

Beauty – with meaning

*You did not come into the world as a herbivorous giraffe,
nor as a carnivorous lion.
You are a domesticated omnivore,
rewarded for his specialised work
with pieces of silver.
Use your brain;
know thyself!*

GUSTAV WEISS

How did it come to pass?

289 million years is how long the Paleozoic lasted when the dinosaurs lived. They were godless and useless. Then, humankind arrived with its brain, which soon proved its usefulness. It was used to kill gazelles and mammoths in order to feed people. And then to kill enemies to acquire land and power. Laws were needed to domesticate humanity. Moses fetched then from Mount Sinai where he spoke in meditation with God, who was concerned that there should be no gods beside him. During the long wait for Moses' return, the people danced around the Golden Calf, with which they were familiar in Egypt as the god Apis and who as Baal embodies the most powerful competition for Moses' god.

Two pathways. On the left the path of enthusiastic thoughts, until one crowns life as an idea. On the right, the path of diligence in the community, in which strict numbers count, in accordance with which constant industry is rewarded with pieces of silver. All pathways are subject to the law of ascent and decline. It looks like a bell. On the back, the symbols for hard work and the idea are shown. Ceramic and paint. With the participation of Ingeborg Pape and Christian Weiß. Height 38 cm. 2019. *Photo Olaf Bruhn*



Those who had fallen back into the old beliefs during the long wait were killed in their thousands in punishment. Historical research has not been able to confirm any of this, not even the flight out of Egypt. This is why there is no date for it.

Belief in one god became a bloody bone of contention between those who believed in him.

Philosophy began in West and East in around 600 B.C.E, as a liberation of humankind from its domestication. In Greek antiquity, it was the Seven Sages, before Socrates, who brought philosophy from heaven down to earth, as Cicero tells us. Greek philosophers founded ethics. With this, following Moses' commandments was no longer god's reward.

At the same time, in the East it was the three great thinkers, Confucius, Laozi and Buddha, who brought philosophy from heaven down to earth.

Philosophical aesthetics

It did not take until today for art to mean something. Something that moved people deep down, like seeing mountains or the raging sea, or in the perception of a person's character. Beauty is only a surface then. It catches the eye as something interesting or original. The effective cause is non-verbal communication with a sense of interested good will.

Through the mind, art is endowed with ineffability, which distinguishes it from science and its form of knowledge. Achieving insight can be an experience in art.

Some ask, Is art at all viable if it is only for the illustration of insights? But should art only address the sense organs and be excluded from the mind? May we forgo intellectual insights conveyed with artistic means through which a major context of

meaning can make the viewer think?

The famous art gallery Deutsche Guggenheim Berlin commissioned a piece from the successful artist Gerhard Richter as a show-piece of philosophical aesthetics. He created an installation of eight almost three-metre movable mirrors, partly painted in grey, only reflecting what was left free by the grey. He called it Eight Grey. It symbolises the limitation of human insight and how it is influenced by the surroundings and the environment.

The art world seized upon Eight Grey as an example of philosophical aesthetics and showed it successively at the great art galleries in London, the Centre Pompidou in Paris and at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York.

In comparison to the past, contemporary art strives for innovation. It breaks out of the confines of tradition and follows an idea, even if this produces only short-lived works and only leaves a memory, such as Christo and Jeanne-Claude's wrapped buildings and trees. They are sensations. A symbolic meaning is scarcely discerned by the thousands of visitors. The wrapped buildings produce a feeling of agitation, such as occurs at the sight of a rocky mountain range. This is art which produces a different effect from philosophical aesthetics. The latter uses symbolic images to force its way into the field of knowledge and overcomes the indifference of the art world to the world of the intellect.

Know thyself

The call to "know thyself" is possibly from one of the seven pre-Socratic Sages, Chilon of Sparta. It was ascribed to the god Apollo.

Like meditation, this insight changes people. It gets into the blood. Brain research



Know thyself. Knowing means a concentration on oneself. It begins with the glove behind which the hand is concealed, which gives impetus. Concentration represented by the tube, a concentrated act of consciousness, symbolically controlled by an intelligent raven. Blood acquires wings. Humans sense the activating feeling of freedom. They renounce indifference, become interested and inquisitive. Ceramic, stainless steel, glass. With participation of Ingeborg Pape and Christian Weiß. Width 1mtr. 2018 *Photo Olaf Bruhn*

has discovered that meditation leads to permanently increased activity in areas of the brain related to positive feelings. It enhances states of happiness, sympathy and empathy. This is what can be expected of philosophical aesthetics too. It gets into the blood, symbolically controlled by an intelligent raven, and acquires wings. This injunction uttered two and a half thousand years ago tells us to become thinking beings. This is the opposite of a domesticated human being and assumes an enhanced meaning in the form of thought about god and the world.

The insight into the limitations of humans is regarded as the original meaning of self knowledge, by which the axiom "Everything in moderation" on one of the columns of Apollo's temple may be meant. Perhaps the fear of overestimating the importance of knowledge emerged with the appearance of philosophy. Today we would have all the more reason for this because we know what happened at the second matter was formed from radiation and the universe was formed with matter, space and time.

Some people believe research should long be continued to make God superfluous. But this cannot be fulfilled – precisely the opposite is the case. If someone wanted to compile an encyclopaedia of ignorance, it would get thicker and thicker and it would never come to the end. The author would have to bring together every specialist but they would not know today what would be added tomorrow.

The more research, the more the realisation of the existence of an unknowable metaphysical force that dwells in everything increases. "God" is just a word that is used for this.

Many people wish not to believe in god and take exception to his personification adopted from mythological writings and to the Holy Trinity. They do not consider the sociological importance of religion as the glue of society, which is often spoken of. But above all, it is what people lose when they are robbed of hope and of a support in need and fear. At the zenith of life, many are strong enough only to accept the logic of cause and effect.

We are filled with respect for the people in the past who devised the saying "Know thyself", whose meaning has been accepted as important over millennia because it brings forth thinking beings. Just like Cicero's avowal of philosophy, that it was brought down from heaven to earth, from heaven that is occupied with belief. These are words that liberate us from an indifferent reality, which received us when we first saw the light of day.