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## The Insistence of Art

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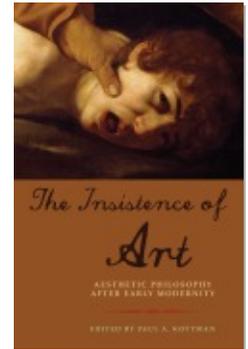
Published by Fordham University Press

Kottman, A..

The Insistence of Art: Aesthetic Philosophy after Early Modernity.

New York: Fordham University Press, 2017.

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## Strokes of Wit: Theorizing Beauty in Baroque Italy

*Jon R. Snyder*

I

Few, if any, artistic and cultural movements in the West have been contested as bitterly and for as long as the Baroque. There is little agreement among scholars over what it was, and even the source of the term “Baroque” today remains uncertain. What is beyond controversy is the fact that, in the first half of the eighteenth century, critics began to apply this term pejoratively to works of seventeenth-century anticlassicism, especially those from Italy.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the 1600s well-heeled foreigners flocked to the peninsula to revere its antiquities, explore its cities, admire its landscapes, and absorb the art of the Renaissance. Most of these northern European tourists did not take, however, more than a passing interest in contemporary Italian culture, with the exception of music, and few likely noticed that in the Po valley of northern Italy there appeared, only a few years apart, two hugely ambitious apologies for anticlassical art: Emanuele Tesauro’s *Il cannocchiale aristotelico* (The Aristotelian spyglass, 1654 first edition) in Turin and Marco Boschini’s *La carta del navegar pitoresco* (The map of painterly navigation, 1660) in Venice.<sup>2</sup> We have no conclusive evidence today that these

two writers knew of each other's work. Both were, however, admirers of Giovan Battista Marino (1569–1625), certainly the most famous—as well as controversial—Italian poet of the age, although by the midway point of the Seicento his reputation was on the wane.<sup>3</sup> The principles of Marinist poetics, which constitute the cornerstone for the Baroque rethinking of the arts, connect these two points along the “continual periphery” of Seicento Italian culture.<sup>4</sup> Although unlikely bedfellows in many ways, Tesauro and Boschini further Marino's frontal assault on the rule systems of classicism. In so doing, these writers put to work in their respective treatises the aesthetic premises on which rest Marinism and, by extension, the Baroque itself, while pushing these toward a position concerning art so extreme that few thinkers anywhere in Europe would follow for more than a century to come.

The Seicento witnessed the first full-fledged crisis in modernity of the core critical-aesthetic principles inherited from classical antiquity, such as proportion, harmony, unity, decorum, and so on, that had long governed, guaranteed, and stabilized Western thinking about artworks.<sup>5</sup> Prior to this crisis, the arts in Italy had generally engaged the logic of “representation,” although the latter was by no means to be understood as a passive reflection of, or transparent window onto, reality. Starting in the later years of the sixteenth century, however, the centrality of mimesis—and all that was predicated on this selfsame notion—in the production and evaluation of contemporary artworks began ever more insistently to be called into question. The system of rules and genres that had been derived in large part from the study of classical antiquity and that was grounded in the logic of verisimilitude (i.e., representation) was increasingly the target of painters, poets, sculptors, architects, musicians, and critics. Although classicism was very far from spent as a cultural force, it was to be gradually challenged by a rival movement that in its own time had no banner other than “the modern.” Appearing in print long after this epochal cultural turn had occurred, both *Il cannocchiale aristotelico* and *La carta del navigar pitoresco* exalt the shock value of the “new” in the arts, dissolving the borders traditionally separating genres, arts, and disciplines in favor of the transgressive and the extreme, without laying claim to the unity, harmony, or decorum that supposedly distinguished both nature and its greatest imitator, namely ancient art.

The treatises are in agreement, moreover, that the two most prominent arts of the age are poetry and painting. If Tesauro's inquiry favors the former and Boschini's the latter, both poetry and painting play a central role in these thinkers' respective accounts of early modern anticlassicism. In

seventeenth-century Italy, poetry still clung to its long-held privileges, asserting supremacy among the arts, but the visual field in point of fact provided the essential paradigm for the Baroque.<sup>6</sup> Thus the intermingling of painting and poetry in these two treatises is inscribed in a particular cultural logic of the age, namely hybridization, and is far from being a nod in the direction of traditional treatments of the arts. Tesauro and Boschini follow in Marino's footsteps as theorists of *concettismo*, or "wit," even though they adopt different critical vocabularies—*argutezza* for Tesauro and the more conventional *ingegno* for Boschini—in addressing the topic. Yet wit, which emerges in the seventeenth century as the constitutive element of anticlassicism, through them extends its domain to the furthest reaches of art, far beyond anything that Marino himself could have imagined. To speak of these two treatises in terms of Marinism alone, however, would fail to account for their respective relations to the broader forces then attempting to revolutionize knowledge in Seicento Italy. The entanglement of the new trends in art with the latest trends in science in particular typifies the mid-century moment, which, as Paula Findlen has observed, "has alternately been defined as the age of the Baroque or the scientific revolution, when it was of course both of these things."<sup>7</sup>

## 2

A critical term common to both *Il cannocchiale aristotelico* and *La carta del navegar pitoresco* is *la macchia*, whose etymological root lies in the Latin *macula*, indicating a stain, a blotch, or a spot, most often irregularly shaped, on a given surface. According to the 1623 second edition of the great dictionary produced by the Accademia della Crusca in Florence, "It is a mark or coloring on the surface of bodies that differs from the latter's own color, for which it is considered accidental [rather than essential]."<sup>8</sup> Perhaps the most influential use of the term in seventeenth-century Italy was to designate sunspots, or *macchie solari*, in the wake of Galileo's writings. By the beginning of 1612 Galileo and his correspondent Marco Velsari freely employed the term *macchia* to refer to this unpredictable solar phenomenon, the observation of which was to become a cornerstone of the early modern scientific revolution.<sup>9</sup> There were numerous other possible uses of the term *macchia* in seventeenth-century Italian, ranging from a "flaw" to an impenetrable and hostile "wilderness," most of which generally possessed a pejorative sense. The accidental quality of any given *macchia* means that its appearance was not planned or designed. Rather, a *macchia* resembles the residue of a prior event that occurred spontaneously and seemingly

at random, like red wine stains found on a white tablecloth after dinner. Something must have “happened” to introduce unintentionally into the order of things an element of disorder, randomness, or even chaos, leaving behind a partial record of what had earlier occurred (such as spills, drips, splashes, and so on). The *macchia* is by its very nature incomplete and fragmentary, often little more than a trace indicating an absence, nor does its shape or form directly reflect or represent the event that preceded it and that it registers (the true causes and nature of sunspots were unknown to early practitioners of the New Science). In other words, in its appearance and function the *macchia* would seem to stand opposed to those stabilizing principles of mimesis that had long governed classicism.

In the case of sunspots, their mutations (like the rotation of the sun) defied explanation within the inherited Aristotelian scholastic framework of celestial physics, which held that the outer heavens were beyond change and therefore devoid of the accidental. Seventeenth-century artists and art theorists increasingly made use of the term *macchia*, moreover, to denote a seemingly accidental event or state, similar to the shifting sunspots revealed by the New Science. Filippo Baldinucci's *Vocabolario toscano dell'arte del disegno* (1681), while drawing extensively on the definitions given in the Accademia della Crusca's dictionary, notes that “painters use this term to indicate the quality of certain drawings, as well as of some paintings that are made with extraordinary ease, with such harmony and freshness, but without use of much pencil or color, and in such a way that it almost seems as though the *macchia* has appeared on the sheet or canvas by itself, rather than because of the artist's hand.”<sup>10</sup> By the second half of the Seicento the meaning of *macchia*—when referring to painting—had modulated, giving it a positive valence, particularly as the opposite of the diligently finished painted surface.<sup>11</sup> According to Baldinucci, the painterly *macchia* appears as spontaneous, and thus may seem wholly devoid of artistic intentionality, but this, as he points out, is nothing other than the illusion projected by the “extraordinary ease” and “freshness” of the artist's hand in creating a picture “without use of much pencil or color.” With little drawing or painting, and no apparent forethought, the image arises on the canvas as if casually and quickly sketched or brushed, although this of course describes the effect that it produces on the viewer rather than the reality of the painter's effort. When understood in this sense, the *macchia* would seem to valorize the very qualities of spontaneity, velocity, irregularity, and vividness that are integral to the Baroque vision of art that Boschini and Tesauo share.<sup>12</sup> The presence of *macchie* of these different sorts permeates Seicento culture in Italy and, I argue in this essay, marks its discourse

on art and wit. As Boschini remarks wittily, if somewhat cryptically: “The painter forms without form—or rather with deformed form—the true form in semblance, seeking thus the art of painting.”<sup>13</sup>

This is, however, not to imply that there are no differences between *Il cannocchiale aristotelico* and *La carta del navigar pitoresco*. Tesauro’s treatise engages the New Science with the aim of appropriating it, even if it goes no further than the field of optics and associated applied technologies (lenses, mirrors), while manifesting no apparent interest in underlying questions of mathematics or physics. To put it another way, if John A. Schuster can speak of the “recruitment” of the Baroque into seventeenth-century natural science, we may instead say that Tesauro recruits the New Science into his visionary version of the Baroque.<sup>14</sup> The reason for this strategic move is clear from the outset. By incorporating its discoveries and instruments into a discourse that is almost entirely focused on the domain of contemporary high culture, Tesauro aims to aestheticize the New Science, thus transforming it into a fundamentally Baroque phenomenon. Perhaps he could not do otherwise. For he sees the scientific revolution as driving no wedge between the natural and the artificial, or between mathematical and poetical-magical modes of knowledge. On the contrary, the former mode serves to confirm the discoveries of the latter, rather than to call them into question. Traditional historical narratives of the so-called rise of science would tend to view Tesauro’s totalizing project as a retrograde exercise in wishful thinking, destined for failure with the emergence and consolidation of scientific rationalism in the course of the long Enlightenment. Today, I would argue, we may more productively view it instead as embodying the contradictions that imbued the study of culture and nature alike in the Baroque era. Ofer Gal and Raz Chen-Morris analyze the shared dilemmas of the high culture and New Science of the seventeenth century in this same perspective, noting that

essentially mediated, . . . the knowledge provided by the New Science, with all its marvelous success, could no longer lay claim to direct [empirical] acquaintance with the objects of nature. In their stead, it produced its own objects: distant stars; infinitesimal magnitudes; the spring of air and the collision of particles. This, for the Baroque savant, was perhaps the most baffling paradox of all: objective knowledge relied on the mind’s creative, “*poetic*,” engagement, or in other words—on the imagination.<sup>15</sup>

Section 3 of this essay addresses this paradox of the “objective” yet “poetic” in relation to the role of the *macchia* in Tesauro’s treatise.

Boschini's approach, in contrast, remains grounded within the domain of art theory and the evaluation of specific paintings. There is no challenge to—indeed there is no direct mention of—the New Science in his work, which seems to show not the slightest interest in the transformation of natural philosophy and scientific knowledge then under way in Italy and in Europe. However, it would be short-sighted to attribute this to personal ignorance on the part of Boschini or to the presumed cultural decadence of Venice during the decline of its once-great empire. His project in *La carta del navegar pitoresco*, as noted above, undercuts—in favor of an aggressively modern art of “form without form”—many if not most of the principal tenets of pictorial representation long championed by classicism. As he remarks in the treatise, “There is old painting, and there is modern painting,”<sup>16</sup> thus suggesting that contemporary modes of representation differ fundamentally from all that came before. It could certainly be argued that this same maxim is applicable by extension to all that is modern in seventeenth-century culture, including the revolutionary New Science. “Is it of the earth or the heavens?” Boschini wonders aloud about the most avant-garde modern art, before concluding: “I don't know where [it belongs].”<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the Venetian poet-critic relies, to a far greater extent than does Tesauro, on the concept and figure of the *macchia*, a term freely shared with seventeenth-century Italian astronomy, despite the semantic divergences noted above. In the final section of this essay, I argue that, by programmatically subordinating nature to artifice, Boschini furthers the Baroque project, with all of its uncertainties and tensions regarding the relationship between objective and creative truth.

## 3

Emanuele Tesauro (1592–1675) was almost eighty years old when the definitive version of *Il cannocchiale aristotelico* appeared in print in 1670.<sup>18</sup> Tesauro was a pious Piedmontese nobleman who left the Jesuit order in 1634 but remained a lay priest, serving at the Savoy court in Turin as historian, playwright, epigraphist, emblemist, panegyrist, preacher, and polemicist. More than a courtier, he was truly a “man of the world” who moved with ease between the different milieus of Italian absolutism. The author of a lengthy list of works, Tesauro was a formidable presence in the culture of Piedmont and Lombardy for most of the seventeenth century. Unusually, although he wrote and published extensively in the 1620s and 1630s, his literary star began to rise well after age fifty, with the appearance of the three-volume *Panegirici* (1647, but revised and republished several times in

Tesauro's lifetime), followed almost two decades later by the highly successful three-volume *Inscriptiones* (1666, but reprinted at least six times before the end of the century). Between these two monuments of erudition and rhetorical bravura—numerous other publications must be left unmentioned here—there appeared his provocatively titled 700-page treatise, putatively on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*, which constitutes perhaps the high-water mark in Italy of Baroque thinking about the art of wit.

Tesauro's theories in his treatise defy any attempt at a neat synthesis or summary. *Il cannocchiale aristotelico* is a multiform "open book," as the author calls it, or a maze that lacks any center.<sup>19</sup> Wit (*argutezza*) is the spark that generates conceits in a genuinely creative intellect; these conceits may then be communicated with others through an acute figure of wit (*acutezza*). This figure of wit, most frequently a metaphor, possesses a sharp point that pricks the mind of the listener, reader, or viewer, provoking a novel thought or perspective that fills the mind with wonder and delight, and rewards the witty creator of the figure with the public's approval. As the author writes with what is for him unusual concision: "Novelty . . . generates wonder: wonder, delight: and delight, applause."<sup>20</sup> Nothing in this formula deviates in the least from the long-established program of Marinist poetics (and in his youth Tesauro knew the great poet at the Savoy court in Turin). Tesauro presses onward, however, to explain that metaphors of wit compress space and accelerate time. Conceits not only connect far-flung and disparate objects or propositions into a single figure, but are always expressed "rapidly" or "in a flash," so that in these high-speed, highly compacted metaphors we are able "see" more than one thing at once, as if gazing into a perspective-box of the sort popular with painters and the public in the mid-Seicento.<sup>21</sup> Tesauro remarks in fact that "metaphor packs all [the objects] tightly together in a single term: and almost miraculously makes you see one inside the other. Thus your delight is greater, in the same way that it is more curious and pleasurable to see many objects through the peep-hole of a perspective device, than to have those objects pass in succession before your eyes."<sup>22</sup> In peering through this metaphoric peep-hole, readers, viewers, or listeners seem to discover—almost voyeuristically—the secret life of things and the hidden relationships between them. Moreover, the estrangement of these objects from their usual context through the well-formed metaphor of wit overcomes the normally distracted perception that we have of these, because we have long been habituated to seeing them in a routine or automatic way. Through metaphor even the most banal objects can acquire a compelling new dimension, because anything can transform itself suddenly into something else. Wit thus enables through

figuration and metaphorical transference—namely the spectacularization of one object by means of another—a more complex knowledge of the universe; it founds an essentially visual modern epistemology.<sup>23</sup>

After the original publication of *Il cannocchiale aristotelico*, Tesauro continued to revise and expand his work for another sixteen years. In the 1663 revised edition, the author inserted an elaborately engraved allegorical frontispiece or *antiporta* (Figure 1), today considered one of the most remarkable book illustrations to have appeared in seventeenth-century Italy. Although at first glance it may seem like an exercise in Baroque excess, this image was designed by him on the basis of a precise iconological program, probably with the intent to offer the reader an interpretive key to the treatise, although nowhere in it does the author mention this engraving. A closer look at the frontispiece indeed reveals several salient points of intersection between Tesauro's theory of wit and the Seicento term *macchia* that bear in important ways on our understanding of the Baroque.

There are three allegorical figures—Aristotle, Poetry, and Painting—in the frontispiece, of which the largest in size is Poetry. She is seated at the left side of the frame with a laurel wreath upon her head, wearing a simple and unadorned dress from which her naked bosom emerges. Propped against her right hip is a stringed instrument (a *viola da gamba*)—Apollo, Greek god of poetry, was also the god of music—and in her right hand Poetry holds a bow. Resting against her right thigh is a star-dotted heraldic shield bearing the motto *tremant urbes et regna* (cities and kingdoms tremble), which appears to be taken from Marcus Manilius's *Astronomica* (4.551), one of the most important surviving ancient works on astronomy. Other coats of arms are scattered on the ground in front of Poetry. The most prominent one bears the double-headed eagle, the symbol of the Holy Roman Empire; lying together with it is the ancient Roman imperial eagle, along with the famous motto *S.P.Q.R.* Tesauro also pays due homage in the frontispiece to the House of Savoy, at whose court he served for much of his life. Visible behind the respective figures of Aristotle and Poetry are two heraldic shields (one bears the figure of an elephant, and the other a centaur) referring to the valor of the great Savoy dukes of the past.<sup>24</sup> Thus the viewer is asked to grasp the indissoluble continuity between past and present, which will turn out to be a central theme of the treatise.

Poetry holds in her left hand a long spyglass or telescope, which she points toward the sun with the assistance of Aristotle, who stands behind her while looking in the same direction and supporting the instrument with both hands. Dressed in flowing robes, the ancient Greek philosopher now appears conversant in the latest technological innovations of the



seventeenth century. In fact, he seems to be speaking to Poetry, around whose spyglass is wrapped a cartouche displaying the words *egregio in corpore* (noble in body). Both figures gaze at the sun, which shines brightly but whose surface displays irregular dark spots, and the viewer naturally assumes that this is what the two are discussing. The allusion to Galileo's pathbreaking astronomical discoveries seems certain, although the great scientist's name is nowhere to be found in the treatise. Here Tesauro deliberately concocts, very much in the vein of Galileo's notion of *novantiqua*, an anachronistic alliance between the symbol of modern science (the telescope) and the greatest authority of ancient as well as scholastic philosophy.<sup>25</sup> In this context the near-total absence of the "natural world" in the frontispiece is noteworthy, for it is reduced to the sun and its sunspots. Everything else crowding into the packed frame figures as part of a human-made emblem or allegory, so that nature itself seems marginalized, if not wholly distanced, by art and artifice. This resonates with echoes of the New Science, for which "the immediacy of the senses" is replaced by "fundamentally mediated" knowledge through instruments, so that "nature could only be approached by art."<sup>26</sup> In this most representative part of the frontispiece, embodying the very title of the treatise, Tesauro accords to this notion—namely, that nature can be approached only through art—every possible privilege.

At the center of the frame stands a painter's easel. On it rests an oval canvas, already set in its frame, with the allegorical figure of Painting seated before it. In her left hand, instead of a spyglass Painting holds a palette, together with three paintbrushes and a maulstick, while with the brush in her right hand she applies the finishing touches to the image on the framed canvas. Her painting represents a most unusual object: a conical catoptric mirror, in which is reflected the motto *omnis in unum* (all in one). Any seventeenth-century viewer with even slight knowledge of current trends in art and technology would have realized at once that this conical mirror serves to give a recognizable shape to an anamorphic image. Indeed, we see Painting's brush at work completing not the representation of the catoptric device itself, but rather the weirdly distorted image that lies on a flat surface at the base of the mirror. The letters *o* and *m* in particular, whose reflection appears at the apex of the cone (the motto must be read from top to bottom), are so elongated in the flat anamorphic image that they do not resemble letters of the Roman alphabet, but rather loose threads or ink smears scattered randomly on the surface supporting the mirror. Painting stares intently at the canvas, while seeming to ignore the actions and words of the allegorical figures facing her.

Beneath the central part of the allegory itself yet another motto is visible: *egregio inspersos reprehendit corpore naevos* ([one] may criticize the blemishes scattered on a noble body). This excerpt from Horace's *Satires*, 1.6.67, which is echoed in the cartouche on the telescope, is once again intended to link the heritage of classical antiquity to contemporary Europe.<sup>27</sup> For the Horatian "blemishes" are to be understood, in the context of the frontispiece, as those same sunspots at which the respective figures of Aristotle and Poetry gaze. As if by magic, an ancient poetic text describes proleptically the operation of the telescope, emblematic of the New Science. We are now in a position to understand that Tesauro's "Aristotelian spyglass"—forged from fragments of classical rhetoric and poetics, now welded to a new framework—is an instrument with an essentially critical function, forcing us to see things as we have not seen them before, namely the "blemishes" or asymmetrically shaped secrets of the universe that have been kept hidden from us until now by our own (deficient) senses. Surprising new discoveries that set fire to the imagination will be made with this particular kind of spyglass, which, like the optical device held up by Poetry, was unknown to the ancients. As with the sunspots first seen by Galileo and other astronomers, these new discoveries made through the "Aristotelian spyglass" will belong first of all to the visual field of knowledge. The transformative linguistic power of Poetry is inseparable from the faculty of vision in Tesauro's frontispiece (she holds the optical instrument to her eye, after all), as well as in his promotion of the art of wit to the core of modern epistemology.

Painting works instead with her brushes to capture on canvas the avant-garde optics of the conical catoptric mirror. In Tesauro's allegory, the sunspots viewed by her sister Poetry are meant to be compared to the *macchie* painted on the flat surface in front of the catoptric cone. Although a visual and verbal pun on the term *macchia* is deliberately included here, that is not all there is. The difference between the two types of "stains" is a fundamental one. If the sunspots are natural objects transformed by the faculty of wit and the mediation of a scientific instrument into figures that can be comprehended by our intellect, the painted *macchie* are wholly artificial, for Painting is shown in the act of creating them with her brushstrokes. Buried deep in the text of *Il cannocchiale aristotelico* is the following passage: "Another man, in speaking of a learned professor who was of deformed and base appearance, remarked: 'this is an ugly catoptric figure, which should be viewed in the cylinder,' alluding to those figures that on a flat surface appear to be blotches [*macchie*] but in the cylindrical mirror seem well-proportioned and beautiful."<sup>28</sup> Only the reflected image of these *macchie*

can make them “well-proportioned and beautiful,” transforming them aesthetically through the new optical technology from bizarre blotches or sketchy brushstrokes to legible letters and words forming an elegant motto (“all in one”). The motto itself self-reflexively describes the effect of the mirror, which shows “all” of these apparently random marks as unified elements of a single image and a single text; in it images become words and words become images.<sup>29</sup> Still later on in the treatise, when speaking of this emblem (which was that of the Accademia dei Solinghi in Turin) Tesauo resorts to the same terminology in order to describe the performance of the “conical mirror”: “That which on the flat surface seem to be blotches [macchie], when reflecting together [in the mirror] above them, become perfect and extremely well-composed figures.”<sup>30</sup> In his 1657 panegyric titled “The Cylinder,” moreover, he employs identical terms to refer to this same famous cylindrical mirror, “at whose center . . . colorful images are found, which outside the mirror appear as formless and distorted blotches [macchie], [but] within its crystalline bosom are given right and most perfect form.”<sup>31</sup>

In the frontispiece Tesauo thus confirms an essential connection between the observation of sunspots and the anamorphic version of the motto *omnis in unum*. Both are shown to be concerned with macchie—irregular or asymmetrical traces—that may be deciphered through the mediation of the innovative optical technologies endorsed so fervently in *Il cannocchiale aristotelico*.<sup>32</sup> Nature has hidden from the unaided eye the sight of the spots on the sun’s surface, but in modernity these can now be detected with the telescope; in parallel fashion, the macchie applied to the canvas by Painting are deliberately nonmimetic distortions, in order to hide from the viewer their true meaning, which can nevertheless be recovered thanks to the miraculous conical catoptric mirror, a copy of which was brought to Turin from Paris shortly after its invention circa 1627.<sup>33</sup> All the elements in the frontispiece participate in the same allegorical scene and contribute to its overall meaning. Although throughout the treatise Tesauo freely employs the vocabulary of painting (some of his preferred terms include “painting” and “to paint”), he in fact does not devote much space to considering that art in his tome, which is after all concerned expressly with rhetoric and poetics. In the frontispiece, however, Painting plays a central role because, among other things, her brushwork can supply strong visual support for Tesauo’s claim that the operations of wit are not limited to poetry alone, but are to be found in all kinds of human undertakings, including those of the New Science. Painting’s canvas provides an allegory within the allegory, or, to put it another way, the self-reflexive representation—the

frame (literally) within the frame—compelling the viewer to contemplate the macchie, compare them to their counterparts in the heavens, and to see them all as part of the workings of wit (*argutezza*), whether human or divine.<sup>34</sup>

Tesauro's frontispiece is an exemplary setting-into-work of wit that is at once textual and visual; these two domains are, like the sister arts of Poetry and Painting, inseparable for him. As he remarks early in *Il cannocchiale aristotelico*, the term "wit" (*argutezza*) is not restricted to poetry alone, but may be "applied to painted or sculpted objects, and to actions signifying any witty conceit, which may be called figural, metaphorical and witty actions and objects."<sup>35</sup> The governing conceit of the frontispiece has to do not only with the novel paradox of the Aristotelian spyglass, that is, the seamless continuity of antiquity and modernity or of classicism and anticlassicism, but also with a particular play on words, or a figure of wit (*acutezza*), whose meaning can be grasped only by a subsequent reading of the treatise, where the second sense of *macchia* (i.e., as a painterly blotch or stain rather than as a sunspot) is made evident.

The sunspots (*macchie solari*) are made present to us through the double work of wit, which first overcomes the vastness of space through the invention of the spyglass, and which then "re-presents" the sunspots through visual and textual representation (precisely as the cartouche is entwined around the barrel of the telescope).<sup>36</sup> Rather than approach these celestial macchie on an empirical basis, Tesauro depicts them in the frontispiece as part of a vital communicative process encouraging us to understand nature as a maker of "natural metaphors, figural conceits, witty symbols and . . . emblems." Here we can see that, despite his debt to Galileo, Tesauro is unwilling or unable to see the achievements of the New Science as belonging to a domain separate from that of the creative and poetic powers of the imagination. As I have tried to suggest, this is not so much a failure to grasp the nature of the scientific revolution as a recognition of its essentially Baroque outlook on nature. The mind of nature, including its faculty of wit, is revealed to humans through such "natural metaphors," which are not made of words per se, but are transposed into human language through the act of interpretation, which requires us in turn to exercise our own imaginative wit in order to grasp the underlying conceit. Thus, for instance, because flowers are "elegant figures and lively works of wit from nature's ingenuity," it follows that "if the witty conceits of poets are called 'flowers,' then nature's flowers are to be called witty conceits."<sup>37</sup> For Tesauro, the fundamentally creative exchange between the respective "minds" of nature and humankind occurs in and through these metaphors, which constitute the

beauty of the universe as we perceive it. Painting's allegorical actions in the frontispiece provide not only a play on the double meaning of *macchia*, but analogically represent Painting to be "like" nature in the deployment of figures—sometimes seemingly illegible to the naked eye—that can be decoded and reconstituted only by the observer's wit.

In the frontispiece, this relationship between nature and Painting is a reversible one, as the presence of the conical mirror at the center of the frame suggests. In so many words, nature and Painting reflect each other. Although both nature and Painting are artists, paradoxically neither is "natural."<sup>38</sup> The universe is a divine work of art, as every human work of art is the universe in microcosm, and uniting both is the irresistible intellectual force of the witty conceit. Once pricked by the "acute" point of the figure of wit (*acutezza*), the viewer, reader, or listener—by replicating the conceit in his or her own mind—participates in this same cognitive process. Wit leaps across space and time by way of figuration, in endless celebration of the overwhelming vitality of creativity and of the vivid, life-enhancing images that it generates. Joining together in mutual ecstasy, "one faculty of wit may awaken another, as firewood heaped together burns with a greater flame than if kept separate."<sup>39</sup> The spark of "genius" at the source of all wit thus triggers a conflagration that is, for Tesaurò, the essence of the beautiful itself, and whose glow illuminates an aestheticized universe of signs.<sup>40</sup>

#### 4

Marco Boschini (1613–78) was a Venetian artist, antiquarian, art critic and consultant, cartographer, and merchant, as well as the author of several important publications about art and architecture in the Serenissima. Boschini was personally acquainted with most of the Republic's leading contemporary painters, as well as with the living descendants of the great Venetian artists of the sixteenth century, such as Tintoretto and Veronese (in his youth Boschini served an apprenticeship in the workshop of Palma the Younger). He was in the circle of the *Accademia degli Incogniti*, Venice's most renowned academy and a magnet for artists residing in or visiting the city: *La carta del navigar pitoresco* contains a prefatory letter of endorsement from Giovan Francesco Loredano, the academy's founder and central figure.<sup>41</sup> Boschini's knowledge of the vast treasure trove of paintings located in Venice and on the Venetian mainland was unmatched, and he was often called upon to serve as a guide for visiting artists and dignitaries, including (or so it would seem) Diego Velázquez in 1651.<sup>42</sup> The interlocutors in *La carta del navigar pitoresco*—Boschini (*il Compare*) and a noble "senator"

(*l'Eccellenza*) from out of town—journey by gondola around the city and lagoon to view the works of the Venetian masters and their epigones. Hoping like tourists from church to palace to monastery, the two men treat Venice as a public open-air art museum whose artworks no longer have the sacred or secular functions for which they were originally intended.<sup>43</sup>

Although the influential Italian art historian Roberto Longhi called him “the greatest critic of the century,” Boschini’s corpus has attracted relatively limited attention from scholars of early modern art theory, with the notable exception of Philip Sohm.<sup>44</sup> This may be attributable in part to the eccentric literary design of *La carta del navegar pitoresco*, Boschini’s critical masterpiece composed in the vein of the Baroque master-poet Marino.<sup>45</sup> Not only is Boschini’s text entirely a verse dialogue composed in Venetian, but it consists of 5,370 rhymed quatrains (filling nearly 700 pages), divided into eight cantos—each called a “wind”—corresponding to a navigational wind rose divided into eight sections.<sup>46</sup> In his preface, the author is unapologetic for this unusual linguistic choice: “Am I, as a Venetian in Venice talking about Venetian painters, supposed to disguise myself?”<sup>47</sup> Moreover, in his treatise he launches a no-holds-barred polemical assault on Giorgio Vasari, the sixteenth-century Tuscan author of the *Vite* (Lives of the most eminent painters, sculptors, and architects, 1550 *editio princeps*), generally considered today to be the founding work of the discipline of art history. Vasari’s distinct bias in favor of Tuscan art, to the detriment of the Venetian school, is subject to Boschini’s withering scorn and contempt, for in fact the “perfection” of Venetian painters such as Titian and Tintoretto is such that, he contends, “there is nothing comparable to it in all the world.”<sup>48</sup> Perhaps, in zealously overstating his case, Boschini becomes a “propagandist” for Venice, as Philip Sohm argues, but his discourse on Venetian painting is anything but superficial.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, there were few more intriguing contributions to the debate on art and artists in seventeenth-century Italy, when painting was itself “a deeply theorized kind of knowledge.”<sup>50</sup>

Boschini was nevertheless an untimely figure, and *La carta del navegar pitoresco* expresses a sense of belatedness, not only in regard to the bygone golden age of Titian, Tintoretto, and Veronese, but also concerning the debate over the legacy of Italian Baroque art. His mammoth text appeared too late to slow the further decline of Marinism in Italy, but too early to have an impact on the subsequent development of the philosophy of art in Europe. *La carta del navegar pitoresco* would resonate with a wider audience only centuries later, although some of his guidebooks to the art of Venice and its territories were reprinted well into the eighteenth century.

Undoubtedly the choice of Venetian as the language of the treatise played a role in this story of neglect, but so did the eccentric—at times radically so—ideas of its author.

Like Tesauro, Boschini begins his book with an image of two mythological divinities, in this case the God of Poetry and the Goddess of Painting. In the preface, he observes that there are many severe judges packed together upon “a hard bench, who would have me put on trial for my life in the court of Apollo and of the goddess of Painting for the crime of *lèse-majesté*, contending that I write of both poets and painters.”<sup>51</sup> Although this double subject might strike some classicist contemporaries as a breach of the accepted rules of art criticism and theory, for our author it is instead a necessary first step in the direction of a discourse on art in modernity. Boschini’s is not just a flamboyant essay in praise of Venetian painting, but a verse tour de force that sets-into-work the poetics of wit (*ingegno*). Its simultaneous engagement with two art forms is among the treatise’s most distinctive traits, and not only in the field of early modern art theory. As Anna Pallucchini notes, “There is nothing else like Boschini’s work in Italian literature,”<sup>52</sup> which cannot be said for any other work of art theory produced in early modern Italy.

Devoted primarily to practical criticism of pictures, *La carta del navegar pitoresco* nonetheless contains a relatively coherent body of remarks of a more speculative nature concerning art and artistic creation.<sup>53</sup> In this it goes well beyond Marino’s *La Galeria* (1620), which, although containing many poems about specific paintings and sculptures, does not offer much (if any) reflection on art theory.<sup>54</sup> In terms of concision, range, and balance, there may certainly be superior writers on the art of painting in early modern Italy, from Vasari to Bellori, but there is no other critic who so openly defies conventional stances toward the work of art in Italy and Europe, whether rooted in Neo-Aristotelian or Neoplatonic doctrines. Like Tesauro, Boschini had in his youth fully absorbed the lessons of Marinist poetics, and in *La carta del navegar pitoresco* he integrates them into his reflections on the radically altered status of the artwork in the Baroque. He sees sixteenth-century giants Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese, and Bassano as anticipating this new aesthetic, particularly in their later works.<sup>55</sup> At the same time, however, Boschini also devotes an extensive section of his verse treatise (the seventh “Wind”) to contemporary seventeenth-century painters active in Venice and its territories. These latter artists—however minor they may appear, even to the author—sustain and extend the practices of the *maniera* first developed by the great Cinquecento precursors, without substantially modifying those practices.<sup>56</sup> This is not just a matter

of preference, in Boschini's eyes, for certain technical aspects of painting over others. The Venetian school puts into practice the very principles of the new aesthetic, which are coextensive with modernity itself, and which arose in Venice earlier than elsewhere in Europe.

I do not intend to argue here for the originality of Boschini's theoretical insights into painting, whether in his promotion of "free" painterly brushwork (or *machia*, as he spells it in Venetian) or his outspoken anticlassicism. No doubt he borrowed liberally from the conceptual framework established by his predecessors and rivals.<sup>57</sup> *La carta del navegar pitoresco* lacks, moreover, "a rigid interpretive frame" offering "clarity, and consistency, and an orderly progression of ideas."<sup>58</sup> Since it unfolds over eight days as a verse dialogue whose interlocutors are wandering around Venice from artwork to artwork, that might be too much to ask, for dialogues are often made of digressions, repetitions, and discursive dead ends. Most of the Venetian or Italian terms in the treatise referring to the activity of painting—*machia*, *maniera*, *trato*, *colpo*, *impasto*, *velare*, and so on—were already familiar enough to readers of early modern Italian art theory.<sup>59</sup> And few would not have recognized the basic philosophical terminology—*arte*, *natura*, *scienza*, *belezza*, *virtù*, and so on—that the author employs, even if here it is provided in the Venetian language. Furthermore, the terms that Boschini borrows from seventeenth-century Marinism and usually translates into Venetian, including *marevegia*, *bizaro*, *piaser*, and *non so che*, among others, set *La carta del navegar pitoresco* in an intertextual network of writings with which contemporary readers would already more than likely have been acquainted. What instead distinguishes *La carta del navegar pitoresco* is its recombination of all of these into a cluster or constellation of terms and concepts circulating around the term *machia*.<sup>60</sup> Just as for Walter Benjamin, in his *The Origin of the German Baroque Mourning-Play*, a constellation "simultaneously groups together and is revealed by the cluster of individual stars," so the treatise reconfigures familiar elements in such a way that these reveal the identification of the Venetian *maniera* with modern painting, and, ultimately, with modernity *tout court*.<sup>61</sup> Even if lacking the philosophical polish of Pietro Sforza Pallavicino (1607–67), for example, or the psychological acuity of Baltasar Gracián, Boschini not only "imbued brushwork with theory and made it carry more ideas and emotions than previous art writers had thought possible," but "took a symptom of style and made it into style itself."<sup>62</sup> Whether his analyses can be said to represent accurately the pictures of the early modern Venetian masters is not my concern here, for, as often as not, they serve him as an occasion for discussing the Baroque as a *style* of vision and thought.

For the Venetian poet-critic, the supreme art of the modern age is (oil) painting, to which all the other arts are ancillary, because no other aesthetic activity can equal painting's engagement of the faculties of both the intellect and the senses, not to mention its dependence on the creative power of wit (*ingegno*). If Venetian painting stands alone at the apex of this art form, Boschini contends, it must be understood in relation to the singularity of the democratic Venetian Republic.<sup>63</sup> The artistic freedom expressed in the dazzling brushwork of modern Venetian painters, he notes, is inseparable from the civic and political freedoms enjoyed by citizens of *la Serenissima*: "In short, the Venetian style / Brings with it the same freedom / Enjoyed by anyone living in this city, / Our homeland, that keeps subjection far from us."<sup>64</sup> In the seventeenth century Venetian painting and the Venetian state differ fundamentally from the art and politics of the rest of the peninsula, which by and large are bound to other codes, such as classicism and absolutism. These practices of liberty—pictorial and political—are intrinsic to a city that constitutes at once a unique body politic and a uniquely beautiful aesthetic object. The poet-critic in fact sees even the plan of the city, with its crazy-quilt of canals surrounding largely human-made, irregularly shaped islands, as being a "painting" (*CN*, 28) in its own right, like so many vigorous brushstrokes and stains of color on a canvas that together form an equally complex maze of paint and attain the same end result: beauty. The Venetian state and its republican institutions are the dynamic creators of this urban architectural masterpiece, which has defied not only time, but the very laws and limits of the relationship between stone and water. This one-of-a-kind city has in turn enabled the practitioners of the Venetian style to achieve perfection in painting by refusing—like the builders of the city in the lagoon—to be subject to the tyranny of nature and its laws.

As a living work of art Venice is so perfect that, as Boschini remarks hyperbolically, the city may be said to have not only defied nature, but to have seduced and conquered it. In *La carta del navegar pitoresco* the city and nature have exchanged the roles traditionally assigned to them in Western theories of art, for now nature is secondary and art (which is the same as saying "Venice and its maniera") is primary, rather than vice versa, as was the case in conventional models of mimetic representation. According to Boschini, the artifice of the Venetians is now the "example" and the "model" for nature itself, which finds its own "monument" in the artifice of Venice.<sup>65</sup> In connecting the dots, as readers of *La carta del navegar pitoresco* are sometimes left to do, we are led to conclude that nature is no longer autonomous or original, but is paradoxically a copy of the art of Titian, Tintoretto, and company, rather than vice versa. The truth of

nature is nothing other than a simulacrum of that of Venice, which is “the source, the spring and the river/That once produced, has produced or will produce the selfsame truth through paintbrushes.”<sup>66</sup> Indeed, for Boschini modern painting is that art that is authentic only insofar as it reforms and transforms nature into its own image:

And here we turned to talking about Painting,  
 Created by our genius and sympathy:  
 That virtue esteemed and revered by all,  
 Nature’s rival and competitor,  
 Or rather [its] true artful reform  
 That surpasses reality in many places,  
 And transforms form with such art  
 That it is more lovely than nature.<sup>67</sup>

This, according to the author of *La carta del navegar pitoresco*, is indeed the “living science” (CN, 286) of the great Venetian painters and their followers. It would seem possible to consider the New Science—which brought sunspots (*macchie solari*) into human consciousness through the innovation of the telescope—in this same perspective, that is, as “Nature’s rival and competitor” and “true artful reform”: Boschini’s art theory is inseparable from the Baroque vision of nature. The following passage from the fifth “wind,” recounting an anecdote in which a blind man compares a portrait in marble to a portrait in oil, articulates the theoretical foundation of the “artful style” and its use of the *machia*:

I wish to remind your Excellency of that blind man who, in a bygone era in which there was a great controversy between painting and sculpture, remarked: “Here I recognize a hand; here I touch a foot; here I can make out an eye, and here I feel an eyelash; and here, nothing?” He said: “O what a marvel! Painting is truly sorcery!” I myself say the same thing. What I see, in short, is this: I see lines, marks, pockmarks, moles, wrinkles, fine and coarse hairs, but from [up close] here I can see everything, and there’s nothing there. I see an impasto, a disdainful brushstroke, a certain something, ineffable and wondrous, that starts to stir under my gaze, so that it seems right to me to say: This is the most beautiful [art]. In the end this involves effort, a desire to create with time, patience, and love, and perhaps every painter with a good eye can get even as far as that. But to arrive at the style and the forceful brushstrokes of, for instance, Veronese, Bassano, Jacopo Tintoretto and Titian, by God, that’s something to drive you out of your mind.

[ . . . ]

Nature with such art competes in order to make herself immortal; and in many places, with stains in stone and wood, strives to imitate figures. And even if she does not attain perfection, at least nature approaches the true way by imitating the Venetian style, considering that use of blotches to be beautiful and good.<sup>68</sup>

Significantly, Pallucchini identifies in this passage an allusion to Galileo's letter of 26 June 1612 to Cigoli defending the superiority of painting to sculpture; she argues that it is linked, moreover, to the sole place in Boschini's treatise in which Galileo's name appears and his telescope is invoked.<sup>69</sup> As if he too were examining an oil portrait (no specific picture is named in the above passage), Boschini describes his hypothetical experience of viewing a lifelike painted image of a human face and head, rich in verisimilar details such as "lines, marks, pockmarks, moles, wrinkles, fine and coarse hairs."<sup>70</sup> On stepping close to the canvas, however, the illusion vanishes in a flash, and, like the blind man in the anecdote about the contest between two-dimensional painting and three-dimensional sculpture, the speaker discovers that "there is nothing there."<sup>71</sup> Or rather, there is only the flat painted surface with its blotches and smears of paint and visible brushstrokes. No figuration is visible to the eye at such close range.

Boschini peers at the impasto (a very thick layering of oil paint) on the canvas, which displays the "disdainful" brushstroke(s) left by the artist in the act of its creation. The Venetian poet-critic can make out no recognizable image there, however, only "a certain something, ineffable and wondrous." This "*un certo che*," which we may identify with the seventeenth-century aesthetic category of the *non so che*, *je ne sais quoi*, or *nescio quid*, is an elusive and indefinable principle of representation that may be experienced in the encounter with the modern work of art, but that cannot be articulated in rational terms. The intellectual and sensual complexity of the experience of the work may move us, but it defies any attempt to reduce it to a unitary or logical proposition.<sup>72</sup> Evidently Boschini refers here, by this certain "wondrous" something (*un certo che*), to the fluid *machia* or stainlike sketch that is at the very basis of the Venetian *maniera*.<sup>73</sup> Although it may seem to be utter confusion from the perspective of a viewer whose eye is only inches from the canvas, it is nothing of the sort if the *machia* was made by the hand of a modern Venetian painter. Skillfully and rapidly applied to the canvas, the sketchy brushwork is not confined within distinct contours or borders, but is like a flood or burst of energy that leaves

in its wake an indeterminate, agitated painted surface. This is not dissimilar to the multitude of G. W. Leibniz's "small" or "minute" perceptions or sensations, which we do not consciously perceive in themselves, but which combine together to create a distinct effect on us akin to the *non so che* (Leibniz's example is that of the roar of a breaking wave, which is in fact made up of innumerable droplets of water crashing into one another, each of which makes a tiny sound that our ear cannot distinguish; we hear them and do not hear them, just as, according to Boschini, we see and do not see the figures on the canvas).<sup>74</sup> The brushwork's ineffable quality, which makes it overflow the boundaries of the traditional categories of aesthetic analysis, is experienced insofar as it seemingly "begins to stir" when the viewer gazes at it closely enough, almost as though it had a life of its own. The paint on the canvas continuously represents and replicates the prior action of the painter's gesture in applying it. Other than the magic of the *machia*, there is no fixed rule and no technique for producing the ineffable (*un certo che*), which is the deepest desideratum of art and the essence of the beautiful for Boschini ("questo è 'l più belo"). The *maniera* of the Venetian masters consists not in figuration but feigned motion, not in imagery but expressive energy, not in diligently painted surfaces but rapid, free brushwork.

With the tables turned, and nature consigned to a permanently subordinate role, it cannot be surprising to readers of *La carta del navegar pitoresco* to learn that, in its endless effort to emulate art, nature too "strives" to become a painter of *machie*, not on canvas but in "stone and wood" (i.e., verisimilar shapes that in fact occur naturally in these materials). In these enigmatic objects—and Baroque connoisseurs coveted them for their collections<sup>75</sup>—is proof positive that nature is hard at work copying from the Venetian style. Such an enterprise can of course never attain perfection, Boschini dismissively remarks, for nature lacks the true creative intelligence required of the painters of the *maniera*. Throughout the treatise it is clear that the author's sympathies lie, above all, with the art of Jacopo Tintoretto, whose paintings Boschini holds to embody the authentic Venetian style. If Tintoretto's cutting-edge artistry anticipates and defines the modern in painting, it is owing first and foremost to his powerful faculty of wit, from which the originality of his work flows, rather than to his training or his eye: "A more tremendous mind/was never seen in painting/. . . because his way of working was to stay always far away/from the practices and forms of all [other] painters."<sup>76</sup> And this creative faculty of wit is precisely what nature lacks. The best that the latter can ever hope to do is

to follow the lead of Venetians like Tintoretto, by embracing the activity of painting with strokes and stains or blotches—albeit in stone and wood rather than on canvas—as the essence of the “beautiful and good” in the realm of art.<sup>77</sup>

Boschini advances the Baroque’s far-reaching claim to the proposition that nature, indeed, imitates art and its truth.<sup>78</sup> As a world-system, set into motion by the Maker, nature must constantly re-create and renew itself in order to avoid entropy and maintain a state of equilibrium. But this essentially autotelic, automatic activity is far less original and inventive than what painting in the *maniera veneziana* achieves as the highest kind of artistic practice. For the modern Venetian style of painting not only conveys on canvas what is in the order of nature, but also what is not, that is, artifice. Thus “it [painting] is the very order of the world; it is a treasure/That contains nature and artifice within itself.”<sup>79</sup> Its artistic products provide the viewer with more than a representation of the world and the things in it (or what has happened in it), because they always also foreground the creative act itself. Thanks to the incorporation of *machie*, with their free, sketch-like brushwork, the making of the picture is always a part of its account of an object or figure, and this is something that nature cannot do, lacking the self-reflexive intelligence and faculty of wit of Venice’s master artificers, as exemplified by Tintoretto. The double dimension of modern Venetian painting—reflection (of nature) plus self-reflection (of art)—is the proof of its essential superiority to nature and naturalism, and explains Boschini’s above-mentioned remark that the *maniera artificiosa* is at once the “imitator” and the “model” of nature, which can only strive without success to try to equal the Venetian style.<sup>80</sup>

Speaking of the *Miracle of Saint Mark*, Boschini remarks in a marginal gloss that this is “the most beautiful painting by Tintoretto, or rather, I’d say, in the whole world.”<sup>81</sup> Curiously, here Boschini seems to take a page from Tesaurò’s book, mentioning Aristotle as an authority whose work, like this great painting by Tintoretto, “astonishes us” with its insights into “the living, the real and the divine.” But his true interests lie elsewhere. In the following passage about the world’s “most beautiful painting” the Venetian poet-critic puts forth a striking series of propositions concerning the modern Venetian reversal of the traditional relationship between nature and art:

We can well see the truth of that conceit, according to which art holds sway over nature. Thanks to Tintoretto’s great prowess, it isn’t so much

in the drawing. But oh yes, here this time we see living and not painted truth!

[ . . . ]

This is a wonder without end. Here is the living, the real and the divine; this is the creative act taken to extremes; this is all of that excess which astonishes us; this is that painting which confounds the true; this is like Aristotle or Homer, of whom we don't know what words of praise to use. Here we'll surely be lying if we still want to call this a "painting." Because it is reality, or, rather, superior to reality; and even nature can learn from it. This is painting that is in motion. But is it sorcery? No indeed, because that sin may not be committed in sacred places. Is it of the earth or the heavens? I don't know where [it belongs]. But what does that matter now? It's both a painting and a true thing; it's at once reality and style; it's the sorcery of a magical talent.<sup>82</sup>

Tintoretto's famous picture generates "wonder" and "astonish[ment]"—central criteria of Marinist poetics—in the mind of the viewer, whose enthusiastic reception provides the truest measure of success of the artwork and the wit of the artist. In order to earn the viewer's accolades, modern painting must shock and delight the eye and mind through virtuoso manipulation of the painted surface, which means to Boschini above all else the deployment of *machie* and free brushwork. In this case, the *Miracle of Saint Mark* represents motion in such a way that it seems to be occurring before our very eyes ("painting that is in motion"). As any reader of the treatise ought to know by now, the techniques favored by Tintoretto—to which Boschini returns over and over again—tend to dissolve solid contours or outlines, emphasizing instead the visible yet sketchy traces on the canvas of the painter's frantic brushstrokes or bold *machie*. If the picture appears to convey motion, this occurs both at the level of the scene represented (i.e., the content of the image) and that of the paint as applied to the surface of the canvas. The viewer perceives both (the illusion of) motion in the gestures of the painted figures and (the traces of) the artist's energetic application of the paint with free brushstrokes. In this way, this quintessentially modern painting becomes "living . . . truth," or rather, it "confounds the true" by displacing "reality" (Boschini idiosyncratically transforms the adverb *dasseno*—meaning "really"—into a noun) from its formerly central role in art, thereby showing painting in the authentic Venetian style to be in fact "superior to reality."

Tintoretto's key achievement in *Miracle of Saint Mark*, Boschini concludes, is to push the act of painting "to extremes" (*questo è strafare*). The verb *strafare* literally means "to overdo" something, usually in a pejorative

sense. The artistic “excess” or surplus that this visionary Venetian painter incorporates into the picture takes it far beyond the conventions of mimesis or of naturalism, and this frame-breaking excess is precisely what reveals the truth of artifice in modernity. As discussed above, for Boschini this same truth is found in the dual function of the Venetian maniera, from which “even nature can learn,” and which here he calls “at once reality *and* style.” By this the Venetian poet-critic does not mean to reject outright representational art, which is aimed at producing a naturalistic illusion, but rather to say that the act of production of the painting, as realized in its “style,” has also become painting’s legitimate subject of representation in the modern age. Art, in its most authentically modern form, has abandoned the old Renaissance ideal of *sprezzatura*, of “artlessness” or the “art that is not art,” which points the viewer away from the work’s two-dimensional status.<sup>83</sup> Tintoretto’s painting instead celebrates its witty self-reflexivity or aesthetic estrangement-effect, which compels the viewer to see it as artifice as well as a mirror of nature, while insisting that the former has greater cultural weight than the latter. As soon as nature in its turn starts to imitate (“learn from”) art, however, then we can no longer hope to assign ontological priority to our experience of reality (what Boschini calls *il dasseno*). Indeed, it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish one from the other. Even as the Venetian maniera recognizes the artwork as a supremely aesthetic object, it also—in a profoundly Baroque touch—acknowledges the aestheticization of existence itself in modernity.<sup>84</sup>

## NOTES

1. Among many studies, see Vernon Hyde Minor, *The Death of the Baroque and the Rhetoric of Good Taste* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), who attempts to chart the shift away from the presumed “excesses” of the Baroque and toward “good taste” in France and Italy in the waning years of the seventeenth century and the early decades of the eighteenth century.

2. Emanuele Tesauro, *Il cannocchiale aristotelico, o sia idea dell’arguta et ingeniosa elocutione che serve a tutta l’arte oratoria, lapidaria, et simbolica, esaminata co’ principi del divino Aristotele* (Turin: Bartolomeo Zavatta, 1670), now an anastatic reprint (Savigliano: L’Artistica, 2000); Marco Boschini, *La carta del navegar pitoresco*, ed. Anna Pallucchini (Venice: Istituto per la collaborazione culturale, 1966); the complete title is *La carta del navegar pitoresco, dialogo tra un senator venezian deletante, e un professor de pitura, soto nome d’Eccellenza e de Compare, compartì in oto venti, con i quali la nave veneziana vien condotta in l’alto mar dela Pitura, come assoluta dominante de quello a confusion de chi non intende il bossolo dela calamita* (Venice: Baba, 1660). Unless otherwise noted, all further

references will be to the 2000 anastatic reprint of Tesauro's treatise (*CA*) and to the 1966 critical edition of Boschini's treatise (*CN*); all translations are mine.

3. We know that G. W. Leibniz, who so greatly influenced Baumgarten's thinking about the aesthetic, read and approved of Tesauro's treatise. The quintessential Baroque philosopher, Leibniz traveled through Italy in 1689–90. He was familiar with the work of Sforza Pallavicino and, above all, Marino, especially the *Galleria* and the *Lira*. See Giuseppe Alonzo, "La 'bibliotheca' italiana moderna di G. W. Leibniz," *Le forme e la storia* 5, no. 1 (2012): 55–70.

4. I borrow this term from Giuseppe Alonzo, *Periferia continua e senza punto: per una lettura continuista della poesia seicentesca* (Pisa: ETS, 2010). See also Francesco Guardiani, "Le polemiche seicentesche intorno all'*Adone* del Marino," in *I capricci di Proteo: percorsi e linguaggi del Barocco, atti del convegno di Lecce, 23–26 ottobre 2000* (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2002), 177; Guardiani argues that the debate over Marino's poetry—particularly the *Adone*—was not only fierce but endured from the poet's death in 1625 until the founding of the Arcadian Academy in 1690, and thus characterizes a key dimension of the literary and artistic culture of this entire period in Italy.

5. Jon R. Snyder, *L'estetica del Barocco* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005), 21–22.

6. See, for instance, Christopher Braider, *Baroque Self-Invention and Historical Truth: Hercules at the Crossroads* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2004), 42: "The Baroque marks at once the apogee and the crisis of early modern visual culture."

7. Paula Findlen, "Agostino Scilla: A Baroque Painter in Pursuit of Science," in *Science in the Age of Baroque*, ed. Ofer Gal and Raz Chen-Morris, International Archives of the History of Ideas 208 (New York: Springer, 2013), 154.

8. Bastiano de' Rossi, ed., *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* (Venice: Jacopo Sarzina, 1623), 485.

9. Galileo Galilei, *Istoria e dimostrazioni intorno alle macchie solari e loro accidenti comprese in tre lettere scritte all'illustrissimo signor Marco Velseri* (Rome: G. Mascardi, 1613).

10. Filippo Baldinucci, *Vocabolario toscano dell'arte del disegno* (Florence: Santi Franchi, 1681), <http://baldinucci.sns.it/html/index.html>: "I Pittori usano questa voce per esprimere la qualità d'alcuni disegni, ed alcuna volta anche pitture, fatte con istraordinaria facilità, e con un tale accordamento, e freschezza, senza molta matita o colore, e in tal modo che quasi pare, che ella non da mano d'Artefice, ma da per sè stessa sia apparita sul foglio o su la tela." Baldinucci was a member of the Accademia della Crusca.

11. See Philip Sohm, *Style in the Art Theory of Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 148–53.

12. Although owing much to the “artless art” of *sprezzatura* first described by Castiglione in *Il libro del cortegiano* (*The Book of the Courtier*), the essentially irregular features of the *macchia* distinguish it from the diligently polished “perfection” of the courtier’s art. On *sprezzatura* see Jon R. Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy in Early Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 71–80.

13. Marco Boschini, *Breve istruzione, premessa a Le ricche minere della pittura veneziane* (1674), in *La carta del navegar pitoresco*, ed. Pallucchini, 750.

14. John A. Schuster, “What Was the Relation of Baroque Culture to the Trajectory of Early Modern Natural Philosophy?” in *Science in the Age of Baroque*, ed. Ofer Gal and Raz Chen-Morris, *International Archives of the History of Ideas* 208 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2013), 28–30.

15. Ofer Gal and Raz Chen-Morris, “Baroque Modes and the Production of Knowledge,” in *Science in the Age of Baroque*, 7. For an analogous approach to the interrelationship between science and religion in seventeenth-century Italy, see Eileen Reeves, “Kingdoms of Heaven: Galileo and Sarpi on the Celestial,” *Representations* 105, no. 1 (2009): 61–84.

16. Boschini, *La carta del navegar pitoresco* (Venice: Baba, 1660), 559: “Ghe xè pittura vechia, e ghe xè moderna.”

17. *CN*, 286.

18. *Il cannocchiale aristotelico* was subsequently reprinted in 1674 in Venice, but with only a few very minor changes to the text.

19. Tesauro calls the treatise “un Libro aperto” (*CA*, 740). More detailed discussions may be found in Monica Bisi, “Visione e invenzione: la conoscenza attraverso la metafora nel *Cannocchiale aristotelico*,” *Studi secenteschi* 47 (2006): 57–87, now in *Il velo di Alceste: metafora, dissimulazione e verità nell’opera di Emanuele Tesauro* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2011), 17–61, and Alessandro Benassi, “Lo ‘scherzevole inganno’: figure ingegnose e argutezza nel *Cannocchiale aristotelico* di Emanuele Tesauro,” *Studi secenteschi* 47 (2006): 9–55.

20. “La Novità . . . genera maraviglia: la maraviglia, diletto: il diletto, applauso” (*CA*, 250).

21. See Martin Kemp, *The Science of Art: Optical Themes in Western Art from Brunelleschi to Seurat* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), figures 365–68, 372–73.

22. “La Metafora, tutti [gli obietti] à stretta li rinzeppa in un Vocabulo: & quasi in miraculoso modo gli ti fa travedere l’un dentro all’altro. Onde maggiore è il tuo diletto: nella maniera, che più curiosa & piacevol cosa è mirar molti obietti per un’istrafóro di prospettiva, che se gli originali medesimi successivamente ti venisser passando dinanzi agli occhi” (*CA*, 301).

23. I have elsewhere written in some depth, as have others, about Tesauro's complex theory of wit (*argutezza*), and for lack of space here must refer the reader to it for further information: see *L'estetica del Barocco*, 106–35.

24. The heraldic elephant with the motto *Infestus infestis* (hostile to the troublesome) was the device of the sixteenth-century duke of Savoy, Emmanuel Philibert, whose astute military and political leadership made the duchy one of the most important states in Italy. The other heraldic shield, displaying the motto *opportune* (timely) together with a centaur about to crush a crown beneath its hooves, refers to the 1588 seizure by Charles Emmanuel I, duke of Savoy, of the marquisate of Saluzzo from Henry III, King of France. See, for instance, Cesare Cantù, *Gli eretici d'Italia: discorsi storici* (Turin: Unione Tipografico-Editrice, 1866), 3:371n.

25. Galileo Galilei, *Nov-antiqua sanctissimorum patrum & probatorum theologorum doctrina de Sacrae Scripturae testimoniis, in conclusionibus mere naturalibus, quae sensatâ experientiâ, & necessariis demonstrationibus evinci possunt, temere non usurpandis* (Strasbourg: Elzevir, 1636).

26. Gal and Chen-Morris, "Baroque Modes and the Production of Knowledge," 7.

27. In Horace's satire, these "blemishes" are the birthmarks on his body. The established text of this poem, however, gives a slightly different reading than that used in the frontispiece: "Atqui si vitiis mediocribus ac mea paucis / mendosa est natura, alioqui recta, velut si / egregio inspersos reprehendas corpore naevos" (*Satires* 1.6.65–67). Here is Neil Rudd's translation of this modern version of the text: "Yet if my faults are not too serious and not too many, / if my nature, apart from such blemishes, in other respects is sound / (just as on a handsome body you might notice a few moles)." See *The Satires of Horace and Persius*, trans. Neil Rudd, rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 2005), 27.

28. "Et per contrario; di un'Huom savio e dotto in catedra; ma disformato e vile in parenza; disse un'altro: Questa è una figuraccia catroptica, da veder nel Cilindro. Alludendo a quelle figure, che in piano paion macchie; ma nello specchio Cilindrico, proportionate & belle si ci presentano" (*CA*, 581).

29. Lina Bolzoni, "Il 'libro figurato' del Seicento: due esempi," in *I capricci di Proteo: percorsi e linguaggi del Barocco: atti del convegno di Lecce, 23–26 ottobre 2000* (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2002), 482, points out that "not only does the reader become a spectator, but in relation to the literary work is also asked to adopt the new scientific and technical perspectives made possible by science and technology."

30. "Cioè lo Specchio CONICO; in cui quelle, che nella piana superficie paion macchie; unitamente riflettendo in alto, divengono perfette, & compositissime Figure" (*CA*, 677). It is worth adding here that the emblem of the

Solinghi is represented as being in the process of completion in the frontispiece: The image in the mirror (*omnis in unum*) appears to be missing nothing, yet Painting's brush is still working—or is finishing work at that very instant—on the anamorphic inscription itself.

31. “Nel cui centro accogliendosi le colorate Imagini, che fuor dello Specchio paiono informi e scontorte macchie; nel suo seno cristallino ricevono diritta e perfettissima forma.” As cited in Valeria Merola, *La messinscena delle idee: Emanuele Tesauro e il “teatro di meraviglie”* (Rome: Vecchiarelli, 2008), 198.

32. See, for, instance, *CA*, 89–90: “Ma io non sò se Angelico ò Humano ingegno fù quello dell’Olandese, che pur’ a’ nostri giorni, con due *optici Specchietti*, quasi con due ale di vetro, portò la vista humana per una forata canna, la dove uccello non giunge. Con essi tragitta il mar senza vele: ti fa veder di presso le Navi, le Selve, & le Città, che fuggono l’arbitrio della pupilla: anzi volando al Cielo in un lampo; osserva le macchie nel Sole . . . & ciò che Iddio ci nascose, un picciol vetro ti rivela” (“but I don’t know if the intellect of that Dutchman was angelic or human who, in our own day, with two small optical mirrors almost like two glass wings, by means of a tube with openings at both ends took human sight where birds cannot go. With these [mirrors] the sea can be crossed without sails; they let you see up close ships, forests, and cities that are beyond the power of our pupils. Indeed, by flying to the heavens in a flash [the telescope] can view sunspots . . . and a small glass reveals to you that which God hid from us”).

33. See *CA*, 679 for a brief narrative account of the arrival in Turin of this mirror.

34. “Quanto hà il mondo d’ingegnoso: ò è Iddio, ò è da Dio. Dipoi accioche lo stile della Divina Maestà non senta punto del triviale: ma da nobili figure si sollievi inguisa, che la sublimità generi meraviglia, & la meraviglia veneratione” (*CA*, 59). “Whatever wit the world has either is God or is from God. Hence so that the Divine Majesty’s style has nothing trivial about it, it should arise from noble figures in such a way that the sublimity generates wonder, and the wonder reverence.”

35. “Così gli stessi Nomi si possono applicare agli Obietti Dipinti ò Sculti: & alle Attioni significanti alcun Concetto Arguto: lequali chiamar si possono Attioni & Obietti Figurati, Metaforici, & Arguti” (*CA*, 8).

36. In fact, in his first letter to Welser Galileo has to explain at some length that the sunspots are not an optical illusion or trick produced by the telescope. See Galileo Galilei, *Istoria e dimostrazioni intorno alle macchie solari e loro accidenti comprese in tre lettere scritte all’illustrissimo signor Marco Velserei* (Rome: Giacomo Mascardi, 1613), 11–12.

37. “Tutte queste, oltre mill’altre, son pur Figure eleganti, & vivaci Argutie dell’ingegnosa Natura. Peroche, sicome le Argutie de’ Poeti si chiaman Fiori: così i Fiori della Natura, si chiamano Argutie” (CA, 73).

38. Significantly, the term *artista* never appears in *Il cannocchiale aristotelico*, though *arte* is extensively employed, and we can find many occurrences of *poeta*, *pittore*, and so on.

39. “Un Ingegno sveglierebbe l’altro, come più legne unite fan maggior fiamma, che separate” (CA, 548).

40. Wit defies the laws of nature, even bringing the dead back to life: “Le cose Mutole parlano: le insensate vivono: le morte risorgono: le Tombe, i Marmi, le Statue; da questa incantatrice degli animi, ricevendo voce, spirito, e movimento; con gli Huomini ingegnosi, ingegnosamente discorrono. Insomma, tanto solamente è morto, quanto dall’Argutezza non è avvivato” (CA, 2). “Mute things speak; inanimate things come alive; the dead return to life; tombs, stone-carvings and statues receive voice, spirit and motion from this enchantress of human minds; they speak wittily with men of wit. In short, anything is dead only inasmuch as it is not revived by wit.”

41. CN, 9–10.

42. See CN, 76–79 for an account of Velázquez’s 1651 visit to Venice.

43. Philip Sohm, *Pittoresco: Marco Boschini, His Critics, and Their Critiques of Painterly Brushwork in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 188n, points out that a number of artistic travelogues had appeared in print earlier in the seventeenth century, starting with Zuccaro’s *Passaggio per l’Italia* (1608).

44. See Roberto Longhi, “Letteratura artistica e letteratura nazionale,” *Paragone: rivista di arte figurativa e letteratura* 3 (1952): 12. See also Sohm, *Pittoresco*, and *Style*, 144–64.

45. Marino was the author of the rambling, monumental verse work titled *Adonis* (1623), 40,000-plus lines in length.

46. See the still useful essay on Boschini’s poetry by Lucia Lopresti (aka Anna Banti), “Marco Boschini scrittore d’arte del secolo XVII,” *L’Arte* 22 (1919): 13–33.

47. “Mi, che son venezian in Venezia, e che parlo di Pittori veneziani, ho da andarme a stravestir?” (CN, 8).

48. “Vuolla che comenzemo a zavarar / Sora la perfezion de sta Pitura? / Lengua mortal non ghe sarà in Natura, / Che possa de sto quadro rasonar. / Questo xe quel Tesoro, che no gh’è / Da far el parangon in tuto il Mondo” (CN, 284). “Do you want us to start to rant / About the perfection of this painting? / There is no human language in existence, / That could serve to discourse about this picture. / This is that very treasure for which there is nothing / Comparable in all the world.”

49. Sohm, *Style*, 144. Compare CN, 7: “Insuma la Natura insegna a pagnar per la Patria.” Maarten Delbeke provides an invaluable summary of the seventeenth-century philosopher Sforza Pallavicino’s contribution to this same ferment in *The Art of Religion: Sforza Pallavicino and Art Theory in Bernini’s Rome* (Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2012). For an introduction to some of the key thinkers of High Baroque aesthetics outside of art theory, see my *L’estetica del Barocco*.

50. See Paula Findlen, “Agostino Scilla: A Baroque Painter in Pursuit of Science,” in *Science in the Age of Baroque*, 148.

51. “[Overo de veder tanti Satrapi] in la sedia dela rigidezza a formarme processo adosso *de vita, et moribus* davanti al Tribunal d’Apolo, e dela Dea Pitura, col acusarme de *crimine laesae Maiestatis*, adusendo che abia opinion de Poeta e de Pitor” (CN, 6).

52. Anna Pallucchini, “Introduzione” to *La carta del navegar pitoresco*, lxxiii: “Non c’è nella letteratura italiana nulla di affine all’opera boschiniana.”

53. “La Pitura non è come le altre Virtù, che per via de libri se possa adotrinarse, né adotorarse; però me inzegnerò de star saldo più che poderò sul ton de l’Arte, senza fare el Filosofo” (CN, 8). “Painting is not like the other virtues, which one could learn about or master through books; I will try to hold as fast as I can to the tone of art, without playing the philosopher.”

54. G. B. Marino, *La Galeria* (1620; Venice: Ciotti, 1635).

55. It is worth noting here that in the first decade of the 1600s Marino was in Venice long enough to have seen many of these paintings.

56. *Maniera* is a widely employed but essentially untranslatable art-historical term originating in the sixteenth century in Italy. Perhaps the most useful, if periphrastic, translation into English is S. J. Freedberg’s “stylized style.” See S. J. Freedberg, “Observations on the Painting of the *Maniera*,” *Art Bulletin* 47 (1965): 187–97.

57. Sohm, *Style*, 145.

58. *Ibid.*, 147.

59. Sohm, *Pittoresco*, 153.

60. From this point on I follow Boschini’s preferred spelling (*machia*) of this term in his treatise.

61. For a superb and lucid exposition of Benjamin’s notion of the constellation, see Peter Osborne and Matthew Charles, “Walter Benjamin,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2012 edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/benjamin/>.

62. Sohm, *Style*, 158–59. I refer the reader once more to Delbeke, *Art of Religion*, for a detailed treatment of Pallavicino’s writings.

63. Sohm, *Style*, 152.

64. “In suma la Maniera Veneziana/Porta con sì l’istessa libertà,/Che porta ognun che vive in sta Città/Patria, che tien l’obligacion lontana” (CN, 98).

65. Boschini seems to employ the term “simulacro” here in the sense of a “monument” rather than a “statue.” See, for instance, all three seventeenth-century editions of the Accademia della Crusca’s *Vocabolario* (1612, 1623, 1691).

66. “E si come Venezia è una Pitura/De pulizia, che tuti, chi la vede,/Come fu Marte i resta presi in rede,/Schiavi di così nobile fatura,/Così quel’artificio, che deriva/Da l’istessa Città, dai so peneli,/Fa so schiavo in caena tuti quelì,/Che sta Pitura osserva cusì viva./Qua ghe xe la minera, el fonte e ’l fiume,/Che produse, ha produto, o produrà/Coì peneli la istessa verità” (CN, 28).

67. “E qua se messe in tola la Pitura,/Cosa de nostro genio e simpatia;/Virtù stimà da tuti e riveria,/Emula e concorrente de Natura,/Anzi vera reforma artificiosa,/Che supera il dasseno in molte parte,/E reduce la forma con tal arte,/Che de Natura l’è più graciosa” (CN, 24).

68. CN, 327–28. For the sake of clarity and concision I have set my translation of Boschini’s verse into prose here (the original passage is too lengthy to include in these notes).

69. There is still disagreement among scholars over the authenticity of this famous letter (*pace* Panofsky). The passage mentioned (CN, 554), not coincidentally, also treats the debate over the relative merits of painting and sculpture.

70. See, for instance, Stephen Greenblatt, “Shakespearean Beauty Marks,” in *Shakespeare’s Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 18–48, who argues that the Bard of Avon’s plays and poems mark a turn away from the Renaissance ideal of featureless, flawless beauty and toward a modern aesthetic sense of the body’s distinctive, singular, and indelible marks of identity—a development that finds an extreme endpoint here, inasmuch as, for Boschini, in true painting there is in point of fact nothing other than these marks.

71. Pallucchini rightly points out that this anecdote would seem to be drawn from Galileo’s letter to Cigoli, which supports the superiority of painting (CN, 327n).

72. See Richard Scholar, *The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe: Encounters with a Certain Something* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), and Stefano Velotti, *Storia filosofica dell’ignoranza* (Bari: Laterza, 2003), 103–18.

73. Sohm, *Style*, 148–50.

74. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, trans. and ed. Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), lxxvii.

75. See, for instance, Jurgis Baltrusaitis, *Aberrations: An Essay on the Legend of Forms*, trans. Richard Miller (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989). The artist and naturalist Agostino Scilla, in his remarkable *La vana speculazione disingannata dal senso* (Naples: Andrea Colicchia, 1670), 50, criticizes this vision of nature's artistry while employing the term *macchia*: "Appunto come veggiamo in un muro rustico, ed antico, nel quale (e nelle nuvole ancora) possiamo determinare figure umane, animali varij, e cose infinite; ma sarebbe pazzia, così l'affermarle perfetti disegni delle cose, che rappresentano, come anche l'averle per impressioni ivi insinuate per altre simili cose, essendo elleno realmente faccende, ed operazioni del caso, favorite dalla nostra determinazione, la qual più ad una, che ad un'altra cosa le rassomiglia. Non ho veduto (ancorché, come dissi, ne abbia osservato infinite) alcuna gioia ad un tal segno puntuale, che di essa si possa dubitare, che sia fattura dell'arte, secondo l'intenzione di Cardano. Dicasi egli quel, che si vuole, della sua agata rappresentante Galba l'Imperadore, che io non lo credo. Dirò sì bene, che può essere accaduta in quella pietra qualche macchia, che più ad un volto umano, che ad un'albero rassomigliasse; ma che sia stata delineata con tanta aggiustatezza, ch'esprimesse Galba? Oibò." "Exactly as can be seen in an old country wall in which (and in the clouds as well) we may make out human figures, various animals, and an infinite number of things. It would however be madness to consider these to be perfect drawings of the things that they represent, just as it would be to think that these are impressions made there by other similar things, inasmuch as they are in truth the outcomes and workings of chance, favored by our determination that they more closely resemble one thing than another. I have not seen (although, as I said, I have observed an infinite number of them) a single jewel displaying any precise indication that there could be any doubt that it is the result of art, according to Cardano's definition. Let him say what he wishes about his agate representing the Emperor Galba, but I don't believe it. I will certainly say that some stain or blotch [*macchia*] looking more like a human face than a tree could have occurred in that stone; but that it was shaped with such skill to make it look like Galba? Come on." See also Paula Findlen, "Agostino Scilla: a Baroque Painter in Pursuit of Science," in *Science in the Age of Baroque*, 119–55.

76. "Un cervel più teribile de quello/Non fu mai visto certo in la Pitura/ . . . Perché el so far è sempre stà lontan/Da l'uso e forma de tuti i Pitoti" (*CN*, 223).

77. The contemporary painter-naturalist Scilla takes a jaundiced view of such claims.

78. Lopresti's 1919 essay, although lamentably devoid of any contextual perspective on Baroque aesthetic thought, makes this point as well: "[Boschini] would lend himself very well to supporting the most extreme modern aesthetic hypotheses, such as in his assertion that nature imitates the Venetian maniera" (31).

79. "L'è 'l decoro del Mondo; l'è un tesoro, / Che in si contien Natura e l'Artificio" (CN, 25).

80. "Oh strada mille volte gloriosa, / Che rapresenta superficialmente / Con machie de colori e vaghe tente / La Natura! oh maniera artificiosa!" (CN, 330–31). "O road whose glory is thousandfold, / That represents with surfaces, / With blotches of color and lovely shades, / Nature! o artful *maniera!*" In using the term *artificios[o]* Boschini plays here, as he so often does, with the semantic matrix enmeshing art-artful-artificial.

81. "El più bel quadro del Tentoreto: falo: digo del Mondo" (CN, 284).

82. CN, 285–86. For the sake of clarity and concision I have set my translation of Boschini's verse into prose here (the original passage is too lengthy to include).

83. See note 11 of this essay.

84. See Pallucchini, CN, 211n.