Original Paper

Reflection of Aesthetic in the Idea of Saint Aurelius Augustinus

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Abstract

In this study, Saint Aurelius Augustinus' philosophical point of view and his understanding of art and his thinking are discussed. The aesthetic stance, aesthetic ideas and views in his mind were revealed. St. Augustinus, synthesizing Ancient Greece and Christianity in a Neoplatonic understanding, argues that the source of all knowledge is "God". According to him, philosophy is an opportunity to find oneself as an activity of self-knowledge. Because, man approaches "God" and tries to discover "God's source of knowledge with philosophy. For this reason, art is together with thought, and thoughts are together with art.

In St. Augustinus' philosophical understanding, as man imitates "God", he acquires the knowledge of beautiful, good, pleasant, happiness, love, etc., concepts. In this context, it uses aesthetic elements to acquire spiritual satisfaction. St. Augustinus' aim is to reach perfection based on the movement from the part to the whole in order to achieve the ideal form. In addition, according to him, if unity and integrity are provided, beauty manifests itself. Beauty is not a temporary thing. According to him, harmony, order, measure, unity, equality and integrity are the basic principles of beauty, and absolute beauty is what manifests itself in these principles.

1. Problem Status

Art generally exists in three senses. The first of these is that the person performing the art creates a work of art or performs an artistic action. Because art differs not only from other actions of human beings, but also because it is something desired and wanted for human beings. The second is to artificially make and create actions that are the opposite of natural. Because they are the actions and objects that are followed and performed in terms of directing the natural impulses of free people and planning their lives. The third is the frame of mind that is categorized as artistic and in which beauty is noticed by people. In this context, there is an idea at the source of art. Ideas appear not only in literature but also in works of art. We cannot fully understand art without looking at the stage in which the

thought or idea is formed. In addition, we cannot comprehend the stages of thought without looking at the foundations of art.

The problems that art and philosophy deal with are not subjects. Their problems are the method or the way of approach. The subjects of art and the subjects of philosophy are not very different. Maybe art starts from the particular, philosophy from the general. But the purpose of both is to be universal (Turgut, 1993, p. 1). In this context, art philosophy is an effort to discover what art is, and It does not involve the study of the world around us to discover and analyze examples of art as if it were a chemical substance But the place of art among them makes necessary to reflect on our specific activities (Collingwood, 2011, p. 10).

Aesthetics is correspond to a subbranch or discipline of philosophy that deals with sensory value. What shows this most clearly is that etymological origin is found in ancient Greece of the term aesthetic. In this field, Famous German philosopher Alexander Baumgarten is first person to used it to express a particular field or discipline of philosophy, who introduced the term into philosophy (Cevizci, 2017a, p. 298).

In this study, in which the qualitative research method was used, the effects of Saint Aurelius Augustinus' philosophical thoughts on aesthetics were examined. In this context, it is aimed to shed light on the philosophical views of Augustinus by considering his contributions to aesthetics.

1.1 Problem Sentence

• Is there a meaningful relationship between St. Aurelius Augustinus' philosophical conception and aesthetic?

1.2 Subproblems

• What is St. Aurelius Augustinus' philosophical conception?

• What are the effects of St. Aurelius Augustinus' philosophical conception on aesthetic?

2. Aesthetic Ideas of Saint Aurelius Augustinus (354-430)

Figure 1. Pietro Perugino, *Saint Aurelius Augustinus*, 1498

Ancient Greek thought lost its influence; philosophy was pushed something into the background as a speculative pursuit and rejected as anti-belief by some church theologians; Christian theology accepted the works of St. Augustinus lived in the 4th century and his followers as basis; Patristic thought, built by the early Christian priests, became the basic method of thinking and Eastern Roman culture began to determine the culture, art, thought, law and politics of Europe (Kalın, 2017, p. 130).

The first encounter between Greek philosophical thought and Christianity, which continued for centuries, was when the young Augustinus, who had just converted to Christianity, began to read some Neoplatonic works, especially the Enneads of Plotinus. Here, Augustinus found not Plato's pure philosophy, but an original synthesis of Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics (Gilson, 1999, p. 51).

Augustinus is an important thinker of early Christian thought. He is a religious man who came out of paganism and adopted the Christian religion. Another aspect of Augustinus, which is much more important in the history of Western philosophy, is that he tried to achieve a reconciliation by combining the Ancient Age thought and the Medieval Age scholastic philosophy with the synthesis he realized (Özel, 2014, p, 119).

It is possible to see the theology and philosophy themes in medieval philosophy clearly in St. Augustinus. According to him, man's place in the world, the meaning of the world and his relationship with the creator of all things is nothing but faith in Christianity, which emerged through a careful interpretation of Neo-Platonist philosophy. Realizing the relationship between knowledge and belief, he accepts that belief makes knowledge possible (Çüçen, 2013, p. 23).

According to Augustinus, who argues that man is in God and the truth God is in man's soul, philosophy is the effort of man to know himself so that he can understand this. For this reason, he accepted the idea of "I believe in order to understand" as his starting point. While doing this, Augustinus benefited from the thoughts of Plato and Plotinos and tried to justify religion by using the philosophy and philosophical concepts of these philosophers (Elmalı & Özden, 2016, p. 239).

Augustinus, while forming his thoughts, finds the neo-Platonists' understanding of philosophy close to himself. Plato accepts that philosophy is God's love, that the highest good is a life lived in accordance with virtue, and this life is only possible for a person who knows and imitates God. Plato and those who share his thoughts accept the existence of an unchanging, eternal, absolute spiritual, creator God. They try to explain that God is the source of happiness, goodness, and love. According to Augustinus, man who knows God and imitates Him can achieve happiness. Achieving the right philosophy can be possible with the love of God and the love of God. Since the only thing that will make man happy is to know God and imitate Him; According to Augustine, the true philosophy would really be the love of God, the love of God (Özel, 2014, pp. 120-121).

According to Augustinus, apart from the different desires that give rise to love, the objects of his love and therefore the results produced by the various types of love are also different. He is of the opinion that there is a certain correspondence between the various needs and desires of man and the objects that will meet these needs and desires. In fact, Augustinus, in the aforementioned love ethics, defines love

as the harmonious relationship between human needs and the objects that will meet these needs. Since human needs are in a measurable quantity, suitable objects to meet these needs can only provide satisfaction to the extent of this quantity. For example, we like bread and various foods and consume them in quantities commensurate with our hunger. Nevertheless not all human needs arise from physical needs. For example, we love works of art because of the aesthetic satisfaction they provide (Cevizci, 2001, p. 66).

The understanding of unity, proportion and order, which both Plato and Aristotle put forward for artistic form, continues its existence in the early periods of Christianity. The ideal form comes into question by bringing together the parts that exist individually, not as a whole in nature, in a certain order. The artist uses the existing elements to reach the ideal, the perfection, and combines them in harmony, just as Plato connects the universe taking form to the God Demiurgos' putting the existing material in order by ordering it out of disorder and presenting it in the most perfect way. It is the mind thing which is the basis of the ideal form and creates the order, and the rational qualities such as measure and proportion reveal the order. For Plato, who considers the world of objects as a happening and an appearance, and claims that behind this appearance there are pure forms (ideas) that are not appearance, only thinkable, incorporeal, and that the objects are shaped according to these ideas, it is the ratio and measure that gives the form its ideal character. Unlike Plato' s doctrine of ideas, in which he separates essence and form, for Aristotle, who combines the essence grasped with thought and the form perceived with the senses, accepting the ideas as the essence of individual objects and combining the world of ideas and the world of senses, it is the measure and proportion that creates the perfect form in art. According to Aristotle's understanding of existence, since every object is a synthesis consisting of matter and form, and the synthesis in nature does not always occur perfectly, an artistic form containing a certain order reveals form-matter conformity. The order, which consists of the proper creation of the parts that make up the whole, requires mental setup because of the measure and proportion used. With mental fiction, the artist reaches the ideal form (Öndin, 2016, pp. 13-14).

While Plato and Aristotle approach art and beauty with a metaphysical perspective, Augustinus examines art and beauty within the Christian faith. According to Augustinus, reaching the knowledge of beauty leads us to real knowledge. He thinks that beauty as a concept is an idea and is above the objective. The concept of beauty, which is inherent in humans, is also associated with good. The beautiful and the good together lead us to happiness. According to Augustinus, there are two kinds of beauty: one is connected beauty and the other is beautiful in itself. Connected beauty is beauty that we accept as beautiful when we see it in nature. The other is to understand beauty as a concept, just like happiness, without seeing beauty. Beauty exists in one form only in God. It is divine this beautiful that is the source of truths and goodness. God is beautiful and good. Because their creations are also beautiful and good. *"Everything is beautiful because you created them, but you who created everything are indescribably beautiful"*. It is God who created the artist's body, arms and legs, the material for which he created his work, the thoughts he designed, and these. They exist because God created them.

If they were not created, it would not be possible for the artist to create. If it were not for the mind created by God, the talent of the artist could not be revealed either. However, nothing created is as beautiful and good as the creator (Özel, 2014, p. 122).

God gave life to beings other than himself because He wanted it. Man has no right to go the other way around. The most he can ask himself is: why did God create things so differently and so differently from one another? Along with Plato, Augustinus answered this by saying that the separation of parts is the condition of unity in the whole (Weber, 2014, p. 145).

Augustinus' theory is much more essentialist than Plato's. First of all, in Augustinian essences do not represent objects and do not constitute a universe considered as real: they are just ideas of God. On the other hand, God is an active (mortal) being who has an active and personal life, moreover, embodied in the person of "Jesus". Finally, the beings in this world are real beings and not just shadows. Compared to Plato, Saint Augustinus is an existentialist and, like anyone with an intense inner life, he also has situations resembling contemporary existential situations, real forms of existence. Yet we cannot separate Augustinus' philosophy from essentialist philosophy; because essences play a fundamental role in this philosophy as well. Everything that exists participates in the world of essences, and real knowledge based on reason is knowledge that leads us to essences, not objects (Foulquie, 1991, p. 17).

Another important approach of Augustinus is that he tries to look at himself and his own soul by using the method of introspection in order to understand man in the Western world. Augustinus argues, unlike Socrates, Aristotle and Stoic thinkers, that the spirit is not reason but self control in its essence;   that it is not knowledge, but desire. According to him, the soul is something that can be grasped through the mind, whose depth and magnitude cannot be grasped through the mind, full of contradictions, incomprehensible and dark. After these observations, Augustinus, revealed the concept of the subconscious, became the first thinker to discover this concept, which would be discovered by scientists and artists much later. He distinguish that these wishes, such as emotion, excitement, self control and desire, which he thinks he wants consciously, have nothing to do with the mind and are blocked by some other desires (Özel, 2014, p. 120).

Augustinus, who got rid of paganism and skepticism and converted to Christianity, arrived at the existence of God through a Platonic argument, starting from the knowledge of eternal truths. In other words, God in him is similar to Plato's idea of the good. His God is not only the cause of the existence of things, but also the cause of the knowledge of these things. Just as the sun illuminates visible things with its light, God also makes eternal truths known (Cevizci, 2017b, p. 49).

We never doubt our own existence. Because being able to "think" shows us that we exist. Knowing that we are a thinking being leads to the conclusion that therefore, knowing we have a consciousness, and that we have consciousness means knowing that we have clear and distinct knowledge. On the other hand, the principles of logic and mathematics are also knowledge that cannot be doubted because they are based on certain real ideas. The principles and laws of logic and mathematics are realities that do not change according to space and time, and are the same everywhere and at all times. These realities

necessitate a being that thinks outside of time and space, which is God (Elmalı & Özden, 2016, pp. 235-236).

According to Augustinus, virtue is the substance of God. It is futile to search for the cause of creation, since the divinity is a principle beyond which there is nothing else. God created because He wanted to create. The highest good is virtue, not happiness. God's will is *"good, beautiful and true"* (Hançerlioğlu, 1995, p. 119).

According to Augustinus, as in Plato, science is the purer, calmer and happier, higher life that only the thinker knows. Reason can know God because God gave it to us to know everything, that is, to know God. To philosophize is to *"see"* the truth directly, without the means of the body's eyes. The mind is the eye of the soul. The highest truth towards which we must go is wisdom (Weber, 2014, pp. 142-143). Augustinus tries to prove the existence of God based on the concept of beauty and happiness. According to him, since the concept of beauty in our minds cannot be put into our minds by the deficient beings in the outside world, it is placed in our minds only by God, who is absolutely beautiful (Işık, 2013, p. 325).

Augustinus thought in his youth: The words *"philocalie and philosophie"* seem to actually come from the same family. What is philosophy? Love for wisdom, what is philocaly? This is the love for beauty. Let's be inspired by the Greeks! What is wisdom? Isn't it true beauty itself? Then both are two brothers from the same father. (Yetkin, 2007, p. 25).

The philosopher talks about this youth in his Confessions, which he wrote years later: *"I loved low-level beauties, I was on my way to my destruction. I was saying to my friends: Do we love anything apart from the beautiful? What is beautiful? What is beauty? What attracts and fascinates us in the objects we love? If they were not for beauty and charm, they would not be able to attract us in any way. I examined and saw that when we consider the objects one by one, on the one hand, they all form a whole in their own way (that's why they are beautiful), on the other hand, harmony stems from the correct relationship between the objects; for example, such as the adaptation of a limb to the skin or the shoe to fit the foot, or in similar situations"* (Augustinus, 2016, p. 74).

Since his youth, Augustinus had been closely concerned with the problem of beauty. But after reading the works of Plato, especially Plotinus, he got rid of skepticism. In 387, at the age of 33, he became a Christian through and through the influence of Ambrosios, Bishop of Milano. After adopting Christianity and especially after he became the Bishop of Hippone in this new religion, he completely turned his back on his old beliefs and views. Augustinus describes this change as follows: *"In the second book of the work I wrote against the academics (contra academicos), I said that the philosopher and the philocaly were two brothers from the same father. Now I realize that this thought of mine was completely wrong and foolish. Either philocaly was nothing but a collection of absurd things, so it could never be the sibling of the philosopher; or if this expression is not to be taken into account as an expression that should express the love of beauty, let's say right away that this beauty is the true and supreme beauty of wisdom. Then this beauty is at the level of the highest incorporeal things. Whatever*

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the case, the two concepts cannot be considered as siblings" (Yetkin, 2007, p. 26).

Saint Augustinus divides beauty into absolute beauty and beauty of things lower than absolute beauty. Absolute beauty is the beauty of God. God is the most beautiful of all beauties. It is the most perfect and the best. The beauties that exist apart from God are just like the food to be eaten in a dream. While the beauty in things gives temporary pleasure, the beauty of God is permanent. All beauty cannot be beautiful unless it takes its source from absolute beauty. However, human cannot adequately express the beauty of God. God's beauty cannot be fully described. Because human has limited mind and limited concepts. Limitless absolute beauty cannot be expressed based on limited concepts. In addition to these, he has the view that God created the universe in the most beautiful order and harmony (Akyüz, 2017, p. 31).

In his youth, the philosopher found beauty in the harmony (convenentio partium) between the parts of a thing, and distinguished that harmonious ratio between the different parts from the quality of a thing's conformity to its purpose (apte). Thus, this understanding of beauty, which was admired by Plotinos's student, was replaced by goodness when the student became a bishop (Yetkin, 2007, p. 27).

Memory contains numerous laws and relations related to space and numbers. None of these thoughts are perceived by the senses. However, geometric drawings are not the same as the images I see with my eyes. There is no need to think of any objects to know them, human recognizes them from the human mind. I also know the numbers that we count through our senses, but counting numbers are different, they do not have the images found in the first, which explains their absolute existence (Augustinus, 2016, pp. 207-208).

We (1) exists and (2) we knows we exist, and this is what existing and knowing is something we (3) love. As long as these three items I have mentioned are in question, the fear of a lie disguised as the truth does not disturb us in any way. For, unlike things outside of us, they are not perceived by any of the body's senses in the same way we perceive colors by seeing, hearing sounds, smelling odors, tasting tastes, touching the hard and soft. As we form mental pictures of such sensual things, we concentrate on them in our minds, store them in our memories, and maintain our desire to keep them alive. But I know with the greatest possible certainty that I exist, that I know, and that I love, if things imagined or appearing have no form to deceive me.

Regarding truths of this kind, I fear no evidence from Academic Skeptics. They said, *"What if you're being deceived?"* they object. If I'm deceived, I'm in. Because someone who does not exist cannot be justified (Cited by Cevizci, 2001, p. 53).

According to Augustinus, beauty is not something temporary, it is always real and permanent. Although many visually pleasing forms change over time, proportions and numerical relationships never change. Therefore, it is necessary to seek permanent beauty in them. In particular, Augustinus sees that the soul finds and loves those who are similar to itself on the basis of aesthetic pleasure; in fact, pleasing colors, softness and similar features rather than recognizing what is similar to oneself. The basis of all ratios and numbers is union with affinity and imitative. This is basically an equalization that leads us to God.

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The basic principle of beauty is equality, uniqueness and integrity (Erzen, 2016, p. 83).

According to Augustinus, the most complete harmony (accord) is unity; then unity is the chief form of all beauty. But it is in God alone; all other beings and bodies bear only traces and stamps of it. However, none of them can achieve the full unity that they aspired to. But they still make great efforts to achieve it, and at least they desire it. It is the pleasing proportion in all the arts.; this is all good. Proportion or harmony seeks unity. According to Augustinus, *"the form of beauty is always unity"* (Yetkin, 2007, p. 27).

The order based on between the parts and numbers brings out the beauty. Unity can be grasped not by the senses, but by the mind. *"It is the mind, not the senses, that really grasps the unity, measuring the proportions between parts and objects. In a word, it is the mind that sees the law that puts them in order, the number that governs them, and stamps them with the charm of rhythm or proportion"*. Reaching this divine beauty is possible by perceiving the concepts of harmony and proportion in the creation of man. The person who can catch the perfection, harmony and proportion in the creation of man will also reach the divine wisdom, which is the source of beings, realities and goodness. Thus, it can be a creator by acting from the creator (Özel, 2014, pp. 122-123).

In the early periods of Christianity, when the artistic form was seen as unity, proportion and order, the lack of form was considered as ugliness and it was claimed that order was the guide for the artist. According to Augustinus, one of the Latin church fathers, the order that guides the artist enables the artist to capture the form in God with divine inspiration, and the artist reveals the form in the light of the exemplary ideas in his mind. Revealing the work in line with the exemplary ideas is possible if the artist can visualize the exemplary idea with some internal tools. These internal tools are the tendency to shrink things, enlarge, and change what experience has left in memory. For this reason, artistic form is obtained by adding or subtracting something from the form of an object, with the ability to change the traces left by experience in memory. The beauty of the artistic form obtained in this way is based on geometric regularity. Beauty is the geometric regularity that ensures harmony according to Augustinus said *"What is the beauty of the body? It is the harmony of the limbs as well as a certain color pleasantness"*. The beauty that emerges from the harmonious ratio of the parts is the numerical expression of formal perfection. This understanding of artistic form creation exactly coincides with divine creation; because, according to Augustinus, God arranged everything within the framework of order and measure (Öndin, 2016, pp. 14-15).

The numerical ontological effect of Plato's Pythagoreanism is seen in Augustinus. Harmony, proportion, size are the factors that determine beauty. Augustinus advocates the integrity that is complete with the understanding of unity. There is competence and beauty in the integrity formed by the coming together of the parts (Oto, 2017, s. 64).

In the church tradition, glorifying geometry as understanding is also valid for Augustinus. He explains the ideal status of geometric forms in his work De Ordine: *"The mind moves towards the power of the eyes, and as it contemplates the earth and the sky, it feels that it is only beauty, and that there are forms*

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in this beauty, measures in forms, numbers in measures. And the mind inquires whether there is a form or a figure, a line or a round shape corresponding to what is in it, and these different and regular forms point to a discipline, which is geometry" (Cited by Öndin, 2016, p. 102)

From the book Sapienza (The Wisdom of Solomon) interpreted by Augustinus, the Middle Ages learned that God had created the world on the basis of number (numerus), weight (pondus) and measure (mensura). As we shall see later, these were manifestation the aesthetic and the metaphysical categories *"good"* as well as cosmological categories (Eco, 2016: 43). Guillaume of Auxerre confirms this as follows*: "Goodness in substance and beauty in substance are the same thing… The beauty of a thing consists of these three attributes: kind, number and order. According to St. Augustinus, beauty consists of these attributes"* (Eco, 2016, p. 46).

For this reason, St. Augustinus developed a rigorous theory in *"De quantitate animae"*, in which beauty was conceived as geometric regularity. In this work, Augustinus stated that the equilateral triangle is more beautiful than unequal sides with the triangle, because in the former there is greater equality, the square, where equal angles correspond to equal sides, was even better, but the circle was the prettiest: In the circle, no angle divides the continuous equality of the circle. Above all, the point was the point: the indivisible point is its starting and ending center, and the beauty of shapes is the foundation of the circle (Eco, 2016: p. 81).

If unity is considered as the result and not the principle of order, there is nothing beautiful in itself, no part. Again, beauty should not look for in something that is completely plain. However, there is nothing beautiful in the whole when the parts are ugly and they are in order. Acoordingly as Plotinos said: *"Beauty is something that shines in proportion and order rather than order and proportion"*. This shining thing is God himself (Yetkin, 2007, p. 28).

3. Method

In this study, it was used qualitative research method. Qualitative research method is based on postmodern and hermeneutic science philosophies. According to some people, According to some, it may be a more accurate distinction, it is analyzed collecting of quantitative and qualitative data and make a judgement rather than quantitative and qualitative research. Studies in which quantitative or qualitative data or both are analyzed can be conducted. If what is done is in accordance with the criteria and principles of science, the work done and the results obtained will be science and scientific knowledge (Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2014, p. 72).

Qualitative research, according to Glaser, is an approach that emphasizes researching and understanding social phenomena in their environment with an understanding based on theory building. In this definition, *"theory building"* means a modeling study that explains some previously unknown results in relation to each other based on the data obtained (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005, pp. 39-40).

4. Conclusion

It was gathered Christianity and Ancient Greek thought years later by St. Augustinus. St. Augustinus tried to provide reconciliation by synthesizing Christian theology and Ancient Greek thought. In this context, it can be stated that belief reveals knowledge by considering the knowledge-belief relationship on the basis of St. Augustinus Neo-Platonist philosophy. Hence, for St. Augustinus, philosophy is the activity of man's self-knowledge. Addressing concepts such as happiness, love, good, beautiful, virtue, St. Augustinus argues that the source of these concepts is *"Absolute God"*.

According to St. Augustinus, man who imitates "God' can approach happiness and love. In this context, human needs are not only physical. In addition, aesthetic elements that provide spiritual satisfactions provide beauty satisfactions. In terms of the search for ideal form, it is essential to achieve perfection by ensuring the unity and harmony from the part to the whole in the part-whole relationship. Beauty manifests itself to the extent that unity and integrity are achieved. Here, it is the mind that creates the ideal form.

Ideas that existed on the intellectual basis in ancient Greece by emerging concepts such as competent with reason, harmony, proportion, proportion and measure comes into existence as beautiful on a realistic basis with St. Augustinus. He tries to prove the existence of "God" based on the concept of beauty and happiness. According to him, since the concept of beauty in our minds cannot be put into our minds by the deficient beings in the outside world, it has been placed in our minds only by the absolute beauty "God".

He examines art and beauty within the Christian belief, which approaches art and beauty with a Platonist and Aristotelian metaphysical point of view. According to him, reaching artistic knowledge leads us to real knowledge. According to St. Augustinus, beauty is the idea and beauty is above the objective, and beauty is of two kinds. The first of these is connected beauty. Connected beauty is the beauty that we encounter in nature and that we accept as beautiful when we see it. The second is to understand beauty as a concept similar to happiness. According to him, beauty exists only in "God" in one form. The created beauty is not as beautiful and good as God himself. In this context, St. Augustinus' philosophy is knowledge that leads us to essences, not objects, as real knowledge based on reason.

According to St. Augustinus, arguing that beauty is not a temporary thing, despite many form changes that are visually pleasing to the individual, elements such as harmony, proportion, proportion do not change. Therefore, it is important to seek permanent beauty here. He describes that by finding own imitative of the soul have reached love on the basis of aesthetic pleasure. With this, it is envisaged to merge with similitude and similarity on the basis of concepts such as ratio, proportion, harmony, unity and integrity. At this point, what brings us to the concept of "God" is equalization. According to him, harmony, order, measure, unity, equality and integrity are the basic principles of beauty. According to him, absolute beauty is what manifests itself in these principles.

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