

Past and Present



The author of this essay Michael Sciam is an artist and art theorist. He has studied architecture and art history at the university in Rome while painting had been always present in his life and gained momentum when he decided to grant his inner vision with freer ways of expression.

Although he is not an art critic, Sciam writes about painting believing in a didactic and social function of art. He seeks to show the wealth of existential content that makes abstract painting a tool capable of contributing both to our understanding of today's world and to the development of tomorrow's.

In a world where the parts have grown superabundantly, where the firm points of reference and age-old certainties have been lost, the capacity for abstraction becomes indispensable in rediscovering a certain essence of things.

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Can there be continuity between past and present forms of art?

At first glance there does not seem to be anything in common between two frescoes that Raffaello Sanzio painted during the early sixteenth century and the last accomplished painting by Piet Mondrian in New York City.

However, a more careful analysis reveals some interesting affinities between these works.

The comparison highlights themes of universal character that are common to the three artworks and shows how, *mutatis mutandis*, the twentieth-century painting could suggest an ideal synthesis of the two ancient frescoes.

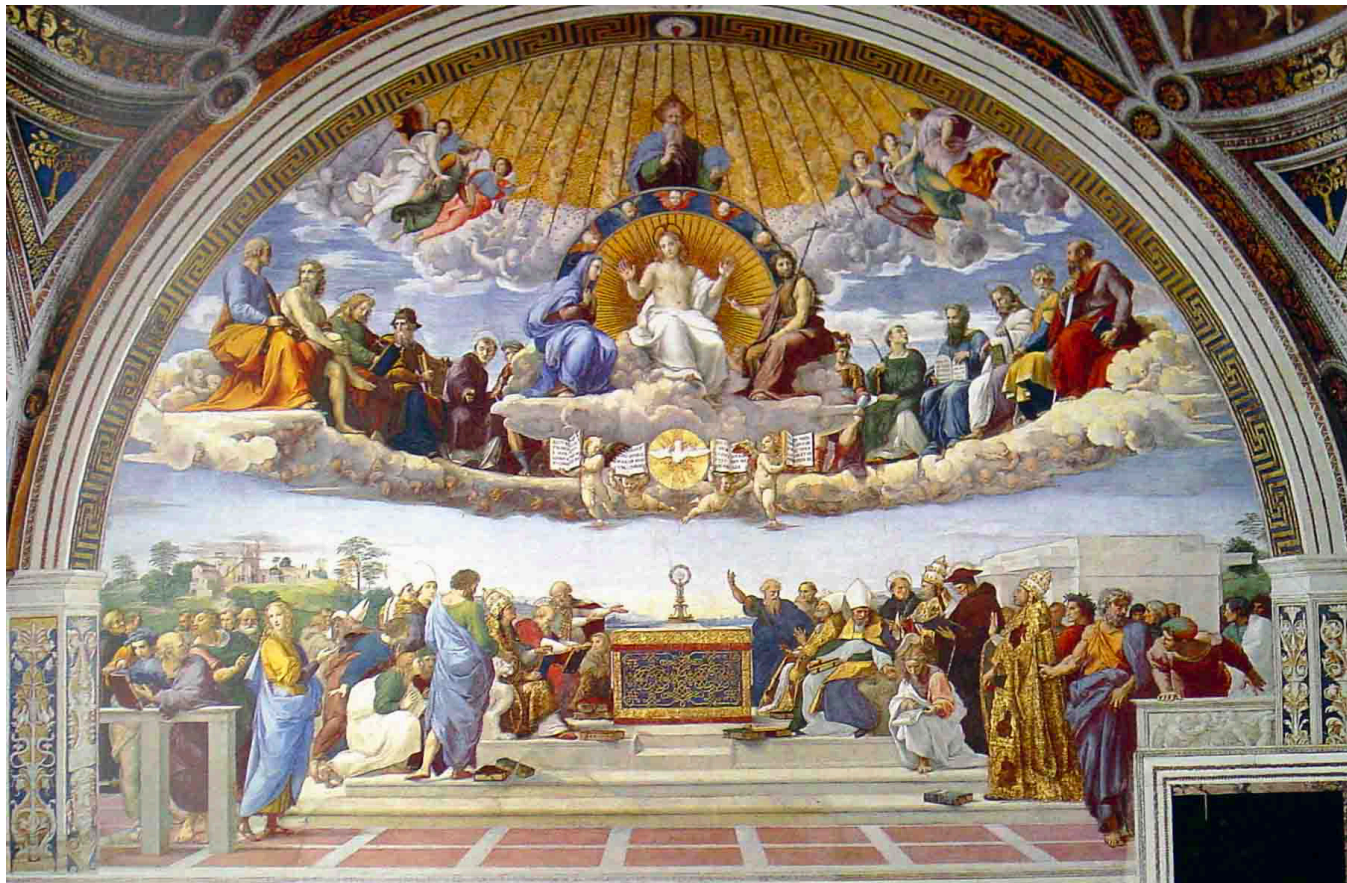


Fig. 1 - Raffaello Sanzio, La Disputa del Sacramento, 1508, Fresco, Musei Vaticani, Roma

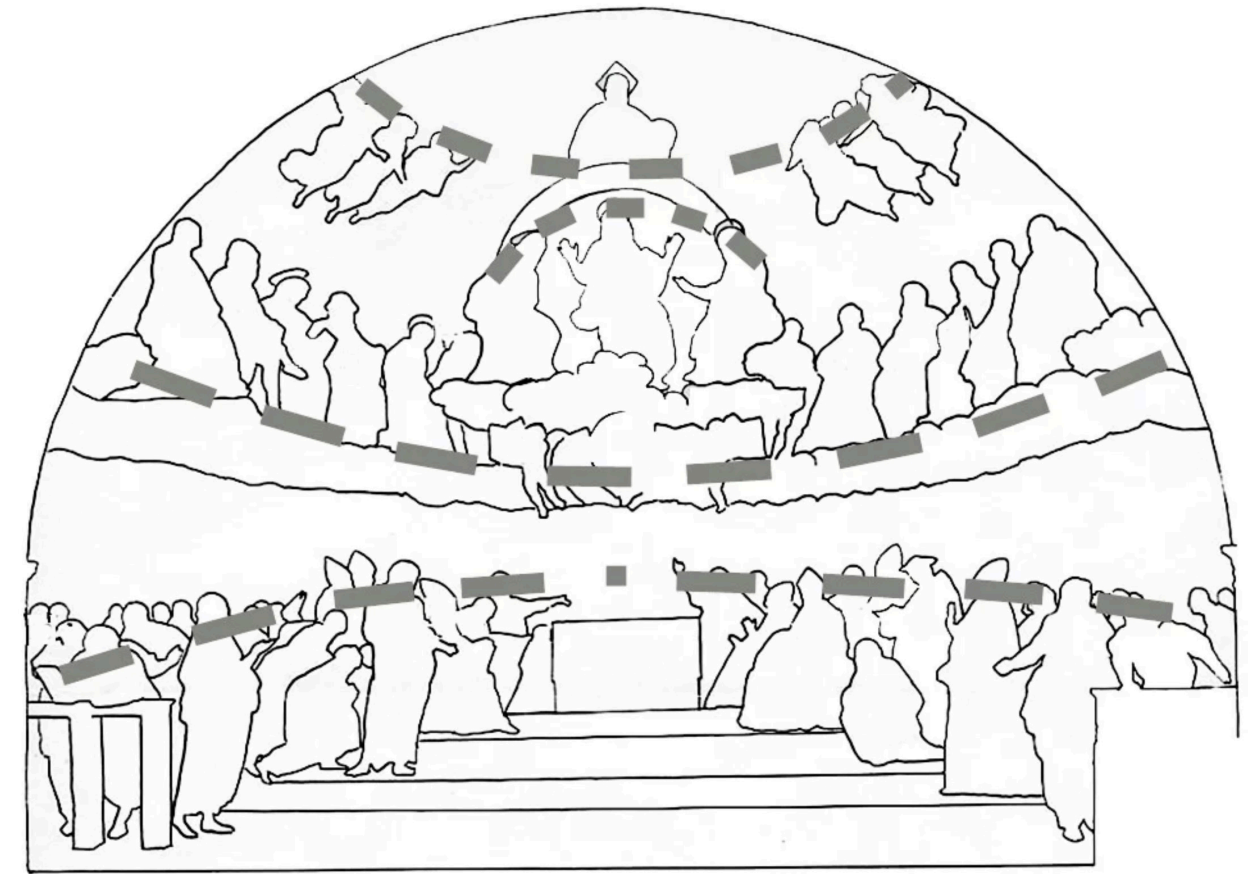


Diagram A - La Disputa del Sacramento

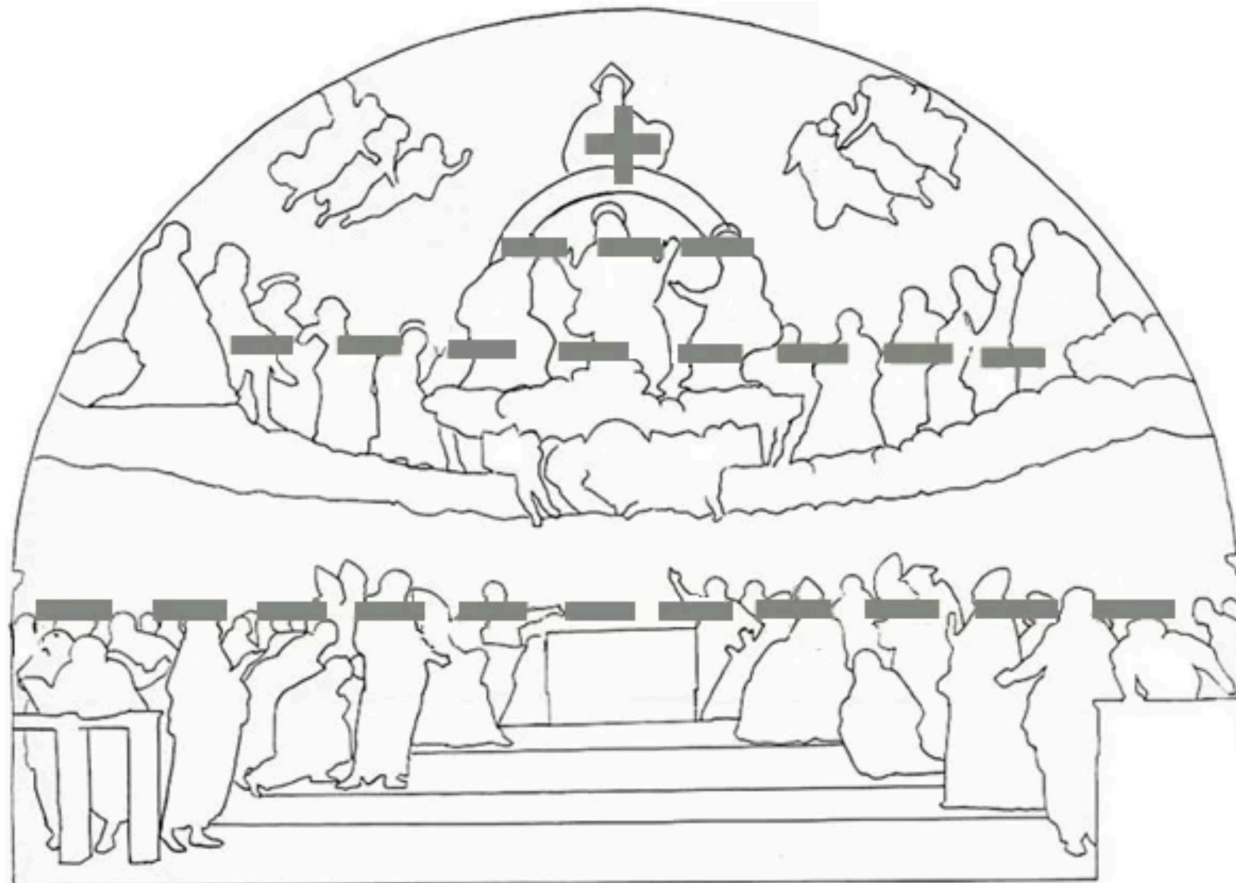


Diagram B - La Disputa del Sacramento

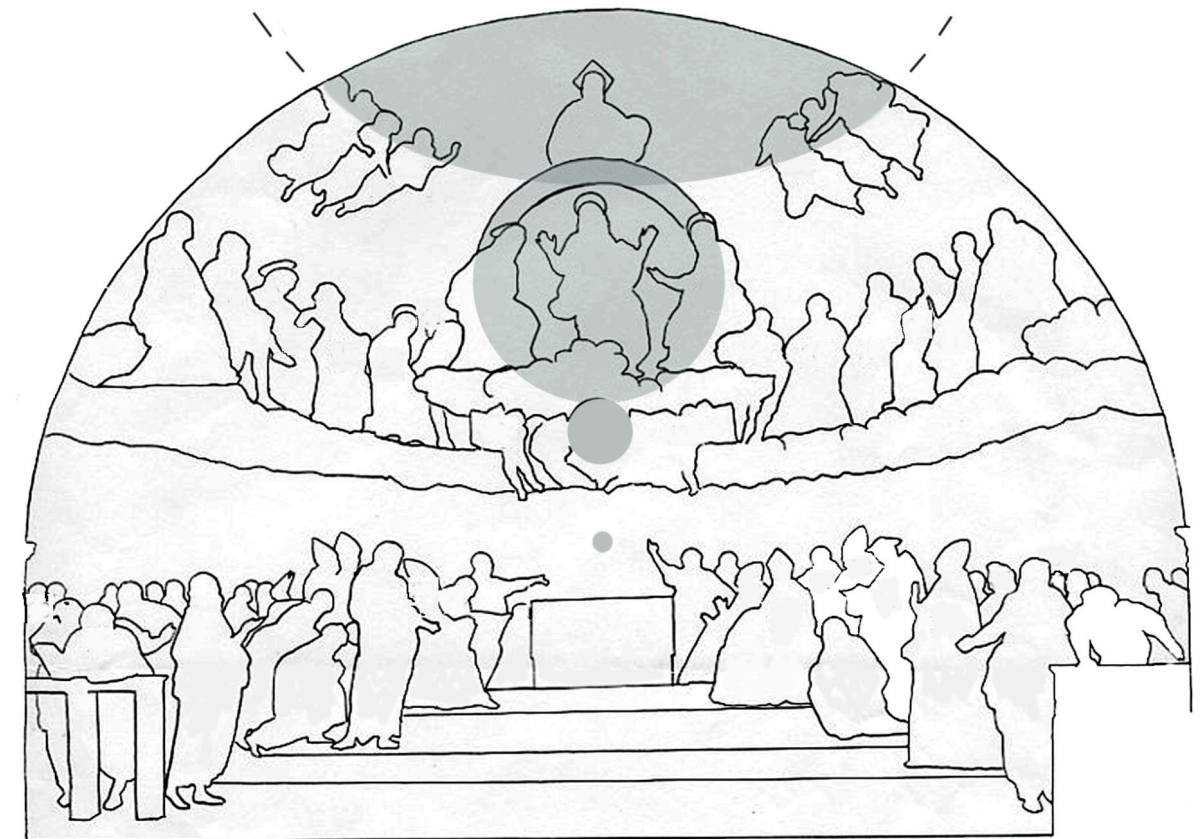


Diagram C - La Disputa del Sacramento

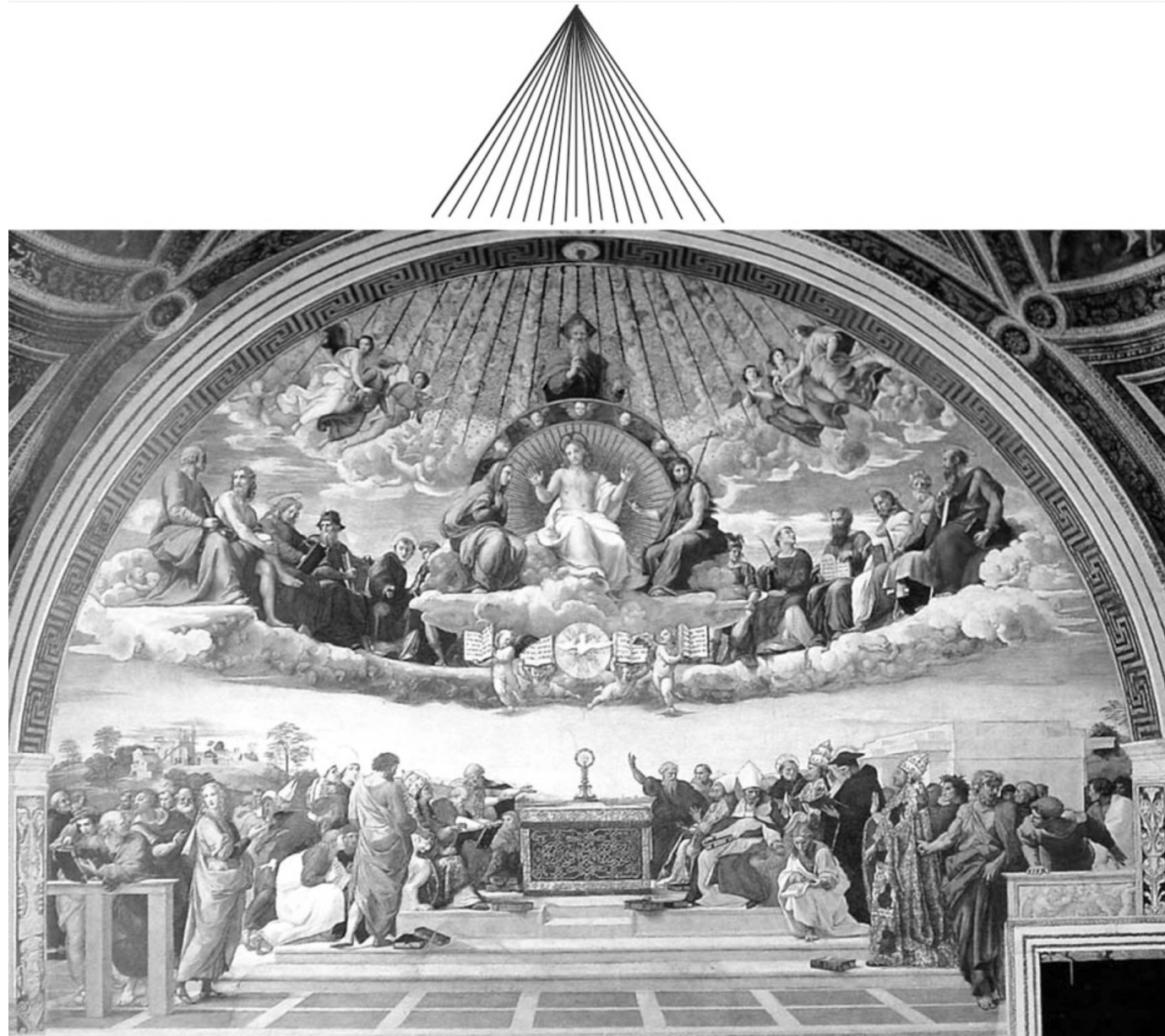


Diagram D - La Disputa del Sacramento



Fig. 2 - Raffaello Sanzio, La Scuola di Atene, 1508-10, Fresco, Musei Vaticani, Roma

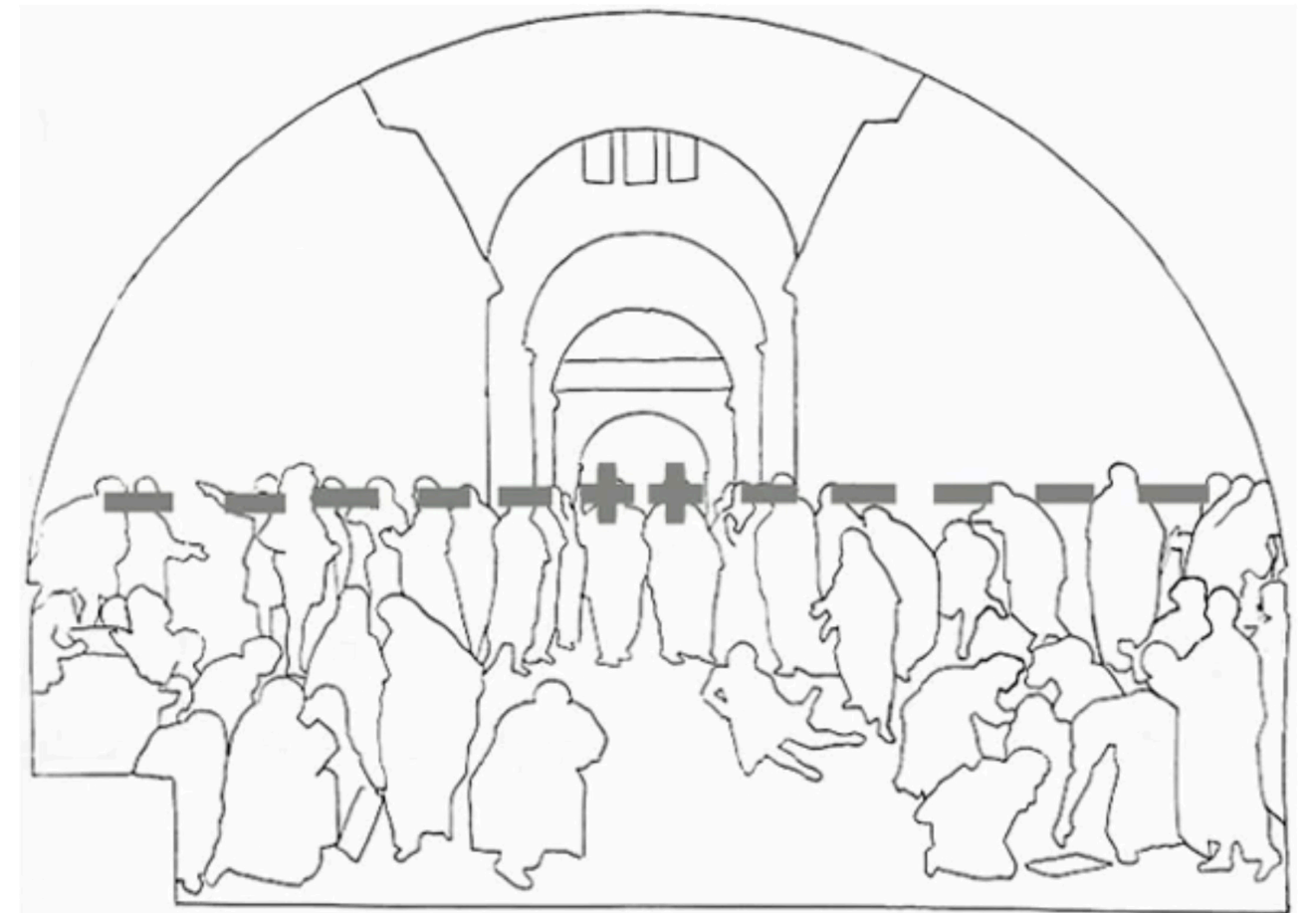


Diagram E - La Scuola di Atene

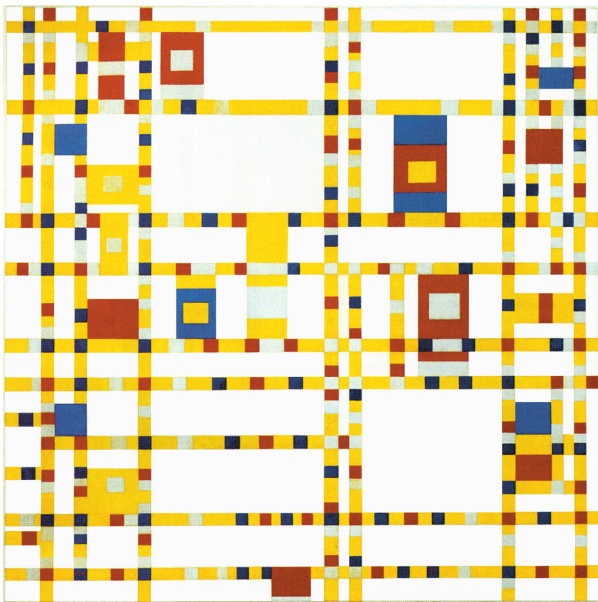


Fig. 4 - Broadway Boogie Woogie, 1942-43, Oil on Canvas, cm 127 x 127 - MoMA, New York City

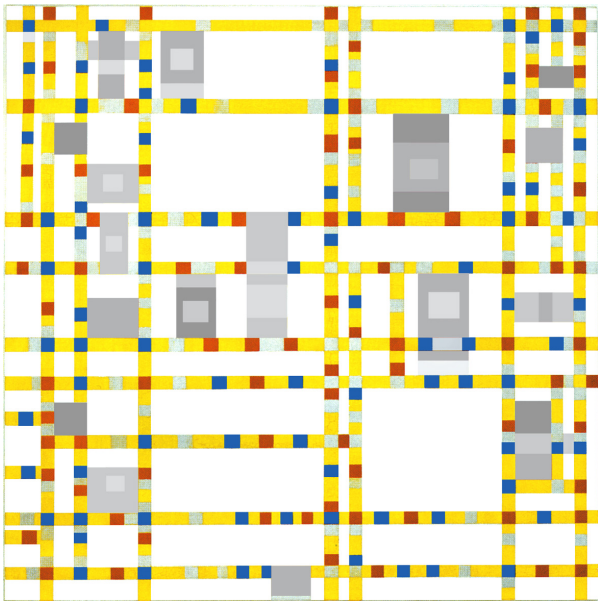


Diagram F

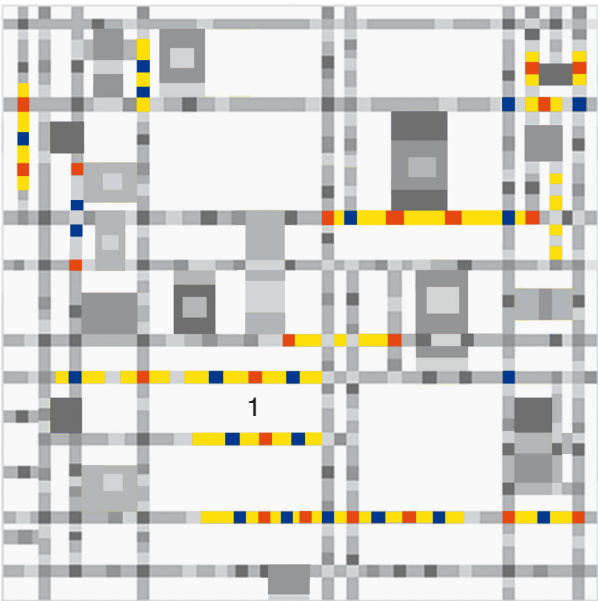


Diagram G

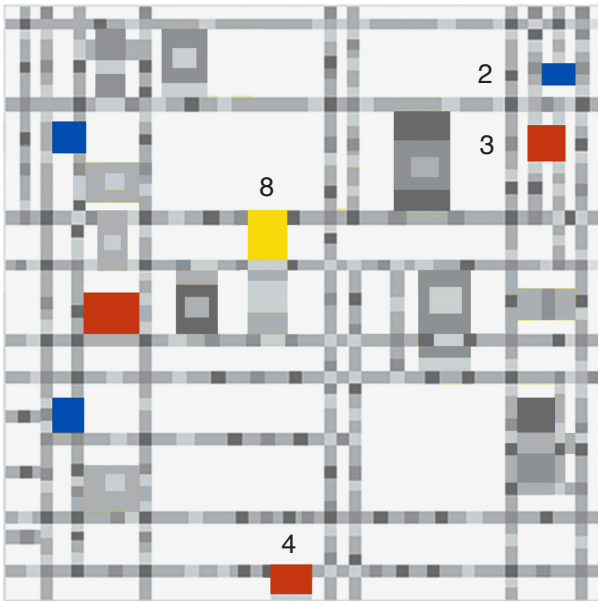


Diagram H

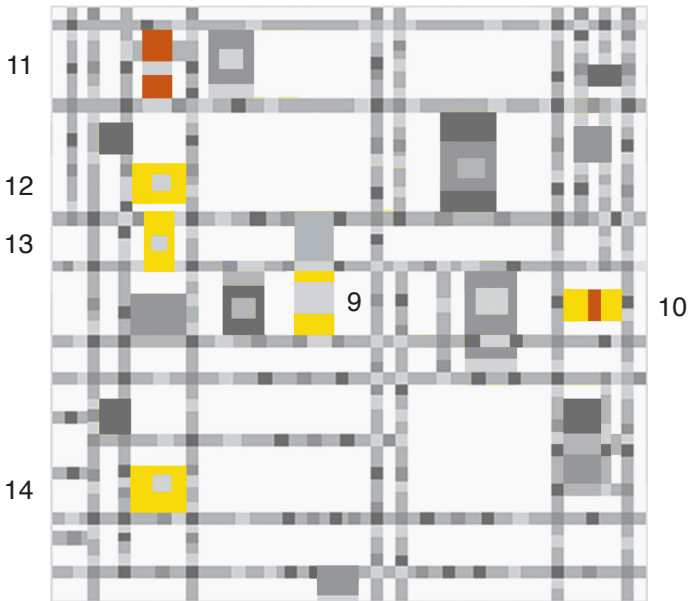


Diagram L

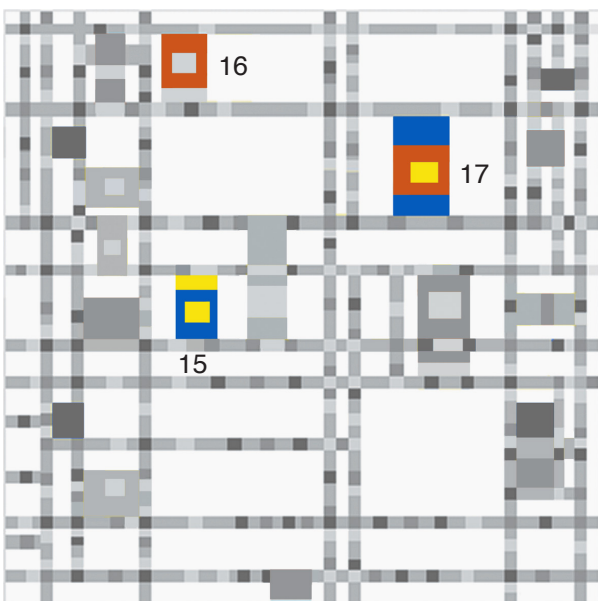


Diagram M

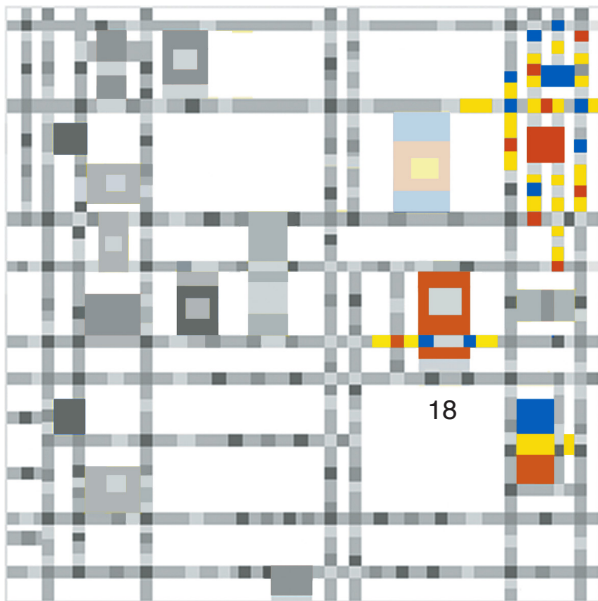


Diagram N

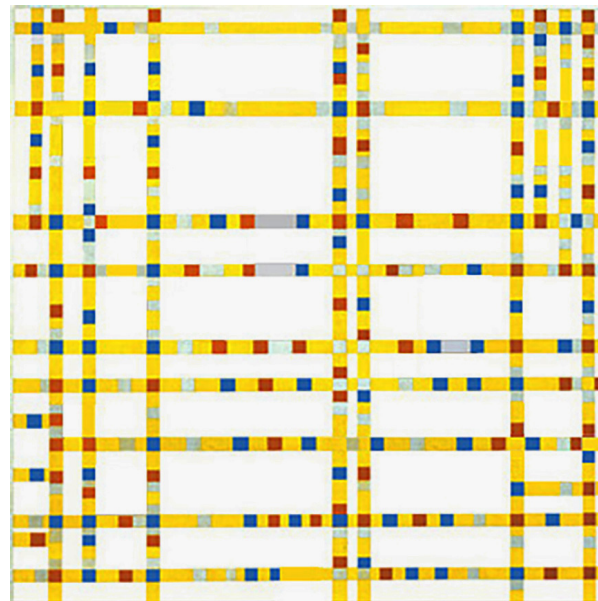


Diagram O

The sacred

“*The purpose of art is to make visible the invisible.*” (Paul Klee)

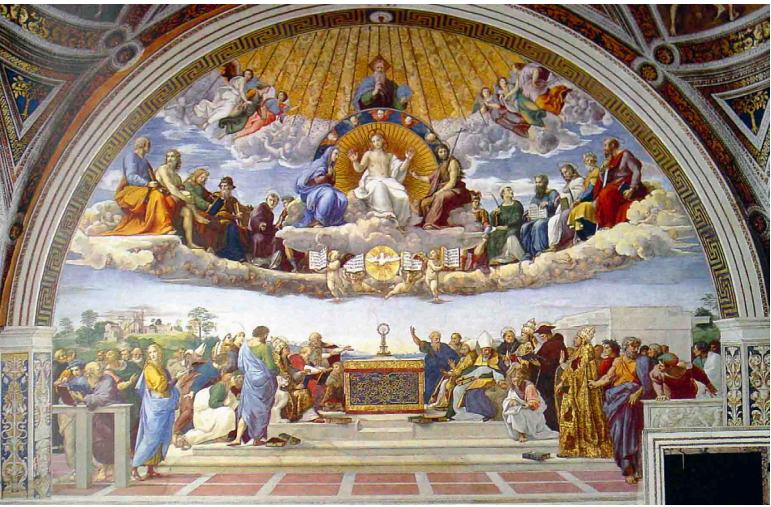
“*Art must express the universal.*” (Piet Mondrian)

“*What you seek to express is above all unity.*” (Henri Matisse)

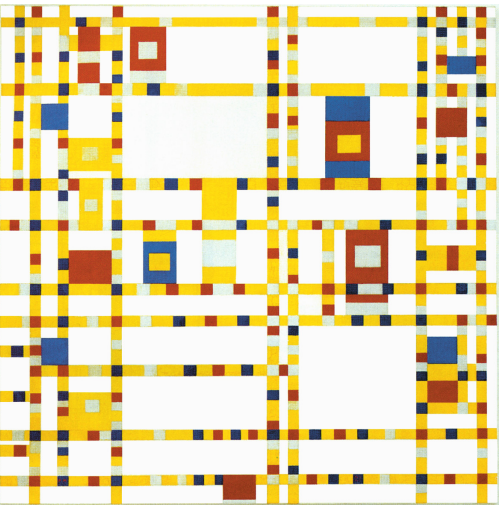
It seems that present day art disregards these masters convictions. Contemporary art seems to have lost touch with the sacred. What is often called art today, pursues fragments of reality and no longer seems able to give us a broader and deeper vision of things.

Michel Seuphor, Mondrian’s friend and collaborator in Paris - also an artist, poet and art theorist - described the Dutch master’s work as follows: “*For the first time in history, one of these prophets is an artist, a painter. For the first time, the presence of another world in this world has been entrusted to an image-maker. This time it is not a matter of reading or interpreting, but of seeing. For those who know how to see, I believe that he has succeeded in placing the mystery in full light.*”

At a first glance we would certainly all agree in attributing a sacred value to Raffaello’s fresco, but we would be suspicious if we said that the same could be said of Mondrian’s painting. We would have no doubts about the sacred character of the ancient painting because in it we recognize obvious symbols of Christianity such as an altar with the host, a dove symbolizing the Holy Spirit, angels with the four Gospels, the figure of Christ and a character above all, immersed in a golden sky, which suggests the Eternal Father. In the modern painting, on the other hand, we see perpendicular lines marked by a succession of small squares and interspersed with larger areas of color:



La Disputa del Sacramento



Broadway Boogie Woogie

What could be sacred in an image without popes, saints and angels flying in the sky?

At a distance of four centuries, these two very different works speak to us of substantial aspects of human existence. They certainly do so in a very different way because in the meantime everything has changed in the lives of human beings. Everything has changed, but certain fundamental traits of human nature have not changed that much.

La Disputa del Sacramento

La Disputa del Sacramento, which is also called Trionfo della Chiesa, is one of three wall frescoes that were commissioned by Pope Giulio II Della Rovere to decorate the Stanza della Segnatura in the Vatican palaces. The room has this name because the most important documents of the administrative and political life of the Papal State were usually signed there. La Disputa del Sacramento illustrates the theme of theology.

Opposing forces

PAGE 1 Diagram A: The fresco is inscribed in a semicircular wall. Raffaello starts from this pre-existing datum and develops the composition according to a rhythm of concave curved lines that contrast with convex curved lines. Like Mondrian, Raffaello was well aware that a painted surface acquires vital energy from the juxtaposition and encounter of opposing forces. This contrast generates compositional tensions that contribute to the vitality of the represented scene.

Physical and metaphysical worlds

In the lower part of the fresco we see a group of figures who seem to burst onto the scene and distribute themselves animatedly around an altar. Presumably, they are discussing theological issues and each seems to have a certain idea to make their point. In that group, one can recognize some characters of the time including Beato Angelico, Bramante, Francesco Maria della Rovere, Pope Giulio II, and Girolamo Savonarola.

The middle zone depicts an imaginary or metaphysical space where saints and prophets of Christian history are seated in the sky, that is, an intermediary between men and divinity. We note, among others, St. Peter, St. John the Evangelist, Abraham, St. Paul.

From earthly figures to God

Earthly randomly assembled figures become higher up an ordered group of twelve figures that are more significant for the Church (saints and prophets); it is synthesized towards the center in the three most emblematic figures (the Madonna, Christ and St. John the Baptist) and finally reaches unity at the highest point with the figure of God. From a disjointed group of earthly figures we pass to a more uniform semicircular motion (saints and prophets) from which a more stable semicircle is generated (Christ) that finally becomes a sphere in the hand of God.

In this way the painter evokes a progression from the bottom to the top: from an open space that on the ground spreads out horizontally to a space that, developing vertically, concentrates in synthesis, evoking unity. From multiplicity to the one: **PAGE 1 Diagram B.**

We will now see how, in addition to this motion that proceeds from the bottom to the top, that is from multiplicity to unity, the composition presents a simultaneous progression that descends from the top to the bottom, that is to say. from the one to the many

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PAGE 1 Diagram C: The gilded canopy at the top of the fresco evokes a large circular space that ideally extends beyond the painted wall upward. Descending, that portion of the circle becomes a circle (with Christ) which then transforms into the circle with the dove (symbol of the Holy Spirit) which finally concentrates in the small circle of the monstrance placed on the altar. From an immense circle that is only partially visible (symbol of the totality in which the figure of God is inscribed), the space proceeds downwards, concentrating on the monstrance.

From earth to heaven and from heaven to earth

We thus observe two opposing motions: on one hand we see a motion of elevation of the contradictory figures scattered on the ground towards a more orderly semicircle (saints and prophets) that then becomes a quasi-circle (Christ) and finally a sphere (in the hand of God) and on the other we see a motion of descent from a totality, suggested by the golden cap at the top, towards the quasi-circle with Jesus (God who becomes man) that then becomes a complete circle (the Holy Spirit) to finally concentrate in the small circle of the monstrance.

One contemplates a progression from earth to heaven and a descent from heaven to earth. With great mastery in the art of composition, Raffaello evokes in this way the meeting of men with the divinity.

The reading of the four roundels in a single sequence seems plausible due to the fact that they are all painted in gold. From the largest at the top to the smallest at the bottom, the golden energy is concentrated in the monstrance above the altar, the earthly symbol of the kingdom of God. The fresco thus shows a progression from the multiple toward the one (from the bottom to the top) and a descent of the one toward the multiple. To express this, Raffaello uses contrasting circular tensions that open, close and open again.

Broadway Boogie Woogie

In Broadway Boogie Woogie a duality expressed by horizontal lines opposed to vertical lines generates a multiplicity of small fragments that through a process of growth and progressive synthesis reach unity: **PAGE 3 Diagrams F - G - H - L - M.**

A unity that then reopens to new multiplicity and duality of opposite lines: **PAGE 3 Diagrams N - O.**

In a completely different way we see both in the 16th century fresco and in the modern painting a progression from the multiple towards the one and an opposite motion from the one towards the multiple. Also in the Broadway Boogie Woogie the unity comes from an interaction between horizontal and vertical but everything remains on one plane. In the modern painting there is no dichotomy between the many and the one, between physical and metaphysical, everyday and eternal.

The one descending from above and unity generating from below

The ancient fresco evokes a spiritual dimension that governs consciousness from above:

From the manifold set of little squares to the unitary synthesis, the modern painting shows a progressive internalization of space and this urges us to think of the One not as an external entity, fixed a priori and once and for all, but as a dialectic path between opposite drives through which it is possible to reach a certain balance with oneself and with the world. Since it is expressed in abstract form, the synthesis evoked in the modern painting symbolizes in abstract terms the unity of all things but also, simultaneously, the unity of the individual consciousness with respect to external reality.

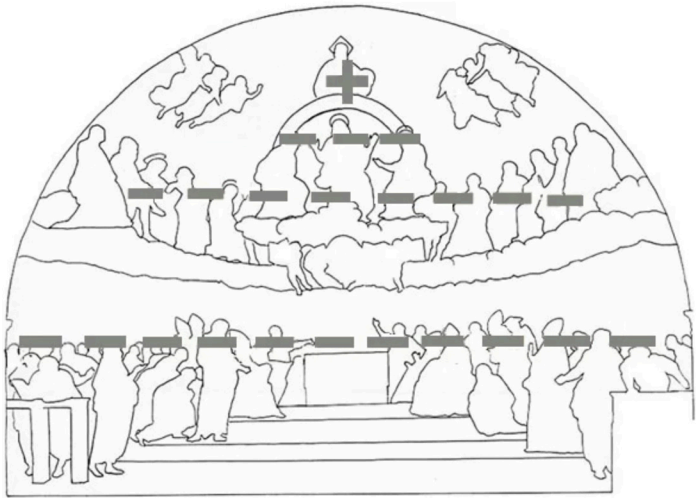


Diagram B - La Disputa del Sacramento

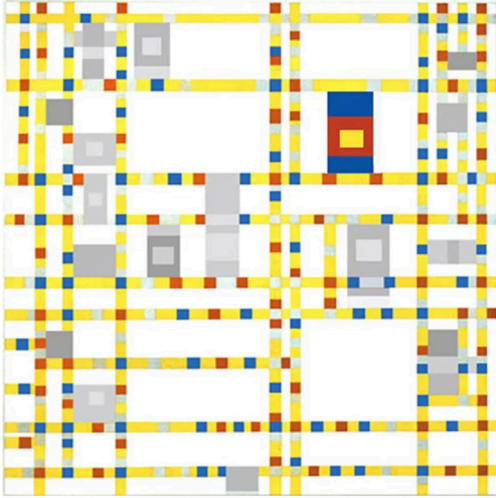


Diagram P - Broadway Boogie Woogie

A dynamic unity

For Mondrian, unity is not a truth revealed once and for all in some heavenly place of which some men proclaim themselves interpreters, but rather the result of a constant search. Paradise is not a privileged place to be reached permanently in a second life but a condition of dynamic equilibrium that begins here and now.

Many times during an existence one can reach paradise and many times one can find oneself in hell; what Mondrian called the tragic; when there is an imbalance between opposites and duality (diabolus) (from the Greek dia = through and ballo = to put in the middle, to separate, to create fractures) lacerates the integrity of consciousness and unity flows back into a contradictory multiplicity. Just what Broadway Boogie Woogie shows with the unitary plane reopening to the multiple. Unity is the result of a dynamic process that reconciles opposing impulses by balancing them; a condition of balance that, once achieved, can also be lost. A unity that must always be regained through daily action.

God is found along the way, by trying and trying again for a lifetime. Grace does not descend from above through the intermediary of saints or prophets, but the fruit of the action of each individual man when his individual action is in tune with the universal reasons present in him and outside him.

While in Broadway Boogie Woogie unity fully reopens to multiplicity, in La Disputa del Sacramento unity descends toward the multiplicity of human beings on earth but remains enclosed within the monstrance placed on the altar. A sense of unity which is born within human consciousness and reopens to it (Broadway Boogie Woogie) and one which is decided and guarded by church authorities (La Disputa del Sacramento).

Would the unity we see generated in the painting of 1943 - a yellow, red and blue plane - therefore be a modern interpretation of the idea of God that we see in the fresco of 1508?

“It is necessary to arrive at a conception that is not doctrinal and static, but physical and dynamic of truth.” says theologist Vito Mancuso.

From an image that presents the One to us in majestic and regal form we come to an image that presents the One by means of perpendicular lines and primary colors. By using abstract forms, the modern image no longer presents only a small circle of human characters as we see in the ancient work, but opens itself ideally to all living forms. An ideal totality which is of course impossible to represent in a so-called figurative way, that is to say, according to the mutable appearance of every single entity.

For Piet Mondrian yellow, red and blue are the most different and contrasting colors and therefore a plastic symbol of the infinite variety of the world. In Broadway Boogie Woogie the three primary colors interpenetrate and become a single entity while maintaining each of their specific characteristics. An image in which such heterogeneous parts are equivalent makes one think of the question of diversity in which none of the components claims to impose itself on the others. Each part contributes with its own particular nature to the balance of the whole. I think of the words of Pope John Paul II when he said “the roots of each are not erased in universality.”

The visible and the invisible

It was said of the golden canopy that at the top of the fresco evokes a large circular space that extends beyond the painting. Inside the golden canopy one can observe lines that seem to come from the figures of the saints and prophets and continue upward to meet ideally at a point beyond the image: **PAGE 2 Diagram D**. The imaginary point towards which those lines converge is the place where, in terms of composition, the fresco - especially the upper-middle part - finds a real synthesis or, if we want, its “vanishing point”. That point seems to support from above the whole complex structure below. Descending along the central axis, we see the trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) supported by that point without which the figure of God would lose tension and concentration; the circle of Christ and all the clouds with the saints and prophets would seem to be suspended in the air. It seems to me that this invisible point is fundamental to give meaning and life to the image.

Unity of human semblance and true unity

According to this interpretation, the fresco would show a unity of human semblance, which responded to the needs of the client, but - at the same time - would indicate a supreme unity that the painter places outside the image as if he wanted to say that the true unity remains an elusive entity, invisible and, therefore, not representable.

It almost seems that the painter has tried modesty in facing an idea of totality that was all inside the image as it had made some years before his master Pietro Vannucci (Il Perugino) in the fresco **L’Eterno con Profeti e Sibille** realized for the Collegio del Cambio in Perugia.

In La Disputa del Sacramento, that celebrates the certainties supported from the Church, it seems that Raffaello wanted to leave an open glimmer towards the imponderable.



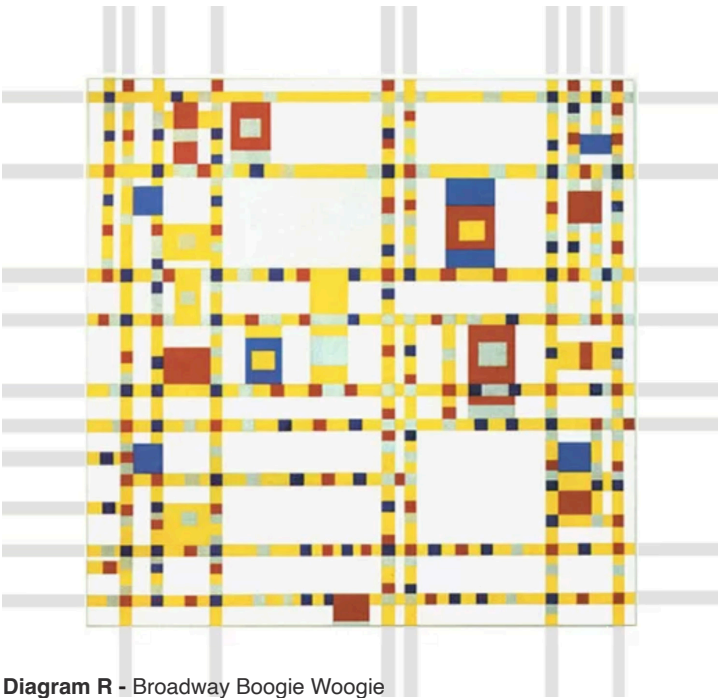
Pietro Vannucci (Il Perugino) - L'Eterno con profeti e Sibille, 1500, Fresco - Collegio del Cambio, Perugia

Ahead of his time

I am not sure, however, that the painter has done it in a conscious way. I believe, rather, that he followed his eye and, usually, the eye of a great artist can go far beyond his conscious reasoning. I mean that to the painter’s eye that external point was indispensable in compositional terms to confer energy and unity to the whole. In the capacity of executor of the commission, Raffaello realized what was requested by the client and the latter was certainly satisfied but, as an artist, I believe that he intuited and expressed in his work more than what was requested of him. Through form, an artist of the sixteenth century has expressed meanings that today we can understand as current while we can no longer identify with a manly figure of a bearded God placed above clouds in the sky nor with other beliefs of that time. That outer point is pure energy that gives vitality to the whole image and is therefore closer to our idea of the divine today.

Mondrian wrote in 1920 that *“the straight lines intersect and touch one another tangentially but continue uninterruptedly.”* and as art historian Maurizio Calvesi points out: *“the result radiates out from the painting to the infinite, but the canvas exhausts the intuition of the whole within itself.”*

The lines act as a plastic symbol of eternal energy that flows and shapes all things. Neoplastic lines manifest themselves on the canvas generating harmonic relationships and then flow back into the real space of the world of which the canvas is a part; a part that hints at ideally represent the whole: **Diagram R** alongside.



In Broadway Boogie Woogie we have seen the virtually infinite space of the perpendicular lines transformed into a finite plane that unites in itself the three primary colors, that is, the substance of the entire painting and of everything that, with the straight lines, ideally goes beyond the painting itself. Yellow, the prevailing color of the lines, is what is most internalized within the unitary plane. It is a process of internalizing physical space (the lines) into mental space (the plane). The unity of Broadway Boogie Woogie is therefore a plastic symbol of our idea of the presumed but unverifiable unity of the natural universe (to which the continuity of the lines alludes) which is unthinkable in its immeasurable extension.

After a progression from a multiplicity of small square to the unity of one large plane, Broadway Boogie Woogie shows the yellow-red-blue unity which reopens to the multiplicity of the small squares and to the infinite space of the straight lines. In Broadway Boogie Woogie unity manifests itself and then flows back into the multiple to reformulate itself infinite times in the attempt to grasp a whole that will never be reached because it is infinite. It is a process that tends towards unity but never reaches it in a definitive form.

Objective and subjective unity

Broadway Boogie Woogie tells us of an objective unity, not representable in its totality, which becomes temporarily visible in the form of plane synthesizing the three primary colors. The objective unity corresponds to the space of straight lines which, as we said, evokes the totality of the real physical world, while the mental and therefore finite translation of that infinite space is generated by the straight lines themselves which are progressively united in the form of small squares, symmetries and planes into one all-embracing plane: **Diagram R** on this page. This process is what Mondrian called the “subjectivization of the objective.”

The invisible becomes visible

In Raffaello’s work, the objective unity (the external point) supports and gives life to the subjective unity (the God in human guise), just as in Broadway Boogie Woogie the straight lines (a symbol of infinite universal energy) give life to the visible unity within the painting.

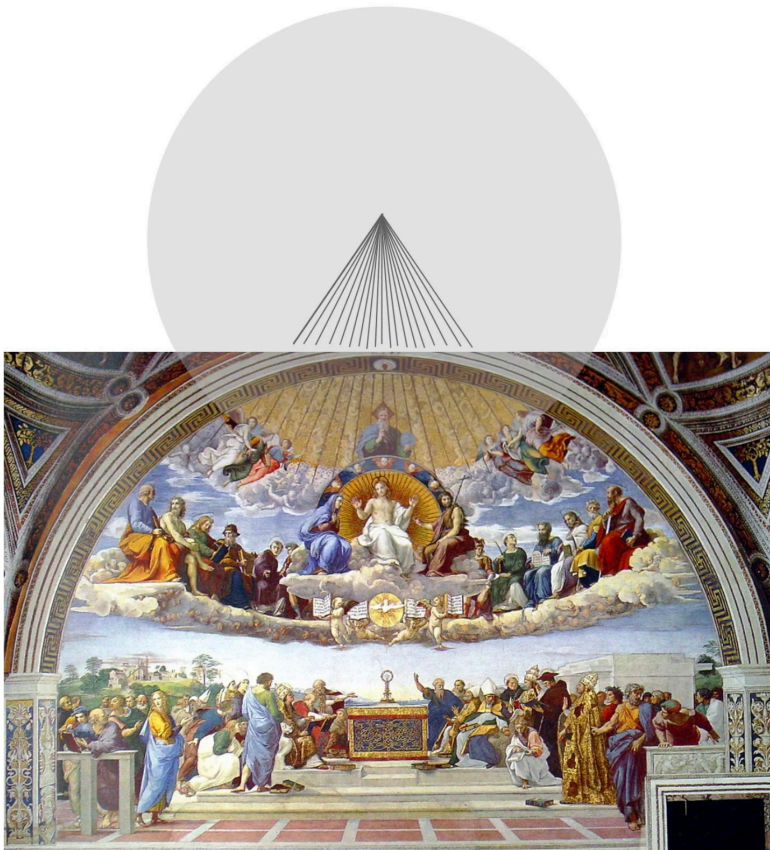


Diagram D - La Disputa del Sacramento

Both Raffaello and Mondrian therefore speak to us of an invisible unity and a visible unity. In the sixteenth century, the subjective representation of the objective is a bearded man holding a sphere in his hand which according to the Church, gives concrete and exhaustive form to the invisible. In the twentieth century, the subjective representation of the objective is a plane made of the three primary colors which does not imply an absolute and permanent solution.

The idea of unity appears now in abstract form because - as mentioned - the modern image no longer presents only a small circle of human characters as we see in the ancient work, but opens itself ideally to all living forms. In my opinion, we are in front of two sacred images because both present an idea of synthesis and unity of all things, in other words, an idea of God and both ideas of God seem plausible for the time in which they occur.

As Michel Seuphor wrote in his 1956 beautiful biography on the Dutch artist: “The development of Mondrian’s religious thought can therefore be summarized as follows: Calvinism is superseded by theosophy, which is itself absorbed (after 1916) by Neoplasticism called upon to express everything wordlessly.”

The universal becomes particular

In the work of the sixteenth century, objective unity (the point outside the painting) and subjective unity (the figure of God the Father) are fixed entities and remain separate and distinct. In Broadway Boogie Woogie objective unity (the continuity of the straight lines) and subjective unity (the synthesis of yellow, red and blue) are dynamic entities and linked together by a process that transforms one into the other (the straight lines that become the unitary plane and the unitary plane that then reopens to the straight lines): **PAGE 3 Diagrams F - G - H - L - M - N - O.**

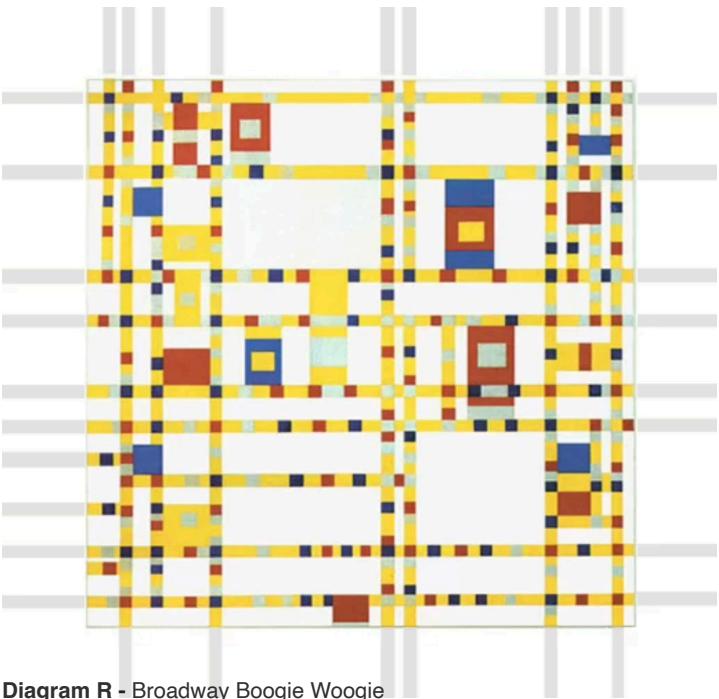


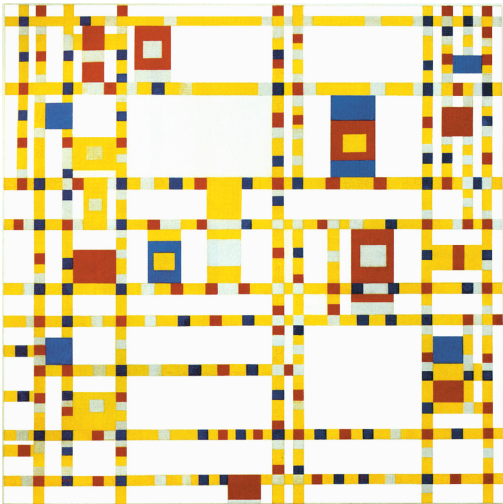
Diagram R - Broadway Boogie Woogie

True reality

In Broadway Boogie Woogie the absolute becomes relative; the objective becomes subjective; the eternal becomes everyday, the external becomes internal and then all of this returns to the eternal, the objective, the external and the absolute. What Mondrian calls “true reality” (absolute, objective, eternal, invisible) becomes “our reality” (relative, subjective, everyday, visible) without ever detaching from “true reality”.

Equivalence of the visible and the invisible

In Broadway Boogie Woogie white, gray, yellow, red and blue constitutes a progressive transition from the lighter, ethereal and indistinct value (white) to the darker, solid and definite value (blue). Through the gray little squares within the lines, yellow draws from white and then reach, through red, the opposite value in blue. From the invisible (white) to the concrete and clearly visible (blue). The definite (yellow, red and blue) springs from the indistinct (white):



Broadway Boogie Woogie

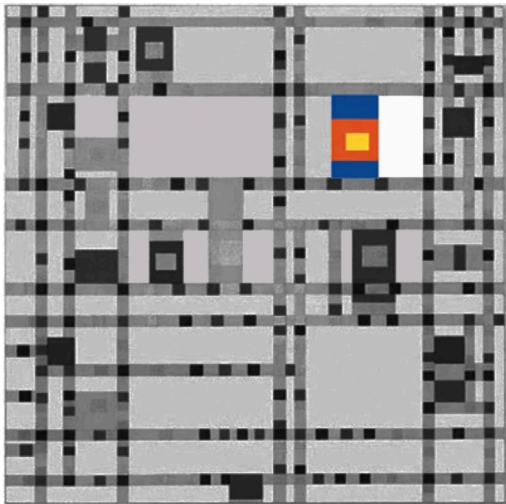


Diagram S - Broadway Boogie Woogie

Diagram S: The synthesis of yellow, red and blue that evokes unity presents on the right an area of white color that has its own measurements and proportions. In that area, the “void” (white) is equivalent to the “full” (yellow, red, blue) and this contributes to a more balanced, stable and lasting fullness. This suggests equivalence between between visible and invisible.

A spirituality of the future

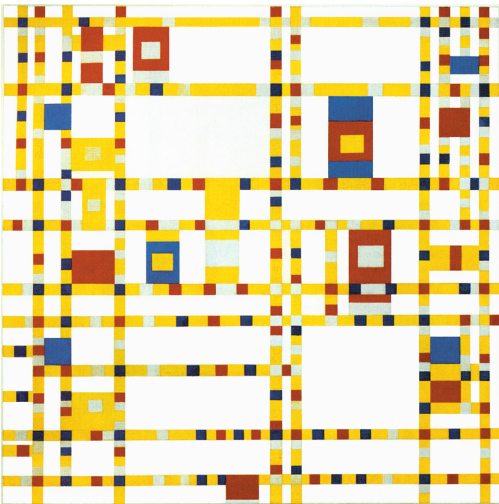
Expressing themes of a spiritual nature through pure relationships of form and color means presenting them in a universal way that transcends the different languages and cultures for new human beings and citizens of the world. Here we have a possible spiritual path of modern thought, a sacred vision that is expressed in a precise language and is therefore no longer necessarily in conflict with science and modernity, a rational vision that is well aware of the imponderable aspects of life. I thinks that this is of crucial importance for a spirituality of the future.

La Scuola di Atene and Broadway Boogie Woogie

The second fresco by Raffaello, La Scuola di Atene, is located on the wall opposite La Disputa del Sacramento and presents themes of philosophy, the sciences and the liberal arts. The painting depicts the most important philosophers of ancient Greece under the vaults of a building that seems to have been inspired by Bramante’s plans for the new St. Peter’s Basilica in Roma:



La Scuola di Atene



Broadway Boogie Woogie

Nature and architecture

In La Disputa del Sacramento the composition is divided between a real scene (at the bottom) and an imagined or metaphysical scene (in the middle-high part). In La Scuola di Atene the whole scene takes place, instead, entirely at the level of earthly life.

If in La Disputa, from the horizontal of the earthly scene one rises vertically towards the spiritual and the divine, in La Scuola everything is concentrated on the human.

In La Disputa we find ourselves in the open space of nature with the immensity of the sky above men. In La Scuola everything takes place in an artificial space where the sky (the infinite space of nature) is enclosed and measured by architectural vaults, that is to say, a product of human’s mind.

Unity and duality

In La Disputa del Sacramento the earthly scene converges towards a vanishing point that corresponds to the monstrance placed on the altar while the metaphysical scene (clouds, saints and prophets) tends towards the unity of a God the Father and, higher up, towards a point that lies beyond the image: **PAGE 2 Diagram D.**

The multiplicity presented in La Disputa del Sacramento tends towards unity: **PAGE 1 Diagram B.**

Through the three architectural vaults of La Scuola di Atene, the gaze converges towards the figures of Plato (on the left) and Aristotle (on the right): **PAGE 2 Diagram E**

The composition therefore tends towards two points (the heads of the two philosophers). These are close but distinct and seem to compete for the vanishing point of the perspective construction of the whole composition. This is not accidental because the theme of the fresco is philosophy and science, that is, rational thought that proceeds through antinomies that manifests duality.

We therefore see how the formal structure of the two frescoes already tells us what their contents are: the unity of faith in the first and the duality of thought in the second.

Aristotle and Plato are in the center because their vision of the world, rather than that of Heraclitus (seated below with his arm resting on a block of marble and portrayed in the guise of Michelangelo Buonarroti) inspired the thought of the time: **PAGE 2 Fig. 2.**



La Scuola di Atene - Detail

A synthesis of Platonism and Aristotelianism

Plato holds his hand up, with his finger pointing upward, indicating the world of ideas. The line extending from Plato's finger follows the arc of the architectural vault and descends back to Aristotle's hand holding a book, while with his other hand the philosopher points to the earthly world.

"Aristotle's horizontal gesture, symbolizes the organization of the world through the Ethics, and Plato's vertical gesture the movement of cosmological thought that rises from the sensible world to its ideal principle" (Chastel).

Plato's finger that, following the curve of the architectural vault, descends in correspondence with Aristotle's hand, suggests a synthesis of the two philosophies, which was probably the idea that the commissioners of the fresco wanted to illustrate. How to express a synthesis of Platonic and Aristotelian thought? In the two-dimensional space of the painting it can be done with a semicircle that ideally unites the two figures. Plato's gesture goes upwards, encloses the universe (the sky circumscribed by the architectural vault) and then descends to the ground, joining Aristotle's hand. Using the semicircle that materializes in the architectural vault, the painter connects and unites the philosophy of Plato with the philosophy of Aristotle, thus expressing, in purely visual terms, the historical-literary content that the client required.

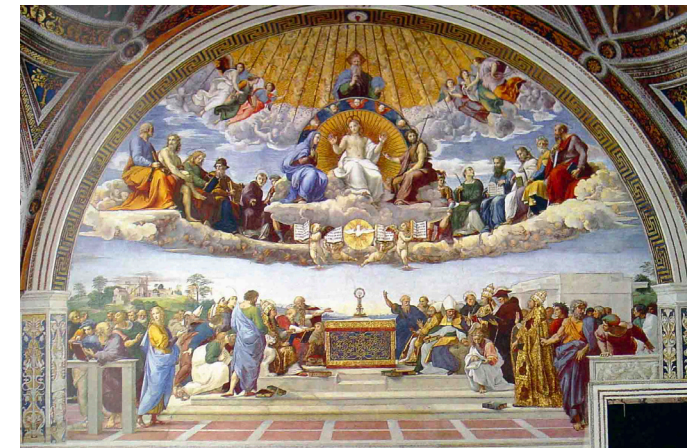
To read the arch as a line connecting Plato's hand to Aristotle's hand is, obviously, unrealistic from a three-dimensional point of view, since - in a real space - that arch would be well beyond the two philosopher bodies. However, in the art of painting the contents are expressed through the only two real and concrete dimensions of the pictorial surface.

Every good painter has always built up his images by establishing relationships that, first of all, interact on the two-dimensional plane even if they evoke the illusion of a three-dimensional space. The formal relations are born on the two-dimensional plane and, through a wise use of geometry and a conscious reading of the observer, they acquire meaning. I believe that in painting, and probably not only in painting, form precedes and determines content.

Recap

As we have seen, in La Disputa del Sacramento, ascending from the bottom to the top, multiplicity (the crowd below) becomes unity (the figure of God) while, in the opposite direction, totality (evoked with the golden dome) descends on men but, in this case, the one does not reopen to the multiplicity of earthly characters but remains closed within itself with the monstrosity placed on the altar.

On the wall depicting theology (La Disputa del Sacramento) we see a multiplicity evoking unity in the absolute terms of faith:



La Disputa del Sacramento

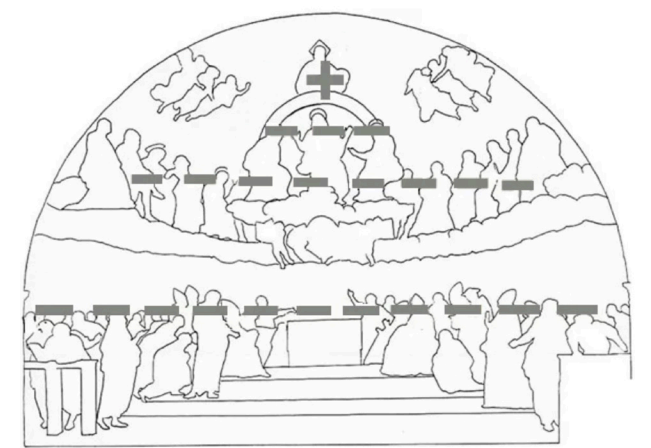


Diagram B - La Disputa del Sacramento

On the opposite wall, the composition which illustrates philosophy, the sciences and the liberal arts (La Scuola di Atene), we see a multiplicity tending toward a synthesis that remains open to duality because rational thought proceeds by contradiction:



La Scuola di Atene

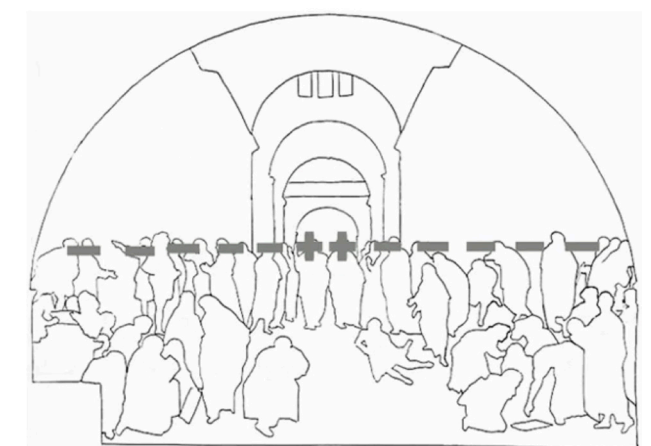
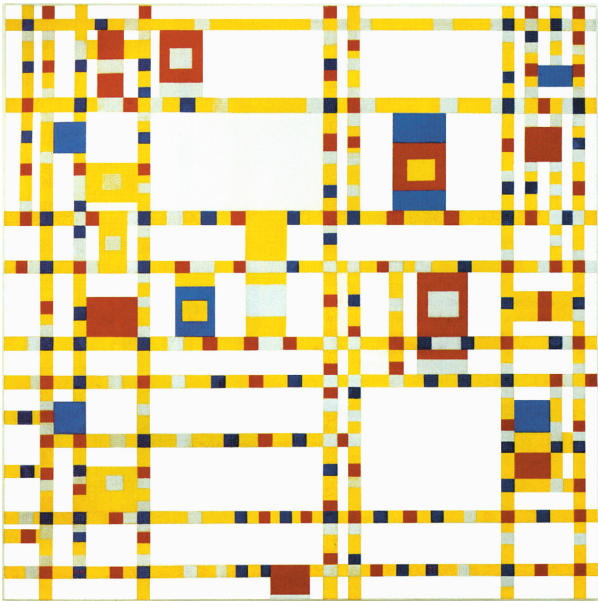


Diagram E - La Scuola di Atene

In Broadway Boogie Woogie the duality expressed by horizontal lines opposed to vertical ones generates a multiplicity of small fragments that through a process of growth and progressive synthesis reach unity:



Broadway Boogie Woogie

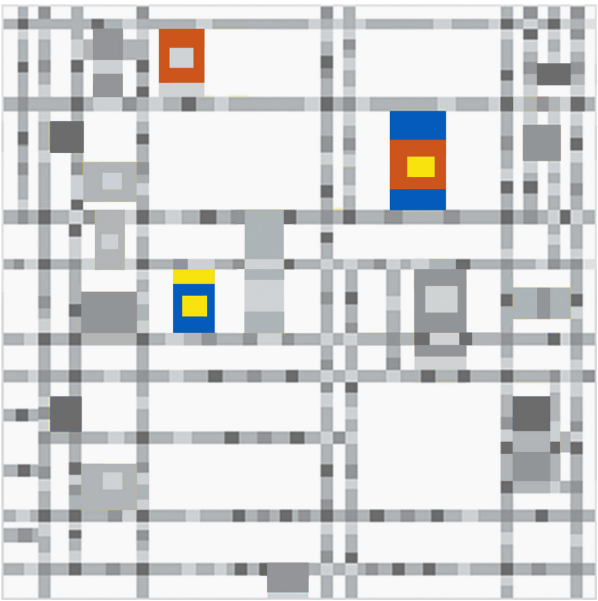
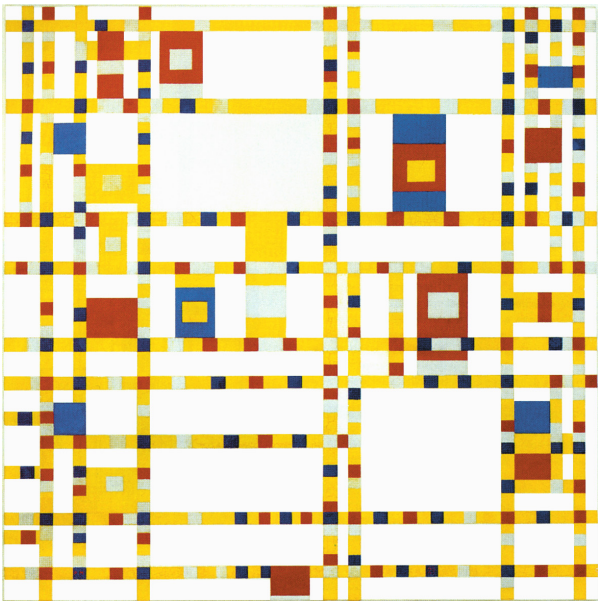


Diagram M - Broadway Boogie Woogie

A unity that then reopens to new multiplicity and duality of opposite lines:



Broadway Boogie Woogie

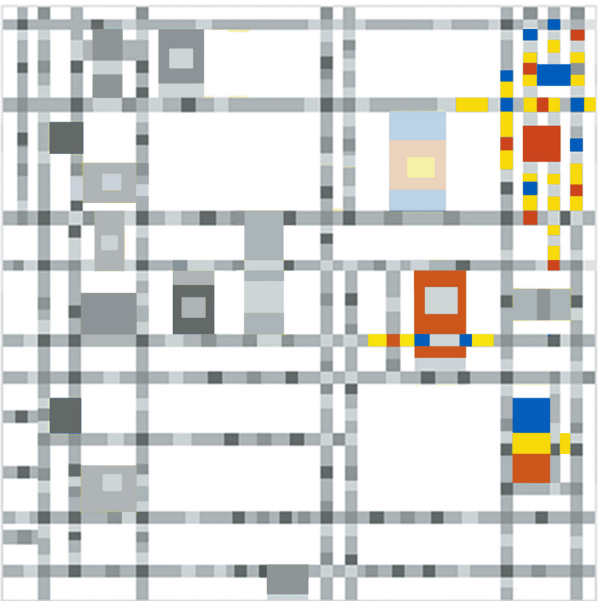


Diagram N - Broadway Boogie Woogie

In this perspective we can say that the duality of rational thought (La Scuola di Atene) and the unity of theological and mystical thought (La Disputa del Sacramento) find an ideal synthesis in Broadway Boogie Woogie where the duality of opposite lines turns into a unity and this reopens to duality. Unity reopens to the contradictory solicitations of reason and the real world avoiding to become clogged in preconceived and dogmatic formulas.

The twentieth-century painting can be considered, *mutatis mutandis*, an ideal synthesis of the sixteen-th-century frescoes.

Theology and science

Broadway Boogie Woogie exhorts to think of a theology that also satisfies rational instances and a science that does not lose sight of the spiritual.

“I believe that cosmic religious feeling is the strongest and noblest incitement to scientific research”
(Albert Einstein).