Huizinga’s contribution to the understanding of late medieval artistic cultures can be productively compared with the treatise *Idealismus und Naturalismus in der gotischen Skulptur und Malerei*, published in 1918 by the famous Viennese art historian Max Dvořák. My paper will focus on the polarity between naturalism/realism vs. idealism/symbolism clearly present in both texts. My comparison will focus on the following questions: 1. What was the exact meaning of the concepts? 2. How had they been rooted in various philosophical traditions? 3. How do they appear in the light of recent criticism?