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LEAPS OF FAITH:FORMALIST NOTIONS OF THE PAINTERLY

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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ABSTRACT

LEAPS OF FAITH: FORMALIST NOTIONS OF THE PAINTERLY

by

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Advisor: Professor Romy Golan

This project focuses on the concept of the "painterly" as conceived by three writers: Konrad Fiedler, Heinrich Wölfflin, and Clement Greenberg. It is divided into three main sections, each devoted to one writer. Each section begins with a detailed analysis of the writer's characterization of the "painterly" and the role it plays rhetorically within its larger narrative framework. This analysis is followed by an investigation of aspects of the writer's historical context which are crucial to an understanding of his formulation of the painterly. In the case of Fiedler, I situate his concept of the painterly in relation to the philosophical tradition of *Lebensphilosophie* ("life philosophy") as represented by the work of Wilhelm Dilthey and others. In the case of Wölfflin, I deal with his version of the painterly within the context of controversies and discussions concerning the nature and purpose of art historical education and of pedagogical philosophy during the *fin de siècle* period in German-speaking countries. In the case of Greenberg, I examine his notion of the painterly and its complicated relationship to a New York-based culture of literary radicalism and positivism during the 1930s and 1940s. This selection of writers reflects the flexibility of the category of the painterly as conceived by three writers with very different historical motivations. By emphasizing the varied interpretations of the painterly, I want to suggest its continued applicability for current art historical practice.

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INTRODUCTION: READING FORMALISM AGAINST THE GRAIN

> Despite appearances to the contrary, it is evident how closely knit is the network that links thoughts of the positivist...and reflections inspired by phenomenology. Their recent *rapprochement* is not of the order of a tardy reconciliation: at the level of archaeological configurations they are both necessary—and necessary to one another—from the moment the anthropological postulate was constituted, that is, from the moment when man appeared as an empirico-transcendental doublet.
> — Foucault, *The Order of Things* (1966)

> Stop everything, I think I hear the president / The pied piper of the T.V. screen is gonna make it simple / He's got it all mapped out and illustrated with cartoons / Too hard for clever folks to understand / They're not talking about right or left, they're talking about right and wrong / Do you know the difference / Between what you know and the things that you'll never see?
> — Joe Jackson (1986)

In 1982, Henri Zerner wrote of "A growing minority of art historians...[who] are convinced that art history, which at the turn of the century seemed to be at the forefront of intellectual life, has fallen behind; that far from progressing it has deteriorated and reduced the thought of its founders...to an uninspired professional routine feeding a busy academic machine."[1] The minority Zerner referred to nearly 20 years ago never came much closer to becoming a majority. The reductive readings of art writing's pioneering and foundational texts persist, and are most disappointing and damaging in the case of formalism. As academic art history and criticism, formalism is read mechanically by the many as an expression of "reactionary" views or as "disinterested" in political and social purposes of any kind. In the main, such (mis)interpretation became fully, and

[1] See Zerner, "The Crisis in the Discipline," *Art Journal* 42 (Winter 1982): 279.

comfortably, naturalized through the process of its repeated and uncritical consumption—mere food for the machine, as Zerner put it.

I hope this dissertation serves up something less easy to digest: I interpret texts conceived during two pivotal and inspired moments of formalism's history, Greenberg's and Wölfflin's, as being motivated by subversive—and, arguably, transgressive—ideas and interests when they were produced. I show how both writers' discourses were formulated according to a political and moral philosophy of resistance to what they perceived as oppressive forces of mechanization and instrumentality. Greenberg and Wölfflin shared this basic philosophical position, but envisioned their resistance within vastly different cultural contexts. My account specifies some, but certainly not all, aspects of their respective communities—social groups that each writer strove to address with his work—which influenced the subversive character of their formalisms. Wölfflin tried to address a particular group of Neo-Kantian academics, while Greenberg spoke to a select, New York-based community of Marxist intellectuals. Despite the difference in context, I demonstrate how both writers believed in and reacted to a growing threat of what I call instrumentality—exercised, on a broader level, by governmental and economic institutions, and, more locally, within the environment of academe as a certain mechanical and uninspired brand of conservative scholarship.

Painterly Identities

In his monumental book *Sources of the Self*, the moral philosopher Charles Taylor discusses those proponents of the Enlightenment, or *Aufklärer*, who—partly in reaction to the brutal punishments inflicted in religion's name—single-mindedly embraced a

doctrine of instrumental reason and a corresponding ethos of utility.[2] Radical *Aufklärer*, like Jeremy Bentham, the Baron d'Holbach, and Claude-Adrien Helvétius, insisted on the purely physical nature of moral life and on the reduction of human motivation to the pursuit of a single good: pleasure and the elimination of suffering. In *The Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1781), Bentham argued that a judgement for any action should be based on its immediate consequences—Does it facilitate pleasure or not?—rather than on how that judgement connects to any pre-existing order or metaphysical absolute.[3] Bentham's highly influential doctrine is indebted to the *Philosophes*, such as Holbach and Helvétius, who were even more motivated than their English counterparts to condemn and offer an alternative to the supposed misanthropy and destructiveness of Catholic Christianity in France. In Helvétius's *De l'esprit* (1759) and *Holbach's The System of Nature* (1770), that alternative was asserted as a single-minded effort to maximize utility

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[2] See Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 317-21, 331-40, 459-60.

[3] Bentham, *The Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1781) (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1988), esp. 1-7. "By the principle of utility is meant that principle which approves or disproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question or...to promote or to oppose that happiness" (2). Bentham's statements anticipate the positivist developments of the following century in a remarkable way. Also of interest is a chapter which posits criteria for evaluating the value of individual pleasures and pains: intensity, duration, certainty/uncertainty, propinquity/remoteness, fecundity, purity, and extent (29-32). For further discussion, see idem, *The Utilitarians* (Garden City: Anchor Press, 1973); Ross Harrison, *Bentham* (London: Routledge, 1983); and James E. Crimmins, *Secular Utilitarianism: Social Science and the Critique of Religion in the Thought of Jeremy Bentham* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 78-79, 92-96, which coherently deals with the complex relationships between English and French Enlightenment figures.

in the service of decreasing the suffering of humankind.[4] In submitting to this objective alone, one did not need to make moral and non-moral distinctions among goods; this neutralization or levelling of ethical awareness became entrenched to a polemical extent—anything not compatible with the good of instrumental efficacy in the pursuit of happiness was to be summarily dismissed.

As alternatives to the levelling doctrine of the radical *Aufklärer*, Taylor explores "sources" of the modern self which carve out an ontological space where our identities can articulate what goods we are for, rather than just affirm what we are against.[5] For Taylor, this space allows for an *avowal* of moral in relation to non-moral goods; this avowal is inherent to his conception of "'strong evaluation,' the recognition that certain goals or ends make a claim on us."

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[4] See Helvétius, *De l'esprit: Or Essays on the Mind and Its Several Faculties* (1759) (New York: B. Franklin, 1970), esp. Essay 2, Chapter 2 and Essay 3, Chapter 1; Holbach, *The System of Nature: Or, the Laws of the Moral and Physical World* (1770), 2 vols., trans. M. Mirabaud (Philadelphia: R.T. Rawl, 1808), esp. vol. 1, 1-5. For a treatment of Holbach and his circle, see Alan Charles Kors, *D'Holbach's Coterie: An Enlightenment in Paris* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976). Still arguably the best historical survey and critique of Enlightenment thought is Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, vol. 1: *The Rise of Modern Paganism* (New York: Knopf, 1966).

[5] My interpretation in some sense recalls Yve-Alain Bois's notion of "intellectual blackmail" that arises from the pressure of "any exclusionist imperative upon the scholar" requiring an immediate affirmation or dismissal of "formalism." Of particular interest is the narrative Bois provides about his and Jean Clay's reading of formalism in the 1970s as a subversion of positivism within a French context, in contrast to the exclusionary labeling of formalism as "reactionary" elsewhere; Bois, "Introduction: Resisting Blackmail," in *Painting as Model* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), esp. xi-xx; see also the Riegl quote critiquing positivism (259).

The claims of some of these goals are incompatible with the *Aufklärer*'s egoistic, instrumental pursuit of pleasure, as they would require considerable self-sacrifice and uncomfortable activity to pursue. A number of such goals made claims on Wölfflin and Greenberg, who formulated their aesthetics as a reaction against late 19th- and 20th-century descendants of the instrumental doctrine which I have just sketched. This dissertation interprets how these writers expressed their reaction by constructing the "painterly," an aesthetic category that played a crucial role within their work as a way of subverting those instrumental forces which, they believed, threaten our very capacity to engage speculative and intuitive thought processes.[6]

The two men shared an interest in a kind of self-sacrifice that occurs when we employ our intuitive faculties during the perceptual event made possible by the painterly object. The subject beholds a painterly artwork made of similar, but not identical, compositional elements, distributed without obvious emphases that would distract overtly from the perception of the work as a total structure. We anxiously, and yet only partially, let go of our conscious minds—which would otherwise compel us to focus on an isolated area of the work—and surrender to our intuition while grasping the painterly object as a whole. This grasping of the whole is meant to be unruly, dynamic, and emotionally intense, as one perceptually shifts between the front and back of the entire, uniformly composed artwork. By devoting ourselves to this perceptual act, we resist the

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[6] For some relevant discussion of art history's institutional relationship to speculative thought, see David Carrier, "Erwin Panofsky, Leo Steinberg, David Carrier: The Problem of Objectivity in Art Historical Interpretation," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 47 (Fall 1989): 333-47, esp. 337-41.

relatively easy and comfortable exercise of instrumental reason, which would dictate that we consciously excise isolated portions of the artwork and interpret them according to specialized purposes. The resistance may lead to "essential" spiritual and moral qualities associated with the world of "cultivated" knowledge, a world that cannot be fully accessed by empirical observation or by analytical description. To receive this essence is to deny the instrumental *Aufklärer*'s deliberate, self-serving pursuit of pleasure and strict confinement to causal logic because we accept a non-egoistic process of delving into the unseen and ambiguous depths of the psyche, a process which "reaches further than we can ever articulate, which stretches beyond our furthest point of clear expression."[7]

Painterly Norms

The painterly's intuitive resistance to cooption by instrumental reason was what attracted me to it as a primary object of study—an excellent vehicle for re-reading formalism against the grain as art writing which has had, and continues to have, the potential for progressive ethical responsibility—for avowals. Aside from its anti-instrumentalist foundation, Wölfflin and Greenberg ascribe numerous other "goods" to their painterly identities, some of which seem decidedly non-progressive from our 21st-century perspective; these distasteful goods include those attributing masculinist features to the painterly. However, my interpretation suggests that we should not be too hasty—like the *Aufklärer*—about polemically throwing out the painterly's good goods along with

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[7] Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 389.

the bad. This project rests on the assumption that the painterly category can continue to serve as a methodological model. My hope is that the painterly will be useful to those art writers developing their own aesthetic categories, even though many of the specific goals assigned to them will differ from those of their formalist predecessors.

To help suggest how the painterly may be reshaped to suit the art-writing needs of today, I want to emphasize the margins of the painterly aesthetic experience, to find that place where what the painterly excludes can be identified and read as something which haunts it as an Other.[8] When that place of exclusion is located and critically understood, we will be better prepared to incorporate aspects of the painterly's Other into new aesthetic categories with identities that retain some of that category's good "goods" but that no longer has, say, the masculinist features assigned by a Wölfflin or a Greenberg. My discussion of the painterly and its Other is meant to draw attention to formalism's distinctive role as a normative discourse. I see this normative function as at the root of the ongoing controversies concerning the importance of formalism for the practice of art history in the future, especially while in competition with or in relation to other, younger fields which study visual culture more generally. Part of the controversy stems from associations made between formalism and ways that the canon is conveyed

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[8] See Stephen Melville, "The Temptation of New Perspectives," *October* 52 (Spring 1990): 3-15. I owe much to Melville's provocative comments and ruminations about the formalist heritage—including those concerning its margins—although my interpretation obviously differs from his. See, for example, his "against the grain" reading of Michael Fried in idem, "Notes on the Reemergence of Allegory, the Forgetting of Modernism, the Necessity of Rhetoric, and the Conditions of Publicity in Art and Criticism," *October* 19 (Winter 1981): 55-92.

using narrative devices; these associations may often be valid and justified, but unfortunately they often have deteriorated into an uncritical and mechanical labeling of formalism as a manevolent purveyor of the canon as master narrative.

My treatment will avoid this polemical view by focusing—in detail, rather than superficially or summarily—on the range of rhetorical devices and narrative codes employed by the formalist writer to define the boundaries of a normative range of aesthetic activity. As Roland Barthes posed the problem in *Mythologies* and in *The Fashion System*,[9] the critic tries to partially decipher such devices and codes, which occupy a hidden or "connotative" position within the text and which function to bring about a system of necessities; these necessities register for the reader as natural requirements and instill a fictional sense of coherence and unity in the discourse as a whole. The connotative features of the formalist narratives which I am examining—those highlighting the painterly and its relationship to other aesthetic categories—did their job extremely well. Within Wölfflin's and Greenberg's respective social contexts, they managed to persuade readers to accept as "natural" a range of goods ascribed to their categories—including those describing normative standards based on nationalistic goals—and which negatively identify types of emotional, bodily, or gender-based experience with the notions of excess, the "unnatural," and the morally reprehensible. However, the degree and effectiveness of this persuasion and naturalization was so great that these goods

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[9] Barthes, *Mythologies* (1959), trans. A. Lavers (New York: Cape, 1972), 114-15; and idem, *The Fashion System* (1967), trans. M. Ward and R. Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 225-30.

continued to be received by audiences divorced temporally and/or geographically from those originally addressed by the two writers. This *unaddressed reception* of the formalist narrative and its normative identity happened within communities that read them uncritically, with little or no sense of the environments in which they were initially conceived. The "homeless" status of these categories is, in my view, one of several factors which has led, periodically, to formalism's denigration—and wholesale dismissal—as dictatorial, disinterested, or master discourse. To help prevent this unfortunate outcome, I want to increase our understanding of formalism's aesthetic categories within the social and intellectual milieux for which they were intended.[10] With this knowledge, we will be more critically aware when we ourselves construct aesthetic categories that have a *provisional* status, associated closely with the particular communities in which we presently function or wish to engage. Of course, this provisional status needs to be periodically checked—and occasionally replaced—so as to prevent its degeneration into reactionary discourse.

This dissertation is not meant as a comprehensive history of formalism. I am not trying to reflect the diversity of formalist approaches to art history and criticism, or even the full range of painterly notions that have been employed since formalism's modernist

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[10] Two articles which were particularly helpful in conceptualizing the contextual aspect of my argument are Fred Orton and Griselda Pollock, "Avant-Gardes and Partisans Reviewed," Art History 4 (September 1981): 305-27; and Robert C. Morgan, "Formalism as a Transgressive Device," *Arts* 64 (December 1989): 65-69. For further bibliography, see below.

inception.[11] Rather, I explore one patch of common ground that a certain range of formalisms share—a limited, but crucial, site in which Wölfflin and Greenberg both participated through their articulations of the painterly and related aesthetic categories. In my account, this shared participation marks a discursive place which justifies the use of the adjective "formalist." Accordingly, my interpretation of formalism is confined severely to a two-fold discussion: First, rhetorical and narrative analysis of specific passages that are relevent to the study of the painterly. And second, a treatment of the nexus of philosophical, political, and social factors which motivated Wölfflin and Greenberg to use the painterly aesthetic as a means to address his respective community. For the sake of brevity, and to ensure that my account does not become "homeless," I either avoid or only suggest other important ways of contextualizing the painterly—which also have yet to be dealt with adequately by art historiographers—including the 18th- and 19th-century pre-history of the category as anticipated by Kantian and Burkean notions of the sublime, by the Hegelian concept of the Romantic, or by various

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[11] I will, for example, avoid thorough textual discussion of the painterly aesthetics articulated by August Schwarsow and Alois Riegl—who are, compared to Wölfflin, of similar importance to the development of formalist discourse—although both figure somewhat in my contextualizing treatment of the painterly in Chapters Two and Three. My deemphasis on Riegl was motivated, in part, by my choice to focus on two art writers in greater detail—namely Wölfflin and Greenberg—and by the existence of an extensive Riegl literature in both English and German which deals with much of the rhetorical and philosophical material that I would have drawn upon in my treatment.

non-German traditions of positivism, such as those pioneered by Hippolyte Taine and Herbert Spencer.[12]

In addition, my focus on the normative, narrative, and rhetorical features of the painterly category contains comparatively little treatment of the analytical purposes of formalist writing. Other scholarship is required which critically examines the descriptive value of painterly concepts as means of referencing objects, including Wölfflin's and Greenberg's. This examination would, ideally, require rigorous critique of the painterly in relation to the historiography of Baroque and modernist art—a worthy project, to which I pay only minimal attention here. By minimizing discussion of the analytical function of painterly notions, I do not mean to imply that they were intended simply as rhetorical devices or as purely discursive strategy.

The Formalist's Compromise

Probing the connotative features of Wölfflin's and Greenberg's writing, I reveal how the painterly category may be used to counter a widespread misconception among critics, who see formalism as a strictly positivist or analytical description of readily observable features of the art object. Using the painterly as an example, I argue instead that the rhetorical power of formalist writing relies on a *combination* of positivist analysis of the object *and* descriptions of psychological and highly dynamic aspects of artistic perception which stubbornly resist analytical description and empirical observation.

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[12] The seeds for future studies of these contextual areas are evident in some of the chapters' longer footnotes, including critical and, at times expansive, commentary on the

My reading assumes that in order to be designated as "formalist," art writers must incorporate a measured amount of positivist conventions and tropes into their writing, thus achieving both aspects of formalism's discursive combination. I see the limited positivist dimension of formalism as a necessary manifestation of the *Aufklärer*'s instrumental reason: as members of intellectual organizations that were periodically hostile to transcendental, phenomenological, and speculative philosophy, Wölfflin and Greenberg both were compelled to use positivism as one way of not only appeasing these groups, but also of camouflaging or compensating for their riskier and more subversive use of non-positivist devices. Indeed, formalists rebeled against the positivist content of their own writing, by using poetic or speculative interpretive language to refer to the essential, intuitive aspects of the painterly experience. They required this non-positivist language to allude to a certain kind of phenomenological confrontation with the single, historically isolated artwork. This confrontation is ignored by critics eager to reassert formalism's "disinterested" label by dwelling solely, and easily, on the linear flow of the master narrative as a canon-enforcing instrument. Some textual analysis will be focused on the structural features of the formalist narrative as a means of naturalizing normative aesthetic categories.[13] However, to focus on narrative alone is misguided, as it corresponds to only

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applicable literature.

[13] I see my project as supplementing the extensive work previously done on the structure of formalist narratives. Two studies that I have found especially stimulating and helpful are David Carrier, *Artwriting* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987) and Jonathan Gilmore, *The Life of a Style: Beginnings and Endings in the Narrative History of Art* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

one side of what I call the formalist's compromise—the other, often-neglected side depends on the uneasy, ambiguous perceptual reality of the painterly experience, an intuitive and performative reality in which formalists have been morally invested as a way of subverting instrumentality.

The Nebula Can Be Your Friend

Another of my motivations for concentrating on the painterly category is the desire to show the positive potential of nebulous interpretive language—as a means to refer to the unobservable, and non-positivist, realities of the aesthetic experience. The use of such language in formalism frequently has been a risky discursive venture, one that railed against not just conventional scholarly practice, but also the prevailing moral and political beliefs of the writers' academic or intellectual institutions, such as the *fin-de-siècle* University of Berlin or the *Partisan Review* of the late 1930s and 40s. The following chapters reveal that, on a regular basis, formalists alternately have been in danger of being accused of: a dilettantish avoidance of philological and iconographic source materials in favor of an unrigorous mysticism of artistic essence; a hazardous escapism from unambiguous, empirically observable reality; an elitist irory-tower obscurantism; and even, in Greenberg's case, an irresponsible promotion of a quasi-religious environment conducive to fascist infiltration. I deal with the formalists' complicated relationship to these accusations while emphasizing how they affected formalism's institutional development.

Some experiential realities require language that is ambiguous enough to take heed of their elusive qualities. The nebulous phrases used to allude to painterly experience—as well as the terms "painterly" or "*malerisch*" themselves—are an exemplary case in point. I am reminded of Barthes's theory of the rhetorical signified as

> formed by an undefined mass of concepts...which could be compared to a large nebula, with vague connections and contours. This 'nebulosity' is not a systematic lack: the rhetorical signified is confused insofar as it depends closely on the situation of the individuals who wield the message...: on their knowledge, their feelings, their morals, their consciousness, and on the historical conditions of the culture in which they live. The massive imprecision of the rhetorical signified is therefore in fact an opening into the world.[14]

This definition has an affinity to the painterly aesthetic object itself, composed of elements with indefinite outlines that compell us to grasp it as a massive total structure. But, more importantly, it is helpful to consider the painterly's reception as a kind of "nebula" containing vague connections that cannot be coherently or logically explained. At various key moments in the history of formalism, writers like Wölffin and Greenberg articulated a content for the painterly that was sufficiently indefinite for it to be received by audience members who each had the semantic flexibility to project their individuality within the amorphous confines of that content—hence, the formalist's rhetorical success, an "opening into the world." This flexibilty is reflected by the range of terms that I alternately use to describe the interpretive language employed by formalists in referring to painterly experience: indefinite, dramatic, poetic, ambiguous, amorphous, intuitive,

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[14] Barthes, *The Fashion System*, 232.

mysterious, inner, unseen—words which might have, but did not necessarily, come to the minds of each of those receiving the painterly discursive nebula.

A major thematic component of the painterly nebula is its ambivalent stance toward instrumentalism. My task is to locate that ambivalence in a way which is suggestive of its applicability to present-day discursive needs—to our own audiences; to do so in an historically intelligent manner, I devote much attention to its intellectual foundations in German-speaking nations, foundations which are directly relevant to Wölfflin's painterly notion as well as to Greenberg's.

Hence, the first chapter of this dissertation deals with two figures—Konrad Fiedler and Wilhelm Dilthey—who do not fit my definition of formalism, but had a profound effect on its academic development during the *fin-de-siècle* and turn-of-the-century periods. I concentrate on these two figures because they are understudied by non-German historiographers of art history and because they serve as an excellent way of setting the stage for my discussion of painterly notions. Fiedler and Dilthey both pioneered non-positivist interpretive concepts capable of referring to their respective objects of study—cultural, artistic, and psychological phenomena that resist the kinds of causal logic and unambiguous empirical analysis which served as the backbone of conventional, positivist scholarship in the humanities during the mid- to late 19th century. Indeed, both writers sought to subvert the reigning conservative standards of academic discourse, which, they believed, did not pay attention to the elusive experiential

features of the studied object—whether psychological, historical, aesthetic, or otherwise. These subversions stood as monumental precedents for those formalists, like Wölfflin, who wished to employ analogous terms and concepts in order to reference painterly experience in a way which was not condoned by conservative, institutional art history.

In Chapter One, I examine Fiedler's tendency to focus radically on the phenomenological act of aesthetic perception at the expense of relatively in-depth and descriptive analysis of the object. In classic essays like "Über den Ursprung der künstlerischen Tätigkeit" ("On the Origin of Artistic Activity," 1887) or "Moderner Naturalismus und künstlerische Wahrheit" ("Modern Naturalism and Artistic Truth," 1881), and in discussion of individual artists such as the painter Hans von Marées, Fiedler prioritizes references to anxious, unruly, and immediate aspects of artistic perception, especially with the help of his concept of the *Ausdrucksbewegung* ("expressive movement"). Such references require a leap of faith on the part of the reader who cannot visually confirm Fiedler's portrayal of the phenomenological act of perception. Fiedler's treatment of the perceptual act differs from formalists'—namely Wölfflin's and Greenberg's—portrayals of painterly perception because of his stronger reliance on internal, hidden processes which are impervious to detailed analytical explanation.

In the case of Dilthey, I explore his major writings, including *Die Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften* ("Introduction to the Human Sciences," 1883), in relation to *Lebensphilosophie* ("life philosophy"), an intellectual tradition which had a crucial effect on the institutional development of art history and criticism, formalist or otherwise.

Dilthey's notions of wholeness (*Ganzheit*), and the *Lebensbegriffe* ("life concept") emphasize, like Fiedler's *Ausdrucksbewegung*, the dynamism of perceptual experience, resist analytical explanation, and are only accessible with the help of intuitive or inner processes. His discussions of "explanatory psychology" reflect *Lebensphilosphie*'s dependence on a notion of spiritual totality that precedes analytical observation and, therefore, subverts the 19th-century positivists' exclusive focus—in the work of Hermann von Helmholz, Richard Avenarius, Ernst Mach, and others—on the observation of sense data, reactions to stimuli, and causal connections between physical phenomena and externalized symptoms.

Chapter Two begins with textual analysis of Wölfflin's characterization of the painterly (*Malerische*) and the role it plays rhetorically within a larger narrative framework. This analysis is followed by an investigation of those historical motivations which are especially relevant to an understanding of the *Malerische* and which have thus far been neglected in the historiographic literature.

I deal with Wölfflin's painterly notion as it appears in his work, *The Principles of Art History* (1915), although some mention will be made of earlier treatments of the concept in works such as *Renaissance and Baroque* (1888) and the essay "Über den Begriff des Malerischen" ("On the Concept of the Painterly," 1913). I demonstrate that, unlike Fiedler, Wölfflin's version of the painterly achieves the formalist balance between analytical description of the object and nebulous references to an anxious "event" of perceptual experience that is hidden to the eye. Using textual examples from *The*

Principles, I show how the painterly mode of perception—identified with the Baroque, as exemplified by Rubens, Rembrandt, and other northern artists—is portrayed by Wölfflin as a process of emancipation from other, earlier modes of perception belonging to the (southern) Renaissance and the "primitives" of the 15th century. The beholder of the painterly object gives up the relatively tactile comfort in the outlines of figures and an emphasis on planar representation and quiet plane sequence typified by the Renaissance mode of "linear" perception. The painterly, Baroque subject experiences a liberatory mixture of sudden perceptual movements while apprehending the anxious visual interplay of light and dark masses, and while straining to perceive dynamic relationships between foreground and background.

However, in describing the dynamism and intangibility of painterly perceptual behavior, Wölfflin must establish equally important limitations to that behavior. In contrast to 15th-century primitives like Hugo van der Goes or Martin Schongauer who failed to create coherent spatial effects, the painterly artist never provokes the viewer's sensibilites to the point that he or she is compelled "to seek the motives" of the artist, whose purpose "is not to be unclear, but to make clarity look like an accidental by-product." The painterly artist achieves a welding of similar compositional elements into a homogeneous mass—"from which the individual figure can hardly be detached," as Wölfflin puts it—that *must* prioritize a recessional movement between foreground and background which can be apprehended as a unified whole. This regulatory or lawful aspect of painterly perceptual experience is paramount to a formalism which conveys a

hybrid form of aesthetic cognition, combining the raw, vital stuff of perceptual behavior with rationalistic thought processes which ensure that a sense of control and uniformity prevails during the moment of aesthetic perception. The lawful and normative aspects of Wölfflin's version of painterly perception are far more pronounced than is the case of Fiedler's notion of a raw and extremely unruly phenomenological act of aesthetic perception that is resistent to rationalistic influences.

Wölfflin's aestheticizing of the painterly in *The Principles* and other contemporaneous essays was partly motivated by educational purposes. In Chapter Three, "The Politics of Formalism," I contextualize Wölfflin's painterly notion by discussing essays by Wölfflin and his peers concerning the state of art historical education and of the humanities in general. Many prominent scholars, including Wölfflin, August Schmarsow, and Josef Strzygowski, wrote at length about formalist methodology as a means to counteract a "spiritless" (*geistlos*) condition that supposedly existed among the student population and that was associated with rapid industrialization and the mechanization of society. Constructed in opposition to the non-formalist perspective of the art historians Herman Grimm and Georg Dehio, the painterly concept in particular was regarded by formalists as an educational tool that could impart spiritual value to the individual student, who receives training and cultivation (*Bildung*) through a process of visualization (*Anschauung*) that emphasizes painterly compositional devices.

This emphasis on the painterly repeatedly was identified with a Northern and germanic spiritual and moral character. This identification was emphasized by non-

academic authors such as Julius Langbehn in his *Rembrandt als Erzieher: Von einem Deutschen* ("Rembrandt as Educator: By a German," 1890). I make the case that formalists like Wölfflin specifically placed a value on the painterly as an educational instrument or *Bildungsbegriffe* because of its melding of analytical and anti-positivist discursive tendencies. Nebulous references to an unseen and anxious experience of the painterly are regarded by the formalist as an integral part of the scholarly, *kunstwissenshaftlich* narrative. The intuitive and unseen component of the painterly concept is compatible with a Neo-Kantian revolt against positivistic discourse that occurred in Germany and Austria during the *fin de siècle* period. Well-known Neo-Kantians like Heinrich Rickert went to great lengths to demonize the development of technological rationality and the mechanization of society, and regarded the implementation of *Bildungsbegriffe*—like the painterly—as playing a key role in the battle against "soullessness."

The focus in Chapter Four is on Greenberg, who consistently made references to the painterly category throughout his career, a category he often identified with his notion of the modernist avant-garde, and alternately portrayed Paul Cézanne, Analytical Cubism, Juan Miró, Jackson Pollock, and Hans Hofmann as its leading practitioners. Like Wölfflin, Greenberg—in essays such as "'American Type' Painting" (1955) and "After Abstract Expressionism" (1962)—describes anxious, dynamic perceptual movements that occur between the pictorial surface and shallow depths of a painterly composition. However, also like Wölfflin, Greenberg establishes limitations on the emotional impact

and visual characteristics of painterly perception. Greenberg compares his exemplars of the painterly with those, such as Salvador Dalí or Wilem de Kooning, who stray from painterly norms by depending too much on the role of immediate impulses or on virtuosic displays that distract from depersonalized standards of compositional uniformity. Greenberg aestheticizes the presentation of the painterly image as one single indivisible piece of texture, with each pictorial passage granted equal compositional importance within the whole. A subtle degree of variation—rather than virtuosity—is required when granting equivalency to individual passages, so that the beholder's initial confrontation with the work reveals "not equivalences, but an hallucinated uniformity." Greenberg prioritizes an uncomfortable experience of psychological immediacy, but one that avoids an overreliance on mere whim and haphazard effects.

Greenberg's concept of painterly perception was motivated, to a considerable extent, by his interpretation of positivism, a term that he used frequently and ambiguously, especially during the 1940s and 50s. In his treatments of Hofmann, Pollock, Miró, and others, Greenberg describes the painterly image as emphasizing the provocation of sensorial reactions at the expense of the image's descriptive or illustrative aspects. I discuss Greenberg's interest in an aesthetic of sensorial perception in relation to strains of positivist discourse that were prominent in New York intellectual circles beginning in the late 1930s and 40s, when members of the so-called Vienna Circle of "logical" positivists began to migrate to American universities and their writings began to appear in English. All genuine experience, according to positivists such as Richard von

Mises and A.J. Ayer, is circumscribed by the limits of sensibility and the organization of that which is immediately present before us or apprehended directly by our sense-organs. These positivists confined their scientific language to "element sentences"—very brief, coherent statements composed of uniform elements referring to simple sensations observed or beheld under controlled experimental conditions; all other propositions are discarded as "metaphysical speculation," meaningless, or false. Greenberg's journalistic style of writing and his obvious focus on sensorial reactions, I argue, are compatible with this type of positivistic language.

However, Greenberg's positivism is in some sense incompatible with traditions of German positivism and Anglo-American empiricism because he repeatedly identified the sensorial "content" of the painterly artwork with notions of the "indefinable" and the "unspecifiable." Greenberg discusses the experience of the painterly as invoking an ideal of potent sensorial experience, an ideal with he refused to define conceptually, except as a kind of non-verbal "event." Greenberg's nebulous characterization of this sensorial event of painterly viewing does not comply with traditional positivist conceptions of knowledge and certainty because the event is not verifiable by direct visual observation, and can only be accessed by hidden, intuitive processes. The formalist's re-creation of that event is sufficiently nebulous to require a *leap of faith* on the part of the reader, who believes in the sheer potency of painterly "sensations" as the means to collapse the temporal void between the historical object and the present. Like Wölfflin, Greenberg succeeds in combining the positivist concern with direct and immediate sensorial

experience *and* the anti-positivist reliance on an irrational, vitalist notion of wholeness that cannot be fully accessed by analytical observation.

It is my project to demonstrate how painterly notions are one of the keys to understanding formalism's rhetorical power, intellectual importance, and unusual ability to prosper within a wide range of epistemological environments and historical moments. I hope that this understanding will in some way be useful to those seeking interpretive alternatives to the uninspired art writing that continues to churn away in the service of the *Aufklärer*.

Bibliographical Note[15]

Despite his wide-ranging impact, there have been few studies in English dealing with Fiedler's relationship to the history of art history, partly because not many of Fiedler's major writings are obtainable in translation. The most reliable sources in English are Michael Podro's *The Manifold in Perception* (1978) and the recent essay "Are Works of Art Provisional or Canonical in Form? Fiedler, Hildebrand, and Wölfflin" (1991), which contain detailed treatments of Fiedler's aesthetic theory and criticism. Sections of Joan Hart's unpublished dissertation, "Heinrich Wölfflin: An Intellectual Biography" (1981) and Gottfried Boehm's well-known, lengthy introduction to a collection of Fiedler's writings (1971) have sections on the methodological relationship of Fiedler to his contemporaries, especially Wölfflin and Hildebrand. Articles by Max Imdahl (1963) and,

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[15] For more detailed bibliographic comments, I ask the reader to consult the extensive footnotes in each of the chapters, many of which are designed to suggest avenues for future research in the intellectual history of art history.

more recently, by Lambert Wiesing (1997) have useful discussion of several influential features of Fiedler's aesthetics, including the concept of the *Ausdrucksbewegung*. However, there appears to be no detailed studies of Fiedler's crucial role within the genealogy of the painterly concept in formalist art writing and of his relationship to the tradition of *Lebensphilosophie*, a philosophical movement which was fundamental to the institutionalization of art history during the *fin de siècle* period and which has been largely overlooked by historiographers.

Intelligent critique of Wölfflin's methodological approach began in the 1920s with insightful essays by Edgar Wind (1924-25) and Erwin Panofsky (1925). These essays, and other writings by both scholars, remain the most helpful studies of formalist art writing that are available, because they criticize Wölfflin's—as well as Riegl's and others'—use of transcendentally deduced categories, such as the painterly, and formalists' reliance on notions of a non-empirical reality "behind" appearance. This critique has recently been taken up again in a published dissertation by Andreas Eckl, *Kategorien der Anschauung* (1996), and in an excellent book by Lambert Wiesing, *Die Sichtbarkeit des Bildes* (1997), which contain rigorous philosophical discussions of the painterly. These sources provide useful philosophical interpretations of Wölfflin's writings, but do not contextualize Wölfflin's project in terms of his historical motivations—educational or otherwise—for formulating the painterly and other art historical categories. Those who have dealt with Wölfflin's context have been concerned

with biographical motivations (Hart, 1981 and Lurz, 1981) and with certain isolated philosophical aspects of his work (Dittmann, 1965; Schmitz, 1995; Busse, 1981), but never with his pedagogical beliefs. My dissertation is intended to partially fill these holes in the literature on Wölfflin.

Despite the massive amounts of writing devoted to him, especially compared to lesser-known figures such as Fiedler, many crucial components of Greenberg's aesthetics remain almost completely unaddressed, including his conception of positivism. Some recent critiques have dealt with Greenberg's Kantianism (eg. Crowther, 1985; Melville, 1990), his relationship to Cold War politics (eg. Kramer, 1993; McEvilley, 1994), and his role as a conveyer of high modernist narratives (eg. Krauss, 1993; Danto, 1993). However, detailed and thorough discussions of specific rhetorical features of Greenberg's writing, including the role of the painterly concept within his narratives, are exceedingly rare (one provocative but limited discussion occurs in de Duve, 1996). No expanded treatments of Greenberg's use of positivistic language—or this language's relationship to his related notions of the avant-garde and the painterly—are available.

CHAPTER ONE: FIEDLER'S RADICALISM

Konrad Fiedler (1841-1895), son of a wealthy clothing manufacturer, Adoph Gottlob, was raised near Leipzig, and studied law at Heidelberg, Berlin, and Leipzig.[16] Fiedler abruptly ceased practicing law after one year, and took several trips to Italy, most notably Rome, where, during the winter of 1866-67, he met the painter Hans von Marées as well as the sculptor and art theorist Adolf von Hildebrand. Early on, Fiedler decided that, as an aesthetic philosopher hostile to academic methodology, his role was to speak to an audience inclusive of non-academics—such as Marées and Hildebrand, with whom he rented a residence in Florence in 1874—and to critique the positivist conventions of conservative art history scholarship during his day. By the time he relocated to Munich in 1880, Fiedler had become prominently identified with a burgeoning community of artists in that city who subscribed to a painterly aesthetics which Fiedler articulated as a "modern" discourse—a worthy alternative to the "spiritless" (*geistlos*) philological practices of traditional art history. My task in the first part of this chapter is to describe what that alternative was and how it affected the development of formalist art histories in the academy, especially Heinrich Wölfflin's.

Fiedler's aesthetic philosophy draws upon the intellectual traditions known as Neo-Kantianism and "life philosophy" (*Lebensphilosophie*).[17] Both of these

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[16] For further biographical information, see *Neue Deutsche Biographie* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1961).

[17] The literature on Fiedler is very limited in English, despite his substantial influence on art history's formation as an academic discipline during the turn-of-the-century period. The most relevant studies in German are Gottfried Boehm's lengthy introduction to

philosophical movements were crucial in the shift towards a "new" methodological orientation in art history subsequently known as formalism. "Neo-Kantians" like Fiedler were concerned with the conditionality of viewing a work of art, or with the psychological and physiological responses to the aesthetic object. These responses were not deemed worthy of investigation by Kant himself, who believed in a notion of transcendental subjectivity that was independent of such empirical qualities, and who mainly was concerned with treating the art object—or, more often, nature—as pretext for the exercise of judgments of taste. Instead of treating the beholder of the artwork as a passive, "bodiless statue" that is distanced from the empirical reality of the object, Fiedler and other Neo-Kantians believed that the sensual and psychic aspects of artistic experience were the key to acquiring a form of knowledge and moral understanding that is unique to the realm of art.[18]

Fiedler's *Schriften über Kunst* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1971, 1991); Lambert Wiesing, *Die Sichtbarkeit des Bildes: Geschichte und Perspektiven der formalen Ästhetik* (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch, 1997); Stephan Majetschak, ed., *Auge und Hand: Konrad Fiedler's Kunsttheorie im Kontext* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1997), which contains useful essays by Wiesing, Beat Wyss, and others; and Andreas Eckl, *Kategorien der Anschauung: Zur transzendentalphilosophischen Bedeutung von Heinrich Wölfflins "Kunstgeschichtlichen Grundbegriffen"* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1996), 149-60; both Boehm and Eckl discuss Fiedler's Neo-Kantianism. The most interesting source in English is Michael Podro, *The Manifold in Perception: Theories of Art from Kant to Hildebrand* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 111-20; see also idem, "Are Works of Art Provisional or Canonical in Form? Fiedler, Hildebrand, and Wölfflin," in *Kunst und Kunsttheorie 1400-1900*, eds. P. Ganz, M. Gosebruch, N. Meier, and M. Warnke (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1991), 405-14; and Joan Hart, "Heinrich Wölfflin: An Intellectual Biography," diss. UC Berkeley (Ann Arbor: UMI Press, 1981), which includes a section on Fiedler.

[18] There are few detailed considerations of art history's relationship to the Neo-Kantian movement. See Joan Hart, "Reinterpreting Wölfflin: Neo-Kantianism and Hermeneutics,"

By making the study of psycho-physical responses a central concern of his aesthetic theory, Fiedler was invoking the experimental and theoretical work of perceptual psychologists. Many of these psychologists were positivists who tended to study *externalized* responses to stimuli which could be directly observed under controlled experimental conditions. However, in contrast to the positivists, Fiedler was concerned less with the world of explicitly observable responses, and more with the inner, *unobservable* processes that come into play during the act of perceiving artworks. As we shall see, Fiedler referred to such processes in an abstract way, using nebulous terminology that does not reflect positivist notions of "scientific" evidence.

The *Lebensphilosophie* movement rebelled against the causal-analytical thought embraced by positivists and other natural scientists. German adherents of "life philosophy," including Friedrich Nietzsche and Wilhelm Dilthey, strove to grasp the "whole" reality of human existence as it is experienced by the individual subject.[19] Crucial

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Art Journal 42 (Winter 1982): 293-300. The German literature on Neo-Kantianism is extensive, although little or no mention is made of the movement's major impact on Fiedler's writing, or upon the development of art history in general. See, for example, Klaus Christian Köhnke, *Entstehung und Aufstieg des Neukantianismus: Die deutsche Universitätsphilosophie zwischen Idealismus und Positivismus* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986). A good source of bibliography is J. Oelkers, et al, eds., *Neukantianismus: Kulturtheorie, Pädagogik und Philosophie* (Wienheim: Deutscher Studien, 1989). One useful study in English is Thomas E. Willey, *Back to Kant: The Revival of Kantianism in German Social and Historical Thought, 1860-1914* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978).

[19] The *Lebensphilosophie* movement in Germany is generally considered to extend from the late nineteenth century until well into the 1920s, and to overlap substantially with other philosophical schools, including phenomenology and existentialism. A good overview of the movement is provided in Torsten Klug, *Grundlagen und Probleme moderner Lebensphilosophie*, diss. U. of Leipzig (Aaachen: Shaker Verlag, 1997), Part I,

psychological and spiritual aspects of this whole reality always remain hidden to direct, analytical observation and fixed or static conceptual knowledge; they remain hidden because of their irrational, dynamic, and expressive nature. The term "life" (*Leben*) frequently was used to represent this whole reality, which was conceived as the continuous flow of one's inner experience, a flow that can only be accessed using intuitive processes rather than fully logical or rationalized systems. Fiedler was devoted to these intuitive processes in his treatment of the act of aesthetic perception.

In Chapters 2 and 3, I will observe how Fiedler's phenomenological[20] aesthetics were an inspiration to turn-of-the-century formalist art historians who sought alternatives

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which contains a summary of "life philosophy" in its many permutations, but does not draw on specifically cited passages in primary sources; Elenor Jain, *Das Prinzip Leben: Lebensphilosophie und Ästhetische Erziehung* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1993), provides excellent information on the movement's most influencial practitioners, including Dilthey and Georg Simmel, as well as their interpretations of aesthetic experience. Still important is the classic study by Otto Friedrich Bollnow, *Die Lebensphilosohie* (Stuttgart: Kolhammer, 1933, 1958). As is the case with the Neo-Kantianism literature in German, little attention is given in these philosophical studies of *Lebensphilosophie* to its fundamental effect on the formation of art history as a discipline during the turn-of-the-century period.

[20] It should be noted that in Fiedler's day—prior to the 20th-century movement associated with Edmund Husserl, who I treat at length in Chapter Two in relation to Wölfflin's painterly notion—phenomenology did not yet exist as a philosophical movement. However, the term has 18th-century origins in the writings of Johann Heinrich Lambert and Kant, who used it to describe references to consciousness and experience in abstraction, in contrast to considerations of its intentional content. Hegel reenvisioned the phenomenological project as the historical inquiry into the evolution of self-consciousness from elementary sense experience to fully rational thought processes capable of yielding knowledge. Husserl realized that intentionality was a concept capable of overcoming the mind-body dualism: he examined conscious experience as an element in a "stream" of consciousness, but also as representing one aspect or "profile" of an object. I will show that Fiedler's interpretive language not only recalls the influences of Hegel and Kant, in their relationships to the *Lebensphilosophie* and *Bildung* traditions, but also powerfully

to a conservative tradition of art history. During the mid- to late 19th century, this tradition had been setting a standard of "rigorous" (*wissenschaftlich*) scholarship based on analysis of isolated, observable features of the art object in relation to philological and historical source materials. The formalists who rebelled against this standard of scholarship—exemplified by prominent figures like Herman Grimm, Georg Dehio, and Eduard Dobbert—included those who developed an aesthetic of "painterly" (*malerisch*) perception. Heinrich Wölfflin, August Schmarsow, and Josef Strzygowski adopted aspects of Fiedler's phenomenological approach in tandem with more "rigorous" analysis of the art object's observable qualities, analysis which Fiedler, in his radical position, did not practice.

In many of his essays, Fiedler characterizes a dynamic activity of perception that occurs during the apprehension of the art object, and portrays this activity using a combination of psychological, poetic, and mystical language.[21] Most famously, Fiedler employs the notion of the *Ausdrucksbewegung* ("expressive-movement"), a term which

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anticipates Husserl's reenvisioning of that discourse during the turn-of-the-century period, when Wölfflin was preparing to write *The Principles of Art History*. For a sophisticated, jargon-free survey in English of the phenomenological movement, see Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (New York: Routledge, 2000), esp. 6-7, which discusses the origins of the term "phenomenology." More specific secondary literature is referenced throughout Chapters 1 and 2.

[21] All quotations are from the standard collection of Fiedler's writings, Konrad Fiedler, *Schriften zur Kunst* (1913-14), 2 vols. (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1971, 1991). The 1991 edition of this collection, edited by Gottfried Boehm, uses a modern and relatively readible font in contrast to the 1971 version, which is based on the original publication of 1913-14. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the German are mine. References to volume and page numbers of the 1991 edition are provided in the text.

in some sense condenses his aesthetic of perception in general and which had a profound effect on subsequent formalist notions of the painterly. The *Ausdrucksbewegung* refers to an experience of the artwork which combines several basic traits. First, the experience is restless because it is in a constant state of "becoming" (*Werden*), with new images continually being produced on various levels within one's consciousness, momentarily appearing and then promptly vanishing or fading (*Vergehen*):

> The view within the inner workshop...does not allow us to grasp definite forms; rather it conceals them in a restless becoming and vanishing, an infinity of processes, in which the elements of all Being appear in the manifold levels of their production, without the volatile, perpetually renewed material ever becoming solid, stiffened, unchanging forms; it is a coming and going, an emerging and disappearing, a forming and dissolving, of impressions, feelings, representations, an uninterrupted play...restless construction, reconstruction.[22] (I, 119)

Fiedler identifies this unruly and constant activity of image production with a dynamic, confusing, and chaotic sense of movement:

> ...we find ourselves before a chaos of coming and going, emerging and disappearing appearances of forms, which link together, and then disintegrate in the next moment into ruins, fragments, which confusingly and disorderly separate and combine in an uninterrupted, spontaneous exchange.[23] (I, 163)

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[22] "Der Blick in der innere Werkstatt...läßt uns nicht einen festen Besitz an fertigen Gestalten gewahren, vielmehr enthüllt sich ihm ein rastloses Werden und Vergehen, eine Unendlichkeit von Vorgängen, in denen die Elemente alles Seins in den manningfachstens Stufen ihrer Verarbeitung ersheinen, ohne daß das flüchtige, sich immer erneuernde Material jemals zu festen, unveränderlichen Formen erstarrte; es ist ein Kommen und Gehen, ein Auftauchen und Verschwinden, ein Sichbilden und Sichauflösen von Empfindungen, Gefühlen, Vorstellungen, ein ununterbrochenes Spiel...rastlos sich bildend, sich umbildend."

[23] "...befinden wir uns vor einem Chaos von kommenden und gehenden, auftauchenden und verschwindenden Erscheinungen von Gebilden, die sich zusammenschließen, um in nächsten Augenblick in Trümmer auseinanderzufallen, von Bruckstücken, die wirr und regellos in ununterbrockenem, willkürlichem Wechsel sich trennen und sich verbinden."

Aesthetic perception is described dramatically as a process of continuous production of images, and as unpredictable and dynamic movement. Fiedler further characterizes the encounter with the artistic object as a profoundly mysterious and dreamlike situation that is divorced from everyday reality:

> ...[Artistic perception takes place] not in the everyday world, the scene of our life and business, the object of our learning and knowledge; ...We feel ourselves in a dreamlike condition, and it is the fact of visible appearance alone which speaks to our astonished senses.[24] (I, 171)

In addition, the *Ausdrucksbewegung* is a psycho-physical experience, combining a variety of psychic processes with sensations derived from bodily organs: "...during the expressive-movement, one perceives not the product of the psyche, but the evolution of a psycho-physical process."[25] (I, 116-17) Fiedler resists the notion of a mind-body dualism by emphasizing that images are perceived using both externalized physical sensations

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[24] "...es ist nicht die alltägliche Welt, der Schauplatz unseres Lebens und Handelns, der Gegenstand unseres Wissens und Erkennens;....Wir befinden uns in einem traumhaften Zustand, und die Tatsache der sichtbaren Erscheinung allein ist es, die zu unseren staunenden Sinnen spricht." In numerous other passages, Fiedler emphasizes the production of images (*Bilder*) which interact with mental processes in a "mysterious context" (*geheimnisvollen Zusammenhang*). For instance, see I, 125. On Fiedler's notion of art being divorced from everyday perception, see Michael Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 111; and idem, *The Manifold in Perception: Theories of Art from Kant to Hildebrand* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 111-20, which includes discussion of Fiedler's relationship to Neo-Kantianism.

[25] "...man in der Ausdrucksbewegung eben nicht den Ausdruck eines psychischen Produktes, sondern die Entwickelung eines psychophysichen Vorganges erblickt." For a similar statement, see I, 190-91.

(which may be observed) and internal mental and spiritual processes (which are hidden to the eye):

> ...one must give up each unjustified separation between mental and bodily activity, and nowhere perhaps is the necessity to do this more convincing than with the consideration of artistic activity.....There is within human beings no organ which could explain what the goal of artistic aspiration is;[26] (I, 175)

In many of his essays, such as "On the Origin of Artistic Activity" ("Über den Ursprung der künstlerischen Tätigkeit," 1887), Fiedler describes the *Ausdrucksbewegung* —and related aspects of aesthetic perception—as an experience of anxiousness, uneasiness, and confusion, as one struggles to apprehend images (*Bilder*) that are constantly being replaced. Using a combination of mental and physical processes, these images are perceived as a highly dynamic movement. The relationship between physical and mental processes—reliant as it is on "secretive" spiritual forces—and the condition of unruly movement and constant production of *Bilder* are of crucial importance to Fiedler's notion of aesthetic perception: these features are nebulous to the extent that they resist "rigorous," analytical, or detailed explanation. Because of its relentlessly dynamic aspect and its status as psycho-physical experience, Fiedler relies on essentialist language, such as the term *Ausdrucksbewegung*, to interpret the act of aesthetic perception. The use of essentialist or abstracted language is regarded as the only means of reference to the

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[26] "...muß man jene unberechtigte Scheidung zwischen geistigem und körperlichem Tun aufgeben, und nirgends vielleicht ist die Notwendigkeit, dies zu tun, einleuchtender, als bei der Betrachtung der künstlerischen Tätigkeit.....Es gibt im Inneren des Menschen gar keine Organe, die das ausführen könnten, was das Ziel des künstlerischen Strebens ist;" For related commentary, see also I, 135-36 and 181.

activity of aesthetic perception, which remains hidden from forms of scholarly language that are said to rely on extra-artistic content: for Fiedler, the artwork is composed of a "fusion of the visible and the non-visible" (*die Verschmelzung von Sichtbarem und Nichtsichtbarem*) and the joining together of the "unclear and the clear in a unified, inseparable structure" (*Nichtanschauliches und Anschauliches in einem einheitlichen, untrennbaren Gebilde*) (I, 205).

The non-visible, unclear, and hidden aspects of artistic experience are paramount to Fiedler's philosophy. Accordingly, he denounced forms of art writing that were led astray by concentrating on the specified "tasks" (*Aufgabe*) of artistic production, rather than referring to the "united reality" (*gesamte Wirklichkeit*) that is perceived during the perceptual "act" (I, 114). In the essay "On Interests in Art and Their Promotion," ("Über Kunstinteressen und deren Förderung," 1879), Fiedler argues against the diversion away from artistic activity as "manifestations of the inner spiritual life of human beings" ("*geistigen Lebensäußerungen des Menschen*") towards so-called "art interests." (I, 50). Fiedler's main concern is with maintaining a grasp of the inner spiritual life that is expressed during the artistic experience, by using language that resists the conversion of that experience into "*wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnis*"—coherent and unambiguous knowledge that, as such, could only be based upon fragmentary or inferior information concerning the perceptual reality of the "total" artwork (I, 74):

> ...(the) endeavors and activities which the interests of art take as a pretext,...are in themselves understandable and are far sooner inclined to be ascribed seriousness and importance than art itself, whose essence remains inaccessible.[27] (I, 71)

> The scholarly researcher...strives to investigate the historical context, the historical sequence and dependence of artistic appearances, and upholds the claim to be able to see the theoretically complete, authorized historical viewpoint that becomes in practice decisive for the treatment of existing artworks. And this claim...has made the pure artistic interest of existing artworks almost forgotten, or at the very least given it completely external consideration;[28] (I, 63)

In the essay, "On Judging Works of Visual Art," ("Über die Beurteilung von Werken der bildenden Kunst," 1876), Fiedler expands his discussion of the inability of scholarly discourse to gain admittance to the essence of artistic experience:

> It is clear that wherever we have to deal with meaningful symbolism or ingenious allegorical representation, this content is not the artistic substance....The content of an artwork that can be grasped conceptually does not represent the artistic substance which owes its existence to the creative power of the artist;[29] (I, 8)

> The sphere of all that can be known about artworks is enormous and is divided into many more or less independent divisions. It is impossible for one person to

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[27] "...(die) Bestrebungen und Tätigkeiten, welche die Interessen der Kunst zum Vorwand nehmen,...ihnen dieselben verständlich sind, weit eher Ernst und Wichtigkeit beizumessen geneigt sind, als der Kunst selbst, deren Wesen ihnen unzugänglich bleibt."

[28] "Der wissenschaftliche Forscher...den historischen Zusammenhang, die historische Folge und Abhängigkeit der künstlerischen Erscheinungen zu ergründen strebt, erhebt den Anspruch, den theoretisch vollkommen berechtigten historischen Gesichtspunkt zu einem praktisch maßgebenden für die Behandlung der vorhandenen Kunstwerke gemacht zu sehen. Und diesem Anspruch...ein reines künstlerisches Interesses an die vorhanden Kunstwerke zu machen hat, nahezu vergessen oder wenigstens gänzlich außer Berücksichtigung gesetzt ist;"

[29] "Daß dieser Inhalt nicht der künstlerische Inhalt sei, liegt offen zu Tage, wo es sich etwa um sinnreiche symbolische, geistreiche allegorische Darstellungen handelt...Der Inhalt des Kunstwerkes, der in den begrifflichen Ausdruck eingeht, ist nicht der, der sein Dasein der wesentlich künstlerischen Kraft des Urhebers verdankt;"

> embrace intellectually all of these divisions; to be intimately acquainted with some of them requires years of ardent study and diligent application. In such an endeavor, everything which is even slightly related to artistic creation becomes important, such as the apparently insignificant buildings of uncivilized peoples and the confused complexities of degenerate epochs, as well as artistic production all the way from very complicated forms down to humble ornamentation of household utensils. The existing artworks make up only a small part of the sources for this scholarship; everything that exists in written documents also has to be searched, to throw light upon the history of the origin and the fate of artworks, the lives and character of the artists, their techniques, and so on. Accuracy in research is demanded; certainty in results is the aim of these extensive and laborious investigations.[30] (I, 9)

Fiedler's critical discussion of art historical writing often focuses on the standards of "scholarly" proof or evidence (*wissenschaftlich Beweis*) and certainty. For Fiedler, these standards in art historical scholarship depend on a number of factors, including the rigorous treatment of the artwork as it relates historically and morphologically to related precedents and to antecedents. This comparative and developmental analysis sacrifices our understanding of artistic experience because it is devoted to the pursuit of

> ...knowledge [that] is only considered as a means of helping to find an historical order in the accumulations of existing artworks...[The art historian] takes into consideration all phenomena that by their outward forms belong to the art field.

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[30] "Der Umkreis alles dessen, was von Kunstwerken gewußt werden kann, ist sehr groß und zerfällt in sehr viele mehr oder minder selbstständige Gebiete. Sie alle zu umfassen ist für den einzelnen nicht möglich, nur in einzelnen vollkommen bewandert zu sein, erfordert angestrengtes Studium und langjährigen Fleiß. Alles ist für solche Forschung wichtig, was nur an irgend einem Punkte mit dem künstlerischen Schaffen zusammenhängt, die ersten unscheinbaren Anfänge ungebildeter Völker so gut wie die Verirrungen entarteter Zeiten, die Kunst in ihrer höchsten Gestalt bis hinab zur unscheinbaren Verzierung am niedrigen Hausgerät. Die vohandenen Kunstwerke bilden nur zum kleinen Teil die Quellen für dieses Studium; alles, was an schriftlichen Urkunden vohanden ist, wird hervorgesucht, um über die Entstehungsgeschichte und die Schicksale der Kunstwerke, über Leben und Charakter der Künstler, über die Technik ihres Verfahrens u. s. w. Licht zu verbreiten. Genauigkeit in den Untersuchungen ist das Erfordernis Sicherheit in den Resultaten das Ziel dieser ausgebreiteten mühsamen Studien."

> Everything finds place in its historical inventory that has at any time or place been ornamented, built, formed, drawn, or painted. Above all, times and places of origin, or the discovery of who the creators were, are made the subject of research.[31] (I, 12-13)

For Fiedler, those who are preoccupied with the expansion and increased sophistication of comparative historical and formal analysis are incapable of considering the conditions of perception that occur during the encounter with the single, *historically isolated* work of art. Standards of scholarly evidence also depend on the detailed examination of relationships by which, "through thousands and thousands of connections, the single work is connected with the whole culture....such a study, though it supports itself on proved facts, will always remain limited to more or less superficial features" and tends to confuse cultural context with "pure" artistic interest.[32] (I, 14-15)

In numerous extreme statements such as this one—which would have been considered as radical in his day as they are today—Fiedler dismisses art history's elevation of "proved facts" based on the analysis of cultural context and of historical or

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[31] "Kenntnis nur als Hilfsmittel zu einer historischen Ordnung der Masse vorhandener Kunstwerke betrachtet werden...(Der Kunsthistoriker) hält sich an die alleräußerlichste Form der Kunstübung und berücksichtigt alle Erscheinungen, die sich ihrer Form nach als dem Gebiete der Kunst angehörig erweisen. Alles findet in ihren Aufzählungen Platz, was jemals an irgend einem Orte verziert, gebaut, gebildet, gezeichnet oder gemalt worden ist. Es handelt sich zunächst nur um Zeit und Ort der Entstehung, beziehentlich um Feststellung des Urhebers."

[32] "...richtet sich der Blick auf jenen großen Zusammenhang, durch den vermittelst tausend und aber-tausend Fäden das Einzelne mit den Ganzen verbunden ist. Das Kunstwerk als Resultat und zugleich als Element des gesamten Kulturlebens zu verstehen, ist die Aufgabe solcher Forschung...immer aber wird diese Forschung, wo sie sich auf beweisende Tatsachen stützt, auf mehr oder minder oberflächliche Züge beschränkt bleiben..."

formal precedents and antecedents. This dismissal follows from an emphatic and crucial distinction that Fiedler makes between preformulated knowledge of the artwork's context and the highly expressive, unruly essence of the artwork that may only be grasped during the phenomenological act of aesthetic perception. This essence may only be referred to with essentialist language, using terms such as the *Ausdrucksbewegung* that are capable of alluding to the experience of the aesthetic object as a "unified, inseparable structure" (I, 205). The connection between scholarly proof and preformulated knowledge is indicative of Fiedler's polemical stance against a positivist trend in scholarship that was the norm during the *fin de siècle* period. In Fiedler's view, positivism had wrongly steered art historians away from art's paramount task of imparting "spiritual and intellectual enrichment" (*Vervollkommnung*) (I, 16). Positivism's effects were represented by art history's overemphasis on drawing connections between the artwork and a preexisting cross-section of cultural influences, or upon the insertion of individual art objects into a similarly preexisting historical progression of other works, usually on the basis of readily observable formal qualities.

For Fiedler, the ability to instantly make formal comparisons between the object at hand and others of its kind does not generate artistic meaning at all, because it does not engage the experiential reality of the "total" work of art. One must strive to refer to the artwork "without preformulated intentions" (*ohne vorher formulierte Absicht*) and in terms of its effects upon a single observer, effects which cannot be determined in advance and which resist *wissenschaftlich* certainty (I, 15-16). Rather than generating positivist

knowledge, these experiential effects play a central role in the artwork's enhancement of our "mental and moral capabilities" (*geistigen und sittlichen Anlagen*) (I, 16).

In a lengthy essay of 1889, Fiedler uses the painter Hans von Marées as an exemplar of his aesthetic philosophy in general. Marées's character is said to have been in a constant state of "spiritual struggle" (*seelischen Kämpfe*) (I, 240). This struggle was represented by a profound sense of uneasiness that the artist experienced while creating works resulting from "constantly renewed experiments" (*immer erneuten Versuche*) (I, 252-53). Despite the dramatic and uncomfortable psychic processes that occurred during their production, Mareés's images have simplified and remarkably banal compositional motifs:

> (Marées) approached his work with much simplicity. His landscapes are of great interest and yet one searches in them in vain for the extraordinary; white foundations, soft hilly terrain, modest groups of trees, situated against or away from the water's surface, a distant line of mountains—that is all that is presented to the eye. Sometimes he enriches the image with an architectonic allusion...a space which the figures can occupy. His figures hardly express anything other than a quiet existence; venerable men and youngsters, youthful wives and children in different arrangements. Where he wants to motivate their positions, he chooses the simplest performances; so there is an especially frequent repetition in his pictures of the representation of the orange harvest. And horses...which he gladly inserts into his compositions.[33] (I, 258)

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[33] "(Marées) ging dabei scheinbar sehr einfach zu Werke. Seine Landschaften sind von großem Reiz und doch sucht man in ihnen vergeblich nach Außergewöhnlichem; Wiesengründe, sanft hügeliges Terrain, mäßige Baumgruppen, ab und zu ein Wasserspiegel, eine ferne Berglinie, das ist alles, was er dem Auge vorführt. Zuweilen bereichert er das Bild durch eine architektonische Andeutung...einem Raum, in dem sich Menschen bewegen können. Seine Figuren drücken kaum etwas anderes aus, als ein ruhiges Dasein; Greise, Männer und Jünglinge, jugendliche Weiber und Kinder in den verschiedensten Zusammenordnungen. Wo er ihre Stellungen motivieren will, da wählt er die einfachsten Verrichtungen; so kehrt in seinen Bildern besonders häufig die Darstellung des Orangenpflükkens wieder. Auch Pferde...fügte er gern in seine Entwürfe ein."

Marées's supposed refusal to allow isolated pictorial components—including human figures—to draw attention to themselves is of crucial importance to Fiedler's aesthetic, which strongly favors the perception of the artwork as a "whole."[34] Marées's use of recurring themes as well as mundane iconographic and stylistic motifs further persuades the beholder of the work to focus on an overall compositional structure, in which the figural components "quietly" occupy pictorial space without drawing attention away from the effect of the "total" work. For Fiedler, the artist was able to achieve this total effect as the result of an anxious and tortuous creative process, a process which corresponds to the beholding subject's discomforting and dynamic experience of the completed artwork during the *Ausdrucksbewegung*. However, despite their expressive and dynamic qualities, Marées's pictures are commendable because they do not contain specific elements that overtly reflect the artist's personality or virtuosity of execution, elements which would distract the viewer from the composition's overall effect. It is the generalized structure of the work—with motifs that are treated, by both the artist and the beholder, with uniform emphasis—which may reflect the artist's "pure strivings" (*rein Streben*) (I, 267) and spiritual identity, rather than specific passages or figures that may represent "arrogant self-interest" (*anmaßlich Selbstgefühl*) (I, 270).

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[34] For photographs of these works, see Julius Meier-Graefe, *Hans von Marées, Sein Leben und sein Werk*, 3 vols. (Munich: R. Piper Verlag, 1909), II, pls. 101, 134, 135. See also Uta Gerlach-Laxner, *Hans von Marées: Katalog seiner Gemälde* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1980).

Fiedler denounces much of the art historical reception of Marées's work on the grounds that academic writers had avoided the perceptual effect of the total composition by allowing "false educational measures" (*falschen Bildungsmitteln*) to influence their interpretations:

> Devastating in effect above all is academic instruction, which puts forward with mediocrity and arrogance a publicly recognized meaning; huge errors are imposed on a still unspoiled student, as though they were demonstrations worthy of imitation, errors which have been appointed to the masters and teachers of art. Whoever lacks the self-confidence to offer an insight of higher value than their examples and opposing interpretations...is lost.[35] (I, 167).

Fiedler's concern with the youthful art history student is one which will be echoed by a host of formalist educators during the following decades. However, Fiedler's radical position prevents him from endorsing the use of specific educational methodologies, because they convey "publicly recognized" or preformulated meanings which discourage the student of Marées's artworks from encountering the experiential reality of the individual object as a "unified inseparable structure." This experiential reality must be attended to without distraction if the work is to convey its moral-spiritual content to the observer. The beholder of painterly artworks, like those of Marées, must be devoted to the act of perceiving them as "wholes" which have not been corrupted by

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[35] "Verwüstend wirkt vor allem der akademische Unterricht; hier tritt die Mittlemäßigkeit mit der Anmaßung einer öffentich anerkannten Bedeutung auf; die größten Verirrungen werden einer noch unverdorbenen Jugend als nachahmenswerte Leistungen derer entgegengehalten, die zu Meistern und Lehrern der berufen sind. Wem das Selbstvertrauen fehlt, um der eigenen Einsicht einen höheren Wert beizulegen, als den Beispielen und den ihm entgegentretenden Meinungen...ist verloren."

preconceived ideas. The beholder, in a sense, must surrender to the reality of the perceptual act and resist the temptation to interpret it further.

In describing Fiedler's methodology, it is important to draw attention to the notions of devotion, surrender, and temptation, because his portrayal of aesthetic perception exhibits a religious quality which recurs in the writings of formalists who constructed aesthetics of the painterly. It is a struggle for the beholder to only perceive the object abstractly as an indivisible whole. This struggle is uncomfortable because one must abstain from using specific concepts, or from focusing on isolated compositional motifs, while experiencing the phenomenon of the object. This way of perceiving is generalized and impersonal in its strict adherence to the phenomenon. The subject must show restraint by confining his- or herself to the psycho-physical processes that come into play while anxiously encountering the succession of images perceived during the perceptual act. This aspect of restraint is mirrored by the artist's anxious infusion of his or her self or personality into the art object while avoiding arrogant displays of virtuosity (I, 270). For Fiedler, when we are compelled as writers to discuss the nature or purpose of aesthetic experience, we *must have faith* in the ability of essentializing terms—rather than positivist language—to refer to it. Only such abstraction in language is capable of alluding to the unseen and intuitive essence of artistic activity which can so easily become corrupted by specialized purposes.

The Relevance of Dilthey

In his interpretations of cultural and historical phenomena, Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) articulated a range of concepts which proved to be of enormous importance for the development of formalist art history. Appointed as the prestigious chair of philosophy at the University of Berlin in 1882, Dilthey had a direct influence on numerous pioneering formalists, including Heinrich Wölfflin, for whom he served as a dissertation reader.[36] Like Fiedler, Dilthey is closely associated with the "life

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[36] Detailed interpretations of Dilthey's major impact on the field of art history during its institutionalization as a distinct academic field are surprisingly scarce, in any language. One discussion in English is included in Joan Hart, "Heinrich Wölfflin: An Intellectual Biography," diss. UC Berkeley (Ann Arbor: UMI Press, 1981). Richard Brilliant is one of the few to draw attention to the fact that discussion of Dilthey's influence has been omitted by the most important scholarship on the formalist tradition in art history. See Brilliant's review of Michael Podro's *The Critical Historians of Art* in *Renaissance Quarterly* 37 (Winter 1984): 634-36. Recent translations of Dilthey's most popular writings, and the future appearance of Dilthey's *Gesammelte Schriften* in English, may improve the situation. Dilthey had a profound effect on formalisms in fields other than art history, most notably literary studies. One important literary scholar who had an impact on American scholarship is Leo Spitzer, who expressed his methodological debt to both Dilthey and Wölfflin on many occasions. See A. Forcione, H. Lindenberger, and M. Sutherland, eds., *Leo Spitzer: Representative Essays* (Stanford: Stanford University Press,

philosophy" tradition, which was concerned with the development of the interpretive tools needed to grasp the wholeness of human experience, a wholeness that was not attended to by methodologies of the natural sciences, including positivism.[37]

In his best known work of 1883, "Introduction to the Human Sciences" (*Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften*),[38] Dilthey proposed a field of scholarly endeavor, the human sciences, that was distinct from that of the "natural sciences" (*Naturwissenschaften*) in its overriding concern with the "psycho-physical living unity of human nature" (*psycho-physischen Lebenseinheit der Menschennatur*) (I, 2, 6). As we have seen, Fiedler strove to refer to a realm of aesthetic experience which is reflective of our entire identity as psycho-physical subjects, including the mysterious, unobservable

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1988), 221, 433-35, and esp. an essay on the Spanish Baroque (1944), which includes discussion of Wölfflin (125-29).

[37] The secondary literature on Dilthey is extensive, although little mention is ever made of Dilthey's profound influence on art historical discourse. One exception is Oskar Bätschmann, *Einführung in die kunstgeschichtliche Hermeneutik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992), 1-7. Still the best introduction to Dilthey is the classic study by Otto Bollnow, *Dilthey: Eine Einführung in seine Philosophie* (1936) (3rd ed., Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1967), which provides a survey of his major philosophical contributions, including the notions of the "human sciences," historical understanding, and the *Weltanschauung*, as well as the development of hermeneutics. Important critiques of the humanist tradition in nineteenth-century Germany, by Hans-Georg Gadamer and others, have focused on Dilthey as a primary figure. For a selection of viewpoints, see, for example, Ernst Wolfgang Orth, ed., *Dilthey und die Philosophie der Gegenwart* (Munich: Verlag Karl Alber, 1985), which contains essays by Bollnow and Gadamer. An interesting study in English is Michael Ermath, *Wilhelm Dilthey: The Critique of Historical Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), which includes a twenty-page overview of Dilthey's intellectual context.

[38] All citations are from Dilthey's *Gesammelte Schriften*, 17 vols. (Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1914-74).

aspects of our subjectivity that are divorced from the discursive field of the natural sciences. Dilthey's ambition was to carve out a discursive space for the human sciences that was similarly reflective of the totality of human experience, a totality which is also partially hidden to direct observation and measurement and, as such, is incommensurable with positivist standards of scholarly rigor. Unlike Fiedler, who was hostile to scholarly discourse in general, Dilthey was primarily interested in laying the foundations of an academic discipline. However, despite their obvious differences both writers offered powerful critiques of positivist scholarship. They each interpreted the subjective experience of perception in a way that influenced formalist art historians who were developing methodologies that strayed from accepted notions of scholarly evidence.

In Dilthey's case, the concepts of *Lebensprozess* ("life process") and *Ganzheit* ("wholeness") are used to refer to qualities of psychological and historical experience which are far too nebulous, dynamic, or unstable to be explained according to fully rationalized and highly coherent interpretive systems:

> All science is a science of experience, but all experience has its original constitution and its definite validity in the conditions of our consciousness in which experience takes place—in the totality of our nature. We call this standpoint—which logically sees the impossibility of going beyond these conditions, which would be like seeing without an eye or directing the knowing look behind the eye itself—the epistemological; modern science can recognize no other....In the veins of the knowing subject constructed by Locke, Hume, and Kant, there flows no real blood, but only the diluted juice of reason as mere mental activity. But dealing with the whole man in history and psychology led me to take the whole man—in the multiplicity of his powers: this willing-feeling-perceiving being—as the basis for explaining knowledge and its concepts....(T)he most important elements of our image(*Bild*) and knowledge of reality...are all things we can explain from this totality of human nature (*ganzen Menschennatur*), whose real life process

> (*Lebensprozess*) manifests itself in its various aspects through willing, feeling, and imagining.[39] (I, Preface, xvii-xviii)

One cannot interpret the "totality of human nature" and its "life process" using completely rationalized and coherent methodological systems. Dilthey's object of study, the "whole" person, indeed has a "multiplicity" of psychological and perceptual qualities which have irrational characteristics warranting a different approach—a psychology of wholeness that is inclusive of the mysterious, "unfathomable depths" of psychic life (VII, 220). We must interpret psychic life ("*Seelenleben*") as not

> ...constituting itself from elements; it is not a composition...; it is originally and always an encompassing unity. From this unity psychic functions have differentiated themselves, but remain bound to their context. This fact, whose highest expression is the unity of consciousness and the unity of the person, entirely distinguishes psychic life from the physical world.[40] (V, 211)

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[39] "Alle Wissenschaft is Erfahrungswissenschaft, aber alle Erfahrung hat ihren ursprünglichen Zusammenhang und ihre hierdurch bestimmte Geltung in den Bedingungen unseres Bewußtseins, innerhalb dessen sie auftritt, in dem Ganzen unserer Natur. Wir bezeichnen diesen Standpunkt, der folgerrecht die Unmöglichkeit einsieht, hinter diese Bedingungen zurückzugehen, gleichsam ohne Auge zu sehen oder den Blick des Erkennens hinter das Auge selber zu richten, als den erkenntnistheoretischen; die moderne Wissenschaft kann keinen anderen anerkennen....In den Adern des erkennenden Subjekts, das Locke, Hume, und Kant konstruierten, rinnt nicht wirkliches Blut, sondern der verdünnte Saft von Vernunft als bloßer Denktätigkeit. Mich führte aber historische wie psychologische Beschäftigung mit dem ganzen Menschen dahin, diesen, in der Mannigfaltigkeit seiner Kräfte, dies wollend fühlend vorstellende Wesen auch der Erklärung der Erkenntnis und ihrer Begriffe....(D)ie wichtigstens Bestandteile unseres Bildes und unserer Erkenntnis der Wirklichkeit...sie alle können aus dieser ganzen Menschennatur erklärt werden, deren realer Lebensprozeß am Wollen, Fühlen und Vorstellen nur seine verscheidenen Seiten hat."

[40] "...es bildet sich nicht aus Elementen; es ist nicht ein Kompositum...; es ist ursprünglich und immer eine übergreifende Einheit. Aus dieser Einheit haben sich seelische Funktionen differziert, verblieben aber dabei an ihren Zusammenhang gebunden. Diese Tatsache, deren Ausdruck auf der höchsten Stufe die Einheit des Bewußtseins und die Einheit der Person ist, unterscheidet das Seelenleben total von der ganzen körperlichen Welt."

Repeatedly in his writings and in public lectures, Dilthey used ambiguous and essentializing terms such as "wholeness" (*Ganzheit*) to reference the entirety of the individual subject's "*Seelenleben*," in all of its multiplicity. This usage of essentialist language is analogous to Fiedler's employment of the term *Ausdrucksbewegung* to allude to the mysterious and irrational aspects of the aesthetic experience.

In the influential essay, "Ideas Concerning Descriptive and Analytical Psychology" (*Ideen über eine beschreibende und zergliedernde Psychologie*, 1894), Dilthey argues that the psychic unity of the individual will not yield to empirical or positivist traditions of psychology that deal with isolated, externalized phenomena: for Dilthey, the dynamic nature of psychic life can be analyzed into an indefinite variety of elements, with the consequence that any particular elements tend to be unimportant. For the positivist, only when just a few elements are posited can scientific hypotheses connecting them hold. However, when the entirety of psychic life is considered, it resists hypothetical explanations, which presuppose that the psychic elements be not only limited in number, but also univocally definable as if they were directly observable in the natural world (V, 139).

Indeed, psychic life appears to be infinitely divisible and therefore rules out any overall hypothetical explanation of the psychic continuum, for this would require an unlimited series of hypothetical connections. Therefore, for Dilthey, the use of a positivist, fully rationalized method of hypothetical "explanation" (*Erklarung*) to

interpret the wholeness of the individual subject's psyche life is an impossibility. An alternative psychological method is required, one which instead seeks an "understanding" (*Verstehen*) of individual psychology, rather than a coherent explanation as dictated by the methodology of the natural sciences:

> We explain using purely intellectual processes, but we understand using a combination of all our psychic abilities. And in understanding we proceed from the context of the whole (*Zusammenhang des Ganzen*) as it is given in vitality, in order to make the parts comprehensible on the basis of it....All psychological thought contains the basic feature that the apprehension of the whole makes possible and determines the interpretation of the individual.[41] (V, 172)

Dilthey states: "We explain nature, but we understand psychic life" ("*Die Natur wir erklären, das Seelenleben verstehen wir*") (V, 144). Dilthey's concept of *Verstehen* is capable of reflecting the inner experience of the individual which cannot be comprehended according to rational laws (V, 170). "Understanding" is used as the interpretive key needed to delve into the psychological aspects of historical reality as it is experienced by the individual subject. Unlike explanation, the interpreter's understanding is not reliant on a logic of causation derived from the natural sciences:

> There is in the historical world no causality derived from the natural sciences, for cause (*Ursache*) in this sense entails that it produces effects according to the necessity of laws: history knows only about relations of doing (*Wirken*) and suffering, of action and reaction.[42] (VII, 197; see also VIII, 175-78)

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[41] "Wir erklären durch ein rein intellektuelle Prozesse, aber wir verstehen durch das Zusammenwirken aller Gemütskräfte in der Auffassung. Und wir gehen im vom Zusammenhang des Ganzen, der uns lebendig gegeben ist, aus, um aus diesen das einzelne uns faßbar zu machen....Alles psychologische Denken behält diesen Grundzug, daß das Auffassen des Ganzen die Interpretation des einzelnen ermöglicht und bestimmt."

[42] "Es gibt in der geschichlichen Welt kein naturwissenschaftliche Kausalität, denn Ursache im Sinne dieser Kausalität schließt in sich, daß sie nach Gesetzen mit Notwendigkeit Wirkungen herbeiführt; die Geschichte weiß nur von den Verhältnissen des

Dilthey's interpretive language—like his concept of understanding—is of an indefinite nature and therefore suitable for referencing the "wholeness" of our existence as individual subjects. In the process of interpreting cultural or historical phenomena, one must retain a sense of this wholeness in order to impart spiritual and moral value to the student of the human sciences.

This overriding concern with the imparting of spiritual value invokes the humanist tradition known as *Bildung*, to which both Dilthey and Fiedler subscribed, but in different ways.[43] The concept of *Bildung* was associated, during the mid- to late 19th century, with the "cultivation" of one's own innate capacities as a human being. Cultivation is accomplished through a spiritual process whereby the individual subject struggles to develop these capacities while, at the same time, receiving universal and transcendental content. Cultivation may take place during the subject's perception of the aesthetic object (Fiedler) or during one's experience of the historical object (Dilthey). However, *Bildung* can only retain its spiritual character if a sense of wholeness is maintained during the

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Wirkens und Leidens, der Aktion und Reaktion." See also the essay "The Construction of the Historical World in the Human Sciences" ("*Der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften*"), V, 170-71. For a pioneering (although brief) discussion of Dilthey's relation to the art historical "understanding" of Wölfflin, see Joan Hart, "Reinterpreting Wölfflin: Neo-Kantianism and Hermeneutics," *Art Journal* 42 (Winter 1982), 295.

[43] An important critical overview of the *Bildung* tradition can be found in Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (1960), 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Continuum, 1998), esp. 9-19. Although no mention is made of art historical discourse specifically, Gadamer's book should be consulted by anyone concerned with the field's humanist underpinnings or with the issue of what constitutes art historical knowledge.

process. For Fiedler, the whole psycho-physical subject strives to perceive the aesthetic object as a whole inseparable structure, while, for Dilthey, the subject attempts to understand the wholeness of human nature and the totality of psychic life as it is manifested by the historical object. To maintain such states of wholeness requires extraordinary devotion and restraint on the part of the subject, who must do so without being coopted by specialized purposes or interests that would distract from the cultivation process.

To retain *Bildung*'s moralizing and spiritual nature, one must avoid dividing up the whole in order to use a portion of it as a means to an end. For instance, one could instrumentalize a part of the entire psyche in order to formulate scientific hypotheses; one could insert one small section of the unified artistic composition into an elaborate comparison with other artworks, or excise an aspect of the whole artwork in order to analyze its relation to cultural context; or, one could instrumentalize a part of the whole object of study for the purpose of demonstrating a specialized talent or make a display of virtuosity according to "arrogant self-interest," to recall Fiedler's phrase. One must avoid this usage of instrumental logic and self-interest by upholding the wholeness of the object under consideration as well as the wholeness of the subject which apprehends it. One achieves this state of devotion to wholeness—and the spiritual and moral enlightenment that comes with it—by referring to the object under consideration in an abstract and relatively *impersonal* way so as not to tempt or distract oneself by the urge to fulfill specialized needs and self-serving desires.

Of course, Fiedler and Dilthey differed regarding how one should respect the condition of wholeness that is required for the cultivation process. Fiedler believed that the interests of academic discourse constituted an unacceptable distraction from the wholeness of the aesthetic experience: only without specialized educational goals could the writer refer to the art object in a way that truly cultivates the reader of the text. Conversely, Dilthey was convinced that the academic field of the human sciences could be conceived in terms of methodological and interpretive language that is compatible with a process of cultivation. I will show in Chapters Two and Three that both Fiedler and Dilthey, although not formalists themselves, had a considerable influence on the development of formalist art historical methods motivated by an urgent concern for the student's cultivation. Fiedler was an inspiration to art historians seeking aesthetic alternatives to the positivist methodologies of their day, while Dilthey's formulation of a specifically academic discourse was of enormous importance to pioneering formalists, like Heinrich Wölfflin, Alois Riegl, and August Schmarsow, who sought professional justification for their resistance to what they saw as the "old" conservative art history—represented by the philological and literary approaches of Hermann Grimm, Georg Dehio, and Edouard Dobbert.

CHAPTER TWO: WÖLFFLIN AND THE PAINTERLY

In *The Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art* (*Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Das Problem der Stilentwicklung in der Neueren Kunst*) of 1915,[44] Wölfflin describes a fundamental change in the perceptual experience of the subject from the 16th to the 17th century. In the process, he defines the boundaries of a normative range of perceptual activity: The Baroque (or painterly) and the Renaissance (or linear) modes of perception are posited as occupying separate poles in relation to criteria based upon aspects of the aesthetic viewing process. Using an elaborate series of illustrated examples, Wölfflin describes each of these criteria as they relate to the "painterly" and the "linear" modes: single chapters are devoted to the painterly and linear beholders' perception of plane and recession, closed and open form, multiplicity and unity, as well as clearness and unclearness—the subject's impressions of each criterion are thus discussed separately.

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[44]German editions of *The Principles* published by Bruckmann, Munich. Differences between editions are of a minor nature; the pagination of the main text remains the same in all of them. In translating from the German, I have used M.D. Hottinger's standard translation (New York: Henry Holt, 1932)—made from the seventh German edition of 1929—as a guide, but I have strayed from Hottinger's interpretation in many instances. It is worth noting that the sixth German edition and the English edition published by Holt contain the photographs of the best quality (the paperback English version published by Dover has far grainier images). References to the German edition of 1915 are cited first, followed by Hottinger's translation in parentheses.

A comparison of linear treatment of female figures by Dürer and Rembrandt is conceived in terms of the subject's impressions being based on completely different values. Dürer's outlines can be "apprehended without difficulty" because the

> line edge running around [the figure] has the principal accent. In Rembrandt it has lost its significance; it is no longer the bearer of the formal impression and there lies no special beauty in it. If we were to attempt to move along it, we should soon notice that that is now hardly possible. In place of the continuous, uniformly moving contour line of the 15th century, the broken line of the painterly style has appeared.[45] [38 (32-33)]

Rembrandt's outlines are "no longer the bearer of the formal impression," and thus, the beholder of Rembrandt's painterly or *malerisch* work is able to suspend the tactile senses so that he or she experiences the anxious visual interplay of light and dark masses.

Other strong distinctions are made between the 16th-century emphasis on planar representation as exemplified by Raphael's *Miraculous Draught of Fishes* and the 17th-century interest in compelling the viewer's eye to strain continuously to form "recessional relations" ("*das Auge beständig zu Bindungen nach der Tiefe gezwungen wird.*") [81 (74)] while experiencing Rubens's *Christ Bearing the Cross*, for example. In the Renaissance work, the image is spread out in separate receding bands—"clear horizontal strata one behind the other" ("*lauter horizontale Schichten hintereinander*") [88 (82)]. In the Baroque painting,

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[45] "...die ringsum laufende Randlinie hat den Hauptakzent. Bei Rembrandt hat sie ihre Bedeutung verloren, sie ist nicht mehr der wesentliche Träger des Formausdrucks und es liegt keine besondere Schönheit in ihr. Wer ihr entlang gehen wollte, würde bald merken, daß dies kaum mehr möglich ist. An Stelle der zusammenhängenden gleichmäßig durchlaufenden Kontourlinie des 16. Jahrhunders ist die gebrochene Linie des malerischen Stils getreten."

> we can no longer grasp the notion of a series of strips before us...recession becomes immediate experience....the whole achieves its effect so definitely in recession...the idea that the composition could be contained in longitudinal strips cannot even arise. Over the shadowed foreground space we leap at once to what lies behind...[46][89-90 (82-83)]

Indeed, in the painterly image there is a greater focus on the sense of immediacy that occurs when the beholder perceives the dynamic relationships between foreground and background to the extent that any element "which could emphasize the plane is repressed" ("*alles, was die Fläche betonen würde, zurückgedrängt ist*").[47] [100 (94)] Wölfflin's implication is that Rubens and Raphael represent two extremes of perceptual activity.

However, in describing the dynamism and intangibility of the painterly mode as lying at one end of a scale of perceptual behavior, Wölfflin must nonetheless establish equally important limitations to that behavior. The Baroque artist or architect is able to create tinges of unreality but never provokes the viewer's sensibilities to the point that he or she is compelled "to seek the motives" (*die Motives zu suchen*) of the artist, whose purpose "is not to be unclear, but to make clarity seem like an accidental by-product"

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[46] Rubens's picture is given exemplary status by being one of a handful of illustrations in the book to occupy an entire page. "...man gar nicht mehr auf die Vorstellung kommen kann, eine Folge von Streifen vor sich zu haben...die Tiefe unmittlebar zum Erlebnis gebracht wird....das Ganze so ausgesprochen im Tiefensinn wirkt sinn...der Gedanke, als ob die Komposition in Streifenfiguren sich erschöpfe, gar nicht aufkommen kann. Über den beschatteten Vorderraum springt man gleich auf das Rückliegende..."

[47]The verb "*zurückdrängen*" (to force back or repel) has violent implications, and hence may be interpreted as one of the many contributors to the masculinist gendering of the painterly aesthetic (see below for further discussion).

("*...zwar nicht unklar sein, aber doch die Klarheit nur wie ein zufälliges Nebenresultat erscheinen lassen*") [218-20 (204-06)].[48] In order to substantiate the limits which the 17th-century subject does not breach, Wölfflin articulates the mode of perception belonging to an earlier stage in his narrative progression, that of the 15th-century subject: Ghirlandaio and Schongauer do not prevent the beholder from seeking the artists' motives because they fail to create adequately coherent recessional effects; their effects do not accord with Wölfflin's scale of acceptable perceptual behavior. Ghirlandaio, being off the scale, is said to use slanting forms to distort the planes in a dispersed and dismembered composition with "superfluous agitation" ("*überflüssige Unruhe*") [110 (101)], while Schongauer's pictorial space may be "enlivened at various depth intervals" ("*verschiedenen Tiefenabständen belebten Bühne*") but the connections between foreground and background figures are not sufficiently defined—a "definite movement to or from the background" ("*ohne ausgesprochene Bewegung nach oder aus der Tiefe*") is not evident. [110 (102)] These so-called primitives of the 15th century render pictorial units that are "too dispersed or appear confused" ("*zu zerstreut...oder wirr erscheint*") in their "scattered multiplicity" ("*zerstreuten Vielerlei*"). [170, 178 (159, 166)]

One of Wölfflin's main objectives in *The Principles* was to construct an elaborate series of criteria that he used to characterize the perceptual activities belonging to two distinctive epochs. Of particular interest is his concerted effort to articulate two edges or

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[48] On the "concealed" lawfulness of the painterly experience, see Joan Hart, "Heinrich Wölfflin: An Intellectual Biography," diss. UC Berkeley (Ann Arbor: UMI Press, 1981), 386, 389-92.

boundaries of a range of perceptual behavior that are conceived in relation to a premature, 15th-century mode which violates that range of activity. We can interpret this articulation of boundaries as an attempt to stage a kind of "competition" between different characters, so that one heroic character—not an individual person, but a mode of perception during the Baroque period—emerges as the victor, as the seemingly self-evident or "natural" means of envisioning the world in contrast to the less enlightened modes of the 15th and 16th centuries. The philosopher of history Hayden White has discussed the notion of a "hierarchy of codes" that is elaborated and evaluated throughout the course of historical narratives. White uses a helpful analogy in describing a protagonistic and heroic element in the narrative that appears to try on different suits until one is found that is tailored properly to the needs of a particular kind of intelligence, as opposed to a variety of "unsuited" elements that are progressively discarded as the story strives toward a climactic moment of resolution. For Wölfflin, the heroic element may be read as a 17th-century subjectivity that is brought into dialogue repeatedly with a 16th-century competitor, a dialogue that is consistently followed by an exchange with a pre-Renaissance mode of behavior, before finding the painterly suit that fits, as it were.[49] The effort to compose a three- rather than two-tiered hierarchy of characters in this recurring

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[49] This dialogue does not play itself out in such a clear-cut or resolved way when it comes to actual reading experience. Accordingly, my discussion is merely meant to provide one aspect of the rhetorical structure which, among many other things, enters into the reception of Wölfflin's painterly narrative.

narrative sequence makes the competitive atmosphere and eventual triumph of the Baroque mode seem more convincing to the reader.[50]

The positioning of the Baroque or painterly mode of perception as the fulfillment of the narrative structure is compelling to readers partly because of the nature of Wölfflin's discussions of painterly perception as an uncomfortable process of emancipation and enpowerment. As I mentioned, Wölfflin repeatedly describes the painterly subject's ability to suspend a former reliance on the tangibility of objects so that he or she can now "surrender to the play of tones and forms" that belong to the Baroque style.[51] In the case of painterly architecture such as the St. John Nepomuk Church by the brothers Asam in Munich,

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[50]See White, "The Context in the Text: Method and Ideology in Intellectual History" (1982), in *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 202-03, 194. David Summers discusses the Aristotelian rhetorical tradition, established in the Renaissance, of creating an antithetical relationship—such as linear vs. painterly—that is complicated by an additional feature (like the "primitive") which serves to ease the raw tension of a merely antithetical opposition. See Summers, "Contraposto: Style and Meaning in Renaissance Art," *Art Bulletin* 59 (1977): 347. Of course, numerous other discourses enhanced, amplified, or modified the naturalizing effects of Wölfflin's narrative, including those grounded in evolutionary theory; for discussion, see, for instance, Olga Hazan, *Le Mythe du Progrès Artistique* (Montreal: Les Presses de L'Université de Montréal, 2001), esp. 28-40.

[51] As Marshall Brown points out, Wölfflin's notions of the linear and painterly modes do not operate strictly on the level of visual experience. Wölfflin's implication is that the subject's entire being—rather than merely the eyes—somehow becomes engaged during the process of interaction with the aesthetic object. In the case of the painterly mode, this implication is given rhetorical force by the emphasis on a sense of immediacy along with corresponding tinges of anxiousness that are used to psychologize the perception of the object. Brown, "The Classic Is the Baroque: On the Principle of Wölfflin's Art History" *Critical Inquiry* 9 (December 1982): 381, 387. See also Michael Ann Holly, *Panofsky and the Foundations of Art History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 65–66.

> one does not look for the solid, enduring, concrete form of the lay-out, but abandons oneself (*überläßt sich*) to the fluctuations (*Wogen*) of the changing views, convinced that these are not fortuitous by-products, but that, in this never-ending spectacle of movement, the true life of the building is expressed.[52] [69 (64)]

In discussing the Ss. Apostoli church in Rome, Wölfflin refers to a sense of movement

> which quivers over the whole...[an] effect [that] presumes that the spectator is able to disregard the merely tangible character of the architectonic form and is capable of surrendering to the visual spectacle, where semblance interweaves with semblance.....In strict (*strenge*) architecture each line acts as an edge and each volume as a solid body: in painterly architecture the impression of concreteness does not cease, but with the notion of tangibility there is combined that illusion of all-pervading movement which is derived just from the non-tangible elements of the impression.[53] [75-76 (69-70)]

Recalling Fiedler's discussions of aesthetic perception as the *Ausdrucksbewegung*, Wölfflin places a similar emphasis on the subject's anxious struggle to experience an expressive and dynamic sense of movement, while abstaining from the relatively coherent

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[52] "...man sucht nicht nach der festen, bleibenden, körperlichen Gestalt der Anlage, sondern man überläßt sich dem Wogen der wechselnden Ansichten, überzeugt, daß dies nicht zufällige Nebenwirkungen sind, sondern daß in diesen unendlichen Bewegungsschauspiel das eigentliche Leben des Baues zum Ausdruck gelangt."

[53] It is notable that Wölfflin sometimes uses the term "*strenge*"—a word which can connote rigidness and austerity—to refer to linear architecture, which implies his aesthetic preference for the liberatory effects of the painterly that is expressed in *The Principles* in contrast to earlier writings such as *Classic Art*.

"...die über das Ganze hinzittert...[eine]Wirkung [die] setzt voraus, daß der Berschauer von dem bloß tastbaren Charakter der architektonischen Formen abzusehen vermag und imstande ist, dem optischen Schauspiel sich hinzugeben, wo Schein mit Schein sich verflicht....In der strengen Architektur wirkt jede Linie als Kante und jedes Volumen als fester Körper; in der malerischer Architektur setzt der Eindruck der Körperlichkeit nicht aus, aber mit der Vorstellung des Tastbaren verbindet sich jene Illusion von durchgehender Bewegung, die sich gerade aus den nicht-tastmäßigen Momenten des Eindruckes herleitet."

and comfortable "linear" perception of tangible (*tastbar*) bodies and clearly defined outlines. The subject strives to abandon his- or herself (*überläßt sich*) to the unrelenting flow of changing images, the "illusion of all-pervading movement" that constitutes the painterly experience. By abandoning oneself to the movement of images (*Bilder*), one makes "the task of the eye" (*die Aufgabe für das Auge*) more difficult and never-ending; without the sense of relief provided by the "exhaustive revelation of form" (*restlose Offenbarung der Form*) belonging to the linear experience, the painterly subject sacrifices that feeling of coherent tangibility, and goes through a comparatively painful—and spiritualizing—process.[209 (196)] This activity of abandon or surrender (*hingeben*) is integral to Wölfflin's—as well as others'—construction of the painterly and is reminiscent of Fiedler's efforts to portray the aesthetic experience as an intuitive activity which cannot be fully explained or exhaustively described. Indeed, Wölfflin often uses the verb "*hingeben*" to refer to a surrendering process that occurs during the subject's submission to the continuous onslaught of painterly imagery; such terms are meant to lend his account a spiritualizing flavor. Wölfflin's aesthetic interest in the painterly sometimes is indicated by his reverence for such "surrendering" activity as an empowering experience. At one point he actually uses the phrase, "the power to surrender to purely visual appearance always signifies a later stage of development" ("*...immer die spätere Entwicklungsstufe bedeutet, sich der bloßen optischen Erscheinung überlassen zu können...*"). [48 (44)]

The potentially unruly and immediate aspects of the painterly beholding experience are enhanced by many descriptions of a charged sensation of movement that

occurs when the beholder gives up a relatively tactile comfort in the outlines of figures as a "uniformly sure guide through the sum of the form" ("*gleichmäßig sicherer Führer durch das Formganze*") [21 (19)]: the subject sacrifices that sure guidance and "now penetrates beyond the solid object into the realm of the immaterial" ("*Über das Greifbar-Gegenständliche dringt...jetzt...in das Reich des Ungreifbaren*") [31 (27)]. The verb "*dringen*" (to penetrate) often is associated with a sense of urgency and danger, such as when one says in "case of emergency" ("*dringender Fall*"). This sense of urgency can be said to permeate Wölfflin's painterly notion, especially with regard to the perception of the "immaterial." The persistent usage of terms such as "penetration" is also indicative of the formalist's employment of masculinist imagery to portray the immediacy and forcefulness of movements that occur during the beholding experience of the painterly object (Figures 6 and 7). In the case of Wölfflin, such movements happen during an initial experience of confronting and entering the realm of the immaterial presented by the Baroque artwork and are consistently described in terms of an uncomfortable and intense perceptual activity.[54] Of interest in this regard are Wölfflin's many references to a "vigorous into-the-picture movement" ("*eine lebhafte Tiefenbewegung*") that occurs in painterly compositions: a few eroticized examples include the reference to a "vigorous" movement from the male artist depicted in the foreground to the female model in the background of Vermeer's *Painter with Model* [85 (77)] and the perceptual movement that

[54] The term "*lebhaft*" can have violent connotations, such as, for example, when it refers to a heated argument ("*lebhafter Streit*").

occurs from Adam to Eve in a work by Tintoretto which Wölfflin grants a kind of exemplary status [83 (77)].

However, despite the presence of anxiousness and discomfort, the perceptual movements provoked by the painterly object always abstain from the tentative, confused, or ephemeral (i.e. feminized) aspects of the 15th-century mode of subjectivity. I will show below that this avoidance of feminized subjectivity was identified by formalists with an evocation of the "hard data" of empirical research and a corresponding masculinist sense of potency that was, paradoxically, associated with not only the "raw" and vital, but also the controlled and rationalized, qualities of painterly experience.[55] David Summers has described the Aristotelian polarity between masculine "form" and feminine "matter" as having a foundational importance for much modern art historical discourse; the portrayal of matter as a kind of feminized, passive, and waiting "receptacle" for the

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[55] For more on Wölfflin's aesthetic of immediacy and "potency," see Mark Jarzombek, "De-Scribing the Language of Looking: Wölfflin and the History of Aesthetic Experientialism," *Assemblage* 23 (1994): 47-52. Jarzombek's discussion of Wöfflin's aesthetic philosophy is supportive of my overall argument concerning the rhetorical force of the painterly. Jarzombek does not discuss the gender symbolism of the painterly specifically. Andreas Eckl refers to the notion of "potency" as it relates to Wölfflin's scientism, which was meant to evoke, in an abstract way, both empirical research on nerve-functions (performed by Wilhelm Wundt and others) and the philosophical arguments of Vischer concerning conscious perceptual functions; this evocation was meant to supply formalisms such as Wölfflin's with the scientistic veneer of "objective clarity," potency, and rigor that was gendered masculine. See Eckl, *Kategorien der Anschauung*, 167-70; Eckl, however, does not mention the gendered aspects of formalist scientism.

potentially violent and active intrusion of form is analogous to the formalist act of "penetration" into the unknown, passive, and malleable depths of the painterly artwork.[56]

A Leap of Faith

The powerful and assertive sensations of painterly beholding function rhetorically to provide Wölfflin's interpretation of painterly subjectivity with the connotation of psychological immediacy. Wölfflin refers to the painterly mode as the perception of an illusion of "all-pervading movement" [76 (70)] and often describes the painterly using a variety of dramatic and poetic devices. In discussing drawings by van de Velde and Ruysdael (Figure 8), Wölfflin describes

> the limitless triumph—the mass of lines that makes it totally impossible to grasp the drawing by its separate elements. With lines that establish hardly any perceptible relation to the form of the object, and can only be achieved intuitively, an effect is produced which makes us think we see the moving foliage of great trees before us....The inexpressibility (*Unbeschreibliche*) of an infinitude of form (*Formenunendlichkeit*) which seems to deny any attempt at fixation (*Festlegung*) has here been mastered by painterly methods.[57] [43 (38-39)]

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[56] See Summers, "Form and Gender," *New Literary History* 24 (Spring 1993): 243-71, esp. 251-56. See also Joan Scott's impressive feminist critique of empiricist "experience" that tends to subsume "other" subject-positions; Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17 (Summer 1991): 773-97.

[57] It is a testament to Wölfflin's "art history without names" that he used the exact same words, in both the sixth and seventh editions of *The Principles*, to refer to different examples of the painterly treatment of foliage—namely, a drawing by van de Velde in the sixth edition and a detail of a drawing by Ruysdael in the seventh edition, from which the English translation was made. This is a rare variation between editions which I cannot explain. "...das Unbegrenzte Trumpf und die Linienmasse, die es ganz unmöglich macht, die Zeichnung nach ihren einzelnen Elementen zu fassen. Mit einer Strichführung, die mit der objektiven Form kaum mehr einen erkennbaren Zusammenhang bewahrt und nur intuitiv gewonnen sein kann, ist die Wirkung erreicht, daß wir das bewegliche Blattwerk großer Bäume...vor uns zu sehen glauben....Das Unbeschreibliche einer Formenunendlichkeit, die sich jeder Festlegung zu versagen scheint, ist hier mit malerischen Mitteln bewältigt."

The reader of Wölfflin's discourse is invited to participate in an intuitive experience of highly dynamic movement and "infinitude"—indeed, an experience analogous to Fiedler's *Ausdrucksbewegung*, with amorphous and "inexpressible" qualities. [58] This experience allows the student of the Baroque to intuitively "understand"—but not coherently "explain," in Dilthey's sense of the word—something of the historical object, to momentarily collapse the void between painterly past and modern present, or to somehow tap into a transhistorical component of Baroque consciousness.

However, this intuitive aspect of the painterly—which "seems to deny any attempt at fixation," as Wölfflin puts it—must be presented within an aesthetic discourse that is organized according to rationalist principles. In contrast to so-called primitives like van der Goes who failed to create coherent spatial effects, a Baroque artist such as Rubens achieves a "welding" of compositional elements into a unified and

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[58] Michael Ann Holly recently has commented at length about the incoherent aspects of Wölfflin's painterly concept. Holly points to Wölfflin's categories of Renaissance and Baroque that do not relate events, attitudes, and personalities in a coherent, temporal architectonic; Wölfflin tends to articulate a perceptual world that is constantly in flux, in which artistic form seems to unwind itself according to its own unpredictable will. The incoherence of Wölfflin's narrative as a whole is seen as a product of a Baroque aesthetic which infuses the text on a structural level. See Holly, "Wölfflin and the Imagining of the Baroque," in *Visual Culture: Images and Interpretations* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 347-64, esp. 353; a revised version of this essay appears in Holly, *Past Looking: Historical Imagination and the Rhetoric of the Image* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996). See also Marshall Brown, "The Classic is the Baroque: On the Principle of Wölfflin's Art History," 401.

> homogeneous mass from which the individual figure can hardly be detached...On principle, the Baroque no longer reckons with a multiplicity of independent units, harmoniously inter-dependent, but with an absolute unity in which the individual part has lost its privilege.[59] [168 (157)]

The homogeneous unity of the painterly composition provides an element of rational restraint and control that works in combination with the intuitive and unruly aspects of painterly experience. The mass or fabric "from which the individual figure can hardly be detached," must prioritize a uniform and controlled recessional movement "which the spectator is called upon to apprehend in one breath as a unified whole" ("*die der Berschauer als ein einheitliches Ganzes in einem Atemzug aufnehmen soll*").[60] [106 (97)] As we saw with Fiedler's treatment of Marées's work, the painterly artist must downplay the importance of isolated compositional devices and motifs; one should show restraint from displays of virtuosity and specialized talents by demonstrating a (moral and spiritual) reverence for the image's "absolute unity."[61] Like Fiedler, Wölfflin

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[59] "...das Zusammenschmelzen der Figuren zu einer einheitlichen Masse, aus der die einzelne Figur kaum mehr herausgelöst werden kann....Der Barock rechnet grundsätzlich nicht mehr mit einer Vielheit selbständiger Teile, die harmonisch zusammengreifen, sondern mit einer absoluten Einheit, in der der einzelne Teil sein Sonderrecht verloren hat."

[60] Wölfflin's interpretation of painterly perception was strongly influenced by Adolf von Hildebrand, who articulated, in his writing and his sculptural artworks, an aesthetic of the "relief view" (*Fernbild*) and the perception of the unified composition that is remarkably regulated and homogeneous in character. Hildebrand's classicising aesthetic, however, is calmer and more composed than Wölffin's anxious notion of the painterly. For further discussion of Hildebrand's importance, see Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art*, 110-16 and Eckl, *Kategorien der Anschauung*, 176-200, esp. 181, 194.

[61] Norbert Schmitz has recently published a series of Wölfflin's lectures on nineteenth-century art delivered in Munich during the summer of 1911. These lectures tend to

conceives of an aesthetic experience that is highly expressive, but one which has a distinctly *impersonal* quality which prevents any individualism that would distract from the preponderant effect of a unified "whole." Wölfflin continually underlines this painterly devotion to the "total" artwork containing uniform elements which compel the subject to apprehend "homogeneous recessional movement" (*einheitliche Tiefenbewegung*) [88 (82)] in a way that is vigorous and anxious, but that is also remarkably controlled.

We observed earlier how the subject perceives depth in the painterly image as a "leap" beyond the foreground space to "what lies behind." Undoubtedly Wölfflin associates this leap with a condition of uncertainty and anxiety that accompanies the "increased...suddenness of perspective reduction" ("*die Jähheit des perspektivischen Zusammenschrumpfens erhöht*"). [90 (84)] It is the perceptual leap into the (unknown) depths of the painterly artwork which is associated with the momentary loss of control on the part of the reader who is compelled to identify that leap with the subjectivity of the Baroque period.[62] But the reality of painterly perception of depth is also one of

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highlight Marées and include an overtly ethical discussion of the painterly's "humbleness" of approach which allegedly provided, in the hands of Marées (and a few others, such as Böcklin) a "shaking of the moral foundations of art." Fiedler's influence is especially apparent in such passages. See Schmitz, ed., *Heinrich Wölfflin: Kunstgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts: Akademische Vorlesung* (Alfter: Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaften, 1993), esp. 10-15.

[62] I am indebted to two recent critiques dealing with the role that a psychology of uncertainty plays within Wölfflin's narratives and categories. Lambert Wiesing discusses the influence of the Schopenhauerian notion of form expressing an unexplainable will manifested in an aesthetic experience which no fully rationalized and coherent conception of "content" can decipher. Wiesing considers the possibility that formalist "style is the principle which bridges in visualization the uncrossable uncertainty." Beat Wyss deals with the relevence of the Nietzchean categories of the Dionysian and Apollonian to the

conscious control—rather than just intuitive recklessness—during the all-important interval when the painterly beholder is made to "think" the foreground and background sections "together in the spatial sense" ("*im räumlichen Sinne zusammenzudenken*"). [90 (84)] Wölfflin's discussion of "closed" and "open" form effectively indicates the nature of this balance achieved between the intuitive and the rational.[63] The closed composition

> makes of the picture a self-contained (*begrenzten*) phenomenon, pointing everywhere back to itself, while, conversely, the style of the open form everywhere points out beyond itself and purposely seems limitless (*unbegrenzt erscheinen will*), although, of course, secret limits continue to exist, and make it possible for the picture to have the character of self-containment (*Geschlossenheit*) in the aesthetic sense.[64] [133 (124)]

By expanding beyond the containment of the closed form, the painterly acquires a quality of *seeming limitlessness* which makes it more evocative of "living reality" ("*lebendigen*

Wölfflinian notions of painterly and linear; in a limited though very insightful discussion, Wyss also makes the point that the rational control of the Apollonian wins against the instinctual unruliness of the Dionysian in *The Principles*'s narrative. See Wiesing, *Die Sichtbarkeit des Bildes: Geschichte und Perspektiven der formalen Ästhetik* (Hamburg: Rowolht Taschenbuch Verlag, 1997), 73-75, 103, 110-13; Wyss, *Der Wille zur Kunst: Zur ästhetischen Mentalität der Moderne* (Cologne: DuMont, 1996), esp. 110. See also Eckl, *Kategorien der Anschauung*, 233-40. As I have discussed elsewhere, the influence of Nietzche and Schopenhauer may be more easily ascertained in the writing of Neo-Hegelian, "expressionist" art historians such as Wilhelm Worringer who had a more pronounced interest than Wölfflin in speculative philosophy and in pre-Freudian theories of the unconscious.

[63] For commentary on the rationalizing role of self-critical "awareness" and control in the Baroque, see Erwin Panofsky, "What is Baroque" (1960), in Panofsky, *Three Essays on Style*, ed. Irving Lavin (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), 51, 75.

[64] "...das Bild zu einer in sich selbst begrenzten Erscheinung macht, die überall auf sich selbst zurückdeutet, wie umgekehrt der Stil der offenen Form überall über sich selbst hinausweist, unbegrenzt erscheinen will, obwohl eine heimliche Begrenzung immerfort da ist und eben den Charakter der Geschlossenheit im ästhetischen Sinne möglich macht."

Wirklichkeit") [135 (126)], a reality which makes the viewing subject uneasy because of its lack of clarity and coherence. The experience of this limitlessness is associated by Wölfflin repeatedly with the "living"—an uncomfortable and anxious condition of life which embraces the intuitive and the vital, "despite the protest of rational vision" ("*gegen den Einspruch optischer Rationalität*"). [234 (220)] However, the irrational conditions of painterly perception are always the subject of "secret limits" which prevent it from reverting to the more extreme irrationality of the 15th-century primitives: "In opposition to the conscious unclearness of the Baroque there was, in the pre-Renaissance epoch, an unconscious unclearness" ("*Im Gegensatz zu der bewußten Unklarheit des Barock gibt es in der vorklassischen Zeit eine unbewußt Unklarheit...*") [231 (217)] which represents a "primitive" amount of irrationality that exceeds the bounds of Wölfflin's painterly aesthetic.[65]

The reader is expected to easily apprehend the painterly because of its "living" qualities, which are accessed when one participates in the spectacle of vital, dynamic perceptual experience identified with abrupt recessional "leaps," the "seeming limitnessness" or "infinitude" of the open composition, or the illusion of "all-pervading movement." The art history student is further compelled to relate to the painterly spectacle because its anxious evocation of "life" is directly connected to one's innate

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[65] Andreas Eckl insightfully comments on the tropes of concealment and of anxious "dissonance" in Wölfflin's portrayal of painterly perception. Especially interesting is the musical analogy between the abrupt "rhythmic" fluctuations occurring during the perception of both the musical and the pictorial Baroque composition. See Eckl, *Kategorien der Anschauung*, 233, 236.

germanic or "Northern" sensibility, in contrast to the linear experience that tends to be "Southern" in its orientation. By granting Northern artists—most notably, Rubens, Vermeer, and Rembrandt—exemplary status as representatives of the painterly, Wölfflin lends a racial tone to a narrative that continuously associates the painterly with the vital and the living—an association which may be intuitively "understood" by the Northern-germanic art history student of the early 20th century:

> [T]he germanic race lies within the blood of the painterly essence....the Baroque transformation into the painterly fulfilled itself in Italy in a splendid development, but we must not forget that the ultimate conclusions were only demonstrated in the North. There the painterly mode of feeling (*Empfindung*) seems to lie (*haften*) in the very soil....The finished form is of little significance for the Germanic imagination; it is always overplayed by the charm (*Reiz*) of movement.[66] [73 (67)]

The Northern student is uniquely capable of understanding the painterly because it is in his or her blood to do so. Such racial identification with the painterly is of an intuitive nature and therefore cannot be fully explained by rational analysis.

It is the "inexpressibility" of life that is somehow conveyed during the perception of the painterly object, an experience of the whole which cannot be completely conveyed using analytical descriptions or with other "demonstrative" devices, such as photographic

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[66] The use of the verb "*haften*" may help to impart an uncomfortable, psychological dimension to the painterly, as the term is sometimes used to denote a sense of being haunted by fears, uneasiness, and the like. "[D]er germanischen Rasse steckt von vornherein das malerische Wesen im Blute....Die barocke Wandlung ins Malerische hat in Italien...in einer glänzenden Entwicklung sich vollzogen, aber man darf nicht vergessen, daß die letzten Konsequenzen erst im Norden gezogen worden sind. Hier scheint die malerische Empfindung am Boden zu haften....Die fertige Form bedeutet der germanischen Phantasie zu wenig, sie muß immer überspielt sein von dem Reiz der Bewegung."

representation.[67] At the heart of the painterly aesthetic is the "beauty of the impalpable" ("*Schönheit des Ungreifbaren*"), which is "inaccessible to reproduction" ("*Für Abbildungen sind...unzugänglich*") [78 (72)] and which entails crucial, unobservable aspects that are incommensurable with analytical or positivist scholarship. Accordingly, one must develop interpretive language that is sufficiently amorphous to reference the intuitive confrontation—and racial identification—with the phenomenon of the painterly object as a whole.

In 1888, more than twenty-five years prior to his writing of *The Principles*, Wölfflin already was fully conscious of the nebulous character of the painterly as a methodological concept: "The concept of the 'painterly' is both one of the most important and one of the most ambiguous and indefinite with which art history works" ("*Der Begiff des 'Malerischen' gehört zu den wichtigsten, aber zugleich zu den vieldeutigsten und unklarsten, mit denen die Kunstgeschichte arbeitet.*")[68] [19 (29)] In the early work, *Renaissance and Baroque: A Study of the Essence and Origin of the Baroque Style in Italy* (*Renaissance und Barock: Eine Untersuchung über Wesen und Entstehung des Barockstils in Italien*), Wölfflin's methodological and aesthetic attitudes towards the

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[67] Wölffin complains repeatedly about the inadequacy of photographs to communicate the phenomenological reality of the "whole" artwork. See, for instance, 89 (83), 64 (59), 53 (49). In the last instance, Wölfflin believes it necessary to provide an engraving after Ostade, rather than a photograph of the original, because the photography would have been "guilty" (*schuldig*) of not conveying anything of the work's painterly effect.

[68] In translating from the German, I use Kathrin Simon's standard translation as a guide although I frequently depart from her interpretation. In the text, I first refer to the fourth German edition (Munich: F. Bruckmann Verlag, 1926), followed by Simon's translation in parentheses (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964).

painterly are, in interesting ways, similar to, and different from, his later treatments of the concept.[69] In this book, Wölfflin focuses on the shift from Renaissance to Baroque in architecture, and strives to grasp the psychological and physiological impact of painterly form. In discussions of Michelangelo, for instance, Wölfflin concentrates on the emotional effect of suffering caused by an "expression of imprisoned matter" ("*Ausdruck von stofflicher Gebundenheit*") that occurs when architectural members

> appear unable to free themselves from the suffocating embrace of the wall. In the vestibule of the [Biblioteca] Laurenziana [in Florence] the columns do not even emerge beyond the surface of the wall but remain held as pairs in recesses. The composition lacks any sense of satisfaction or fulfillment, or of necessity, so that an impression of endless (*unaufhörlichen*) movement arises: impassioned agitation (*Wühlen*) and nervous struggle with material.[70]

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[69] My textual analysis is confined to isolated occurences of Wölfflin's painterly notion. Others have dealt competently with the larger evolution of Wölfflin's methodological approach while taking into account numerous philosophical sources which I do not mention: Michael Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 99-151; Michael Ann Holly, *Panofsky and the Foundations of Art History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 46-68; and Joan Hart, "Heinrich Wölfflin: An Intellectual Biography." Another important analysis of *Renaissance and Baroque*, which puts the book in the political context of Baroque reception in Germany, see Martin Warnke, "Die Entstehung des Barockbegriffs in der Kunstgeschichte," in *Europäische Barock-Rezeption*, ed. Klaus Garber, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 1991), vol. 2, 1207-24. For a critique of the psychology of Wölfflin's approach in *Renaissance and Baroque* and other works, see Ernst Gombrich, *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1979), 201-03. See also Lurz, *Heinrich Wölfflin*, 72, 173-89, which contains discussion of Wölfflin's dissatisfaction with the painterly in his earlier writings.

[70] Wölfflin provides a photograph focusing on a single wall of the vestibule which is not included in the English edition. It is regrettable that there are some other important photographs appearing in the German editions that are absent from the translation. "...die Formglieder vermögen aus der erstickenden Umhüllung der Mauer sich nicht loszulösen. In der Vorhalle der Laurenziana (Abb. 30) treten die Säulen gar nicht aus der Fläche der Wand heraus, sondern bleiben zu zweien in Vertiefungen stecken. Die Komposition entbehrt so ganz und gar des Befriedigten und Befriedigenden, mit einem Worte der

As in *The Principles* of 1915, Wölfflin identifies the painterly with the uncomfortable, anxious perception of dynamic movement, but there are associations with "suffocating" physical sensations and an absence of "fulfillment" which are not made in the later book. Indeed, Wölfflin's attitude to the painterly in *Renaissance and Baroque* is, in general, far more derogatory than it is in his later work: interpreting Michelangelo's colonnade in the Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome, Wölfflin states, in 1888, that the painterly consists of

> proportions which only affect us as discordance, and seem to have lost the harmony of the whole. The upper story presses down so heavily on the small columns that they seem pushed against the piers. We are convinced that the columns are there only under duress. This impression results in part from the highly irrational and perverse (*widrig-gequetschten*) intervals between the columns, which are hardly satisfying and therefore cannot be fulfilling (*selbstgewollte*) form. Of course, the pleasure in treating matter with violence (*Stoffgewalt*) leads to a tendency to amorphousness (*Formlosen*)...[71] [40 (45)]

Wölfflin dwells upon the chaos and violence of the painterly and—in stark contrast to his future interpretations—criticizes its irrational and "perverse" aspects, which are said to

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Notwendigkeit, daß der Eindruck einer unaufhörlichen Bewegung entsteht: leidenschaftliches Wühlen, aufgeregtes Ringen mit dem Stoff."

[71] The term "Widrigkeit" often is meant to connote repulsiveness or loathsomeness, while "Gequetschten" was variously used as a colloquialism to describe silly talk or balderdash. "In den Loggien des Konservatorenpalastes auf dem Kapitol gibt er Proportionen, die für sich allein als Dissonanzen wirken und erst durch das Ganze harmonisch gelöst erscheinen. Das Obergeschoß drückt dermaßen auf die kleinen, untergestellten Säulen, daß diese an die durchgehenden Pfeiler herangedrängt werden. Wir sind überzeugt, daß die Säulen nur gezwungen dastehen. Dieser Eindruck resultiert zum Teil aus dem höchst irrationellen und widrig-gequetschten Verhältnis des Säulenintervalls, das kleine befriedigte und darum keine selbstgewollte Form sein kann. Natürlich kam mit dieser Freude an der Stoffgewalt eine Tendenz zum Formlosen..."

infect the artwork or building to the extent that they prevent an experience of fulfillment. Wölfflin's critical comments on the painterly's irrationality actually recall his portrayal, in *The Principles*, of 15th-century, "primitive" artworks filled with "superfluous agitation"—where irrationality and incoherence are supposed to predominate. It is not until well into the 20th century that Wölfflin refrains from associating the Baroque with a "degeneration into a more amorphous state" ("*eine Rückbildung zu einem formloseren Zustande*") [47 (50)] of overwhelming chaos and irrationality, and develops an aesthetic of the painterly as a *regenerating*, potentially enlightening experience.[72] This is so because Wölfflin, in *The Principles*, more assertively integrates the notion of rational control into the painterly aesthetic, while continuing to dramatize—but no longer to criticize—the relentlessly dynamic and anxious aspects of painterly perception. In 1915, the "secret limits" and "conscious unclearness" of the painterly composition are stressed as the proper aesthetic alternative to the perverse and degenerate "unconscious unclearness" of the 15th-century primitives. In the essay, "On the Concept of the Painterly" ("*Über den Begriff des Malerischen*," 1913), Wölfflin emphasizes the compatibility of the painterly with an irrational expression of unconscious drives that is coopted by standards of uniformity and conscious control during the act of aesthetic perception. For Wölfflin, this coopting or *harnessing of the irrational* is exemplified by the uniform and generalized perceptual leap that occurs between foreground and

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[72] Arnold Hauser discusses the Hegelian notion of "conservation through change," according to which Wölfflin's Baroque epoch "surpasses" (*aufheben*) the linear while preserving its most valuable aspects. See Hauser, *The Philosophy of Art History*, 133-34; See also Brown, "The Classic is the Baroque," 401.

background of the painterly work—one surrenders a sense of rational control by conceiving spatial relationships only as a "total movement" (*Gesamtbewegung*):

> ...there comes the moment when the eye surrenders (*kapituliert*) and only sees the total wave (*Gesamtschwall*). This is the decisive victory of the painterly....The artistic intention is expressed primarily in the fascinating rhythm of a glittering total movement.[73]

Wölfflin offers Monet's impressionism as an example of the artwork exceeding the bounds of measured or controlled irrationality that typify the painterly. Monet's compositions transgress the "limits of uncertainty" (*Grenzen von Unbestimmtheit*) allowed for by the painterly aesthetic:

> Monet's [image] is conceived simply as wall paper without objective meaning, losing the most essential purpose of the [painterly] impulse, which only operates when one constantly feels (*durchfühlt*) the recognized forms of the thing in a tremendous (*unerhörtenen*) Metamorphosis....[T]he enjoyment of the painterly impulse only [occurs when] the "thing" continually operates (*durchschlägt*) upon the observer. As mere decorative points on paper [Monet's] composition always has an agreeable rhythm, but it would not be called painterly.[74]

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[73] *Logos: Internationale Zeitschrift für Philosophie der Kultur* 4 (1913): 7. "...es kommt der Moment, wo das Auge kapituliert und nur noch den Gesamtschwall sieht. Das ist dann der entschiedene Sieg des Malerischen....Die künstlerische Absicht geht in erster Linie auf den faszinierenden Rhythmus einer flimmernden Gesamtbewegung."

[74] "Monets [Bild] als bloße Tapete gedacht, ohne gegenständliche Bedeutung, verlöre den wesentlichsten Ziel des Reizes [Malerischen], der eben darin besteht, daß man die uns bekannten Formen der Dinge in der unerhörten Metamorphose immer noch durchfühlt....[Der] Genuß des malerischen Reizes, daß die "Sache" für den Betrachter eben immer noch durchschlägt. Als bloß dekorative Punkte auf dem Papier würde [Monets] Komposition zwar stets einem angenehmen Rhythmus besitzen, man würde das aber nicht malerisch nennen" (Ibid., 4).

Monet's work is classified as another violator of the painterly aesthetic because the "decorative" impressionist image lacks "objective" meaning, and thus strays beyond the limits of uncertainty upheld by the painterly.

The Formalist's Compromise

Wölfflin's concern with placing normative limits on the psychological and perceptual effects of the painterly experience reflects an interest in rationalist aesthetics that differs from the non-formalist position of Fiedler.[75] Certainly both writers constructed an aesthetic of the painterly which prioritizes an anxious and uncomfortable apprehension of movement, characterized by sudden and highly expressive perceptual shifts. And, both emphasized a quality of devotion and reverence for the painterly work as a whole. This whole contains an essential element that denies coherent explanation, but that also can only be created by the artist who restrains virtuosic displays of talent and specialized motifs which would distract from the achievement of a unified compositional fabric. This reverence for the sense of vitality emanating from the painterly whole lends a moral and spiritual flavor to both Fiedler's and Wölfflin's narratives.

Fiedler, in his radical phenomenological stance, believed that the level of sheer anxiety and emotional expressiveness that is experienced during the *Ausdrucksbewegung* was far too ambiguous and mysterious in character to allow for a detailed and "rigorous" description of it. Wölfflin, on the other hand, in his writings of 1913 and 1915, contended that the painterly contained a sufficiently rationalized and controlled aspect to permit a

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[75] For critical comments on the normative and generalizing aspects of Wölfflin's methodological categories, see Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art*, 136, 149-51.

scholarly analysis that is complete with specific, descriptive examples of many of the painterly's features. *The Principles*, moreover, seems to subscribe to many of the norms of positivist scholarship that were firmly established by the mid- to late 19th century in the leading academic institutions of England and France, as well as German-speaking countries. Many of these positivist norms were derived from the earlier, basic doctrinal tenets of Auguste Comte's *Cours de philosophie positive* (1830-42).[76]

Historiographers of art history have made little mention of Comte's influence on art historical methodology during its institutionalization in German-speaking countries. Comte's relevance to Wölfflin and his contemporaries was echoed in a variety of other fields, especially during the period when Wölfflin was preparing to write *The Principles*. Wölfflin's well-known aspiration to write an art history "without names" was directly informed by Comte's concept of a "*histoire sans noms*"; his familiarity with Comte's work was facilitated by widely available German translations of the *Cours de philosophie*'s fifth edition (1892-94).[77]

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[76] The terms of my discussion are indebted to Carol Armstrong's recent study of English texts of the mid-nineteenth century; her book does not deal with formalism or art historical discourse, but much of her lucid discussion of Comtean positivism is of importance to my argument, especially with regard to formalists' ambivalent relationship to positivism's "evidentiary structure." See Armstrong, *Scenes in a Library: Reading the Photograph in the Book, 1843-1875* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998), 18-19, 46-48, 179-80. See Comte, *Cours de philosophie positive*, 6 vols. (Paris: Bachelier, 1830-45); a more recent, two-volume French addition, with commentary, was published by Hermann in 1975. Some useful selections are available in translation in Gertrud Lenzer, ed., *Auguste Comte and Positivism: The Essential Writings* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975).

[77] David Summers discusses formalism that lends itself more easily to description of the progression or sequence of styles and to "explanation" of continuity in the art historical

The Comtean principles of synchronic comparison (or "resemblance") and diachronic sequencing (or "succession") were central to the development of positivist scholarship during Wölfflin's time.[78] The three-part narrative structure of *The Principles*—from the primitive to the linear to the painterly—is associated with positivism's effort to construct a "cause-and-effect ordering" in historical time which, in this book, is rehearsed repeatedly and acquires the status of scholarly proof or "fact." Similarly, by comparing 15th-century, Renaissance, and Baroque images as a synchronic arrangement—or an "on-the-table" ordering—Wölfflin tries, with the help of photographs, to construct relationships between the images that have the rhetorical impact of historical "facts" for the reader as the products of an analytical, empirical gaze.[79] To promote an easy, matter-of-fact flow between the various images "on the

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narrative. See Summers, "Conventions in the History of Art," *New Literary History* 13 (Autumn 1981): 103-25, esp. 108, a summary of Meyer Schapiro's classic 1974 essay, "Style," which contains references to formalism's relationship between style and sequencing.

[78] For a concise discussion of Comte's importance (as well as English positivists such as John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer), see Ferdinand Fellmann, "Positivism," in *Geschichte der Philosophie im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. F. Fellmann (Reinbeck bei Hamburg; Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1996), 19-37. For an indication of Comte's currency during Wölffin's time, see, for instance, W. Ostwald, *Auguste Comte: Der Mann und sein Werk* (Leipzig: Verlag Unesma, 1914). The literature on Comte is immense. One survey of Comte's philosophy, which includes recent bibliography, is M. Pickering, *Auguste Comte: An Intellectual Biography* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993). See also Walter M. Simon, *European Positivism in the Nineteenth Century: An Essay in Intellectual History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963).

[79] Of comparable significance was the later positivism of Hippolyte Taine, whose cultural histories—such as the four-volume *History of English Literature* (1863-64)— and *Lectures on Art* (1864) famously employed another kind of cause-and-effect reasoning to art interpretation. Using a comparative method that undoubtedly had a profound effect on

table," Wölfflin isolates specific "cuts" or cross-sections of the composition, such as the representation of surface and depth or recession. The isolation—or "artificial decontextualization"—of cuts is constantly supported by photographic illustrations that are meant to fulfill a kind of "proof-function" for the reader because they serve as empirical "evidence" and invoke positivism's obsessive fixation on the "observable relationality" of phenomena in the experimental context, as opposed to the unobservable activity of the introspective mind.[80]

Wölfflin's methodological development, Taine persuasively drew "correspondances" between the object as a collection of "signes" and aspects of its "milieu" that determine those signes. Indeed, Taine's sociological determinism posited externalized social variables, including race, which combined, through the agency of the artist, to produce the artwork. Taine's racial chacterizations were particularly well received by German-speaking academics, as they were relatives of the broad, Latin-germanic or North-South distinctions that already had legendary philosophical precedents in the writings of Hegel and Herder. Taine's determinism lent these Romantic thinkers' distinctions a status of "factual" rigorousness that was aspired to by youthful humanistic disciplines seeking greater institutional legitimacy, including the art history. See Taine, *Lectures on Art*, trans. John Durand, 2 vols. (New York: AMS, 1971), esp. II, 51-52, a lauditory discussion of Germany, and II, 151-56, which deals with the notion "verification" based on correspondances between art and surrounding influences in Venice and Greece. See also idem, *History of English Literature*, trans. H. Van Laun (New York: Ungar, 1965), esp. the introductory section, I, 1-36. For a rare discussion of Taine relationship to art history, see Donald Preziosi, *Rethinking Art History: Meditations on a Coy Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 88-99, 115-16.

[80] For discussion of Alois Riegl's complicated relationship to the positivism of Comte (as well as others, such as Wilhelm Scherer), see Hans Berthold Busse, *Kunst und Wissenschaft: Untersuchungen zur Ästhetik und Methodik der Kunstgeschichtswissenschaft bei Riegl, Wölfflin, und Dvorák* (Mittenwald: Mäander Kunstverlag, 1981), 50, 60-63. Of interest in Busse's interpretation—which is indebted to Gombrich—is his mention of Riegl's balancing act between the empirically given and the "hidden." Busse also discusses Wölfflin's ambivalence to "*wissenschaftlich*" explanation of art historical phenomena, but does not deal with the relevence of phenomenology or *lebensphilosophische* discourse to this ambivalence (74-78).

By arranging a plurality of artistic phenomena into a highly coherent network of synchronic comparisons and diachronic successions, Wölfflin gives his text the rhetorical effect of "hard data" and "scientific" (*wissenschaftlich*) rigor. The tight, coherent narrative *integration* promotes a sense of scientific *integrity*.[81] This rhetorical connotation of "rigor" was associated with positivist research traditions in several fields of the natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*), including physics, physiology, and psychology.[82] Research scientists, such as Wilhelm Wundt, Ernst Mach, and Richard Avenarius conducted experiments under controlled laboratory conditions that focused on immediately observable phenomena. This experimentation became increasingly prominent during the late 19th century and had a profound effect on scholarship produced not only in the natural sciences but in the humanities as well.

The idea of "*Wissenschaft*" had been aligned, earlier in the 19th century, with the study of philosophy and philology and had the definition of "systematic scholarship"

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[81] For further discussion, see Hayden White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980): 1-26.

[82] My understanding of positivism in the German-speaking context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is indebted to summarizing discussions in J. Blühdorn and J. Ritter, eds., *Positivismus im 19. Jahrhundert. Beiträge zu seiner gechichtlichen und systematischen Bedeutung* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971) and M. Sommer, *Husserl und der frühe Positivismus* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1985). For an excellent, concise treatment of the complicated relation between positivism, "holism," and phenomenology within the context of psychology during the *fin de siècle* and turn-of-the-century periods, see Mitchell G. Ash, *Gestalt Psychology in German Culture, 1890-1967: Holism and the Quest for Objectivity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Ash's book should be consulted in tandem with the classic work by Henri F. Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books, 1970).

rather than "science." In Wölfflin's time, however, the notion of *Wissenschaft* had been evolving under the influence of empirical researchers who placed less emphasis on the role of philosophical and personal reflection as the means to pursue knowledge. Wilhelm Wundt, for instance, who was the pioneering director of a research laboratory at Leipzig, sought to discover principles of "psychical causality" that are based on the direct observation of the subject's reactions to stimuli which are measurable temporally with recording instruments or apparatuses. The resulting data—which was often measurements of reaction times or attention spans—was arranged in tabular form and regarded as knowledge that was the product of precise instrumentation and the strict emphasis on the empirically "given" (*Gegebene*) as directly observable causal relationships.[83] Nevertheless, Wundt was not a fully fledged positivist—according to late 19th-century academic standards in German-speaking countries—because he did not believe that "higher" psychological functions, such as memory and other abstract thought processes, were within the purview of experimental and empirical science.[84]

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[83] See Wundt, *Grundriss der Psychologie* (Leipzig: W. Engelmann, 1896), "Allegemeine Richtungen der Psychologie," 7-21, esp. 18-19. For commentary, see Kurt Danziger, "Wundt's Psychological Experiment in the Light of His Philosophy of Science," *Experimental Research* 42 (1980): 113-20; and idem, "The Origins of the Psychological Experiment as a Social Institution," *American Psychologist* 40 (1985): 133-40. See also Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999), 29, 38-39.

[84] See Kurt Danziger, "The Positivist Repudiation of Wundt," 15 (1979): 5-30; and idem, *Constructing the Subject: Historical Origins of Psychological Research* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), Chap. 3.

Conversely, Ernst Mach, a physicist based in Zurich—as well as his equally influential successor, Richard Avenarius—contended that higher functions, like emotional states, may be conceived as collections of "sensations" that, in turn, are analyzable with reference to portions of the nervous system that are connected directly to the brain. In the highly influential book, *The Analysis of Sensations* ("*Die Analyse der Empfindungen*," 1886), Mach discussed the self ("*Ich*") as a reality of "sensation" (*Empfindung*) arrangements that have effective and observable relationships with the external world, and thus manifest physical and bio-physical forces which can be measured and assigned numerical values.[85] This focus on the measurability of sensations was indebted to the work of the sensory physiologist Wilhelm von Helmholtz, who had been Wundt's mentor at Heidelberg. For Helmholtz—just as for his many descendants who upheld positivist beliefs—psychological phenomena were not beyond the reach of explanation or the "realm of causal law": Helmholtz, like Mach, emphasized the mechanical nature of sensory processes as they are located in peripheral organs of the body. Nerves are

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[85] See Mach, *Die Analyse der Empfindungen und das Verhältnis des Physischen zum Psychischen*, 6th ed. (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1911), esp. Chap. 1, "Antimethaphysische Vorbemerkungen," 1-30. English translation by C. M. Williams and Sydney Waterlow, made from the 5th German edition of 1904 (New York: Dover, 1959). For further discussion, see J. T. Blackmore, *Ernst Mach: His Work, Life, and Influence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972); H. Schnädelbach, *Erfahrung, Begründung und Reflexion: Versuch über den Positivismus* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971), which contains a good overview of Mach's complex relationship to the positivist tradition; and R. Haller and F. Stadler, eds., *Ernst Mach: Werk und Wirkung* (Vienna: Holder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1988), which has some recent bibliography. No thorough studies exist of Mach's considerable importance for the development of formalist art history and of modernist visual culture in Germany. For instance, artists such as Klee and Kandinsky avidly read Mach's studies of visual perception and attempted to evoke Mach's research in their geometric and "scientistic" figuration during the Bauhaus years of the 1920s.

regarded as "indifferent carriers of excitations" and their corresponding sense organs are conceived as mechanical entities that produce physical patterns in relation to stimuli.[86] The conception of the psychological phenomenon of "sensations" as machinic mechanisms helped to encourage a general revision of *Wissenschaft* according to a physicist's—rather than a philosopher's—discursive bias: a mode of psychological explanation based on the observation of *localized* sense organs instead of more introspective experience led to a discrediting of "depth" psychology because it was distanced from the all-important observable and measurable phenomena of the experimental context. These phenomena included the introduction of the physical stimulus to the subject and the measurable conditions of neural structures immediately affected by an experimental apparatus; the strict focus on classification and measurement of sensory processes—otherwise known as "sensations"— corresponded to a de-emphasis on relatively unconscious processes, often referred to negatively as psychological "abstractions."

Fiedler's aesthetic is largely incompatible with this line of positivist thought. I have tried to show that positivism's fixation on the study of localized sense organs as a main source of data contrasts with Fiedler's holistic approach to subjective experience

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[86] See, for example, Helmholtz, "Recent Progress in the Theory of Vision" (1868), in *The Selected Writings of Hermann von Helmholtz* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1971), 153-76; and idem, *Treatise on Physiological Optics*, trans. J. P. C. Southall (Rochester: Optical Society of America, 1924-25), vol. 2, 143-46. See also Didier Deleule, "The Living Machine: Psychology as Organology," in Jonathan Crary and Sanford Kwinter, eds., *Incorporations* (New York: Zone Books, 1992), 203-33.

reflected in statements such as: "There is within human beings no organ which could explain what the goal of artistic aspiration is." In addition, Fiedler was hostile to positivism's exclusive concern with the "given" or with the immediately observable experimental event that is conducive to precise measurement and tabulation. Above all, Fiedler was profoundly disturbed by positivism's principles of scientific proof and evidence based on observable and causal relationships, such as those between the experimental subject and apparatus. Academic art history, he believed, was trying to emulate these principles by emphasizing causal and mechanical relationships between the artwork and a preconceived, "on-the-table" set of traits synchronically reflecting the artwork's cultural context, or, a diachronic arrangement of artistic precedents and antecedents.[87] Fiedler thought that the nature of these mechanical relationships constructed by art historians was evocative of the positivists' conception of the sensory organ as a kind of machine—mechanically reacting to a precisely calibrated machinic apparatus—which yields the only information worthy of being called scholarly knowledge.[88]

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[87] For a recent argument in favor of the non-speculative coherence of the art historical narrative focused on precedents and antecedents, "underwritten by the structure of practical reasoning," see Noël Carroll, "Historical Narratives and the Philosophy of Art" *Journal of Aesthetics of Art and Criticism* 51 (Summer 1993): 313-26, 322.

[88] For a discussion of the pedagogical significance of Fiedler's aesthetics, with reference to Schiller, Humboldt, and other philosophical sources, see Klaus Mollenhauer, "Fiedlers Bietrag zu einer Theorie ästhetischer Bildung," in *Auge und Hand: Konrad Fiedlers Kunsttheorie im Kontext* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1997), 95-109, esp. 102-06.

By contrast, Wölfflin's notion of the painterly undertakes a sort of negotiation or dialogue with the main principles of positivist doctrine.[89] However, in spite of his adherence to numerous conventions of positivist scholarship, Wölfflin believed that the positivist doctrine of "factual relationality" was incapable of fully experiencing the essence of the painterly. We have seen how Wölfflin continued to use non-positivist language—including intentionally nebulous notions of compositional "wholeness" or of leaps into the unknown "infinitude" of the image—to refer to aspects of the painterly that remain unobservable and unexplainable. Such devices are regarded by both Wölfflin and Fiedler as the interpretive key to the painterly experience precisely because they are incompatible with the idea of positivist fact.[90] The formalist's use of nebulous interpretive language, while repellent by positivist standards, is envisioned as an integral part of the discursive project of imparting cultivation to the art history student.

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[89] For some mention of Wölfflin's Neo-Kantianism and ambivalence towards positivist cultural analysis, see Michael Ann Holly, *Panofsky and the Foundations of Art History*, 50-56. To some extent, Wölfflin associated his adoption of positivist tropes with the professionalization and "maturation" of his work. For further discussion, see Lorenz Dittman, *Stil/Symbol/Struktur: Studien zu Kategorien der Kunstgeschichte* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1967), 62-67.

[90] In her discussion of a text of Tennyson's poetry illustrated with the photographs of Julia Margaret Cameron, Carol Armstrong comments on a condition of "modernist" (and feminist) ambivalence towards positivist doctrine that is interesting in the present context of formalism's straying from established notions of positivist evidence. Armstrong defines modernism as a "bringing to the fore [of]...the latent self-reflexivity of positivism"; I would argue that formalism, as a kind of modernism, was also able, in a limited sense, to mine positivism's unconscious, although this was done inadvertently within the confines of institutional apparatuses (i.e. the academy) in contrast to the more deliberate and aggressive discourses of much of the modernist avant-garde. See Armstrong, *Scenes in a Library*, 492, n. 38.

Certainly, Fiedler and Wölfflin held different beliefs about how their respective discourses could impart cultivation to the reader. As a formalist, Wölfflin contended that more elaborate and expanded descriptive and analytical means (including positivist ones) could be employed to convey the painterly while still preserving the spiritualizing essence of the painterly experience.

This condition of compromise with the analytical scientific tradition reflects Wölfflin's invocation of a *Wissenschaft* that is avowedly "scientific" and sympathetic to experimentation, but not fully positivist in orientation because it is committed to the study of introspective and intuitive processes, and thus is interested in the project of *Bildung* as it was conceived by resolute anti-positivists like Fiedler.[91] Carl Stumpf, director of a leading psychological laboratory at Berlin, was appointed—with the support of Wilhelm Dilthey and others—partially because his brand of experimental research was more respectful of introspective processes than his infamous competitor at Leipzig, Wilhelm Wundt. As Mitchell Ash has discussed, there were indeed heated, unusually public disagreements concerning the philosophy of psychological research which occurred between Stumpf and Wundt during the 1890s. Certainly, Wölfflin and his art historical colleagues would have followed this debate with great interest; as I explain in the following chapter, such psychological arguments—usually between more philosophically-

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[91] For further discussion, see the survey of different historiographic attitudes to intuitive processes and the issue of historical "reliving" in Frank Ankersmit, "The Reality Effect in the Writing of History: The Dynamics of Historiographical Topology" (1989), in Ankersmit, *History and Topology: The Rise and Fall of Metaphor* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 125-61.

informed scholars aligned with Neo-Kantianism (like the formalists) and those identified with the positivist tradition—directly informed art historians' sense of the "politics of formalism."

Stumpf's research at Berlin—which began in 1893, seven years before Wölfflin was named art history chair there, also with the support of Dilthey[92]—was published with an assortment of tabular data, often detailing the subject's perception of spatial extension or distribution and of memory images, as well as the relationships constructed between these perceptions and images according to principles such as fusion, similarity, and gradation. For Stumpf and his assistants, the researcher recognizes and describes these relationships but may not ascribe to them the same kind of mechanical causality and lawfulness that exists in the external world of nature. The properties of the psychological world are essentially different from those of the natural world, and therefore necessitate that the researcher rely on verbal reports of what the subject experiences during the experimental event (what Stumpf called "short-term introspection") rather than on numerical and tabular data yielded by the use of the mechanical apparatus belonging to the externalized, technological world. Stumpf's idea that the experimental apparatus is "only an introduction and aid to *subjective self-observation*, which remains decisive as before," represents his adherence to the use of non-positivist, introspective processes as the

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[92] For information about Wölfflin's appointment at Berlin, see Joan Hart, "Heinrich Wölfflin," 319, 337-40; and Meinhold Lurz, *Heinrich Wölfflin: Biographie einer Kunsttheorie* (Worms: Wernerische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1981). Hart's biographical interpretation is based on the study of Wölfflin's unpublished lecture notes and diaries contained in the *Heinrich Wölfflin Nachlass* in the Handschriftensabteilung of the main library at the University of Basel, Switzerland.

paramount way to achieve scientific knowledge.[93] The prioritization of the individual subject's introspection as an integral component of the scholarly enterprise is indicative of Stumpf's allegiance to the project of the "life philosophy"—of which Dilthey was a leading representative—in opposition to the positivist psychological research practiced by Mach, Avenarius, William Stern, Ernst Meumann, Hugo Münsterberg, and others.

In the landmark work, *Logical Investigations* (*Logische Untersuchungen*, 1900-01), Edmund Husserl, chair of philosophy at Göttingen, firmly expressed a belief in the value of an analytical and empirical approach to the study of psychology and perception, but, like Stumpf, took issue with the positivists' focus on the immediately observable or "given" as the exclusive site of investigation. For Husserl, the reality of perceptual experience frequently transgresses the positivist "given" and therefore requires other, non-positivist methodologies to gain access to it. Husserl argues for the primacy of "perception," rather than "sensations," as the object of scientific research because the former encompasses essential qualities of consciousness—including intuitive ones—that are fundamentally different from the latter, which only correspond to the workings of the

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[93] For general commentary, see Stumpf, "Carl Stumpf," trans. Thekla Hodge and Suzanne Langer, in Carl Murchison, ed., *A History of Psychology in Autobiography*, vol. 1 (Worchester, Mass.: Clark University Press, 1930), 389-441. Stumpf's most famous work is a study of the psychology of aural perception, *Tonpsychologie*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1883-90); for an interesting statement of Stumpf's research philosophy, see Stumpf, "Psychologie und Erkenntnistheorie," *Abhandlungen der königlich bayrischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* I. Kl., 18 (Munich, 1891), 482-510, esp. 501-02. For general discussion of Stumpf, including his relationship to Dilthey, William James, and others, see Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (New York: Routledge, 2000), Chapter 2; see also Herbert Spiegelberg, *Phenomenology in Psychology and Psychiatry* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972), 3-30.

nervous system and to localized sensory organs.[94] The positivist may only analyze perception in terms of a succession of separate sensory acts that are recorded by the experimental apparatus. Perception, according to Husserl, should be dealt with as sensory material conceived as a unified whole that is not treatable as the sum of a series of sensations; perception contains an intuitive aspect which the researcher may describe as an activity of the subject "grasping" (*Auffassen*) or "referring" (*Meinung*) to the object perceived; this act of "grasping" cannot be observed immediately and experimentally in the positivist sense.[95]

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[94] Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, 4th ed., 2 vols. (Halle: N. Niemeyer, 1928); see Husserl's critique of "psychologism" in vol. 1, chap. 7, "Der Psychologismus als skeptischer Relativismus," esp. 124, 114-15. For a rare discussion of Husserl's relevence to art historical notions of "understanding," see Oskar Bätschmann, *Einführung in die kunstgeschichtliche Hermeneutik*, 114.

[95] Ibid., vol. 2, "Zur Phänomenologie der Erkenntnisstufen," esp. 75-79; Husserl repeatedly identifies the perceptual "act" with an intuitive process of "grasping" that is of direct relevence to Wölfflin's notion of the act of painterly perception. See also ibid., 193-96. For commentary on Husserl's notion of scholarly "evidence" as it relates to phenomenology, see George Heffernan, *Bedeutung und Evidenz bei Edmund Husserl* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1983), 42-51; and Bernward Grünewald, *Der phänomenologische Ursprung des Logischen* (Kastellaun: A. Henn Verlag, 1977), chap. 2 on Husserl's "fundamental principles" (*Grundbegriffe*) of "phenomenological analysis," which bear a substantial resemblance to Wölfflin's art historical *Grundbegriffe*. For discussion of the relevence of Johannes Volkelt (a professor of philosophy at Basel) to Wölfflin's phenomenology, see Mark Jarzombek, "De-Scribing the Language of Looking," 39: Volkelt focused on "how conscious human beings apply concepts to the data of sensations in order to produce a phenomenalistic world picture." Jarzombek also briefly deals with other thinkers who had a direct influence on Wölfflin's intellectual evolution, including Theodor Lipps (founder of the Psychological Institute in Munich, the city where Wölfflin eventually taught after his stint in Berlin)—one of several major figures whom I cannot touch on here.

Henri Bergson, whose major works were widely available in German while Wölfflin was preparing to write *The Principles*, argued passionately against what he named the "spatial" science of "associationist" or positivist psychology. Bergson identified this positivism with the effort to apply many reference points to the movement of an object in space; these references are recorded by the researcher as "stopping points" which do not account for the "mobile reality" of perceptual experience.[96] For Bergson and Husserl, the scholar may be analytical in approach to the study of perception, but needs to take heed of intuitive processes in order to understand the dynamic character of the perceptual act; one must attempt to capture the constantly mobile "wholeness" of perceptual experience rather than merely isolated bits of it.[97] This emphasis on perceptual wholeness recalls my discussion, in Chapter 1, of Dilthey's project of "understanding" the totality of the subject's psychic life (*Seelenleben*) instead of particular and static aspects of mental activity that have very coherent and unambiguous connections to the

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[96] Bergson, "Introduction to Metaphysics" (1903), trans. in *The Creative Mind* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1946). See also idem, *Creative Evolution* (1907), trans. Arthur Mitchell (New York: Holt, 1966), 210-20, esp. 216. For a philosophical critique of Bergson's theory of perception, see Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism* (1966), trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1991), esp. chap. 1, "Intuition as Method."

[97] Anne Harrington discusses a "holistic" trend in neurological research, represented by scientists like Oswald Külpe in Würzburg, which supported the philosophical claims of Husserl and other critics of positivism's "epistemological arrogance." See Harrington, "A Feeling for the 'Whole': The Holistic Reaction in Neurology from the *fin de siècle* to the Interwar Years," in *Fin de Siècle and its Legacy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 254-77, esp. 259-61.

empirical world.[98] Dilthey's positing of a psychic realm fundamentally distinct from the natural and technological world was of enormous importance to subsequent contributions to "life philosophy"—including Bergson's and Husserl's—that underlined the discursive limitations of positivist research and promoted the phenomenological belief in the scientific legitimacy of studying and interpreting introspective and intuitive conditions of psychology and perception.

In the second volume of *Logical Investigations*, Husserl strives to develop interpretive concepts that are respectful of perception's intuitive aspect. One such concept is that of the perceptual object being "grasped" as a fabric or collection of compositional figures; this collection may be described by the scientist without recording independent sensory responses to isolated points within the perceived object.[99] Husserl's notion of perceptual grasping recalls Wölfflin's discussion of the subject grasping the foreground-background recessional movement of the painterly composition "in one breath as a unified whole." Wölfflin's treatment of the painterly subject emphasizes intuitive aspects of aesthetic perception which are reminiscent of Husserl's commitment to an analytical *and* phenomenological approach to the psychology of perception. Husserl's interpretation of subjective experience cannot be entirely confirmed by direct visual confirmation and positivist explanation, but can be "understood"—to remember Dilthey's term—using a combination of intuitive insight (as opposed to sight) and empirical

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[98] For a rare and valuable discussion of Dilthey's relationship to Wölfflin, see Joan Hart, "Heinrich Wölfflin," 73-95.

[99] *Logische Untersuchungen*, vol. 2, 165-75.

investigation. Both Husserl and Wölfflin believed that the researcher or scholar should follow the empirical methodological principle of analyzing and comparing the subject's perceptual reactions to a variety of objects as a means of arriving at "*wissenschaftlich*" knowledge. On the basis of this analytical research, the researcher is able to make *normative* statements about the nature of perception; for Wölfflin, the "normal" features of the painterly are formulated on the basis of an extensive and impressive array of illustrative examples and accompanying photographs that function as empirical evidence for the scholar's normative statements about the painterly.[100] But Husserl's and Wölfflin's respective definitions of "*Wissenschaft*" and scholarly knowledge are also inclusive of an intuitive and vital experience which requires the usage of non-positivist and non-empiricist interpretive language to refer to it. The act of perception—or, in Wölfflin's case, painterly perception—frequently transgresses the empirically given, and thus it is the job of the scholar to linguistically convey that state of transgressiveness and vitality which can only be experienced authentically during the phenomenological confrontation with the actual object. The reader of the formalist text must, in a sense, be persuaded into making a leap of faith, accepting the ability of the scholar's ambiguous, dramatic, or poetic language—always used in rhetorical combination with analytical and

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[100] For commentary on one formalist's claims of *scholarly access* to the "*Mentalität*" of a particular epoch—such as the Baroque—on the basis of a "crowd" of individual, empirical examples, see the discussion of Riegl in Wyss, *Der Wille zur Kunst*, 124, 130. The leap that the reader is persuaded to make between the level of "*wissenschaftlich*" analysis of individual, historically specific examples and that of "*Mentalitätgeschichte*" (characterizing the collective cultural tendencies of an era) is, I would argue, one of the crucial rhetorical achievements of formalist art writing.

empirical devices, such as illustrative photographs—to evoke the nebuluous essence of painterly perception. It is only when the reader has faith in the expressive power of the scholar's interpretation that he or she can undergo a process of moral and spiritual cultivation that is akin to the subject's physical experience of the painterly object.

Jonathan Crary has interpreted the psychological concept of "attention" as an activity of exclusion whereby the subject selectively apprehends some features of the perceptual field while rendering others unperceived. This process of perceptual exclusion is analogous to Wölfflin's normative notion of painterly perception as an encounter with a compositional field that is apprehended exclusively as a unified compositional fabric.[101] However, this painterly exclusion of other perceptual possibilities was made, as Crary notes, within an atmosphere of "epistemological uncertainty in which perceptual experience had lost the primal guarantees that once upheld its privileged relation to the foundation of knowledge." Despite the controlled and exclusive aspects of the painterly, Wölfflin also felt compelled to account for perceptual experience that was "intrinsically nonrationalizable, that exceeded any procedures of normalization."[102] Wölfflin referred to

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[101] Walter Benjamin critiqued the normative aspect of Wölfflin's discourse and emphasized the study of the "marginal" as an alternative object of art historical study which forefronts the beholder's subjective imagination and perceptions to a greater degree. See Benjamin, "Rigorous Study of Art: On the First Volume of the *Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen*" (1933), trans. T. Y. Levin, *October* 47 (Winter 1988), 88-90.

[102] See Crary, *Suspensions of Perception*, 24-25, 12. Although not concerned with art historical texts directly, Crary's discussion of the discourse of attention is of interest in relation to Wölfflin's normative conception of the painterly. "...a normative observer in the late nineteenth century began to be conceptualized not only in terms of the isolated

such transgressions of the normative—and of the empirically given—using the language of the "infinite," the "whole," and the "inexpressible," which was intended to incorporate (and not merely to acknowledge) the existence of a spiritual and transgressive reality that cannot be rationalized.[103] As we shall see in the following chapter, this transgressive reality was identified by Wölfflin and other formalists not only with the perception of the Baroque period, but, more importantly, with the present-day cultivation of the art

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objects of attention, but equally in terms of what is not perceived, or only dimly perceived, of the distractions, the fringes and peripheries that are excluded or shut out of the perceptual field." (40)

[103] By focusing on the transgressive potential of Wölfflin's painterly notion, I depart from Norbert Schmitz's characterization of Wölfflin's (as well as Adolf Hölzel's) discourse as a kind of "Visual Rationalism" that, in its supposed pursuit of classicizing claritas, is diametrically opposed to the spiritualism and irrationalism of Wassily Kandinsky and the later work of the "expressionist" art historian Max Dvorák. Of course I agree that compared to Wölfflin, the work of Dvorák places a relatively strong emphasis on the unobservable, mystical, and intuitive processes of aesthetic experience. But my interpretation of the painterly is meant to bring out the phenomenological qualities of Wölfflin's (and other formalists') writing that resist an easy association of his work with positivistic determinism and the realm of the natural sciences in general. I am arguing that Schmitz's discussions of the metaphysical "event space" and the uncertainty of the semantically open, "undetermined ground" articulated by "expressionist" artists and historians may also be located in the writing of formalists whom Schmitz assigns to his other category of "Rationalism." The problem stems from Schmitz's belief in Wölfflin's continuing preference for the classicizing linear mode; I have contended that Wölfflin's aesthetic preference changed substantially towards the painterly— and away from the coherent rationalism of the linear—during the years when he wrote *The Principles*. Schmitz's work is a worthwhile read, partly because of its sophisticated treatment of the interaction between art historical and historical avant-garde production during the first years of the 20th century, and its use of previously unpublished materials. See Schmitz, *Kunst und Wissenschaft im Zeichen der Moderne: Exemplarische Studien zum Verhältnis von klassischer Avantgarde und zeitgenössischer Kunstgeschichte in Deutschland: Hölzel, Wölfflin, Kandinsky, Dvorák*, diss. Wuppertal (Alfter: Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaften, 1993).

history student who was adversely being affected by a "spiritless," increasingly technological and mechanical culture.

For Wölfflin and other formalist art historians—along with many Neo-Kantian colleagues in other fields—the rise of mechanized culture was exemplified by the looming presence of positivism in the academy. The situation required the development of methodological and educational devices which were resistant to the forces of mechanization and other decadent influences. Chapter Three demonstrates that formalists argued passionately about the educational value of the painterly as a methodological concept possessing spiritual qualities that are incommensurable with analytical and positivist scholarship and research. Formalists chose, in the face of opposing forces who proclaimed the superiority of more "rigorous" scholarship, to retain the nebulous aspects of the "painterly" as a means to instill cultivation in the art history student.

CHAPTER THREE: THE POLITICS OF FORMALISM

Six years before *The Principles of Art History* appeared, Heinrich Wölfflin published an article, "On Art Historical Miseducation" ("Über kunsthistorische Verbildung," 1909),[104] which summarizes his pedagogical philosophy.[105] Throughout the article, Wölfflin criticizes the dilettantish activity of surveying too many art objects in a

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[104] Originally published in *Die Neue Rundschau* 20 (1909); reprinted in Wölfflin, *Kleine Schriften*, ed. Joseph Gantner (Basel: Benno Schwabe, 1946), 159-63. For further discussion of this essay, see Hans-Berthold Busse, *Was ist "kunsthistorische Verbildung"?* (Berlin and Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1986), which also contains much useful bibliography; Peter Joerrissen, *Kunsterziehung und Kunstwissenschaft in Wilhelminschen Deutschland, 1871-1918* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1979), 218-25; and Irene Below, "Probleme der 'Werkbetrachtung'—Lichtwark und die Folgen," in *Kunstwissenschaft und Kunstvermittlung*, ed. Below (Gießen: Anabas-Verlag, 1975), 83-136.

[105] My interpretation in this chapter is indebted to a body of German scholarship which focuses on the pedagogical and institutional history of art history; much of this material was published during the 1970s in journals such as *Kunst + Unterricht*, in which can be found many relevant articles; see, for instance, Wolfgang Kemp, "Der Ordungsbegriff in der älteren kunstpedagögischer Literatur," *Kunst + Unterricht* 1 (1973): 30-50. One crucial source is Heinrich Dilly, *Kunstgeschichte als Institution: Studien zur Geschichte einer Disziplin* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1979). Although focusing mostly on art history's adolescence prior to the period that is my focus, I have taken much from Dilly's sociological and institutional approach to the history of art history, as well as bibliographical references. Dilly's book should be translated into English and be a standard assignment in art history methodology courses. Another important study is Joerrissen, *Kunsterziehung*, which touches on many of the original sources that I treat in this chapter; however, Joerrissen's interpretation is very limited and, in the end, his book is most useful as an exceptional source of bibliographical advice. Also helpful for bibliography is the work of Wolfgang Beyrodt, such as the recent article "Kunstgeschichte als Universitätsfach," in *Kunst und Kunsttheorie, 1400-1900*, eds. P. Ganz, N. Meier, and M. Warnke (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1991), 313-33. Additional bibliographic assistance was provided by the staff of the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, Munich. One notable source in English is Kathryn Brush, *The Shaping of Art History: Wilhelm Vöge, Adolph Goldschmidt, and the Study of Medieval Art* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), which deals with the *Methodenstreit* among medieval art historians and cultural historians during the 1890s.

rapid and unmethodical fashion, an activity which only results in a mere smattering of knowledge for the student ("*Halbbildung*") (160). Wölfflin focuses on the need to adopt standards of scholarly rigor (*Wissenschaft*) that avoid casual or impulsive preoccupations with judgments of aesthetic quality and the assignment of names and dates in the manner of "pseudo-connoisseurship" (*Pseudo-Kennershaft*). Instead of such amateur pursuits, the student must work towards developing the "feeling for a style as a whole" ("*Ganze eines Stiles Gefühl*") (160-61). One cultivates this feeling by repeatedly comparing different modes of stylistic expression so that one ultimately comprehends their distinguishing characteristics, or the "differentiation of style" (*Verscheidenheit der Stile*).

Wölfflin's is a comparative and systematic approach that deemphasizes the personal character of individual artists and focuses on coherent distinctions between differing modes of aesthetic perception, such as the linear and the painterly.[106] These transindividual perceptual modes are concentrated in the artwork's essential effect as a "whole impression" (*Gesamteindruck*) (162) rather than in isolated features of the artwork's iconography or in specific, virtuosic qualities reflecting the artist's talent.[107] The student's learned ability to recognize the whole impression or essential quality ("*Hauptsache*") (163) of the linear or the painterly is the result of a gradual process of

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[106] On the formalist shift in art historical discourse to a "modal" approach, see the groundbreaking article by Jan Bialostocki, "Das Modusproblem in den bildenden Künsten," in *Stil und Ikonographie* (Dresden: VED Verlag der Kunst, 1966), 9-35.

[107] For further commentary, see the brief essay "Über das Zeichen" in Wölfflin, *Kleine Schriften*, 164-65.

careful and systematic comparison between representative artworks of different historical periods, such as the Renaissance and the Baroque.

The ability to grasp the painterly artwork's *Hauptsache* is the result of a "rigorous" contemplation of comparative relationships *and* the repeated exercise of the student's intuitive processes during the apprehension of individual artworks. Wölfflin lends great pedagogical importance to an exercise and training of intuitive responses to artworks, which allow

> one to learn to differentiate between different effects, and to value as something beneficial when, in the complete representation, the form in its various qualities is recognized *immediately* and *strikingly* and *completely*.[108] (162) (Wölfflin's emphasis)

The emphasis in this chapter is on the pedagogical and epistemological beliefs—most notably, in the training of intuitive and speculative abilities—which motivated Wölfflin and many of his formalist colleagues. This emphasis is not meant to imply that there were not a host of other factors—especially the objects of study themselves—which compelled formalists to construct analytical and descriptive means of referring to their objects of study. However, as the quote above indicates, one of Wölfflin's main objectives as an educator was to exercise the student's intuitive experience of different

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[108] "...man zwischen verschiedenen Wirkungen unterscheiden lerne und es als etwas Beglückendes schätze, wenn in der vollkommendenen Darstellung die Form nach ihren entscheidenden Eigenschaften sich *sofort* und *schlagend* und *vollständig* zu erkennen gibt." For a recent meditation on the intuitive confrontation with artworks in the exhibition context as producing an "instantiation of history in a relationship of facing," see Stephen Bann, "Face-to-Face with History," *New Literary History* 29 (Spring 1998): 235-46.

artworks as different "wholes" so that the student is sufficiently trained to immediately distinguish between modes of stylistic expression. As is suggested by the previous two chapters, the painterly object is especially well suited for such an objective. For Wölfflin, the art history student may proceed to train his or her intuitive processes by repeatedly comparing painterly objects to linear and "primitive" ones, eventually arriving at an understanding of perceptual modes that is based on a narrative of historical progression—from the 15th to the 16th to the 17th century. This training corresponds to a disinterest in the practice of making casual judgments of quality or attribution, the sort of activity which Wölfflin refers to collectively as the "*Nebensächlichen*" ("secondary") (163).

Although in "Art Historical Miseducation," Wölfflin's stated target of criticism is the average museum-goer or the art connoisseur who is lacking in scholarly rigor, the unmentioned, but strongly implied, targets are those who subscribe to an older tradition of academic art history that values the "contextual" approach as the primary source of art historical knowledge. Wölfflin—like other formalists who construct a painterly aesthetic—ascribes "secondary" (*nebensachlich*) interest to contextualism because it distracts from the student's central, and profoundly ethical, project of training his or her own perceptual and intuitive experience. One of Wölfflin's unmentioned opponents was his predecessor at Berlin, Herman Grimm, who, along with many other art historians of the *fin de siècle* and turn-of-the-century periods, occasionally broke their usual political silence and engaged in a heated debate concerning the future of art history and of the humanities in general. In a lengthy article, "The Study of the New Art History at Universities" ("*Das Universitätsstudium der Neueren Kunstgeschichte*," 1891), Grimm

argues that art history should only be practiced with constant reference to historical and philological source materials:

> My conviction, which I have never concealed from my colleagues, is that new art history is not a field in itself, but an auxiliary discipline of history (*historische Hülfswissenschaft*), and whomever wishes to dedicate himself to this study should pursue not an "art historical" but rather an "historical doctorate"....On the basis of this belief I advise each young man to pursue this path. Without the foundation of historical and philological knowledge, a scholarly (*wissenschaftlich*) pursuit of new art history is not possible.[109] (391-92)

For Grimm, speaking with authority as chair at Berlin in 1891, *wissenschaftlich* knowledge is neglected by "new" (formalist) art historians who are coopted by an unrigorous museum culture that is overly concerned with the artwork "in the essential sense" ("*kunst im eigentlichen Sinne*") (393; see also 408-09). It is the usage of literary and historical documents which is the crucial explanatory element of an art historical education: "For the counsel of students there is only one path leading to Giotto: Dante!" ("*Für den Berather von Studenten führt nur ein Weg zu Giotto: Dante*!") (406; see also 401). Only by comprehending emphatic causal relationships between the artwork and the

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[109] Published in *Deutsche Rundschau* 66 (1891): 390-413. Grimm's article provides a frank perspective on the institutional situation of art history during the early 1890s, including descriptions of individual art historians' positions and methodological biases (394) and of the political dynamic that existed specifically in Berlin between museum officials, Kaiser Friedrich Wilhelm IV, and academic art history (407-09).
"Meiner Ueberzeugung zufolge, die ich meinen Collegen auch nie verhehlt habe, ist Neuere Kunstgeschichte kein Fach für sich, sondern eine historische Hülfswissenschaft, und wer sich diesen Studien widmen möchte, hätte nicht den "kunsthistorishen," sondern den "historischen Doctor" zu machen....Aus dieser Ueberzeugung heraus gebe ich jedem junge Manne den Rath, diesen Weg einzuschlagen. Denn ohne die Unterlage historischen und philologischen gründlichen Wissens ist ein wissenschaftlicher Betrieb der Neuern Kunstgeschichte nicht möglich."

extra-artistic document—Giotto and Dante—can the young student develop an art historical knowledge which is sufficiently coherent and "explanatory" (*erklärend*) (406).

Recalling the Diltheyean terminology introduced in Chapter 1, the formalist did not rely on the "explanatory" power of source materials, but rather depends on an "understanding" (*Verstand*) of artworks based on the perceptual and intuitive experience of the object itself. This intuitive aspect of art historical education was a main interest of *fin-de-siècle* formalists, many of whom wrote treatises defending their pedagogical approach in the face of accusations of unrigorousness by conservatives like Grimm. August Schmarsow, a professor of "new" art history at Breslau, produced several essays, such as *Art History at Our Colleges* ("*Die Kunstgeschichte an unseren Hochschulen*," 1891) that were meant to serve as a kind of guidebook for the design of formalist art history courses for undergraduate students ("*Anfänger*").[110]

For Schmarsow, the primary goal of the educator is to refer to, describe, and compare an array of artworks so that the student eventually builds up collections of visual impressions (*Anschauungen*) that become a "compelling store of memory-images" ("*nötigen Vorrat von Erinnerungsbildern*") (37-39). Schmarsow discusses this process of visualizing and storing compelling imagery as a spiritual activity associated with the development of the student's germanic identity according to "revelations of the national soul" (*Offenbarungen der Volksseele*) (2). By concentrating on comparisons between different kinds of artistic perception, the student acquires a sense of period styles that he

[110] Berlin: Georg Reimer Verlag, 1891. In this essay, Schmarsow mentions Grimm early on as a representative of the rival, "historical" approach to art history (2-3).

or she can grasp intuitively, during a single moment (*Augenblick*) of beholding experience of the object as a "whole" reflecting the spirit of its age (81). This condition of intuitive grasping directly recalls Wölfflin's paramount educational criteria of being able to apprehend the object's whole impression "immediately and strikingly and completely." Of crucial importance are the distinctions, repeatedly visualized by Schmarsow's students, between Northern, "painterly" and Southern, "classic" objects (62-63) which lead to the desired goal of an intuitive understanding of perceptual modes. One only arrives at this intuitive grasp of painterly-classic distinctions after a "long, attentive preparation" (*lange, sorgfältige Vorbereitung*) (82) involving the apprehension of a myriad of representative images. For Schmarsow, the consequence of this preparation is the most authentic of art historical knowledge, which he believes is wholly absent from the discourse of non-formalist art historians, such as Georg Dehio—an especially influential practitioner of "old" art history at Königsberg—who, sidetracked by a predominating focus on the "odds and ends" ("*Kram*") (71) of historical documentation, treat art history merely as a "secondary field" ("*Nebenfach*") and therefore ignore the pedagogical (and spiritual) value of "living visualization" (*lebendiger Anschauung*) (59).

Schmarsow may be responding, in part, to Dehio's blunt declaration, in an angry article of 1887, that the student must be subjected to "rigorous art historical instruction as an integrated component of historical studies" (*kunstwissenschaftlich Unterricht als*

integrierender Bestandteil der historischen Studien).[111] Like Grimm, Dehio identifies "new" art history with an absence of scholarly rigor and claims that his pedagogical approach is the one which can solve the "problem of universal education of the nation" ("*Problem der allgemeinen Volkserziehung*") (241). Only an educator who constantly draws causal connections between the object and historical, philological, and theological source materials can succeed in providing the young art historian with a general education (*allgemeinen Erziehung*) that is compatible with his or her existence as an "organ of the national spirit" ("*Organ der Volksseele*") (241-43).[112] Dehio's statements are echoed by those of Eduard Dobbert—like Grimm, a prominent old-school art historian in Berlin—who asserts that it is solely the explanatory value of extra-artistic sources which can provide the student with true art historical learning. The young art historian completely loses touch with the "originality of artistic practice" ("*Ursprünglichkeit des Kunstschaffens*") when he or she is not occupied consistently with the process of

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[111] Dehio, "Das Verhältnis der geschichtlichen zu den kunstgeschichtlichen Studien" (1887) in *Kunsthistorische Aufsätze* (Munich and Berlin: R. Oldenbourg, 1914), 235-46, 238. It is notable that this essay appreared originally in the same Berlin-based journal, the *Preussische Jahrbucher*, where Grimm's well-known polemical article would be seen four years later. The presumably conservative stance of this and other periodicals that existed during the *fin-de-siècle* period motivated "new" art historians, along with other like-minded humanistic scholars, to develop new outlets for publication, such as the journal *Logos*, which I discuss below.

[112] See also Dehio's bitter afterward of 1914 to the same article where he laments the continued distancing of art history from the realm of historical studies (245).

historical contextualization (15-17).[113] For Dobbert, "new" art historical methods are associated with the unrigorous, intuitive quest for the artwork's "essence" and with dilettantism and casualness of study within the museum context; such supposedly amateurish pursuits are unconcerned with textual sources and therefore do not permit the student access to real scholarly knowledge, which Dobbert identifies with the same Germanic "*Volkseele*" (7) to which Schmarsow lays claim.

In response to such criticism, formalists were inclined to promote certain features of their methodology which did have connotations of scholarly rigor.[114] As is suggested by my discussion of Wölfflin's article on education, it was believed by formalist writers that the ostensibly systematic qualities of their approaches made them both rhetorically effective and rigorous pedagogical instruments.

As longtime editor of the Stuttgart-based journal *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* and organizer of international conferences, Max Dessoir helped to naturalize the claims of rigorousness made by formalists seeking institutional acceptance. In opening remarks to one of these conferences, held at Berlin in 1913, he stresses the importance of adopting a systematic approach to artworks based on the

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[113] "Die Kunstgeschichte als Wissenschaft und Lehrgegenstand" (1886), in Dobbert, *Reden und Aufsätze Kunstgeschichtlichen Inhalts* (Berlin: Verlag von Wilhelm Ernst & Sohn, 1900), 1-20.

[114] To my knowledge, the "new" art historians did not apply the term "formalist" to themselves during the turn-of-the-century moment that is my focus. As I state in the introduction, I use the word to refer to a discursive compromise of positivism and phenomenology that, I believe, became integral to a kind of art writing subsequently known as formalist. Regrettably, I have not investigated the archaeology of the category "formalist" during the 20th century.

assumption that "knowledge of the individual case is only possible through its inclusion in a meaningful connection" ("*Erkenntnis des Besonderen ist nur möglich durch Einbeziehen in einen sinnvollen Zusammenhang*") to other works (2-3).[115] The connection spoken of here is only meaningful if it reflects an "unavoidable circular movement" (*unvermeidliche Kreisbewegung*) between the empirical realm of individual artworks and an abstracted realm inhabited by concepts of aesthetic perception (3). When the student compares historically specific artworks while simultaneously making reference to contrasting abstract aesthetic categories—such as the painterly vs. the linear—he or she arrives at a form of knowledge that is unique to the realm of art and that is foreign to those who are preoccupied with the investigation of extra-artistic documents (8-11).

Strongly influenced by the aesthetics of Konrad Fiedler, Dessoir strove to promote a disciplinary category of "*Kunstwissenschaft*" ("Rigorous Study of Art") in contrast to older forms of "*Kunstgeschichte*" (Art History) that remained mired in antiquated standards of extra-artistic historical evidence.[116] In 1906, Dessoir wrote a long

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[115] Originally published as "Systematik und Geschichte der Künste" (opening remarks for the Kongress für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft in Berlin, 7 October 1913) in *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 9 (1914): 1-15. See also idem, *Beiträge zur allgemeinen Kunstwissenschaft* (Stuttgart: Verlag von Ferdinand Enke, 1929), which is a compilation of Dessoir's writings that includes other general methodological statements. For discussion of the important role played by conferences in the professionalization of the field, see W. Ranke, "Der deutsche Kunsthistorikertag—eine obsolet gewordene Kommunikationsform," *Kritische Berichte* 3 (1975): 91-105; and Heinrich Dilly, *Kunstgeschichte als Institution*, 161-72.

[116] For discussion of Fiedler's repudiation of positivist traditions of scholarly evidence, see Chapter 1 above. Emil Utitz, an art historian based in Rostock, wrote a perceptive study in 1914 of the *Kunstwissenschaft* movement. Fiedler and Dessoir are each

treatise summarizing his aesthetic and pedagogical orientation, *Characteristics of the Aesthetic, Universal, and Rigorous Study of Art* (*Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft in den Grundzügen dargestellt*), which emphasizes the systematic and methodical nature of "new" art history.[117] Dessoir describes *Kunstwissenschaft*'s object of study as "the normal and essential" (*das Normale und Wesentliche*) (431) which becomes appreciated by the student who comparatively examines "necessary connections" (*denknotwendige Zusammenhänge*) (433) between artworks representing categories of aesthetic perception that are conceived as polar opposites. Practitioners of *Kunstwissenchaft* were convinced that scholarly narratives which alternated between the historically specific level of the empirical artwork and the abstracted level of opposing aesthetic categories would succeed in conveying a discourse that is both "objective" and "lawful." In a scathing discussion of Herman Grimm, old-school *Kunstgeschichte* is attacked as a field that is distracted from such "necessary connections" towards the potentially endless and unsystematic study of source materials (423, 431-32).

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portrayed in detail as "fathers" of the movement. Utitz's book is useful in general as a document of someone caught up in the events of art history's institutionalization. See Utitz, *Grundlegung der allgemeinen Kunstwissenschaft* (1914), ed. W. Henckmann, 2nd ed. (Munich: Wilhem Fink Verlag, 1972). See also Utitz's lauditory review of Fiedler's *Schriften über Kunst* in *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemein Kunstwissenschaft* 8 (1913): 501-05.

[117] Stuttgart: Verlag von Ferdinand Enke, 1906. Dessoir's book has two main sections. The first treats the philosophical background of "new" aesthetics, including the category of the sublime which is relevant to painterly experience as well as the issue of how one "objectively" may describe aesthetic impressions of artworks in terms of harmony and proportion, rhythm and meter, etc. The second part has an interesting discussion of the moralizing and spiritual effects of artworks signifying different aesthetic modes of perception, including the painterly.

The pedagogical writings of Josef Strzygowski—a "new" art historian who taught in Vienna for many years, along with Alois Riegl—exemplify the formalist's effort to construct a discursive identity that is both suited to the study of immediate perceptual effects of specified artworks *and* is rigorously "objective" or "lawful" because of its reference to abstract and oppositional aesthetic categories. In the essay *The Future of the Rigorous Study of Art* (*Der Zukunft der Kunstwissenschaft*, 1903), Strzygowski cautions against the educator dwelling too much within the abstract world of aesthetic principles while neglecting the process of visualization (*Anschauung*) as a fundamental tool for attaining art historical knowledge.[118] A detailed, step-by-step account of how formalists should make use of visualization techniques is provided: the student's attention should be drawn to the perceptual effects of "depth representation" (*Tiefenvorstellung*), the proportion of light to dark passages, the tightening and loosening (*Verbindung und Lösung*) of compositional parts (5-7), and the like, but the ultimate goal of such exercises is the development of students' abilities to perceive the artwork as an "overall impression" (*Gesamteindruck*) (4). Strzygowski comments that for old-school art historians, this goal lies buried beneath a pile of "*Bücherstaub*" (book dust) (12).

In "System and Method of Artistic Reflection" ("System und Methode der Kunstbetrachtung," 1912), Strzygowki states that the spiritual and moral importance of the student's education resides in an intuitive grasp of the artwork's perceptual effect as

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[118] Munich: Druck der Buchdruckerei der *Allgemeinen Zeitung*, 1903.

a "whole."[119] This grasp is brought about by the lecturer's use of a question-and-answer approach which provokes students' active participation in the visualization and description of artworks (51). However, aside from this pronounced concern with the intuitive grasp of the artwork, Strzygowski consistently cites the need to incorporate an element of "rigor" into the formalist educational method as a means to combat a presumed threat of disorder and disruption (48-50). Formalists like Strzygowski often associated this threat of disorder with the issue of how to teach the masses of undergraduates crowding into the lecture halls and how to deal with the masses of exponentially growing research materials emerging from both western and non-western locations during the late 19th- and early 20th centuries (4). In another article, "The Change in Art Research" ("Der Wandel der Kunstforschung," 1915), Strzygowski discusses with great urgency the necessity of subscribing to a "systematic foundation" (*systematische Grundlegung*) (5), in both lecturing and written scholarship, which prevents the unruly masses of both students and objects of study from overshadowing the crucial goal of creating perceptual understanding of coherently defined period styles.[120] Art history's exposure to a myriad

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[119] Published in the journal *Volksbildungsarchiv: Beiträge zur wissenschaftlichen Vertiefung der Volksbildungsbestrebungen* 3 (March 1912): 44-63. The wide scope of Strzygowski's writings on educational topics is indicated by the bibliography included in this article (45). Also interesting is a summary of a lecture on a Classical Greek grave relief that is meant to serve as an example of proper employment of *Anschauung* methods (52-62).

[120] *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* 25 (1915): 3-11. For another fearful reminder of the need to systematize the formalist approach, see idem, *Die Kunstgeschichte an der Wiener Universität* (Vienna: Hof-Verlags-Buchhandlung, 1909), which also includes mention of Strzygowski's indebtedness to the "rigorous" systematic approaches of both Alois Riegl and Franz Wickhoff.

of Asian monuments, for example, caused a considerable dilemma for a discipline fixated aesthetically on Classical Greek civilization (5). For formalists like Strzygowski, the introduction of objects hostile to this old aesthetic orientation signaled the need to adopt methodologies that were sufficiently flexible to encompass the new diversity and abundance of objects. These formalist methodologies—identified as the "new" art history and as "*Kunstwissenschaft*"— compared and contrasted abstract aesthetic concepts like painterly and the linear. Such concepts gave their methodologies a sufficient amount of malleability to refer to and compare radically different objects in a way that was accessible to both a mass of undergraduates seated in an auditorium and a beginning student delving into his or her first art historical text. Books such as Wölfflin's *Principles of Art History* or Schmarsow's *Principles of the Rigorous Study of Art* (*Grundbegriffe der Kunstwissenschaft*, 1905) stand as exemplars of a remarkably *accessible* formalist pedagogy that foregrounds the use of aesthetic categories which allow for coherent juxtapositions of objects, in a range of media, deriving from very different geographical and historical positions.[121]

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[121] For discussion of Wölfflin's book see Chapter 2. See also August Schmarsow, *Grundbegriffe der Kunstwissenschaft: Am Übergang von Altertum zum Mittlelalter kritisch erörtert und in systematischem Zusammenhange dargestellt* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1905), especially the introduction, which contains a frank discussion of the author's relationship to the work of Gottfried Semper and Riegl, as well as *Kunstwissenschaft*'s Fiedlerian interest in the "essence" of artistic activity that is separate from the everyday world represented by extra-artistic source materials. Even more influential perhaps as a demonstration of this "new" and highly flexible comparative method is Paul Brandt's *Sehen und Erkennen: Eine Anleitung zu vergleichenden Kunstbetrachtung* (1910), 10th ed. (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 1952), which had an

Konrad Lange, another powerful supporter of formalism based in Göttingen, also exhibits a worried concern with how to educate the "masses." In the article, "Rigorous Study of Art at Our Universities" ("Die Kunstwissenschaft an unseren Universitäten," 1891),[122] Lange states that the student population must be dealt with in a carefully structured way within the controlled environment of the lecture hall in contrast to the more spontaneous context of the museum gallery (461). We saw earlier how Wölfflin similarly denigrated the unprofessional and impulsive qualities displayed by the "pseudo-connoisseur" or the touristic museum-goer. As a "new" art historian, Lange justifies his avoidance of old-school approaches by emphasizing the rhetorical success of a formalist pedagogy of "*Anschauung*" that is fully accessible to the "average" college student (463). Formalism's enemies associated this accessibility with dilettantism practiced by museum culture and with inconsequential, speculative musings on the essence of artistic practice. As evidence of their field's corruption, "old" art historians pointed to members of the artistic community and non-academic art critics and theorists who were helping to propagate the formalist cause, such as Konrad Fiedler, Julius Meier-Graefe, or Adolf von Hildebrand.[123] However, despite its accessibility to undergraduates and non-academics,

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unprecedented effect on several generations of German undergraduate students; see esp. 290-302, which contains some painterly juxtapositions of Rembrandt and Menzel.

[122] *Die Grenzboten: Zeitschrift für Politik, Litteratur und Kunst* 50 (1891): 449-67. Lange's article has a summary of the political landscape of art history in 1891 that includes the names of the major players and their various methodological orientations (450-53).

[123] Popular figures like Fiedler and Hildebrand had close ties to formalists in the academy and virtually no allegiance to old-school art history. See Meier-Graefe,

new art historians argued that it was formalism's reference to a systematic structure of abstract aesthetic concepts—and its corresponding resistance to the exercise of arbitrary aesthetic judgment—which saved it from unrigorous dilettantism (466).[124]

My discussion of several formalists' pedagogical beliefs reveals shared traits that are worth emphasizing. First of all, there is an urgent concern with the student's intuitive and moral ability to perceive the artwork as a "whole" impression: the development of this ability requires repetitious training, in the form of visualization exercises, and the simultaneous suppression of tempting distractions from the whole; these distractions include an "egotistical" preoccupation with virtuosic displays of artistic talent or an overly specialized and erudite fixation on isolated iconographical motifs and philological source materials. Equally important, though, is the effort to educate the student's intuitive perception of the whole in a rigorous way, by alternating between the study of

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Entwicklungsgeschichte der modernen Kunst (Vergleichende Betrachtung der bildenden Künste als Beitrag zu einer neuen Ästhetik) (1904), rev. ed., ed. Hans Belting (Munich: Piper, 1987), which Belting argues was the "most read and discussed book on modern art in the German language" during the turn-of-the-century period (11); Meier-Graefe (unlike Hildebrand) was a powerful, non-academic proponent of the painterly aesthetic and also had a pronounced interest in pedagogical issues; see, for example, his famous study of Hans von Marées (1909) and idem, *Der Fall Böcklin und die Lehre den Einheiten* (Stuttgart: Verlag Julius Hoffmann, 1905), which portrays Böcklin as a kind of "modern" successor to Rembrandt. I am interested in the intimacy of formalism to the realms of practicing artists and of non-academic criticism—a situation that recurs frequently over the course of modernism's history in Europe and in post-World-War-Two America.

[124] For another discussion of art history's effort to avoid its conversion into a "hotbed for dilettants" ("*Tummelplatz für Dilettanten*"), see Adolf von Oechelhaeuser, *Der Kunstgeschichliche Unterricht an den Deutschen Hochschulen* (Karlsruhe: Druck der G. Braun'schen Hofbuchdruckerei, 1902), esp. 6-9, 16-17, 30. Oechelhäuser was a professor at the Technischen Höchschule in Karlsruhe who had strong ties to the local community of artists and architects.

specific, empirically existing art objects and a structure of abstract and normative aesthetic categories. A group of abstract, contrasting concepts provides the student with a means to interpret the object of study "essentially" and in a "lawful" manner. It is the fusion of intuitive perception and systematic conceptualization that lies at the heart of an academic formalist pedagogy which proved to be enormously successful both in terms of its rhetorical impact upon the student population and its eventual institutional acceptance, despite the protests of "conservative" art historians who were fearful of losing their influence.

I have focused so far on formalists' arguments with fellow art historians, but the "new" art historians were motivated by philosophical and political beliefs affecting the wider expanse of academic culture as well. As Fritz Ringer elucidates in the classic study, *Decline of the German Mandarins* (1969), a wave of cultural pessimism spread over segments of the academic community in turn-of-the-century German-speaking nations:[125] Increasing numbers of professors in the humanities—including all of the formalists I refer

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[125] Although his argument contains some questionable assertations, Ringer's remains the best study of turn-of-the-century academic culture in Germany. See Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969); another useful source in English is Frederic Lilge, *The Abuse of Learning: The Failure of the German University* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 84-130, which includes bibliography of original sources and extended discussion of pessimistic philosophy in the academy. Neither Ringer nor Lilge mention art historians specifically; the generalizations they make about humanist academics promoting themselves as an "elitist" nobility do not apply easily to some formalists who, I am suggesting, were self-consciously trying to develop teaching and textual instruments that would have an especially popular appeal; the embrace of formalist discourse by non-academic artists and critics is testimony to this appeal.

to in this chapter—held the conviction that undergraduate students were not receiving adequate "universal cultivation" (*Bildung*), which may be defined as the absorption of moral and spiritual content as the result of personal and speculative contemplation of the object of study. "Neo-Kantian" academics in particular wanted to develop pedagogical instruments which would counteract a prevailing trend towards unspeculative, and therefore unspiritual ("*geistlos*"), scholarship that was divorced from *Bildung*. It was believed that a steady decline in the vitality of intellectual traditions had taken place during the course of the nineteenth century, a decline associated with the separation of the spiritual and the political-bureaucratic realms: The government—and by extension, the university—administered its territory as though it were a machine, performing mechanical tasks in order to fulfill subjects' practical needs while neglecting its role as purveyor of moral and spiritual guidance. Such practical needs were exemplified by the instrumental attitude exhibited by the student who desires a university degree solely as a stepping stone to a career.[126] As we observed with Fiedler's critique of academic discourse in

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[126] Of crucial relevance to my argument throughout this chapter is Frederic Schwartz's recent discussion of the academic art historian's critique of instrumentalist culture, as represented by the distinction between style and fashion. Style concepts were interpreted idealistically as harkening back to "the nature of visual form under precapitalist conditions of culture," while fashion was conceived as a central concept within a larger discourse on the "decadent nature of visual form" under capitalism exemplified by its relentless instability of taste and constant change. In fashion, "form was seen as taking revenge for its instrumentalization as a commodity"; its visual qualities were important only when functioning as exchange value. See Schwartz, "Cathedrals and Shoes: Concepts of Style in Wölfflin and Adorno," *New German Critique* 76 (Winter 1999): 3-48, esp. 12-15, 25-27, 31. Schwartz, however, focuses on Wölfflin's construction of "historically remote visuality" in order to interpret a (reactionary) desire to evoke a pre-capitalist moment, but avoids discussion of the painterly and its function as a "modern" aesthetic and pedagogical concept within the contexts of 19th-century art movements (not only the

Chapter 1, a kind of instrumentalism also was adopted by scholars who, according to a mechanical logic, "explained" the artistic object by drawing causal connections between it and a range of external or contextual sources. This mechanical logic was identified with the influence of experimental science—thought to be a servant of the economic and industrial interests of the state—concentrating on the directly observable empirical world as the only source of knowledge, a world which often could be measured using a machinic apparatus. Neo-Kantians, including a host of "new" art historians, believed that they could methodologically embrace *both* the empirical world of the "given" *and* the unobservable, transcendental world—indeed, a marriage of the two realms was sought, and was represented by methodological concepts that have access both to the empirical specificity of the objects of study (whether historical, artistic, psychological, or otherwise) and to the suprahistorical or transcendental domain which the eyes and apparatus of the positivist cannot reach; as such, these concepts may provide the student with "universal cultivation."

As Klaus Christian Köhnke points out, the 1870s had been marked by an unprecedented aversion to metaphysical and theological discourse in the academy. In Prussia, this aversion was influenced by the "liberal" *Kulturkampfe* policies instituted by Bismark which led not only to a more pronounced separation of church and state, but also

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Renaissance or Baroque), museum culture, and the art reform movement in Prussia. For further discussion, see below and my discussion of Fiedler and Marées in Chapter 1.

a "liberation" of university pedagogy from theological doctrine.[127] The rise of secularism corresponded to an increased institutionalization of positivist research in the natural sciences and the humanities, research resolutely dedicated to the study of empirical "experience" rather than metaphysical speculation. Founded in 1877, the journal *Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie* reflected the positivist turn in scholarship; it combined the writings of well-known positivist scientists, like Richard Avenarius, with those of speculative philosophers, like Wilhelm Windleband, who—despite their reverence for Kantian metaphysics—were compelled to present themselves as compatible with the prevailing scholarly trend.[128] However, at the close of the decade,

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[127] See Köhnke, *The Rise of Neo-Kantianism: German Academic Philosophy between Idealism and Positivism* (1986), trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 246-80, esp. 252-54. Köhnke's discussion assumes a great deal of philsophical background and also has a disagreeable lack of page references to original source materials, but it is still one of the best sources in English on German academic philosophy during the *fin de siècle* (the translation is of the highest quality; Hollingdale has been the principle translator of Nietzsche). For expanded treatment of the political context of Neo-Kantism, see Thomas E. Willey, *Back to Kant: The Revival of Kantianism in German Social and Historical Thought, 1860-1914* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978).

[128] And yet other groups of Neo-Kantians chose to never associate themselves with such publications. Hermann Cohen, a prominent member of the Neo-Kantian Marburg school, was relatively radical in his platonic distaste for positivism, preferring to publish in the Berlin-based *Philosophische Monatshefte*, a journal that existed from 1868-94. Emile Utitz mentions the important relationship that existed between the aesthetic philosophies of Cohen and Konrad Fiedler. See Utitz, *Grundlegung der allgemeinen Kunstwissenschaft*, 8; and Cohen, *Ästhetik des reinen Gefühls*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1912), a fascinating work which has gone practically untouched by historiographers of art history. Other members of the Marburg school, such as Ernst Cassirer and Paul Natorp, had considerable influence on art historical discourse, including, most famously, Erwin Panofsky. On Panofsky's relationship to Cassirer, see Keith Moxey, "Perspective, Panofsky, and the Philosophy of History," *New Literary History* 26 (Autumn 1995):

a "social crisis" of considerable magnitude was occurring, spurred on by assassination attempts on Bismark that were perceived widely as related to an absence of the ethical conditioning previously exercised by the educational establishment.[129] Neo-Kantians propagated the view that academics were following a fully secularized dogma of scientific "explanation" that was not attentive to the student's moral and spiritual education, but rather was becoming an instrument of the "egotism" of industrial and trading interests.[130] Beginning in the 1880s, and throughout the pre-World-War-One period, many Neo-Kantian educators took it upon themselves to polemically state their opposition to an alleged abandonment of universal cultivation. These academics included the formalists whom I discussed earlier, such as Wölfflin, who vigorously complained about art historical "miseducation" as a sign of this abandonment. Windelband, as a leading member—along with Heinrich Rickert—of the so-called Southwest German school of Neo-Kantians, emphasized the educator's employment of *normative* methodological principles or categories. In order to acquire cultivation, the student must believe in the absolute validity of the normative values exercised by these principles. In other words, he

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775-86; and Silvia Ferretti, *Cassirer, Panofsky, and Warburg: Symbol, Art, and History*, trans. Richard Pierce (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

[129] Köhnke, as in n. 125, provides a concise narrative of this moment of "crisis" in Prussian history (276-80).

[130] This egotism was associated by some with both "foreign" and "Jewish" influences. For more on this right-wing association, see my discussion of Langbehn and Rembrandt below.

or she should be persuaded to accept on faith that the educator's principles are unquestionably valid as a means to understand the objects of study.[131]

The question of faith is crucial to Neo-Kantian pedagogical philosophy. The student requires personal, speculative contemplation of the object of study before making his or her own *leap of faith* by accepting an identification between the studied objects on the one hand and a corresponding group of abstract, normative principles on the other; both the objects and the principles are, needless to say, selected by the educator who must devise rhetorical means to persuade the student's leap of faith. By making this identification between empirical object and abstract principle—after a prolonged period of contemplative activity—the student is able to attain *Bildung*. My usage of the phrase "leap" of faith is appropriate in that *Bildung* necessarily depends on a dynamic process of formation and creation that occurs within the mysterious and unobservable depths of the student's psyche; when performing the leap, the self is engaged in a constant state of "becoming" (*Werden*) rather than a static condition of "being" (*Sein*). The educator ascribes mystical, moral, or spiritual significance to this formative process, significance that is neglected by positivist epistemology. In the case of "new" art history, one may become "*gebildet*" ("cultivated") by experiencing a dynamic and intuitive process of visualization that happens during the encounter with a selection of objects—either from a textual source or during a lecture—*and* while referencing normative aesthetic principles

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[131] See, for instance, Windelband, *Präludien: Aufsatze und Reden zur Einleitung in die Philosophie*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1884), esp. 19, 149. Windelband's best known works deal with ancient history (now available in translation) and the history of philosophy.

such as the painterly and linear. After an extended period of performing these intuitive and formative exercises, the student comes to *accept on faith* the ideal applicability of the abstract, universal principle (e.g. the painterly) to the empirical, historically existing object (e.g. of the Baroque period).

The Neo-Kantian educational process that focuses on the student's acceptance of normative principles draws its rhetorical strength from previous, 18th- and 19th-century traditions of *Bildung*. One of the more venerable of these traditions is religious in nature: it constructs the reading experience of the biblical text as a revelatory moment when the subject accepts ethical and religious principles on faith.[132] Another broad discursive tradition—which indirectly references the spirituality of religious *Bildung*—focused on the literary text as a means for achieving universal cultivation. One of these literary traditions was articulated powerfully by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in narratives conceived—like those of formalist art historians—as the means to compel the reader to accept a set of normative values. The genre of literature eventually referred to by Wilhelm Dilthey in 1906 as the *Bildungsroman* ("educational novel") naturally requires a

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[132] For further discussion, see Thomas Zippert, *Bildung durch Offenbarung: Das Offenbarungsverständnis des jungen Herder als Grundmotiv seines theologisch-philosophisch-literarischen Lebenswerks* (Marburg: N. G. Elwert, 1994); and the essays by Martin Huber and Gerhard Lauer in *Bildung und Konfession: Politik, Religion, und literarische Identitätsbildung 1850-1918* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1996).

prolonged period of private reading activity which is analogous to the personal activity of visualization required by the "new" art history.[133]

One much-studied *Bildungsroman* is Goethe's novel, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (*Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, 1796), in which the protagonist, as a kind of exemplary self, follows a path of self-formation or self-cultivation with which the reader is expected to empathize. The hero, Wilhelm, is manipulated covertly by a secretive organization called the Society of the Tower. The role of the Society is to promote a notion of "mastery" (*Meisterschaft*) which cannot be coercively imposed, but rather is indirectly communicated to the unaware initiate, Wilhelm. The Society ultimately embraces Wilhelm, but only after various characters perish for the sake of the hero's gradual enlightenment; Wilhelm's frequent contemplative experiences of sacrifice and loss are necessary to the overall narrative of being trained as a future member of the Society, an outcome that is analogous to the reader's eventual achievement of universal cultivation.

The literary theorist Marc Redfield describes the *Bildungsromane* as "the most pedagogically efficient of novels, since they dramatize and enact the very motion of

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[133] See Dilthey, *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung: Lessing, Goethe, Novalis, Hölderlin* (1906) (Leipzig: Teubner, 1913), esp. 394. There is a huge literature on the *Bildungsroman* in both English and German; a good source of bibliography is Marc Redfield, *Phantom Formations: Aesthetic Ideology and the Bildungsroman* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 38-62; I have found Redfield's interpretation of literary *Bildung* to be illuminating and suggestive for my own argument about art historical discourse. See also Gerhart Mayer, *Der deutsche Bildungsroman: Von der Aufklärung bis zur Gegenwart* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandllung, 1992), 12-14, 43-59; and Claus Günzler, *Bildung und Erziehung im Denken Goethes* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1981), 1-20.

aesthetic education."[134] The student of the *Bildungsroman* experiences moral and spiritual training comparable to Wilhelm's: normative principles are indirectly conveyed while one follows the gradual flow of the narrative and gradually "understands" the hero's behavior as being exemplary. Such training is similar to that of the formalist art history student, who contemplates art objects within a prescribed narrative sequence while simultaneously referencing a structure of normative aesthetic principles which contrast with "abnormal" artistic tendencies that exceed those aesthetic norms, or do not achieve them. When reading through Wölfflin's *Principles of Art History*, the student rehearses the narrative sequence from pre-Renaissance to Renaissance to Baroque, and ultimately accepts the normative value of the painterly aesthetic principle—like the principle of "mastery" adhered to by the Society—as opposed to the abnormal, chaotic expressionism of the 15th-century "primitives."[135]

As Redfield points out, the *Bildungsroman* functions as an impressively efficient pedagogical instrument for cultivation. The educational devices of formalist art history are persuasive as well, although they operate in a rather different rhetorical context. The

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[134] See Redfield, *Phantom Formations*, 55-94. Mieke Bal's work on the relation between literary and pictorial narrative is notable in this context. For some provocative discussion of the roles of self-reflection in the epistemology of narratives and the illusion of "original subjectivity," see Bal, "First Person, Second Person, Same Person: Narrative as Epistemology," *New Literary History* 24 (Spring 1993): 293-320, esp. 300-02. It is interesting to compare narratives of the painterly Baroque with Walter Benjamin's interpretation of Baroque *Trauerspiel* narratives; see Lutz P. Koepick, "The Spectacle, the *Trauerspiel*, and the the Politics of Resolution: Benjamin Reading the Baroque Reading Weimar," *Critical Inquiry* 22 (Winter 1996): 268-91, esp. 287-88.

[135] For further discussion, see Chapter 2.

student of formalism performs visualization exercises in accordance with a group of aesthetic categories; these categories allow for a limited range of experiential, intuitive, and perceptual possibilities. Rather than being occupied with the specific *details* of literary characters' lives, the art history student becomes immersed in a far more abstract narrative sequence, inhabited by protagonists that are not individual characters, but modes of aesthetic perception, like the painterly, the linear, and the primitive. The formalist educational narrative is overshadowed by experiential "acts" of aesthetic perception enacted by the student in relation to textual illustrations or slides.[136] It is the relative *abstraction* of the formalist pedagogical process—focused on the phenomenology of the perceptual "act"[137] —which makes it more rhetorically convincing as a conveyer of normative principles reflecting "essential," metaphysical, and spiritual content.

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[136] Besides this interest in the unobservable, intuitive properties and phenomenology of perception as an integral component of the pedagogical narrative, the academic formalist also adopted a variety of positivist tropes as a relatively "scientistic" means of making scholarship rhetorically convincing to undergraduate classes. Heinrich Dilly points out that the development of late-nineteenth-century photographic technology corresponds to the evolution of formalism's success in the academy. The usage of lantern projections, for example, allowed the formalist to focus in an unprecedented way on minute, observable details of the object, and on more sophisticated morphological comparisons between different objects; these projections lent the formalist lecture a new type of scientistic "fascination" that was associated, to some extent, with positivist experimental practices. See Dilly, "Lichtbildprojektion—Prothese der Kunstbetrachtung," in *Kunstwissenschaft und Kunstvermittlung*, 153-72. For interesting commentary, see Donald Preziosi, Rethinking Art History: *Meditations on a Coy Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 54-79 and Robert S. Nelson, "The Slide Lecture, or the Work of Art History in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Critical Inquiry* 26 (Spring 2000): 414-34, esp. 432. For more on Wölfflin's compromise between Neo-Kantian and positivist conventions of scholarship, see Chapter 2.

[137] Of course, many turn-of-the-century formalisms are indebted to aesthetic discourses of "empathy" (*Einfühlung*) which are focused on the phenomenological experience of self-

Invoking earlier *Bildung* traditions established by Goethe, Gottfried Herder, Friedrich Schiller, and many others, new venues were promoted as outlets for a turn-of-the-century scholarship in the service of *Bildung*, including publications such as the *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* mentioned earlier, and more interdisciplinary journals, such as the Tübingen-based *Logos: Internationale Zeitschrift für Philosophie der Kultur.*[138] *Logos*, which began in 1910-11, consistently published those who became identified with the then-current strains of both Neo-Kantianism and the *Lebensphilosophie* movement.[139] In a foreword to the first issue—which contains articles by the life philosopher and critic Georg Simmel and the Italian formalist writer

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formation that occurs during the individual subject's experience of the perceptual act. Empathy theorists such as Theodor Lipps were particularly important for the "early" Wölfflin of the 1880s (whom I do not deal with in this dissertation) and various "expressionistic" art historians like Wilhelm Worringer and Max Dvorak, but is of less immediate relevance to the painterly aesthetic that is my object of study. The aesthetic and pedagogical writings of Konrad Lange—such as *Das Wesen der künstlerischen Erziehung* (1902) and *Die künstlerische Erziehung der deutschen Jugend* (1893)—helped to facilitate the incorporation of empathy theory into a coherent pedagogical methodology by turn-of-the-century formalist art historians. On empathy theory and the formalist tradition see, for example, the introduction by Harry Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomou to *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893* (Santa Monica: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994). On Wölfflin's eventual critique of empathy theory in his "mature" phase, see Meinhold Lurz, "Der einfühlungs-psychologische Hintergrund der Grundbegriffe Heinrich Wölfflins: Wirkung—Entwicklung—Kritik," diss. University of Heidelberg (1976).

[138] Another important new periodical was the enormously successfull *Kantstudien* which began in 1897 and was indicative of the current wave of fasincation with Kant interpretation.

[139] In 1935, *Logos* became the *Zeitschrift für deutsche Kulturphilosophie*, reflecting the growing nationalism of that period in contrast to the journal's formerly overt internationalist stance, which is analogous to the internationalism of many modernist avant-garde artists, such as Kandinsky.

Benedetto Croce—the editors state their intention of constructing a new "*Systembildung*" that encompasses the interests of all humanistic fields of study, including history, philosophy, sociology, psychology, and art history.[140] *Logos*'s advisory board was made up of a "who's who" of pre-World-War-One Neo-Kantianism and *Lebensphilosophie*: Edmund Husserl, Friedrich Meinecke, Rickert, Simmel, Max Weber, Windelband, and Heinrich Wölfflin, who occupied the board throughout his career, although he did not publish regularly in the journal.

Rickert in particular was a highly prolific, influential, and polemical critic of positivism's influence in the academy and of the logic of instrumentalism more generally. In the fourth volume of *Logos*, Rickert expressed the need to adopt not only a speculative and intuitive approach to historical description, but one that proceeds according to normative methodological categories, which provide the means to find the "essential" (*wesentlich*) aspect of the historical object or event.[141] In the same volume of 1913, Wölfflin's article, "On the Concept of the Painterly" ("*Über den Begriff des*

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[140] It is significant that in the same issue, one of the editors, Richard Kroner, published an article on Henri Bergson, which further emphasized the international and the "life philosophy" interests of the journal.

[141] On Rickert's influence on *Logos*'s editorial direction, see Friedrich H. Tenbruck, "Heinrich Rickert in seiner Zeit: Zur europäischen Diskussion über Wissenschaft und Weltanschauung," in J. Oelkers, et al, eds., *Neukantianismus: Kulturtheorie, Pädagogik und Philosophie* (Wienheim: Deutscher Studien, 1989), 79-105. For more detailed discussion, see Rickert, *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft: Ein Vortrag* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1899), which contains a powerful critique of positivist epistemology; and idem, *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung: Eine logische Einleitung in die historischen Wissenschaften*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1896-1902), 10-15, 97, 390. Translations of both books are available. Rickert's influence on the development of art history has been vastly underestimated.

Malerischen") appeared, reflecting a similar concern with finding universal norms as a means of structuring the intuitive activity of performing visualization. It is important to reflect on Wölfflin's motivation to focus on the painterly—rather than on the linear or some other category—as an exemplar of his methodological approach.

In Chapter 2, we observed the ways that Wölfflin constructed his notion of the painterly in relation to Baroque art and architecture, and how, with the publication of the *Logos* article and *The Principles of Art History* (1915) his aesthetic came to favor the painterly over his other main aesthetic principle of the linear. Wölfflin's eventual preference for the painterly was motivated, in part, by a popular revival of interest in the Baroque that culminated in Germany during the turn-of-the-century period. This revival, which had occurred in France a generation earlier, tended to focus on the work of Rembrandt van Rijn as a kind of artistic analogue for the "modern" *Zeitgeist*. As Johannes Stuckelberger discusses, the artistic elite of Munich became known internationally as "modern" interpreters of a Baroque *malerisch* aesthetic. During the mid- to late 19th century, the Bavarian circles of Karl Theodor von Piloty, Franz von Lenbach, and Wilhelm Leibl all sought to emulate the Dutch masters, as in the case of the portraitist Lenbach, whose depiction of Bismark (1890) is ostensibly indebted to Rembrandt, or Hans von Marées, who made a name for himself as a Rembrandt copyist.[142] Leibl successfully helped to establish leading Munich-based artists, including himself, Max

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[142] See Stuckelberger, *Rembrandt und die Moderne: Der Dialog mit Rembrandt in der deutschen Kunst um 1900*, diss. University of Basel (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1996), 29-39.

Liebermann, Lovis Corinth, and Max Slevogt, as revisionists of the 17th-century *malerisch* tradition, and organized—along with the collector-dealer Ernst Seeger[143]—a major Rembrandt exhibition in Munich (1898) that conveyed an increasingly popular sentiment: artists should formulate a dialogue with Rembrandt that is focused on the "how" of painterly painting—rather than on the revival of the "what" or the subject matter of Dutch "*Altmeisterlichkeit*"—as an educational, moral and spiritual symbol for what modern German *Kultur* could become. It is most important to emphasize that this "educational" interest in Rembrandt and the painterly was expressed by an artistic community *prior to* its enthusiastic formulation by academic formalists in subsequent years. The painterly, then, was to some extent identified with a trend of current artistic practice by both formalism's enemies in the academy and by the formalists themselves, many of whom were personally connected to artists with painterly sympathies.[144]

However, the museum culture of Berlin played an even more direct role in the popular construction of Rembrandt as a painterly "model" for a much-needed

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[143] Photographic sources: Sonja Mehl, *Franz von Lenbach in der Städtischen Galerie im Lenbachhaus, München* (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1980), pl. 12; and Emil Waldmann, *Wilhelm Liebl* (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1930), fig. 254.

[144] For further treatment of artists' post-1900 shift from a *Klassiche* aesthetic to a painterly-oriented interest in Rembrandt, Böcklin, and Klinger, see Inge Schlünder, *Die deutschen Künster-Steinzeichnungen und die kunstpädagogische Reformbewegung in der Wilhelminischen Ära* (Bern: H. Lang Verlag, 1973), which focuses on the culture of lithographic workshops. Unlike German-speaking nations, it is certainly the case that French art historians embraced the painterly's importance—as an alternative to classicizing preferences—already during the mid-19th-century, and therefore affected the subsequent institutional shift in aesthetics within the German context, first among artists and then academics.

regeneration of the German *Volk* that was besieged by the *geistlos* instrumental logic and materialism of technological and industrial forces. As director of the Berliner Gemäldegalerie from 1890-1929, Wilhelm Bode amassed a spectacular collection of Rembrandt, as well as other Dutch masters like Franz Hals.[145] In opposition to the classicizing tastes of old-school academic art historians such as Herman Grimm, Bode used his influence as general director of Berlin museums (1905-20)—under the supervision of crown prince Friedrich Wilhelm—to convey a message of Rembrandt's germanic "spirituality" to non-academic audiences:

> Through Rembrandt, Dutch art arrives at a pure expression of its character, the zenith of its painterly development. In Germany we lay claim to Rembrandt as a German; it is fitting that he is a descendent of pure germanic stock and his art is truly germanic.[146] (4-5)

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[145] For a useful outline of this museum context and its relation to art historical discourse, including discussion of figures such as Bode, see Martin Warnke, "Epochen als Kunstwerke: Zur Entwicklung der Periodisierungstechnik in der Kunstgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Konkurrenten in der Fakultät: Kultur, Wissen und Universität um 1900*, eds. Christoph König and Eberhard Lämmert (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1999), 124-48, esp. the section on "*Eingangsbilder*" as personifications of epochs and as *Bildung* devices in museum entrance halls. Warnke also mentions the importance of Friedrich Schinkel—and the *Bildung* tradition within the museum context—on later, academic art history traditions; for discussion, see Barry Bergdoll, *Karl Friedrich Schinkel: An Architect for Prussia* (New York: Rizzoli, 1994), Chapter 2, "Building and the Ethos of Bildung." The best survey of turn-of-the-century German museum culture is Thomas Gaehtgens, *Die Berliner Museumsinsel im deutschen Kaiserreich: Zur Kulturpolitik der Museen in der wilhelminischen Epoche* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1992); see also idem, "Das Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum in Berlin," *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 88 (1992): 53-70. For relevant discussion of the historical formation of art history in relation to museology, see Donald Preziosi, "The Art of Art History," in Preziosi, ed., *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 507-25.

[146] Bode, *Rembrandt und seine Zeitgenossen* (Leipzig: Verlag von E. A. Seemann, 1906). Bode was also well known for his scholarship on design objects (eg. Italian furniture) and

> [Rembrandt's] representations...are the loud announcement of religion of love, an evangelism of the grace and salvation which encompasses the lowliest and the unluckiest; poor and destitute are most of his images....The modest truth of his representation, the honesty and depth of his perception speaks a meaningful and engaging language like the words of the Evangelists; the spirit of love and compassion is spoken in all of his pictures with such convincing vitality (*Lebendigkeit*) and such moving sincerity (*Innigkeit*)...[147] (8)

Like Konrad Fiedler, Bode is reluctant to provide detailed observation of specific paintings. When referring to Rembrandt's painterly style, Bode uses vague references to "*Helldunkel*" ("chiaroscuro") (13, 15) which are not further elaborated; instead, he stresses the "uncertain, formless, and intangible" ("*unbestimmt, formlos, und unfaßbar*") qualities of Rembrandt's "vital expression" ("*lebendige Ausdruck*") (19) which are, in essence, the "ambiguous, mysterious" ("*Schwerverständliche, Rätselhafte*") (28). With

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especially his work on rugs of the ancient Near East. In his scholarly elevation of the painterly Baroque and the "minor" arts, Bode makes an interesting comparison with Riegl, who had a similar interest in non-classicizing aesthetics and was identified closely with museum culture. See also Matthew Rampley, "Riegl and the Rediscovery of the Baroque," in *Framing Formalism: Riegl's Work* (Amsterdam: G + B Arts International, 2001), 265-90. "Durch Rembrandt ist die holländische Kunst erst zum reinen Ausdruck ihres Charakters gelangt. Er bildet den Höhenpunkt ihrer malerischen Entwicklung. In Deutschland liebt man es jetzt, Rembrandt als einen Deutschen in Anspruch zu nehmen; richtig ist nur, daß er der Sproß eines rein germanischen Stammes und seine Kunst eine echt germanishe ist."

[147] On the highly publicized Bode-Grimm debate, see Peter Joerissen, *Kunsterzeihung*, 253-59. "[Rembrants] Darstellungen...sind die laute Verkündigung der Religion der Liebe, des Evangeliums von der Gnade und Erlösung, die auch dem Niedrigsten und Unglücklichste—und arm und elend sind seine meisten Gestalten—zu teil wird....Die schlichte Wahrheit seiner Darstellung, die Ehrlichkeit und Tiefe seiner Empfindung reden eine ebenso deutliche und zugleich gewinnende Sprache wie die Worte des Evangeliums; der Geist der Liebe und Barmherzigkeit spricht aus allen seinen Schilderungen mit so überzeugender Lebendigkeit und so ergreifender Innigkeit..."

this emphasis on inexpressible "*Lebendigkeit*," Bode highlights the modest, but earnestly religious, spirituality of the painterly. In addition, Bode foregrounds the *germanic* identity of that humble and "honest" spirituality, an identity which should be emulated by present-day Germans.

Bode's moralizing and spiritual treatment of the painterly as a distinctly germanic phenomenon was expressed to the museum-going public in numerous exhibitions and official catalogues of Berlin's Gemäldegalerie and Kaiser-Friedrichs-Museum—especially during the period 1897-1906—and contributed to an escalation in Rembrandt publications that reached its peak ca. 1906, the year of Rembrandt's 300th birthday.[148] Consequently, in addition to its association with actual artistic practice, the painterly took on a connotation of popular appeal because of its enthusiastic construction within the museum context. Bode and other museum officials convincingly portrayed the painterly, in all of its mystery and ambiguity, as an instructive form of "sincere" and authentically germanic cultural expression.[149] The painterly could function as a model of resistance against the

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[148] Arguably the most important of these publications was Carl Neumann's extravagant two-volume study, *Rembrandt* (Berlin: W. Spemann, 1902), which similarly contains discussion of painterly "vitality" as a distinctly germanic phenomenon that is associated with mysterious, hidden experience; the book, which has a lengthy section on *The Nightwatch* (217-340) includes an interesting discussion of 19th-century reception of Rembrandt (1-28), and a treatment of painterly perception (154-71) that is an important precursor to Wölfflin's painterly notion as expressed in *The Principles* thirteen years later. Neumann was professor at Heidelberg for many years.

[149] Another powerful museum figure was Alfred Lichtwark, director of the Kunsthalle in Hamburg, who published extensively on the problem of *Bildung* and art education. Like Strzygowski, Lichtwark endorsed the question-and-answer technique of teaching, but unlike many academic formalists, Lichtwark overtly expressed the desire to use formalist pedagogy as means to legitimate economic and political interests. See Lichtwark, *Alfred*

unspiritual, dishonest, and ungermanic tendencies of an increasingly egotistical industrial and technological environment.

The notion of the painterly serving as a kind of instructional model for the spiritual renewal of the modern German *Volk* was taken up by the non-academic cultural critic Julius Langbehn in an enormously successful book, *Rembrandt as Educator: By a German* (*Rembrandt als Erzeiher: Von einem Deutschen*), first published anonymously in 1890.[150] Langbehn's discussion of the painterly contains barely any discussion of actual artworks. The focus instead is on "Rembrandt" as a sort of symbolic antidote for the "spiritual emptiness" (*geistige Leere*) pervading German urban centers, especially Berlin (259); this emptiness is best represented by scholarship (*Wissenschaft*) that follows a "mechanische Weltauffassung" (*mechanistic world-view*) which is neglectful of all "spiritual" traditions of universal cultivation (126-28). Rembrandt's version of the

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Lichtwark: Eine Auswahl seiner Schriften, 2 vols., ed. Wolf Mannhardt (Berlin: B. Cassirer, 1917); for commentary on Lichtwark's leadership role within the so-called art education reform movement, as well as bibliography, see Irene Below, "Probleme der 'Werkbetrachtung'," esp. 86-90. For a textual source reflecting the art reform movement's interest in the painterly aesthetic, see Joerissen, *Kunsterziehung*, 266-68, which cites a important statement published by an assocation of Leipzig art educators; see Ernst Heidrich's review of *Bildbetrachtungen: Arbeiten aus der Abteilung für Kunstpflege des Leipziger Lehrervereins* (1906) in *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allegemeine Kunstwissenshaft* 2 (1907): 429-32.

[150] Leipzig: Verlag C. L. Hirschfeld, 1925. Despite its obvious problems, still the best detailed source in English on Langbehn is Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), esp. 153-80, which provides some insightful cultural history of Berlin during the "crisis" of the 1890s; see also the sections on germanic "religion" and the "corruption of German education," 35-81.

painterly is constructed as the emulation of non-mechanical, spiritual *Bildung* for which Langbehn uses poetic and dramatic language:

> [In Rembrandt] [c]olors find mixed shadows, the children of day and night; they float between light and dark; and here is the place where the process of life takes place. Humanity swings—in its whole existence—between light and dark; in its course of formation (*Bildung*), it oscillates between the two poles;...the element of the eternal—the infinite light—and the element of the personal—the infinite dark—are held in equal weight, understanding itself perfectly, animated reciprocally....Where the light and dark meet one another, there they inhabit (*aufhalten*) the spiritual; they love the hour of twilight (*Dämmerstunde*). Light and dark meet each other...nowhere more closely than in Rembrandt's pictures;....There is only *one* master of chiaroscuro (*Helldunkels*).[151] (79-80)

Like Bode, Langbehn repeatedly uses the term "*Helldunkel*" as a means to refer ambiguously to Rembrandt's painterly combination of light and dark masses; he does not elaborate on this term using descriptions of paintings. Reminiscent of Fiedler's poetic references to the "*Ausdrucksbewegung*" discussed in Chapter 1, Langbehn's discussion of the *Helldunkel* is meant to aestheticize a perceptual experience that is exceedingly vague and cannot be appreciated with the analytical, explanatory language of the natural sciences or any unspiritual academic doctrines of "purely rationalized education" (*rein verstandesmässigen Bildung*) (268-70, 120-26). Like humanity—which similarly oscillates between light and dark—the gray and nebulous "hour of twilight" represented

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[151] "[In Rembrandt] [f]arben find bunte Schatten, kinder des Tages und der Nacht; sie schweben zwischen hell und dunkel; und eben hier ist es, wo der Prozeß des Lebens sich abspielt. Die Menschheit schwebt, in ihrem ganzen Sein, zwischen Hell und Dunkel; in ihrem Bildungsgang oszilliert sie bald dem einem, bald nach dem anderen Pol;....das Element des Ewigen—das unendlich Helle—und das Element des Persönlichen—das unendlich Dunkle—sich das Gleichgewicht halten, sich wollkommen verstehen, sich gegenseitig beseelen....Wo Hell und Dunkel aufeinander treffen, da halten sich die Geister gern auf; sie lieben die Dämmerstunde. Hell und Dunkel treffen sich aber...nirgends näher als in Rembrandts Bildern;....Es gibt nur *einen* Meister des Helldunkels."

by Rembrandt's *Helldunkel* must be intuitively and spiritually "understood" as a whole rather than coherently "explained" using specialized or analytical interpretive language.

For Langbehn, the experience of Rembrandt's painterly representations is both metaphorically and literally capable of regenerating the character of the German "*Volksseele*" ("national spirit") (316-17). Because of its inexpressible, mystical and spiritual component, the painterly *Helldunkel* may help to save the *Volkseele* from materialistic influences deriving from foreign infiltration and immigration (243, 261-63). Bode and Langbehn each articulate the spiritual and moralizing aspects of the painterly in terms of its nationalistic significance as a key to the *Volk*'s cultivation and renewal; they both declare the germanic symbolism of the painterly with remarkable confidence.[152]

We have seen how the painterly aesthetic was employed by two powerful non-academic voices—one fiercely nationalistic (and racist) cultural critic and one leading museum official, both of whom succeeded in promoting the ethically and spiritually beneficial qualities of Rembrandt's *Helldunkel* to the public as a "modern" remedy for the problem of "soullessness." When academic formalist art historians employed the painterly as a methodological principle, they were fully aware of its non-academic popularity as a "modern" and "germanic" aesthetic within several different contexts, including museums and the Munich-based artistic community mentioned earlier. However, as is indicated by the pedagogical statements I treat in this chapter, these

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[152] For an example of a powerfully poetic formalist description of Rembrandt that is ungermanic in character, see Henri Focillon, *The Life of Forms in Art* (1934), trans. Charles Beecher Hogan and George Kubler (New York: Zone Books, 1989), esp. 150-51.

formalists were urgently concerned with integrating the painterly into a rigorously systematic methodological approach, partly because they wished to avoid connotations of amateurism which would slow (or possibly halt) their acceptance within academic culture, despite the growing influence of the Neo-Kantian movement.

On the one hand, formalists believed that the painterly's popular, "germanic," and non-academic appeal would add to its rhetorical effectiveness when it was conveyed to the populace of undergraduate students.[153] The relatively intuitive apprehension of the painterly—as opposed to the classicizing—aesthetic object was an ideal methodological vehicle for a pedagogy that was intended to appeal unpretentiously to the "masses": formalist education increased its self-conscious popularity by relying on the experiential act of perception as a primary source of art historical knowledge rather than on "extra-artistic" philological and literary source materials. On the other hand, these perceptual acts always were integrated into a sophisticated narrative structure; while not as articulate as the literary *Bildungsroman*, this narrative is based on a dialogue between the painterly mode and other kinds of aesthetic perception. The formalist articulates the experiential reality of art objects within a *kunstwissenschaftlich* structure of aesthetic principles: individual artworks are constantly being referred to these abstract principles in order to

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[153] This popular appeal was further enhanced by art periodicals that strove to connect with non-academic audiences, such as high school teachers. The journal *Die Kunst für Alle*, for example, was an instrument of the art education reform movement that propogated the "popularization" of art history by focusing on practical ways that art teachers could employ "universally understandable" (*allegemein-verstandlichen*) pedagogical methods. For bibliographical references, see Peter Joerrisen, *Kunsterziehung*, 227-28.

compose a formalist narrative that has a normative character which is given added rhetorical force and conviction because it is punctuated by acts of perception that everyone can perform.

I have argued that formalist notions of the painterly were motivated by a set of pedagogical beliefs reflecting broader trends in the intellectual culture of German-speaking academic centers during the turn-of-the-century period. The construction of the painterly as an ambiguous, indefinite, and spiritual aesthetic experience made it a particularly useful device for formalists who sought alternatives to a positivistic epistemology solely concerned with the definite, measurable, and readily observable world. They gave the painterly a distinctive ethical flavor, by contrasting its virtuous and "honest" devotion to the "whole" with the specialized elitism and "egotism" of studying the artwork's isolated parts. Formalists generally provided painterly perception with a nationalistic identity: the painterly was pronounced as a germanic phenomenon, an identity that had been constructed previously and successfully by artists and non-academic writers alike.

It is an easy—but by no means necessary—jump from expressing the nationalistic identity of the painterly to articulating its racial symbolism. Indeed, numerous writers, such as Langbehn, zealously believed in a germanically "pure" Rembrandt as the painterly antidote to a *geistlos* industrial and technological disease that had a "foreign" and racially impure origin. However, my interpretation emphasizes other patriotic, but relatively liberal, figures like Konrad Fiedler, who firmly believed in the painterly's nationalism

while avoiding its racism.[154] Despite whatever other conservative attitudes they held, Fiedler—and, to some extent, his friend Wölfflin—were sympathetic to a "liberal" interest in *Bildung* as a speculative process of character formation and moral cultivation; liberals identified this process with the progressive development of German-speaking nation-states, and ascribed to it a spirituality that had no direct linkages to institutional religious doctrine.[155] For Fiedler, Wölfflin, and many others, *Bildung* achieved through a privately experienced relationship with painterly and contrasting objects was associated with a non-denominational spiritualism, adhered to by a range of social organizations broadly identified with a future "nation." In Wölfflin's case, one of these social groups was a German-speaking academic community—composed, on a more exclusive level, of formalist art historians and of Neo-Kantian humanists more generally—that has been a central focus of this chapter.

Of course, the painterly notion constructed by Clement Greenberg did not subscribe to the belief systems of the far right. In the next chapter, I show how

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[154] Well-known German-Jewish nationalists during the turn-of-the-century period include the philosophers Hermann Cohen and Ernst Cassirer, who both were interested in Neo-Kantian solutions to an educational crisis that tended to be discussed in a distinctly German context. On Wölfflin's interest in avoiding specific political references in his work during the period leading up to World War One, see Martin Warnke, "On Heinrich Wölfflin," trans. David Levin, *Representations* 27 (Summer 1989): 172-87, which draws on Wölfflin's unpublished papers.

[155] On the 19th-century evolution of liberalism in Germany, see Dieter Langewiesche, "The Nature of German Liberalism," in Gordon Martel, ed., *Modern Germany Reconsidered, 1870-1945* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 96-116, esp. 100; F.C. Sell, *Die Trägodie des deutschen Liberalismus* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1953); and James J. Sheehan, *German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 14-20 and Chapters 5-6.

Greenberg's painterly identity bears striking affinities to the context of *Bildung* that I have described, even though the social communities in which Greenberg operated were a world and an era apart.

CHAPTER FOUR: GREENBERG AND THE PAINTERLY

Clement Greenberg's painterly notion was formulated at an early stage in his career and continued to be articulated and exercised as a primary standard of aesthetic quality decades later. In the textual analysis section which opens this chapter, I weave together examples from various moments of Greenberg's long career, but my reading of the painterly emphasizes the original context of its formation as an aesthetic position during the late 1930s and 1940s.[156] Later on, I situate this formation within a culture of literary radicalism and anti-fascism, a culture that—in Greenberg's case—combined with humanist and modernist interests in the aesthetic cultivation of the self. Such a mixture of intellectual and political orientations effectively motivated Greenberg's construction of a painterly aesthetic. These orientations have been ignored by those concentrating exclusively on an "apolitical" Greenberg—epitomized by truncated selections from later essays like "Modernist Painting" (1960)—who is easier to dismiss polemically as such. My reading of Greenberg's painterly notion is meant as a response to those dismissive claims.[157]

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[156] As Rosalind Krauss has noted recently, a distinction should be made between Greenberg's earlier references to painterly experience as "hallucinatory" and later characterizations of it as "optical" in the late 1950s and early 1960s; my interpretive emphasis throughout will be on the former, despite my occasional references to later essays; Krauss, "The Crisis of the Easel Picture," in Kirk Varnedoe and Pepe Karmel, eds., *Jackson Pollock: New Approaches* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1999), 160, 178 n. 11-12.

[157] Accordingly, my interpretation draws on both of the major strains of Greenberg scholarship: One the one hand, there are those focused on the incompatibility between

The narrative of the painterly is one of modernism's evolution and is punctuated by crucial moments when that aesthetic is reenvisioned and pronounced as a normative standard in relation to inferior kinds of aesthetic experience. I treat the painterly narrative initially on its own to demonstrate its particular and undeniably powerful rhetorical properties which have encouraged a majority of critics to neatly read "Greenbergian" narrative structures as reflecting a "Kantian" disinterest in political and social purposes of any kind.[158]

Greenbergian narratives and selected strains of Minimalism, Conceptualism, Pop, Dada, and Surrealism; some in this group focus more on specific rhetorical properties of Greenberg's narrative while others are primarily concerned with charting and criticizing its psychologically repressive and sublimating qualities. On the other hand, some emphasize the concerns of Greenberg as the socialist and the anti-Stalinist "intellectual" which were expressed most explicitly in the early part of Greenberg's career but which, they argue, continued to motivate his aesthetic long afterwards. The sources which I have found particularly helpful include Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), esp. 244-46, 307-08; Danto, *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), esp. 68-74, 84-86, 102; Carrier, *Artwriting* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987), esp. 23, 46; T.J. Clark, "Clement Greenberg's Theory of Art," *Critical Inquiry* 9 (September 1980): 139-56; Fred Orton and Griselda Pollock, "*Avant-Gardes* and Partisans Reviewed," *Art History* 4 (September 1981): 305-27; and Serge Guilbaut, "The New Adventures of the Avant-Garde in America," *October* 15 (Winter 1980): 61-78. However, Thierry de Duve, *Clement Greenberg Between the Lines*, trans. Brian Holmes (Paris: Éditions Dis Voir, 1996), is the study which has the most direct relevance to my project, as it touches—but does not dwell—on many of the issues that are central to my argument, including notions of kitsch and anti-instrumentality (45-46), vague interpretive language (53, 61-64), and the role of intuitive experience (17, 91-92). For further references to the extensive Greenberg literature, see below; Caroline Jones's forthcoming book on Greenberg; and John O'Brian's bibliography contained in the *Collected Essays*, as in n.157.

[158] On the difficulty of simplistically labeling Greenberg as a Kantian, see Stephen Melville, "Kant after Greenberg," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 51 (Winter 1998): 67-74, which argues that Greenberg's invocations of Kant "do little more than operate a short-circuit between the preface to the first *Critique* and a version of Lessing" and that Greenberg's notion of self-criticism has no obvious ground in Kantian aesthetics

In the essay "Cézanne and the Unity of Modern Art" (1951),[159] dramatic language is used to describe Paul Cézanne's mature works as a groundbreaking episode in the narrative of the painterly:

> Recording with a separate dab of paint almost every perceptible—or inferred—shift of direction by which the presented surface of an object defines the shape of the volume it encloses, he began in his late thirties to cover his canvases with a mosaic of brushstrokes whose net effect was to call attention to the physical surface plane just as much as the tighter-woven touches of the orthodox Impressionists did. The distortions of Cézanne's drawing, provoked by the extremely literal exactness of his vision as well as by a growing compulsion, more or less unconscious, to adjust the representation in depth to the two-dimensional surface pattern, contributed further to his inadvertent emphasis on the flat plane. Whether he wanted it or not—and one can't be sure he did—the resulting

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(72); Paul Crowther, "Greenberg's Kant and the Problem of Modernist Painting," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 25 (Autumn 1985): 317-25, makes a similar point about Greenberg being "largely misunderstood through his finding an unwarranted shelter beneath the theoretical umbrella of Kantian-style aesthetic formalism"; I am sympathetic to Crowther's argument in favor of Greenberg's "intellectualist notion of aesthetic value, based on the artist's conception, or inspiration" in opposition to the Kantian-style Greenberg that is hostile to all forms of "interest" (317, 324); see also David Carrier, "Greenberg, Fried, and Philosophy: American-Type Formalism," in *Aesthetics: A Critical Anthology, eds. George Dickie and Richard Sclafani* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), 461-69. I wish, along with Thierry de Duve, to re-interpret Greenberg against the grain of polemical discourse which has ignored the underlying politics of his aesthetic philosophy: "The critics who reproach Greenberg for having abandoned Marxism, in order to condemn the way formalism silences the political and institutional dimension of aesthetic experience...have chosen the wrong target. It is traces of Marxism in Greenberg's conception of the avant-garde which are in need of critique, if one wants to reintroduce those dimensions into aesthetics"; see de Duve, *Kant after Duchamp* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996), 274, n. 98.

[159] I refer to *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, vols. 1-2: 1986; vols. 3-4: 1993). References to volume and page numbers are in the text. The Cézanne essay first appeared in *Partisan Review* 18 (May-June 1951). Because my interpretation privileges the intellectual context of Greenberg's earlier career, I concentrate on original versions of the essays cited rather than on revised versions which appeared in the compilation *Art and Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961) and elsewhere.

> ambiguity was a triumph of art, if not of naturalism. A new and powerful kind of pictorial tension was set up such as had not been seen in the West since the mosaic murals of the fourth and fifth century in Rome. The little overlapping rectangles of paint, laid on with no attempt to fuse their dividing edges, drew the depicted forms to the surface while, at the same time, the modeling and contouring of these forms, as achieved by the paint dabs, pulled them back into illusionist depth. The result was a never-ending vibration from front to back and back to front. (III, 85-86)

In this passage, several essential traits of a painterly aesthetic are emphasized, all of which are similarly articulated by both Fiedler and Wölfflin. First, Cézanne uses uniform compositional units—overlapping rectangles which, in painterly fashion, discourage those seeking in vain to find clearly defined outlines surrounding depicted motifs, and the comforting tactile guidance that those linear outlines would provide. The individual rectangular units are distributed even-handedly as a "mosaic" throughout the composition. Second, the perceptual effect of the painterly mosaic is one of anxious tension produced by a "never-ending vibration" between the front and back of the image.

Third, the painterly aesthetic is portrayed as more the product of an unconscious compulsion, rather than the conscious egoism of the artist. As with Wölfflin and Fiedler, Greenberg makes the basic assumption that a lack of egoism is reflected in the actual structure of the painterly composition. A consistently applied and uniform distribution of painterly dabs was conceived, using unconscious processes, by Cézanne as a "whole" mosaic configuration. Throughout this chapter, we will see that the moral identity of Greenberg's painterly aesthetic depends on the lack of egoism which is assumed to permeate the entire structure of the painterly artwork. This is so because, for the formalist, the absence of egoism often is associated with an absence of egotism. One must

not egotistically draw attention away from the unconsciously motivated "wholeness" of the mosaic towards isolated areas of the composition. This mosaic later transforms into the cubist "tight mesh"—which retains the same sort of moralizing quality—as the next episode of the painterly narrative.

Because of the even-handed distribution of compositional units, the beholder of Cézanne's painterly image is meant to perceive it as a unified structure, using a "combination of thought and feeling—thought that was not a matter of extra-pictorial rules, but of consistency, and feeling that was not a matter of sentiment, but of sensation" (84-85). Greenberg associates the painterly perception of a unified pictorial surface pattern with a feeling of "sensation" identified with the "physical fact of the medium" (88). Especially in the case of Cézanne's late works, this feeling of sensation is produced by "facet-planes jump[ing] forward from the images they define, to become more conspicuously elements of the abstract surface pattern" (88). However, the immediate apprehension of unified surface pattern is balanced—but not overpowered—by the tension-filled beholding of powerfully expressive and relentless oscillation, forward and backward (89). Greenberg emphasizes the anxious expressiveness of the painterly perception of oscillating movement, but underlines the way that it always occurs in a controlled manner: the control derives from a consistent application of surface pattern which allows us to apprehend the movement in a way that is "more majestic in its rhythm because more unified and all-enveloping" (89). One is reminded of Wölfflin's discussions of the painterly image as a homogeneous fabric "from which the individual figure can hardly be detached" that contributes to a uniform and controlled recessional

movement "which the spectator is called upon to apprehend in one breath as a unified whole." Like Wölfflin, Greenberg conceives of an aesthetic experience of the painterly that is highly expressive, but infused with an *impersonal* quality which prevents any individualism that would distract from the preponderant effect of a unified network of standardized compositional elements.

The next crucial stage of Greenberg's painterly narrative occurs in 1910–11. Again Greenberg describes an anxious and dynamic, oscillating perceptual movement inherent to the painterly aesthetic:

> The cubist painter eliminated color because, consciously or unconsciously, he was parodying, in order to destroy, the academic methods of achieving volume and depth, which are shading and perspective, and as such have little to do with color in the common sense of the word. The cubists used these same methods to break the canvas into a multiplicity of subtle recessive planes, which seem to shift and fade into infinite depths and yet insist on returning to the surface of the canvas.[160] (I, 35)

Greenberg's portrayal of shifting and fading cubist planes recalls Fiedler's notion of the *Ausdrucksbewegung* as an experience of "restless becoming and vanishing." Both Fiedler and Greenberg strive to characterize painterly perception as a nebulous and ambiguous experience, and in doing so they employ poetic and dramatic language. In Greenberg's case, the cubist planes seem to be drawn backwards and forwards from the "infinite depths" and any indications of "real objects struggle to maintain their volume against the tendency of the real picture plane to re-assert its material flatness and crush them to silhouettes" (I, 35). The dramatic mentioning of the "infinite depths" and of an epic

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[160] "Towards a Newer Laocoon," *Partisan Review* 7 (July-August 1940).

struggle to avoid being "crushed" are devices used by the formalist to refer to certain essential qualities of painterly perception. These essential qualities of the painterly are nebulous in character and therefore require the use of indefinite language to allude to them.

In keeping with the central argument of this dissertation, Greenberg's painterly aesthetic achieves a careful interpretive compromise between the discursive realms of positivism and phenomenology.[161] As with Wölfflin, Greenberg uses terms such as "sensation" in order to invoke a positivist tradition of scholarship and experimental research, while, at the same time, betraying that tradition by exceeding its strictly empirical and non-speculative interests. The cubist picture plane is described as strongly assertive "material flatness" which "thrusts a sheet of pigment at you with an immediate force proper only to the realm of material sensations" (II, 250). Greenberg associates the painterly with cubist efforts to lay down, on the picture surface, a pattern of uniform compositional units whose impact upon our sensations is felt immediately, but with such *profound* intensity and expressiveness that it cannot be described precisely or in great detail; Greenberg resorts to using speculative and ambiguous references to the "thrusting" dynamic of painterly perception. In "The Crisis of the Easel Picture" (1948), he states:

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[161] One of the few scholars who refer to Greenberg's positivism specifically is Donald Kuspit in his pioneering study, *Clement Greenberg: Art Critic* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), 51-54. Although Kuspit does not concentrate on the painterly notion, his book focuses on concepts which are integral to my discussion, including Greenberg's notions of aesthetic unity and kitsch. Kuspit deals with important textual material that I do not touch on, including many shorter articles written for *The Nation* during the 1940s. Other sources which discuss Greenberg's positivism are David Craven, "Clement Greenberg and the 'Triumph' of Art," *Third Text* 25 (Winter 1993-94): 3-10; and Nancy Jachec, "Modernism, Enlightenment Values, and Clement Greenberg," *Oxford Art Journal* 21 (1998): 121-32.

> Just as Schönberg makes every element, every voice and note in the composition of equal importance—different but equivalent—so these [cubist] painters render every element, every part of the canvas equivalent; and they likewise weave the work of art into a tight mesh whose principle of formal unity is contained and recapitulated in each thread, so that we find the essence of the whole work in every one of its parts....But these painters go even beyond Schönberg by making their variations upon equivalence so subtle that at first glance we might see in their pictures, not equivalences, but an hallucinated uniformity....This very uniformity, this dissolution of the picture into sheer texture, sheer sensation, into the accumulation of similar units of sensation, seems to answer something deep-seated in contemporary sensibility. It corresponds perhaps to the feeling that all hierarchical distinctions have been exhausted, that no area or order of experience is either intrinsically or relatively superior to any other.[162] (II, 224)

The term "sensation" is used to refer to the initial perceptual confrontation with a cubist image composed of similar, but not identical, units. An elaboration or specified identity of "sensation" is, quite deliberately, not provided: Greenberg only juxtaposes this term with another basic requirement of the painterly aesthetic—a principle of unity which infuses each of the like pictorial elements, arranged as a tight mesh. Greenberg will not say much more except to offer a moralizing suggestion that this mesh as a whole exerts a kind of democratic cancellation of hierarchical relationships, and identifies this whole with the forceful perceptual impact of "sheer sensation." The rhetorical success of Greenberg's painterly notion depends upon the nebulous status of terms such as "sensation."

In "The Decline of Cubism" (1948), the cubists' project is seen as an integral part of a contemporary "age of experiment" (II, 212) which expresses a "positivist" devotion to the "supreme reality of concrete experience" (214). Greenberg wishes to loosely

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[162] *Partisan Review* 15 (April 1948). "The Decline of Cubism" appeared in the March issue, one month prior to "The Crisis of the Easel Picture."

associate the cubist aesthetic with a positivist context hostile to metaphysical speculation of any kind because confined to the analytical observation and precise measurement of empirical phenomena (see below). However, in this same passage, Greenberg contradicts positivist epistemology by associating cubist artworks with transcendental notions of spiritual faith and conviction and speculative interests in the "unknown" or "unforseeable" as a source of knowledge (214). This contradiction is fundamental to Greenberg's—as well as other formalists'—notions of the painterly, and is most apparent when Greenberg discusses a further episode of the painterly narrative: the New York School's reenvisioning of the cubist mesh.

In the essay "'American Type' Painting" (1955) Greenberg considers Jackson Pollock's inadvertent innovation of the painterly aesthetic in 1946-47:

> One of the unconscious motives for Pollock's "all-over" departure was the desire to achieve a more immediate, denser, and more decorative impact than his late Cubist manner had permitted. At the same time, however, he wanted to control the oscillation between an emphatic physical surface and the suggestion of depth beneath it as lucidly and tensely and evenly as Picasso and Braque had controlled a somewhat similar movement with the open facets and pointillist flecks of color of their 1909-1913 Cubist pictures. ("Analytical" Cubism is always somewhere in the back of Pollock's mind).[163] (III, 225-26)

The designations "Abstract Expressionism" and "Action Painting" do connote the emotionally charged immediacy and dynamic impact of Pollock's work as one apprehends the oscillating movement to and from the depths of the painterly image. But, for Greenberg, these names are unsatisfactory, as they do not represent Pollock's efforts to

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[163] *Partisan Review* 22 (Spring 1955).

control this apprehension of movement as an activity that occurs "evenly" and "lucidly."

Speaking of the New York School more generally, Greenberg states that

> Their paintings startle because, to the uninitiated eye, they appear to rely so much on accident, whim, and haphazard effects. An ungoverned spontaneity seems to be at play, intent on registering immediate impulse, and the result seems to be nothing more than a welter of blurs, blotches, and scrawls—"oleaginous" and "amorphous," as one British critic described it. All this is seeming (III, 218).

Greenberg's overriding aesthetic preference is for *seemingly* ungoverned spontaneity: an underlying sense of rational control always prevails and is facilitated by an even-handed distribution of uniform compositional units. On several occasions, Greenberg claims the superiority of the term "painterly" as the best means of referring to this "seeming" aspect in Pollock's work, partly because of the term's far-reaching historical implications (IV, 192). In the essay "After Abstract Expressionism" (1962), Greenberg reflects on the New York School's pictorial achievement of creating a "look" of haphazardness and, significantly, chooses to mention Wölfflin's painterly notion at this juncture:

> If the label "Abstract Expressionism" means anything, it means painterliness: loose, rapid handling, or the look of it; masses that [are] blotted and fused instead of shapes that stayed distinct; large and conspicuous rhythms; broken color; uneven saturations and densities of paint, exhibited brush, knife, or finger marks—in short, a constellation of qualities like those defined by Wölfflin when he extracted his notion of the *Malerische* from Baroque art.[164] (IV, 123)

A Painterly Narrative

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[164] *Art International* 25 (October 1962).

Greenberg composed and continuously refined his painterly aesthetic concept as a means of descriptively analyzing individual objects of study.[165] However, like Wölfflin, Greenberg also formulated the painterly within the context of a master narrative, based on the travails of a heroic protagonist—not a specific person, but a transindividual mode of painterly perception—that is brought into contact with other, competing perceptual modes. The painterly mode, divorced from the idiosyncratic volitions of individual historical actors, is made compelling and naturalized for the reader of the formalist text on the basis of narrative trajectories that demonstrate its competition with, and superiority over, inferior strains of aesthetic consciousness. In an essay called "The Discourse of History" (1967), Roland Barthes, following Jacques Lacan, discusses certain "imaginary" aspects of narration that are used to fashion a narcissistic, infantile consciousness into a subjectivity capable of bearing the responsibility of being an object of the law.[166] As the developing subject acquires the capability to assimilate "stories" and to tell them, that subject learns to occupy the position of the one who makes promises, to use Friedrich Nietzsche's phrase, who "remembers forward" as well as backwards, who links one's end to one's beginning in such a way as to attest to an "integrity" which every individual

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[165] My focus is on rhetorical and narrative features of Greenberg's project. This focus does not attend to the equally important analytical aspects of Greenberg's painterly notion, which I leave to other scholars to critique. The descriptive value of Greenberg's painterly readings of selected works by Pollock could, for instance, be critically evaluated in relation to other writers' analytical approaches to those same objects.

[166] Barthes, "The Discourse of History," trans. Stephen Bann, in *Comparative Criticism: A Yearbook*, vol. 3, ed. E. S. Schaffer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 7, 16–17.

must be supposed to possess if one is to become a "subject" of any system of law, morality, or propriety. Greenberg positions an array of lawless or transgressive artworks that are assigned to play the role of explicating the natural character of norms governing painterly perception. The range of the abnormal ranges widely and serves to complicate the flow of Greenberg's master narrative. The complication is required to make the avant-garde's victorious moments seem convincing as the result of genuine struggle and competition to the extent that the readership of the text habitually and naturally "makes promises," or integrates the narrative by remembering forward and backward, and by associating the rehearsal of that *integration* process with a notion of *integrity*.

Greenberg goes to great lengths, throughout his career, to describe and categorize different transgressors of the painterly aesthetic which each contribute to the Barthean effect that I have just outlined. In his essay on Surrealism (1944), Greenberg expresses disdain for those, such as Salvador Dalí, who produce imagery based excessively on "an automatic procedure uncontrolled by reason or the deliberate consciousness. Inspiration is induced by surrender to immediate impulse and to accident" (I, 226-27). Wölfflin's treatment of the painterly Baroque's superiority over the chaotic expressionism and accidental properties of 15th-century "primitive" artworks is indeed relevant to Greenberg's discussion of an overly zealous subservience to the haphazard effects of automatist technique. On the same page, Greenberg champions the 20th-century avant-gardists who follow the precedent of Rubens, who

> had Plutarch and Seneca read to him while he painted, but he did not withdraw his conscious attention from his work, he simply divided it, like any painter one knows who can carry on a conversation while working. There was indeed an

> element of automatism in Rubens's art, as there is in all successful art, but it was not the primary factor in the process by which it was created.[167] (I, 227)

Rubens is held up as a precursor of the modernist avant-garde's successful infusion of a *measured* amount of automatist content into a larger compositional framework that is implicitly—rather than explicitly—ruled by the dictates of rational consciousness; this aspect of measured automatism is, of course, designated by Greenberg as the product of painterly imagination (228) in contrast to an inferior aesthetic that is fully, rather than seemingly, ruled by the spontaneous exercise of haphazard impulses.

In contrast to Dalí, Pollock is treated as a successful avant-garde revisionist of the painterly Baroque once articulated by Rubens:

> The seeming haphazardness of Pollock's execution, with its mazy trickling, dribbling, whipping, blotching, and staining of paint, appears to threaten to swallow up and extinguish every element of order. But this is more a matter of connotation than of actual effect. The strength of the art itself lies in the tension...between the connotations of haphazardness and the felt and actual aesthetic order, to which every detail of the execution contributes. Order supervenes at the last moment, as it were, but all the more triumphantly because of that. Like Mondrian, Pollock demonstrates that not skill or dexterity but inspiration, vision, intuitive decision, is what counts essentially in the creation of aesthetic quality. Inspiration declares itself in the overall conception of the work...Execution, in effect, takes care of itself. (Benedetto Croce, the Italian philosopher, perceived this long ago.) No matter how much execution may feed back to conception, the crucial decisions still belong to inspiration and not to manual skill.....Again like Mondrian, Pollock demonstrates that something related to skill is likewise unessential to the creation of aesthetic quality: namely, personal touch, individuality of execution, handwriting, "signature." (IV, 247)

With only minimal discussion of individual paintings, Greenberg uses dramatic language to deal with Pollock's painterly imagery in the abstract.[168] The effect of order is said to

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[167] *The Nation* (12 and 19 August 1944).

triumph "at the last moment" because uniform compositional details come together as a whole to contribute to the painterly defense against chaos. With strong conviction, Greenberg understands this triumph as the consequence of forces that are both mysterious and impersonal—intuitive processes or "inspiration" motivate the painterly aesthetic rather than the personalized skill or "signature" of the artist. A certain "impersonality of execution" (IV, 248) is required for Pollock's composition to express properly the "essential" quality of the painterly aesthetic. In keeping with Greenberg's commitment to nebulous interpretive language, the painterly's intuitive essence is not further defined—hence the mention of a theorist of aesthetic intuition, Croce—and is therefore hidden from positivism's epistemological requirement of precise analytical observation.

In "Post Painterly Abstraction" (1964), Greenberg discusses another species of those who transgress the norms of the painterly aesthetic.[169] In the early 1950s, this group violated Pollock's painterly norm of "inspiration" by discouraging its intuitive quality and reducing it to the "Tenth Street Touch": a "set of mannerisms, as a dozen, and

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[168] Greenberg's deemphasis on the artwork's material process in favor of considerations of "essence" is discussed by Yve-Alain Bois in "Ryman's Tact," in *Painting as Model* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 224; Bois is indebted to the important work on Greenberg by Jean Clay; see, for instance, Clay, "La Peinture en charpie," in "Dossier Ryman," *Macula* 3/4 (November 1978): 173, 171-72; and idem, "Pollock, Mondrian, Seurat: La profondeur plate," in Hans Namuth, *L'atelier Jackson Pollock* (Paris: Macula, 1982).

[169] The essay was written for the exhibition *Post Painterly Abstraction* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (April-June 1964), but also appeared in *Art International* 27 (Summer 1964).

then a thousand, artists proceeded to maul the same viscosities of paint, in more or less the same ranges of color, and with the same 'gestures,' into the same kind of picture" (IV, 194). Unlike the Surrealists, whose artworks lacked the necessary infusion of rational control, the practitioners of Tenth Street Touch did not sufficiently follow automatist procedure and ended up with overly mechanical, and therefore non-painterly, products. Elsewhere, Greenberg deals with Willem de Kooning's work of the early to mid-1950s as another, less reprehensible, kind of mannerism in which a selfish "virtuosity of execution" (IV, 131) distracts from the more impersonal intuitive experience that is responsible for the unified surface pattern of the painterly aesthetic (IV, 124, 128). It is this virtuosic quality that is lacking in virtue for Greenberg's painterly notion because it is too prone to becoming coopted by representational purposes which distract from depersonalized standards of compositional uniformity. This moralizing position recalls Fiedler's support of Hans von Marées as one who manages to restrain himself from "arrogant displays of talent" represented by isolated passages or motifs that distract (or corrupt) the viewer from apprehending the painterly image's effect as a unified structure. Both Greenberg and Fiedler conceive of this avoidance of virtuosity as an activity having moral and spiritual implications. As both artists and viewers, we endure discomfort—and make a kind of spiritual sacrifice—if we abstain from "arrogant displays" in favor of a less "selfish" devotion to the unified and uniform compositional structure of the painterly. Thus, Greenberg's deemphasis on personalized skill is in alignment with the formalist's heroization of a transindividual avant-garde identified with the painterly mode.

Another, especially broad, category of transgression of the painterly was designated by the term "kitsch" early on in Greenberg's career. In the case of kitsch, the transgression does not derive from virtuosic displays of personalized skill, but from an absence of a sustained period of private, speculative reflection during the aesthetic experience. In the essay "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" (1939), Greenberg famously makes a distinction between a kitsch picture by a Russian social realist, Repin, and an avant-garde work by Picasso:

> [T]he ultimate values which the cultivated spectator derives from Picasso are derived at second remove, as the result of reflection upon the immediate impression left by plastic values. It is only then that the recognizable, the miraculous, and the sympathetic enter. They are not immediately or externally present in Picasso's painting, but must be projected into it by the spectator sensitive enough to react sufficiently to plastic qualities. In Repin, on the other hand, the "reflected" effect has already been included in the picture, ready for the spectator's unreflected enjoyment....Repin predigests art for the spectator and spares him effort, provides him with a short cut to the pleasure of art that detours what is necessarily difficult in genuine art.[170] (I, 16-17)

Although the term "painterly" is not present in this essay, "avant-garde" serves a similar semantic purpose in that both words refer to a state of aesthetic "reflection" requiring considerable effort and sacrifice to attain. Above all, it is the ease with which the beholder absorbs the work of kitsch that distinguishes it from avant-garde production, which requires prolonged and uncomfortable bouts of "training" and "conditioning" (I, 19) in order to appreciate it. After this training period, the spectator is sufficiently cultivated to struggle properly with and reflect upon the avant-garde or painterly image. Such mention of the avant-garde's resistance to easy, mechanical communicability directly recalls my

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[170] *Partisan Review* 6 (Fall 1939).

discussion in Chapter 3 of the formalist pedagogical interest in the humanist tradition of *Bildung* ("universal cultivation"). Both Wölfflin and Greenberg believed in a process of personal, speculative contemplation of the aesthetic object as a means of acquiring certain spiritual and moral values that were assumed lacking in an increasingly mechanized and industrialized urban culture. This mechanized culture is identified with governing institutions—including academe, as Greenberg points out (I, 12-13)—which exercise forms of instrumental logic by constructing and promoting kitsch artworks that are little more than "vessels of communication" (I, 28).

A Painterly Partisan[171]

Prior to writing his first major essay, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," Greenberg became caught up in a culture of literary radicalism surrounding New York-based publications such as *Partisan Review*, established in 1934 as one of several "little magazines" sponsored by the John Reed Clubs that were initially sympathetic to the dictates of Soviet-style revolutionary Marxism.[172] As James Gilbert discusses in *Writers*

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[171] The contextual discussion that follows is indebted to those who participated with me in the interdisciplinary Mellon Seminar on Cold War culture held at the CUNY Graduate Center in June of 2000; I am grateful to the seminar's director, Morris Dickstein, for bibliographic advice.

[172] On Greenberg's relationship to the little magazines, see James D. Herbert, "The Political Origins of Abstract-Expressionist Art Criticism: The Early Theoretical and Critical Writings of Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg," *Stanford Honors Essay in the Humanities* 28 (1985). I take issue with Herbert's assertion about Greenberg, after an initial Marxist phase, eventually treating the artist as an "apolitical being" (29), which I feel is similar in its unproductiveness to the all-too-familiar summing up of Greenberg's project as completely disinterested "Kantianism"; the historical narratives provided by Serge Guilbaut, Fred Orton and Griselda Pollock (as in n. 155) are especially useful as

and Partisans (1968), there was among leftist intellectuals in the mid- to late 1930s a growing disillusionment with the Stalinist regime responsible for the Moscow Trials (1936-37) which convicted intellectual heroes of the Bolshevik revolution, including Leon Trotsky who was tried in absentia.[173] In 1937, *Partisan Review* reemerged after a brief respite significantly more detached from the influence of official political organizations,

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differing versions of the same period that I treat here, as well as Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), Chapter 1; and Orton, "Action, Revolution and Painting," *Oxford Art Journal* 14 (1991): 3-17, which focuses on Rosenberg, but much of the historical details also apply to Greenberg's case. Orton and Pollock's 1980 article contains a pioneering attempt to situate Greenberg's early work as "addressing a specific constituency in the cultural intelligentsia" and as "a strategic manoeuvre within the coterie of *Partisan Review*'s editors and readership" (325). I argue that Greenberg's motivation to address this particular community becomes reflected most obviously in his strategic appeals to the magazine's various positivist and anti-fascist identities.

[173] See Gilbert, *Writers and Partisans: A History of Literary Radicalism in America* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1968), 121-99, esp. 155. The secondary literature on this culture of literary radicalism is substantial, although some of it is written in an autobiographical mode which is relatively uninteresting to the intellectual context of the painterly that I am interpreting. I found Gilbert's classic study to be among the best sources on the subject, along with relevant sections of Morris Dickstein, *Double Agent: The Critic and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 68-84, which includes commentary on literary figures who had a profound influence on Greenberg, such as R.P. Blackmur and Lionel Trilling. For further reading see Alan M. Wald, *The New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Decline of the Anti-Stalinist Left from the 1930s to the 1980s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), which is highly opinionated in tone, but still contains important sections on Trotskyism's relationship to "reactionary" politics and on the "pragmatist" Marxism of Sydney Hook (120-27, 210-20); Alexander Bloom, *Prodigal Sons: The New York Intellectuals and Their World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) has useful historical and biographical information on the culture of *Partisan Review* (71-140); William Barrett, *The Truants: Adventures Among the Intellectuals* (Garden City: Anchor Press, 1982), is a more personal account of the author's relationship to various *Partisan Review* contributors, but also has helpful and lucid discussion of a trend towards "conservatism" and "existentialism" in the philosophies of Hannah Arendt (99-131) and others which affected Greenberg in significant ways.

although the magazine remained resolutely "political" in its broadly socialist and anti-fascist orientation.

Greenberg played a direct role in the production of anti-fascist discourse years before engaging in any sort of art or literary criticism: In 1936, he translated substantial documentary sections of a volume called *The Brown Network*, which detailed the covert activities of Gestapo agents and informers operating in foreign countries, most notably the United States. This book played a part in promoting an atmosphere of suspicious awareness about hidden, international networks of "divergent tentacles slowly and inexorably closing in on one objective"—laying the groundwork for a future Nazi invasion through the systematic use of propaganda, kidnapping, espionage, sabotage, and anti-Semitic agitation, a program masterminded and orchestrated by Goebbels and Himmler.[174]

The idea of an *unseen* fascist infiltration of America contributed to a kind of paranoid hyper-sensitivity to the production of language reflecting totalitarian or reactionary beliefs and influence. This paranoia became manifested especially by intellectual circles espousing Marxist beliefs, such as the literary community to which Greenberg belonged. Of course, among radical leftist American publications of the mid-1930s and thereafter, there was much debate concerning what constituted a betrayal of the anti-fascist cause. Journals which remained more sympathetic to the doctrine of the

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[174] World Committee for the Victims of German Fascism, *The Brown Network: The Activities of the Nazis in Foreign Countries* (New York: Knight Publications, 1936), 11, 72-93, 300-04; see esp. the section on efforts to "Germanize" the U.S. using the vehicle of travel bureaus and the United German Societies of New York (239-63), which is relevant to an atmosphere of suspicion concerning domestic fascist infiltration.

Soviet regime, like the *New Masses* and the *Daily Worker*, generally viewed the artwork and writings of European modernists as contrary to the "popular" aesthetic required for revolutionary Marxism. The social realism of a John Steinbeck or a Theodore Dreiser was viewed as being more compatible with the "scientific" rationalism and economic determinism of orthodox Marxist epistemology and of the Second or Third International. In contrast, the most important editors of *Partisan Review* at the time— Phillip Rahv and William Phillips—increasingly sought a position of political aloofness, which became expressed by a devotion to modernist art and writing that resisted being read as devices for instigating class struggle or in terms of their blatant political messages. Instead of interpreting the art object as a mere "vessel of communication"—to recall Greenberg's phrase—they read the modernist work as a means of cultivating the "revolutionary self."[175] Under the influence of Trotsky—who, significantly, admired Pushkin and Tolstoy despite their "reactionary" political and religious views—Rahv and Phillips believed that literary study of a Franz Kafka or a T.S. Eliot was necessary to achieve an

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[175] A crucial document in this regard is André Breton and Diego Rivera, "Manifesto," *Partisan Review* 6 (Fall 1938): 49-52, which, although signed by Rivera, was actually written by Breton and the exiled Trotsky; in the same issue of the magazine, the editors declare their allegiance to Trotsky's doctrine of "revolutionary self" put forward in the manifesto, and to an art that is "not content to play variations on ready-made models but insists on expressing the inner needs of man" (50). See Rahv and Phillips's provocative "Editorial Statement," *Partisan Review* 4 (December 1937): 3-4, which prepared the way for their stronger Trotskyist orientation of the following year. See also Trotsky's article "Art and Politics," *Partisan Review* 5 (August-September 1938): 3-10, which was his first essay on literary subject matter that he produced since the highly influential *Literature and Revolution* (1928).

anxious condition of "aesthetic revolt" identified with the experience of alienation.[176] Loosely associated with Trotskyism, many contributors to *Partisan Review* strove to associate themselves with the plight of the alienated "intellectual" artist as personification of authentic revolutionary experience, rather than with the "worker" envisioned as a mere spoke in the wheel of the Stalinist bureaucratic machine. Unlike the Stalinist worker, the Trotskyist vanguard intellectual is capable of uncomfortably avoiding the "slice of life" social realism and "ready-made" kitsch products promoted by Stalinist theoreticians, thereby freeing the self to delve into the relatively speculative, private, and irrational realm of the "self-exiled outsider."[177] In constructing his aesthetic of painterly perception as a private, anxious, and speculative experience strictly in relation to modernist objects, Greenberg, with the publication of "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," aligned himself with a similarly Trotskyist construction of literary radicalism. But his alignment was only half-hearted in the sense that he subscribed to *another* culture of revolutionary socialism, one invested in the rationalist and positivist methods of experimental science.

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[176] Another major proponent of this view was Arthur Koestler—who eventually replaced George Orwell as *Partisan Review*'s London correspondent in 1946—whose treatment of the socialist intellectual's moderate frustration with his or her alienation ("not too much or too little") may have directly inspired Greenberg's anxious notion of measured automatism during the painterly experience; see Koestler, "The Intelligensia," *Partisan Review* 11 (Summer 1944): 267-75, published the same year, significantly, as Greenberg's Surrealism essay.

[177] The quoted phrase is from an editorial statement by Rahv, "Twilight of the Thirties," *Partisan Review* 6 (Summer 1939): 1-4; reprinted in Rahv, *Essays on Literature and Politics 1932-1972*, eds. Arabel J. Porter and Andrew J. Dvosin (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1978); in the statement, Rahv effectively severs his ties with Soviet "bureaucratic collectivism" by declaring, in the immediate aftermath of the Nazi-Soviet pact, that "all we have left to go on now is individual integrity" (4).

Many contributors to *Partisan Review* were indeed hostile to the inward and speculative experience of the alienated intellectual on the grounds that it invoked an overly irrational psychological condition or spirituality conducive to the infiltration of totalitarianism. Beginning in the late 1930s, the magazine published articles by empiricist and pragmatist philosophers—such as N.Y.U. professors Sydney Hook and William Gruen—which had a profound impact on Greenberg's construction of a painterly aesthetic.[178] In an essay called "What is Logical Empiricism?" (1939), Gruen discusses positivist doctrine which he thinks provides an "important tributary to the mainstream of present-day revolutionary thought."[179] According to Gruen, Hook, and many others, this

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[178] Hook, who was a fixture at N.Y.U. for almost half a century (1927-73), was a far more influential and controversial figure than his colleague Gruen; among Hook's publications are a book about his mentor at Columbia, John Dewey (1939) and the widely read study, *Towards an Understanding of Karl Marx* (New York: John Day, 1933). Some of Dewey's work—especially the popular little book *Art as Experience* (1934) (New York: Perigee, 1980)—must have had a substantial influence on Greenberg's painterly aesthetic, including, for instance, Dewey's discussions of how the empirical experience of the artwork may become infused with spiritual and/or emotional content while submitting to rationalistic limits conducive to the pragmatist (and humanist) view: "There is no limit to the capacity of immediate sensuous experience to absorb itself meanings and values that in and of themselves—that is in the abstract—would be designated 'ideal' and 'spiritual'" (29); see also 48-51 and 53: "The esthetic or undergoing phase of experience is receptive. It involves surrender. But adequate yielding of the self is possible only through a controlled activity that may well be intense." See also Dewey, "Anti-Naturalism in Extremis," *Partisan Review* 10 (January-February 1943): 24-39, esp. 25, 36, published when Greenberg was the magazine's editor, which has provocative sections arguing against "intuitive" methods of interpretation and their various totalitarian implications.

[179] *Partisan Review* 6 (Winter 1939): 64-77, 64; Greenberg's "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" appeared two issues later. Gruen's article is interesting in its polemical assertion of a philosophy of unified science applicable to all "intellectual and practical enterprise" including art criticism (65); Greenberg may have been intrigued by Gruen's emphasis on the process of testing for the presence of "unverifiable revelation" in individual

doctrine was expressed poignantly in the volumes of the International Encyclopedia of Unified Science, a collection of theoretical treatises by leading experimental researchers, many of whom migrated from Germany and Austria to major American academic centers—New York's City College, the University of Chicago as well as Columbia, New York, and Harvard universities—before or during the Second World War.

Joergen Joergensen's contribution to the Encyclopedia, *The Development of Logical Empiricism*, is typical because it contains summarizing discussions of a formative period during the 1920s when most of the crucial tenets of positivism's future Anglo-American identity were formulated.[180] Joergensen begins with a laudatory treatment of

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statements such as those which "designate some observable trait of the work of art" (66, 72).

[180] University of Chicago Press (1951; reprinted 1970). For further reading on the reception of positivism within the Anglo-American context, see Ronald Giere and Alan Richardson, eds., *The Origins of Logical Positivism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), which includes some discussion of the social sciences' development in a positivist direction in the 1930s away from a traditionally humanist disciplinary orientation. A convenient compilation of original source materials is *Logical Empiricism at Its Peak: Schlick, Carnap, and Neurath*, ed. Sahatra Sarkar (New York: Garland, 1996), esp. Carnap's article on "how metaphysics is to be eliminated through the analysis of language," which has a polemic against Heidegger's metaphysics (10-33), and the introduction by Sarkar, which discusses the reception of positivists by American universities and crucial academic figures like Charles W. Morris, a pragmatist at the University of Chicago who helped to appoint Carnap at that institution. On the "unity-of-science" movement in America, see ibid. and P. M. S. Hacket, *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth-Century Analytic Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996), Chapter 2. Throughout the course of positivism's history beginning in the 1920s, Wittgenstein's early writings were used as a rallying point for those promoting a cross-disciplinary, "universal" allegiance to positivistic language. Despite Wittgenstein's refusal to become a member of the Vienna Circle (and his eventual disavowal of positivism's interdisciplinary expansion as a "unified science"), isolated sections of his *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* (1921; English and German edition of 1922) were used as foundational texts to justify a push towards the uniformity of all "scientific" language.

the so-called Vienna Circle, a seminar held from the early 1920s until the war which was attended by a continually changing, international assortment of scientists and scholars from fields as various as physics, philosophy, law, history, and mathematics. Regular members of the Circle published treatises advocating notions of a "unified science" (*Einheitswissenschaft*) and a "scientific worldview" (*Wissenschaftliche Weltauffassung*) based on the assumption that the same standard of rigorous knowledge may be applied to research in numerous fields of scholarly endeavor, including those not traditionally identified as the natural sciences. The way to attain this state of disciplinary unity is by strictly following a "logical method of analysis...which serves to eliminate metaphysical problems and assertions as meaningless as well as to clarify the meaning of concepts and sentences of empirical science by showing their immediately observable content—'*das Gegebene*'" (4). Some members of the Vienna Circle who eventually settled in America, such as Rudolf Carnap, Otto Neurath, and Richard von Mises, produced writings focused on the *linguistic* challenge of making statements that are verifiable by immediate sensory experience and that exclude metaphysical or speculative assumptions.[181] Taking their cues

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[181] As a central figure of the positivist "science movement," Carnap became professor at the University of Chicago (1936-52) and later taught at U.C.L.A. (1954-62); his most popular work, *The Logical Syntax of Language* (1934) (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1937), had a profound effect on the interdisciplinary development of positivism in the American context. Neurath, whose background was in physics, was especially polemical in his theoretical statements against metaphysical influence on fields other than the natural sciences; see especially Neurath, *Foundations of the Social Sciences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944). Von Mises was professor of philosophy at Harvard for many years (see below). One American figure who greatly contributed to the reception of positivism—particularly in New York during the 1930s and 1940s—was Ernest Nagel, professor at City College (1931-66) and author of another edition of the

from Ernst Mach—one of a few widely proclaimed fathers of 20th-century positivism whom I deal with in Chapter Two—these scientists strove to construct sentences with as few words and concepts as possible, and that express what Mach called "sensations," or a group of immediately comprehensible propositions which individually represent a single sensory impression.[182] Mach's successors tried to be more specific about what form these propositions should take. In an especially popular and accessible book, *Positivism: A Study in Human Understanding* (1951), von Mises discusses the key importance of Carnap's theory of "protocol sentences"—statements made within the controlled environment of the experimental laboratory which have "immediate, present events as their subject and which are instantly written down (or otherwise recorded), as in the case of protocols in the juristic sense" (92). The objective of these protocols is to have a "sequence of single atomic sentences" containing "very short, very simple expressions corresponding to immediate perceptions" which can be understood "unambiguously" (95). Compared to the original Vienna Circle, positivists in America and Britain

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International Encyclopedia of Unified Science, *Principles of the Theory of Probability* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939). On the American social science reception of the Vienna Circle positivist tradition, see Peter T. Manicas, *A History and Philosophy of the Social Sciences* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), 250-62. On the "unity of science" movement in its earlier European context, see Fritz Ringer, *Max Weber's Methodology: The Unification of the Cultural and Social Sciences* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 131-49.

[182] See Richard von Mises, *Positivism: A Study in Human Understanding* (1951) (New York: Dover, 1968), 81-82; and Joergensen, *The Development of Logical Empiricism*, 7-11. Sowald Hanfling explains that the terms "empiricism" and "positivism" have been used alternately to refer to the same philosophical tendencies which I am summarizing. To minimize confusion I use the word "positivism" in my discussion; See Hanfling, *Logical Positivism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 1-12.

distinguished themselves further in the 1930s and 40s by developing ways of testing whether or not protocol sentences are valid. In *Language, Truth, and Logic* (1936), A. J. Ayer—who managed, with great success, to convey positivist theories to a prewar and wartime audience of non-scientists—discusses a "criterion of verification" which is used to judge systematically each component of a statement in order to establish its status as sensation, or its relationship to immediate sensory impressions. Either the sentence under evaluation conforms to the criterion—and is therefore truthful—or it does not and is dismissed as being speculative or metaphysical in character.[183]

The positivists' extreme sensitivity to and distaste for speculative language was of urgent importance to one faction of the Marxist intellectual community which similarly believed in conforming to a strictly empirical standard of the given (*Gegebene*). This faction wanted to meticulously evaluate their own discourse in order to *verify* whether or not it had strayed from the realm of sensation into the corrupted and potentially totalitarian world of the metaphysical. Especially during the early to mid-1940s—when anti-fascist sentiments were intensifying—Sydney Hook was the most vocal and polemical *Partisan Review* contributor who sought to identify and eliminate any remnants of irrational or religious expression deemed incompatible with a properly scientific

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[183] London: Victor Gollancz, 1938; see esp. 19-39 on the verification criterion. Ayer was professor of philosophy at Oxford beginning in 1933 and later taught at the University of London (1946-50). Many of the transplanted positivists I mention in this chapter criticized Ayer's popularizing treatment of positivist doctrine as an overly simplified distortion of Vienna Circle principles; nevertheless, a sizable group of American literary intellectuals received their dose of positivist theory through Ayer's book.

outlook. In an infamous essay, "The New Failure of Nerve" (1942)[184]—published during a brief period (1942-43) when Greenberg was an editor of the journal—Hook earnestly points to "signs of intellectual panic, heralded as portents of spiritual survival," particularly the use of "mystery" as a mode of knowledge which is not "testable" or verifiable according to empirical analysis. Hook singles out the theological writings of Reinhold Niebuhr—professor of the philosophy of religion at Union Theological Seminary in New York—as being reprehensible. This is partly because Niebuhr represented for Hook a very sophisticated, and therefore threatening, effort to combine metaphysical assumptions with Marxist philosophical principles, an effort which ran counter to his own empiricist and pragmatist bias. Hook also berates Kirkegaard, "who frankly throws overboard his intelligence in order to make those leaps of despairing belief which convert his private devils into transcendent absolutes" (4). On the next page the interests of fascism are bluntly associated with pursuits of private, intuitive "revelation" that are incompatible with standards of empirical evidence and "public verification" (6). For Hook, the relatively extroverted social context and the materialist "praxis" of using an apparatus in the experimental laboratory represented a "common sense"—but still resolutely Marxist—antidote to a wartime and potentially fascist atmosphere of hysteria, excessive introversion, and quasi-religious speculation.[185]

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[184] *Partisan Review* 10 (January-February 1943): 2-23. Greenberg held the editor position until he joined the Air Force in the middle of 1943.

[185] For a particularly good example of anti-fascist paranoia during the mid-40s, see Hook, "God, Geography, and the Good Society," *Partisan Review* 11 (Spring 1944), 161, which theorizes the "totalitarian liberal" as one who retreats from properly scientific method

In the following issue of the magazine, Hook published another polemic, "The Failure of the Left" (March-April 1943), which severely criticizes all forms of "infantile leftism" which exhibit irrational traits that are construed as sympathetic to an anti-scientific, and therefore potentially totalitarian, "utopianism" (165-77, esp. 171-74). In the next issue (May-June) appeared an article—signed by David Merian but written by Meyer Schapiro—"The Nerve of Sidney Hook," which defended the "irrationalist content" of advanced art that promotes a deeper awareness of the "inner world of the self' and which one cannot mechanically refer to as "reactionary" in nature simply because of that content. Schapiro wrote the article with the false name—in contrast to a film review in the same issue—because he feared losing his job or facing censure at Columbia, where he taught art history.[186] In a sense, Greenberg's painterly aesthetic courted both of these poles of Marxist philosophy—well expressed by Schapiro's prioritization of the inner self and Hook's empiricist inclinations—in its cautious and limited incorporation of anxious introspection and automatism into the artistic experience.

Greenberg's position was reflected by other scholarly figures who similarly were ambivalent in their reception of European non-empiricist philosophies. John Randall and Herbert Spiegelberg—prominent philosophers who, like Schapiro, engaged in debates

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and "one who voices the liberal tradition, yet through his action helps create the totalitarian society"; and the discussion collaborationist liberalism in William Phillips and Philip Rahv, "The Future of Socialism," *Partisan Review* 14 (January-February 1947): 23-24.

[186] Schapiro, who was for a time editor of the short-lived journal *Marxist Quarterly*, wrote several book reviews for *Partisan Review* during the period 1937-40. Unfortunately, I cannot deal further here with Schapiro's relevancy to Greenberg's project.

with Hook—developed strong interests in critiquing Sartre's metaphysics. However, as Ann Fulton points out, they did so cautiously, because they were suspicious—like Hook—of French existentialism's overly ambiguous connotations of "being."[187]

As translator of *The Brown Network* and zealous believer in the anti-fascist cause, Greenberg certainly was sympathetic to the linguistic policing advocated by Gruen and Hook. Already in "Towards a Newer Laocoon" (1940), Greenberg interprets the avant-garde's history as becoming more and more "experimental" by devoting itself to the expression of "immediate sense-data" (I, 29). Gustave Courbet, as the "first real avant-garde painter," depicted "prosaic contemporary life" as subject matter, supposedly so that more emphasis could be placed on the immediate physical impact of the medium as "sense-data." Greenberg associates this sense of immediacy with the paying "attention to every inch of the canvas, regardless of its relation to the 'centers of interest'" (I, 29). Throughout the course of the avant-garde's history, the beholder becomes both increasingly indifferent to the depicted "subject" and devoted to the artwork's physical

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[187] Randall taught at Columbia, while Spiegelberg was a renowned expert on phenomeology at Lawrence College in Wisconsin. Both men rather courageously expressed limited sympathy for existentialist discourse in the 1940s and 50s, and faced considerable opposition, not only from polemicists like Hook. See Randall, "On Being Rejected," *Journal of Philosophy* 50 (December 1953): 797-805; idem, "Metaphysics: Its Function, Consequences, and Criteria," *Journal of Philosophy* 43 (July 1946): 401-12; Spiegelberg, "French Existentialism: Its Social Philosophies," *Kenyon Review* 16 (Summer 1954): 448-54; and idem, *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction*, 2 vols. (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1960), esp. vol. 1, 83 and vol. 2, 690. For valuable further discussion, see Fulton, *Apostles of Sartre: Existentialism in America*, 1945-1963 (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1999).

effect as a "whole" expressing "with greater immediacy sensations, the irreducible elements of experience" (I, 30).

The notion of sensation is central to Greenberg's painterly aesthetic. An artwork may have many of the criteria required to convey a painterly effect to the viewer, including a measured amount of automatist content and an effect of dynamic oscillating movement to and from the depths of the composition. But, the object cannot be *verified* as painterly—or judged as aesthetically valuable—unless it produces the immediate and forceful perceptual effect of "sheer sensation." Greenberg's journalistic style of writing further reflects the positivist strategy of creating drastically pared down statements that refer to—or immediately record, as in the protocol sentence—sensory impressions of the studied object. Using relatively brief propositions, Greenberg intentionally connotes a positivist context of experimental practice; this context is regulated by a standard of epistemological certainty based on direct empirical observation. Speaking generally about "new" sculpture of the 1940s, Greenberg describes the painterly object's provocation of sensorial reactions within a space shared by artwork and beholding subject, a space that is meant to be analogous to the social, experimental environment inhabited by the positivist. The term "positivist" is applied to sculptural forms with a "self-evident physical reality, as palpable and independent and present as the houses we live in and the furniture we use" (II, 318). But unlike furniture, painterly sculpture, as well as painting, reflect an increasingly narrow

> conception of what constitutes an indisputable fact of experience....Only by reducing themselves...to the literal essence of their medium, and only by avoiding as much as possible explicit reference to any form of experience not given

> immediately through their mediums, can the arts communicate that sense of concretely felt, irreducible experience in which our sensibility finds its fundamental certainty.[188] (II, 314)

"Positivist" is also the word chosen to encapsulate Hans Hofmann's project, as it soberly discriminates between what is "immediately given" in empirical experience and what is extraneous to it (II, 169). Elsewhere, Hofmann is portrayed as having struggled successfully to achieve a "tautness of feeling" which comes from "distrust of more and more of his emotions" that distract from "only that which he can vouch for with complete certainty"—namely, the empirically given.[189] (III, 102)

From such passages it may seem as though Greenberg were embracing, quite wholeheartedly, positivist doctrines which—in their subservience to the given as the source of epistemological truth and certainty—are hostile to speculative and introverted processes as a means of interpreting the object of study. However, Greenberg often violates the basic positivist requirement that one's interpretive language be understandable in a completely unambiguous way. The painterly work is

> an object of literally the same spatial order as our bodies, and no longer the vehicle of an imagined equivalent of that order. It has lost its "inside" and become almost all "outside," all plane surface. The spectator can not longer escape into it from the space in which he himself stands; on the contrary, the...picture returns him to that space in all its brute literalness, and if it deceives his eyes at all, it is by optical rather than pictorial means, by relations of color, shape, and line largely divorced from descriptive connotations, and by "situations" in which foreground and background, up and down, are interchangeable.[190] (III, 191)

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[188] "The New Sculpture," *Partisan Review* 16 (June 1949).

[189] "'Feeling is All'," *Partisan Review* 19 (January-February 1952).

[190] *Art Digest* 1 (November 1954).

The beholder of the painterly object gives up the pleasurable escape into illusionistic space, and instead accepts an effect of brute literalness identified with the dynamic apprehension of optical situations occurring within the subject's own immediate spatial environment. The status of these "situations" remains indefinite—and is deliberate, as is reflected by the writer's use of quotes—but is identified with a relentless perceptual shuttling movement between portions of the unified painterly compositional structure. The reader is left with the implication that the identity of the painterly resides in a dramatic and anxious struggle to apprehend the brute onslaught of picture surface. One is reminded of many other statements by Greenberg that make use of masculinist imagery to portray the "raw" perceptual power of the painterly, which exhibits a "thrusting force proper only to the realm of material sensations." References to the thrusting impact of the painterly image are meant, in an abstract sense, to imply something of the scientistic, male-gendered world of "hard data." But by dramatizing the dynamic and anxious perception of the painterly object to the extent that he does, Greenberg constructs an aesthetic experience which depends significantly on intuitive processes to access it.

Throughout his career, Greenberg regularly and enthusiastically employed positivist terminology, but did so partly because he was insecure about being branded by the Marxist intellectual community as a producer of reactionary or overly speculative discourse. By emphasizing its positivism, Greenberg tried to rhetorically compensate for the painterly's Other identity—as a profoundly irrational, discomforting, and phenomenological experience which flies in the face of positivist doctrine. I interpret this

anti-positivist component of the painterly as an "Other" because during much of Greenberg's career it was denigrated by a portion of his own intellectual community as lacking epistemological value because not subject to empirical verification.

Greenberg was well aware that the nebulous nature of his references to painterly experience was a risky discursive venture. Like him, a number of other prominent leftist intellectuals, such as Lionel Trilling and Hannah Arendt, shared a discursive interest in "cultivating" the inner self which—in its epistemological dependence on hidden, introspective, and non-empirical experience—was offensive to those who associated the spirituality or "religious" character of that cultivation process with reactionary tendencies. Despite their differing motivations, Greenberg, Trilling, and Arendt shared a disillusionment with kitsch and its relationship to ready-made political dogmas—Stalinist or otherwise—and a corresponding desire to resist the forces of instrumentalism that threaten to mechanize and eliminate our capacity for speculative and critical thought; such resistance necessarily requires that we stray, on an individual basis, from the positivist epistemological norms of rational necessity, empirical verification, and strict causal logic.

Hannah Arendt participated directly in the production of an anti-fascist and anti-Stalinist discourse, doing so in a more elaborate and influential manner than Greenberg, which culminated in the publication of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* in 1950. In that book, Arendt theorized and condemned the practices of totalitarian regimes, including racial and expansionist policies of terror that are exercised while invoking a

> law of the movement of some suprahuman force, Nature or History. Terror is the execution of a law of movement whose ultimate goal is not the welfare of men or the interest of one man but the fabrication of mankind [and which] eliminates

> individuals for the sake of the species, sacrifices the "parts" for the sake of the "whole."[191]

In this and many other passages, Arendt abstractly refers to the structure of the totalitarian machine in a way which contributed to a paranoid atmosphere of anti-fascism that had already been articulated on the pages of *Partisan Review* and other journals for nearly two decades. Of key significance is the totalitarian notion of dynamic movement, which does not derive from empirical "experience" but rather is identified with a transcendental and "'truer' reality concealed behind all perceptible things" (470-71); it is this hidden and dynamic realm which justifies terror policies against individuals that are exercised for the sake of the "whole."

And yet Arendt herself was committed to a notion of the revolutionary self which has transcendental implications. As Martin Jay has pointed out, Arendt—from the outset of her career—consistently held the view that the political life of the individual cannot be hampered by the constraints of instrumentalism and rational necessity. Like Greenberg, Arendt wanted to prioritize a moment of private, inwardly directed, and intensely speculative activity—occurring prior to political action—when the individual self shows a "capacity to begin." This speculative moment is a relative of those constructed by the "political existentialists" of the 1920s, such as Ernst Jünger, Martin Heidegger, and Carl

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[191] New York: Harcourt Brace, 1951, 465; see also 462 and chapter 13, "Ideology and Terror."

Schmitt, to whom Arendt had been indebted but rarely acknowledged out of the fear she shared with Greenberg of being branded a reactionary.[192]

The "spiritual" and introspective qualities of Arendt's political philosophy of the self echoed contemporaneously in the literary criticism of Lionel Trilling, the Columbia professor of English and author of *The Liberal Imagination* (1950), an enormously popular compilation of essays written throughout the 1940s. Like Arendt and Greenberg, Trilling strove to combine his leftist beliefs with an anti-instrumentalist philosophical position that does not accept artistic expression as merely mechanical "communication of knowledge."[193] As with Greenberg's distaste for Repin's kitschy social realism, Trilling

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[192] See Jay, "The Political Existentialism of Hannah Arendt," (1978) in Jay, *Permanent Exiles: Essays on the Intellectual Migration from Germany to America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 237-56, esp. 238, which deals with an article Arendt published in *Partisan Review* (Winter 1946) that exemplifies her flirtations with transcendentalism in the effort to resist instrumentalism, an effort which I think shows striking similarity to Greenberg's situation. Jay's insightful work on the complicated relationship between "holism" and the development of the Marxist tradition is relevant to my discussion of Greenberg's notion of painterly "totality"; see Jay, *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas* (University of California Press, 1984), 13, 348, 370, which includes treatment of the "holism" of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty. Greenberg's understandable insecurity about his phenomenological interests led him to make defensive assertions which may seem a bit absurd to us in hindsight, such as when he referred to the T.S. Eliot's writings as being the product of an "age of positivism" (III, 67) or when he made claims about aesthetic effects having no potential for "mystical" implications at all (IV, 271).

[193] Trilling, *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society* (New York: Anchor Books, 1953), 275; the phrase is drawn from a relevant discussion of T.S. Eliot's views on Henry James's writings as resistance to "life being intellectualized out of all spontaneity and reality" because of James's intimacy with emotionally and unconsciously affected knowledge (276). Another important literary figure for Greenberg was R. P. Blackmur, whose collections of essays contain many passages on the gestural performance of poetic language which are relevant to the performance of the "self" which takes place during Greenberg's painterly experience. See Blackmur, *Language and*

criticizes a mechanical "convenience" and "vulgar ease" of expression in the realist prose of Theodore Dreiser and John Steinbeck.[194] The writer—as exemplified by James Joyce, Thomas Mann, or Franz Kafka—avoids such vulgarity by struggling to infuse the literary work with a carefully measured dose of unconscious and intuitive content. In one of the compilation's essays, "Freud and Literature" (1940), Trilling discusses Joyce's depiction of "states of receding consciousness" as aesthetically valuable because they promote, for the cultivated reader, a certain private, emotionally spontaneous, and speculative experience of "latent and ambiguous meanings" (37). As with Greenberg's painterly notion, this aesthetic experience is shaped by unseen, uncomfortably anxious, and empirically unverifiable psychological processes which are, nevertheless, tempered—and covertly controlled—by the influence of rational control (38, 42, 263).

Trilling and Greenberg both theorized and articulated an aesthetic experience that was meant to have moralizing and political implications. The underlying spiritual and

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Gesture: Essays on Poetry (1942) (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1954), which includes commentary on the "outward and dramatic play of inward and outward meaning" during the performance of poetry (6) and some interesting references to painterly artworks by Rembrandt and El Greco (8); idem, *The Double Agent: Essays in Craft and Elucidation* (New York: Arrow Editions, 1935) and *A Primer of Ignorance*, ed. Joseph Frank (1940) (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967). See also Morris Dickstein's treatment of Blackmur in his *Double Agent: The Critic and Society*, esp. 81-84, which distinguishes Blackmur from the more analytical writing of the New Critics and which notes the way in which Blackmur incorporated the irrational into his criticism and redefined "bourgeois humanism into the broad and subversive doctrine it may have once been."

[194] On Dreiser, see ibid., "Reality in America," 18; on Steinbeck, see "Manners, Morals, and the Novel," 211, which includes discussion of aesthetic value "hidden beneath false appearances."

moral value of this experience is associated with the workings of speculative faculties concealed within the self that serve as a kind of armor against the corrupting forces of instrumentalization and mechanization. By accepting the epistemological and aesthetic validity of these concealed forces, we engage in a *leap of faith* because we do so without confirming their empirical existence and without being able to describe them with analytical accuracy. Such internal workings of the self are portrayed as lending a humble and "pious" dimension to the aesthetic because their intuitive aspect prevents us from egoistically applying a fully coherent explanation or—to use Trilling's phrase—a "formulated solution" to the artwork's interpretation.[195] We uneasily struggle to maintain a situation of interpretive nebulosity out of respect for, or veneration of, our speculative selves. When Greenberg referred to the painterly's intuitive basis as inspiration, he did so with a strong sense of both spiritual and ethical conviction. He was compelled to betray the cause of Marxist empiricism by straying into the suspicious and modernist realm of concealed intuition.

Despite this betrayal, Greenberg's aesthetic never stopped being motivated by political concerns.[196] Trilling's and Greenberg's aesthetic exemplars were the works of

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[195] In a telling passage, Trilling contrasts the "egoism" of Thomas Wolfe with the efforts of Hemingway and Faulkner to remain faithful to the "stuff of life"—rather than "conquering" it, as in Wolfe's case—by abstaining from the "formulated solution" (Ibid., 287-90). Trilling also comments on the spirituality of such reverence for "life" as reflecting "[r]eligion in its decline [which] leaves a detritus of pieties, of strong assumptions" (290); a similar conception of pieties is necessary to the "leaps of faith" that I am interpreting in the work of formalist art writers.

[196] For another essay in favor of reading the "political" in Greenberg, see Stephen C. Foster, "Clement Greenberg: Formalism in the '40s and '50s," *Art Journal* 35 (Fall 1975):

modernists because these objects best facilitated interpretive speculation as a profoundly subversive gesture against the egotism of an industrialized world pervaded with easily consumable kitsch.[197] This gesture of speculative activity was seen as having a moral and spiritual dimension, as a non-selfish and ethically responsible expression of the inner self. The *performance* of this gesture was what mattered, rather than the incidental politics of those artists and writers whose work made it possible.[198]

In a statement about T.S. Eliot, Greenberg expresses disdain for the arch-modernist's reactionary adherence to institutional religion as indispensable for the "'common faith and order'...[of] a high total Culture" in the future. Greenberg predicts the socialist fate of organized religion as "dissolv[ing] itself into the ethical, discarding revelation and the envelope of the supernatural. Or what is more likely and less banal, it will be superseded by an ethos resting on a conviction of the absolute and integral value of the human personality."[199] For Greenberg, the intuitive workings of the self become a

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20-24; see also Piri Halasz, "Art Criticism (and Art History) in New York: The 1940s vs. the 1980s; Part Three: Clement Greenberg," *Arts Magazine* 57 (April 1983): 80-88.

[197] Accordingly, Phillip Rahv felt justified in his laudatory treatment of figures like T.S. Eliot and Dostoevsky, who "discovered inversions and dislocations in human feeling and consciousness which to this day literature imperfectly assimilated. Reactionary in its abstract content, in its aspect as a system of ideas, his art is radical in sensibility and subversive in performance." See Rahv, "Dostoevsky and Politics: Notes on *The Possessed*," *Partisan Review* 6 (July 1938): 25-36.

[198] For a related point about the performative nature of Greenberg's formalism conceived as a means of transgressing academic "Alexandrianism," see Robert C. Morgan, "Formalism as a Transgressive Device," *Arts Magazine* 64 (December 1989): 65-69.

[199] Greenberg, "Mr. Eliot and Notions of Culture: A Discussion" (1944), I, 218-19; John O'Brian notes that editors of *Partisan Review* asked Greenberg to respond to Eliot's

kind of the substitute religion, a wellspring for the ethical and spiritual identity of a future socialist society. On another occasion, Greenberg favorably deals with Eliot's devotion to aesthetic "facts" as focusing on "what works of art actually do, not so much what they mean" and as exercising the "ability to discriminate between the essential and non-essential in literary experience."[200] As with Eliot, the "essential" for Greenberg is

> inner, emotional, dramatic form: the way in which middle follows beginning, and ending follows middle to form a total experience in time that seizes the reader's or auditor's attention, and with it his emotion, and possesses and controls these until, like the Ancient Mariner, it is done, having finally satisfied the reader within the terms of the context it first set for itself. If form is this, it can do without most of the rest; by comparison all other aspects of it are mechanical and dispensable,

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essay "Notes Towards a Definition of Culture" that had been published in a previous issue of the journal (Spring 1944).

[200] Greenberg, "T.S. Eliot: The Criticism, The Poetry" (1950), III, 66-67. It is difficult to overstate the importance of Eliot to Greenberg's intellectual development, although Greenberg of course went a different route than the academic New Critics who lauded Eliot as a father figure. Much of Eliot's essay "The Function of Criticism" (1923), for instance, displays striking resemblances to Greenberg's work—despite Greenberg's reaction against Eliot's religious views—including an emphasis on moralizing and spiritual notions of surrender and non-virtuosic content, which, I have tried to show, are fundamental to Greenberg's painterly notion: "There is accordingly something outside of the artist to which he owes allegiance, a devotion to which he must surrender and sacrifice himself in order to earn and to obtain his unique position. A common inheritance and a common cause unite artists consciously or unconsciously; it must be admitted that the union is mostly unconscious. Between the true artists of any time there is, I believe, an unconscious community. And, as our instincts of tidiness imperatively command us to leave to the haphazard of unconsciousness what we can attempt to do consciously, we are forced to conclude that what happens unconsciously we could bring about, and form into a purpose, if we made a conscious attempt. The second-rate artist, of course, cannot afford to surrender himself to any common action; for his chief task is the assertion of all the trifling differences which are his distinction: only the man who has so much to give that he can forget himself in his work can afford to collaborate, to exchange, to contribute"; see Eliot, *Selected Essays* (1932) (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964), 13.

> mere means towards this as an end. To fail of this end is to fail conclusively—fail to "come off." (III, 70-71)

What counts as a painterly aesthetic fact for Greenberg is the dramatic, spontaneous, and potentially revelatory performance of inner processes during the phenomenological encounter with the total object. Greenberg summarily dismisses those who fail to live up to the speculative demands of being devoted to the aesthetic fact, including those practitioners of the New Criticism who have become

> a new academy spawning and sheltering epigones, a haven for mediocrities and a blind alley for those who are not. Everything immediately discernible in Eliot's attitudes...has been converted into a set of rehearsed mannerisms as easy to put on as a suit of clothes—to the infinite detriment of the sensibilities of precisely the best of our young literary people. (III, 68)

During a symposium on "The State of American Writing, 1948," Greenberg declared the New Criticism—and presumably other forms of academic formalism—to be "incapable of independent and fresh insights into the ways in which their subject matter is related to the rest of human activity. Here we feel the breath of provincialism..." (II, 256) This declaration—published in *Partisan Review* 15 (August 1948)—was made with specific mention of a leading New Critic and academician, John Crowe Ransom, who attended the symposium and must have been taken aback by its frank condescension. Greenberg's moralizing judgments are applied with equal intensity to writers and artists—those producing "mannerisms" of the academy and the painterly—such as the makers of unintuitive products like the Tenth Street Touch.[201]

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[201] Nevertheless, some of Ransom's work probably was read sympathetically by Greenberg, such as the expert commentaries on Eliot's criticism; see Ransom, *The New Criticism* (Norfolk: New Directions, 1941), 135-208 esp. 150-51.

As a gesture of the speculative self, the painterly was designed by Greenberg as an antidote to a culture of mannerism which travestied art's paramount task of imparting cultivation. Greenberg found the academic practice of iconography to be especially offensive because it seemed to him entirely divorced from the performative activity of painterly perception (IV, 271-72). This activity came to be exemplified by the Abstract Expressionists who Greenberg so admired, and provided a kind of critical "support structure" for these artists. But I have argued that that activity was theorized as integral to the painterly long before Greenberg knew Pollock—as a means of reflecting numerous theorizations of the self, formulated by a socialist intellectual community which Greenberg aspired to address.

CONCLUSION: LEARNING FROM THE PAINTERLY

In this dissertation, I describe a bit of formalism's common ground—a discursive site which combines the interests of phenomenology and positivism, and which provides a carefully crafted resistance to instrumentalist culture. This resistance is shared, on a foundational level, by the painterly identities constructed by both Wölfflin and Greenberg. Each of them subverted instrumentality by covertly and strategically avoiding full submission to the empirical biases which tended to rule the intellectual domains in which they operated. Beyond this foundational melding of two basic discursive tendencies, Wölfflin and Greenberg strove to ascribe other features to their respective painterly "selves" that were intended as means of addressing the moral aspirations of their respective communities. These aspirations were, in both cases, linked to the exercise of intuitive and speculative processes that were believed to be jeopardized by the encroachment of mechanization and instrumental logic throughout all facets of society, most notably academe. As a related objective, Wölfflin and Greenberg used their painterly notions for popularizing purposes, to speak to (and for) a social group that was—when compared to the audience addressed by the philological or iconographic writing of academic art history during their times—more inclusive of non-academics, including artists and critics who prioritized the "essential" viewing and comparison of objects as "wholes" within the museum or gallery context. This viewing was facilitated by constant reference to normative aesthetic categories corresponding to the historical periods from which the objects derived. As I stated in the introduction, such goals or "goods" that made claims on Wölfflin's and Greenberg's painterly selves may be evocative for those of

us wishing to mine formalist art writing and aesthetics selectively for its progressive ethical potential.

Chapter Three considered the painterly's occasional, but infamous, associations with German nationalist politics and Aryan racial identity; these associations have contributed to subsequent negative attitudes towards formalism in general and thus have helped to suppress the potential I want to suggest. A major contributor to this derogatory attitude has been—and continues to be—scholarship tending to connect the exercises of aesthetic cultivation with the exercises of totalitarian political power.[202]

I discussed the painterly as an aesthetic principle employed, during the turn-of-the-century period, by German-speaking art historians wanting to cultivate their students. It was an aesthetic of wholeness in that the perceptual grasping of the artwork as a "unified impression" was valued above all else—only in its entirety could the painterly object impart its spiritual content to the beholder; this content could not be empirically confirmed or coherently analyzed. The formalist educator invoked that spirituality while

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[202] Some of the best of this literature has been produced by literary critics. One foundational, and often-misinterpreted, text is Terry Eagleton's critique of the literary formalism, *Criticism and Ideology* (Boston: New Left Books, 1971); see also idem, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), esp. the sections on Alexander Baumgarten and Friedrich Schiller, whose *Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (*Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Mankind*, 1793-95) frequently is interpreted as the pioneering Neo-Kantian statement on the relationship between aesthetic *Bildung* and the non-coercive exercise of political power. More recently, see Constantin Behler, *Nostalgic Teleology: Friedrich Schiller and the Schemata of Aesthetic Humanism* (New York: P. Lang, 1995), esp. Chapter 2, "The Hidden Violence of *Bildung*"; and Louis Dumont, *German Ideology: From France to Germany and Back* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), Section 2, which treats the connections between *Bildung* and nationalist politics ca. 1914.

describing the painterly, and used nebulous language to refer to its timeless, inexpressible, and transcendental qualities. Because of this spiritual invocation, the formalist was convincing when he articulated the identity of the painterly as a normative standard of aesthetic experience, which the faithful student accepted as valid. One can easily make the simplistic analogy between the painterly object and the totalitarian state as another entity venerated as a "whole," with transcendental properties that cannot be fully explained by the analytical observer. The overriding spiritual value of the state—or the "*Reich*"—as a whole was, one could say, invoked by a regime wishing to justify the persecution of isolated citizen groups; again, the spiritual invocation helped to convince the faithful subject of the validity of the *Reich*'s normative identity and its corresponding exercise of racial and expansionist policies. In addition, phenomenological or existential references to aesthetic wholeness have been identified with fascist culture—and of course denigrated—because of the personal politics of certain writers producing these references, as in the case of Martin Heidegger, or several prominent formalist art historians who expressed sympathy for Nazism.[203]

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[203] For example, see Margaret Olin's discussions of Josef Strzygowski in "From Bezal'el to Max Liebermann: Jewish Art in Nineteenth-Century Art-Historical Texts," in Catherine M. Soussloff, ed., *Jewish Identity in Modern Art History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 19-40; idem, "Nationalism, the Jews, and Art History," *Judaism* 45 (1996): 461-82; and Christopher Wood's discussion of the reception of Hans Sedlmayer's formalism in Wood's introduction to *The Vienna School Reader*, ed. Wood (New York: Zone Books, 2000), esp. 12-13, 17. Turn-of-the-century painterly notions, such as Riegl's, should be considered direct precursors of Vienna School conceptions of *Strukturanalyse* in the late 1920s and 1930s. For further discussion of Sedlmayer and others, see Heinrich Dilly, *Deutsche Kunsthistoriker 1933-1945* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1988).

As early as the 1920s, the dangers of formalism's cooption by the far right were hinted at by the art historians Edgar Wind and Erwin Panofsky, who each expressed their methodological distaste for the painterly and related categories. Wind, for instance, drew attention to "linguistic unclarity" and "terminological vagueness" in his critiques of formalism or the "new" *Kunstwissenschaft*, as it was then called. Wind and Panofsky both voiced their suspicions concerning formalist aesthetic categories as reflecting a speculative distancing from the realm of "empirical appearances"—as a means of formulating "*Idealgebilde*"—that was motivated by a non-rigorous, mysticizing essentialism and a morally questionable mode of transcendental reflection.[204]

But it was not until after the Second World War—especially during the 1950s and 60s, when fears of totalitarianism's resurgence loomed the largest—that formalist methodology began to be explicitly criticized for promoting an intellectual environment of aesthetic wholeness conducive to fascist infiltration. Arnold Hauser, for example, attacked Wölfflin's "Hegelian" tendency to deemphasize the individualism of specific artists by pursuing an aesthetic of anonymity and collective volition that treats historical subjects as "just servants of a world-architect who is 'cunning' enough to play upon their impulses and interests as to give them a sense of freedom and creativity whereas all the time they are only carrying out menial tasks for him." Hauser took offense to the idea of the artist

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[204] See Panofsky, "Über das Verhältnis der Kunstgeschichte zur Kunsttheorie" (1924), in Panofsky, *Aufsätze zu Grundfragen der Kunstwissenschaft*, ed. H. Oberer and E. Verheyen (Berlin: Verlag Bruno Hessling, 1964), 49–75; Wind, "Zur Systematik der künstlerischen Probleme," *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 18 (1924–25): 438–86, esp. 485, 438–40.

as a "mere carrier" of a metaindividual mode of perception, and identified Wölfflin's art history without names as a kind of analogue for the totalitarian system in which the subject "submits" to the "group mind." But perhaps the greatest critic of "holism" in formalist art history was Ernst Gombrich, who discussed the importance of impersonal Hegelian categories of collective perception—such as the painterly—to which the reader can provide no "intellectual defenses": Wölfflin is envisioned as a "self-appointed spokesman of the Zeitgeist" who articulates the (painterly) concept as the *Volksgeist* (a temporary form of the absolute spirit) to which all aspects of a culture are traced back, as if those aspects followed along the spokes of a wheel to its center. Gombrich emphasized the hazards of the process of tracing back to the cultural "essence," an operation that may all-too-easily become a mechanical movement, the product of an "exegetic habit of the mind leading to...mental short-circuits."[205]

The implication throughout my argument is that we may reinterpret and articulate the painterly, as well as other formalist (and neo-formalist) notions, without any such negative associations, despite their prior susceptibility to fascist affiliation. I wish to read the painterly in a way that retains its potential for liberal referentiality, that avoids its

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[205] See, for instance, Gombrich, "The 'Father of Art History': A Reading of the *Lectures on Aesthetics* of G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831)," in *Tributes: Interpreters of Our Cultural Tradition* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1984), 51-67; and Hauser, *The Philosophy of Art History* (New York: Knopf, 1959), 119-26, 133-38, 168-78. For more recent critiques of Hegelianism in art history, see Keith Moxey, "Art History's Hegelian Unconscious," in *The Subjects of Art History*, eds. Moxey, Michael Ann Holly, and Mark Cheetham (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 25-51; James Elkins, "Art History without Theory," *Critical Inquiry* 14 (Winter 1988): 360-68; and Beat Wyss, *Hegel's Art History and the Critique of Modernity*, trans. Caroline Dobson-Saltzwedel (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

racial essentialism under the category of the "germanic" or the "Northern" while still asserting or avowing a limited number of identity characteristics.

Accordingly, this project is concerned with moments in the history of formalism when its essentialism was not emphatically coopted by the interests of the ultra-right. In Chapters Two and Three the object of my study is turn-of-the-century formalism—rather than its postwar reception—and it is a mistake, in my view, to automatically associate formalist methodology with the subsequent totalitarian cooption of phenomenological or aesthetic wholeness. It is true that the painterly's identity was articulated by card-carrying members of the far right, such as Julius Langbehn, in the 1880s and 90s, but it is also true that those of more liberal political persuasions—including Jews—believed in the painterly aesthetic as a means to advance their non-malevolent normative and pedagogical objectives.[206] One of these objectives was to

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[206] One of the very few intelligent discussions of formalist aesthetic discourse—in any language—that makes a strong distinction between turn-of-the-century and subsequent discursive contexts is Mark Jarzombek, *The Psychologizing of Modernity: Art, Architecture, and History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Rather than the painterly, Jarzombek focuses on variants of "empathy" (*Einfühlung*) aesthetic theory, which he interprets as being part of a larger humanistic and nationalistic aesthetic discourse that was contributed to enthusiastically by both liberals and conservatives; in particular, see the section on Max Nordau's *Entwartung* (1890), 118, 270, n. 44. Much of Jarzombek's treatment of empathy and psychological aesthetics (including Wölfflin's dissertation of 1886) are obviously applicable to the painterly, including his stress on the importance of figures like Goethe and Dilthey (50-58) and his interest in "vitalism" and experientialism. However, Jarzombek tends to focus more on proto-fascist and fascist aesthetic discourses of the 1920s and 30s, which of course suppressed any of the former liberalizing goals of *Einfühlung*, in favor of arguing for the racial essentialism of the aesthetic experience (112-13, 120), most notably in the cases of Paul Schultze-Naumberg, *Kunst aus Blut und Boden* (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1934) and Ludwig Volkmann, *Grundfragen der Kunstbetrachtung: Die Erziehung zum Sehen* (Leipzig: K. W.

prioritize aspects of aesthetic experience which are incompatible with positivist epistemology. By pursuing this goal habitually, one could succeed in acquiring *Bildung* which enabled someone—even, say, an assimilationist Jew who recently had entered German bourgeois society—to achieve a significant measure of cultivation and respectability as a "germanic" subject, while still maintaining other identity traits, such as one's "Jewishness."

Additional "goods" belonging to the painterly's spiritual and moral identity included those identified with the subservience of the individual compositional elements to the painterly whole, which was portrayed as having humble or honest connotations. This honesty was violated by those interpreting egotistically or materialistically by mechanically linking isolated sections of the painterly artwork to externalized, empirically existing source materials. The painterly's perceptual and psychological properties were expressed according to normative limits that had further moralizing implications: the expressive and anxious dynamism of painterly perceptual activity could not exceed or transgress certain emotional limitations. For instance, the emotional transgressiveness provided by expressionist painting appealed to many German-Jewish patrons who sought aesthetic cultivation, but did not, in its exceeding of painterly aesthetic norms, carry as much significance as a humble, popular, and patriotic discourse.[207]

Hiersemann, 1925); I am more concerned than Jarzombek with a relatively speculative moment in the history of formalist aesthetics before its essentialism was emphatically coopted by the ultra-right.

[207] For further discussion of "Jewishness," *Bildung*, and expressionism, see Robin Reisenfeld, "Collecting and Collective Memory: German Expressionist Art and Modern

My point is that there is nothing inherently wrong with formalism's methodological reliance on non-positivist realities of aesthetic experience or with its employment of poetic or dramatic interpretive language to describe those realities. There is nothing inherently wrong with formalism being far more dependent on rhetorical and literary devices than other, contextualist methods: ambiguous or nebulous terms and tropes are required to convince the reader or audience member into making a leap of faith, into believing in the validity of the painterly's—or some other principle's—normative identity. This identity may have both spiritual and moral implications that need not reflect reactionary or extreme right-wing belief systems.

Conceived during the rise of fascist Germany and amidst the decline of doctrinaire Soviet influence on the New York intellectuals, Greenberg's aesthetics is a crucial case in point. It succeeded in maintaining what I have called the formalist's compromise, even while under enormous pressure from Marxist empiricists, such as Sydney Hook and William Gruen, who promoted an atmosphere of hostility toward metaphysical speculation, loosely identified with the "spirituality" of totalitarian culture.

Jewish Identity," in Catherine M. Soussloff, ed., *Jewish Identity in Modern Art History*, 114-34, esp. 123; Reisenfeld's account of Jewishness and *Bildung* is indebted to George L. Mosse, *Confronting the Nation: Jewish and Western Nationalism* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1993), 131-45. See also Laurence J. Silberstein, "Others Within and Others Without: Rethinking Jewish Identity and Culture," in *The Other in Jewish Thought and History: Constructions of Jewish Culture and Identity*, ed. Silberstein and Robert L. Cohn (New York: New York University Press, 1994), esp. 2. For relevant discussion of art historians' denigration of Max Liebermann's painterliness as "excessiveness," identified with the artist's Jewish cosmopolitanism, see Olin, "From Bezal'el to Max Liebermann," 28-29.

By prioritizing an act of intuitive and speculative confrontation with the painterly object as a means to moral and spiritual cultivation, Greenberg strayed into a dangerous discursive territory that he often dubbed "inspiration." Rather than delving into the germanic pedigree of his aesthetic—which he wisely never mentioned—Greenberg constructed the painterly as a gesture whereby the subject is able to perceive a wholeness that was infused with socialist and liberal significance. When performing the painterly perceptual act, one intuitively engaged in a non-empirical component of the inner self; during this act, the subject resisted the oppressive logic of instrumentality, exercised institutionally by market capitalism's imposition of easily digestible kitsch and by the university's promotion of equally digestible scholarship that, in its subservience to mechanical logic, discouraged the kind of speculative activity required to achieve not only "cultivation," but also effective social critique and political activism.

Here lies the essence of the painterly's subversiveness—its ability to "come off," to remember Greenberg's term, happened precisely when it succeeded in throwing an intuitive wrench into the *Aufklärer*'s machine. Like Greenberg, we should strive to remind that contraption—which would otherwise keep churning away, well-lubricated by institutional, academic, and bureaucratic celebrations of mediocrity—of what lies within, of our speculative selves, of what can never be converted into one of its cogs.

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