

ART HISTORY;
AN ART EDUCATION ANALYSIS

DISSERTATION

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By

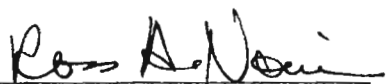
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INTRODUCTION

HOW SHOULD ART HISTORY BE TAUGHT?

"How should art history be taught?" is an art educational question, i. e., it is of interest to art educators. It is a question of traditional interest to many art teachers since art history has a long tradition as a component in school art programs. It is a question of concern to art educators involved in teacher preparation both by mandate and by policy. Many state legislatures have mandated that art history be included in art education programs by making a certain number of hours in art history a requirement for art-teacher certification. The art history requirements in teacher-preparation programs are also, however, matters of policy--policy made by art educators who generally concur with and often argue for the importance of teaching art history in the schools. Art historians who are charged with instructional duties as part of their service to an academic institution are also interested, by necessity, in the

question of how art history should be taught. Museum educators sometimes elect to include art history in their programs and thus are interested in the question. Also film makers, textbook writers and other instructional resource developers have an interest in those answers to the question which might be of use to them in their work. Thus the range of types of art educators who might be interested in answering the question, "how should art history be taught?" is extensive.

Different kinds of art educators have chosen very different means to attempt to answer the question. Among those means which have been called on in response to the question have been historical, experimental, pragmatic, and analytic means of inquiry. "Pragmatic" is used here in the sense of matching teaching content and methods with goals. "Analytic" is used here in the sense of making distinctions. The question to be answered can take on quite different meanings depending on the methodological approach employed.

In "The History of Art in Education,"¹ Joshua Taylor presents historical findings which lead him to certain suggestions

¹Joshua Taylor, "The History of Art in Education," in A Seminar in Art Education for Research and Curriculum Development, project director Edward L. Mattil, co-operative research project no. V-022 of the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University, 1966), pp. 42-59.

about how art history should be taught. For Taylor the question to be answered takes on two different meanings, the answer to the first question somehow leading to the answer to the second. The two questions might be expressed: "How has art history been used to serve the purposes of art education?" and "How should art history be used to serve the purposes of art education?" Taylor offers answers to both questions. He concludes with a reconciliation of three pursuits (art history, art production, and art criticism) within one general program in art having as its goal "the development of the skills, awareness and knowledge that will provide the non-professional with a meaningful and deeply rewarding experience of art."²

Michael Day is an art educator whose article, "The Compatibility of Art History and Studio Art Activity in the Junior High School Art Program,"³ exemplifies an experimental approach to answering the question, "How should art history be taught?" For this experimental researcher the question to be answered might be expressed more precisely, "By what method can art-historical knowledge be taught most effectively?" To answer

²Taylor, p. 56.

³Michael Day, "The Compatibility of Art History and Studio Art Activity in the Junior High School Art Program," Studies in Art Education, X, No. 2 (1969), pp. 57-61.

that question Day stipulates what will be taken as art-historical ⁴
learning--i.e., the acquisition of knowledge--and tests two
instructional methods for efficacy in teaching for that acquisition.
He concludes that "Pupils may, as results implied, learn more
art history subject matter in this type of integrated program
[including production activities] than in a more traditional
lecture-slide art history program." ⁴

John White and H. W. Janson--both teaching, art historians--answer the question pragmatically. The question of how art history should be taught for them might be expressed as, "How can art history be used to satisfy the purposes of general education?" In "Art Critics, Art Historians and Art Teaching" ⁵
Janson identifies a goal, for a beginning college art history course, which has been neglected and toward which instruction should be directed. That goal is "equipping the student to act intelligently and responsibly as an art patron." ⁶ In "Art History and Education" ⁷ John White proposes a rather extensive list of

⁴Day, p. 61.

⁵H [Orst] W. Janson, "Art Critics, Art Historians and Art Teaching," Art Journal, XXXII, No. 4 (1973), pp. 424-425, and 428.

⁶Janson, p. 425.

⁷John [Edward Clement Twarowski] White, "Art History and Education," an inaugural lecture delivered in the University of Hull on 9 November 1961 (Hull, England, University of Hull, 1962).

ways in which art history might be used to satisfy the purposes of general (university) education, among them: compensating for over-specialization; adding to the vividness and richness of life; helping to gain mastery of the environment; balancing intellectual discipline and emotional response; encouraging growth of intuition; improving subtlety and precision of verbal communication; and providing an opportunity to practice contemplation.

Ralph Smith's "The Structure of Art-Historical Knowledge and Art Education"⁸ approaches the question of how art history should be taught in another way--analytically and from a particular point of view. Smith addresses his analysis to the question, "How would one teach the structure of the discipline of art history?" Smith presumes from the outset that "teaching structure involves not only the general ideas--the basic concepts and principles--central to any subject but also the method of inquiry through which general ideas are formulated."⁹ His conclusions,

⁸Ralph A. Smith, "The Structure of Art-Historical Knowledge and Art Education," Studies in Art Education, IV, No. 1 (1962), pp. 23-33.

⁹Smith, p. 23.

set forth nine pages later, assert very little more than he initially assumes.¹⁰ The body of Smith's paper addresses itself to the prior questions: "What is the structure of art history? [and] what kinds of issues are involved in teaching the structure of art history?"¹¹

The five articles just cited illustrate some of the range of meanings which the question, "How should art history be taught?" might take and some of the methodologies which have been brought to bear on that question. Among the other areas of expertise from which the question might be addressed are those areas concerned with factual considerations other than facts related to art history. One such area is the study of the nature of the learner. "How should art history be taught?" would be answered, from that point of view, "Art history should be taught in a way consistent with the needs, experience, and abilities of the learner." Conclusions from a study in this area might include suggestions

¹⁰Smith p. 32. Smith claims that one teaches the structure of art history by...

"...(a) teaching the so-called basic concepts and principles of art history, (b) teaching the kinds of activities by means of which art historians acquire art-historical knowledge, and (c) teaching (a) and (b) in such a manner that the new encounters on the part of the student with art-historical situations will be understood as specific instances of more general cases."

¹¹Smith, p. 23.

about when a learner is or is not capable of dealing with various ⁷ aspects of art history, e.g., a primary school child may not have developed a conception of time adequate to deal with certain aspects of art history, or a junior high school student may not have the life experience or knowledge of the history of ideas adequate to understand other aspects. To teach art history consistently with what one may know about the nature of the learner requires some knowledge not only of the learner, but, of course, also of the nature of art history. Experimental research is also aimed at describing matters of fact (other than facts about art history) which might affect art-history teaching. Such experimental research also proceeds from a base of assumptions about art history. Studies of how art history can be used in accordance with particular value positions similarly propose answers to the question, "How should art history be taught?" based on assumptions about art history. From a pragmatic approach, to prescribe how to teach art history toward the end of fulfilling art education or general education goals, it is necessary to have some notion about what art history is. Thus a number of modes of inquiry (involving factual and value questions) which lead to educational implications about how art history should be taught are based on assumptions about what sort of thing art history is. The analytic mode of inquiry used by Smith takes as the object of its investigation

these very assumptions. Smith has limited his article to an analysis of art-historical explanation. The length of his article does not allow him to deal with his subject in an extensive fashion.

This paper, like Smith's, is an art education analysis, i. e., an analysis which makes distinctions which are useful to art educators. It is, however, much more comprehensive and extensive than Smith's, that is it deals with a wider range of art-historical inquiry activities and deals with them in fuller detail. It does not propose to answer the question, "How should art history be taught?", but proposes rather to answer analytically the prior question, "What is art history?"

WHAT IS ART HISTORY?

"Art history" is an ambiguous term. In the sentence "in all of art history, this painter has no equal in the mastery of color," "art history" is used to mean something quite different from its meaning in "art history might be said to have begun with the work of J. J. Winckelmann." The two sentences use "art history" in two senses. In the first sentence "art history" refers to all the art events of the past (sense #1), while in the second sentence it refers to the work, not of artists, but of those who account for art-historical events (sense #2).¹²

¹²Occasionally attempts are made to resolve the ambiguity by calling the first sense (all art events) "art history" and the

The notion of "art event" used in the explication of the first sense of "art history" is intended to refer not only to works of art but also to information about artists and information about the contexts within which works of art have been produced. Contextual information might be as narrow as information about particular apprenticeship practices employed in a particular shop at that point in time when a particular work was executed, or as broad as information about a major change in world-view permeating the culture within which an artist is working.

In addition to past art events themselves being commonly termed "art history" (sense #1), the study of those events is also commonly referred to by the same name, "art history" (sense #2). The present analysis proposes to investigate 1) what sorts of accounts are made of art-historical events ("art history" #2), and 2) how these accounts are related to art-historical events themselves, i. e., how "art history" (sense #2) is related to "art history" (sense #1). The aim of this study is not to define "art history" nor to treat metaphysical issues concerning the nature

second sense (the work of art historians) "history of art." One difficulty with this attempt is that many readers are unaware of the advocated usage and take "art history" and "history of art" to be synonymous. Another difficulty is the awkward construction sometimes required to maintain the distinction. "Justifying art-historical claims" becomes "justifying claims made by historians of art." In most situations the sense of "art history" intended is made clear by the context in which it appears.

of "art history," in either sense. Its aim is to describe and analyse writings which are ordinarily taken to be cases of art history. The analysis proceeds through an examination of the writings of prominent art historians. Their writings are used not because art historians are the only persons capable of accounting for art-historical events, for they are not, but because their writings provide paradigm cases of what is ordinarily referred to as "art history" (sense #2).

Put briefly the present analysis proposes to describe "art history" within an organizational structure dictated by several distinctions. The broadest distinction is made among activities engaged in to account for art-historical events, i. e., essential research, interpretation, and explanation. "Essential research" is intended here to refer to those activities engaged in to establish essential data for art-historical accounts, i. e., specific factual claims about the appearance, authorship, date, provenance, technique, or function of particular works of art. "Interpretation" is intended here to refer to the activities engaged in toward the end of explicating the meaning of particular art works. "Explanation" is intended to refer to the activities engaged in to account for change among art-historical events. Further distinctions among differing activities subdivide each of these three major types of art-historical activities. Within the general activity of essential research are further distin-

guished the activities of description and attribution; within interpretation are distinguished formal interpretation and iconographic interpretation; and within explanation, generalized and particularized explanations.

Paradigm cases of art-historical scholarship resulting from these various distinct activities are then analysed. Each piece of scholarship is analysed in terms of its object of investigation, the nature of its claims, the sort of evidence appealed to, the nature of the case offered in support of the claims, and criteria for the evaluation of the claims offered. A summary of the results of the analysis of these issues is put forth in the form of a table following this introductory chapter. A glossary of terms used in that table (with appropriate page references) is provided after the concluding chapter.

As is the case with art-historical writings, so be it also with the present analysis. To understand the analysis which is to follow it is important to understand what sorts of claims are being asserted about the work of those who account for art-historical events. The distinctions among art-historical activities are intended to describe the work of art historians qua art historians. Art historians certainly do other things for other reasons, but it is here proposed that the set of activities mentioned above accommodate all the activities central to the discipline of art

history. It is not asserted here that all the above activities must be exhibited in every piece of art-historical work. In fact art historians tend to specialize in certain activities to the subordination, if not the exclusion, of other activities. Nor is it asserted here that the works of art historians can be clearly and exclusively separated into these categories. The categorization is meant to make distinctions among types of activities not among entire works by art historians. Indeed art historians often combine activities. It is very common to find art historians using the results of one activity as evidence in support of an assertion resulting from a different activity, e.g., explanations can be used in building a case for an attributive (essential research) claim. Finally, just as it is the case that art historians engage in non-art-historical activities, it is also the case that non-historians can be found engaging in art-historical activities. The present analysis focuses on the work of art historians, however, since they are the individuals whose central concern is with the discipline of art history.

Even though art historians are the experts to be studied, they are not necessarily experts in the sort of art education analysis here attempted. Although expert in thinking about art-historical phenomena they may not be expert in reflecting analytically on that thinking or comprehensively about the discipline

as a whole. Like scholars in other fields art historians are usually specialists in a type of research or in an area of study. Their writings on art history often reflect their own area of specialization. Erwin Panofsky and Max Friedlaender are two such scholars. Although Panofsky has written generally about the discipline of art history,¹³ he has not written an extensive analysis of the discipline as a whole. He has written extensively (in full detail) about his own area of specialization within the discipline. In his introduction to Studies in Iconology¹⁴ Panofsky's reflections are thoroughly analytic of the restricted specialization of interpreting the representational aspects of art works. Max Friedlaender in On Art and Connoisseurship,¹⁵ as the title suggests, restricts his reflections about art-historical activities to those engaged in by the connoisseur. It is for his achievements in connoisseurship that Friedlaender is most noted; and it is in this area that he has written most extensively.

Other art historians have written extensively about the

¹³Erwin Panofsky, "The History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline," in Meaning in the Visual Arts (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1955), pp. 1-25 [originally published in 1940].

¹⁴Erwin Panofsky, "Introductory," in Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance (New York: Harper and Row, 1939), pp. 3-17.

¹⁵Max Friedlaender, On Art and Connoisseurship, trans. by Trancred Borenius (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, publisher, 1932).

discipline of art history as a whole, but have done so from some particular point of view which runs through the entire analysis. Lionello Venturi and Arnold Hauser are two such art historians. Lionello Venturi's History of Art Criticism¹⁶ is an early attempt to deal systematically with the discipline of art history. As the title suggests the volume expresses a particular point of view. Venturi does a commendable job of compiling a history based on the works of aestheticians, critics, and art historians--beginning with the Greeks. However some useful distinctions are lost when those three disciplines are collapsed into one. In his conclusion Venturi writes:

It is true that the union of art criticism and art history that is so necessary has not yet been achieved, but history and criticism each have acquired greater depth. What remains is the problem of bringing them close to each other.¹⁷

It is clear from this passage that Venturi's history is not aimed exclusively at description and analysis of what art history has been and is, but is intended to foster a particular direction for the future of the discipline. Arnold Hauser in Philosophy of Art History¹⁸ is generally expounding his own conception of the

¹⁶Lionello Venturi, History of Art Criticism, trans. by Charles Marriott, (rev. ed.; New York: E. P. Dutton, 1964), [originally published in 1936].

¹⁷Venturi, p. 347.

¹⁸Arnold Hauser, The Philosophy of Art History (Cleveland: Meridian, 1958).

discipline rather than attempting a descriptive analysis. On the ¹⁵
other hand he raises some important philosophical issues in his
section "Logical and Aesthetic Validity."¹⁹ For example he
discusses such important philosophical issues as the distinction
between genesis and validity, confusion between objectivity and
timelessness, and criteria for truth. Even though his remarks
are directed at a criticism of the work of Heinrich Wölfflin
they can be applied more broadly. The philosophical issues Hauser
raises can be useful to shed light on the full range of art-
historical scholarship. Some of the writings of art historians,
devoted to an extensive analysis of the discipline of art history
as a whole, are written for prescriptive rather than descriptive
ends. Such writings may indeed point a way for the future and
are certainly useful to the present analysis. They cannot, how-
ever, provide the extensive and comprehensive descriptive
analysis of art history which it is the aim of the present study
to offer.

Another group of art historians have written about their
discipline neither extensively nor comprehensively, but pointedly,
that is, they direct their remarks at particular issues within the
discipline. Frederick Antal and E. H. Gombrich have written
articles of this sort. Frederick Antal's "Remarks on the Methods

¹⁹Hauser, pp. 166-188.

of Art-History"²⁰ are rather brief and basically make the point ¹⁶ that the methods of art-historical scholarship have changed in the past and are still open to change. In "Art and Scholarship"²¹ E. H. Gombrich points up some real dangers to which art-historians are susceptible, e.g., the myth of cycles, the myth of historicism, purely mechanical explanations, mutually reinforcing clichés, and circularity, but he makes no attempt at a systematic analysis of the discipline.

One art historian, James Ackerman, has written an extensive and comprehensive analysis of the discipline of art history.²² He did this, on the request of the Council on Humanities at Princeton University. Ackerman's analysis is one in a series of works commissioned by that council for the express purpose of giving "an account of American humanistic scholarship enabling us to see just what that scholarship has contributed to the culture

²⁰Frederick Antal, "Remarks on the Methods of Art-History," in Classicism and Romanticism: With Other Studies in Art History (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pp. 175-189 [originally published in 1949].

²¹E. H. Gombrich, "Art and Scholarship," in Meditations on a Hobby Horse and Other Essays on the Theory of Art (London: Phaidon, 1963), pp. 106-119 [originally presented in 1957].

²²James S. Ackerman, Art and Archeology with Rhys Carpenter (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1963), pp. 121-229.

of America and the world."²³ Ackerman acknowledges the aim of the council in his preface and notes that his own aim is not only to "discuss how our discipline had developed... [but also] how it ought to develop."²⁴ Ackerman here explicitly states that his aims are historical and prescriptive--different from the aims of the present analysis. Ackerman's study is, however, a significant contribution for several reasons. He makes some important points distinguishing art history from other historical endeavors. The distinction is based not only on the obvious difference in the object under investigation but also on the distinctiveness of studying art works as opposed to other sorts of historical phenomena. The art historian studies an object with a peculiar "dual existence...as a document of the past and as an object in the present."²⁵ Ackerman makes another important contribution to critical philosophy of art history with his analysis of the notions of objectivity and subjectivity. His chapter "The Historian as Critic"²⁶ carefully compares the work of the art historian and the art critic. Ackerman's general

²³Richard Schallter, "Foreword," in Art and Archeology by James S. Ackerman and Rhys Carpenter (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1963), pp. vii-x.

²⁴Ackerman, p. 125.

²⁵Ackerman, p. 131.

²⁶Ackerman, pp. 144-163.

analysis of the discipline of art history is contained in his chapter "Genres and Scholars."²⁷ Just as his preface claims, this general analysis is not intended to be a comprehensive study of what is ordinarily called "art-history" (#2) but rather an historical account of the schools of thought around which art-historical scholarship has developed.

We have seen how art historians have written about what is ordinarily called "art history," in several ways: 1) extensively (in full detail) in their own area of specialization; 2) prescriptively, building a case for how art-historical scholarship ought to be pursued; 3) topically, addressing themselves to particular issues in the field; and 4) historically, accounting for how art-historical scholarship has developed. The first three of these approaches to writing about one's discipline are traditional approaches within any field of scholarship. A scholar writing for his peers often writes 1) to inform them about conclusions he has reached about his own specialized research methods, 2) to argue for a particular direction for future research, and 3) to direct attention to particular issues in the field. The fourth approach, the historical one, is not so ordinary, at least not so ordinary for a scholar writing for his peers. A

²⁷Ackerman, pp. 196-229.

general history, like that in Ackerman's chapter "Genres and Scholars," is presumed to be common knowledge to peers in one's field. The reader will recall that Ackerman's account is one in a series on the humanities presumably directed toward a readership larger than professional art historians. The art historian qua art historian contributes several sorts of writings. He presents the specific findings of his own art-historical research. But also, as we have seen, he sometimes, as a professional art historian, records his reflections on the field. The sort of descriptive analysis which it is the aim of the present study to provide is a task which is "above and beyond the call of duty" of the practicing art historian. It is not a piece of history nor a profession report to one's peers. It is a piece of art education analysis--analysing 1) the object of investigation, 2) the nature of claims, 3) the sort of evidence appealed to, 4) the kind of case offered, and 5) criteria which can be used to evaluate the claims. The present analysis is not undertaken as a piece of art history nor as a report for professional art historians, but as an art education analysis, that is, an analysis which makes distinctions which are useful to art educators.

A professional art historian, W. Eugene Kleinbauer, acting as an art educator, has written a very comprehensive description

of the discipline of art history in the first three chapters of his Modern Perspectives in Western Art History.²⁸ His educational aims are made explicit in his preface where he writes:

My purpose in preparing this book has been to introduce students of the humanities to the variety of methods that scholars, mainly of this century, have adopted and developed for conveying what may be called their "perspectives" on the unfolding of the visual arts in the Western world.²⁹

In his first three chapters Kleinbauer presents a comprehensive analysis of the discipline of art history. His study makes several significant contributions. Kleinbauer begins by making the seemingly obvious distinction between art history as the history of creative activities and accomplishments (sense #1) and art history as the study of those activities and accomplishments (sense #2). Although this distinction may seem trivial, a potentially confusing ambiguity can be avoided by clearly indicating the sense of "art history" intended. Kleinbauer's preliminary attempt at defining the discipline of art history is made by showing in what ways it is similar and dissimilar to the related disciplines of antiquarianism, aesthetics, and several sorts of art criticism.

²⁸W. Eugene Kleinbauer, Modern Perspectives in Western Art History: An Anthology of Twentieth Century Writings on the Visual Arts, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), pp. 1-105.

²⁹Kleinbauer, p. vii.

In his second chapter Kleinbauer discusses the influences of philosophical presuppositions on art-historical scholarship. Kleinbauer uses "philosophy of history" to refer to speculative philosophy of history, i. e., he is concerned with the influence of presumptions about patterns of art history (sense #1) (cycles, evolution, spiral progress and basic causes). Kleinbauer's analysis of the work of art historians (in his third chapter) is divided into two categories based on the intended focus of the study, i. e., intrinsic and extrinsic perspectives. In the category of intrinsic perspectives he includes studies focusing on materials, techniques, authorship, provenance, form, and content, and in the extrinsic category biographical, psychological, and sociological focii. Kleinbauer's very general organization is based on a simple distinction of object of investigation, which in itself does not shed much light on the discipline of art history. The sub-organization of his analysis of intrinsic and extrinsic perspectives takes the form basically of two lists, each subordinate art-historical area is discussed and exemplified, but generally not very carefully related to other areas on the list. Kleinbauer's analysis is, however, very comprehensive, that is, it describes a wide range of art-historical activities. It might be described as a subject-organized, annotated bibliography in expository form. With its extensive footnote and in-text

references, these first three chapters of Modern Perspectives in Western Art History make up a very valuable general reference for studies of the discipline of art history. Although Kleinbauer's is a comprehensive description of the discipline of art history, it is not extensive enough in its analysis to satisfy the aims proposed for the present study.

The answer to the question, "What is art history?" which the present study proposes must be more extensively analytic than Kleinbauer's. For the educational aim of this study is broader than that addressed by Kleinbauer's introduction to art history and anthology of readings. While Kleinbauer's book was edited, introduced, and assembled for use in "seminars on the historiography of art," (i. e., for an educational purpose) the present study aims to satisfy a much broader educational goal, that is, making distinctions which are useful to a wide range of types of art educators. The present analysis proposes to offer an answer to the question, "What is art history?" sufficiently extensive, comprehensive, descriptive, and analytic to be useful to art educators seeking to answer the further question, "How should art history be taught?"

An analysis of that which is called "art history" should be useful also to the answering of such other educational questions as, "Why should art history be taught?" "When should art history

be taught?" and "What of art history should be taught?" An understanding of what is meant by "art history" is not sufficient in itself to answer any of these questions. Various matters of fact (not related to art history) affect decisions about the teaching of art history, e.g., a particular group of students may have or not have certain skills necessary to engage in certain art-historical activities. Educational decisions about the teaching of art history are also affected by various value positions held by those making the decisions, e.g., one may hold that it is or is not important that citizens be intelligent and responsible art patrons, or that students should acquire subtlety and precision in their verbal communications.

On the other hand, one cannot know whether an educational decision about the teaching of art history is compatible with relevant matters of fact without an understanding of what is meant by "art history." For example, one cannot know whether a junior high school student is capable of constructing a narrative account of art-historical change without an understanding of the sorts of activities involved in constructing such a narrative. Nor can one know whether or not art-history teaching can be useful in fulfilling particular individual or societal goals without an understanding of what is ordinarily called "art history." For example, if an educator holds that it is

important for students to be able to perceive regularities as well as uniqueness within their own life experiences, having an understanding of the activities involved in art-historical scholarship puts that educator in a position to make an informed decision about whether or not any art-historical activities might be used toward the end of perceiving regularities and uniqueness. Thus, particular educational decisions about art-history teaching do not follow solely from an understanding of what is called "art history." Various matters of fact and values are also involved in such decisions. However an understanding of that which is called "art history" is necessary to any informed decision on educational questions about the teaching of art history.

The present analysis does not address itself to relevant factual considerations outside the discipline of art history nor to value issues which affect decisions about art-history teaching. It does propose to make distinctions about what is ordinarily called "art history" which will be useful to educators making decisions about art-history teaching. A case for the utility of this analysis to art educators is offered in the final chapter of this study.

Art-Historical Activity	Object of Investigation	Nature of Claims	Type of Evidence	Methods of Case	Criteria for Claims
Description	Individual Art Work	Assertions of Fact	Art Work under Investigation	Measurement; Observation; Comparison with Ordinary Visual Experience; Empathy and Recording of Descriptive Findings.	Public Test
	Individual Art-Historical Event		Evidence of the Art-Historical Event under Investigation; and Evidence of other Art-Historical Events. (Evidence of an Art-Historical Event includes the Art Work and Evidence about the Artist and the Context.)	Description; Seeking and Weighing Evidence; Comparing Art Works Formally; and Hypothesizing.	Pragmatism; Coherence; and Correspondence.
Attribution	Individual Art-Historical Event		Representational Aspects of Art Work.		
Iconographic Interpretation	Individual Art-Historical Event	Explanation of Meaning	Evidence of the Art-Historical Event (especially of Artist's Intention) and of Audience Expectations; and Evidence of Literary and Visual Conventions.	The Methods of Essential Research; and Hypothesizing.	Possibility; Comprehensiveness; Applicability; and Objectivity.
			Formal Aspects of Art Work.		
Formal Interpretation				Generalizing	Control; Prediction; Retrodiction;
Generalized Explanation	Art-Historical Events	Explanation of Change	Evidence of Regularity.		Explanatory Demands
			Evidence of Art-Historical Events (including Essential Research Claims and Interpretations).	Questioning Evidence.	Understanding; Curiosity;
Particularized Explanation			Evidence of Uniqueness	Judging Significance; and Identifying Influence.	Perspective; and Judgment.

ESSENTIAL RESEARCH

The essential unit of study of art-historical investigation is the art-historical event, i. e., the work of art, the artist, and the context within which the art work is produced. Essential research in art history is aimed at accurate perception and appropriate identification of that unit of study. For the art historian the most important component of the art-historical event is the art work itself. Those persons who are considered to be artists are so considered solely because of their production of art works. That context which is taken to be part of the art-historical event is defined as such also solely because of its relation to the art works and artists within it. The art historian's investigation is limited to or defined by a relationship to works of art.

Description provides a record of perceptions of art works. Attribution provides a record of the identification of certain specific aspects of art-historical events, e. g., authorship, date,

provenance, technique, and function. Descriptions and attributions are established through different means. Different means are required because of the different nature of the objects which are under investigation. In the case of description the particular aspect of the art-historical event which is the object of investigation is the work of art. A work of art is in the present and directly accessible to scrutiny, but this is not so with other aspects of art-historical events. The artist is not accessible (except, of course, in the case of very recent art-historical events) nor is the context of production open to observation. Therefore, before certain attributive conclusions about art-historical events can be reached, the event must be reconstructed with the aid of documents, the most important of which is, of course, the work of art. While reconstruction is the means required to establish attributions, observation is the means required for the establishment of descriptions.

DESCRIPTION

Early descriptions (and identifications) of art works in the possession of individual patrons were made within extensive inventories. Other early descriptions were provided by men who wrote extensively about the art works known to them. Giorgio Vasari in Florence and Karl van Mander in the north were two such men. What descriptions are to be found in early inventories

and in the works of such writers as van Mander and Vasari are usually quite brief and take note of material, size, and representation. The information catalogued by antiquarians up until the close of the nineteenth century was limited largely to description of these same aspects of art works. Description of works of art as formal compositions is a sort of description undertaken in a systematic way only within the last century. Heinrich Woelfflin's work, attempting to explain the change from Renaissance to Baroque styles in art, Principles of Art History,¹ is based on sophisticated observation of compositional aspects of works of art. Woelfflin's work was one of the first art-historical studies based heavily in compositional research, i. e., making use of formal description.

Woelfflin's work is typical of art-historical writings in its use of description. Although art historians make extensive observations of art works, those aspects which they chose to describe in their writings are usually limited to those which are important to the attribution, interpretation, or explanation they are trying to establish. The art historian's concern is generally broader than that of the cataloguing of observations. He aims to use his observations in developing some sort of art-historical

¹ Heinrich Woelfflin, Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style on Later Art, trans. by M. D. Hottinger (New York: Dover, [1932]), [originally published in 1915].

account--not merely to record those observations. Thus one seldom finds an art-historical work devoted primarily to description.

Diana M. Buitron's recent article on a small bronze statuette at the Fogg Museum² makes much use of description. Buitron uses description in her attempt to argue against the statuette's accepted attribution of date, provenance, and subject matter. Let us consider this article as it exemplifies the nature and quality of an art historian's descriptions rather than as a case study of an attribution argument.

Buitron begins her article with a description of the condition of the statuette. She notes that the bronze had been covered with a "falsely pigmented patina." The false patina was removed in 1970, she claims, "revealing metallic areas exposed by previous extensive mechanical cleaning." Since no other evidence is provided for the condition of the metal, one assumes that the condition was "revealed" through careful observation.³ Although it is further assumed that an expert examining the piece could detect the exposed metal areas, they are not visible in the photo-

²Diana M. Buitron, "The Alexander Nelidow: A Renaissance Bronze?" Art Bulletin, LV, No. 3 (1973), pp. 393-400.

³If Buitron's observations were made very recently, they were made after a protective plastic coating was applied to the piece. It is not clear whether such observations could be confirmed now.

graphs provided with the article.

In continuing her description of the piece Buitron describes the metallic make-up of the bronze as including eight percent tin, fourteen percent lead, and one percent zinc. That description was reached by X-ray analysis. Buitron next describes the piece as standing twelve centimeters, a description arrived at by means of standard measurement.

The statuette is never described as a male, nude figure although that natural subject matter⁴ identification is implicit in Buitron's continued references to hand, thigh, head, and even Adam's apple. It is conceivable, however, that the work might be a representation of something other than a male nude, e.g., a woman dressed in a garment imitating the appearance of a male nude. By her failure to consider such an alternative (however unlikely) it is assumed that Buitron takes the description of the natural subject matter to be entirely obvious from the six accompanying photographs, based on every reader's ordinary knowledge of human anatomy.

The remainder of Buitron's preliminary description includes descriptive statements about formal qualities, and expression,

⁴"Natural subject matter" is used here as Panofsky uses the expression to refer to the identification of forms as representations of objects in nature. Erwin Panofsky, "Introductory," in Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance (New York: Harper and Row, 1939), p. 5.

as well as implicit references to natural subject matter. Descriptions of formal qualities are regularly conjoined with subject matter statements, e.g., "...the torso is modelled with great emphasis..." or "...there is a lack of organic unity in the way the head is set on neck and shoulders and in the construction of hips and thighs." In such statements the representational references, although implying natural subject matter, are used also to locate the formal qualities being described.

Descriptions of expression are also mixed with natural subject matter and formal description, e.g., "The stance curves strongly into an exaggerated swagger," and "...the face is long and thin, with narrow, shadowed eyes and furrowed brow which impart to it a frowning, almost aggressive expression." Once again since no support is given for the expressive descriptions, it is assumed that they are readily observable in the photographs based on ordinary experience.⁵ We are familiar with the appearance of facial features of persons acting aggressively, and recognize that configuration of forms in the features of the bronze statuette.

⁵Panofsky suggests that to identify expressional subject matter requires "a certain sensitivity, but this sensitivity is still part of...practical experience, that is, of...every-day familiarity with objects and events." Panofsky, pp. 3-4.

Buitron goes on to make the same sorts of descriptive statements about other ancient and Renaissance works representing Alexander and Hercules. Based on comparisons among her observations she proposes that the Fogg bronze is not an ancient Alexander but a Renaissance representation of a Herculean inspired ruler. In this article, as is so often the case with art-historical writings, description is put to service in building a case for some other art-historical claim, in this instance, an attribution.

Descriptive claims of essential art-historical research are publicly testable. They are made by observation of art works--by means of measurement or appeal to ordinary experience. They can be judged accurate or inaccurate by checking the descriptions against observations of the work of art--that judgment requiring no argumentation or evidence outside the work save measurement instruments and ordinary experience.

The height description of the Fogg bronze can be readily tested by simple, standard measurement. Any expert in X-ray analysis should be able to run a check on the accuracy of the measurement set forth in Buitron's metal composition description. Anyone should be able to recognize the exposed metal areas which Buitron notes in her description of the condition of the piece. Such descriptions of size, material, and condition are empirically-

verifiable claims about which there is likely to be little disagreement.

Descriptions of natural subject matter, expression, and formal qualities are also open to public test. Buitron shows her confidence in public agreement with her implicit description of the natural subject matter by presuming agreement out of hand. Her descriptions of expression are more developed. She takes care to point to those features which carry the expression, to ensure that the reader will notice subtleties. To test Buitron's expression descriptions one need only turn to the photographs⁶, look where she directs, and verify the familiarity of the expressive form.

As regards formal qualities, Buitron's descriptions provide few clear-cut cases. Her descriptions of formal qualities are so tied up with representational, expressive, and even value statements that they are difficult to isolate for criticism. Those formal descriptive claims which can be isolated are, like natural subject matter and expressive descriptions, testable by observation of the photographs accompanying the article. It is not

⁶One must here assume that the photographs are accurate representations of the work and that the description could just as well be confirmed by observation of the work of art itself.

difficult to observe whether the stance curves, whether muscles are heavily modelled, or whether the spinal column is marked by a deep furrow.

Other art-historical claims can be stated in such a way as to be confused with descriptive claims. But at least for the purposes of this study they can be distinguished by the test of public verifiability based on measurement and ordinary experience. Two examples of such pseudo-descriptive claims were mentioned in the Buitron analysis. First, the removal of the patina revealed "metallic areas exposed by a previous extensive mechanical cleaning." It is the exposed metal which can be observed. To confirm the cause of the exposed areas as resulting from a long-past cleaning requires more than observation of the piece, e.g., knowledge of cleaning techniques and their effects on bronze as evidenced at some later point in time. A second example of a claim which might be confused with a descriptive one is the claim that "there is a lack of organic unity in the way the head is set on neck and shoulders and in the construction of hips and thighs." The way the head is set on neck and shoulders is visible in the work, as is the construction of hips and thighs, but the conclusion that these features ought be interpreted as an instance of lack of organic unity, again requires, if not evidence outside the work, then argument about what constitutes criteria for organic unity.

At any rate a claim about organic unity is not verifiable by observation of the work requiring only measurement or every-day experience, and thus does not qualify as a case of description as defined here.

A descriptive claim, though judged to be accurate by public test, can change as the public test changes. A description of the material of a statuette as bronze might be judged quite accurate at one time and rejected as insufficiently precise at another time. More changeable than the test itself is the choice of the tests which are to be applied or the observations to be made. Thus no set of claims set forth as a description will suffice for all time. Witness the increase in formal description in the last century.⁷ Changes in ordinary experience can also affect the sorts of descriptions made.⁸ A descriptive claim is one which is made by observation of art works by means of measurement or ordinary experience, and which can be judged accurate or inaccurate by public test. Sets of descriptions change with changes in the tests

⁷ It would never have occurred to art viewers of 500 years ago to observe and note down the formal qualities described by Woelfflin.

⁸ Knowledge of the appearance of a rhinoceros is part of ordinary experience in this culture, but was not, in eighth-century England. A statement about a work as representing a rhinoceros would be a simple matter of description today but would have required other evidence outside the work in eighth-century England.

applied, changes in expectations for art works, and changes in the ordinary experience of viewers.

ATTRIBUTION

Attribution here refers to the activities involved in establishing specific factual claims about particular art-historical events, i. e., establishing claims about authorship, date, provenance, technique, and function. As has been previously noted, descriptive claims are established through observation of individual works. Attributive claims identify aspects not solely of particular art works but of aspects of art-historical events. Doing attribution is answering questions such as the following about particular art-historical events: 1) who produced the work which was the culmination of the art-historical event?--authorship; 2) when did the event occur?--date; 3) where did it occur?--provenance; 4) how did the execution of the work take place?--technique; and 5) for what purpose was the work executed?--function.

Much of the information used in making attributions is provided for the art historian by the philologist, the connoisseur, and the antiquarian. The antiquarian's primary concern is for building a complete, systematic, consistently-entered catalogue of works by a certain artist or school or within a certain collec-

tion.⁹ The simple, though thoroughly necessary descriptive tasks involved in making such a catalogue include taking the physical dimensions of each work, noting the materials used, and describing briefly the formal qualities and natural subject matter of the work. Antiquarians may also indicate in their listing the artist, date, provenance, technique, and function of a work of art. These latter claims are attributive, i. e., factual claims about particular art-historical events. Since the art-historical events centering around the production of a particular art work are events in the past, those events, unlike the art work produced, cannot be described through observation. Instead, before attributive claims identifying aspects of art-historical events can be made, those art-historical events must be reconstructed with the aid of evidence in the present. The attributive claims of the antiquarian are among those which the art historian doing essential research is concerned with confirming or denying.

Philologists are concerned with examining the literary documents which are used to support attributive claims. The philological method according to Venturi consists of "...verifying

⁹The need for antiquarian cataloguing, as one might well imagine, increased in connection with large movements of art works such as Lord Elgin's removal of the Acropolis marbles (see L. Venturi in History of Art Criticism) and the assembling of vast art collections by American tycoons (see J. Ackerman in Art and Archeology).

the source of evidence and decomposing it: that is to say, before accepting evidence, one tries to determine upon what it is founded, and then decomposes this source into its separate sources."¹⁰

Erwin Panofsky exhibits a masterful use of philological method in an article in which he meticulously evaluates the documents relating to the Arnolfini Portrait.¹¹ His philological research confirms the sometimes debated attribution of the famous London double-portrait as the authentic Arnolfini Portrait. At least one clearly-documented attribution is necessary before an art historian can establish any other attributions by other methods. He must have one undebated attribution supported by literary documentation, that attribution then being used as a reference point with which unidentified works can be related.

The connoisseur is often characterized as an art historian with "a good eye." This description is somehow intended to name that particular ability the connoisseur has to make accurate attributions. The connoisseur's "good eye" is aided by his knowledge of style change (morphology), knowledge of conventions, knowledge of the life of the artist, and a good deal of comparison

¹⁰Lionello Venturi, History of Art Criticism, trans. by Charles Marriott (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1936), p. 213.

¹¹Erwin Panofsky, "Jan van Eyck's 'Arnolfini' Portrait," Burlington Magazine, LXIV (1934), pp. 117-127.

of works by an individual artist, and above all his intimacy with a particular period, or the corpus of a particular artist. With the aid of morphology the connoisseur is able to date a work by placing the particular qualities of its form on a continuum of changing formal qualities the dates of which are already established. Style analysis sometimes also includes a great deal more than the study of changing forms, e. g., the history of race, nationality, and personality,¹² iconography, and subject matter, depending on the sense of "style" used by the connoisseur. Knowledge of the date of introduction of certain visual conventions can be used by a connoisseur in zeroing in on his attribution. Likewise, sometimes seemingly incidental biographical information about an artist can be used to date a work.¹³ Perhaps the real secret of the connoisseur's "good eye" lies in his familiarity with a particular body of work. By continually looking and re-looking at those art works the connoisseur develops skill at what Venturi

¹²Heinrich Wölfflin.

¹³Max J. Friedlaender, On Art and Connoisseurship, trans. by Francis Borenius (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, publishers, 1932), p. 186. Friedlaender notes the use of oak for paintings in the Netherlands instead of the lime wood of S. Germany. This information along with the dates when Dürer was known to have traveled to the Netherlands is instrumental in narrowing in on the specific dates of particular Dürer paintings.

calls "an instinctive spiritual activity,"¹⁴--the confidence bred only by intimacy which supports an initial response until that hypothesis can be investigated and a case built for the attribution.

The first art historian who attempted to rationalize the methods of attribution of art works was a nineteenth-century Italian connoisseur, Giovanni Morelli. In Italian Painters: Critical Studies of Their Works, Morelli established and revised attributions based on systematic comparisons of artists' treatment of such minor details of a painting as hands, noses, and ears. Venturi suggests that although Morelli claimed to be using the empirical methods of science (establishing laws of attribution) that, in fact, he was able to accomplish what he did because of a "lively intuition."¹⁵ Max Friedlaender reaches a similar conclusion claiming that Morelli used his method to supply evidence for conclusions he had reached intuitively.¹⁶ Be that as it may, Morelli's careful analysis and attempts to support conclusions with evidence, brought a new rigor to the business of attribution in the history of art.

One of Morelli's students, Bernard Berenson, building on

¹⁴Venturi, p. 234.

¹⁵Venturi, p. 234.

¹⁶Friedlaender, p. 167.

Morelli's beginnings, became the leading twentieth century connoisseur of fifteenth and sixteenth century Italian painting. Richard Offner, also working in the Morellian tradition, has made major contributions to connoisseurship in the area of fourteenth-century Italian painting. More recently the tradition of Italian connoisseurship has been furthered by the work of the American art historian, Millard Meiss. Another paradigm twentieth-century connoisseur is Max J. Friedlaender who is best known for his major work, Early Netherlandish Painting.¹⁷

An analysis of two short attribution articles by Max Friedlaender and Millard Meiss should serve to exemplify two different approaches to attribution and also three different conceptions of truth underlying the attributions asserted. Friedlaender's attributions are claims about authorship. Meiss' attributions are assertions about function and provenance.

Let us consider first a piece on Jan van Eyck appearing in Friedlaender's Van Eyck to Breugel.¹⁸ The major point of Friedlaender's chapter is to attribute the dominant hand in the Ghent altarpiece and the authorship of certain Eyckian prayerbook

¹⁷Early Netherlandish Painting is an extension of Max J. Friedlaender's earlier Van Eyck to Breugel originally published in German in 1916.

¹⁸Max J. Friedlaender, Van Eyck to Breugel, Vol. I, ed. by F. Grossmann, trans. by Marguerite Kay (London: Phaidon, 1956), pp. 6-13.

pages. The establishment of these attributions at the same time lends support to Friedlaender's art-historical judgment that Jan and not his brother Hubert, nor the two van Eycks equally, deserves the highest fame among fifteenth-century Flemish painters. It is, however, Friedlaender making an attribution and not Friedlaender making an art-historical judgment which is under consideration at this point.

Friedlaender begins by claiming that on historical (non-painting) evidence alone there must have been a creative genius called van Eyck. His historical evidence includes first, the paramount importance attributed to the van Eycks by Karl van Mander in his 1600 chronicle of Netherlandish painting, and second, the traditional attribution of the invention of oil painting to Jan van Eyck. Friedlaender contends that the invention should be taken as evidence for "observation, imagination and creative will"¹⁹ rather than as a technical accomplishment, on the grounds that creativity causes inventions to be made and not the other way around. Further attributions depend on there being only one Eyckian genius and Friedlaender suggests early on that there was only one, giving as his evidence the rarity of persons of

¹⁹Friedlaender, Van Eyck to Breugel, p. 7.

genius and the unlikelihood of two appearing in the same family.^{20 43}

In identifying Jan as the dominant artist of the Ghent altarpiece, Friedlaender must contradict an explicit inscription found on the altarpiece itself which proclaims Hubert "unsurpassed" in painting. The best case he has against the inscription is made by raising alternative possible explanations of the inscription ("a pious lie or a modest piece of self-deception") and by noting Hubert's lack of fame--"Hubert's name was almost forgotten." Having only such weak evidence against Hubert's dominance, Friedlaender's major argument provides evidence for Jan's dominance. Friedlaender cites style analysis as evidence for there having been two artists involved in the painting of the Ghent altarpiece. Friedlaender's case is basically this: given 1) that only one of the van Eycks was a genius; 2) that Jan took over from Hubert (inscription used as evidence); and 3) the generalization that no lesser talent painter could achieve "perfect harmony" in a painting, then Jan must have been the dominant artist of the Ghent altarpiece, for we know Jan was capable of genius (Arnolfini Double Portrait used as evidence) and we can see that the Ghent altarpiece does exhibit a perfect harmony of means and ends (judgment based on descriptive observations).

²⁰"The law of averages" (Van Eyck to Breugel, p. 7) as Friedlaender puts it is rather weak evidence for the elimination of the possibility of two Eyckian geniuses.

Friedlaender wants to show further that it was Jan and not Hubert van Eyck who painted certain Eyckian pages of "unparalleled illusion" in a Turin book of hours. First, the date of the pages²¹ corresponds roughly to a time period when Jan van Eyck is known to have been working as a manuscript illuminator. Second, the man depicted on one page was the brother of a man for whom Jan worked. To reinforce his case for Jan and not Hubert's authorship, Friedlaender notes also that Hubert "was [not] spoken of as a book illuminator." Friedlaender not only develops his own case for Jan's authorship but also argues for his attribution over that of another art historian, Hulin, who attributed the pages in question to Hubert. In this argument Friedlaender reveals his pragmatic standards for attribution. He argues that his attribution is more satisfying than Hulin's in attempting to trace the development of Jan's work.

In another volume Friedlaender is quite explicit about his pragmatist assumptions about the truth of attributive claims.

A false verdict shows itself to be sterile.
 With the true something could be done, it was
 possible to build on it, and usually it was
 subsequently confirmed by knowledge gained
 along other paths, and from a different quarter.²²

²¹Established by identifying and dating the event depicted on one of the pages.

²²Friedlaender, On Art and Connoisseurship, p. 177.

Thus it seems that Friedlaender would have us believe that his attribution is true not solely because of the logic of his reasoning and the strength of his evidence, but also because his attribution works--it is useful to the historian.

We will find a somewhat different conception of truth of attribution exemplified in a much more recent pair of articles by Millard Meiss.²³

In his first article on two recently emerged Filippino Lippi panels, Meiss' arguments are focused on establishing the two panels (known as the Simon panels) as those Vasari recorded in a Lucca church on either side of a sculptural Saint Anthony--panels long referred to as lost. Before attacking these primary attributions of provenance and function directly, Meiss describes the condition of the panels, interprets their subject matter, and makes a date attribution. All three conclusions are called upon later to aid in the major attributions.

Regarding the condition, Meiss begins by simply describing the present state of deterioration in various areas of the panels. He further claims that the present high rectangular format of both panels is not significantly different from the original format, on

²³Millard Meiss, "A New Monumental Painting by Filippino Lippi," Art Bulletin, LV, No. 4 (1973), pp. 479-493, and Millard Meiss, "Once Again Filippino's Panels from San Ponziano, Lucca," Art Bulletin, LVI, No. 1 (1974), pp. 10-11.

compositional grounds.

The subject matter he establishes by iconographic interpretation. He identifies three of the four saints by means of their conventional, symbolic attributes--a sword for Saint Paul, a birch for Saint Benedict, and a tooth-extracting plier for Saint Apollonia.

The date of the panels is established through stylistic analysis of the works of Filippino and by reference to biographical and historical information about Filippino and his influences. First, Meiss divides Filippino's life work into three major stylistic groups, divided by major breaks in his composition and his use of color. The changes are explained by reference to growing maturity and shifting influences. The first stylistic stage has compositional similarities to the works of Fra Filippo, Filippino's father, and to Botticelli, Filippino's early master. Later works show the influences of Flemish artists whose work had recently arrived in Florence (where Filippino could have studied it). The influence specifically of Memling is established by noting obvious extracts, from a Memling known to have been in Florence, found in landscape sections of the Simon panels. The specific date of 1483 is reached by situating the Simon panels on a stylistic continuum of all Filippino's works and particularly between two altarpieces--one painted in 1482, the other, in 1484.

With original format, subject matter, and date established, Meiss moves to the primary attributions of function, i.e., as flanking panels of a tabernacle, and provenance, i.e., painted for a church in Lucca (the panels referred to by Vasari). Meiss begins by identifying the fourth saint as Saint Zenobious, by comparing the Filippino saint with other known representations of Zenobious. This done, Meiss has some evidence for his site attribution since all four depicted saints are associated with the city of Lucca. Meiss next tries to make a case for the function of the panels as side panels of a tabernacle. He cites as evidence other high rectangular panels used for this function and strengthens his case by arguing against a rival suggestion--that the panels were sawn from an altarpiece. Meiss claims that an altarpiece usually has a Madonna for its central panel and that this panel would be valued over the side panels, and therefore more likely to be preserved. Yet no unidentified Filippino Madonna exists. He further proposes that the subject matter contradicts the altarpiece-alternative for the Simon saints are "self-absorbed," an attitude not "sufficiently attentive" to a central Madonna panel.

The next piece of evidence, the record written by Vasari within a hundred years of the painting of the panels, proves both supportive and problematic to Meiss' attribution. Vasari documents the existence of panels by Filippino accompanying a

sculptural Saint Anthony in the Olivetan church in Lucca. Thus there is evidence for Filippino paintings in Lucca, but are the Simon panels the ones to which Vasari refers? For many years those mentioned by Vasari have been assumed to be lost works. Two puzzles complicate Meiss' attribution. First, why was the Saint Anthony completed twenty years after the side panels? Second, why does the Simon Benedict wear a black habit, in accordance with Benedictine tradition, but contrary to the Olivetan traditional white habit (and yet is located in an Olivetan church)? Meiss cites some monastic history which together with his 1483 dating give rise to a hypothesis which explains away both difficulties. The history Meiss cites is a relocation of the Olivetan order in a previously Benedictine church in Lucca in 1488. If Filippino did paint the Simon panels for the Lucca church in 1483, Saint Benedict would appropriately have been clad in black. With the arrival of the Olivetans the new monastic order may have retained the side panels but replaced whatever statue filled the niche between them with a saint more important to the order, specifically, Saint Anthony. This hypothesis would thus explain the puzzle of the Benedictine color of habit in an Olivetan church as well as the late execution of the Saint Anthony statue.

From the last of his arguments, one might conclude that Meiss holds a coherence conception of the nature of truth. The

coherence theory which might be used to bind Meiss' last argument presumes that a statement is true if it coheres with all the other statements which are taken to be true within a system. Meiss' statement of attribution is not only compatible with other statements about Filippino's work and times but also provides a means whereby other statements about Filippino's work and times, previously taken to be prima facie incompatible, can be seen as compatible.

A reading of Meiss' second article on the Simon panels, however, forces reconsideration of his assumptions about the truth. The second article reveals him not as presuming coherence among statements as a standard of truth, but presuming that true statements correspond to things in the world. Anyone holding a coherence conception of truth is not likely to readily shed all doubt about the truth of any statements with the exception of statements within closed systems. According to coherence theory a statement can only be known to be true with certainty if it coheres with all other true statements in a system. In open systems certainty cannot be reached since a complete set of all true statements is not attainable.²⁴ Yet, with the identification of an ownership seal on the back of the Simon panels, Meiss sees

²⁴Alan White, Truth (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1970), p. 110.

himself as moving beyond a high degree of probability to certainty.

He claims that his attribution is thus shown to be "established beyond doubt." This seeming inconsistency (between coherence and correspondence conceptions of truth) in Meiss' thinking can be shown to be consistent however. Meiss does not claim certainty in his first article. He states that "all the evidence points to" his attribution. It is only in the second article that he claims to have reached certainty with the analysis of additional, conclusive evidence. It would be perfectly consistent for Meiss to hold that his first article is an argument for the acceptance of a well-reasoned hypothesis, while his second article, by way of certain compelling facts, is a proof of the truth of his attribution. One can quite consistently employ coherence as a standard for reasonableness and, at the same time, hold correspondence with fact as a standard for the truth.

Whereas with descriptive claims in art-historical writing those descriptions are supported solely by observation of works of art, a more complex case must be built to establish attributive claims. In the case of art-historical writings on attribution, evidence outside the work must be marshalled and arguments must be offered to reconstruct the art-historical event in question so that specific aspects of the event (authorship, date, provenance, technique, or function) can be identified.

The notion of fact has been used at several points in the preceding analysis of essential research in art history. The activities of essential research are described at the outset as those activities involved in establishing factual claims about particular works of art. Neither historians nor philosophers are unanimous in their conclusions about what it is that the word "fact" names. There are those who hold that facts are identical with things in the world--events, situations, objects, states of being, etc. Leopold von Ranke, the nineteenth-century German historian, seems to have held such a view. He proposed that the job of the historian is "to show what actually happened (wie es eigentlich gewesen)."²⁵ He refers a bit later to the supreme law of the writing of history as "the strict presentation of the facts."²⁶ It would seem that for von Ranke the facts are the events of the past.

Representing an opposing conception of the notion of fact are those who hold that facts are human constructs or ideas. The modern historian, Edward Hallett Carr clearly expounds such a view when he states that...

²⁵Leopold von Ranke, "The Ideal of Universal History," in The Varieties of History, rev. ed. by Fritz Stern (New York: Meridian, 1972), p. 57 [originally published in 1885].

²⁶von Ranke, p. 57.

The belief in a hard core of historical facts existing objectively and independently of the interpretations of the historian is a preposterous fallacy.²⁷

Carr's view reflects that of his predecessor Carl L. Becker, who wrote:

Where are these facts? They are, as I said before, in his mind, or in somebody's mind, or they are nowhere.²⁸

Becker makes a classic idealist claim when he states that there would cease to be a fact of Lincoln's assassination "if there were now no one in the world who could make any meaning out of the patterned records of sources."²⁹ While Becker exemplifies one extreme position on the nature of fact, a position dichotomous with that of some other historians, e. g., von Ranke, he has also provided a means of dealing intelligibly with the dichotomy. He does so when he says of facts that "I have been talking about words instead of things."³⁰ Although disagreement continues regarding the ontological nature of the referents of the word "facts,"

²⁷Edward Hallett Carr, What is History? (New York: Random House, 1961), p. 10.

²⁸Carl L. Becker, "What are Historical Facts?" in The Philosophy of History in our Time, ed. by Hans Meyerhoff (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1959), p. 125 [originally published in 1955].

²⁹Becker, p. 126.

³⁰Becker, p. 121.

the word can still be used for effective communication. In ordinary language a speaker can use the word "fact" and be clearly understood by his audience even if neither the speaker nor his audience is aware of the speaker's understanding of the nature of fact.

"Facts" names the basic and indispensable ingredients of the historian's research. Regardless of whether the ontological status of those ingredients is taken to be mental, material, or otherwise, one can ordinarily distinguish statements about facts from other sorts of statements.

Of all the claims of art historians it is their essential research claims, i. e., descriptions and attributions, which are most likely to be referred to as statements about facts. Descriptive statements, based on testable observations, such as "the statuette is made of bronze," or "the statuette represents a male nude," are clearly both factual claims. "It is a fact that" makes sense preceding such attributive statements as "the Mona Lisa was painted by Leonardo da Vinci," or "Filippino Lippi painted the Simon panels in 1483." One is less likely to state that interpretations are matters of fact. One would not so comfortably say "it is a fact that Carravaggio's Saint Matthew represents the saint as a Jew-Philosopher-Apostle synthesis." This is also the case with art-historical explanations. "Kunstwollen explains style change"

is not so likely to be understood as a factual claim, as, as an hypothesis. Essential research claims (attributions and descriptions) would more often be offered as examples of statements about art-historical facts than would be cases of either interpretation or explanation.

Art historians' scholarly writings exhibit two quite distinct relationships to factual claims. Of one type are those for whom the establishment of factual claims is a sufficient goal, in itself, for their research. For a second sort of art historian, factual claims, to be established or accepted at the outset of study, are taken as data to be used toward other historical ends, e.g., interpretation or explanation. Art historians engaged in essential research activities are historians of the first type. Their primary goal is to establish factual claims. Description relies solely on observation based on measurement requiring only ordinary experience, while other sorts of art-historical activities are often used to help art historians make their cases for attribution. Meiss, for example, made an iconographic interpretation of the conventional meaning of the Simon panels to conclude that the four figures represented four particular saints. His interpretation, however, was necessary evidence for his factual claim about the original function and site of the panels. Meiss appealed to an explanatory generalization from art theory to help make his

case for his factual claim about the date of the panels. In order to attribute the date of the panels essentially by style analysis, Meiss had to assume the explanatory generalization that works executed close together in time have strong stylistic similarities. When making his case for a single Eyckian genius, Friedlaender also relied on implied explanatory generalizations about the creative process, i. e., that observation, imagination, and creative will are the causes of technical invention in art.

It is when the art historian is primarily involved in the activity of description or attribution that his primary goal is the establishment of a case for an assertion about those essential ingredients of art-historical research called facts.

A real distinction is being made when some claims are called factual as opposed to interpretive, or explanatory. Whereas "fact" can be clearly understood in ordinary language without knowledge either by the speaker or by his audience of the speaker's conception of the nature of fact, the speaker's assumptions about appropriate tests for fact, are important for understanding his claims, and the case he offers in support of his claims.

Evaluation criteria (tests of fact) appropriate to art-historical activities vary with the type of activity in question, e. g., an interpretation can be judged to be a good one on quite different grounds than might be used to evaluate a description,

attribution, or explanation. Likewise the evaluation criteria appropriate to writings resulting from a single art-historical activity (e.g., attributions) can vary with the presumptions about the appropriate tests of fact which underlie those writings. Art-historical descriptive claims presume a naive test for fact, i.e., if a descriptive claim takes note of something publicly observable then that claim is taken to have asserted a true fact. We have seen that at least three different conceptions of truth can underlie attribution claims, i.e., pragmatist, coherence, and correspondence theories of truth. Each of these has tests for fact which are appropriate to it.

A conclusion such as "Leonardo painted the Mona Lisa," though apparently expressing only one factual claim might indeed be used to make several quite different assertions depending on the conceptions of fact presumed by the person making the statement. The statement made by a pragmatist might be used to mean 1) that such an attribution is useful in coming to grips with Leonardo's oeuvre. As used by someone holding a coherence conception of truth the statement might be intended to mean 2) that that attribution coheres with all statements taken to be true about Leonardo, his work, and his times, i.e., that the statement fits within a system. Finally, the same statement used by someone presuming correspondence as a criterion of truth might be intended

to mean 3) that a correspondence can be demonstrated between the claim and an item in the world. The arguments and evidence marshalled in support of the three different claims, intended to be expressed by the same grammatical statement, differ in accordance with the presumptions about truth which underlie the three factual claims. Different tests of fact are also appropriate to different conceptions of truth. Arguments for the utility of the attribution for art historians would lend support to the first claim, i. e., utility is held to be an appropriate test for some factual claims. Evidence about statements in a system and argument about the coherence of those statements lend support to the second claim, i. e., coherence is held to be an appropriate test for some factual claims. Evidence about items in the world and arguments about the correspondence between the attribution statement and those items lend support to the third factual claim, i. e., correspondence is held to be an appropriate test for some factual claims. Evidence might be taken to be irrelevant and reasoning taken to be fallacious by one who is unaware of alternative tests for facts which are appropriate to different conceptions of truth which underlie factual claims.

To fully understand or to fruitfully debate some essential research assertions might require explicating the particular meanings intended to be expressed through particular factual

claims. Buitron's descriptive claims depend entirely on common observation. There is no reason to accept her descriptions as more accurate if a reader's own observations of the work differ from those noted by Buitron. Friedlaender's attributive assertion is a pragmatic one, i. e., if a different (equally well-founded) attribution is seen to be more useful in understanding the van Eycks' development, then the new attribution should replace Friedlaender's. In the case of Millard Meiss' articles, in the first article Meiss' attributive claim (about the original function and site of the Simon panels) is supported in accordance with a coherence theory. Meiss' case stands or falls on the power of argument and weight of his evidence for coherence. Any statement taken to be true about Filippino, his work, or his times which appears to be incompatible with Meiss' conclusion would have to be shown to be consistent with this conclusion if that conclusion is to remain a tenable factual claim. In this second article, Meiss sees the same attribution confirmed by a demonstrated correspondence between his factual claim and items in the world (ownership seals). To refute the factual claim of the second article would require an attack not on Meiss' assertions about statements and their coherence but an attack on the correspondence of his physical evidence and the reasonableness of his arguments for a correspondence between his evidence and his attribution statement.

Although essential research in art history, description and attribution, aims at the establishment of factual claims about specific aspects of particular art-historical events, those factual claims may be very different sorts of assertions depending on the presumptions held by the art historians making those claims.

INTERPRETATION

Art historians focus their inquiries on individual art-historical events in several different ways. Description and attribution have already been discussed as research activities establishing essential factual claims. Art historians also focus their inquiries on individual art-historical events when they interpret works of art.

Art historians talking about their work use "interpretation" ambiguously. At least three distinct senses of the word are fairly common. The first sense, as expressed in "well, that's just your interpretation of the work," is a usage not specifically tied to art history. "Interpretation" in this sense is used synonymously with "opinion." Another ordinary use of the word is exemplified in the following question, "Are you referring to a psycho-analytic or a Marxist interpretation of the work?" This sense of "interpretation" is common in art-historical talk. "Interpretation" here might be translated roughly as "an account

according to a doctrine or theories of... (Marx or psycho-analysis)."

A third sense of "interpretation" is used in the statement, "My interpretation of the work is that it is a statement about power."

In a third sense, then, "interpretation" can be taken to refer to an assertion about the unique content of a particular work.

The issue of objectivity underlies the first, opinion-sense of interpretation. Consideration of what it might mean for an art-historical writing to be called objective is taken up in the analysis of art-historical interpretation, even though objectivity is an important issue for the evaluation of all art-historical writings, i. e., essential research, explanation, or interpretation. The second, account-sense of interpretation is considered in conjunction with the activities of explanation since such accounting in accordance with a doctrine or theory is directed at understanding common qualities among art-historical events rather than at understanding the unique content of individual art-historical events. It is the third, content-sense of interpretation that is the major activity of art history which is the focus of this chapter. "Content" is used here to refer to the meaning which is contained in a work of art.¹

¹See John Hospers, "Meaning," in Problems in Aesthetics, ed. by Morris Weitz (New York: Macmillan, 1959), pp. 242-245 [originally published in 1946].

In his role as interpreter of art works, the art historian bears some resemblance to the art critic. E. B. Feldman describes the business of art criticism as engaging art in dialogue.² In this dialogue one can ask questions of the artist and patron, but also of the culture-at-large and the audience of the work. The content of the art work is not solely determined by the relationship of artist to art object but involves the relationship of the audience to the art object as well.

Both the transmitter and the receiver need the right degree of guidance by an array of alternatives within which the choice can be expressive.³

Thus, according to E. H. Gombrich, to fully interpret the art-historical event we must take into account the cultural expectations which affect the alternatives which the artist is able to recognize for his work and the response the audience will be able to have toward the work. The art historian usually limits his study of audience response to the responses which were possible at the time the work was produced, while art critics sometimes consider the possibility that a later audience might contribute to the meaning

²Edmund Burke Feldman, "Engaging Art in Dialogue," in Concepts in Art Education, ed. by George Pappas (New York: Macmillan, 1970), pp. 352-359 [originally published in 1967].

³E. H. Gombrich, "Expression and Communication," in Meditations on a Hobby Horse and Other Essays on the Theory of Art (New York: Phaidon, 1963), p. 68.

of a work.⁴ Feldman suggests that the meaning of a work is thus timeless. For art historians, on the other hand, because of the very nature of any historical discipline, interpretation is not timeless but inextricably bound up with the notion of time. The art historian may use documents which came into existence only after the execution of a work in order to help him understand that work's content. He also relies on his own present-day observations of the work. But as an historian doing interpretation his concern is directed toward only that meaning contained in the work which was available to that work's contemporary audience.

The availability of content to an art work's contemporary audience not only delimits that content with which the art historian is concerned, but also is a useful notion in understanding the role artists' intentions play in defining the content of their works. An artist's intention is only important for an interpretation if that intention is carried through in the work. Wimsatt

⁴Geoffrey Berry writing for The American Scholar writes: "The beholder is considered an active participant in the creative process itself, and the creative process is seen to extend far beyond the point in time in which the painter applies the final stroke to the artifact."

Geoffrey N. Berry, "Criticism as Exploration," The American Scholar, XXXVI, No. 4 (Autumn 1967), p. 653.

and Beardsley point out that artists can make their intentions known and yet fail to fulfill those intentions.⁵ Gombrich, in an article criticizing psycho-analytic interpretations of art works, claims that such very private and personal intentions, as those attributed to Leonardo by Freud, even if verifiable, are not important to the public meaning of Leonardo's work.⁶ Once again, it is generally only intentions made manifest publicly in a work which are of interest to the art historian interpreting content. To say of an intention that it is public is not to say that it is readily observable by means of ordinary experience. To discover an intention might require a great deal of research using evidence outside the work. But in the end, an intention is only important for interpretation if it sheds light on the content of a work of art, not for its own sake.

Interpretations of content fall generally into two categories, namely, those which rely heavily on representation as the embodiment of or evidence for content, and those which depend more

⁵William K. Wimsatt, Jr. and Monroe C. Beardsley, "The Artist's Intention," in Philosophy Looks at the Arts, ed. by Joseph Margolis (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962), pp. 91-105 [originally published in 1954].

⁶E. H. Gombrich, "Psycho-Analysis and the History of Art," in Meditations on a Hobby Horse and Other Essays on the Theory of Art (New York: Phaidon, 1963), pp. 30-44 [originally presented in 1953].

directly on form as the manifestation of content in a work of art. Interpretations of the first sort are here referred to as iconographical interpretations, while the second sort are called formal interpretations.

ICONOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION

Certain sorts of representational aspects of art works have already been discussed in relation to the essential art-historical activity of description. Erwin Panofsky has distinguished identification of natural and expressional subject matter from other sorts of representation in works of art.⁷ Recognizing natural subject matter requires only an ability to recognize shapes and line configurations as representations of natural objects. To do this requires only ordinary acquaintance with the world of objects and with ways that formal relationships can be used in art to represent those objects. Panofsky uses "expressional" meaning to refer to the mood, atmosphere, or character of the natural objects in a work, for example, the atmosphere of an interior or the character of a gesture. Coming to understand the expressional subject matter of a work requires an ability

⁷Erwin Panofsky, "Introductory," in Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 5 [originally published by Oxford University Press, 1939].

to empathize--to project oneself into the situation of the work of art. For example, one can come to understand the expressional quality of a depicted gesture by imagining oneself making that gesture. Projecting oneself into an interior and imagining one's feelings within that room helps one to come to understand the atmosphere of the interior. Thus the natural and expressional subject matter of art works are representational aspects open to observation and description based on ordinary experience and do not require interpretation.

Joseph Margolis has written an article aimed at distinguishing description and interpretation as regards art works. In it he writes:

"Describing" suggests a stable, public, relatively well-defined object available for inspection; the effort of the describer calls for no special notice; differences in description are reconciled by further examination of the object or the point of view from which it is described. "Interpreting," on the other hand, suggests a touch of virtuosity, an element of performance, a shift from a stable object whose properties, however complex, are simply enumerable to an object whose properties pose something of a puzzle or a challenge--some inventive use of the materials present, on the added contribution of the interpreter, and on a certain openness toward possible alternative interpretations.⁸

⁸Joseph Margolis, "Describing and Interpreting Works of Art," in Contemporary Studies in Aesthetics, ed. by Francis J. Coleman (New York: McGraw Hill, 1968), p. 180 [original version published in 1961].

Margolis sees interpretation as an activity different from description not only as regards the object of the activity but also the nature of the activity. The involvement of the interpreter with the work of art is more complex and less direct than the involvement of the describer with the work. The interpreter hypothesizes about the content of the work and uses evidence in the work to test his hypothesis.

Interpreting the meaning of a work of art for an iconographer requires more than description of the object alone for "...the iconographer is after what the artist and his patrons meant to say."⁹ Although the iconographer's aim is to understand the content of a work; that content is not solely of the art object, but rather that content is of the art-historical event. To understand that content requires an understanding of the intentions of artists (those which are manifest in the work), the expectations of patrons (contemporary audience), and other relevant information external to the art object, as well as an understanding of that which is available, through simple observation, within the work.

A knowledge of conventions is important external evidence used in iconographic interpretation. Very often the literary

⁹James S. Ackerman with Rhys Carpenter, Art and Archeology (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1963), p. 214.

research of the philologist is useful to the art historian attempting to interpret an artistic convention whose once generally accepted meaning is no longer understood. Whole stories or allegories can be "read" in an art work by translating the conventions depicted into verbal narration. Imagine a painting of an interior with a window; on the window sill stands a glass vessel filled with clear water through which sunlight shines; seated in the room is a young lady reading a book. The conventional meaning of such a representation can be interpreted only with the knowledge that the depiction of a young lady seated and reading, especially in Northern Renaissance painting, was very often intended to represent the Virgin Mary reading her prayerbook. The glass vessel pierced with sunlight is known to have been used regularly to symbolize the immaculate conception of the Virgin. The conventional meaning of a work can only be interpreted with the knowledge of commonly accepted meanings attached to particular representations at the time the work was done.

Conventions can vary a great deal in their scope. A goodly proportion of all of Western painting depends for much of its conventional meaning on Christian themes. On the other hand, conventional themes are sometimes restricted to a much more limited context. Such a limited context is the period in Northern Renaissance painting after a female saint claimed to have had a

vision of the nativity in which the Christ child lay directly on the bare ground. For a time after the vision, artists altered their representations of the nativity to coincide with the saint's vision. Conventions can be even more restricted--sometimes limited to the work of one artist. The bull in Picasso's painting owes much of its conventional meaning to general cultural associations with the bull, but some of that meaning can only be understood in terms of Picasso's own particular and repeated depiction of the bull in his own work. Thus the interpretation of conventions can range from interpretation of very general conventions common to an entire culture to conventions limited to the oeuvre of one artist.

Aby Warburg, for whom the Warburg Institute was named, was an art historian who specialized in interpretation. The most famous advocate of interpretation of meaning in the visual arts is, of course, Erwin Panofsky, who wrote a book of that title, Meaning in the Visual Arts. In Studies in Iconology, Panofsky presents not only cases of iconological studies, but also his theories of interpretation.

The following analysis of one art historian's interpretation, serves to exemplify iconographic-interpretive claims, that is, claims about the content embodied in the representational aspects of particular art works. But more than that, by setting forth the evidence marshalled and the arguments offered by the art

historian, the analysis serves also to exemplify the sort of case which can be offered in support of iconographic-interpretive claims. This analysis, then, is important to later evaluative considerations, i. e., what grounds are appropriate to judgments of the worth of iconographic interpretations.

Irving Lavin's recent article on the two Caravaggio St. Matthews¹⁰ is a fine example of iconographic interpretation. In this article Lavin proposes a sophisticated interpretation of the meaning of Caravaggio's first St. Matthew,¹¹ a painting rejected by those who commissioned it, requiring the execution of the second St. Matthew.

What Caravaggio did was to fuse, Ingmar Bergman-like, two distinct yet kindred spirits--Levi the Jew who recognized Christ, and Socrates the wise pagan who recognized his own ignorance; but the whole was more than the sum of the parts, for out of the fusion emerged a third persona, the evangelist Matthew. The additional ingredient is the gospel, the word of God brought by the angel. The angel's act of guiding the writer's hand provides the magic touch, transmuting Judaism and paganism into Christianity.¹²

Replacing the once-accepted interpretation of Caravaggio's earlier works as "innocent genre and mythological pictures"

¹⁰Irving Lavin, "Divine Inspiration in Caravaggio's Two St. Matthews," Art Bulletin, LVI, No. 1 (1974), pp. 59-91.

¹¹Destroyed, formerly in Berlin at the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum.

¹²Lavin, p. 75.

with Lavin's much more sophisticated interpretation helps explain Caravaggio's "extremely refined patronage" and also shows a continuity of profound content between his early and late works.

To support his interpretation Lavin calls not only on evidence in the work but extensive evidence outside it, including evidence of Caravaggio's literary and visual sources, and evidence of the significance of Caravaggio's message to his Renaissance audience. Lavin argues for his explication of a sophisticated content in Caravaggio's work by showing the historical sources which make Caravaggio's message possible and the religious atmosphere which made that message timely.

The older and simpler interpretation of Caravaggio's first St. Matthew was put in doubt by recent research discoveries concerning the date-attribution of the work. Earlier it was assumed that the appearance of St. Matthew in the first version was inconsistent with the depictions of the same saint in Caravaggio's two lateral scenes, because Caravaggio modified his original conception for the later lateral depictions. However, since the chronology is now considered to be reversed, Lavin concludes that...

...Matthew as the author of the gospel was meant to be different from the apostle of the historical narrative; and, furthermore, the rudeness of the figure was not an end in itself, but an alternative of the artist consciously invented or chose in order

to convey some specific idea.¹³

The point of Lavin's article is to set forth and make a case for his interpretation of that "specific idea" which is the meaning of Caravaggio's first St. Matthew.¹⁴

Lavin begins by locating Caravaggio's first St. Matthew at a point in the development of the conventional, visual theme of the seated evangelist. He notes that during the Early Christian period the pose was borrowed from that used in ancient times to represent authors writing. He then traces the seated evangelist theme through its two different traditions. In the Byzantine East the evangelist was represented intellectually as a contemplative man seated alone; in the Latin West, supernaturally, as a man inspired by his symbolic attribute (for St. Matthew, a man). Caravaggio's work reflects the traditional Renaissance synthesis of the intellectual and supernatural by transforming the mysterious symbollic attribute into a realistically depicted angel. Having thus put Caravaggio's work in a Renaissance context, Lavin

¹³Lavin, p. 59.

¹⁴Notice Lavin's use of an attributive claim as an established fact on which his interpretation is based. Lavin calls the attribution of date, a "revelation of recent scholarship... [which] results from the discovery of incontrovertible documentary evidence of the true [underline added] sequence in which Caravaggio executed the pictures..." p. 59.

proceeds to his specific interpretation by examining three anomalies present in Caravaggio's painting, namely, one concerning the text which St. Matthew writes, a second concerning St. Matthew's unusual appearance, and a third concerning the angel's guiding hand.

Caravaggio's depiction of St. Matthew writing a specific text in Hebrew is unprecedented. The simplest explanation offered by Lavin for Matthew's writing in Hebrew rather than Latin or Greek is that Matthew was a Jew, a Jew who, according to St. Jerome, wrote in his native language "to buttress the faith" of his people. Lavin supports this interpretation by noting the importance of "buttressing the faith" for Caravaggio, working as he did during the Counter-Reformation.

Lavin argues similarly for his explanation of the depiction of the specific Hebrew translation of the second rather than the first verse of the gospel of St. Matthew. The second verse is more important because it starts Christ's genealogy proper, thus indicating the dawning of a new age, the Incarnation. Lavin argues for his interpretation by showing how the particular translation depicted stands in support of the Counter-Reformation. It seems that a controversy about the authenticity of the Catholic church's translation from the Hebrew was a threat to the Church during Caravaggio's time. Caravaggio's particular Hebrew

translation, standing as it does in relation to contemporary rival⁷⁴
Catholic and Protestant Hebrew texts, served to confirm the
authenticity of the Catholic Church's official Latin version of the
Bible. Thus in the case both of the language of the text and the
specific verse and translation depicted, Lavin interprets the
meaning of the painting in terms of the religious concerns at issue
in Caravaggio's day.

The second anomaly which Lavin seeks to explain through
his interpretation is the unusual homely appearance of St. Matthew.
He interprets the look of St. Matthew as an explicit reference to
Socrates. He argues for this interpretation in two ways: first, by
giving historical, conventional evidence for this identification;
and, second, by giving evidence for a contemporary attitude about
Socrates which would support Caravaggio's decision to depict
St. Matthew as Socrates. First Lavin points out the consistency
of descriptions of Socrates found in ancient sources with the
appearance of Caravaggio's St. Matthew. He also notes a striking
similarity between the Socrates of Raphael's School of Athens and
Caravaggio's St. Matthew. He shows that the conventional Socrates-
formula was available to Caravaggio by directing the reader's
attention to sixteenth-century published illustrations of the
Socrates-type.

Second, Lavin indicates reasons why Socrates was admired
during the Renaissance as a precursor of Christianity. Parallels

can be seen between the lives of Socrates and Christ, e. g., both were divinely inspired (Socrates heard a demon who told him what to do and not do); both taught orally (Christ through parables, Socrates through dialogues); and both faced unjust deaths. Ironically Socrates gained knowledge through ignorance, i. e., he knew that he knew nothing. Lavin shows that this conception of Socrates was available to Caravaggio by directing the reader's attention to the text and illustrations of an influential sixteenth-century emblem book depicting Socrates according to this conception. The book contains an engraving with a caption which Lavin takes as a manifestation of the Renaissance conception that Socrates' knowledge of his own ignorance lay [in] his foreknowledge of the Trinity." Once again Lavin supports his interpretation by showing the timeliness of the message which he proposes it was Caravaggio's intention to convey.

The third anomaly which Lavin examines concerns the angel's guiding hand. Lavin claims that the guiding hand in St. Matthew is both pedagogical and inspirational. To support the pedagogical aspect of his interpretation Lavin cites the writings of Quintilian, St. Jerome and Seneca, all referring to teaching methods involving manual guidance of the pupil's hand. To support the inspirational aspect of his interpretation he directs the reader's attention to Botticelli's *Magnificat*, in which

the Christ child manually assists the Virgin in writing the names of the saved. Lavin is able also to find one precedent for manual assistance in writing for combined pedagogical and inspirational purposes in sixteenth-century woodcut illustrations depicting the illiterate St. Veronica assisted in her writing by an angel. Finally, as in his preceding arguments, Lavin demonstrates the timeliness of Caravaggio's stress on the manually-assisted writing by St. Matthew.

...an old man arduously learning from a patient child [youthful angel] represented the very process by which Judaism and paganism were superseded by Christianity.¹⁵

Thus the education of St. Matthew symbolizes the triumph of Christianity. Lavin illustrates the Counter-Reformation revival of the theme of the triumph of the Church (argued to be identical with Christianity) with an example of that theme represented in a painting by Rubens.

Lavin closes his article with a few comments about the content of Caravaggio's second St. Matthew (in Rome). The second, more brief, interpretation reinforces the first by showing that the second version was not a concession to criticism made by patrons of the crudeness of the first characterization of St. Matthew, but was itself equally sophisticated. Lavin claims further that,

¹⁵Lavin, p. 78.

as different as it seems to be, the second St. Matthew can be seen as representing a "complementary aspect of essentially the same message." Briefly he makes his case as follows. The Incarnation, important in the first St. Matthew, is symbolized in the second painting, by St. Matthew's pose, which reflects the traditional pose of the Virgin in representations of the annunciation--the annunciation also symbolizing the Incarnation. The authenticity of writing stressed in the first painting is referred to in the second, also, by the "back-handed annunciation pose," which had been used on several occasions in representations of St. Jerome--St. Jerome being "the prime witness to the tradition that Matthew wrote his gospel in his own hand." The importance of the reference to genealogy indicated by the use of the second rather than the first verse of the gospel depicted in the first St. Matthew is conveyed by the inspiring angel in the second St. Matthew--the angel ticking off points on his fingers, specifically his second finger. And, finally, the irony of the first St. Matthew, depicted as acquisition of knowledge through ignorance, is carried through in the second version in the ironic depiction of an intellectual stunned by the miraculous inspiration of the angel. In Lavin's words "...the key to the irony lies in the divine mystery itself, which brings truth to him who is wise, be he ignorant or learned."¹⁶

¹⁶Lavin, p. 81.

Lavin's interpretation of the second St. Matthew supports his interpretation of the first by providing an alternative to the simple interpretation of the second St. Matthew as a concession to demands, and further by giving evidence that Caravaggio was capable of sophisticated content early in his career.

In the preceding analysis we have seen Lavin consistently supporting his explication of the content of Caravaggio's work 1) by showing the visual, and literary sources which were available to Caravaggio and which would have made a content, such as that proposed by Lavin, possible in Caravaggio's time, i. e., the historical context which would have made Caravaggio's content comprehensive to a refined, Renaissance audience, and 2) by showing why it makes sense to suggest that Caravaggio intended to convey the content proposed, i. e., how the proposed content-interpretation is consistent with concerns and controversies important in Caravaggio's time--the Counter-Reformation.

FORMAL INTERPRETATION

Formal interpretation like iconographical interpretation is directed toward explicating the content of particular art works. Unlike iconographic interpretation, those aspects of the work which the formal interpreter takes as evidence for his interpretation of content are the formal rather than representational qualities of the work. The art historian doing formal inter-

pretation generally restricts his evidence more closely to that found in the art work than does the iconographer.

In its simplest form, formal interpretation may be nothing more than the formal description of a work conjoined with an assertion that the form described is identical with the meaning of the work under discussion. George Kubler calls the interpretation of form as meaning the interpretation of the "self-signals" or "the existential declaration" of a work of art.¹⁷ In this sort of formal interpretation the art historian is concerned with understanding form as the embodiment, itself, of meaning, rather than with form as the conveyer of meaning, by reference to objects outside itself.

Alois Riegl was a pioneer of formal interpretation. He was one of the first to recognize form as a phenomenon which can be considered apart from a subordinate relationship to representation--as a phenomenon to be considered in its own right.¹⁸ Riegl,

¹⁷George Kubler, The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), pp. 24-25.

¹⁸Lionello Venturi, History of Art Criticism, trans. by Charles Marriott, rev. ed. (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1964), p. 280, [originally published in 1936].

"...he [Riegl] battled against the two leading prejudices in art history. The first is the hieratic distinction that continued to be made, and, in fact, is still made, between the fine arts, which applies to the representation of man and what concerns him, and the applied or minor arts, which refers to decoration only." [underlining added]

along with his student, Heinrich Wölfflin and later the French art historian Henri Focillon, developed theories about art history founded on this new recognition of the importance of the phenomenon of form. Since the writings of these art historians are aimed at accounting for specific stylistic groups of art works or even the entire development of art history, rather than at focusing on the content of individual works, their writings are left for consideration in a later chapter on art-historical explanation. Clive Bell and Roger Fry are art theorists who, following Riegl's lead, have worked at developing a theoretical base for formal interpretation.¹⁹

A more complex sort of formal interpretation adopts the methods of structural analysis developed by Claude Levi-Strauss.²⁰ Such formal analysis is aimed at "exposing the objective structure of the work of art and articulating it as an independent, internally

¹⁹Clive Bell proposes that we find meaning in art by interpreting what he calls the "significant form" of the work of art. Clive Bell, Art (New York: G. P. Putman's Sons, 1958). Roger Fry not only finds meaning in "visible formal design," but he claims that formal meanings "have a curious vitality and longevity" elevating them in importance over what he calls "the associated ideas of images" or representational meaning. Roger Fry, "Pure and Impure Art," in A Modern Book of Aesthetics, ed. by Melvin Rader (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), p. 307 [from a 1920 publication].

²⁰Sheldon Nodelman, "Structural Analysis in Art and Anthropology," Yale French Studies, nos. 36-37 (1967), p. 89.

"The concept of structural analysis held by Levi-Strauss is founded on the functional analysis of society as a global unit carried out by Marx...."

focused phenomenon."²¹ As Sheldon Nodelman puts it, structural analysis is a particularly valuable sort of inquiry since it requires no evidence outside the work.

The result of such an analysis, radically purified of distorting elements, and shaped solely in terms of the internal structure of dynamics of the work itself, aspires to an objective validity which would hold, as Levi-Strauss says, "for any possible observer."²²

Even though structural analysis requires no evidence outside the work, it can tell us about the world outside the work. The work is a record of the "pervasive and fundamental categories, which condition all directly observable phenomena."²³ At this point in this study, however, we are concerned only with structural analysis as an art-historical activity directed at understanding the content of individual art works. Besides telling us about the world outside the work of art, a structural analysis of a work of art can tell us about the relationship between the art work and the world outside it. It is this relationship which constitutes the content of a work of art for the structural analyst.

The [structural-analytic] account, moreover, which this method renders has the special advantage of representing an unconscious, or not overtly conscious, content: the concrete meaning and value structure which materially informs the work, and which may

²¹Nodelman, p. 97.

²²Nodelman, p. 93.

²³Nodelman, p. 102.

never be explicitly formulated in verbal terms by the culture concerned, or only in the form of inadequate or deceptive rationalizations.²⁴

More specifically, the highest goal of structural analysis is "to allow the fullest self-revelation of the phenomenon in its signification as an image of the world and of man's situation in that world."²⁵

Thus, structural analysis, like simpler forms of formal interpretation, is directed at understanding form for its own sake. But structural analysis is also directed at understanding a relationship between the form of the work of art and the world outside the work. This relationship is one of signification rather than representation. The structural analyst deals with the art object as an image--not as an image imitating the appearance of objects in the world outside itself, the sort of representational image open to natural and expressional subject matter description or the methods of iconography, but rather as an image which signifies abstractly the pervasive and fundamental categories of human consciousness.

Like iconographic interpretation, formal interpretation consists of more than descriptive claims about qualities directly observable in the work. Formal interpretation, like iconographic

²⁴Nodelman, p. 101.

²⁵Nodelman, p. 94.

interpretation, congeals observations into a statement about the content of the work (even if that statement is nothing more than the assertion that the form is the content). Even though the evidence for such a statement may come entirely from the work of art, any interpretation is also about the art-historical event. Any statement about the meaning which is contained in an art work is also a statement about the art-historical event which culminated in the production of that work. For a statement of content implies that meaning was (consciously or unconsciously) embodied in the work by its producer and that such a meaning was (consciously or unconsciously) available to the contemporary audience of that work.

As one might imagine, art historians sometimes propose general interpretations of content using iconographic and formal interpretations to reinforce each other and to support the general interpretation. At this point, however, consideration is focused on formal interpretation separate from iconographic interpretation.

"The Sculptures of Souillac"²⁶ by Meyer Schapiro is an article the analysis of which advances the present study of interpretation in several ways. Like the preceding interpretation by

²⁶Meyer Schapiro, "The Sculptures of Souillac," in Medieval Studies: in Memory of A. Kingsley Porter, ed. by Wilhelm R. W. Koehler (2 vols.; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), II, pp. 359-387.

Lavin, Schapiro's article provides a fine example of a type of interpretation, i.e., formal interpretation. Out of the article it is possible to isolate formal-interpretive claims and to set forth the evidence and argumentation which Schapiro offers in support of his interpretation. Besides providing a contrasting formal-interpretive case against which iconographic-interpretive cases might be compared, Schapiro's article serves to demonstrate a linkage between the two sorts of interpretation.

The decentralizing episodic forms and dis-coordinate schemes, the antithetic mobility of the figures, the concreteness and energy of presentation, in contrast to the traditional centralized, symbolic designs, presuppose the broader conception of the active, morally divided individual, at once Christian and secular, whose struggles are resolved in the religious legends of the church.²⁷

This general interpretation of the content of the Souillac sculptures is based both on Schapiro's formal interpretation and on his understanding of the representational meaning of the sculptures. Let us begin, as Schapiro does, with his formal interpretation.

The Souillac Sculptures, which are the object of Schapiro's interpretive investigation, consist of the four separate pieces which survive of what once was a unified sculptural whole. They are fragments from the portal sculpture of a medieval church built in the first third of the twelfth century in the town of Souillac.

²⁷Schapiro, p. 384.

The pieces which remain are 1) a major relief consisting of a trefoil-upper section and a lower section divided into three areas, a roughly square central area flanked by two vertical-rectangular areas, 2) 3) two separate relief figures assumed to have been located at either side of the church entrance beneath the major portal relief, and 4) a trumeau, one of originally two columns which once also stood flanking the entrance. The tripartite upper section contains two flanking angels and, in the center, the Virgin and a mortal, Theophilus. The central panel of the lower section contains simultaneous representations of three episodes involving Theophilus and the devil. The two lower side panels contain large representations of St. Peter and St. Benedict. The large relief figures thought to have been located below the major relief represent Joseph and Isaiah. The trumeau is built up of colonnettes intertwined with beasts and their victims. It is assumed that the identification of figures has been firmly established through iconographic investigation. Within his formal interpretation, Schapiro refers to the identified figures not as conveyers of meaning, but simply as convenient location references for forms.

Schapiro's formal interpretation asserts that the composition, which might seem "accidental," is actually "a deeply coherent arrangement" which signifies an antagonistic compromise of

conflicting forms. This balanced composition of contrasts Schapiro calls discoördination, which he defines as "a grouping or division such that corresponding sets of elements include parts, relations, or properties which negate the correspondence."²⁸ He claims further that this sort of arrangement is no mistake or accident, but is only comprehensible through an understanding of details. Schapiro proceeds to build his case for this organizing principle by an analysis of details observable in the work. His case is more than description, however, since he does not merely list his descriptions but also uses his observations of detail as evidence for examples of compositional units arranged according to the principle of discoördination.

Schapiro constructs his case for his formal interpretation by demonstrating how all sections of the work can be seen as obeying the principle of discoördination. Through diagrams and verbal compositional analysis he argues 1) that the "eccentric, irregular, flattened trefoil" can be seen as a "balanced scheme"; 2) that the Joseph and Isaiah figures, though not directly balanced by contrasting mass, can also be seen as balanced if the arrangement of details is understood; 3) that the more apparently corresponding figures of St. Benedict and St. Peter can be seen as exemplifying discoördination in the "sustained contrast" maintained consistently in the details of the figures; 4) that the central relief

²⁸Schapiro, p. 362.

panel, though not traditionally symmetrical in arrangement, exhibits a very sophisticated balance among its forms; and 5) that the beasts on the trumeau, likewise, can be seen as presenting a complex intentionally unstable sort of balance.

Schapiro further contends that this pervasive discoördination is no accident.²⁹ In support of this contention Schapiro notes that the principle operates consistently in small, minor areas of the work,³⁰ arguing that this consistency is evidence of the sculptor's "conscious method of design." Further, he lends support to his proposed conscious method of design by arguing that such a sophisticated design was possible in the twelfth century because of the facility with which the medieval spectator could comprehend the story represented.

Thus Schapiro's case for his formal interpretation is based almost entirely on evidence from within the work. He argues that the arrangement of details can be explained by the principle of

²⁹Schapiro, p. 375.

"The beast is not unstable because fitted into a diagonal scheme; he is represented diagonally because the sculptor wishes an unstable figure." (underline added)

³⁰Schapiro, p. 368.

"Because these groups of monstrous beasts under the ledges supporting Benedict and Peter are so small and so minor an element in the whole, they reveal to us all the more deeply in their minute distinctions and powerful fantasy and in the pervasive contrast of corresponding parts the sculptor's independence of an a priori architectural form and his conscious method of design, with its virtuosity in variation and intricate juggling of symmetrical schemes."

discoördination, that is, that examples which illustrate his interpretation are plentiful in the work. To be convincing in his interpretation of meaning, Schapiro must show that the organization he sees was not accidental but meant by the sculptor. Schapiro implies that the organization must have been intentional since it is so pervasive--visible in small, minor details. Marshalling evidence from outside the work Schapiro further suggests that it was possible for a content such as he proposes to have been entertained in the twelfth century because of the background shared by the sculptor's spectators which allowed them to easily read the figural groupings as episodes in a familiar religious legend.

Having set forth his case for his formal interpretation of the meaning of the Souillac sculptures as a balanced compromise of antagonistic forms, Schapiro proceeds, in the last half of his article, to unite his formal interpretation with his understanding of the iconographic meaning of the work to support his general interpretive claim about the general content of the sculptures. He shows how representational aspects of the sculptures can, like the formal aspects, be seen as exhibiting a compromise among conflicting forces. He does this by interpreting the iconographic meaning of the work as representing "the active, morally divided individual, at once Christian and secular [conflict], whose struggles are resolved [compromise] in the religious legends of the church"³¹

³¹Schapiro, p. 384.

As he did in the case of his formal interpretation, Schapiro supports his general interpretation on the grounds of consistent manifestation of "compromised conflict," both in the representational and formal qualities of the work. Also as he did with the formal interpretation, he claims further that the content he proposes was possible in the twelfth century.

The social and economic development which indirectly evoked the new programs of imagery in the church [iconography] also promoted the freedom of the sculptor and suggested to him within the framework of spiritualistic and ascetic conceptions more naturalistic forms, a more articulated and flexible composition [form], to satisfy the new norms of the lay experience.³²

Schapiro supports his claim of possibility in the twelfth century by citing evidence outside the work pertaining to the religious, cultural, and economic conditions of the time.

Any expression of resolved conflict between Christian and secular concerns experienced by the Christian lay individual in twelfth-century church sculpture had to have resulted in a de-emphasis of traditionally prevalent religious absolutism. Schapiro bolsters his case for the possibility of such a de-emphasis by interpreting contemporary architectural

³²Schapiro, p. 384.

design as also exhibiting a decrease in absolute focus.³³ By demonstrating that his interpretation is not limited to the work under investigation, but that it can be seen as applicable in other works (Schapiro cites sculpture from other churches of the time) and in another medium (architecture), Schapiro lends credence to his specific interpretation of a particular set of sculptures.

INTERPRETATION AND MEANING

Throughout this chapter "interpretation" has been used to refer to the setting forth of meaning of particular art works. It has also been proposed that for a work of art to have a meaning, that meaning must have been put there by an artist and have been comprehensible in the historical context within which the work was produced. In other words, for an art historian to interpret a work requires an investigation not solely of the art object, but of the entire art-historical event--object, artist, and

³³Schapiro, p. 386.

"Instead of the prolonged vista focussed on the choir and altar, instead of the succession of nave bays flanked by subordinate aisles, these churches present a shorter series of independent, self-contained domical bays to which the choir is added as a subordinate terminal niche."

Schapiro, p. 387.

"The nave is amplified and liberated from the compulsive apsidal focus, just as the monumental design of Theophilus dethrones the absolutized Christ."

Whether we are writers, critics, or painters, we are all apt to forget that not everyone shares our knowledge and our past experience. But without sharing, messages will die on the way from transmitter to receiver, not because we fail to be 'attuned,' but simply because there is nothing to relate them to. Neither communication nor expression can function in a void.³⁴

Gombrich makes clear here that to understand the message of an art work it is necessary to have information from outside the art work. His reference to the "message" implies communication as a phenomenon to be understood in art. If we understand meaning as a sort of communication, then "meaning" can be used in several different ways as regards art-historical events. We can speak 1) of the meaning of the art object, 2) of what was meant by the artist, and 3) what the work meant to its viewers. Before the proposed conception of interpretation as setting forth of meaning can be accepted, two objections may have to be put to rest, namely one concerning the consciousness of intention to communicate on the part of the artist, and another concerning aesthetic judgment.

It has already been conceded that an artist's intention does not by itself substantiate an interpretation of meaning--for artists can fail. But can there be meaning when none is intended? State-

³⁴Gombrich, p. 68.

ments denying any intention to communicate are not, after all, rare among artists reflecting on their work.

Although it is as a communicator that it is most profitable to consider the artist, it is by no means true that he commonly looks upon himself in this light. In the course of his work he is not as a rule deliberately and consciously engaged in a communication endeavor.³⁵

Certainly, we are all aware of situations in which meaning was communicated when no conscious attempt had been made to communicate that meaning, e. g., a look upon opening a gift which quite unintentionally communicated disappointment. "Meaning," as used in the present study, is intended to refer to whatever expression is perceptible in a work, regardless of whether the artist articulated that expression consciously or unconsciously.

It must further be conceded here that the communication of meaning is not all that has value in a work of art. In criticizing Gombrich's conception of art, Ruth Saw makes the following objection:

This account of art and its appreciation suffers from the defect that if we are to "read the signs," what is there is there not for its own sake and for the sake of its sensible properties but for its meaning.³⁶

³⁵I. A. Richards, Principles of Literary Criticism (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1925), p. 26.

³⁶Ruth L. Saw, Aesthetics: An Introduction (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1971), p. 155.

To interpret meaning no more denies aesthetic worth than the appreciation of aesthetic worth denies meaning. To consider the meaning of a gesture no more denies the possibility of that gesture's having aesthetic worth and intent than does the aesthetic appreciation of a memo deny that memo's communicative function. Neither the efficacy of communication nor the importance of the meaning of a work guarantees the value of that work. However, the art-historical activity under investigation here is not aesthetic judgment. It is interpretation. When the art historian is interpreting a work, he is investigating and explicating any meaning which that work contains.

Assuming that the job of the interpreting art historian is the explication of meaning, how does he find that meaning? If meaning is an expression of thoughts (consciously or unconsciously) articulated in a work of art, then to understand meaning it is important to understand the thoughts of artists. Yet many of those thoughts have gone unrecorded. R. G. Collingwood suggests a means whereby the historian can gain an understanding of thoughts of the past.

To know someone else's activity of thinking is possible only on the assumption that this same activity can be re-enacted in one's own mind. In that sense, to 'know what someone is thinking' (or 'has thought') involves thinking it for one's self.³⁷

³⁷R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 289 [first published in 1946].

To re-think thoughts of another time one must inform oneself of what preceded the thought and of what conditions prevailed at the time. One must not, of course, allow into one's rethinking factors which could not have been entertained at that time, e. g., while it was possible in the year 1500 to have thought about the idea of landing on the moon it was only possible after 1969 to have thought about the actual earthly reaction to Armstrong's lunar visit. According to Collingwood's method, then, having mentally situated himself in the time in question, the historian thinks about contemporary circumstances, thereby imagining what was then thought, i. e., re-thinking past thoughts. Whether or not this is how historians arrive at their interpretations, it does provide one method of testing them. One can ask of an interpretation of meaning whether it was reasonable to entertain a thought, such as that which is proposed, at the time of a work's execution.

In writing about interpretation of meaning in literary art works, Cohen and Nagel proclaim the necessity of closely scrutinizing all details of the work.

An adequate understanding must be able to account for every word and clause as well as the total plan. This does not deny that the meaning of a word is determined by the context in which it occurs. Indeed in some cases the meaning of a sentence is so clear

apart from a given word in it that we can tell that this word is a mistake or a misprint....³⁸

For an interpretation of meaning to be reached, then, which satisfies Cohen and Nagel, it must be tested against all its details, i. e., it must be comprehensive. If we can extend the ideas of Collingwood (about history) and Cohen and Nagel (about literature) to the interpretation of art-historical events, we have two activities by means of which meaning might be discovered: 1) by considering what was possible at the time the artist was at work, and 2) by considering all the details within a work.

Consideration of comprehensiveness and possibility are evident in the interpretive writings both of Lavin and Schapiro. Lavin's interpretation accounts for a great amount of representational detail in the first St. Matthew by Caravaggio, and Schapiro's interpretation likewise accounts for a great amount of formal detail in the Souillac sculptures. Any detail (representational for Lavin or formal for Schapiro) which is not accounted for by the interpretation must be taken as counter-evidence and must weaken the case for the proposed interpretation. Thus comprehensiveness not only suggests an interpretive method for discovering meaning but also a criterion for judging the adequacy

³⁸Morris R. Cohen and Ernest Nagel, An Introduction to Logic and the Scientific Method (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1934), p. 360.

of proposed interpretations.

A similar situation is found regarding consideration of possibility. Lavin makes a case for the possibility of his interpretation by showing how the meaning he attributes to Caravaggio's work might have been developed out of the conventions which preceded it and how the thoughts behind such a meaning were indeed prevalent during the Counter-Reformation. Schapiro, likewise, relates his interpretation of the Souillac sculptures to the compositions which were traditional at that time and further to the economic, cultural, and social conditions of the time. As with comprehensiveness, possibility can also serve as a criterion for judging art-historical interpretations. Any evidence about the artist or his context which implies the improbability, if not the impossibility, of the interpretation's making sense either to the artist or his viewers would, likewise, weaken the art historian's case for his interpretation.

Art historians do also sometimes offer supportive, if not conclusive evidence for their interpretations by demonstrating the applicability of those interpretations in a wider arena than the investigation of the particular art work at issue. Lavin applies his interpretation to the second St. Matthew; Schapiro to other contemporary sculpture and to the medium of architecture. Demonstrations of wider applicability by no means satisfy

scientific criteria of proof, i. e., rigorous confirmation of the interpretation; they do sometimes, however, lend just enough support to an interpretation to sway a decision in favor of that interpretation's acceptance over its rivals.

In addition to the three criteria just discussed (comprehensibility, possibility, and applicability), a fourth might be added--objectivity. For an art-historical interpretation to be judged to be a good one, it must be considered to be objective. The statement that a particular historical writing is objective might have several different meanings--witness J. A. Passmore's eight different criteria for objectivity.³⁹ Art-historical interpretations are not usually expected to meet such rigorous criteria of objectivity as deducibility from self-evident axioms or universal acceptability. But art-historical interpretations are expected to meet such professional criteria of objectivity as those pointed out by W. H. Walsh⁴⁰--avoidance of assertions based on personal likes or dislikes and avoidance of assertions based on group prejudice. Art-historical interpretation need not, however, necessarily meet such criteria of objectivity as being free of any historical theory which is in conflict with others or being

³⁹J. A. Passmore, "The Objectivity of History" in Philosophical Analysis and History ed. by William H. Dray (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pp. 75-94 [originally published in 1958].

⁴⁰W. H. Walsh, Philosophy of History: An Introduction, (rev. ed. New York: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 99-101.

free of any underlying philosophical view which conflicts with others.

There exists no universally acceptable test of verification for art-historical interpretation. Rival interpretations of the meanings of particular art-historical events do often co-exist. If particular interpretations of meaning cannot be proved conclusively, one is not forced to assume that any unproven interpretation is as good as the next. The assertions of meaning contained in interpretations can be evaluated against such criteria as comprehensibility, possibility, applicability, and objectivity. It is perhaps the lack of a universally accepted verification test, and yet the existence of less than conclusive but reasonable criteria for evaluation that explain the sort of judgments most often applied to art-historical interpretations. Particular interpretations of meaning are regularly judged to be more or less satisfying, plausible, convincing, or credible, rather than true or false, based not on proof but on the quality of the case offered in support of the explication of meaning proposed in the interpretation.

EXPLANATION

In addition to investigating individual art-historical events, art historians also work at investigating groups of art-historical events toward the end of accounting for art-historical change.

The simplest means of making an account of change among art-historical events is by taking note of the events involved in the change, i. e., to chronicle events. A chronicle is an enumeration of events in the order of their occurrence. An art-historical chronicle consists of facts about individual art-historical events, perhaps including some interpretation of the meaning of those events, registered sequentially according to the order of their occurrence. Thus, to chronicle art-historical events requires only an ability to order temporally the claims of essential research and interpretation.

Other terms are used to label accounts of change which draw some relations among historical events, among them, "narration" and "colligation." W. H. Walsh relates the two

notions of colligation and narration in this way.

...the historian's aim [is] to make a coherent whole out of the events he studies. His way of doing that, I suggest, is to look for certain dominant concepts or leading ideas by which to illuminate his facts, to trace connections between those ideas themselves [colligation], and then to show how the detailed facts become intelligible in the light of them by constructing a 'significant' narrative of the events of the period in question.¹

Here Walsh seems to be using "colligation" to refer to a method of inquiry ("...to look for certain dominant concepts... [and]... to trace connections between those ideas...."), while he uses "narration" to refer to a method of presenting the results of the colligation inquiry ("...to show how the detailed facts become intelligible in the light of them [ideas] by constructing a 'significant' narrative...."). At this point in this study we are concerned with the inquiry activities involved in investigating art-historical events and the activities involved in building a case in support of conclusions reached through inquiry. Our concern here then is with the art historian's method of colligation, i. e., assimilating "...a number of separately observed facts to a unified conception or formula"² in his attempt to account for

¹W. H. Walsh, Philosophy of History: An Introduction, rev. ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 61.

²Ledger Wood, "Colligation" in Dictionary of Philosophy, ed. by Dagobert D. Runes (Totowa, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams, 1962), p. 58.

art-historical change.

An art-historical chronicle does nothing more than register sequentially factual and interpretive claims about art-historical events. Even though a chronicle constitutes an account of art-historical change it does not account for art-historical change, that is, a chronicle does not explain art-historical change. An explanation draws some relations among statements about art-historical events.

"Explanation," like "interpretation," can be used ambiguously as regards historical writings. William Dray has distinguished three quite distinct senses of "explanation"--explaining-what, explaining-why, and explaining-how.³ As regards art-historical writing, at least four senses of "explain" can be distinguished:

1) to explain what an art work is; 2) to explain what an art work means; 3) to explain why a change occurred in art history; and 4) to explain how a change occurred in art history. To understand each sense of "explain" requires an understanding of two art-historical activities: the first being the inquiry activity involved in reaching an explanatory conclusion; the second, the supportive activity of building a case in support of the explanatory conclusion reached. For example to explain what an art work is

³William Dray, "'Explaining What' in History," in Theories of History, ed. by Patrick Gardiner (Glencoe, Illinois: Macmillan, 1959), pp. 403-408 and William Dray, Laws and Explanation in History (London: Oxford University Press, 1957).

requires some essential art-historical research such as function-attribution. Having concluded that the work in question is, let us say, an altarpiece, in order to explain what the object is, it is necessary further to make a case for this function-attribution. To make such a case might require explication of the concept of altarpiece, as well as the offering of evidence and argumentation to support the attribution. The first sense of "explain"--to explain what an art work is--is little more than a task of essential art-historical research. The second sense of "explain"--to explain what an art work means--requires an interpretive investigation of the art-historical event resulting in a conclusion about its meaning. For an assertion of meaning to be taken as an explanation it must be accompanied by evidence and argumentation in support of that interpretation. Both these first two senses of "explain" have already been considered (in chapters on essential research and interpretation) as regards the nature of their claims as well as the sort of case which can be built in their support. Both these senses of "explain" are also aimed at understanding individual art-historical events rather than change which occurs among art-historical events through time. The two remaining senses of "explain"--explaining-why and explaining-how--are activities involved in accounting for art-historical change.

Accounts which explain why art-historical changes occur

owe much to the discipline of art theory. Art theory, as its name suggests, is aimed at developing theories concerning artists, contexts of artistic production, art works, and relationships among these three factors. Art theories consist of statements of laws or generalizations and statements of the conditions under which particular generalizations apply and statements about relationships among laws. The art-historical activity of explaining-why aims at accounting for art-historical change by showing what conditions existed at the time the change occurred and what explanatory generalization applies under those conditions. The art-historical activity of explaining-how, on the other hand, rather than focusing on generalities among art-historical events, focuses on the particularities which distinguish art-historical events. Explaining-how accounts explain art-historical change by noting the uniqueness of the set of conditions prevailing at the time of the change. Important to such an explanatory account is a judgment of the significance of particular contextual factors or the unique influence of particular individuals.

Needless to say, statements about particulars are used in attempts to account for art-historical change through generalization, as are generalizations used in particularized accounts of art-historical change. However, art-historical accounts of change ordinarily focus on either the general or the particular and are

herein referred to as generalized explanations and particularized explanations depending on their major focus.

GENERALIZED EXPLANATION

Explanation of change among art-historical events through generalization, in the extreme, might take the form of a covering-law model of explanation. According to the covering-law model, as set forth by Carl Hempel,⁴ a particular event or change can be explained by subsuming it under a law or generalization which "covers" it. Such an explanation consists of the statement of the appropriate generalization and the conditions under which that generalization applies, along with a statement that those conditions are, in fact, in evidence in the situation to be explained. These assertions made, the particular situation is said to be explained. Further, if this model is rigorously applied, again according to Hempel, the difference between explanation and prediction is reduced to a matter of time of occurrence.

The customary distinction between explanation and prediction rests mainly on a pragmatic difference between the two: While in the case of an explanation, the final event is known to have happened, and its determining conditions have to be sought, the situation is reversed in the case of prediction: here, the initial conditions are given, and the

⁴Hempel explicates the "covering-law model" of explanation in his Philosophy of Natural Science. Carl G. Hempel, Philosophy of Natural Science (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1966).

"effect"--which in the typical case, has not yet taken place--is to be determined.⁵

The same structure of argument is offered in support of both explanation and prediction. To predict what will happen one need only state the conditions which presently prevail showing them to be the conditions under which a particular generalization applies and then assert the generalization as the prediction. In a simplistic example a generalization might be asserted that "art with a social content is produced during periods of financial depression." This one law might be used both to explain and to predict. One might explain the social comment evidenced in mural painting of the thirties by reference to the Depression of the thirties. One might similarly predict a social content in painting of the near future on the grounds that the economic situation of the early seventies is depressed. A third operation, retrodiction, can also be carried out using the same structure of argument. An unknown event in the past can be retrodicted (predicted to be found to have been the case) from knowledge of the conditions which prevailed and the generalization which applies when those conditions prevail. To continue the present illustration, one might research with an expectation of discovering social

⁵Carl G. Hempel, "The Function of General Laws in History," in Theories of History, ed. by Patrick Gardiner (Glencoe, Illinois: Macmillan, 1959), pp. 347-348 [originally published in 1942].

content in art works in any economically depressed period of the past. The collapsing of the distinctions between historical explanation and prediction is regularly used as evidence for history's being no distinct sort of discipline, but rather a subclass of science. F. J. Teggart has named this historical branch of science, "the science of social change."⁶

History, as it is ordinarily practiced, however, does not usually very closely resemble scientific explanation as described above. Hempel has proposed two modifications of his covering-law model which he claims accommodate the sorts of explanation found in history writing. On the one hand he proposes that historical explanations are often incomplete. He calls such incomplete historical explanations, "explanation sketches."

Such a sketch consists of a more or less vague indication of the laws and initial conditions considered as relevant, and it needs "filling out" in order to turn into a full-fledged explanation.⁷

Thus, historical explanation is different from scientific explanation only in its incompleteness. A second modification of the covering-law model is proposed as accommodating for historical explanation. Hempel claims that scientific explanation can be of two

⁶F. J. Teggart, Theory and Processes of History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962) [originally published as two books in 1918 and 1925].

⁷Hempel, "The Function of General Laws in History," p. 351.

forms, the deductive-nomological form which has already been described...

...they [deductive-nomological explanations] assert that in all cases in which certain specified conditions are realized an occurrence of such and such a kind will result....⁸

...and explanations of the probablistic-statistical form.

...they [probabalistic-statistical explanations] are, generally speaking, assertions to the effect that if certain specified conditions are realized, then an occurrence of such and such a kind will come about with such and such a statistical probability.⁹

Hempel would have us believe then that all historical explanation is either a complete or incomplete case of deductive or probablistic, scientific explanation.

Very often art-historical explanations direct the reader's attention to conditions necessary for the application of a sometimes only implied generalization, but seldom do they furnish a sufficient set of conditions for the application of any generalization. A number of art historians have also attempted to explain art-historical change by reference to general explanatory conditions in the form of general causal assertions. That is to say, rather than asserting that a particular condition uniformly occurs in

⁸Carl G. Hempel, "Explanation in Science and History," in Philosophical Analysis and History, ed. by William H. Dray (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 100 [originally published in 1962].

⁹Hempel, "Explanation in Science and History," p. 100.

conjunction with a particular event, art historians sometimes make the stronger claim that the prevailing condition causes the event (to be explained) to occur. Many art-historical explanations do thus bear certain resemblances to scientific explanation, though few, if any, strictly follow the scientific, covering-law model of explanation.

The nineteenth-century Vienesese art historian, Alois Riegl, provides two of the earliest examples of generalized explanation of art-historical change. He explains art-historical change by reference to changes in the causal force he calls Kunstwollen. Venturi characterized Riegl's causal force as follows:

Kunstwollen is therefore not the synthesis of the aims of art of any given period but is its tendency, its aesthetic impulse, its germination; in other words, a dynamic force, a true force.¹⁰

Kleinbauer describes Riegl's notion of Kunstwollen as...

...the desire or impulse on the part of the artist (or period of artists) to confront and solve specific artistic problems.¹¹

In any case, it is difficult to know what sort of thing this Kunstwollen might be--an independent dynamic force? some sort of

¹⁰Lionello Venturi, History of Art Criticism, trans. by Charles Marriott, rev. ed. (New York: Dutton, 1964), p. 281 [originally published in 1936].

¹¹W. Eugene Kleinbauer, Modern Perspectives in Western Art History: An Anthology of Twentieth Century Writing on the Visual Arts, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), p. 21.

collective artistic desire? the impulse of an artist? Whatever he might have meant by it, or how he might have determined what form it took in a given period, Riegl proposed Kunstwollen as an art-historical force which does much to determine the nature of art work produced in different periods.

A similarly slippery concept was proposed by Henri Focillon to explain art-historical change. Focillon postulated an independent life-of-forms as an explanatory notion for art-historical change.

To summarize: forms transfigure the aptitudes and movements of the mind more than they specialize them. Forms receive accent from the mind, but not configuration. Forms are, as the case may be, intellect, imagination, memory, sensibility, instinct, character; they are, as the case may be, muscular vigor, thickness or thinness of blood. But forms, as they work upon these data, train and tutor them ceaselessly and uninterruptedly. They create a new man, manifold and yet unified, out of animal man.¹²

In case there be any doubt as to the independent existence or importance of the life-of-forms as proposed by Focillon, note his concluding paragraph.

For, within this great imaginary world of forms, stands on the one hand the artist and on the other form itself. Even as the artist fulfills his function of geometrician and mechanic, of physicist and chemist, of psychologist and historian, so does form, guided by the play and interplay of metamorphoses, go forward, by its own necessity, toward

¹²Henri Focillon, The Life of Forms in Art, trans. by Charles Beecher Hogan and George Kubler (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), pp. 58-59.

If Riegl's commentators and Focillon's own words are relied upon to explicate their notions of Kunstwollen and the life-of-form, it is because they are found to be much too slippery to attempt to paraphrase.

A second Rieglian explanatory generalization about art-historical change proves to be more comprehensible. Riegl proposed to explain major stylistic differences by grouping into two categories the modes of perception of artists--the haptic (tactile) and the optic (visual).¹⁴ This proposed dichotomy of perceptual modes had perhaps its strongest and most articulate advocate in Heinrich Wölfflin.

The mode of vision, or let us say, of imaginative beholding, is not from the outset and everywhere the same, but like every manifestation of life, has its development.¹⁵

Note that Wölfflin describes "mode of vision" not as some autonomous force with an independent existence, but rather as a "manifestation of life," presumably of artists and people of a period. The haptic-optic dualism suggested by Riegl is given

¹³Focillon, p. 76.

¹⁴Kleinbauer, p. 20.

¹⁵Heinrich Wölfflin, Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art, trans. by M. D. Hottinger (New York: Dover (1932)), p. vii, [originally published in 1915].

a careful and elaborate application in Woelfflin's analysis of the classic (haptic) and baroque (optic) styles in art.

None of the art historians mentioned thus far have attempted to explain art history by attributing all change to a single necessary condition. Riegl had his two generalizations of Kunstwollen and modes of perception. Woelfflin wrote of the "double root of style," specifying mode of vision and race or nationality as the major conditions necessary for any explanation of style. Focillon recognized the importance of materials and "races" as well as the life-of-forms as determinants of style.

Other art historians have through their explanatory generalizations noted other factors important to the understanding of art-historical change. Franz Boas, for example, in his classic Primitive Art, directed attention to technical virtuosity as an important determinant of primitive style development.¹⁶

Rudolf and Margot Wittkower have written in Born Under Saturn a most fascinating and meticulously documented study of the character and conduct of artists. They claim that "cultural trends have a determining impact on the formation and development

¹⁶Franz Boas, Primitive Art (New York: Dover, 1927), p. 11.

"So far as our knowledge of the works of art of primitive people extends the feeling of form is inextricably bound up with technical experience."

of character"¹⁷ of artists. Although their conclusion may seem to be a simple one, they make a strong case for it and at the same time systematically refute several popular rival explanatory generalizations. Basically their point is that if artists exhibit a particular personality type it is because of the image of the artist held by his culture (sometimes contributed to by particular artists) and not because of any specific personality traits attributable to the sort of person who makes art.

Art historians attempting to explain art-historical change do so regularly by developing explanatory generalizations which often resemble the work of sociologists,¹⁸ psychologists, and cultural historians, and art theorists. Although all art

¹⁷Rudolf Wittkower and Margot Wittkower, Born Under Saturn: The Character and Conduct of Artists (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963), p. 293.

¹⁸Richard Wollheim has written an article in which he attempts to describe three sorts of sociological explanations of art history--the causal, expressive, and the anecdotal. His explication of causal explanation is closest to scientific explanation. Expressive sociological explanations demonstrate how "works of art are seen as expressing, as reflections of, the social conditions under which they are found." (p. 406) and thus bear some relation to interpretation. The anecdotal sort of sociological explanation is perhaps closer to a particularized explanation. Wollheim writes that "...there is no single relation sought for as holding [sic] works of art and social conditions: but in the case of each particular work of art a story is told which has as its first term some social or economic fact and as its last term the genesis of the particular work." (p. 407). Richard Wollheim, "Sociological Explanation of the Arts: Some Distinctions," Atti del III Congresso Internazionale di Estetica, Venice, 3-5 Settembre, 1956 (Turin: 1957), pp. 404-410.

historians make some general assumptions as they perform their various art-historical activities, the ones mentioned here (and others, too, of course) have focused their efforts primarily on the activity of explanation by proposing various conditions necessary for the application of sociological, psychological, or other sorts of generalizations which they suggest explain why art-historical change occurs as it does.

Generalized historical explanation has similarities with two rather different disciplines. Generalized explanation resembling scientific explanation has just been discussed. A second sort of generalized explanation resembles speculative philosophy of history. Speculative philosophy of history, according to Walsh is "a speculative treatment of the whole of the course of history, a treatment in which it was hoped to lay bare the secret of history once and for all."¹⁹ Art historians have speculated about the pattern of art history in ways similar to the speculations of philosophers of history. A progressive conception of the pattern of history was voiced as early as the fifth century A.D. by St. Augustine. In the City of God St. Augustine reveals a commitment to progress in history toward a perfect society, an attitude reinforced by the Christian conception of life ending in salvation. Vasari had a progressive conception of the pattern of art history.

¹⁹Walsh, p. 14.

I have come to the conclusion that it is inherent in the very nature of these arts to progress step by step from very modest beginnings, and finally to reach the summit of perfection.²⁰

In the nineteenth century, progressive philosophy of history was reinforced further by Darwin's sweeping evolutionary theory of the development of man. Gottfried Semper built an evolutionary philosophy of art history which closely followed Darwinian theory.²¹

Besides providing an early example of a progressive philosophy of art history, Vasari was also an early exponent of a biological and cyclical conception of pattern in art history. He wrote of the works of the Italian Renaissance as being in the stages of infancy, adolescence, and maturity. Cyclical philosophies were proposed by the Italian historian, Giambattista Vico and later the French historian, Auguste Comte, among others. In art-historical writing an early example of a cyclical conception of art history can be found in the works of the eighteenth-century German, Johann Joachim Winckelmann.²²

The discipline of art history has a long history of generalized explanation of art-historical change, those explanations sometimes bearing similarities to explanations in speculative philosophy of

²⁰Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, trans. by George Bull (Middlesex: Penguin, 1965), p. 85 [originally published in 1550].

²¹Kleinbauer, p. 20.

²²Kleinbauer, pp. 24-25.

history and sometimes to science.

Before considering in detail generalized explanation in art-historical scholarship, it may be important to point out a difficulty sometimes encountered in attempting to see art history as explanation--a difficulty concerning truisms.²³ By supplying implicit generalizations which allow an art historian to move from one assertion to another, it is possible to see every piece of art-historical writing as a case of generalized explanation. Take as an example an art historian who writes that Michelangelo has a very good reputation and that his work was in constant demand, and that also he was arrogant, difficult to work with, and slow to fulfill his obligations. One might supply a generalization which could be said to "explain" Michelangelo's conduct--"people do what they can get away with." Such a generalization, however, is at best, trivial. Even though an art historian might make some such assumption to further his narrative, one need not certainly conclude that that generalization is of any real interest to him. This example is a case in which a generalization may be used to trace interrelationships among particular events, but not in which

²³Alan Donagan, "The Popper-Hempel Theory Reconsidered," in Philosophical Analysis and History, ed. by William H. Dray (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pp. 127-159 [originally published in 1964], and Michael Scriven, "Truisms as the Grounds for Historical Explanations," in Theories of History, ed. by Patrick Gardiner (Glencoe, Illinois: Macmillan, 1959), pp. 443-475.

particular events are used to support a generalization. At this point in this study consideration is given only to cases in which particulars are used to support generalizations, that is, in which generalizations are of some major interest to the art historian.

E. H. Gombrich has written a classic piece of what has here been called a generalized art-historical explanation. In this piece he accounts for a particular, dramatic change in art-historical events by appealing to general laws. The change he aims to explain is the dramatic development of illusion in ancient Greek art. The laws he appeals to are those he developed to explain representational art in general. The article to be analysed is Gombrich's chapter, "Reflections on the Greek Revolution,"²⁴ appearing in Art and Illusion--the chapter serving to instantiate and support the laws of pictorial representation articulated throughout the book.

Gombrich's case for there having been a dramatic change in Greek art is largely assumed. He does recall the development, as typically illustrated, by noting changes in illusionism visible in sixth- through fourth-century B.C. kouroi figures. He gives

²⁴E. H. Gombrich, "Reflections on the Greek Revolution," in Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation, (2nd ed. rev.; Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 116-145.

credit to Emanuel Loewy for first hypothesizing that Greek art demonstrates a gradual change from reliance on schemata to naturalism. However, Gombrich contends that although Loewy's hypothesis describes what happened it does not explain the change. Loewy gives an account of what happened but, according to Gombrich does not explain why it happened.

The law which Gombrich calls upon to explain the developments in illusionism of ancient Greece is basically this: Illusion in art occurs when there is a history of image making, and when an appropriate change in the function of images has taken place. The Greeks used images for imaginative narration (function); they had a long schematic (Egyptian) image-making history to draw on; and, therefore, illusionism developed in Greek art.

To make his explanation convincing Gombrich does more than appeal to his law. He asserts the universality of his law and gives evidence for the conditions of the law having been met at the time in question. He shows how such a series of art-historical events (as those in ancient Greece) could have occurred and then why they must lawfully have occurred.

When Gombrich elaborates his major generalization or law, that making (image making) comes before matching (illusionism), he does it in this way.

Before the artist ever wanted to match the sights of the visible world [illusion] he wanted to

create things in their own right [image making].
 Every artist has to know and construct a
 schema before he can adjust it to the needs of
 portrayal.²⁵

In thus speaking of "the artist" or "every artist" Gombrich is putting no limits whatsoever on his generalization. He is writing about all artists at all times. Behind such a broad claim lies an assumption about the uniformity of human mentality. Later he dismisses out of hand explanations which depend on notions of changing human mentality, e. g., "the evolution of mankind" or "the spirit of the Greeks," to account for art-historical change.

...mankind can hardly have changed in the period
 which separates us from the archaic Greeks....²⁶

Gombrich assumes that what was intelligible in Greek times is intelligible now if we ask the right questions. Intelligibility has not changed. Given this assumption Gombrich seeks to explain how such a drastic change as that found in Greek art could have made sense. Again, given his assumption of stable mentality, making sense now is not different from making sense then. Thus there is no need to reconstruct a distinct Greek mentality.

To demonstrate how the Greek revolution could have occurred, Gombrich shows how the two conditions of his law (1] image-making history, 2] appropriate change in function) might be found

²⁵Gombrich, p. 116.

²⁶Gombrich, p. 119.

evidenced in the case of Greek art.

Gombrich claims that there must be an image-making history from which schemata can be drawn which then can be gradually corrected to suit the new demand for illusion. He shows this gradual process of development toward illusion based on the modification of schemata, in a series of paintings depicting the judgment of Paris. The first, a VI century B.C. vase painting, makes use of formula which resemble those of Egyptian painting. The second, a V century B.C. cup painting, shows a more plausible scene by means of more convincing gestures, poses, and anatomy rendering. The third, a I century A.D. wall painting (which "may illustrate" the later Greek "direction" in illusionistic painting), has developed a stronger illusion through manipulation of space and light. With this series of paintings Gombrich shows how an example of Greek illusionism might have developed through schema-correction from the schematic images available from the Egyptians.

Gombrich also shows how the proposed change of function for art might have occurred in Greek times. He begins by suggesting the function which art served for the Egyptians, on whose works the Greeks drew. He claims that Egyptian representation was of the what and not of the how. It was meant to be legible. (To support the legibility claim Gombrich cites the

apparent interchangeability within compositions of inscriptions and representations.) Egyptian art was also intended to represent the typical and the timeless rather than the momentary (evidence: individual or personal distinctions generally avoided). Even though Gombrich does not claim to know the exact function of Egyptian images, he suggests that the qualities he has discerned (legibility and timelessness) could make sense in Egyptian tomb sculpture where "Only the complete embodiment of the typical in its most lasting and changeless form could assume the magic validity of the pictographs for the 'watcher' who could have seen both his past and his eternal future removed from the flux of time."²⁷

How could such a fixed function for art change from making for the Egyptians to matching for the Greeks? Gombrich proposes that the demand for illusionism is not a natural one existing in all cultures, but one which requires "an adjustment of mental set." (Evidence: Australian aborigines' dislike for illusionistic representations.) The key to understanding the Greek change of mental set is, for Gombrich, the notion of "fiction," that "twilight realm" between myth and reality. Gombrich suggests that Homer's narration is the first known example of imaginative fiction displaying an interest not only in what happened but how it happened.

²⁷Gombrich, p. 125.

...where the poet was given license to vary
and embroider the myth and to dwell on the 'how'
in the recital of epic events, the way was open
for the visual artist to do likewise.²⁸

Thus, the idea of depicting the quality of the moment, evident in Greek poetry, accompanied a different sort of question being asked of art works. Instead of demanding lucidity and effectiveness, the Greeks began to demand convincingness in their images. the new demand for illusion thus set in motion the "rhythm of schema and correction" which eventually led to the illusionistic achievements of the Greeks. Gombrich offers as further documentation of the Greeks' change in attitude toward art, the Greeks' misunderstanding of Egyptian images. He directs attention to a Greek VI century B.C. vase painting. The scene depicted shows a strong resemblance to Egyptian reliefs commemorating victorious campaigns. However in the Greek rendition the outsized Pharoah is translated as a giant among pygmies, while the small pictograph of a whole city is transformed into a more illusionistically comprehensible altar. Gombrich, thus, makes his case for a different mental set among the Greeks.

...the timeless function of the potent image,
...[was] discarded in favor of an imaginary
fleeting moment of time....²⁹

²⁸Gombrich, p. 130.

²⁹Gombrich, p. 138.

With the change in mental set came a change in function. As different questions were asked of art (is it convincing rather than potent?) then artists began correcting their representations to satisfy the new demands.

Gombrich does more than show how Greek art could have changed in accordance with his explanatory generalization. He further attempts to show why Greek art had to have changed as he proposes. Gombrich's case for the lawfulness of the change is based on the validity and generalizability of his generalization. Gombrich's explanatory generalization might be stated as follows. For every era which has had a history of image-making and which has had a change in mental set--that change of set leading to a subsequent change in the function of images--illusionism will develop. He models the testing of his explanatory generalization, as best he can, after scientific testing.

The scientist can best test his explanations by a systematic variation of conditions of experiment, the historian obviously cannot.³⁰

Gombrich does the next best thing by searching out cases in art history which systematically test the conditions of his explanatory generalization. He notes that ancient India had a similar imaginative development in its fiction yet illusionism did not develop. This case is accounted for by Gombrich's generali-

³⁰Gombrich, p. 118-119.

zation, however, for even though ancient Indian art satisfied one of the conditions for the application of Gombrich's generalization--that of a changed function for art--it did not satisfy another condition--a heritage of image making. Later Gombrich points out isolated cases in Mesopotamian and Egyptian art in which careful observation is evidenced (refined Mesopotamian representation of a lioness and individualized, momentary Egyptian representation of a slave). He accounts for these cases by proposing that the schemata and the skill necessary for illusion were available at other times but they were not developed, by gradual schema-correction because one of the necessary conditions was absent.

But from the point of view of function, the figure [individualized, Egyptian slave] was perhaps considered a misfit....³¹

The generalization, that matching replaces making, only applies when the appropriate change in function occurs which in turn was preceded by a change in set. Finally, Gombrich notes that rigid, stereotyped images returned to Western art when the function of art (Byzantine) changed.

Art has again become an instrument [for 'imperial ceremony and divine revelation'], and a change of function results in a change in form.³²

³¹Gombrich, p. 143.

³²Gombrich, p. 145.

Even though the Byzantines had an illusionistic heritage they discarded it for image making when the function of the image changed. Thus Gombrich supports his explanatory generalization by demonstrating its efficacy in varying, other art-historical situations.

Gombrich's article exemplifies what has been here called a generalized explanation by accounting for art-historical change by appeal to generalization and the conditions under which the generalization applies. He further supports his explanation by noting his assumptions, showing how the conditions can be seen to have prevailed in the case in question, and by testing his generalization in situations of differing conditions.

PARTICULARIZED EXPLANATION

We have seen how some historians attempt to explain change by appeal to general laws. Other historians attempt to explain change by reference not to generalizations but to particulars. William Dray is a philosopher of history espousing the latter approach to historical explanation.

...the sciences are concerned with abstractions --mere ideal constructions. But history is different in all its concrete detail. It therefore follows a priori that since laws govern classes or types of things, and historical events are unique, it is not possible for the historian to explain his subject-matter by means of covering laws. If he is to understand it at all, it will

have to be by some kind of special insight
into particular connexions.³³

For Dray, then, an important distinction exists between the objects of inquiry of science and history--science being concerned with understanding classes of events; history, with particular events. To illustrate the distinction, note that science may explain why a certain number of leaves fall from a tree in one day, or the statistical probability of any leaf's falling at any moment. But science cannot explain, nor is it concerned with explaining, the fall of one, individual leaf at a particular moment. For Dray it is this concern with particular events rather than classes of events which distinguishes historical inquiry from scientific inquiry.

In art history (as distinct from history in general) concern with the particular is strengthened by the nature of the object of investigation, i. e., the art-historical event. Arnold Hauser described the peculiar nature of the object of art-historical inquiry in this way.

In science there is a radical distinction, perhaps even an insuperable gulf, between the validity of laws and the discovery and formulation of these laws, but in art there can be no question of any such cleavage between idea and execution, value and its realization, valid norms and their historical embodiment: each of these pairs is an indissoluble unity. The

³³Dray, *Laws of Explanation in History*, p. 45.

work of art itself is the aesthetic value; and that value is in no way apprehensible apart from the work of art.³⁴

To disregard the individuality of particular art works is tantamount to disregarding their most important quality. Therefore any art-historical inquiry concerned with the aesthetic value of art works must deal with them as individual works--at least, not exclusively as classes of things. In his concern for the uniqueness of art works, the art historian shares his interest with the art critic. James Ackerman distinguishes art history and art criticism in this way.

History is more concerned with the reconstruction of the context in which works of art are produced; criticism more with the articulation of responses to works of art in relation to current modes of thought.³⁵

Thus the art historian, unlike the critic, limits his concern with the uniqueness of particular art works to that which is comprehensible within the work's historical context.

Dray claims that "some special insight into particular connexions" is required for historical explanation. Michael Oakeshott suggests something about the nature of that "special insight."

³⁴Arnold Hauser, The Philosophy of Art History (Cleveland: Meridian, 1963). p. 174.

³⁵James S. Ackerman with Rhys Carpenter, Art and Archeology (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1963) p. 162.

...the method of the historian is never to explain by means of generalization but always by means of greater and more complex detail.³⁶

Oakeshott contends, then, that not only the object of historical inquiry is particular but that the method of explanation of particular events is accomplished by means of particulars. H. L. A. Hart and M. A. Honoré have proposed a different method for explaining particular historical events.

Their [historians'] characteristic concern with causation is not to discover connexions between types of events, and so to formulate laws or generalizations, but is often to apply generalizations, which are already known or accepted as true and ³⁷even platitudinous, to particular concrete cases.

For Hart and Honoré the object of historical inquiry is particular, but the method of explanation may include the use of generalizations. Thus there are historians, unlike those discussed earlier in this chapter, who explain particular art-historical change not by appeal to generalizations but by appeal to particulars. It has been suggested that particularized explanations make use of some generalizations or of none at all. In any case the primary

³⁶Michael Oakeshott, "Historical Continuity and Causal Analysis," in Philosophical Analysis and History, ed. by William H. Dray (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 209 [originally published in 1933].

³⁷H. L. A. Hart and A. M. Honoré, "Causal Judgments in History and in Law," in Philosophical Analysis and History, ed. by William H. Dray (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 214, [from a 1959 publication].

aim of particularized art-historical accounts is the explanation of particular art-historical changes by reference to particular persons and events rather than exclusively by appeal to an explanatory, "covering" generalization.

One way in which particulars can be used in historical accounts has already been discussed--the chronicle. Such a recitation of individual facts, although it may describe an historical change, does not explain it. For individual facts to be explanatory they must, in Walsh's terms be colligated, that is, the separate facts must be assimilated into a "unified conception or formula."³⁸ We have seen how formula (laws and generalizations) can be used to assimilate separate facts. However other conceptions are possible for the assimilation of separate historical facts. Walsh has proposed that the construction of a "'significant' narrative" is an alternative sort of assimilation of separate historical facts (By "significant" Collingwood seems to mean "coherent".) A narrative explanation accounts for change by drawing relationships among particular events. The relationships drawn are not, however, the assertions of regularity put forth in scientific generalizations, but the judgments of the relative significance of certain events, as well as assertions about the influence of those events on later events. A book like H. W.

³⁸Wood, p. 58.

Janson's Key Monuments of the History of Art reflects a conception of art-historical account as narrative based on judgments of significance ("significance" here referring to important originality) and influence.

Historic significance, rather than aesthetic appeal to modern sensibility, has been the determining factor in the choice of the works of art....³⁹

Janson refers to some works as "peak achievements" in art history. To arrive at such an assessment surely requires some sort of judgment of significance and influence. Yet Janson's historical judgments are clearly distinct from the judgments of art critics for they are not judgments of the "aesthetic appeal to modern sensibilities."

Through the years a wide range of criteria have been applied to judge the worthiness of art works to be included in the history of art. Giorgio Vasari's historical judgments seem to have been largely provincial. Vasari was a Florentine and wrote about Florentines.⁴⁰

The re-evaluation of art works significant enough for the attention of art historians is continuous. Lewis Mumford drew

³⁹H[orst] W. Janson, Key Monuments of the History of Art: A Visual Survey (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, and New York: Abrams, 1959), p. 5.

⁴⁰Giorgio Vasari, Lives of the Artists, trans. by George Bull (Middlesex: Penguin, 1965) [Italian edition in 1550].

attention to "...the importance of vernacular building, usually overlooked by historians...."⁴¹ In his 1954 preface to Sticks and Stones Mumford outlines some of the major contributions of that book.

To begin with, it was one of the first books to do justice to the medieval tradition in America: [referring to New England village architecture]....⁴²

But concerning the period after the Civil War, Sticks and Stones made its shrewdest contributions; and first of all, by restoring to their proper position, the work and example of Henry Hobson Richardson: our first truly indigenous masterbuilder.... My chapter on his work struck the first blow against this glib, fashionable judgment and led the way toward his rehabilitation.⁴³

Mumford's explanation of change in American architecture depends on assertions about relative influence (medieval influence on New England village architecture) and judgments of historical significance of individuals (Richardson).

What is here called particularized explanation, then, is that sort of art-historical explanation which explains particular art-historical change by means of narration of particular events--those events related by assertions about influence and judgments,

⁴¹Lewis Mumford, Sticks and Stones: A Study of American Architecture and Civilization (New York: Dover, 1924), p. vi.

⁴²Mumford, p. vi.

⁴³Mumford, p. vii.

of significance.

Erwin Panofsky's Et in Arcadia Ego⁴⁴ is a classic example of a particularized explanation in its explanation of an art-historical change by reference to numerous individual art-historical events connected by judgments of the significance of the individual accomplishments, and the influence of particular accomplishments on later events. The change to be explained is a change in the content of paintings rendering the Et in Arcadia Ego theme. The specific change to be explained is from a depiction of present happiness menaced in the future, to a depiction of past happiness ended by death. The explanation is set forth in a narration of events beginning in ancient Greece. Relationships among events are drawn by assertions about the influences upon, the significant contributions of, and influences of particular individuals--specifically Virgil, Jacopo Sannozaro, and Giovanni Francesco Guercino, but most importantly Nicolas Poussin.

Panofsky's first historical judgments are of the influences upon Virgil's conception of Arcady. The influences which Panofsky presents are of those Greek writings about the land of Arcady, by Polybius and Theocritus, which were available to

⁴⁴Erwin Panofsky, "Et in Arcadia Ego: Poussin and the Elegiac Tradition, in Meaning in the Visual Arts (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1955), pp. 295-320 [originally published in 1936].

Virgil. Life in the land of Arcady as described by the Greek poets was conceived in two very different ways in Latin--as a life of "plenty, innocence and happiness" or as a life of "almost subhuman existence full of terrible hardships"--depending on the poet's conception of the natural state of man. Virgil held the first, while Ovid held the latter conception of life in Arcady. Both Latin conceptions were based on the writings of the Greek poet, Polybius. Theocritus had recognized the "discrepancy...felt between the supernatural perfection of an imaginary environment [the happy conception of Arcady] and the natural limitations of human life as it is [death]." ⁴⁵ Panofsky supports his assertion of the influence of Polybius and Theocritus on Virgil by noting their descriptions and stories about Arcady and showing how these relate to Virgil's conception of that land.

More important than Panofsky's assertions about influences on Virgil is his judgment of the significance of Virgil's accomplishments. Panofsky calls Virgil's pastoral poems works "of original and immortal genius." ⁴⁶ To support his judgment of original genius Panofsky describes the accomplishments which he claims are original to Virgil. Among Virgil's original contributions Panofsky lists the "discovery" of evening as an image

⁴⁵Panofsky, p. 300.

⁴⁶Panofsky, p. 301.

representing a "mixture of sadness and tranquility" (the discrepancy which Theocritus depicted), the discovery of the elegy, "opening up the dimension of the past,"⁴⁷ and the first appearance of the tomb in Arcady (Virgil's Fifth Eclogue).

It was, then, in the imagination of Virgil, and of Virgil alone, that the concept of Arcady, as we know it, was born--that a bleak and chilly district of Greece came to be transformed into an imaginary realm of perfect bliss.⁴⁸

Panofsky thus attributes Virgil with sole responsibility for the modern concept of Arcady. This judgment is based on claims of Virgil's having been first to describe qualities basic to the modern concept of Arcady.

The next historical judgment in Panofsky's narrative explanation of a later content change in painting concerns the writings of the Medicean poet, Jacopo Sannazaro, specifically his Arcadia, written in 1502. Panofsky asserts that Sannazaro was influenced by Virgil.

It is through him [Sannazaro] that the elegiac feelings--present but, as it were peripheral in Virgil's Eclogues--became the central quality of the Arcadia shere.⁴⁹

Panofsky further claims an influence of the Renaissance period

⁴⁷Panofsky, p. 301.

⁴⁸Panofsky, p. 300.

⁴⁹Panofsky, p. 304.

on Sannazaro's Arcady. In the Renaissance the Arcady of the ancients was transformed from a distant place to a distant time-- a haven from the present. Panofsky claims that Sannazaro's work shows the influence of his time by "reflecting the feeling of a period," that feeling being the idea that the Utopian realm was "irretrievably lost, seen through a veil of reminiscent melancholy."⁵⁰ Panofsky seems to judge Sannazaro not so much as a significant contributor to the development of the idea of Arcady but as expressing the influences preceding and surrounding him.

The third major figure in Panofsky's narrative is the painter Giovanni Francesco Guercino. The significance of Guercino for Panofsky's narrative explanation concerns his work entitled Et in Arcadia Ego painted between 1621 and 1623. The significance of the painting is two-fold. First it was the "first pictorial rendering of the Death in Arcady theme"; and second it was the first to include in that rendering the phrase Et in Arcadia ego. Panofsky traces two sorts of influences on Guercino's work, i. e., the philology of the Latin inscription and Guercino's medieval, moralistic antecedents. Panofsky argues by appeal to Latin grammar, that Et in Arcadia ego must correctly be translated "Even in Arcady there am I" (the "I" referring to Death itself), and not "I, too, was born, or lived, in Arcady," (the "I" referring

⁵⁰Panofsky, p. 304.

to a deceased Arcadian). Panofsky claims that it is the correct translation of the phrase which is the meaning of the Guercino painting. He supports this claim with an interpretation of the painting, noting as evidence the representation of the two Arcadian shepherds as suddenly "checked in their wanderings," and the inclusion in the painting of a large skull. Panofsky cites contemporary literature as evidence for the skull's representing Death itself. These pieces of evidence support Panofsky's interpretation of Guercino's work as representing the correct Latin translation rather than the incorrect one since the speaker of the mistranslation is not Death but a deceased Arcadian and because the suddenness of the action in Guercino's painting runs counter to the quiet contemplation of a deceased Arcadian but is consistent with a confrontation with Death itself. Panofsky claims further that Giulio Rospigliosi (later Pope Clement IX) had an interest in the subject of Death in Arcadia and that he may even have invented the phrase, Et in Arcadia ego. Panofsky supports his claim of a possible influence on Guercino by Rospigliosi by claiming a relationship between the two based on Guercino's visits to study a Guido Reni painting housed in Rospigliosi's family palace.

Panofsky claims a second sort of influence on Guercino from medieval paintings. He directs attention to a type of

moralistic painting representing the medieval memento mori (remember mine end or remember that you must die) theme. Panofsky compares a medieval painting of the memento mori theme with the Guercino painting.

In both cases Death catches youth by the throat, so to speak, and "bids it remember the end."⁵¹

Thus Panofsky supports his case for medieval influence on Guercino by showing how his painting can be interpreted as representing a traditional medieval moralistic theme.

Panofsky further judges Guercino's work to have been influential in the spread of the correct grammatical translation of the phrase Et in Arcadia ego in England. He notes that the English painter, Sir Joshua Reynolds, sketched Guercino's painting and suggests further that "It is a fair assumption that he remembered this very painting when he included the Et in Arcadia ego motif"⁵² in one of his later paintings. Panofsky then proceeds to trace the correct use of the phrase in England all the way to the writings of Evelyn Waugh.

The last and most important figure in Panofsky's explanation of the change in content of paintings of the Et in Arcadia ego theme is Nicolas Poussin. Panofsky contends that Poussin is the

⁵¹Panofsky, p. 309.

⁵²Panofsky, p. 310.

"one man whose pictures mark the turning point in the history of the Et in Arcadia ego theme."⁵³ Panofsky begins his discussion of Poussin with an argument for the influence of Guercino on the first of Poussin's two paintings representing the Et in Arcadia ego theme. Even though Poussin made some changes, his first Et in Arcadia Ego painting "does not conceal its derivation from Guercino's."⁵⁴ Panofsky supports his claim of derivation by pointing out three areas of similarity between the Guercino and Poussin paintings: 1) the drama and surprise; 2) the depiction of an actual skull; and 3) the moralistic message.

Panofsky judges Poussin's second painting to be historically significant for the radical break which it made with medieval tradition.

In short, Poussin's Louvre [second painting of the Et in Arcadia ego theme] no longer shows a dramatic encounter with Death but a contemplative absorption in the idea of mortality. We are confronted with a change from thinly veiled [medieval] moralism to undisguised elegiac sentiment.⁵⁵

Panofsky demonstrates how such a radical break was possible by showing three influences which could have supported the change:

1) "more relaxed and less fearful spirit of a period that had

⁵³Panofsky, p. 311.

⁵⁴Panofsky, l. 312.

⁵⁵Panofsky, p. 313.

triumphantly emerged from the spasms of the Counter-Reformation';

2) "the principles of Classicist art theory, which rejected... such gruesome objects as a death's head"; and 3) "Poussin's familiarity with Arcadian literature."⁵⁶ Poussin's simple rectangular representation of the tomb in his second painting is offered as evidence of his knowledge of Virgil's description of the tomb in his Fifth Eclogue. Panofsky further supports his judgment of Poussin's responsibility for the radical change in content by showing how Poussin's later painting forces one to interpret its meaning in accordance with the grammatically incorrect translation of the phrase Et in Arcadia ego.

Thus, Poussin himself, while making no verbal change in the inscription invites, almost compels, the beholder to mistranslate it.... The development of his pictorial vision had outgrown the significance of the literary formula.⁵⁷

As evidence for the necessity of interpreting the second Poussin according to the mistranslation, Panofsky notes first that there is no moralizing content in the second painting, and second that the symmetrical composition and expressional subject matter (calm discussion and pensive contemplation) disallow any element of surprise or drama. Panofsky cites contemporary literary evidence in support of the conclusion that it is the person buried in the

⁵⁶Panofsky, p. 313-314.

⁵⁷Panofsky, p. 316.

tomb, not the tomb itself or Death, who must be assumed to have uttered the latin phrase inscribed on the tomb. All this evidence supports the interpretation of the Et in Arcadia ego as "I (deceased), too, lived in Arcady," rather than the correct "Even in Arcady, there am I" (Death). Having thus judged Poussin to be ultimately responsible for the change in content (Panofsky's explicit claim) Panofsky concludes his article by tracing Poussin's influence on conceptions of the phrase Et in Arcadia ego through such men of letters as Goethe, Schiller, Flaubert, and Diderot and other painters including Fragonard and German Romantics.

Panofsky, in the article, exemplifies what has here been called a particularized art-historical explanation. He offers an explanation of a change among art-historical events. To support his explanation Panofsky makes assertions about the unique historical significance of particular art-historical events. These significance-assertions are based on judgments of originality. Events judged historically significant are then shown to have later influence. The influence of significant earlier events, as well as other events, is asserted. These influence-assertions serve to bind together the individual events of the explanation. The influence-claims are based on possibility arguments, showing earlier events to be available to those claimed to have been influenced, and by comparisons, showing similarity between

earlier and later events. Thus, Panofsky has explained an art-historical change by citing individual events and by assimilating them into an explanatory narrative by judging historical significance of particular events and by drawing relationships of influence among the separate events.

EXPLANATION AND CHANGE

Change has been presumed throughout this chapter to be the phenomenon which art-historical explanations account for. Change is something which occurs in time. It cannot be conceived of outside a temporal frame. To say of something that it has changed is to say that it is in some way not the same as it was at some earlier point in time. A change may occur in a moment but is only comprehensible in terms of how a thing is at one time different from how it was at an earlier time. Change can be considered in all three of the ordinary frames of time--present, past, and future. We can ask after what is in the process of change now, what has changed in the past, or what will change in the future. The historian is particularly concerned with changes in the past.

The historian, like anyone else, lives and works in his own present time frame. His knowledge of the past is not direct. It is achieved through a reconstruction of what was, accomplished through an examination of what is. He works with his own memor-

ies and the expressed memories of others, as well as with documents and artifacts, i. e., things which existed within the past and which remain in existence in the present.

The art historian, like other historians, must gain his knowledge of art-historical change by examining evidence available in the present. However, his situation is different from that of the general historian in his relationship to one class of those things remaining from the past. That special class of things is, of course, the class of works of art. In most cases, the general historian relates to his documents and artifacts as things whose value is extrinsic, that is, the value of the object he examines is in what it can tell him about something outside itself, specifically events in the past. Much of the evidence (art works and other things) available to the art historian he uses in just the same way as the general historian--to find out about past events. Along with having an interest in the extrinsic value of art works, the art historian is also very much interested in the intrinsic value of those artifacts as they still exist in the present, apart from anything they might tell him about the past. While a general historian might use Wall Street financial records existing in the present to help him reconstruct a change in the past, e. g., the stock market crash, he is not, as an historian, interested in those financial records for their own sake. When Irving Lavin

and Meyer Schapiro studied the works of Caravaggio and the master of the Soulliac sculptures, they were interested in what those art works could tell them about events of the past, but also in those works for their own sake. The art historian's interest in art works for their own sake, however, is not an atemporal interest. The art historian, qua art historian, is always concerned with individual, presently existing art works in terms of events of the past. The concern for art work for its own sake is most prominent in art-historical interpretations, like those of Lavin and Schapiro, when past events are used to interpret objects still in existence in the present.

When art historians are seeking to explain change among groups of art-historical events, art works must be considered for what they can tell about events. They may retain their intrinsic value to the art historian but this cannot be his predominant focus. Such is necessarily the case in any study of change. Change takes place among events over time. The art works themselves do not change or, if they do, that change is only of secondary interest. Thus, the sort of change an art historian is interested in explaining is a difference occurring between earlier and later events in the past.

Gombrich's and Panofsky's explanations account for two very different sorts of art-historical change. Gombrich explains

a change in pictorial style, a change occurring over a period of three or four centuries and visible extensively throughout Greek art of that period. Panofsky's explanation is both more and less restricted than Gombrich's. Panofsky's narration begins in ancient Greece and traces influences nearly to the present, but is restricted to a very limited theme--a theme, by no means dominating any period within that very extensive span. As preceding sections of this chapter should demonstrate, the method of explanation as well as the sort of change which is the object of explanation distinguish the works of these two art historians. Both men, however, do make use of evidence in the present, e.g., art works themselves and literary evidence, to help reconstruct and then explain art-historical change. The same sorts of evidence in the present are used to make very different sorts of explanations.

Explanations of past change do not, of course, automatically form themselves even after all relevant evidence is available. Evidence only yields knowledge to be used in explanation when questions are asked of that evidence. In fact, that evidence deemed relevant is only so judged in accordance with the questions of the historian. The questions which an historian asks in order to develop an explanation arise out of

differing explanatory demands in the present.⁵⁸

One might be interested in understanding change out of simple curiosity alone. A chronicle of art-historical events might well be all the "explanation" necessary to satisfy such a demand. "Explanation" is used with reservation here since the sort of account provided by a chronicle is not usually thought of as an explanation. The demand for which a chronicle might be offered might be expressed: "Explain what happened?" but more likely would be expressed: "Tell me what happened?"

Demands for art-historical explanation can arise out of an interest in understanding (or controlling) the present or in anticipating (or predicting) the future, as well as understanding change in the past. Such a demand can only be satisfied by an explanation which discovers uniformity of change in past, present, and future. Gombrich's generalized explanation is such an explanation. The reader will recall that Gombrich explicitly

⁵⁸Gwynn Nettler, Explanations (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970), p. 2 and p. 6.

"Explanations then, are addressed to questions. A first step in the art of explanation is to examine the question to ascertain what it asks--that is, what would satisfy it."

"It should surprise no student that explanations that satisfy one man's curiosity or another man's morality or the third man's urge for action may fail the fourth man's desire to predict."

states his assumption that human mentality has not changed from the days of the ancient Greeks to the present (and presumably will not change in the future). This assumption of atemporal regularity is necessary to the sort of explanation Gombrich offers since that explanation depends on laws--timeless laws which will always apply when certain sets of conditions prevail. The things with which Gombrich chooses to support his explanation and the questions he asks about those things are dictated by the sort of explanatory demand he is satisfying. He chooses evidence from very different places and times since his law must be shown to apply always and every place in which the conditions prevail. He asks of art works of different periods whether or not the conditions existed which would indicate that his explanatory law be applied. He examines artifacts and documents from differing situations searching for regularities which can be formulated as part of an explanatory generalization about art which can then be applied to all times. The larger work of which the chapter on the Greek Revolution is a part sets forth Gombrich's explanatory generalizations about representation under the subtitle, A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation. In this book he puts his generalizations to work across most of the history of art. At one point he retrodicts events in the past, claiming that certain events must have occurred in prehistoric art, a

claim for which he supplies no evidence except his own law.

In his last chapter he applies his generalizations to twentieth-century art.

W. H. Walsh has suggested a very different sort of demand which might be asked of an historical explanation.

...a major task of history... [is] ...making men aware of the character of their own time by seeing it in comparison and by contrast with another.⁵⁹

Walsh is suggesting that we can gain a perspective from which to judge ourselves by getting away from our own situation. We can do this, Walsh says, by traveling to another country and describing and assessing differences, or by reconstructing another time with which our own situation can be compared.

Panofsky makes a very similar claim when he writes:

To grasp reality we have to detach ourselves from the present.... Instead of dealing with temporal phenomena, and with causing time to stop[natural sciences], they [scholars in the humanities] penetrate into a region where time has stopped of its own accord, and try to activate it.⁶⁰

He recognizes the importance of getting out of one's own situation.

For Panofsky it is the humanities with their concern with time

⁵⁹Walsh, p. 187.

⁶⁰Erwin Panofsky, "Introduction: The History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline," in Meaning in the Visual Arts (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1955), p. 24 [originally published in 1940].

rather than the natural sciences with their concern with the timeless, which provide that realm detached from the present from which one can gain perspective on one's own situation. Panofsky's particularized account of the change in content of paintings of the Et in Arcadia ego theme is an explanation which satisfies such demands. To provide a realm for comparison with the present, different sorts of questions are asked of the relevant evidence. The uniqueness of that other time must be discovered so that it can serve as a comparison with the present. Judgments of significance are also important. The demand is for a comparison for assessment (not control or prediction) of the present. Being able to assess the influence and significance of events and changes in another time should help equip one to be better able to judge one's own situation. It is precisely this sort of comparison which Panofsky's particularized explanation provides. He searches out the uniqueness of art-historical events and accomplishments, and judges their historical significance.

Thus it seems that art historians can be seen 1) to choose , things from the present to use as evidence, 2) to ask questions of that evidence, and 3) to form different sorts of explanations of change, depending on the explanatory demands to be satisfied. The notion of change also differs with the two types of explanation

under discussion. In a generalized explanation change is ordered, i. e., certain sorts of changes always occur whenever and wherever certain conditions prevail. Prediction, retrodiction, and proof in cases with little evidence, by appeal to laws, depends on the regular pattern of change. On the other hand, in particularized explanation change is unique.⁶¹ Change in another time is different from that of our own, thereby providing a comparison against which the present can be assessed.

The examples of explanation analysed in this chapter were chosen for their differences. They represent extremes on a continuum of sorts of explanation. The generalized explanation makes use of the particular just as particularized explanation makes use of the general. The difference is largely a matter of predominant focus.

An attempt has been made in this section to illustrate the different sorts of dialogue which can take place between an historian and his facts depending on the demand for explanation

⁶¹Dray, Laws and Explanation in History, p. 47.

"...we can interpret 'unique' in a relative rather than the absolute sense: the sense in which we ordinarily call persons and things unique, meaning that they are peculiar in certain respects."

to be satisfied. Art-historical change is neither "changing
or changeless." It is both.⁶³

⁶³Marc Bloch, The Historian's Craft, intro. by Joseph R. Strayer, trans. by Peter Putnam (New York: Random House, 1953), p. 28 and p. 42. [written in French between 1941 and 1944, published posthumously].

CONCLUSIONS

As is stated in the introduction, this study proposes to offer an answer to the question, "What is art history?" which is sufficiently extensive, comprehensive, descriptive, and analytic to be useful to art educators seeking to answer the further question, "How should art history be taught?" It proposes further that such a study proceed through an investigation 1) of what sorts of accounts are made of art-historical events, and 2) of how those accounts are related to art-historical events. The aim of this study is neither to define "art history" nor to treat metaphysical issues concerning the nature of art history. Its aim is to make distinctions about what is ordinarily called "art history" which will be useful to educators making decisions about art-history teaching. Paradigm cases of art history which have resulted from various distinct art-historical activities are analysed. The findings of this analysis can be stated as distinctions among objects of investigation, nature of

claims, sorts of evidence appealed to, methods used to build supporting case, and criteria for evaluating claims. These findings are set forth in the following section entitled "Summary of Findings" and in the table on page 152. In the next section of this chapter, "Educational Utility of Findings," examples have been used to demonstrate that the present analysis is indeed useful to art educators seeking to answer the question, "How should art history be taught?" In the final section a suggestion is made for another sort of analysis of art history writing which might also prove useful to art educators.

Art-historical Activity	Object of Investigation	Nature of Claims	Type of Evidence	Methods of Case	Criteria for Claims
Essential Research	Description	Nature of Assertions of Fact	Art Work under Investigation	Measurement; Observation; Comparison with Ordinary Visual Experience; Empathy and Recording of Descriptive Findings.	Public Test
	Attribution		Evidence of the Art-Historical Event under Investigation; and Evidence of other Art-Historical Events. (Evidence of an Art-Historical Event includes the Art Work and Evidence about the Artist and the Context.)	Description; Seeking and Weighing Evidence; Comparing Art Works Formally, and Hypothesizing.	Pragmatism; Coherence; and Correspondence.
Interpretation	Iconographic Interpretation	Explanation of Meaning	Representational Aspects of Art Work.		
	Formal Interpretation		Evidence of the Art-Historical Event (especially of Artist's Intention) and of Audience Expectations; and Evidence of Literary and Visual Conventions. Formal Aspects of Art Work.	The Methods of Essential Research; and Hypothesizing.	Possibility; Comprehensiveness; Applicability; and Objectivity.
Explanation	Generalized Explanation	Explanation of Change	Evidence of Regularity.	Generalizing	Control, Prediction; Retrodiction;
	Particularized Explanation		Evidence of Art-Historical Events (including Essential Research Claims and Interpretations).	Questioning Evidence.	Understanding; Curiosity;
			Evidence of Uniqueness	Judging Significance; and Identifying Influence.	Perspective; and Judgment.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Essential Research:

The art-historical activity of description is directed at investigating individual works of art. The claims which result from this activity are factual in nature and are based on evidence in the art work under investigation. The methods used to establish descriptive claims include measurement, observation, comparison with ordinary visual experience, empathy, and recording of findings. The case in support of descriptive claims is open to public test.

The art-historical activity of attribution is directed at investigating individual art-historical events. The claims resulting from this activity are also factual in nature. Evidence for attributive claims include the art-historical event under investigation but also other art-historical events (art works themselves as well as evidence about artists and contexts of production). The methods used to build attributive cases include description, seeking and weighing evidence, comparing art works formally, and hypothesizing. Attributive claims can be judged according to pragmatic, coherence, and correspondence criteria.

Interpretation:

The art-historical activity of iconographic interpretation is

directed at investigating individual art-historical events. The claims of iconographic interpretation are explications of meaning. These explications are based on evidence of the art-historical event in question (especially the representational aspects of the art work, evidence of the intention of the artist, and evidence of the expectations of the contemporary audience) and also on evidence of literary and visual conventions available at the point of time in question. Methods used to build iconographic-interpretive cases include hypothesizing, description and attribution. Iconographic interpretations can be judged against such criteria as possibility, comprehensiveness, applicability, and objectivity.

The object of investigation, nature of claims, type of evidence, methods used to build cases, and criteria for the evaluation of claims are alike for formal and iconographic interpretation with the exception of the fact that formal interpretation relies more heavily on formal aspects of the work as evidence, whereas iconographic interpretation relies more heavily on the representational aspects of the work under investigation.

Explanation:

Both generalized and particularized explanations are activities directed at investigating a number of art-historical

events. Both explanatory activities result in explanations of art-historical change. Both types of explanation are built on evidence about art-historical events, including essential research claims and interpretations. However generalized explanation makes particular use of evidence of regularity among those events while particularized explanation makes use of evidence of uniqueness among art-historical events. Questioning of evidence is important in building either sort of explanatory case. Generalizing is an essential method for building generalized explanations, while judging significance (based on originality) and identifying influence (based on similarity and access) are essential methods for building particularized explanations. Either sort of explanation can be judged against criteria based on the explanatory demands satisfied. Either sort might satisfy the demands of curiosity. Generalized explanations can be judged useful in understanding present art-historical events, predicting future change, and retrodicting change in the past. Particularized explanations can be used to provide a realm against which the present situation can be compared and which can be useful in judgments of significance of present art events.

The findings of this analysis are re-stated in abbreviated form in the table on page 152. A glossary of terms

from this table follows this chapter. The order of presentation of factors from left to right on the table is roughly representative of the order of occurrence of these factors within art-historical inquiry. Early on in his investigation an art-historical inquirer is likely to have some notion of both of the first two factors on the table. He is likely to know what he is investigating (the object of investigation) and the type of conclusion he is aiming to reach (nature of claims). The third and fourth factors are likely to follow the first two. After deciding what he will investigate and generally toward what sort of end that investigation is directed (assertion of fact, explication of meaning, or explanation of change), the art-historical inquirer considers his evidence (type of evidence) and builds a case with that evidence (methods of case). Finally the inquirer presents his claims with his supporting case for judgment according to various evaluative criteria (criteria for claims). This order of presentation of factors in the table is described only as roughly representative of the occurrence of factors in art-historical inquiry since research inquiry is often actually more complex than this simple sequence would seem to indicate. For example, for an art-historical account to eventually measure up to certain evaluative criteria, it may be necessary for the inquirer to be clear on those criteria when he chooses the object of his investigation,

the nature of his claims, the type of his evidence, or his methods of case-building. It is also quite possible for an inquirer to reconsider his choice of object of investigation or nature of claim while working with evidence in building his case.

The presentation of factors from top to bottom in the table is basically ordered by degree of complexity. The simplest items are presented at the top of the table, the degree of complexity increasing toward the bottom. The increasing complexity is particularly evident in the central portion of the table (type of evidence and methods of case) where all the factors of a simpler art-historical activity might constitute just one of several methods for building a case for claims within a more complex art-historical activity, e. g., all the factors of description might make up just one among several methods of building a case for an attributive claim. At a level of higher complexity, such as explanation, the case for the more complex claim might be built on simpler claims established by other inquirers rather than by methods which themselves establish those claims. For example an art-historical inquirer aiming to build a case for an explanatory claim might not himself go about establishing the descriptive, attributive, or interpretive claims which are necessary to his explanation, but rather he might accept and use as evidence the claims established by others to build his

case for his own explanatory claim.

EDUCATIONAL UTILITY OF FINDINGS

The findings of the present analysis can be useful to art educators in at least two ways. It can be useful in resolving some apparent controversies among prescriptions for the teaching of art history. It can also be useful in art-history curriculum decision-making.

For the purposes of demonstrating the utility of the findings of the present analysis in resolving some apparent controversies among prescriptions for the teaching of art history, let us consider a series of three articles all proposing changes for the teaching of art history (at the college-level) which appear in Gregory Battcock's anthology of New Ideas in Art Education.¹ As Battcock points out in his introduction, "Though the documents printed here [including the three art-history teaching articles] represent diverse viewpoints, what they generally have in common is a negative attitude toward the usual practices and ambitions of art education as taught in today's schools and colleges."² Patricia Sloan, Irving Sandler, and Carol Duncan, whose articles are here considered, all have taught or are teaching art history

¹Gregory Battcock, ed., New Ideas in Art Education: A Critical Anthology (New York: Dutton, 1973).

²Battcock, p. xi.

at the college level. Sloan and Sandler seem to be concerned with handling matters of fact (other than facts about art history) which affect the teaching of art history, while Duncan seems to be addressing a value issue affecting art-history teaching.

In "Teaching Art History in the Community College,"³ Patricia Sloan seems to be concerned with ways of handling factual matters affecting art-history teaching, i. e., enrollments of non-art-history majors (including "Black, Puerto Ricans and other disadvantaged students") in beginning art-history survey courses in which "Too much material is supposed to be covered in too short a time in too superficial a manner." Sloan assumes that the aim of a survey course in art history is the acquisition of factual knowledge, or as she puts it, "remembering dates and names" or at least "remembering what" certain artists' works "look like." The question to which she addresses herself is how non-art-history majors (including the "disadvantaged") can most effectively be taught to remember factual information about the history of art. Empirical research methods would seem to be appropriate methods for attempting to answer such a question, e. g., various teaching strategies might be attempted with similar students under comparable conditions, tests for knowledge

³Patricia Sloan, "Teaching Art History in the Community College," in New Ideas in Art Education: A Critical Anthology, ed. by Gregory Battcock (New York: Dutton, 1973), pp. 105-116 [originally presented in 1972].

acquisition administered, and conclusions reached about the effectiveness of those various teaching strategies. Sloan's conclusions are based on personal experimentation. She describes a method which for her results in the desired acquisition of knowledge⁴. She describes the organization of her lectures, selection of material, number of slides, slide lists and review notes provided, and other aspects of her teaching. She concludes that the problem of "covering" the history of art (which she emphatically insists includes non-Western art history) can be effectively accomplished by reducing the number of facts to be remembered,⁵ by concentrating on the work of individual artists, and by eliminating the study of architecture.

The present analysis can be useful to the consideration of Sloan's article by providing a means of evaluating some of her proposals in terms of the alternatives she considers. The value of Sloan's proposals is limited by the restrictive assumptions she makes about what it might mean to teach art history.

The question of how art history should be taught in two year colleges reduces finally to the question of how to teach a general survey course covering the entire history of art.⁶

⁴Although Sloan states that she believes strongly "... that the classroom should be a place for looking and thinking...", she gives no suggestion for how classes might be organized to bring about thinking.

⁵She writes of how much is "enough" for students to remember.⁶Sloan, p. 106.

The above statement is the first sentence in her article, and since no argument is offered for it, it seems to have been presumed to be self-evident. It is clear from Sloan's writing about art history that she further considers the discipline of art history to include a collection of factual claims mixed together with "inventions," "fiction," and "illusion." This very limited conception of the discipline of art history leads Sloan to a series of unnecessary conclusions. At one point, she criticizes art-historical style classification, comparing it to a system she finds much superior, namely, the Linnaean system of biological classification. This seems a particularly inappropriate comparison. The stylistic classification she refers to as the system of art-historical classification is not solely a classification of factual claims. Style concepts are often developed and used to shed light on interpretive and explanatory issues. The intended uses of style concepts are broader than that of factual organization, for which Sloan finds them inadequate. On the other hand Sloan does not consider several systems for organizing factual information about art-historical events which are available, e.g., chronology and classification by medium. The conclusions she reaches about the adequacy of art-historical classification might be explained by her presumption that the business of art history is solely that of establishing factual claims. Given this presump-

tion her failure to consider intended (interpretive and explanatory) functions of style concepts is comprehensible.

Similarly Sloan's proposal that instruction be focused on the works of individual artists might be seen to follow from her restricted assumption about the meaning of "art history." The factual claims of essential research are assertions about individual art-historical events. It is in conjunction with the art-historical activities of interpretation and explanation, which Sloan does not consider, that relationships among art-historical events become increasingly important. In interpretation the development of conventions apparent in sets of art-historical events is important. In explanation, generalization, judgment of significance, and identification of influence among art-historical events are important considerations. If Sloan does indeed hold the limited conception of art history as accumulations of individual factual assertions, it is not surprising that her instruction is focused on the works of individual artists rather than interpretive or explanatory concepts or generalizations.

Another of Sloan's conclusions, about the efficacy of teaching about art-historical concepts, is also comprehensible in terms of her limited presumptions about art history.

The only "concept" there is to French Impressionism is that at a certain time and place a certain group

of artists developed a particular way of making pictures. Whoever knows the paintings knows the concept, whether or not he calls it a concept. Whoever knows the concept without knowing the paintings--to the extent that such a thing is possible--really knows nothing at all.⁷

Sloan's notion of concept is narrowly defined in terms of her assumption about what art history is, namely, that it is a matter of facts.

Finally, Sloan describes the discipline of art history as divisible into assertions of fact and various other non-factual considerations, e.g., illusion, fiction, and invention. She writes that...

Perhaps it should be part of teaching the history of art to make students aware that the history of art is an illusion.... I confine myself when teaching to explaining what the current theory is, making it clear that this is a theory, not a fact. Then I ask the students to invent other theories of their own, and to think about whether any of these conjectures are really susceptible to proof.⁸

The only criterion she proposes for art-historical claims is proof (of fact), regardless of the nature of the claim.⁹ Sloan further recognizes no alternative art-historical methods other than those involved in "verifying points of fact."

⁷Sloan, p. 110.

⁸Sloan, p. 114.

⁹The present analysis proposes a series of additional criteria which might be called upon to evaluate different sorts of art-historical claims.

The past, to the extent that it is not merely a delusion of the present, lies on the other side of a temporal barrier as complete as that which separates us from the future. Whoever refuses to see that we cannot penetrate this barrier lacks either humility or common sense.¹⁰

Sloan does not seem to recognize art-historical methods commonly used to "penetrate" the barrier of the past--methods used to establish interpretive and explanatory art-historical claims.

Thus the present analysis of what might be meant by "art history" is useful in evaluating Sloan's article by providing a structure within which her assumptions can be considered. One can ascertain the scope of her proposals, (i. e., the range of situations to which her assertions apply) by comparing them to the range of alternatives set forth in the present analysis.

Irving Sandler, in "New Ways of Teaching Art History,"¹¹ seems to be concerned with matters of fact (other than facts about art history) which affect art-history teaching and uses historical methods in his attempt to cope with those matters of fact. The factual matter which Sandler sees as affecting the teaching of art history is a quality of contemporary culture.

¹⁰Sloan, p. 115.

¹¹Irving Sandler, "New Ways of Teaching Art History," in New Ideas in Art Education: A Critical Anthology, ed. by Gregory Battcock (New York: Dutton, 1973), pp. 117-127 [originally presented in 1970].

This dislocation of past and present has given rise to a shift of focus, more pronounced than ever before, on the here and now, on our contemporary culture, its values and standards. This shift is compelling us to reevaluate the role of received humanistic values implicit in art history as it is generally being taught today.¹²

This fact manifests itself in the classroom in the students' perceptions of the world.

The world as they see it is a far more fragmented, random--even orderless and meaningless--place than the past allowed.¹³

Sandler contends that present art-history teaching methods will not satisfy the demands of students within contemporary culture. This contention is based on the assumption that "The teaching of art history traditionally has been based on a conception of the past as a more or less orderly evolution of artistic traditions from generation to generation, each generation adding gloss while considering those traditions valuable and pertinent to its time."¹⁴ Even though Sandler's historical contentions about

¹²Sandler, pp. 119-120.

¹³Sandler, p. 120.

¹⁴Sandler, p. 119.

culture and traditional art-history teaching are contestable¹⁵, let us consider here how the present analysis can be useful in evaluating the conclusions he reaches based on those contentions.

One of Sandler's proposals is to change art-history teaching from following a curriculum developed around "a predetermined chronology of Western art" to a curriculum organized around "the conflicting issues deemed important now."¹⁶

In this way, we can determine what is significant--alive or dormant at any moment--in the past, significant because it exposes how we arrive at the present and by contrast clarifies our awareness of both past and present.¹⁷

The present analysis can be useful in pinpointing what might seem to be a contradiction with Sandler's proposal. He is

¹⁵It is perhaps important to note here that Sandler's view of contemporary culture in comparison to the past, and his view of traditional art-history teaching methods are, at best, tenuous positions. There have certainly been other periods in time when there was "an extreme dislocation of past and present;" (e.g., the period of the Reformation). There are also "conceptions of the past" which are anything but orderly and evolutionary (the concept of revolution has a long tradition and use in explaining historical change, as well as specifically art-historical change) and these other conceptions have been apparent in art-history teaching methods.

¹⁶Sandler, p. 124.

"I propose that we begin from the vantage point of the present...."

¹⁷Sandler, p. 124.

concerned with teaching what is "significant" in the past. He further judges an historical event to be significant "because it exposes how we arrived at the present." Surely "how we arrived at the present" is a phrase describing a development occurring through time and apparent in changes from earlier to later events.¹⁸ If this explication of Sandler's meaning is correct, then it is difficult to understand how significance, based on a transition among successive events, can be taught exclusive of at least some chronological consideration of art-historical events. Of course, it is possible to develop a curriculum which, as Sandler proposes, selects issues "deemed important now" and which makes use of specific narrative (chronological) accounts to deal with those issues. If this is Sandler's proposal, the present analysis can prove useful in understanding what it might mean to teach about what is significant in the past and also in suggesting how that significance might be understood (by means of a narrative account), thereby proving useful in curriculum development.

Carol Duncan's "Teaching the Rich,"¹⁹ is another article

¹⁸This sort of development is referred to in the present analysis as a narrative account (see particularized explanation).

¹⁹Carol Duncan, "Teaching the Rich," in New Ideas in Art Education: A Critical Anthology, ed. by Gregory Battcock (New York: Dutton, 1973), pp. 128-139.

for the evaluation of which the present analysis can be seen to be useful. Duncan's article seems to concern itself with an irreconcilable conflict in value positions affecting art-history teaching. She writes that...

...the art historian's traditional role, in schools not only of this kind [small liberal arts colleges for the sons and daughters of the affluent and educated] but less prestigious places as well, is precisely to transmit this ideology of aesthetic elitism.²⁰

Duncan would replace the goal of aesthetic elitism with a more democratic aim. She suggests that a way to teach art history democratically is by replacing "purely 'aesthetic' contemplation" with a study of "specific works of art...in relation to their changing societies...." She presents her case in favor of art-history teaching which emphasized social issues, by forming a false dichotomy between the aesthetic and social aspects of art. For Duncan it is necessary to find some non-aesthetic-oriented way to teach art history, if one is to teach democratically, because "most people are socially organized" to the extent that they cannot develop an aesthetic consciousness. Duncan presents her proposal for how art history should be taught, supporting that proposal on grounds of a democratic vs. elitist value position. Yet, her argument depends on an empirical

²⁰ Duncan, pp. 134-135.

presupposition, i. e., that most people cannot develop an aesthetic consciousness. Whether or not lower and middle class people have this capacity is not, of course, a question of value, but an empirical question.

The present analysis can be useful in relation to this article by providing alternatives to the two (presented as falsely dichotomous) presented by Duncan. The present analysis has shown how the discipline of art history can be seen in terms of activities as well as established accounts. Duncan's concern for the inaccessibility of masterpieces to most people is based on an assumption that art history is a set of claims about art-historical events judged to be important. Art history, seen as established accounts might be so interpreted; however, art history seen as activity provides another alternative--an alternative which might dissolve Duncan's pseudo-value debate about art-history teaching. The present analysis offers distinctions among both art-historical accounts and activities. If most people cannot aesthetically experience works judged important enough for study by art historians, perhaps their aesthetic abilities can be enhanced by learning to use art-historical activities to understand everyday visual phenomena. Development of curricula and methods which make use of art history construed both as a sort of activity, and as accounts, might thus eventually lead to demo-

cratically providing access for all to what was once an experience accessible only to an elite.

Thus we have seen how the present analysis can be useful in resolving or dissolving several rather different debates about art-history teaching. The present analysis has been shown to be useful in issues concerning factual matters (Sloan and Sandler) as well as value positions (Duncan). It has also been shown to be useful in conceptualizing issues which are resolvable (or only apparently resolvable) by non-analytic methods (Sloan, empirical; Sandler, historical; and Duncan, pragmatic [matching teaching with goals]).

A second way in which the present analysis can prove useful to art educators is in art-history curriculum decision-making. Curriculum development, as has previously been suggested, depends on more than an understanding of the discipline to be taught. Numerous factual matters and value issues also play a large role in affecting curriculum decision-making. While the present analysis does not, of course, settle questions of fact or value issues, it can, however, provide information useful in decision-making situations which are influenced by factual and value matters. Two demonstrations of this utility follow--the first arising out of concern for factual problems, the second, out of value concerns.

Let us imagine first an educational institution situated far from the nearest art museum and not well enough endowed to afford an extensive art collection of its own. Such factual considerations would have an important effect on art-history curriculum development especially if those developing the curriculum assume that it is important for students to study original art works. The present analysis could prove useful in planning a curriculum which could be implemented under those circumstances. Teaching a unit with the aid of a single original (even a student work) and a set of photographs of that original (slides, color photographs and black and white prints--from various angles, in different settings, under different lighting conditions) plus a series of commercial reproductions and replicas of several works (both two-dimensional and three-dimensional) could be made to serve double duty in the art-history curriculum. These various visual materials might be used in instructional situations in which students are taught some of the methods of essential art-historical research, specifically, the methods necessary to, and the criteria for evaluation of, the art-historical activity of description. Skills in measurement, observation, and comparison are necessary for the development of an art-historical description. These skills might be exercised on various sorts of visual materials, including those just mentioned.

The further skills of recording observed findings and

presenting them to public test might be developed through exercises in which, for example, students are asked to offer descriptions of one of a set of reproductions of a single work. Other students then attempting to single out the particular reproduction from the set basing their identification solely on the first student's description. Such an exercise could be used to teach the methods and criteria of art-historical description and at the same time prove useful in emphasizing differences among originals and various types of reproductions. A single instructional unit might thus develop in students an understanding of an important art-historical activity. That understanding in turn might be put to use in developing students' understanding of an important factual problem--the scarcity of local original art works. By offering distinctions within art-historical inquiry, the present analysis facilitates the curricular task of matching factual problems with potential means of dealing with them which might be found within the discipline.

In addition to being useful in curriculum decision-making affected by factual problems, the present analysis can be of use in curriculum decision-making affected by value issues. A case in point might be the problem of reconciling art-history teaching with a value position emphasizing the importance of student innovation. If curriculum developers conceive of the discipline

of art history solely in terms of the established accounts of art historians, it is difficult to develop art-history curricula which allow student innovation. In an art-history curriculum based on an established-account sense of "art history," the job of the student is to somehow acquire the knowledge generated and supported by others. The student studying under such a curriculum is not likely to be in a position to question that knowledge, much less establish any new art-historical claims.

The present analysis provides an alternative to the view of art history as established account, namely, art history as activity. The analysis has shown that hypothesizing is involved in building attributive as well as interpretive cases in art history. The art-historical activity of explanation requires in addition the abilities to generalize, to judge significance, and to identify influence. Structuring educational situations in which students are encouraged to engage in the art-historical methods of hypothesizing, generalizing, judging significance, and identifying influence could certainly allow for student innovation. New claims might be established by students using the methods of art history in unstudied areas: for example, interpreting the meaning of murals, windows, and non-representational decoration in a local church; by explaining why certain class art assignments result in more or less structured projects, inter-classmate

similarity, or experimentation; or explaining how community residential architecture has changed in the past seventy-five years. In this example, as in the previous one, the present analysis proves useful not by solving the problem in question (factual or value) but by offering distinctions which can be useful in dealing with that problem. In this case curriculum decision-making influenced by a particular value position (commitment to student innovation) is facilitated by an analysis of art history construed both as activity and as account. Thus the present analysis again offers distinctions which facilitate the curricular task of matching goals (based on value positions) with potential means of achieving those goals which can be found in the discipline.

The table of findings of this analysis (p.152) is useful in curriculum decision-making not only because it sets forth useful distinctions in abbreviated form, but also because it is organized by degree of complexity. The table should prove useful in aiding the curriculum developer in his sequencing decisions. Often an educator chooses to begin his curriculum with simple activities and proceed to more complex ones. The table provides him with the necessary information about complexity in art history to plan his curriculum accordingly. The table also indicates some important relationships among art-historical activities. It is surely important, for example, for the art educator deciding on

sequencing of activities to be aware that some simpler art-historical activities sometimes constitute one among several types of evidence or methods of case-building for more complex art-historical activities. If the activity of description can be used in building a case for an interpretive claim an art educator might well choose to order his curriculum accordingly, i. e., to plan to deal with art-historical description before art-historical interpretation.

The educational utility of the present analysis is of at least two sorts. First, the present analysis can be useful in resolving some apparent controversies among prescriptions for the teaching of art history. And second, it can be useful in facilitating art-history curriculum decision-making.

A SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

There is a sort of analysis of art history which has not been undertaken in the present study and which might be useful in providing alternative models for pedagogical methodology used in teaching art history. That sort of analysis which has not been undertaken is not of art history as the activity of art-historical inquiry, but rather of the form given to art-historical accounts.

Many of the scholarly writings of art historians take the form of a report. This report-form of presentation presents the claims asserted and the case built in support of those claims in

a straight-forward and concise manner.

Other writers accounting for art-historical events present their conclusions in other forms. One of these forms is the historical novel. If Irving Stone's Lust for Life and The Agony and the Ecstasy do not build cases for their art-historical claims about Van Gogh and Michelangelo which are acceptable to scholarly art historians, they do often create a sympathetic curiosity in the minds of their readers about the art-historical events discussed. This sympathetic curiosity might prove to be of a sort useful to art educators in introducing students to art-historical events. Yet one need not examine fiction to discover historical writing taking the form of a story.

Historical narration is sometimes presented in story form. C. V. Wedgwood, the British historian, provides a fine example of a story-form presentation of the findings of her historical research, in "The Last Masque."²¹ Wedgwood relates significant events and conditions of the end of the reign of King Charles I by way of the last royal theatrical extravaganza (the last masque) which concluded the Court festivities of the 1639-1640 Christmas season, just before the outbreak of the English Civil War.

²¹C. V. Wedgwood, "The Last Masque," in The Sense of the Past: Thirteen Studies in the Theory and Practice of History, originally published as Truth and Opinion (New York: Macmillan, 1960), pp. 139-156.

Wedgwood is able to tell the story of the artistic event, the theatrical, and the story of the tense court atmosphere enveloping that event in such a way that neither is subordinated to the other, but both stories combine into a very readable and illuminating narrative. In describing history writing, Wedgwood writes...

But art does come into it, for within the limitations of our human condition, truth is not apprehensible nor can it be communicated to another person without the help of art. To pass on any piece of information intelligibly requires a feat in the arrangement of words and ideas.²²

For Wedgwood there are two creative acts involved in doing history--one in researching the past, the other in the presentation of one's findings in intelligible form.

Robin W. Winks, an historian, suggests another form which historical presentation might take. He has compiled an anthology of historical writing which he compares to a particular sort of story--the detective novel.

What I have tried to explore in this anthology is the relationship between the colorful world of fictional intrigue, then, and the good gray world of professional scholarship, and to show how much of the excitement, the joy, and even the color properly belongs to the latter.²³

²²C. V. Wedgwood, The Sense of the Past: Thirteen Studies in the Theory and Practice of History, originally published as Truth and Opinion (New York: Macmillan, 1960), p. 83.

²³Robin W. Winks, "Introduction," in The Historian as Detective: Essays on Evidence (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. xiii.

Thus we find several sorts of story forms by means of which historical findings might be presented ranging from historical fiction to truthful presentation of a real detective story.

Robert Brentano, a medieval historian, is also concerned with the form of presentation which he gives to his findings. In reflecting on the form of historical presentation he writes...

I thought my job was to create something that would have its own existence.... I think, and thought, that history should be allowed to be, should be made to be, as demanding (and always as complex) as a play or a novel.... If history is worth writing at all, it must be written "real," with the violent and complex reality of serious fiction.²⁴

Brentano is not here advocating a sort of historical fiction fabricated around historical facts, but a presentation of fact which rivals fiction in the power of its form. Bound up with his concern for the form of his writing is Brentano's consciousness of the impact of various structures of writing on his readers. He exhibits these combined concerns in a passage in which he compares the form and impact of the chapters of his book to the structure and effect of "five movements in some sort of musical composition."²⁵ To quote one application of the analogy...

²⁴Robert Brentano, "Bishops and Saints," in The Historian's Workshop: Original Essays by Sixteen Historians, ed. by L. P. Curtis, Jr. (New York: Macmillan, 1960), pp. 25-26.

²⁵Brentano, p. 36.

The third chapter was meant to be a fast movement, in which the themes were to be restated in a relatively attractive, even pretty and obvious way, so that the reader-listener would be reassured about what he thought he had read or heard in the previous chapter, and also convinced of it because he had moved from difficult illustration to bright statement.²⁶

Such concern for effective presentation as demonstrated by Brentano may shed some light on how art educators might effectively present information to their students.

Analysing the presentation forms found in art-historical and historical writing (forms ranging from reporting, to storytelling, to carefully orchestrated manipulation of reader response) could be a worthwhile study for a researcher interested in distinguishing various models of presentation which might be adaptable in art education situations. The present study has been directed at analysing art history as a mode of inquiry. Another art educational study of art history might be directed at analysing art-historical presentation. In addition to analysing how art-historical accounts are researched and developed, one might analyse how they are written.

²⁶Brentano, p. 36.

GLOSSARY

GLOSSARY
OF TERMS IN TABLE OF FINDINGS

APPLICABILITY--Generalizability to other instances. (See pp. 96-97.)

ART WORK--(Used in the ordinary sense).

ART-HISTORICAL ACTIVITY--a process through which accounts of art-historical events are developed. (See pp. 10-11.)

ART-HISTORICAL CLAIMS--the conclusion or major assertions of a piece of art-historical scholarship.

ART-HISTORICAL EVENT--an event in the past consisting of an interrelationship of an art work, the artist who produced the work, and the context of the production. (See p. 26.)

ART HISTORY--1) all the art events of the past; 2) accounts of art events of the past. (See pp. 8-10.)

ATTRIBUTION--the activities involved in establishing specific factual claims about particular art-historical events, i. e., establishing claims about authorship, date, provenance, date, technique, and function. (See section entitled "Attribution," pp. 36-51.)

CASE--the support offered for art-historical claims.

CHANGE--a difference occurring in one thing over time. (See section entitled "Explanation and Change," pp. 140-151.)

COHERENCE--(Used in the philosophical sense. See pp. 56-59.)

COMPARISON--(Used in the ordinary sense.)

COMPREHENSIVENESS--accounting for a great quantity of detail. (See pp. 94-95.)

CONTEXT--situation within which an art work is produced.
(See p. 9.)

CONTROL--(Used in the ordinary sense. See pp. 144-145.)

CONVENTIONS--traditions. (See pp. 67-69.)

CORRESPONDENCE--(Used in the philosophical sense. See pp. 56-59.)

CRITERIA--(Used in the ordinary sense).

CURIOSITY--(Used in the ordinary sense).

DESCRIPTION--activities involved in recording the publicly testable factual observations of particular art works, i. e., recording observations of material, size, formal qualities, and natural (p.30) and expressive subject matter (pp. 30-31). (See section entitled "Description," pp. 27-36.)

EMPATHY--projection of oneself into another situation. (See pp. 65-66.)

ESSENTIAL RESEARCH--art-historical inquiry aimed at the establishment of factual claims about specific aspects of particular art-historical events. (See chapter entitled "Essential Research," pp. 26-59.)

EVIDENCE--(Used in the ordinary sense). Evidence is distinct from the object of investigation. Evidence must be in the present. The object of investigation need not be, e. g., an art-historical event is in the past. Evidence for building a case for some claim about an object of investigation may include evidence of the object of investigation but also of any other sort which lends support to the claim to be asserted.

EXPECTATION--(Used in the ordinary sense. See pp. 62-63.)

EXPLANATION--art-historical inquiry aimed at accounting for art-historical change. (See chapter entitled "Explanation," pp. 99-149.)

EXPLANATORY DEMANDS--expectation for the type of explanation which will be taken as satisfactory. (See pp. 143-149.)

FACT--basic and indispensable ingredient of art-historical inquiry. (See section entitled "Essential Research and Fact," pp. 51-59.)

FORM--the surface qualities and organization of surface qualities of an art work.

FORMAL INTERPRETATION--the activities involved in the explication of the meaning of an art work, that explication relying heavily on form as the embodiment of and evidence for content. (See section entitled "Formal Interpretation," pp. 78-90.)

GENERALIZED EXPLANATION--the activities involved in accounting for art-historical change by appealing to laws or generalizations. (See section entitled "Generalized Explanation," pp. 104-124.)

GENERALIZING--subsuming particulars under laws or statements of regularity.

HYPOTHESIZING--generating and proposing for consideration as-yet-unsupported assertions.

ICONOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION--the activities involved in the explication of the meaning of a work of art, that explication relying heavily on representation as the embodiment of and evidence for content. (See section entitled "Iconographic Interpretation," pp. 65-78.)

INFLUENCE--the effect of an earlier event on a later event.

INTENTION--(Used to refer to both conscious and unconscious intention. See pp. 63-64 and pp. 91-92.)

INTERPRETATION--art-historical inquiry aimed at explicating the meaning of works of art. (See chapter entitled "Interpretation," pp. 60-98.)

INVESTIGATION--art-historical inquiry.

JUDGMENT--assessment of significance based on comparison of different situations. (See p. 147.)

MEANING--the content of an art work (consciously or unconsciously articulated by the artist and comprehensible to a contem-

porary audience). (See section entitled "Interpretation and Meaning," pp. 90-98.)

MEASUREMENT--(Used in the ordinary sense).

OBSERVATION--attention to perception.

OBJECT OF INVESTIGATION--the unit of study of a particular inquiry activity. (Unlike evidence, the object of investigation need not necessarily be in the present. Evidence for building a case for some claim about an object of investigation may include evidence of the object of investigation but also of any other sort which lends support to the claim to be asserted.)

OBJECTIVITY--("Objectivity" can be taken to have a number of meanings. See pp. 97-98.)

PARTICULARIZED EXPLANATION--the activities involved in accounting for art-historical change by reference to particulars. (See section entitled "Particularized Explanation," pp. 124-140.)

PERSPECTIVE--understanding gained through comparison. (See pp. 146-147.)

POSSIBILITY--(restricted in its reference here to possibility at some particular point in time. See pp. 94-96.)

PRAGMATISM--(Used in the philosophical sense. See pp. 56-59.)

PREDICTION--(Used in the ordinary sense. See pp. 144-145.)

PUBLIC TEST--a check for accuracy based on empirical verification, appeal to ordinary experience, or standard measurement. (See pp. 32-35.)

QUESTIONING [evidence]--considering the appropriateness of evidence and considering what sort of information that evidence might yield. (See p. 143.)

RECORDING--verbalizing descriptions of observations. (See p. 34.)

REGULARITY--recurrent uniformity or order. (See pp. 144-146.)

REPRESENTATION--(Used in the ordinary sense. See p. 65.)

RETRODICTION--prediction of what will be found to have been the case. (See pp. 145-146.)

SEEKING AND WEIGHING [evidence]--considering what sort of evidence to seek, searching out that evidence, and evaluating the evidence found.

SIGNIFICANCE--the important originality or uniqueness of an art work.

UNDERSTANDING--(Used in the ordinary sense).

UNIQUENESS--the differences which distinguish things. (See pp. 147-148.)

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