

THE ART SEMINAR

This conversation was held March 13, 2005, at the University College Cork, Ireland. The participants were: Friedrich Teja Bach (Universität Wien), James Elkins (University College Cork/School of the Art Institute of Chicago), Andrea Giunta (Universidad de Buenos Aires), Ladislav Kesner (then Charles University, Prague), Sandra Klopper (Universiteit van Stellenbosch, South Africa), and David Summers (University of Virginia).

James Elkins: I'd like to begin by speaking, in a general way, about the physical conditions of art history worldwide. The University of Maryland published a document about art history in sub-Saharan Africa; it surveys about ten mainly French-speaking countries. The picture it paints is very different from the experience of art history in much of the world. In several countries there are art historians with no students, virtually no books, and often no slides. From other sources I have been made aware of the fact that in some African universities — in Nigeria, for example — the salaries of the professors are paid so irregularly that they are compelled to charge students for courses, creating a market economy in which students opt for the best combination of utility and cost. And of course it's common experience in many parts of the world that a full-time, permanent lectureship or even a professorship may not pay the bills, making it necessary to have two and even three jobs. It would go without saying that such situations make research impossible — it would, that is, except some researchers, particularly in North America, are not aware how common those situations are.

The question this kind of material poses is whether deficits like these mean there is simply *less* art history being done (so that an infusion of money would decrease the difference between such conditions and, say, European ones), or whether it affects the content in some other way.

Sandra Klopfer: Perhaps I should say that yesterday, when we were preparing for this panel, Jim said that he found the situation in South Africa, as I present it in my essay, to be depressing. I beg to differ: I don't think our situation is depressing. It simply forces us to be resourceful in ways that make us do things differently. The art history we teach is very different from art history as it is practiced in, say, America and Britain.

The canon of art, as it is taught in first-world countries, presents a problem for South Africa on account of the history of colonialism in Africa. There has been a shift towards validating indigenous art and archaeological material in recent years. This has been happening in South Africa especially since the emergence of democracy in the 1990s, and so, increasingly, we are teaching not European art, but rather concentrating on local and contemporary South African art and popular culture. An enormous shift is taking place, away from a Western history of art.

JE: And yet, as you've said, the textbooks of African art are not themselves produced in South Africa.

SK: Yes, these texts are being produced mainly by American scholars, many of whom first encountered Africa through the Peace Corps or because their parents were missionaries. In South Africa — and the rest of Africa — the pressing need to devote one's energies to teaching students at undergraduate as well as postgraduate level, together with the absence of a large market for academic books dealing with comparatively esoteric subjects like art, mitigates against the production of textbooks. With very few exceptions we therefore rely on texts collated by American scholars for a primarily American audience. These texts often draw on primary research done by scholars based in Africa, some of whom have even been asked to contribute to their production.

But the situation today is very different from what it was when I was an undergraduate student in the 1970s. In those years, many of my lecturers were South Africans who had studied at places like the Courtauld Institute, so they were never exposed to alternative, non-Eurocentric perceptions and values about what constitutes fine art.

JE: When I was assembling this panel, I had difficulty locating art historians who work in Africa; I found a number in North America, but I wanted to avoid inviting too many people from North America and Europe. The University of Maryland study makes an explicit reference to the “brain drain” in sub-Saharan Africa, suggesting that scholars who identify themselves as art historians find that more than simply economic pressures impel them to look for work elsewhere.

SK: Mainly, though, they emigrate because of the lack of adequate resources. Olu Oguiibe, a Nigerian art historian, is an example. He is also an artist, and that in itself is common in the African context because art history tends to be taught in a fine-art context.

JE: That also happens, for example, in China. I wonder if the percentage of art historians who are also artists, or who have been artists, is lowest in the United States and western Europe ...

SK: Olu speaks about the expatriation of Nigerian art historians; you will find highly qualified, very well-educated Nigerian art historians in many of the larger art history departments across the United States. As far as I know, none ever return to Nigeria.

Andrea Giunta: Such levels of expatriation have not taken place in Latin America, at least not yet. It may be a case where something like the contrary is true: many art historians who do undergraduate or postgraduate-level studies in the United States have then gone back to their countries in order to teach at universities, work at museums or become independent curators. There are temporary migrations, to do residencies as visiting professors, but not an overall “brain drain” (one exception would be Carlos Basualdo, for

example, educated in Argentina and working as an independent curator in the United States, fundamentally focused on Latin American art). On the other hand, this wouldn't be very positive for studies of Latin American art in either the United States or Latin America.

What would be ideal would be professors who split their time between the United States and Latin American universities, in order to generate joint projects. It is neither in the United States nor Europe where the highest level of research on Latin American art can be found. It's in Latin America. In spite of the fact that it is true that a professor or researcher in a Latin American university can hardly expect to live on that job alone and is obliged to carry out other related activities (conferences, articles, or curatorial projects), this is a good moment for research. This is not reflected by the same indicators used to measure art history's situation in the United States (the quantity of art history departments, or the number of specialist magazines), but essentially in the increasing number of books being published. This new bibliography does not focus on general histories, constructing a wide-ranging narrative of Latin American art or of each nation's art, and it does not offer a biographical perspective or catalogues raisonné, but rather on the analysis of specific periods and issues. On the other hand, even while the number of art history departments in Latin America remains relatively small, there are networks of exchange that are generated by seminars and symposia that permit researchers to maintain actively in contact. I believe that this network is more visible as seen from the United States (in some art history and Spanish or Romance Studies departments) than it is from Europe.

SK: Ironically, the same is true for Africa because it is in America that the study of African art has really taken off in the last

forty to fifty years. In England there is SOAS [the School of African and Oriental Studies at the University of London] and the University of East Anglia, but little else to connect African scholars of African art with Europe.

AG: I would add that generally, art historians in Latin America do not come from a visual arts background. Although some may have initially studied architecture, history or philosophy, a large part of their education is in degree courses in art history or in master's or PhD programs. This formative process has been present for the past fifteen years; previously it was not the case. It corresponds to transformations in the academic field. In this sense, ours is a discipline without a strong previous local tradition.

Ladislav Kesner: Getting back to Jim's question about the physical or material conditions, I am sure that material deficits mean less art history, and they also affect content. On a plane to Dublin, I just read a newspaper article ridiculing a new breed of so-called "turbocharged professors" in my country, who occupy two or three full-time jobs at different universities at once to get more adequate income and essentially spend their time speeding from one place to another; there are such people in art history and the implications are obvious. Material deficits, however relative this designation is, certainly are a very real problem in most places art history is being practiced. That said, I have heard them often invoked as an explanandum for whatever had not been accomplished, or should have been of much better quality.

So I cannot help but to see it also the other way around: poor or insufficient material conditions are also a consequence of art history's aloof isolationism, its inability to demonstrate why it matters and why it should be given more adequate funding. Certainly in my country, the unwillingness of art historians

to truly reflect on their audiences, to be held accountable for what they really contribute to society in exchange for public support, and to subscribe to some form of qualitative judgments of their work is endemic.

JE: Let's turn from questions of conditions to questions of content. I propose we divide our conversation into two parts. To begin, let's talk about the books and scholars who compose art history worldwide, and then about the concepts and terms that structure art historical interpretation.

Just to start with an emblematic example: the University of Maryland survey notes that in Dakar, one art historian uses a book called *Aesthetics from Plato to Michaud* for the introductory art survey — it's a book I have been unable to trace.¹ I remember, Sandra, that after a long talk about conceptual issues — those I hope to raise in the second part of our conversation — including mention of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Husserl, you said, "We no longer use those sources in South African art history: we don't even look at people like T.J. Clark, Thomas Crow, or Michael Baxandall."

SK: Let alone Wölfflin or any of the older theorists.

LK: Baxandall, and specifically his theory of intention, has only recently been received in Czech art history. Sometimes you have to allow time for major conceptual revisions.

JE: In China, Baxandall has only recently been translated, by Cao Yiqiang. That could be seen as an odd choice given the existing translations from English, which include Gombrich (there have been Chinese translations of his books for several decades) and, in 1999 I believe, Wölfflin.² That makes for an interesting situation for young Chinese art historians: it is hard to imagine how a history of twentieth-century art historical thinking could be reconstructed from the quite

disparate sources that are currently available. Selections like those cannot be taken simply as parts of a larger picture that remains to be completed: they have to tell a story by themselves, and that story is therefore not only partial but essentially different from the stories we might tell.

And this is then different in kind from the situation you described, Sandra, when you remarked that Baxandall simply isn't present any more in South African art history. That is not belatedness; it is more like absence — or really, an amnesia.

SK: I would have been raised on Wölfflin. But perhaps what matters is not the absence of certain discourses around art but the politicization of the discourse. Pierre Bourdieu would be someone we look at extensively, and he would be known to our students; but Baxandall would not. Obviously there are exceptions and these are shifting emphases. But the notion of cultural capital, for example, is current and significant for understanding certain exclusions that are more relevant for us than they would be in a more European environment.

AG: In an art history student's formation in Buenos Aires, Wölfflin, Riegl, Warburg, Baxandall, and also Bourdieu or Williams have a presence. Terms like "belatedness" may turn out to be much more irritating than "genealogy," because it is hardly possible to separate out the disastrous consequences that the narratives of progress have had on the analysis of artistic and cultural processes: when art is considered in terms of advancement or backwardness, it loses its specificity and originality. I certainly don't wish to fall into a naïve use of the term "invention" by proposing a history of the advanced nature or absolute originality of Latin American art, particularly that which is considered avant-garde. But notions such as "backwardness" as articulated from a Eurocentric perspective do not allow for a meaningful visualization of artistic or historiographic processes.

JE: This question of sources leads naturally into discussion of kinds of art history that are practiced and taught. A working distinction can be made between what I call, in a statistical sense, *normal art history* — by which I mean historical writing that is concerned principally with documentation, archival evidence, patronage, conservation, and iconography — and what might be called *theory*. The distinction is a traditionally vexed one on the discipline, but it can be addressed in a very straightforward manner by considering the journals that are classified as art history.³ A number of them pursue iconographic and other concerns; and others focus more on debates surrounding such issues as historiography, methodology, and politics of the discipline. I bring this in here in order to introduce one of the ways that a conversation might begin on the subject of *kinds* of art history, especially as they can be identified through journals and monographs.

LK: I wonder to what extent this distinction between *normal art history* (or what others would call *positivist* art history, sometimes in derogatory tone) and theory-laden art history or *theory* (again sometimes meant in derogatory sense) mimics the distinction I tried to point out between some local art histories and the international shape of the discipline. I do not want to play the advocate of *theory* here, but quite often the distancing from theory involves ignoring the art traditions outside the traditional Eurocentric scope — as if art history should be protected from both.

Friedrich Teja Bach: Regarding the diversity of art history, I think we should try to see what our expectations are. How unified do we expect art history to be, or how diverse? Only then can we judge whether certain things are significant.

I studied German literature in the 1960s, and my wife taught German literature at Columbia University in 2003.

The two occasions do not have much to do with one another, actually. One main difference was that in 2003, at Columbia, there was no longer talk of literature. They talked about poetics, aesthetic theory, and so on ... whereas when I studied German literature in a very philological way. The two contexts were very different, to say the least.

So I would say we should not expect too much homogeneity. On the contrary, the diversity we have been talking about in relation to South Africa would be both expected and normal.

I would also like to say, Jim, that your term *belatedness* creates a certain problem. It suggests a linear development; only in a linear development can one speak of belatedness. That seems to be at the least very problematic.

JE: How, then, would you characterize the fact that Wölfflin was translated into Chinese in 1999? To me belatedness does not imply a linear difference. The time lag poses a specific set of problems, because Chinese students who read Wölfflin in 1999, presumably without the intervening literature and without Riegl, Warburg, and many others, were encountering specific problems of reception. Some of those problems, I would agree, shouldn't be called "belated" because they would in effect be *inventions*. But others would have to be called that, if they led for example to the students adopting style categories.

FTB: Well, but things come up to the surface of history in different manners; some come up and vanish. Some come up again, and their second surfacing would not be a belatedness: they would become actual in a new frame of reference.

And I do think that belatedness means there is up-to-timeness, and everything else is belated.

JE: I would be happy not to use the word belated, but I would not be as happy to draw the conclusion that every occasion is a new one, especially because one of our principal subjects so far has been the diffusion, not the reinvention, of texts and textbooks. I think it is possible to study genealogies of the narrative structures of textbooks, and to find lines of dependence. What significance one might choose to read into those dependences is another matter.

I don't want to imply new is better, old is worse. There is a bibliographically quantifiable diffusion — not a linear development — in texts, which is why it is interesting to consider the editions of authors like Wölfflin or Baxandall.

FTB: In cultural phenomena, belatedness is an actual issue. Popularization largely works with programs that were current forty or fifty years ago. *There*, belatedness is a correct description.

Of course my model would not be textbooks; it would be points where the discipline is working *with* Wölfflin, or *with* Baxandall. A textbook is a level of information for students. I am speaking of moments when the subject rises to the level of an actual discourse, a leading discourse of the discipline. Once something comes up in a discourse, it is in a way new. If Chinese students work with Wölfflin, then theirs would be a different Wölfflin.

JE: That would often be true. But I disagree with your assessment of textbooks: I would say their structure informs the structure of classes at higher levels, and those in turn inform the choices of postgraduate specialization, and ultimately the reasons why monographic studies are made. From my point of view, textbooks can be formative for the discipline, so that it can be quite significant to study when and where they are written and translated.

A concrete example is Burhan Toprak's *Sanat Tarihi*, which tells the history of the Christian West up to Chartres, and then turns to Hindu and Japanese art.⁴ The narrative structure there is dependent on Western models (Helen Gardner's book, I think) up to the passage on Chartres. I would think that a textbook like that would necessarily be formative for the shape of the discipline in places where it is read.

To me, it is hard to overestimate the importance of the standard "story of art," which I identify synecdochically with E.H. Gombrich's *Story of Art*. Whole chains of dependence, misunderstanding, abbreviation and expansion, and adaptation come from receptions of the story Gombrich tells so clearly — the very Eurocentric story that has proven so difficult to import into local contexts. Hundreds of textbooks can be marshaled to tell these alternate stories.

AG: If we had had to consider the popularization of texts that had extraordinarily wide circulation in Latin America, perhaps more than Baxandall, Riegl, or Wölfflin, we should consider Ortega y Gasset or Franz Roh and the extraordinary influence they had throughout Latin America during the first half of the twentieth century. The narrative structure of art history in Latin America cannot be separated from Western models, even though it questions them. This also applies to the reading of canonic authors, readings that do not necessarily follow the order delineated by the discipline of art history discipline. These readings are frequently marked by chance or specific interest. Chance intervenes in the form in which one makes contact with certain books. Reading depends on the material conditions related to dissemination: what can be translated, what can be published, and what can be read. Until the 1980s, people in Argentina still read in French, but not in English. And nothing in German.

Almost nothing that was produced in the United States was being translated.

Reading and translation processes are also marked by censorship (if you look at the translations cited by Ana María Guash you realize that while Franco was in power the translations that were read in Spain were done in Latin America, and in Argentina in particular). In this sense, the translation of Wölfflin into Chinese in 1999 brings me to ask myself, not about the question of delay, but about what it is that Wölfflin may have to offer to the analysis of Chinese art that Baxandall or Riegl might not.

The idea that one must have complete knowledge of a discipline in order to make use of its instruments, that one must possess its entire genealogy, is Eurocentric. For an art historian in Latin America — and I suppose in China as well — the genealogy that is of interest has to do with reading cycles and patterns, and with the establishment of a reading canon. Notions such as “backwardness” or voids in reading material can be of importance for those who are concerned with defending a discipline’s purity. This, I would dare say, is not a problem for a Latin American, which is more interested in knowing in what way a discipline like art history might serve its own concerns.

SK: We could also talk, as we did yesterday, about the remaining collections of plaster casts after the antique —

JE: They are a kind of art-school corollary of the “essential” writers of art history —

SK: There is a collection of those casts, for example, in the Fine Arts Department at Stellenbosch; despite the fact that we no longer teach the canon of Western art, I was surprised to discover that none of my students had the faintest idea that

they were walking every day past a plaster cast representing St. George by an artist they appear not to have heard of.

David Summers: So far, this conversation has been mostly about the diffusion of art history as we know it, and as we know it, art history is obviously not global. I am not surprised if students in Africa do not find Donatello's St. George of great interest, or if they are puzzled or even offended by the expectation that they should. Where do they find art with which they themselves might be culturally identified? Gombrich's *Story of Art* starts off with a section called "Strange Beginnings." The "story" is at least implicitly universal; it begins with Paleolithic art, then there are six or seven examples of "primitive" art. Most of the book is devoted to the story of European art to modernism, with a few pages in the middle on Islam and Asian art, excluding India. This narrative — essentially in the direction of optical naturalism — to my mind is a problem to be solved. It is a terrible face for a would-be global art discipline to present to the world. What is the interest in finding yourself among "strange beginnings," or in finding your artistic tradition exhausted in half a page of prose?

JE: This is what first got me involved in this subject. My own contribution is the book *Stories of Art*, which collects several dozen histories of art written outside the West, including Toprak's that I mentioned, and shows how their different narratives cannot often be taken as art history.⁵ To me the lack of viable alternatives demonstrates the pervasiveness and the strength of the standard "story of art" that I find so well exemplified in Gombrich's book. One reason why I think globalism is art history's most pressing issue is that Gombrich's narrative, if I can call it that, and one source of my pessimism on this subject, is that it has proven so hard

to either modify the “story of art” in a satisfying manner, avoiding a sense of dependence, or else to produce a newly structured story that can still be persuasive as art history and not as a capricious local invention.

DS: When I began studying art history at Brown University in Providence, the first book I was given to read was Wölfflin’s *Principles of Art History*. I was told I would learn how to look at art, that is, “form,” by reading it; the course, however, was set up so that we studied modern art first, because it simply is “formal.” Then we went back and did the history of art leading up to modernism, including Renaissance and Baroque art.

JE: Where I went to undergraduate, at Cornell University, we were also given Wölfflin as an introductory text. As we read it, we were warned: This is not proper art history; it shows you categories of seeing, but they don’t correspond to the discipline as we practice it. I wonder if similar warnings accompany readings of Wölfflin in, say, Chinese universities.

DS: Well, but there was a close formalist connection in those days between art history and art practice. Studio sections, in which we did “formal” exercises, were also part of the introductory course. The rise of contextual art history at first drove a wedge between the history and practice (although art has also become more and more “contextual”). There have been attempts to bridge the gap between form and context — Michael Baxandall or T. J. Clark, for example — but contextual art history pushed hard in its own direction. It seems to me that the situation in which art, considered very broadly, is now practiced and taught as primarily “political” is an anticipatable effort to establish a relation between art that is understood fundamentally contextually and art practice.

JE: I think what you say about that particular reception of Wölfflin is right. And that, again, would seem to me to be a particular reception that would not be available elsewhere: it's not likely, for example, that it could be used as a reason to read Wölfflin today!

DS: Students read Wölfflin now with a high degree of resistance, edging into noncomprehension. This is an old text, which is to a degree about old issues.

JE: I have also noticed a resistance that comes from a certain sophistication about reading. Students recognize Wölfflin through deconstructive texts like Marshall Brown's "The Renaissance Is the Baroque."⁶ We're perilously close to saying no one believes the text, and no one thinks it is pertinent to the current discipline: to me that would place it in the realm of historiographic inquiry, rather than methodological interest, and it would make me wonder about times and places where Wölfflin appears to retain methodological pertinence.

Another way to think about art history as a worldwide phenomenon is to take up the question of the relation between art history and neighboring disciplines such as art practice, art criticism, and visual studies. It is important, for example, to pay attention to places where art criticism stands in for art history, where there is no developed art historical practice.

DS: In the United States, certainly, we have many art history undergraduate majors, and the great preponderance of them gravitate toward modernism: that is, they study exactly the kinds of art history that take them close to the critical issues Sandra was discussing. That preference contributes to the blurring of art history and criticism.

JE: The big threat to art history, I think, is visual studies. There is the possibility in many institutions that art history

will disappear into visual studies. In most places I know that possess a visual studies or visual culture department (or center, or concentration, or program), the art history department loses students to visual studies.⁷ That is in part simply because students would rather study reality television than Rubens. One of the futures for art history might therefore be to dissolve into visual studies.

DS: As I listen to the situation in South Africa, practices there seem to pose a real problem for art history, because it is associated with the “civilizing” aims of a discredited political order.

JE: Yes, Sandra, from your perspective the discipline of art history has, as it were, already dissolved before it has come into existence.

SK: I think we have quite different takes on visual studies in the 1990s, because I think the reason visual studies is triumphing in the African context is because it is abolishing hierarchies; it is, as Nicholas Mirzoeff says, including everything that was excluded in the hierarchies of modernism. That does not necessarily mean visual studies is ahistorical, which is the biggest fear some people have about it. It is thought to be a leveler —

JE: That has been said, yes —

SK: — but I think there is room for a visual studies that is historically nuanced.

JE: That is a charge that is often leveled against visual studies, and it is not always true. There are senses of history in visual studies texts, and there are people who would call themselves visual culture scholars who are interested in the history of

their own field, young though it is (perhaps it goes as far back as Burckhardt, if you're thinking optimistically).

But the artists, movements, and central concepts in art history and visual culture follow different lines. One of the reasons I think visual studies is perceived as a threat by some people in art history is an insouciance regarding the genealogies that art history posits for itself, and the notion that it is now time to completely reinvent relevant histories for the new field.

Sometimes Nick Mirzoeff does work this way. He gave an interesting paper last year on images of Babylon and other metaphors that could be used to rethink political images in the present.⁸ I thought it was intriguing and provocative, but to some people in art history it would seem overly optimistic about the possibility of forgetting the narratives of art history.

SK: I understand that, and I think there is room for both. In certain contexts, because of lack of resources and because of our very problematic colonial heritage, it offers an out: but we still do a form of cultural studies that is rooted in an attempt to understand the relationship between visual histories and the human endeavor. This allows us to move away from being *burdened* by that colonial heritage. So it's a way of surviving, rather than a way of dying.

LK: I would like to return to the starting point of the seminar, and to your statement, in your review of David's book, that global art history is the most important issue facing the discipline. In my essay I disagree with that, and Andrea has said that in Argentina this would also not be the most important issue. Yesterday we agreed that the topic of this seminar is closely linked to the subject of the social purpose of art history in any particular context. Let's talk some more, then,

about why you say that the claim regarding globalism might be mapped into the problem of art history's social purposes.

JE: You were concerned in your essay about the importance of the diminishing public for art history.

LK: Yes, I was noting the gap between what any artworks of any culture — Irish prehistoric monuments, nineteenth-century American painting, Shang Dynasty Chinese bronze, whatever else — may offer cognitively and emotionally, and the very small amount that people in museums and galleries seem to obtain in their mostly superficial encounters with works of art is. I have spent most of my professional career working in or for museums, and my view might be hypercritical or cynical, but the diminishing demand for art and trivialization of art seem to me incomparably more important than the problem of whether art history is sufficiently “global.”

JE: I see these issues as completely entwined. Take for example Irish art history. The curriculum that is in place here is based very much on Continental European art. It is biased, also, toward England — there is often material on the Grand Tour, on Palladianism, on Robert Adam, silver, Georgian design, Canova.⁹ That comprises a narrative, and also a canon — two of the issues that interest me — and also a terminology and methodology that support such emphases.

Then, and this is where the subjects are entwined, you then have the question of social use, utility, and purpose. Why continue such a curriculum? The assumption would have to be that those artists, periods, and concepts are the appropriate ones for Ireland, for the education of a cultured person in Ireland.

AG: Ladislav, I think we might talk about differences between our two contexts; that might be useful in bringing out this

theme. As I understand what you're saying, you have a theoretical frame and a local context, and that is how the discipline works. Maybe I am wrong —

LK: What I tried to briefly underscore in my essay was the distinction between writing in English, addressing the global audience, and a moment, when — writing in your native language — you participate in one of the local art historical environments. Either way you implicitly or explicitly address a different sort of audience, and the writing is subject to different sets of constraints, or demands, and motivated by different purpose. It is certainly not surprising to observe that in most of these local contexts art history (or the local practice of discourses and practices connected to images and objects) is anything but global — for reasons ranging from the lack of resources we touched upon earlier, to more or less overt manipulation of art historical narratives (museum displays included) for the purpose of fostering nationalistic ideologies.

JE: I would think that one of the main difficulties in addressing art history this way is knowing when you can spell out people's motivations. In the case of Irish art history, I don't know any nineteenth-century texts that say, "What Ireland really needs is Continental European art."

Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes [from the audience]: Hugh Lane!¹⁰ He bought impressionist paintings around 1910, and said that he did so in order to show them to Irish artists (in a Gallery of Modern Art in Dublin) to help them build up an Irish school of painting.

JE: Oh, yes, right! Thanks for that. Well, anyway the lack of such texts can make it tricky to say exactly what motivations might be. Certainly in the United States it is widely acknowledged that nineteenth-century fascinations with

Europe drove the Eurocentric art historical curriculum. It was even the object of parody in the nineteenth century, for example by Samuel Clemens. There is a literature on the subject, but it is not available as such *while it's being taught*. Then it seems, as Marx would have said, natural.

This varies very widely. When the state promotes an extensive art historical idolatry, as in Romania, then it is immediately perceptible as such and open to critique as soon as the politics permit. But in other cases, and here I include Ireland, it lingers.

I would also be wary of considering this issue as a local one, and contrasting it to global issues: not least because globalism, as a doctrine, can have local motives. Perhaps that's the way it is in South Africa. Globalisms also serve local communities.

FTB: I would like to return to the question about what constitutes the most pressing issue. Ladislav, regarding the specificity of art history, on the one hand, and its ability to enter into dialogue, on the other: I would say they have to go together.

I would rather say the most pressing issue is to ask the question, "Where do they need us, as a discipline?" And of course we are needed where we cannot be replaced. That is the dimension of specificity, and it has to be an open specificity — open to dialogue with other domains, realms, disciplines. That would be a different emphasis than globality, I think. The question is: How far do we have to open the field in order to be open to the dialogue, and where do we lose by opening our specificity too far? That, I think, is the most important question.

JE: How would you specify that specificity?

FTB: It has to do with looking, with seeing, and with a kind of insight they can produce. It is a specificity, an insight,

that is different from literature, theory, and so forth. That would be our contribution to the irreplaceable, specific cognitive dimension.

JE: That is compatible with a visual-studies standpoint, even an ahistorical one.

FTB: Sure.

AG: This point you underline, that the principal thing we need to conserve is the specificity, of looking at objects —

FTB: It is not just looking at objects; it is also looking at looking, at ways of looking —

AG: Of course. At the ways of looking. If you look in the index of any book written in Latin America about modern art, you will find the idea that modernism began with the translation of impressionism, twenty-five years later; or the translation of cubism, or the translation of abstraction. (Dada never existed in Latin America — it appeared in the 1960s.) Latin American histories always confirm this chronology, this narrative, of the history of art.

It is useful, therefore, to pay attention to the way we look at the objects, and at the kinds of visuality the objects are constructing. To have all the tools that come from the narrative of the Western history of art, but to work on the differences and contributions made in Latin America: changes that are not independent of Western art history and visuality, but introduce specific characteristics. Sometimes these are large contributions, to Western culture as a whole. Art history could be a useful tool for understanding important differences between Latin American and European visuality.

What does a Latin American art historian expect here? To show that what has taken place in Latin America is not

just theory, but different ways of looking at reality, and different ways of considering the context of the real through the image. And to show that if you wish to continue you need images that will add important elements to the narrative.

JE: Let me propose some categories that might apply to the possibilities we have been considering. These are four different ways the narrative that I like to assign to Gombrich's *Story of Art* has been received.

One is emulation or dependence: a country might produce books and scholars interested in *understanding* and *adopting* the standard Western narrative. Books with titles like *Modern Art in Thailand* do that, and they risk being read as dependent, at every point, on Western models.¹¹ It can be as if the author has taken the standard Western narrative, erased all the proper names of periods and artists, and put local names in their place. This is the principal problem I had with Steven Mansbach's *Modern Art in Eastern Europe*: that it drained the interest from the artists it introduced to its readers by comparing them, initially and with qualifications but always to their detriment, to Western artists who had preceded them.¹² We have not talked about emulation here, but I think it is the most prevalent relation worldwide.

A second is absorption: Andrea, you say in your paper there is no problem with the European narrative because Argentina has long collaborated with modernism, or connected with it —

AG: In Argentina, we don't have a conflict with art history as a Western discipline. Latin America has a very different history than, for example, South Africa; it would be difficult to imagine we don't have a relation to European art. After all, Latin Americans speak Spanish, one of the world's major languages ...

The administrative and educational structures were initially imposed on us, but Western traditions remain extremely important. For us as art historians, the challenge is not to alter the discipline of art history, but to use art history in order to understand culturally specific phenomena. Hence we don't have problems with the limits of disciplines; we can use a variety of disciplines as they are needed.

This does not mean that there is a specific absorption, as might come from James's classifications. A history of modern Latin American art requires specific words for determinate artistic movements. Such specificity deactivates explanations based on emulation, dependence, or absorption. For example, terms like *indigenismo*, *muralismo*, *martinferrismo*, *universalismo constructivo*, *antropofagia*, and *neo concretismo* (indigenism, muralism, martinfierrism, constructive universalism, anthropophagia, and neoconcretism) come to my mind. These terms are not on the fringes of European narratives, but they do create disturbance, challenging their limits and established schemes.

JE: A collaborative connection, where it exists, would have to be a precondition for thinking of a local tradition as being absorbed into the Western tradition. If relations of dependence, independence, or (to take up the problematic word) belatedness became preeminent, the anxiety they generate would make it impossible to go on thinking of the absorption of the local into the European.

A third relation is *absence*: when the standard Western narrative is simply excised or was never present. Sandra's description of contemporary South African art history sounds like that: they reject the narrative; they have no use for it.

And the fourth is *reaction*: when the standard Western narrative is rejected, in whole or part, and where it appears as a problem posed to the independence of local history.

I think these are four productively different configurations. Emulation, reaction, and their attendant anxieties would be the whole middle ground, the places where I think most art historical traditions outside the West find themselves. By luck, we have on this panel two more extreme positions, one of relative independence (“absence”) and one of relatively reconciled identity (“absorption”).

I imagine that what happens in South Africa would seem very strange to students in Buenos Aires. I imagine them being told, “We don’t need all that European art: it’s an asked-and-answered problem and speaks only to a past we no longer want. Let’s go on and do something different.”

AG: If I had to position art history in Latin America in the context of global art history according to the categories that James proposes, I wouldn’t consider the relation to be one of reconciled identity (“absorption”) but rather of reaction. This does not imply the absence of art history as a discipline, but that art history’s limits are both used and questioned. It means art history as a discipline is in negotiation with other disciplines.

SK: It’s not exactly that we’re not anxious. And the same is true of Nigeria, I think. There is still an effort to engage a more traditional conception of art history. But from year to year, there is a dilution in the effort.

LK: Jim, you seem to be concerned about narratives, largely those that circulate among professional communities of art historians and students. I would be more concerned with narratives intended for broader audiences, those who do not read scholarly texts and do not attend conferences. When I was a small boy, one of my first TV experiences was Kenneth Clark’s *Civilisation*; you will remember how one-sided or Eurocentric the story is.¹³ I don’t know what

the most general coffee-table books are for audiences here in Ireland, or in England — books that people might buy to get some idea of the history of art. In my country, it's a Czech translation of a Spanish scholar, José Pijoán. The history of art in eleven or so volumes, but again anything non-European art, being allotted absolutely marginal place.

JE: Yes, I know this series — in Spain it's around forty volumes.¹⁴

LK: It was first translated into Czech in 1972–73, but it keeps being reprinted all the time. It is by far the most widely distributed and popular general source on art in the Czech Republic and surely not only there. This would be the kind of book that the general audience would browse through, to get some general education in the histories and scope of art.

JE: There are other examples as well. In German there is the *Propyläen*, and in Russia a multivolume history that was widely reprinted.¹⁵

LK: And there is Horst Janson's book —

JE: Yes. I have a particular perspective on these books. I think even the largest of them share a common story: they have demonstrable lineages. The biggest are efflorescences, outbranchings of the core story. The simple narrative of illusionism (to take Gombrich's theme, which is also the exemplary theme) is interrupted, bracketed, divided and subdivided, and rendered effectively invisible: but I think it still persists, which is why to me the entire field of study is in the end the study of a reaction against a single very powerful story.

FTB: Ladislav and Jim, if we talk at this level we should not talk about books at all. We should talk about television

series. If we are to talk about how the public is informed, we should forget about books.

LK: But that prompts the question why art history hasn't been more successful in translating the enormous accomplishments of scholarship on so many distinct artistic traditions, its increasing awareness of specific and local practices of art or image-making, into these popular sources and venues of information. Well, to get an answer, people from publishing business, TV stations, editors, etc. would have to join the discussion.

SK: Art historians definitely participate in the promotion of tourism: I would say that's a major function that we don't sufficiently acknowledge. I was involved in an exhibition in Cape Town recently, commemorating the tenth anniversary of democracy in South Africa, and it was a huge international success. Whatever else we thought we were doing, that exhibition played a significant role in the Cape Town tourist industry. The closing date was postponed on two different occasions in response to indications that local and international visitors were keen to see the show. Because of its popularity we were even urged, at one stage, to find a permanent venue for it.¹⁶

JE: That is not unrelated, given that the kinds of thinking that go into blockbusters and other exhibitions that could be called touristic can often be assigned to art historical narratives. The Art Institute in Chicago, where I work half the year, had an exhibition of Monet's works.¹⁷ Some of us called it the "Money" show, and it certainly had that function: but it had serious art historical content, and at least some of its motivation and coherence — as invisible as that might have been to many viewers — was generated directly from the disciplinary narratives as we have been discussing

them. The curator, Charlie Stuckey, had a point to make about late Monet. You are right, Ladislav, the point was not communicated to many people: but a diluted version of it must have been.

AG: This is not a small point: all these books, television programs, and versions of art histories published in what could be called peripheral places, all sharing the same schema. What is this art history, then, and how is it understood throughout the world?

JE: I think all this discussion, no matter how wide it becomes, is on the same subject. I have yet to see a television series on art that cannot be assigned, at whatever remove, to the standard story and its variants. Kenneth Clark is a perfect example: he comes out of an Edwardian education, and that taste and those emphases are perfectly clear. This is not at all to say that Ladislav's concern is solved: just that we are not really changing topics when we talk about television, tourism, coffee-table books, or blockbuster shows.

Just to finish up this portion of our discussion, I would like to mention the relative absence of art historical narratives that do not follow the general lines we have been exploring. There are many eccentric examples, like Toprak's, which don't follow the model. But there is also a broader question: Why have viable alternate narrative forms not appeared in art historical pedagogy? The Chinese scholar Jason Kuo is publishing a book of interviews with Chinese art historians; in it there is vacillation over what counts as *connoisseurship* in modern Chinese scholarship: is it just the name for some Western-inspired protocols of looking, mixed with Chinese interests? Or is *connoisseurship* the only available name for a truly indigenous, conceptually independent practice that has no institutional name?¹⁸ There are Chinese specialists on

both sides of this issue (and those who deny the issue has any purchase or interest).

And more broadly: I don't know any art historians who specialize in Chinese art being hired in Western universities for their ability to deploy Chinese interpretive methods. They are hired for their expertise, and partly for familiarity with Western methods, such as iconography, semiotics, social art history, and so forth.¹⁹

Why, in other words, do the alternatives continue to remain nearly invisible? There is a depressing parallel to be made here with searches for alternates to Western global capitalism. It's hard to find them, because they are being swamped by the machinery of capitalism.

Questions from the audience?

John Paul McMahon: Concerning colonial heritage: Sandra, when you were talking about the shift to local and indigenous practices, did the tools and modes of analysis change, or did South African art historians retain Western tools?

SK: The whole tradition of iconographic analysis (I removed a lot of stuff here) is still used, and even increasingly so. There is also increasingly a tendency to "indigenize," to localize interpretive tools like these. Quite where this will take us in the long run I don't know. Yet I would not be as pessimistic as Jim seems to be. It is fascinating watching how global practices get localized and indigenized, appropriated and transformed. An obvious example in South Africa is the whole hip-hop phenomenon: it is being localized there, as it is elsewhere in the world. Interpretive modes can also be localized, a point that has been made time and again in the pages of journals like *Third Text*.²⁰

Elisabeth Shee Twobig: Galleries haven't been mentioned much; maybe there hasn't been a textbook on the subject yet. I am thinking of how in Sydney there is a gallery that has a section on impressionism, and then one on indigenous art.

SK: Maybe there is no *need* for a textbook. Maybe, Jim, that is not what people do in the peripheries: maybe there simply is no perceived place for a grand narrative of any kind if one is not at the center.

JE: I don't mean to say there should be a physical object of any sort. Galleries imply and embody narratives.²¹ The recent intense interest in the new MoMA and its slightly ambiguous, somewhat open-ended narrative — which still retains the essential MoMA story of modernism — is a case in point, perhaps the paradigmatic case.

LK: I am sure there is a demand for a narrative, for some meaningful way to plot the development and conceptualize the variety of arts on the part of general audience, and I even believe that this is one of the things that art-loving people legitimately expect art historians to provide.

Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes: I feel that books both in the center and the peripheries are reacting against the globalism and the money-spinner. When I studied in Germany, we weren't given any textbooks at all. We were discouraged from reading one-volume histories. I am not a pure example, because I profited greatly from the Courtauld survey lecture series, but it was assumed that professors teach to their specialization. One had to learn piece by piece what the jigsaw puzzle of art history was.

Now I teach in Belfast, and I find that for very different reasons there is no survey. It is an art school, and they used to be understaffed; and besides, art students don't like art

history anyway. So art history teaching happens in studios, in an ad hoc fashion.

JE: Isn't there a parallel between your description of teaching in Belfast and the situation of art history in some smaller countries, where there can be a sense of independence from the centers? The parallel being that in both cases, in studios and in universities, there is a conceptual dependence on some narrative. What goes on in the studio certainly draws what coherence it has from art history.

John Paul Stonard: Just in terms of trying to get a grip on what is a large playing field: I wonder if you can address the motivation of the question about what could constitute a world history of art. Would you distinguish between an intellectual factors and institutional factors? Teaching has been mentioned as an important factor, and there are issues of expanding audiences by teaching and through museums. But the intellectual part would be the inauguration of new narratives, their invention and dissemination. Is that how you would divide the field, or are they in fact together?

JE: That is a very difficult question, masquerading as an easy one. The two issues you raise are linked; but I think you may be right: a weakness or limitation in the ways I describe the field may be that I can't account for the appearance of new narratives, and yet my understanding of the field turns on them.

Let's move on, then, to our second topic, the concepts that inform art historical writing. In the first instance, we could talk about concepts that have been taken as useful for a world art history, and concepts that have been utilized only or mainly in local contexts. And to begin, there is the project, common also in postcolonial studies, in anthropology, and

in linguistics, of mining local contexts for terms that can speak to wider concerns.

Our essays include several such concepts. In my review of David's book, I mention Nancy Munn's use of the Walpiri word *warri-ngirntiri*, as well as the Japanese term *ma* (which has apparently completed an arc of interest and is now waning in Western citations), and several others.²² But since the exotic is contingent on who speaks, I would also mention the French tableau, which my wife Margaret MacNamidhe (who is a specialist on nineteenth-century French painting) has taught me to see as a very complex and virtually untranslatable term — a local term, if such an expression can be applied to the central tradition of Western artmaking in the nineteenth century. Yesterday Wolfram Pichler mentioned the difficulty of putting English *modernism* into German: *Moderne* and *Modernismus* are perhaps inadequate as one-word equivalents.

Teja Bach has suggested for one of our readings an excerpt from a book by Dagobert Frey. There, under the heading “Weg-Motiv,” by which Frey means the occurrence of paths and directions in world architecture, I note that the section on India begins with the claim that the “primitive morphological form” of paths in Indian architecture is “the ambulatio (*pradakshana*).”²³ Now *ambulatio*, as I understand it, is a form that first occurs in Roman architecture in the first century BC. *Pradakshana* or *pradakṣiṇa* is the clockwise circulation around the holy site — typically a stupa — that is part of the being-viewed-by-the-god widely known in Western literature as *darśana*.²⁴ *Pradakṣiṇa* involves honoring but holding oneself apart, seeing and being seen, and it is particular, I would think, to certain times and places that are distinct, in part, from examples of ambulatio such as Pompeii.

An initial question with such terms is how they connect with the terms that ostensibly frame them. In Frey the conjunction of German *Weg*, Latin *ambulatio* (both apparently framing terms, because they are Western), and Sanskrit *pradakṣiṇa* raise this question in an especially clear form. Would it be good to locate as many such terms as possible, to raise art history's sensitivity to local contexts, or would it be, in the end, unnecessary, especially if the Western terms are understood as providing the explanatory ground?

DS: One of the very common forms of space is circumambulation. It is at least a quasi-universal, although it is crucially important that it takes culturally characteristic linguistic and spatial forms. Alexander ran around the tomb of Achilles, people circumambulated the tomb of Augustus, Aztecs practiced circumambulation, and people circumambulate stupas. The ambulatory in a Christian church usually circles a relic.

JE: I would think that if we had a panel of, say, dyed-in-the-wool postcolonial theorists, they might want to say something like, "Well, pradakṣiṇa has to be used when the subject is a stupa, because the indigenous discourse is necessary." There would be skepticism about the idea of an underlying term that would take pradakṣiṇa as a special case.

DS: As you know, I would like to abandon the Eurocentric idea of the "visual" arts altogether and, in general, to replace it with "spatial" arts, the terms of which are much less reductive. Frey was on the right track, but does not go nearly far enough. In my terms, architecture and images are always variants of human social and personal space, so that the third term, in relation to which specific cultural forms and practices — the two are inseparable — may be compared is

human corporeality and its significance in the context of any number of possible built environments.

I would not imagine *Real Spaces* working as a textbook that would tell people the “stories” we were talking about earlier. There might be any number of stories — “shapes of time” as George Kubler might call them — which, however, because all are variations on human corporeality, are not mutually untranslatable. Circumambulation is an excellent example of a powerful tendency on the part of people in many traditions to acknowledge centers of value, if in a variety of specific ways. In a course on Indian art, it would be possible to explain what circumambulation means in a certain context. But the idea is to proceed from the possible conditions of shared human spatiality to culturally specific — but not radically different — practices. That is exactly what I would want to do.

JE: Conceptual problems aside, there are also political problems. I imagine that for some readers, those who want to see terms like *pradakṣiṇa*, the book might be a hard sell. There is a notion that particularity entails skepticism about universals.

DS: I don’t think any cultural practice is reduced in belonging to a more general category. Perhaps the political problem arises because Western academics are accustomed to thinking of languages — which are ultimately untranslatable — as the paradigm of reality definition and communication. But then it has to be explained why in linguistically absolutely unrelated traditions very simple real spatial patterns occur in local variants. Pilgrimage is another example. I understand the resistance to the reduction of “our” categories to “yours,” but perhaps this is not really a necessary alternative. The history of art has been very nationalistic, and has been deeply implicated in the faith in progress and cultural

superiority justifying Western imperialism. It is hard to accept the contingencies of one's origins. I think that's a very general problem ... I often encounter in seminars objections to the implicit relativity of cultural beliefs and practices. But in fact, an important part of the global challenge to which the history of art might also rise is the furthering of the willingness to suspend convictions about the absoluteness of one's own behavior, and to understand the degree to which all behaviors are variations on physically grounded themes.

JE: That's very interesting. It sounds as if your students have diametrically opposed sources of skepticism from mine. On the one hand, suspending belief in the universality of one's own concepts, and on the other suspending disbelief in the possibility of universal or general concepts.

Another problem for an account like Frey's is the connection between a term like *pradakṣiṇa* and one like *darśan*: in other words the term that's imported brings along its unruly relatives, and the conversation becomes more problematic.

LK: Shouldn't we distinguish more carefully between, on the one hand, culturally specific terms that would be useful or necessary in the study of a particular cultural tradition and, on the other, terms coming from some linguistic or cultural tradition that might be potentially useful in the Western context as well?

In my essay I mention several terms in Chinese art. I would be interested to hear from specialists on Chinese art whether they think expressions such as *fu gu* (the return to the ancient) and *da cheng* (the great stylistic synthesis) might have some potential for use in general meditation on the return to tradition or stylistic emulation —

JE: You mean uses outside of Chinese art?

LK: Yes. So I would ask the people writing Assessments for the book whether they might come up with examples of such terms from various languages and contexts — from Yoruba to Japanese — which could perhaps compose some list of critical or useful terms for art history.

FTB: We should also consider that the willingness to coin terms is not evenly distributed. It is one thing to speak of terms, and another to speak of language. Otherwise we just presuppose that our European willingness to coin terms, or to focus a problem *in terms*, is universal, and that is not the case.

Even this gesture of opening up to terms from other cultures as a step in opening up to other cultures is —

JE: ... is itself Eurocentric.

FTB: Yes. That's one thing. A second point regards a distinction David made. If I remember correctly, you said there is a confrontation between undifferentiated space, on the one side, and bounded, centered, or circumambulatory space on the other.

DS: Yes, but my whole book is a qualification of that difference. Qualitatively undifferentiated space is the metric, Cartesian, or Newtonian space underlying modern technology, distribution, and communication. Traditional societies — including traditional Western societies — are more properly uniquely centered and bounded. Nationalism is a late bloom of this kind of centering and bounding.

FTB: I am hesitant to see that as an overall structure. To point briefly to one level of phenomena that is excluded in that structure: Foucault addresses different phenomena in his article on heterotopic spaces. He means social spaces that are pronouncedly fluid, such as cinemas, theaters, and

cemeteries. Those are a type of space that goes against the stability of centered spaces: they are heterogeneous to the bounded spaces, internally contradictory, and fluid — they move. This type of space has an important function, and it is left out if you think either of basic undifferentiated space, which we are all afraid of, or of stable, bounded space. I think it would be important to bring heterotopic spaces into the discussion —

DS: I don't think cemeteries, theaters, and cinemas really belong together. The necropolis — a city for the dead — has a long, culturally various history, as do theaters, “places for seeing.” It is very useful to consider these histories, and to compare and differentiate the cultural forms of housing and provisions for the dead and for drama. As for cinemas, these are paradigmatically modern, and I think in general that the idea of “heterotopia” was generated by modern utopias, which turned out to be dystopias, sites of uniformity and murderous efficiency. The category in any case is less apt to premodern societies, to the discussion of which urban space, with its confluences of variously centered lives and reactions against them. But I agree that these issues should be carefully studied. What I was after in the chapter on places in *Real Spaces* was basically the fact that the great cultures have been centered, at the same time that they have been isolated from one another. I present these differences as basically arbitrary, although they have deep and long consequences. People who come either to heterotopias, or to urban spaces, are coming to places having been shaped by very different, and very ancient, values.

In the book I wanted to devise a way to set Western culture, including premodern Western culture, against what is often spoken of as “later” culture. I wanted to make what I call *metaoptical* spaces a culture not just of a space that we all

fear, but also of a specific kind of projection and control, and a specific relation to nature. I wanted to place Western culture in a problematic but negotiable relation to historical cultures.

FTB: Well, I wouldn't agree with David's response. Heterotopic space bears a weak and a strong meaning. The weaker meaning, speaking informally, is that heterotopic space is a form of urban space. The strong meaning is different: Foucault does not speak of heterotopic spaces as urban spaces. On the contrary, he tries to show that heterotopic spaces are in *opposition* to urban spaces. In a broad sense, then, heterotopic space and urban space are compatible. But if you take the concept seriously, it falls out of your dichotomy of undifferentiated and bounded space. It is something *else*.

JE: Let me take a step back from both your interventions, Teja, and also your response, David. I want to ask if an adjustment or an addition to David's schema might ever comprise an adequate conceptualization of space. I ask that because I wonder if what we are talking about here is conceptualizations of space outside of or before their application to historically defined spaces.

DS: I meant to leave the idea of space itself relatively open, to be defined by the instances, the historical modalities, that I mentioned. It should be pointed out, however, that there is an immediate division of space into real space, including social space (architecture) and personal space (mostly sculpture); and virtual space (painting, in general, "space" seen in two dimensions). All virtual spaces have culturally specific formats, which are real spatial.

An important ingredient of *Real Spaces* was provided by George Kubler's *Shape of Time*. It is a conception of the history of art in which there is not any temporal metric against which

everything can be plotted, except for convenience. Kubler's conception is spatiotemporal and is conceived in terms of series, which are not reducible to one another; any work of art is a fusion of such historical strands in one or another circumstance. *The Shape of Time* posits a revisable diachronic structure for every culture, and things can diffuse from one culture to another: but basically the history that one might be concerned with in any given instance is a shape of time — an ongoing shape of time, but in possible relation to other shapes of time. The history of any place can be presented in those terms. The interesting thing about such categories, in my mind, is that they create interrelations: again circumambulation could serve as an example.

JE: Teja, on the question of the adequate conceptualization of space in general, would you say that the addition of Foucault's concept produces a conceptualization of space that could then be used to study *other*, historically specific kinds of space?

FTB: I would metaphorize the question. I am speaking of something like real black holes in the matrix of space: how cultures form, for compensatory or other reasons, such kinds of "black holes" *against* existing spaces. They fulfill an important function in society, and they would be included in a conceptualization — that is the brief answer to your question.

JE: What is concerning me here is the difference between conceptualizations of space that can be adjusted against one another, on the one hand, and on the other spaces that are conceived of as historical *subsets* of those spaces. This is a crucial distinction, I think, because the very concept of space — David's open, undifferentiated, phenomenological space — is something that we are only partly in possession

of as a historical concept. We know certain spaces were associated with particular practices in the past, and we are aware of conceptualizations of them — but we also have another intellectual domain, in which we attempt to classify *fundamental* issues of spaces. I don't want to say the "very concepts" of undifferentiated or phenomenologically understood spaces are outside history, because they appear to us as attached to history, but they are related to history in a different way. We take them to be merely *true*, as opposed to kinds of space we would say obtain in various times and places in the past.

DS: I'm not sure I see the problem you are raising. Perhaps it will help to think about the close relation between place-making and local cosmologies ... but I am not really concerned with that problem. It would seem to me to be an enormous projection over the art of the world that I would not want to make. I am trying to explain why the whole Islamic world, say, centers on Mecca; why Rome has the status it does; why there is such conflict over Jerusalem; why Cuzco was the navel of the universe. These things are not self-evident, but they have something like the simplicity of presence. When people built Teotihuacán, they buried relics under the major temple platform, and they oriented the site in such a way that they could continue to build as long as they lived in that enormous city. It is the case that cultures in general align their principal buildings in one way or another. That is what I want to take into account when I talk about the qualification of space and time. In a way, it's that simple an issue and the distinctions are that simple. I want to make them into the foundation of a truly comparative art history.

SK: What about diasporic cultures? There is an extremely interesting literature on the ways slave communities engaged

with master communities in the use of space, often behaving as Christians in public spaces, but continuing certain ritual practices in private spaces. This had the effect of destabilizing spatial hierarchies and the meanings generated through them despite appearances to the contrary.

DS: I talk about diasporas in the book: the first one, the Babylonian captivity, and how the Jews have continued to contribute to the metaphorical language of destruction and suffering. Or we might consider the Atlantic slave trade and Afrocentrism in the United States: that's a kind of centered thinking, because it implies a kind of return as a solution to problems, and an identification with a center. The question of the adaptation of diaspora communities is exactly the sort of thing I had hoped people would work on using the tools I have provided. Scattering very much lends itself to discussion in terms of centers.

JE: Let me reintroduce the subject from another perspective. It has been observed that no Western architectural treatises use the word *space* before the eighteenth century.²⁵ Instead the authors talk about objects. That would pose an insuperable obstacle for a certain kind of historical work. There would, I think, be agreement that using space and its cognates to describe Western architecture before the eighteenth century is technically anachronistic: but that would, I imagine, not be generally taken to be a problem. On the other hand, it raises the issue of the historicity of specific concepts of space, and the potential limitations of the uses of the term *space*. The absence of the term makes it necessary to ask what *portions* of our concepts are historically bounded, and what it means when a historian goes outside those bounds and continues to use the terms.

DS: Architecture is the art of social space, and Renaissance architecture is comparable to all other traditions in shaping social space in determinate ways. On the other hand, the intellectual history of space, leading to the way we seem inclined to use the word here, is another history, which post-dates Renaissance architecture. I don't see, however, why it is not altogether possible to discuss Renaissance architecture as social space, without encountering the word space in architectural treatise. And it would be of great historical interest when developed Western notions of space, worked out in scientific and technological contexts, begin to be applied to architecture.

Part of the polemic of the book is the rejection of the presumption that art is "visual," which is nothing more than a kind of abstraction from very ancient Western ideas. I have tried to demonstrate that certain categories of space are much more useful. That's why the book is so long.

We spoke of *darsan* before: the idea in that case is that the deity sees you. To understand that you have to read about other things — substitution, icons, invocation, and so forth. It is an excellent, paradigmatic example of an idea that basically can't be addressed in terms of visibility. You have to think differently about the "art" you are confronting in order to describe the practice.

FTB: I would like to come back to the term Sandra introduced, *displacement*. In terms of contemporary ethnographic theory, James Clifford would suggest that the terms of displacement are replacing terms like *exile* and *diaspora*. Those terms are still conceptualized in relation to a center, but displacement has become a general phenomenon and it cannot be captured with the term diaspora. Just in order to save the radicality of the question you posed, Sandra, I think you would have

to say displacement is increasingly a general fate, something that affects all of us.

Your question of displacement, properly understood, is a radical one, and it opens the question of centrality and periphery.

DS: I am talking about art history and the formation of cultures, and the evidence that exists for those formations. Your discussion of this, Teja, seems to be a modern projection over these historical processes —

FTB: We are not only talking about history: we are talking, as I said, about cultures, including contemporary cultures. And I would not say displacement is a projection of contemporary cultures.

DS: One of the repeated themes of *Real Spaces* is the contrast between the aggregate premodern world of places and the isomorphism and fungibility entailed by the realization and enactment of modern notions of space. The problem presented by the book's argument is the negotiation of this contradiction. The lives of the vast majority of people are shaped by traditional spaces. If all of that is so, how are traditional places and cultures to be respected and maintained? How are places made, and how might they best be made, in the modern world? "Displacement" seems to me to be a fairly obvious description of that predicament. People may now be authentically and radically displaced in ways that were not possible before. To be sure, the premodern world had its problems, but it was not like that.

SK: Can I take this up a bit further? There is a whole series of pieces that have appeared recently around the issues of asylum and migration. About 150,000,000 people have been displaced in the last several years. That raises interesting issues about cultures and their centers, and about people's

relationship to what they understood to be centers, or lack of centers.

DS: I couldn't agree more. But what I would like to insist is that these ideas do have cultural histories. Formulations — “displacement,” for example — are shaped for real historical reasons. I would like to contribute to a project in which these specific modalities were not simply erased by being called “displacement.” Displacement itself presupposes a certain economic and technological order, and an understood world spatial order, within which this movement is possible, and within which it is for one reason or another considered necessary.

SK: What is coming out of recent literature is a notion of displacement that involves the impossibility of return: not physical return, because that's always possible — but conceptual, because you can never go back to what was there before. There is, if you like, a quality of instability both in terms of the temporal and the spatial.

Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes [from the audience]: I would like to underline what you have said, Sandra. I also note an increasingly positive valuation of hybridity. On notions of space, I wish to give an Irish example, from Belfast, where there are two different cultures who experience space differently. They have clashed and now share a limited appreciation of space, or an appreciation of limited space. You could begin with circumambulation in Irish Celtic cultures: you could adduce the ritual of adding stones to cairns and walking around them three times; there are then the hedge schools [clandestine Catholic schools held outside, in the first half of the nineteenth century] and the dancing at the crossroads [a utopian image made famous by Eamon De Valera, prime minister of Ireland] ...

Those kinds of spaces were put in place by various historical necessities, of course. But you may still find today that the Catholic community is open to looking at other cultures, such as South Africa, Israel, Palestine, and other displaced peoples. On the other hand, both communities exhibit a siege mentality. Peace walls [which divide Catholic and Protestant communities in Belfast] are actually welcomed, creating an ever smaller and more restricted sense of space.

DS: There is an important difference between the making of markers by the old Celts (and many other people) and the archaizing reenactment of these forms, which, it should be noted, continue to have to do with identity. And I would be very disappointed if the effect of *Real Spaces* were to create a division between fenced and unfenced cultures, even though, unhappily, defensive walls mark the interrelation of many human groups. An important implication of the book is what my old colleague Richard Rorty calls “contingency.”²⁶ It’s a hard thing for people to acknowledge that what they believe most deeply and assuredly is contingent. But, to use another of Rorty’s terms, we must all learn to maintain reserve of irony in our beliefs, such that there is room for the beliefs and practices of others. That to me would be the ideal circumstance. We may or may not all be displaced (and some people are displaced more than others), but there is also the possibility of human identification and mutual respect.

LK: I would like to express my reservations about whether in invoking concepts like “displacement,” we can move so easily between objects, art history, social movements, political realities, and even ecological forces. I say this even though I fully agree with Teja that we are talking not only about images and art but also implicitly about cultures. But talking about displacement in terms of modern cultural displacement

short-circuits the difference between those subjects and the ways displacement could be used to talk about objects and images.

JE: I think I would agree with that. But isn't there a wider issue in all of this? Everything we have been talking about in the last few minutes, beginning with heterotopias, and including circumambulation, diaspora, hybridity, and displacement, involves *adjustments* to conceptualization of space. These ideas may or may not be outside the schemata proposed in David's book. But all of them, potentially, would be acceptable — perhaps as ruptures of preceding categories, or as third terms, or as redefinitions — but they could conceivably all find places.

There are concepts of space that we have historicized fully, and there are others that we haven't fully conceptualized, which we live inside of, which we are in the business here of trying to fix. In my mind the versions of space we are considering are ultimately phenomenological. I think there is a commonly held set of ideas that represent the truths of space for us: it includes the psychological spaces that come out of Ernst Mach, and the "psychophysiological spaces" in Cassirer and Panofsky, and Husserl's and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological spaces. These would be formulation in which we find truths and starting points, and I want to distinguish them from other formulations that we might say belong in certain times and places in the past.

DS: I have a response to that.

JE: I know you do!

DS: Speaking of historicizing space: the functional category, from ancient Greece to the Renaissance, was place, *topos*. It implied boundedness and denied the possibility of infinity,

and to my mind it was a locally cosmological version of the relation between social order and higher order. In general terms, it was comparable to concepts in many other cultures.

In the case of your observation about the word *space* in architectural treatises: these are people who would have thought of themselves as being concerned with a kind of theatrical placemaking. The emergence of the idea of space was a great labor of thought that parallels the emergence of modern science.

JE: But then, for me, there is still the question of what space you begin with, where you stand when you interpret. I think that is at least partially Merleau-Ponty's space, and I find that strange.

I wonder if we might talk for a few minutes about our favored conceptions of space. In relation to phenomenology, for example, a lot of the conceptions we have been considering, including Foucault's, depend on a certain embodiedness, including a social embodiedness. That would comprise one of the strands in our own sense of space. I am asking this because it seems to me we are partly *inside* this sense of space, that we don't have a clear way out of it: and as a consequence, we see what appear to be other possibilities through phenomenological eyes. This would apply to all of us, including me, whether or not we want to begin with the capacious undifferentiated space in *Real Spaces*, or with something like *ambulatio*.

Because we know which passages in Merleau-Ponty or Heidegger seem apposite, we can also see our interest as historically bounded. Even in terms of art history, we can sometimes see how our conceptions of space have only recently become available. Yesterday, Teja, you mentioned the concept of *Raum* — as in *Lebensraum* — and how it enabled a certain kind of thinking about art historical space.

FTB: Yes, I was pointing out the necessity of considering the geopolitical sense of space. It seems necessary to have that in your back yard when you're talking about space, because in the Central European past, Raum had strong geopolitical connotations. Given the term *global*, even aside from one's intentions, it is especially important to think about geopolitical references.

This kind of historicization of your own categories seems important. So does the shift from a more, let's say, ontological position. Heidegger's important emphasis on Ort (place) against space in the 1950s and 1960s was not so much a social engagement with space. Thinking in a more political definition marks the second part of the twentieth century apart from the first. And now, we have to ask ourselves about our own position, and what it is we most need to be careful about.

DS: I am not sure that I can recognize my own thinking in phrases like "capacious, undifferentiated space," and I certainly did not mean to leave geopolitical issues aside. On the contrary, much attention is given to the formation of the modern grid of the world. I meant to help geopolitical issues to be negotiated in other terms. It is true that places tended to be regarded as stable entities, but that is one of the reasons they are very dangerous, and therefore one of the reasons we must learn to think about them. People associate centers with collective identity and continuity, but that may create situations in which people not connected to a certain center are not considered human at all. I put Jerusalem in a central place in the chapter on places because it is ambivalent in precisely these terms. Its relationship to monotheism, to the vigorously active world religions that are centered there, has geopolitical consequences. When Hitler was thinking of *Lebensraum*, and of making Munich the capital of the

Movement, and therefore of the world, comparable to Rome and Mecca, he provided the most murderous example of the danger that comes with centrality. This was very atavistic thinking, which was, however, persuasive to millions. We should know how to think about such things.

JE: Teja, I agree with that. Another way of starting the same critique would be to think of modernism, and the way that it disallowed certain kinds of talk about space. Space was immediately apprehensible, “purely optical” in the phrase. A recent book called *After Criticism* proposes an especially radical sense of embodied, political space, and the kind of writing it implies²⁷ —

FTB: You would have to talk about the “topographic turn” in cultural theory, but that is a phenomenon starting in the 1990s. Here *frame* as a category comes back, because as you said, it is not present in high modernism.

JE: The question here concerns the limits of self-awareness. We can watch ourselves subscribing to a phenomenologically informed concept of space, but since the topic is historical writing, it would seem to me important to continue to see how far out of that we can think, and that would include thinking about kinds of space to which we will not subscribe.

So, to pursue this. Another strategy is to consider concepts of space that are close to us, but to which we can't quite subscribe. An example for me would be Cassirer's and Panofsky's “psychophysiological space.” It has been thoroughly historicized, and yet at the same time has elements that may appear indispensable for a working sense of space — for example the claim that objects effectively change size depending on whether they are seen with other objects around them.²⁸ Or in general terms: an

extrageometric dimension of things that arises on account of bodily experience. That would have to be present in any viable “undifferentiated” notion of space in art history.

DS: I'm not sure I understand that, either. Cassirer was first of all a philosopher of science. In *Substance and Function and Einstein's Theory of Relativity* he made the very painful confession that he had to give up the *a priori* notion of Euclidean space.²⁹ I expect that he gets his concern with phenomenological space and time from that reexamination. He elaborated and expanded psychological and phenomenological space in opposition to what he considered a discredited *physical* definition of space. Even though Euclidean space is discredited it has continued to be very useful for doing things like getting me home to Virginia on schedule.

JE: Although if you were to read texts by people like Peggy Phelan — or for that matter George Mark Johnson, whom Teja mentions in his essay — you'd find a subscription to a radically embodied space not inconsistent with its beginnings in people like Husserl or Cassirer.³⁰ You are saying that Cassirer is a figure in the history of the conceptualization of spaces, but there are elements of it that contribute to the phenomenologically oriented undifferentiated space that continues to be both useful and true. (As does Euclidean space: but that is another issue.)

There is a crucial difference between all of these semi-conceptualized versions of space, which we are all content to debate, and historically bounded terms such as *pradakṣiṇa*. I agree with Ladislav that it would be interesting to expand on the uses of such terms in the discussion of art outside their local contexts, but even if one were to do so (and I have tried the experiment), you start from *outside* the concept, putatively from a position of control.³¹ Here the issue is different.

What is driving my anxiety here is that this use of a somewhat undefined, phenomenologically oriented space as a starting point may be the worst kind of Eurocentrism, the kind that says: Here is my concept; I know it's embattled, and it engulfs other concepts, but I am going to use it anyway. I think this issue, along with Teja's observation about the Western propensity for coining terms, is a deep problem in our conversation.

FTB: It's certainly true that the Western tradition is particularly obsessed with the term space. No other comparative culture is.

JE: It could be addressed in the ways we have been positing, and perhaps especially by considering "exotic" terms that appear outside our concerns, and letting them illuminate whatever it taken as art history by contrast.

FTB: This would be another question for those writing Assessments.

SK: There are also contemporary scientific terms concerning space ...

JE: Ladislav, regarding your idea of using local terms outside their local contexts. I don't think I have convinced anyone with my attempts to do that, and it occurs to me that the difficulty of arguing for a broader application of local terms may illuminate the politics of the discipline in an interesting way.³²

LK: But Jim, unlike you, I would not be expecting any profound change in the structure of art history, even if non-Western concepts were appropriate for the more widespread use; nor do I suspect that this is inherently an issue of disciplinary politics. Rather I take the fact that this has not generally

happened as a sign that the conceptual scaffolding of Western art history and discourse about images indeed is indispensable and that even a skillful adoption of critical terms, desirable as it might be, stands no chance of substantially altering the structure of the discipline.

But I wanted to add a note on space. The lesson of David's remarkable book notwithstanding, I still have some reservations about the general use of the term space for all of art history. Jim, you know that in Chinese painting theory and practice, there is a specific conceptualization of space — for instance Kuo Hsi's "three distances" (high distance, deep distance, level distance).³³ The notion that Chinese paintings (and poems) reveal a distinct Chinese conception or consciousness of space is a staple of much sinological literature. That is well known to all Western art historians who deal with Chinese art, and yet it seems to me that the Chinese concept of space could never be an effective starting point for discussions of space in general. At least I am not aware of any examples in recent scholarship.

JE: Neither am I.

LK: The distance between Kuo Hsi's conception and, say, Albertinian perspective, can be spelled out very easily, but what can you do with it? In other words, while the concept of space might be useful for some more abstract, philosophical reflections, and even intercultural comparisons, I am not sure it has the same explanatory power as other terms in the metalanguage of art history. It does not seem to be as useful analytically or conceptually as terms like style, meaning, function, or intention — at least in standard interpretations and descriptions of works of art.

JE: There is at least one scholar, Wen Fong, who has tried to make the Chinese conceptualization into a schema that could work —

LK: But in the first of his two monographs on Chinese paintings, if I remember correctly, he provides a brief discussion of the structural principles of Chinese landscape painting and treatment of space, but the analysis of space per se never forms a starting point or coherent focus around which the interpretation of a painting evolves.³⁴

JE: I have a feeling he gave up on that project, because there's an early article in which he proposes a partly Chinese, but also largely Western, schema for all of Chinese painting.³⁵

Then would you say it is mostly a political or institutional problem that these concepts have not taken hold —

LK: I am not saying that; I'm just questioning the prominent position the term space seems to enjoy in this discussion and also the belief that it can form a basis for what you dubbed truly intercultural art history.

DS: In proposing spatial (as opposed to “formal,” “spatial,” or “linguistic”) categories as the basis for an expanded and more inclusive art history, and as one who keeps a watchful eye on the broader world of interpretation, I certainly did not mean to blunder into the “worst kind of Eurocentrism” by saying “here is my concept; I know it's embattled (do I? does it matter?), and it engulfs other concepts (does it?), but I am going to use it anyway.” Perhaps any concept considered in itself begins to seem over-general and engulfing, but the question is, does it work? Does it do what we would like a world art history to do? To me, these spatial categories — in concert with other categories, of course — have the high practical value of open-ended flexibility and adaptability, at the same time that they enable

new and timely intercultural conversations. Nor am I chastened by reservations over the “Western propensity for coining terms” (although I believe in Occam’s razor). One can only be so remorseful about “Western propensities” and continue to talk about the same thing. The history of art, whatever forms it may take, will either be an intellectual discipline or it will not, and, if it continues to be one, it will have a more or less common, if disputed, terminology. And again, the proof of that terminology will be its usefulness.

As for the discussion of space in Chinese painting, this seems to be a defense of some version of connoisseurship. I have only mentioned the notion of virtual space, that is, seeing three dimensions in two, which I think I would be willing to say is a universal condition or possibility of representation. The skills of virtuality seem to me to be highly and characteristically developed in Chinese painting (which is why it is included in Gombrich’s *Story of Art*), and it is hard for me to see how it can be described at all without indicating this. Chinese painting has its own culturally specific real/social spatial formats, and if there is an obvious difference between Kuo Hsi and Alberti, I cannot see why the features of each are not of great interest to someone explaining them in context, or why it is not informative to compare them precisely as developments of virtuality.

LK: If we could move away for a moment from the particular problems of space, to the realm of the visual, there are other concepts that might justify a brief reflection on their potential in narratives that would be more sensitive to challenges of world art. There is the gaze — a quite overloaded term, in my mind abused in recent theory, and burdened with the baggage of Lacanian connotations. But the gaze can be augmented by culturally specific concepts of visual practices and skills — such as Craig Clunas’s discussion in his book

Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China of differences between various terms used in classical Chinese texts for engaging with painting (kan, guan, du).³⁶ There have been other recent attempts to historicize practices of glancing and looking at objects in various traditions.³⁷ You could, I think, undertake a quite productive study of concepts of looking outside the gaze, a study that would be attentive to particular spatial settings in which objects and images were handled. Some of those might then be mapped back into the European context, perhaps partly replacing overarching concepts such as the gaze.

SK: I do not know about the African literature you mention, but it reminds me of the African idea that there is a figure that is a midpoint between two opposites ... for example, in Fang reliquaries there's the idea that figure can be at once the embodiment of babiness and ancientness.

You get a tension between things that are apparently different. Or in Yoruba aesthetics, people talk about "midpoint mimesis": there is a whole idea of balance that is not necessarily about looking, but about doing.³⁸

Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes [from the audience]: I wonder, Sandra, if I can draw a line from the balancing which you were mentioning in the African examples, to nonbinary thought in the West, beginning with dialectics, and far Eastern thinking that has never been binary. That could be a place to look if we're in search of international or cross-cultural currents.

I also think of Aby Warburg's project, in which Hopi and Athenian Greek cultures are juxtaposed, and of the ways he organized his library in Hamburg in an ellipse. An ellipse is a geometric understanding of history, and is a shape with two centers. Perhaps that library would be a good place to transport ourselves conceptually!

AG: Another example of a concept used for specific cultures that might be of wider interest is the Peruvian *huaca*, a Quechua word for a sacred thing. It does not denote any specific object: it could be a stone, or an image, but it is not necessarily either —

JE: Yes, a huaca could be a mountain or a mountain range, a mummified ancestor, or a thread —

AG: Yes, even now people working on the syncretic encounter of Precolumbian and European culture study are studying the hypothesis that *color* can also be a huaca.³⁹ When we look at the syncretism of images, we tend to look for representations, for example in Santería. In such cases, people took Christian images and added supplementary images that denoted African gods or ideas. That practice worked through the syncretism of images. But if people proposed that a *color* could be a huaca, they made something completely outside the control of religious authorities. The color could be used, for a religious purpose, and the colonial powers could not see it.

But is that useful for art history in general? I doubt it: what matters is understanding the local uses.

JE: I also find the huaca fascinating. It is kind of hypnotic, the way it escapes from art historical categories. But it also makes me wonder if something in Western approaches doesn't fetishize elusive concepts. I was entranced by huacas for some time, but then I began to wonder if their occurrences weren't seeming to propose to me something outside of the categories and interpretive reach of art history, and if that itself wasn't the source of my interest. I would hate to think I'd overlook things that seem more easily assimilated, such as varieties of glances and glimpses, or even the Japanese *ma* —

AG: In its context, however, it is necessary to focus on the concept.

JE: True.

FTB: Coming back to Ladislav's comment: I don't think that gaze, as important as it is, is a rival to space. Because if you think about the space, it is hard to imagine anything more fundamental. Whereas if you think about the gaze, you can easily find things that are left out. The gaze and seeing are ways of behavior, and there are other behaviors that do not involve seeing or looking. We have learned in the last few decades that the predominance of the visual is problematic in itself: we have learned to think also of touch, movement, and so forth.

Hence gaze is not as fundamental as space.

LK: Perhaps not gaze per se, but the culture-specific conceptualization of vision is at least equally important as that of space, at least when it comes for laying better grounds for more intercultural art history. They are in fact closely interwoven, because any negotiations of space involve visual-motor activities. Perhaps, Jim, I have misread you in your review of David's book, where you present five models of art history's response to global art history. But it seems to me that you are far too optimistic in assuming that by bringing concepts from outside Western art history it is possible to make fundamental changes in the shape of the discipline. At least I say in my paper that you were too optimistic.

JE: I did not mean to say I'm optimistic that it will make deep changes in the discipline. But I do think that is the way the discipline is going. Work of the kind that interests Andrea, both in her own area of Argentine modernism and in the recent literature on huacas, is a good example of where art

history headed. However I do mistrust the assumption, in postcolonial studies in particular, that the more attention you pay to details the more you will be able to passively, automatically erase assumptions about Westernness.

Wolfram Pichler [question from the audience]: I have a question connected with the huaca, non-Western terms, and their possible use in art historical work. I was thinking it would be interesting to think about the ways Hubert Damisch, for example, deals with Chinese painting in his *Traité du trait*.⁴⁰ That book had to do with an exhibition at the Louvre on drawing, but its concern is the dialectics of the line and of the stroke in general. (Damisch does not have an essentialist notion of drawing.) One chapter in the book concerns Chinese painting and concepts; the function of the chapter seems to be to gain a new position from which to look at Western images. Even if the central dialectic he works with — stroke and line — do not have to do with Chinese concepts, it seems his idea in the chapter is to make Western images strange.

I think there are similar moves in the earlier work of Norman Bryson: reconceptualizing Western images by using Asian traditions. This seems to be an interesting way to bring together Western and non-Western concepts, without implying dependence or cultural exchange.

JE: I agree, that's the function of that chapter in the *Traité du trait*. I don't agree with it, and I'm not convinced by it, but as a rhetorical strategy I think it works well.⁴¹

All these examples we have been entertaining, following Ladislav's initial remark, of the potential use of non-Western or local concepts for Western or wider ends — all of them raise for me the same question. Why have they failed? Is it because of disciplinary politics or some other contingent

reason? Or is it because of the structure of art history, which can admit new fundamental concepts (as opposed to “exotic” new ones) any more than it can admit new structures of historical narrative?

Whatever the reasons, there is no sign that art history is being fundamentally changed by its encounters with non-Western concepts.

LK: No, it is not.

JE: The new concepts are treated with the kind of care and solicitation you might provide to any delicate, exotic creature that is far from home. The unfamiliar concepts are not provided fundamental interpretive power.

It is also true that if you import *too much*, you can lose your interpretive power for a different reason. Tom Crow wrote an account of Baxandall’s *Limewood Sculptors* in his *Intelligence of Art*.⁴² There he says in passing that Baxandall’s book might have too many terms taken from the fifteenth-century German vocabulary of woodcarving. It’s only a brief remark, but it raises a curious problem, and it does so wholly within Western contexts. Another such example, within Chinese studies, is the discussion between Wu Hung and Robert Bagley that I mention in my review. The idea would be that it is possible to pass some border of anachronism into some inappropriate accuracy.

Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes [question from the audience]: Why not begin with the expression *art history*? As John Onians wrote in his first editorial, in the opening issue of *Art History*, it is a bad translation into English of a German term that has meanings that may not be the ones that one wishes to import.

LK: I am trying to imagine if we can get beyond the problems Wolfram describes in regard to Damisch's book. Why can't we reach an informative or original point of view?

JE: One of the reasons why that doesn't work may be that our root-level concepts are underinterrogated. To take the exemplary example of space: perhaps, if every art historian were required to write, in the first footnote of their text, "This is what I believe about Heidegger, and this is what I leave aside," then there might be a basis for an analysis of art history's fundamental concepts. Or, to link this to our first theme, if there were a custom of declaring the reasons for subscribing to certain narratives of art ("This is why I think the sequence from Giotto to Manet is indispensable here, for this context, or this country, or this audience"), then it would be possible to undertake a more concerted analysis of the narratives that seem to structure the discipline. (And I need to add, to counter-balance the skepticism that I know some people feel about the importance of those narratives: that kind of examination would be even more necessary when it appears the narratives are irrelevant or have been overcome.)

This is a good place to stop. I am actually not concerned, Sandra, that South African students may not be learning the Western tradition. It's alarming, but it's okay. I am more concerned about the situation I think is more common worldwide, and that is an ongoing anxiety and negotiation with Western European and North American narratives and concepts of art history.

But clearly, our conceptualization is inadequate. It seems art history is moving blindly into these new occasions, as Damisch and others have done. In my own experience those experiments stand on, and also fall back on, the standard story and its apparently undifferentiated concepts. That's my pessimism.

FTB: David, I would just like to say that in the end none of your categories were contradicted here, by anyone. The problem is that questions arise as soon as one speaks about general terms of a science such as art history, and particularly about the future of that science. So two dimensions came into play: a maximal generalization, and a future direction. In a sense our brief was to speak about the future configuration of the field at a very general level. That is difficult, and in a way perhaps one should not even do that.

DS: I am not worried about the contradiction of my categories. I am, however, perplexed by what might be called the infra-categorical issues raised, which seem to me disabling. Given the slight movement I have seen in these discussions away from the most conservative art history, mostly toward the incorporation of some terms from one or another culture into the existing conceptual structure, I can see good reason for pessimism regarding the future of the discipline. I do not believe, however, that such pessimism is the only alternative.

Notes

1. Michelle Henderson and Eileen Julien, *Art History in Africa* (University of Maryland: David C. Drikell Center for the Study of the African Diaspora [spiral bound publication], 2003), 11.
2. Translated by Pan Yaochang. The Japanese translation is 1936: *Bijutsu no kiso gainen: Kinsei bijutsu no okeru yoshiki tenkai no mondai*, tr. by Moriya Kenji (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1936). I thank Jason Kuo for this reference. He adds: "By 1982, it was in its 14th printing. Taiwan reprinted the English translation in 1971; in fact, I was one of the few graduate students who read it then. The Chinese translation — by the same person who had translated Gombric's *Story of Art* — appeared in Taiwan a few years later. I think a mainland Chinese translation appeared even later. So, there was a gap of about 40 years between the Japanese and Chinese receptions of Wölfflin." (Personal communication, September 2005.)
3. See the essay "Is Art History a Global Discipline?" in this volume. The argument is extended in my *Our Beautiful, Dry, and Distant Texts: Art History as Writing* (New York: Routledge, 2000 [1997]), 11–13.
4. This is discussed in the Introduction.
5. Elkins, *Stories of Art* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

6. See Brown, *Turning Points: Essays in the History of Cultural Expressions* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1997).
7. This is explored in *Visual Studies: A Skeptical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2003).
8. Mirzoeff, *Watching Babylon: The War in Iraq and Global Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004).
9. "The State of Irish Art History," *Circa* [Dublin] 106 (2003): 56–59.
10. Robert O'Byrne, *Hugh Lane, 1875–1915* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2000).
11. Apinan Poshyananda, *Modern Art in Thailand: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1992).
12. Review of Mansbach, *Modern Art in Eastern Europe*, in *The Art Bulletin* 82 no. 4 (2000): 781–85. "Response [to Anthony Alofsin's letter regarding the review of Mansbach's *Modern Art in Eastern Europe*]," *Art Bulletin* 84 (2002): 539.
13. The television series; see Clark, *Civilisation: A Personal View* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969).
14. José Pijoán et al., *Summa artis, historia general del arte*, second edition (Bilbao, Madrid [etc.]: Espasa-Calpe, 1944-). The first edition is (Bilbao, Madrid [etc.]: Espasa-Calpe, 1931-); Pijoán wrote vols. 1–16.
15. *Propyläen Kunstgeschichte*, edited by Kurt Bittel et al. (Berlin: Propyläen-Verlag, 1966–75); and *Supplementbände*, edited by Beat Brink et al. (Berlin: Propyläen-Verlag, 1977-). The Russian text is *Universal History of Art*. Akademiia khudozhestv SSSR. Institut teorii i istorii izobrazitel'nykh iskusstv. (Moscow: State Publisher "Art," 1956), translated by Ullrich Kuhirt as *Allgemeine Geschichte der Kunst* (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1965). These and others are discussed in my *Stories of Art*.
16. *Democracy X: Marking the Present, Representing the Past*, held at the Castle in Cape Town from April 2004 to April 2005.
17. Charles Stuckey, *Claude Monet, 1840–1926* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1996).
18. See my "Afterword," in *Discovering Chinese Painting: Dialogues with Art Historians*, edited by Jason Kuo, second edition (Dubuque IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 2006), 249–56.
19. Discussed in a book only available in Chinese, my *Xi fang mei shu shi xue zhong de Zhongguo shan shui hua* [*Chinese Landscape Painting as Western Art History*], translated from the English by Pan Yaochang and Gu Ling (Hangzhou: Zhongguo mei shu xue yuan chu ban she [National Academy of Art], 1999).
20. K.A. Appiah, *In my Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 137–57; E. Nicodemus, "Bourdieu Out of Europe," *Third Text* 30 (Spring 1995): 3–12.
21. See for example the popular books by Victoria Newhouse, *Towards a New Museum* (New York: Monacelli, 1998), and Newhouse, *Art and the Power of Placement* (New York: Monacelli, 2005).
22. In addition, see *Concepts of Space: Ancient and Modern*, edited by Kapila Vatsyanan (New Delhi: Indira Gandhi Centre for the Arts, 1991).
23. Dagobert Frey, *Grundlegung zu einer vergleichenden Kunstwissenschaft: Raum und Zeit in der Kunst der afrikanisch-eurasischen Kulturen* (Darmstadt Germany: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1970 [1949]), especially p. 104.

24. For *darshan*, or *daršana*, see Diana Eck, *Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*, third edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), and the exhibition *Darshan: Blickkontakte mit indischen Göttern: die ländliche und tribale Tradition*, edited by Cornelia Mallebrein (Berlin: Museum für Völkerkunde, 1998).
25. This is part of a critique of space-oriented description of Renaissance art in my *Poetics of Perspective* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1994).
26. Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
27. *After Criticism: New Responses to Art and Performance*, edited by Gavin Butt (London: Blackwell, 2005).
28. Discussed in my *Poetics of Perspective*, chapter 5.
29. Cassirer, *Substance and Function and Einstein's Theory of Relativity*, translated by William and Marie Swabey (New York: Dover, 1953 [1923]).
30. Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
31. Discussions of terms from the Chinese, from *Calligraphers and Painters* by Qādi Ahmad ibn Mir-Munshi, and from the Indian *Atthasalinī* and *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* are in my *Pictures and the Words That Fail Them* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), chapter 6.
32. This strategy also suggested in relation to visual studies in *Visual Studies: A Skeptical Introduction*, 105–6. (The idea there is to use unusual Western sources, such as Vico, instead of the usual ones, such as Benjamin.)
33. In Guo Xi's *Linquan Gaozhi [The Lofty Message of Forest and Streams]*. For an English translation see *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, edited by Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1985): 168–69.
34. Wen Fong, *Images of the Mind: Selections from the Edward L. Elliott Family and John B. Elliott Collections of Chinese Calligraphy and Painting* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).
35. Wen Fong, "Toward a Structural Analysis of Chinese Landscape Painting," *Art Journal* 28 (1969): 388–97.
36. Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).
37. For example the contributions in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw*, edited by Robert Nelson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
38. R.F. Thompson, "Yoruba Artistic Criticism," in *The Traditional Artist in African Societies*, edited by W.L. d'Azevedo (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973): 19–61; J. Fernandez, "The Exposition and Imposition of Order: Artistic Expression in Fang Culture," in *ibid.*, 194–220.
39. Gabriela Siracusano, *El poder de los colores: De lo material a lo simbólico en las prácticas culturales andinas (siglos XVI a XVIII)* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2005).
40. Damisch, *Traité du trait, Tractatus tractus* (Paris: Éditions des Musées Nationaux, 1995).
41. This is argued in my *Xi fang mei shu shi xue zhong de Zhongguo shan shui hua [Chinese Landscape Painting as Western Art History]*, unpublished in English.
42. Crow, *The Intelligence of Art* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

