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The Map of Art History

Robert S. Nelson

From the nineteenth century, History was to deploy, in a temporal series, the analogies that connect distinct organic structures to one another. . . . History gives place to analogical organic structures. . . . This event, probably because we are still caught inside it, is largely beyond our comprehension.—Michel Foucault¹

This is an essay about knowledges of space and time that aspire to be global but remain local, and about their inscription in the discipline of art history. It proceeds from the microcosm to the macrocosm, from particular points on the spatial surface of art history to its broad, totalizing plane, and thence to an awareness of the jagged, gerrymandered divisions of art history itself. It wends its way from moments in the present and the lived past to distant pasts dimly remembered in a discipline that typically studies the histories of everything but itself, conveniently forgetting that it, too, has a history and is History. The intent is to examine notions that exist, as Foucault suggests, at the level of a disciplinary unconsciousness and to argue that Order, History, Space, and Time do matter. Through them, art history is constituted and, in turn, constitutes objects, narratives, and peoples. Yet what is made can be unmade or re-sited, re-structured, and re(-)formed, and what has become tangible and reified can revert to mere heuristic category, if first consciously addressed.

The argument takes for granted that contemporary art history, like any other academic subject or learned profession, is a practice, a discipline, a narrative, and a rhetoric with its own history, protocols, and institutional structures. In the admittedly small but growing body of literature about the history of art history, investigations of individual art historians have dominated heretofore. There is, however, more than a

little need for studies of the poetics of art history² and of the means and consequences of its rise to the status of a discipline over the past two centuries.³ As discipline, art history acquired and has been accorded the ability and power to control and judge its borders, to admit or reject people and objects, and to teach and thus transmit values to others.

If these structures are seldom noticed, much less studied, they are always present. They are revived and replicated whenever a student attends an introductory class, reads a survey book, or follows a prescribed curriculum, whenever a colleague retires, a chair justifies and a dean endorses a replacement position, and a recent Ph.D. is hired, and whenever the discipline or a subfield, such as Renaissance or medieval art, convenes its members or publishes its journal—acts of scholarship but also of ritual, with their attendant consequences for the production of social meanings and identities. And they are in operation whenever someone looks for a book on a library shelf, or when a visitor to an art museum walks through its symbolically charged spaces, thereby enacting and embodying a narrative of art, as Carol Duncan has recently explained.⁴

In this essay, the space and time created by the disciplinary gaze are at issue and *the* issue. They can be encountered in a multitude of sites and performances. I choose three: a grid of fields into which new Ph.D. dissertations are set, a library classification of art history, and the structure of basic survey books. Because I seek to explore the typical, ordinary, or commonplace of disciplinary order, I have deliberately avoided its most public and visual manifestation, the museum. A topic of sustained interest these days, the art museum, both as a model of and model for art historical classification, is cer-

Many people have helped me with this essay, especially the members of my classes in the history of art history at the University of Chicago and W.J.T. Mitchell, with whom I shared the most recent version. Thomas Cummins, Katherine Haskins, and Margaret Olin have also read various drafts.

1. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, New York, 1973, 219, 221 (*Les mots et les choses*, Paris, 1966, 231–32).

2. A recent example of the study of the poetics of art history would be Donald Preziosi, *Rethinking Art History: Meditations on a Coy Science*, New Haven, 1989; and of history, Philippe Carrard, *Poetics of the New History. French Historical Discourse from Braudel to Chartier*, Baltimore, 1992. See the latter, xi–xvi, for a discussion of poetics or what some call discourse analysis or rhetoric. The principal recent example of this mode of inquiry is perhaps Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Baltimore, 1973. Similar issues are considered in a more philosophical manner by Paul Ricoeur, “History and Narrative,” in his *Time and Narrative*, I, pt. 2, Chicago, 1984, 91–230.

3. A pioneering study is Heinrich Dilly, *Kunstgeschichte als Institution: Studien zur Geschichte einer Disziplin*, Frankfurt, 1979.

4. Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*, London, 1995. For example, Georges Salles, the director of the Museums of France, is quoted (33) as describing the Louvre just after World War II in a manner that suggests a pilgrimage, a journey home, and a palace of memory all at the same time: “It may be said that the Louvre collections form today a coherent whole, grouping around our western civilization all those which, directly or indirectly, had a share in its birth. . . . At the threshold of history there stand the mother

civilizations: Egyptian, Sumerian, Aegean. Then, coming down through Athens, Rome, Byzantium, towards the first centuries of our Christian era, there are the full blossomings of Medieval, Renaissance, and Modern Art At the Louvre, then, we are on our own home territory, the other inhabited parts of the earth being dealt with elsewhere.”

5. For example, *ibid*; Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, eds., *Exhibiting Cultures*, Washington, D.C., 1991; Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff, eds., *Museum Culture*, Minneapolis, 1994; and especially Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, London, 1992. In addition, I should note that Donald Preziosi considers the desire of art history and the museum to establish an “address” of the artwork in “Seeing Through Art History,” in *Knowledges: Historical and Critical Studies in Disciplinarity*, ed. Ellen Messer-Davidow et al., Charlottesville, Va., 1993, 220. For English fiction, the role of the museum/archive, both actual (especially the British Museum) and metaphorical, has been studied recently by Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire*, New York, 1993.

6. For example, most recently, Patricia Yaeger, ed., *The Geography of Identity*, Ann Arbor, Mich., 1996; Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift, eds., *Mapping the Subject. Geographies of Cultural Transformation*, New York, 1995; Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake, *Global/Local. Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*, Durham, N.C., 1996. There are also relevant essays in George E. Marcus and Fred R. Myers, *The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology*, Berkeley, 1995.

7. Pile and Thrift (as in n. 6), 48.

tainly relevant to the inquiry, but that investigation is being ably pursued by others.⁵

In using the word “map” in the title of this essay, I am aware that I risk its being swept up into that torrent of recent scholarship about maps and mapping, taken literally and allegorically.⁶ Art history’s general relation to these important and ongoing discussions is by no means “surveyed” here. The senses of map that I intend are surely allegorical, but they also are prosaic, commonplace, or literal. That literalness comes easily to art historians: we work daily with maps, plans, or diagrams. My inquiry extends that disciplinary routine to the visual and spatial aspects of art historical classification. Thus, I take map as metaphor, but also, following Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift, as

a fetish, a speculum, a bounded and purified re-presentation of mapper, mapping, and mapped. . . . Maps are not empty mirrors, they at once hide and reveal the hand of the cartographer. Maps are fleshly: of the body and of the mind of the individuals that produce them, they draw the eye of the map-reader.⁷

Fields

In June 1995, the annual listing of American and Canadian dissertations appeared, as is customary, in the *Art Bulletin*, the principal journal of the art historical profession in North America. There each year the work of beginning scholars is duly certified by the “little seal”⁸ and classed according to traditional categories:

Egyptian, Ancient Near Eastern, and Classical Art; Early Christian, Byzantine, and Medieval Art; The Renaissance; Baroque and 18th-Century Europe; 19th- and 20th-Century Europe; Photography and Film; Art of the United States and Canada; Native American, Pre-Columbian, and Latin American Art; Asian Art; Islamic Art; African Art; African Diaspora; Art Criticism and Theory.⁹

The list is neither natural, consistent, nor logical according to

8. “Bulletin” derives from the French *bulletin* and the Italian *bulletino* or *bolletino*, diminutive of the Latin *bulia*, an official seal, hence, according to *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1971, 293, “a short account or report of public news, or events, issued by *authority*” (emphasis added).

9. *Art Bulletin*, LXXVII, no. 2, 1995, 346–53. Since this article was written another June issue has appeared with another list: LXXVIII, no. 2, 1996, 372–79. The titles and sequences of its categories are slightly different from those of the preceding year.

10. Michel Foucault, 1966 (as in n. 1), 7. As usual, Foucault does not provide a precise reference, but the source is identified in David Macey’s excellent biography *The Lives of Michel Foucault*, New York, 1995, xviii, as Borges’s “El Idioma de John Wilkins,” translated as “The Analytical Language of John Wilkins,” in Borges’s *Other Inquisitions 1937–1952*, by Ruth L. C. Simms, New York, 1968, 103. Foucault’s evocation of this Chinese classification has itself stimulated the imaginations of many, including Suzanne Preston Blier, “Art Systems and Semiotics: The Question of Art, Craft, and Colonial Taxonomies in Africa,” *American Journal of Semiotics*, vi, 1988–89, 7–8; and John Hay, in his introduction to *Boundaries in China*, London, 1994, 6–8. Hay, who has the skills to approach the cited Chinese system literally, not merely metaphorically, thinks that it might be either from a divination manual or else fictitious (299). Like my essay, that of Keith Moxey also begins with libraries and with Foucault, but then it turns in other directions; “Motivating History,” *Art Bulletin*, LXXVII, no. 3, 1995, 392–401.

11. The Sinocentric view of the world is studied in John King Fairbank, ed.,

our cultural categories, much less those of other societies, and presumably is a function of its compilers and the material to be compiled. Only our familiarity with this ordering prevents us from laughing, as Foucault did when, in the famous beginning to *Les mots et les choses*, he encounters Jorge Luis Borges’s description of the classification system of animals in “a certain Chinese encyclopaedia.”¹⁰

Presumably, what had amused this philosopher and historian of science was the incongruous classification of animals—incongruous, that is, by the criteria of Western rationality. But that same rationality may be turned, as Foucault did and as I wish to do, on Western systems of order. The ways and means that a certain version of logic is contravened in the *Art Bulletin*’s listing is both puzzling and revealing. The word “art,” for example, is found in all categories except, for reasons unknown, the “Renaissance” through “19th- and 20th-Century Europe” and “African Diaspora.” Less arbitrary, surely, is the use of the definitive article “the” for only one category, “The Renaissance,” thereby making it a monolithic entity of unique significance. It is the Renaissance, not the Middle Ages, that presides at the middle of a five-part narrative from the beginning of art to the present in Europe. In this context, the Renaissance functions like China, literally the Middle Kingdom, at the center of Chinese maps, or like Europe or America in maps from these cultures.¹¹ Indeed Renaissance art similarly presides at the heart of various museum collections of universal intent¹² and inspires the architectural styles and semiotic messages of American museums from the Gilded Age, such as the Art Institute of Chicago.¹³

In the *Art Bulletin*, this grand Western narrative, known in the trade as “Pyramids to Picasso,” is isolated from the United States and other geographical categories, and from the rest of the list, by the heading “Photography and Film,” the only artistic medium listed. Not surprisingly, given the site of the periodical’s publication, North America is the first continent to be appended to art history’s aging but ever vital canonical core. South America, Asia, and Africa follow behind. Between Asia and Africa is the list’s only religious category, “Islamic

The Chinese World Order: Traditional China’s Foreign Relations, Cambridge, Mass., 1968.

12. Concerning the period of Renaissance art, Carol Duncan describes how the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, was reinstalled in the early 20th century with classical art in the south wing, Egyptian art in the north, and upstairs European painting, arranged by schools and by chronological order. Renaissance painting occupied the central axis. Other arts—Chinese, Japanese, Islamic, American, Primitive, Modern—surround “this canonical core” in wings built later. The Renaissance was also central to the earlier arrangement of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the Classical and Renaissance periods to the Louvre. See Duncan (as in n. 4), 33, 63, 71. Such spatial politics might be compared to the arrangement of universal exhibitions in the 19th century. There, the pavilions of the host nation claimed the center and were surrounded by those of other industrial states. Colonies and non-Western countries were relegated to the periphery. See Zeynep Celik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World’s Fairs*, Berkeley, 1992, 51.

13. Duncan (as in n. 4), 51–53. Across its facade of 1892 are inscribed the names of famous artists, culminating with Leonardo da Vinci, Durer, Michelangelo, and Raphael at the left of the entrance and Titian, Andrea del Sarto, Correggio, Holbein, and Veronese to the right. The entire series is a fascinating record in monumental form of a late-19th-century American canon of artists. It warrants further study in the context of the 19th-century preoccupation with compiling lists of great masters and incorporating them in the decoration of museum spaces. On the latter, see *ibid.*, 27–32.

Art." At the conclusion comes "Art Criticism and Theory," as if only this category were either critical or theoretical.

Chronologically, the list proceeds in temporal sequence from antiquity to twentieth-century Europe, then moves more or less laterally to photography and film (nineteenth and twentieth centuries), the United States and Canada (sixteenth–twentieth centuries), and Native America (mostly nineteenth–twentieth centuries). Then there is a flashback within the same category to the Pre-Columbian. Forward progress resumes with the next term, Latin American Art. Asian, Islamic, African, African Diaspora, and Art Criticism and Theory occupy temporally ambiguous positions. European art is accorded the greatest number (five) of chronological subdivisions. The art of North and South America has two divisions, the explicit Pre-Columbian and the implicit post-Columbian, that is, all the rest (United States, Canada, and Latin America, and, I suppose, Native American). Asia and Africa are undifferentiated temporally.

Geographically, the tabulation begins in Egypt and the "Near East," that is, northeast Africa and southwest Asia, continues to western Asia, northern Africa, and southern Europe (antiquity), to western Asia and Europe (Early Christian, Byzantine, Medieval), and then narrows to Europe exclusively (Renaissance to present). Next it vaults the Atlantic for the Americas (United States, Canada, Latin America, in this order), jumps back to Asia and Africa (Asian and African art), and somehow negotiates the combination of Asia, Africa, and Europe that encompasses Islamic art. Inserted into this narrative are the spatially ambiguous Photography and Film, African Diaspora, and Criticism and Theory.

To identify geographical categories, the list uses the long-accepted names of continents, with the sole exception of the term "Near East." Logically, the latter makes sense only from some point to the West, such as North Africa, but we understand that this is the Near East from the perspective of a Europe that is unaware that Persia, Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and Arabia lie to the southeast. The term is also currently employed in the United States, from whose vantage point it ought to refer to Bermuda or the Bahamas. Linguists term a word like near or far, east or west a *shifter*. Such a word is understandable only from the perspective of the speaker, and thus shifts from speaker to speaker in ways that are comprehensible in spoken, face-to-face conversation but often become ambiguous over the telephone or in formal writing. The fact that the term "Near East" is meaningful in the abstract, contextless listing of the *Art Bulletin* is proof of a semantic shift

from shifter to substantive, a word functioning as a noun. This linguistic reification of the personal, the imaginary, and the ethnocentric never quite forgets nor forgives its European origins.¹⁴

Libraries

N	Visual Arts
NA	Architecture
NB	Sculpture
NC	Drawing, Design, Illustration
ND	Painting
NE	Print Media
NK	Decorative Arts, Applied Arts, Decorations and Ornament
NX	Arts in General

—Synopsis, Class N, Library of Congress Classification¹⁵

Every book creates order, individually and collectively.¹⁶ The order of a single book is a function of its written discourse, but the order of a group of books is greater than the sum of their texts. Historically, however, the classification of large masses of books became more than a theoretical issue only during the nineteenth century, as a consequence of the demand for books by the emergent middle class, the formation of great book collections, and the establishment of public libraries. Initially building on schemes that can be traced back to the Middle Ages, librarians began to create comprehensive systems of bibliographic classification. These, according to one historian, were and are predicated on certain assumptions: knowledge is cohesive and unified, established by mental discovery, and related as genus is to species, because this is how the human mind works. Consequently, libraries should be ordered to meet human needs through the application of principles derived from natural relationships.¹⁷

Melvil Dewey (1851–1931), one of the leaders of the classification movement and the creator of the system that bears his name, stressed the educational mission of the newly accessible public libraries. Once a musty museum, the library should become a school, according to Dewey, and the visitor "a reader among the books as a workman among his tools."¹⁸ With the spread of open-stack policies, the classification of libraries became an important aspect of that educational mission, for classification served to inculcate the basic structure of knowledge.¹⁹ In this century, with the gradual adoption of the Library of Congress (LC) classification throughout

14. One wonders why "Near Eastern" or another common adjective, "Oriental," as applied to the same region, continues to be used, even as others, such as "Far Eastern," seem to be waning, in favor of the more neutral "East Asia."

15. Library of Congress, Processing Department, Subject Cataloging Division, *Classification, Class N Fine Arts*, 4th ed., Washington, D.C., 1970, v.

16. On the single book, see Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books*, Cambridge, 1994.

17. Francis L. Miksa, "The Concept of the Universe of Knowledge and the Purpose of LIS Classification," in *Classification Research for Knowledge Representation and Organization*, ed. N. J. Williamson and M. Hudon, Amsterdam, 1992, 104–5.

18. Sarah K. Vann, *Melvil Dewey: His Enduring Presence in Librarianship*, Littleton, Col., 1978, 70–71.

19. Miksa (as in n. 17), 106–9.

20. *Ibid.*, 111–12.

21. Charles C. Bead, "The Library of Congress Classification: Development,

Characteristics, and Structure," in *The Use of the Library of Congress Classification*, ed. R. H. Schimmelpfeng and C. D. Cook, Chicago, 1968, 19.

22. Francis Miksa, *The Development of Classification at the Library of Congress*, Urbana, Ill., 1984, 63–64. As he explains, the popularity of the LC system is at least partly attributable to the lower cost of cataloguing books with it.

23. R. Howard Bloch and Carla Hesse, eds., *Future Libraries*, Berkeley, 1995, contains a number of interesting essays, based on an issue of *Representations*, XLII, Spring 1993. Much in the future will be different; much will evidently be the same. In the new grand Bibliothèque de France, the old cataloguing system of the Bibliothèque Nationale, based on that of Nicolas Clément of the 17th century and closed in 1994, will be replaced by the Dewey decimal system. The change, then, is from the 17th to the 19th century. See the essay by Gérard Grundberg and Alain Giffard, "New Orders of Knowledge, New Technologies of Reading," in *Future Libraries*, 85.

24. Allan Wilson, "The Hierarchy of Belief: Ideological Tendentiousness in Universal Classification," in Williamson and Hudon (as in n. 17), 390.

the United States, efficient and standardized processing of books and retrieval of information became more important than the nineteenth-century's mapping of knowledge.²⁰ Moreover, the LC system depends on literary output; categories are not created for nonexistent books.²¹ Yet the system is not as passive as it is sometimes represented, because it forever imposes and maintains an order for publications. By the 1980s it was this system that had come to be adopted by over fourteen hundred libraries in the United States and nearly two hundred abroad.²²

Thanks to computerization and rapidly evolving information retrieval systems, the library of the present and the future might appear to be far different from its nineteenth-century ancestors, but classifications change slowly.²³ No doubt inertia is partly responsible; to reclassify books is cumbersome and expensive. Rewriting and relearning computer programs provides trouble enough. The organization of knowledge in American university libraries today thus remains structurally beholden to philosophical and political systems thought long past. In particular, the dominant Library of Congress system has taken more than a little criticism for its ethnocentrism, even after certain embarrassing categories, such as the "Jewish Question" and the "Yellow Peril," have been dropped.²⁴ For example, the LC classification still allots to all of Africa the same space as the topic "Gypsies."²⁵ While the comparison is not meant to disparage the latter, who now wish to be called the Romany, it does call to mind Hegel's famous dismissal of Africa as not worthy of belonging to the "historical part of the World," that is, Europe or Asia.²⁶

Not surprisingly, the major systems used in Western Europe and America are derived from values held by those societies. They prioritize European history, Christianity, Western philosophy, and capitalist economics. In different cultures, different classifications prevail. In the Soviet classification, Marxism-Leninism was the lead category, instead of philosophy and Christianity at the beginning of the Dewey and Library of Congress systems. Similarly, a system designed for the Islamic world begins with Muhammad,²⁷ and it has been proposed that South Asian classifications are indebted to the Vedic system of knowledge.²⁸ The situation calls to mind the seminal study of Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss regarding "primitive" classification, first published in 1901–2. There, they argue against the then widespread notion that classification is merely logical and has its origin within the rational faculties of "man." Such attitudes are ubiquitous in accounts of the formation of library systems, as, for example, in the

basic assumptions sketched above. For Durkheim and Mauss, classification involves the formation of groups and their arrangement hierarchically. It replicates not some fundamental human logic but conceptual structures of the present that are social, cultural, religious, political, etc., to choose contemporary Western categories. When created, systems mirror structures of their time and place, but once formed, they have the capacity to interact with the present, by classifying and interpreting phenomena and thereby fostering or hindering social change.²⁹

While Durkheim and Mauss's work may be justly criticized for an outmoded insistence on the primitiveness of certain peoples, a belief in cultural evolution, and a causal treatment of evidence,³⁰ their basic assertion that classification mirrors social groupings and hierarchies may be productively extended to library systems in current use and to those that will now be created in the age of digital reproduction. In the case of the Library of Congress classification, the absence of a detailed analysis of the entire system need not hinder the exploration of an individual part, such as the ordering of Class N, art history, for each individual class was created and revised separately.³¹ At first glance, some aspects of Class N depend on contemporary aesthetic values. Thus, for example, photography is found not with the fine arts but with Class T, comprising engineering and technical subjects, such as electrical engineering, motor vehicles, and mineral industries. When Class N was first published in 1908, photography was not generally considered to be art, and it continues to challenge library systems.³² The significance for other hierarchies is more obscure. In the main, LC classifications proceed from the general to the particular and from a greater to a lesser importance. Thus, the ordering of artistic media as architecture, sculpture, drawing, painting, prints, decorative arts (see above) presumably constitutes a sequence of decreasing value, but if so, the early twentieth-century context of such a ranking is not known.³³

The single feature of the classification that most clearly describes its point of view is its geographical ordering, the system that is applied, for example, to journals, buildings, schools of painting, etc. The same geographical arrangements are used with minor adjustments throughout the LC classification³⁴ and, as expected, vary with the political realignment of the globe since the early twentieth century. Thus, in the more detailed schedule of Class H for the social sciences, Africa was formerly subdivided as follows: Egypt, then British, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish posses-

25. For problems with the classification of Africa, see David Henige, "Library of Congress Subject Headings: Is Euthanasia the Answer?" *Cataloging and Classification Quarterly*, VIII, no. 1, 1987, 7–19, and the defensive "Library of Congress Response," 21–23; Robert L. Mowery, "The Classification of African History by the Library of Congress," *Cataloging and Classification Quarterly*, IV, no. 1, 1983, 1–10. Similar problems exist in the accounting of Africa in the Dewey system: Philip Pacey, "The Classification of Literature in the Dewey Decimal Classification: The Primacy of Language and the Taint of Colonialism," *Cataloging and Classification Quarterly*, IX, no. 4, 1989, 101–7.

26. G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree, New York, 1956, 99.

27. Wilson (as in n. 24), 394–96.

28. Amitabha Chatterjee, "Structures of Indian Classification Systems of the Pre-Ranganathan Era and Their Impact on the Colon Classification," in Williamson and Hudson (as in n. 17), 151–59.

29. Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, *Primitive Classification*, trans. Rodney Needham, Chicago, 1963, 7–32.

30. Rodney Needham, *ibid.*, xi–xxix.

31. Their history is reviewed in John Phillip Immroth, *A Guide to the Library of Congress Classification*, 2d ed., Littleton, Col., 1971; and Miksa (as in n. 22). The history of the N Class is briefly indicated in the preface to its first edition, as reprinted in Library of Congress, *Classification, Class N: Fine Arts*, 3d ed., Washington, D.C., 1922, 3. Interestingly enough, here it is mentioned that in the preparation of Class N, the catalogues of the Kunstgewerbe-Museum in Berlin and the Art Institute of Chicago were consulted.

32. See, for example, its changing status at the New York Public Library: Douglas Crimp, "The Museum's Old, the Library's New Subject," in *On the Museum's Ruins*, Cambridge, Mass., 1993, 73–83.

33. The sequence of architecture, sculpture, and painting is the same as Hegel's, except that for him the order was reversed, painting being the superior medium: *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox, Oxford, 1988, II, 624–25.

34. They are enumerated in Immroth (as in n. 31), 273–82.

sions, followed by the much smaller category "other divisions, native states, etc."³⁵ By 1989, African countries were grouped geographically, that is, north, south, etc.³⁶

Yet, in spite of periodic revisions, the initial structural organization of global space in the LC classification has remained. The United States and a particular region within it continue to be the position from which the rest of the world is viewed. In the fourth edition of Class N, published in 1970, the regions of the world begin with America—North America before Central and South America. Within North America, the United States precedes Canada and Mexico. The United States itself is subdivided into the following regions: New England, Middle Atlantic States, South, Central, West, and Pacific States. Individual states follow alphabetically. After North and South America come Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and Pacific Islands. Within Europe, Great Britain is listed first and subdivided into England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. In contrast, other European countries form an alphabetical series down to Turkey, after which Bulgaria, Montenegro, Rumania, and Serbia are appended. Next, a second alphabetical series extends from the Czechoslovak Republic through Yugoslavia. Asia is divided into southwestern, central, southern, southeastern, and eastern Asia. Within these regions, certain anomalies are apparent. Iran and, to a lesser extent, Israel receive greater classificatory space than Iraq, Jordan, or Saudi Arabia. Departing once more from an alphabetical sequence, southern and eastern Asia are subdivided into, respectively, India, Ceylon, and Pakistan; China, Japan, and Korea; and other countries.³⁷

This order of fine arts in the LC classification is both perspectival and hierarchical.³⁸ Like nothing so much as that famous Saul Steinberg drawing,³⁹ the LC gaze proceeds as if looking across the United States from somewhere in New England, first south, then west. Outside the national borders, the classificatory gaze turns north to Canada and then south. Appearing next in view is Europe, where the exceptions to alphabetical order are telling. Listed first is Great Britain, with which the United States has that "special relationship." Subdivisions within the United Kingdom are also not alphabetical, and certain European countries are relegated to secondary lists. Next, the LC gaze turns toward Asia, but this is Asia seen from Europe, not America, and therefore ordered from east to west. Hence, the first region listed is the "Near East," followed by central, southern, and eastern Asia. Asia might just as logically have been observed from the Pacific coast of the United States, or west to east, yielding a different series: the Pacific Islands, east Asia (ordered as Japan, Korea, and China), Australia, and Africa. Inserting Africa between Asia and Australia, the LC system effectively divorces Australia and the Pacific Islands from Asia.

35. Library of Congress, *Classification, Class H: Social Sciences*, Washington, D.C., 1910, 491.

36. Larry D. Dershem, *Library of Congress Classification Class H, Subclasses H-Hj*, Littleton, Col., 1989, 686–89.

37. *Classification, Class N* (as in n. 15), 224–29.

38. In this respect, it might be useful to compare this system more generally with other classifications in American culture. For example, see Leslie A. Fiedler's accounting of the topographical imagination in American literature, *The Return of the Vanishing American*, New York, 1968, 16–28. He begins (16), "we need only notice, too obvious, perhaps, to have been properly observed or understood, that geography in the United States is mythological."

The classification of art history books, first by media and then by a certain gerrymandered map, thereby orders the browsing of open stacks. That serendipity of discovering an unknown but related book, the rationale for all classificatory systems, is thus hardly accidental. In their lifetime, many American readers have known nothing but the LC scheme. For them, its order is presumably never noticed or else taken as obvious, ordinary, or logical. Its compilers, led by Charles Martel, "Chief Classifier," have, in these cases, achieved more than an efficient arrangement of a knowledge, according to prevailing values. Like all successful classifications, the LC system also constructs and inculcates those same values and thereby supports and legitimates the societies that create and are created by the system.

The geopolitics of art historical books as a genre and a classification bears further scrutiny than is possible here, for the connection of art bibliography with nationalism and the constitution of national identity through cultural patrimony, while promising, is complex.⁴⁰ But on a more prosaic level, the impact of nationalism can be observed throughout the bibliographic geography of the LC scheme. Below the level of continent and region, the modern nation-state is the defining category—hardly surprising for a system created by and for a national library and a further exemplification of the Durkheim-Mauss thesis. Because the classification rests on the unit of the contemporary state, its frequent revision is inevitable, as is the distortion of historical geography. Only relatively recent art ever fits the mold into which it is pressed. Moreover, when the grid of history is applied within the category of the nation-state, classification creates a linear history for that state—English Gothic, English Renaissance, etc.—and the fiction of a stable national identity. The construction of such pasts and traditions, as Benedict Anderson and others have discussed, is fundamental to the constitution of these "imagined communities."⁴¹ Finally, the historical sequencing of the LC classification conforms to the standard (Western) narrative and therefore reproduces the manifold contradictions of that order.⁴²

But space and time in the LC system function only within a yet more basic framework, that is, the one listed above: N, NA, NB . . . This division of the visual arts according to medium is fundamentally antiquarian. Arnaldo Momigliano has written brilliantly about the transition from the early-modern antiquarian to the modern historian. He provides a cogent description of the two perspectives: "(1) historians write in a chronological order; antiquaries write in a systematic order; (2) historians produce those facts which serve to illustrate or explain a certain situation; antiquaries collect all the items that are connected with a certain subject, whether they help to solve a

39. *View of the World from Ninth Avenue*, reproduced in Harold Rosenberg, *Saul Steinberg*, New York, 1978, 79. Steinberg or whoever titled the drawing did not quite get it right. Strictly speaking, this cannot be the view from Ninth Avenue, because the observer overlooks this street. Thus, even in a drawing about point of view, it is precisely this that is occluded.

40. See, for example, the comments concerning publishing itself and the establishment of museums in Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed., New York, 1991, 37–46, 178–85.

41. *Ibid.*, 197–206; Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention*

problem or not."⁴³ Art history's resistance to history, theory, or other humanistic disciplines—that crisis so much lamented and analyzed in recent years—may owe something to its bibliographic (and certainly museological) classification. The positivistic, antiquarian nature of that system itself isolates art from other fields, subjects, or ways of understanding knowledge. It even frustrates the most traditional of art historical methods, artistic biography. Unlike literature in the LC system, for example, works by and about a single artist are grouped first not by maker but by medium.⁴⁴

The choice of one category, of course, precludes another, and one classification system denies the existence of another, except through cross-referencing. In the electronic library of the future, new categories and new interrelations will presumably be possible, but the promise of that new world will be realized only if the present is not merely digitized into the future. Replicating the LC system electronically and thus extending its universal classification to new objects and subjects, or texts and people, will not constitute progress. On the other hand, replacing subject headings by mere word searches will impose its own order on books. Then, the current popularity of metaphorical titles, like mine, will presumably have to give way to prosaic versions, and thus to metonyms, parts of wholes, bytes that can be accessed more readily within vast computer databases.

The nature and structure of that universe is what remains at issue. Will new classifications simulate aspects of the spatial character of the present system? Or will spatiality utterly dissolve in the void of cyberspace? The latter, of course, is not real space, and perhaps for that reason it uses spatial terms, e.g., gateway, point of entry, path, navigator. It thereby attempts to reassure its users that nothing has changed; the first printed books imitated the formats of manuscripts for this and other reasons. Presumably for some time to come, libraries will still contain books, but electronic forms of knowledge do not need buildings, their space being literally utopic in the etymological sense of "no place." Bibliographic cyberspace has the potential to realize electronically the lost library of ancient Alexandria, that nostalgic dream of the universal library,⁴⁵ or the modern nightmare of Borges's "Library of Babel."⁴⁶ Conceptually, the wired library would seem to be the metaphorical rhizome that Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari once predicted, a space without hierarchy or state control, spreading and multiplying organically like the rhizome and creating diverse chains of relationships, unfettered by externally imposed order or structure.⁴⁷ Indeed, the terms *Web* and *Internet* are rhizomic metaphors. But human agency is not likely to disappear. Someone will still write the data programs and organize the modes of reference. Only members of certain communities will have the economic

means to access that information, and already E-mail addresses in cyberspace encode professional distinctions (com, edu), institutions (uchicago), and country of origin, with the suspicious exception of the United States, which, of course, is the place of origin of the system. In the future, the bibliographic gaze may well pierce the electronic haze.

Surveys

Each year thousands of undergraduate students in America pass through the disciplinary matrix of the introductory art history survey and the books written for it. For more than a generation, that course and publishing market has been dominated by the book that I, too, encountered on that occasion and remember fondly: *History of Art: A Survey of the Major Visual Arts from the Dawn of History to the Present Day*. Authored by H. W. Janson with his wife, Dora Jane Janson, this staple of American art historical pedagogy was first published in 1962 by Prentice-Hall and Harry N. Abrams and reprinted frequently thereafter. Translated into fourteen languages, it had sold over two million copies by 1982, and doubtlessly many more since.⁴⁸ After twenty printings, a second edition appeared in 1977, a third, "revised and expanded by Anthony F. Janson," the son, in 1986, a fourth in 1991, and the latest in 1995. The name of Dora Jane Janson disappears from the title page after the second edition.

To judge from other testimonials, my undergraduate enthusiasm for Janson's book was scarcely unique. At the beginning of his useful recent book, *Art History's History*, Vernon Hyde Minor writes about his introductory course in 1963 and the book that he was assigned. What impressed him and his fellow students about "Janson" was "the sheer quality of the book: solid, beautifully bound. . . ." and the best reproductions that they had seen.⁴⁹ Reviewing the initial publication of the book on the normally staid pages of the *Art Journal*, Edwin C. Rae broke into rapturous prose to describe "this lusty, young contestant in the arena of the general history of the visual arts. . . ." He concluded no less grandly, if repetitiously, that "it will be a strong-willed teacher indeed who can resist the temptation to try out this personable and well trained young contestant in the tournament of golden ideas."⁵⁰ Twenty-six years later, in another issue of *Art Journal*, Bradford R. Collins termed *History of Art* "a central monument in the teaching of art history in this country for over a quarter century" and "the most widely used (because the most widely respected) text in the field since its publication in 1962." Mindful of art history's newly energized theoretical interests, Collins also criticized the book for its methodological narrowness, preoccupation with the transcendental character of art, and alle-

of Tradition, Cambridge, 1983.

42. One example that I have described elsewhere is the ordering of the Middle Ages, according to which Byzantine art is separated from Romanesque and Gothic art by Islamic art: *Classification, Class N* (as in n. 15), 53. See R. S. Nelson, "Living on the Byzantine Borders of Western Art," *Gesta*, xxxv, 1996, 3–10.

43. Arnaldo Momigliano, "Ancient History and the Antiquarian," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, xiii, 1950, 286.

44. Immroth (as in n. 31), 182.

45. On the latter, see Roger Chartier, *Forms and Meanings, Texts, Performances, and Audiences from Codex to Computer*, Philadelphia, 1995, 21.

46. Jorge Luis Borges, "The Library of Babel," in *Labyrinths*, New York, 1983, 51–58.

47. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Minneapolis, 1987, 3–25.

48. The obituary for H. W. Janson by John Russell in the *New York Times*, Oct. 3, 1982, 44.

49. Vernon Hyde Minor, *Art History's History*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1994, 1–2.

50. Edwin C. Rae, review of *History of Art* by H. W. Janson, *Art Journal*, xxiii, no. 1, 1963, 74, 78.

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2 Table of Contents, from H. W. Janson, *History of Art*, New York, 1969, p. 6

giance to an absolute standard of art.⁵¹ Today, the art history survey itself is being rethought,⁵² but it is not likely to disappear quickly.

Books like the Jansons' compete today, as then, in an actual marketplace of modern capitalism, not a pseudomedieval tournament of "golden ideas," and they continue to have a significant impact on the history of art that the discipline imparts to thousands of college students each year. Yet these books, as publishing phenomena and art historical survey, and the courses they accompany continue to be largely ignored by the art historical profession and its conferences and journals. Until the recent *Art Journal* issue of Fall 1995, there have been few investigations of this genre in comparison with the studies that have been made of the textbooks in other fields.⁵³ While I, too, decline the challenge, I do wish to examine one aspect of the problem, the plotting of time and space in the survey book as a means of understanding the construction of the Western narrative of art history and the historical narrative of Western art.

51. Bradford R. Collins, *Art Journal*, XLVIII, no. 1, 1989, 92, 90. Janson, for his part, certainly argued against a single absolute and timeless standard of art in an interview with Milton Esterow, "Conversation with H. W. Janson," *Artnews* LXXIV, no. 7, 1975, 62–63.

52. See the issue of *Art Journal*, LIV, Fall 1995, edited by Bradford R. Collins. To this discussion should be added the article by James Elkins, "Is It Possible to Write a Survey of Art History?" *Umeni*, XLIII, 1995, 309–16.

53. For example, Frances FitzGerald, *America Revised: History Schoolbooks in the Twentieth Century*, Boston, 1979. The only general listing of art history surveys that I know, Mary W. Chamberlin, *Guide to Art Reference Books*, Chicago,

That story is at once visible in the table of contents of the first edition of Janson's book (Figs. 1, 2). The structure remains little changed to the present, in spite of what immediately appears to be a peculiar definition of the ancient and medieval periods. Chapter 8, "Early Christian and Byzantine Art," has been placed in Part One, "The Ancient World," while the more or less contemporary Islamic art is made the opening chapter of Part Two, "The Middle Ages." The subject of Early Christian and Byzantine art dates from about A.D. 300 to the fall of Constantinople in A.D. 1453. Janson's chapter also includes Russian art and the church of St. Basil in Moscow from the mid-sixteenth century, substantially past what most people would regard as the end of the ancient world.⁵⁴ Islamic art begins somewhat later, around A.D. 700, and continues, like the art of Russia and Orthodoxy, to the present. In Janson's book, Islamic art ends in the seventeenth century.

Whether classed as ancient or medieval, both Byzantine and Islamic art precede chapter 2 of Part Two, "Early

1959, 69–74, was not comprehensive in its day and is now long out-of-date. It is not fully replaced by Etta Arntzen and Robert Rainwater, *Guide to the Literature of Art History*, Chicago, 1980, 110–14.

54. Prof. Rae (as in n. 50, 77) also noticed this: "Among the few bizarre examples of pre-packaging in the book under review is the jostling of the Parthenon by sixteenth-century Saint Basil's in Moscow, both included as part of the ancient world."

55. Nelson (as in n. 42), 3–10; Mitchell Schwarzer, "Origins of the Art History Survey Text," *Art Journal*, LIV, Fall 1995, 25, 29.

Medieval Art" (of Western Europe). The latter, however, actually antedates the rise of Islam, the first example given here being the purse cover from the Sutton Hoo ship burial of the mid-seventh century. Thus the Jansons' narrative moves from the fourth to the sixteenth century in Part One, chapter 8, to the eighth to the seventeenth century in Part Two, chapter 1, and then back to the seventh to the eleventh century for the chapter on early medieval art. These chronological anomalies are neither arbitrary nor unprecedented but follow a disciplinary tradition that by 1962 was over a century old.⁵⁵

The book's subtitle is *A Survey of the Major Visual Arts from the Dawn of History to the Present Day*, but its table of contents indicates that the scope is far from global. A "Postscript" describes the agenda:

Our interest in the past springs from a desire to understand the present. Behind it lies always the question, "how did we get to where we are now?" For the historian of art, "now" means the living art of our century; this art is the product of Western civilization on both sides of the Atlantic. We have, accordingly, discussed in this book only those elements outside Europe and America that have contributed to the growth of the Western artistic tradition; prehistoric and primitive art, as well as the art of Egypt, the ancient Near East, and Islam. Three major areas have been omitted—Indian Asia, China and Japan, and pre-Columbian America—because their indigenous artistic traditions are no longer alive today, and because these styles did not, generally speaking, have a significant influence on the West.⁵⁶

While Janson recognizes that the arts of these cultures are "important in their own right," these traditions, nonetheless, do not tell us how we got "to where we are now." In this last quotation, both shifters are important, the "we" that would be instantly questioned today (another shifter) as well as the "now." Janson correctly understands himself to have written a narrative that leads to and culminates in the present, a type of history to which I will return and a philosophical problem for which the linguistic shifter is hardly an adequate accounting. When Anthony F. Janson appended his preface to the third edition of his father's book in 1986, he commented that he had omitted the "Postscript," for "the entire study of Third World art is presently being transformed so dramatically that a new synthesis will not be possible for at least another decade."⁵⁷ That decade has now passed, and in the meantime, the writing of a global narrative has become even more problematic, but also theoretically interesting, at least outside the hermetic isolation of the survey book.

56. H. W. Janson, *History of Art*, New York, 1962, 546.

57. Anthony F. Janson, in *History of Art*, 3d ed., New York, 1986, 8.

58. Janson, *History of Art*, 4th ed., New York, 1991, 86.

59. Hegel (as in n. 26), 99.

60. *Ibid.*, 139, 116.

61. E. H. Gombrich, "The Father of Art History," A Reading of the *Lectures on Aesthetics* of G.W.F. Hegel (1770–1831), in *Tributes: Interpreters of Our Cultural Tradition*, Ithaca, N.Y., 1984, 51–69, 254–55. More recent discussions of art history's Hegelian origins are James Elkins, "Art History without

Dropping the "Postscript" scarcely obviates the chronological and spatial contradictions of the book's first chapter, "Magic and Ritual—The Art of Prehistoric Man." This title continues through the third edition but becomes "Prehistoric and Ethnographic Art" in the fourth edition of 1991. Similarly, the subsection formerly entitled "Primitive Art" changes to "Ethnographic Art." For once, small alterations were also made to the text itself, yet much remains as before. These societies, whether primitive or ethnographic, show "no signs of evolving in the direction of the 'historic' civilizations. . . . The entire pattern of ethnographic life is static rather than dynamic, without the inner drive for change and expansion that we take for granted in ours. . . ."⁵⁸

Such societies are outside, beyond, or, in this case, before history. Notions about the historical alterity of the "primitive" scarcely began with H. W. Janson. In *The Philosophy of History*, Hegel, for example, wrote about Africa, "it has no movement or development to exhibit." In Africa, there is only "the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature. . . ." The "real theatre of History" takes place only in Asia and Europe,⁵⁹ but India and China have also "remained stationary and fixed." In different ways, they, too, "lie, as it were, still outside the World's History. . . ."⁶⁰ In this passage, as in the various editions of the Jansons' book, we are in the presence of several notions, but one is surely German idealism, a major force in art historical scholarship since Hegel, whom E. H. Gombrich designated the "Father of Art History," although the paternity of art history is none too clear, to judge from the other nominations that have been made.⁶¹

The conceptualization of these societies by the Jansons belongs to an older mode of scholarship, a truly primitive inquiry into the "primitive" that has no place in the ethnographies being written by anthropologists at the end of the twentieth century. Perhaps for this reason, the latest edition of 1995 omits the entire discussion of "Ethnographic Art," yielding a chapter that is now devoted solely to the art of the Old and New Stone Ages. But once again, removing offending sections does not fundamentally alter the structure of the argument. Nor does it mask the basic structural problem of how to plot time and space if, as it was once declared, "our interest in the past" is motivated by "a desire to understand the present."

As the referent for the shifters "our," "present," and "past" changes, so do the narratives in which they are employed, and vice versa. Adjusting the time and space of that structure and the point of view or identity of the speaking voice causes different civilizations to appear and disappear and to move from margin to center and vice versa. The presence or absence of history (which is, of course, what is

Theory," *Critical Inquiry*, xiv, Winter 1988, 354–78; and Stephen Melville, "The Temptation of New Perspectives," *October*, no. 52, Spring 1990, 3–15. For Paul Barolsky, Vasari was "the father of art history": *Why Mona Lisa Smiles and Other Tales by Vasari*, University Park, Penn., 1991, 3. According to David Carrier, it is Winckelmann who has been called the "father of modern art history": *Principles of Art History Writing*, University Park, Penn., 1991, 122. Yet, "der Vater der modernen Kunstgeschichte," according to Heinrich Dilly (as in n. 3), 10, was Carl Friedrich von Rumohr (1785–1843). The real issue here, my students remind me, is who (or what?) is the mother of art history.



3 Lee Boltin, Navaho sand painting ritual for a sick child, 1954 (Reproduced in H. W. Janson, *History of Art*, 4th ed., New York, 1991)

being written, but which is said to exist prior to the actual history being read) is one criterion for placement in these narratives. Thus, for a civilization to be without history, when in fact it is only “without Europe,” to quote recent articles,⁶² becomes adequate justification for marginalization or total exclusion, as in the case of Hegel’s dismissal of Africa from his universal history.⁶³ In a linear narrative, marginalization is accomplished by shifting a civilization out of direct chronological sequence. These temporal anomalies, these deliberate denials of coevalness, these devices for manipulating time and societies are what Johannes Fabian calls *allochroism* and are important clues to the larger intentions of a narrative.⁶⁴

The denial of history to the cultures discussed in the earlier versions of the Jansons’ first chapter and the positioning of this material at the beginning, like the placement of Asian and American art at the end in the “Postscript” of the early editions of the Jansons’ book; or the literally eccentric position given Byzantine art in “The Ancient World,” are all examples of *allochroism*. Far from lacking history, the peoples and arts included in the former versions of chapter I have a longer history than the rest of the entire book. The artifacts surveyed here range from cave paintings in Spain and France and the ubiquitous Venus of Willendorf (15,000 to 10,000 B.C.), Stonehenge in England (second millennium B.C.), Nigerian bronzes (twelfth and sixteenth–eighteenth centuries A.D.), masks from Tennessee, Alaska, Cameroons, New Britain, and Switzerland (A.D. 1000 to twentieth century), and, lastly, to a present-day Navaho sand-painting ritual in Arizona.

62. The phrase is used by Tal Asad, “Are There Histories of Peoples without Europe? A Review Article,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, xxix, 1987, 594–607; and by John Davis, “History and the People without Europe,” in *Other Histories*, ed. Kirsten Hastrup, London, 1992, 14–28. The phrase plays on the title of Eric R. Wolf’s book *Europe and the People without History*, Berkeley, 1982.

63. Because Hegel (as in n. 26) needs Egypt and Carthage for the history that he does sanction, he takes them out of the category “Africa” (99). The inclusion of Africa in the curricula of universities during the past generation has directed a sharp and bright critical light on the many problems of universal history. See Steven Feierman, “Africa in History: The End of Universal Narratives,” in *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements*, ed. Gyan Prakash, Princeton, N.J., 1995, 40–65. For a critique of art history from the perspective of African art, see Suzanne Preston Blier,

The latter is illustrated in the first and succeeding editions by a photograph (Fig. 3) that lacks attribution or date and demands to be critiqued in terms of context (what is the evidentiary status of a photograph of a ritual that was supposedly never to be photographed?) and gender (what are the roles of the differing states of dress and undress?).⁶⁵ Both the photographer, Lee Boltin, and the year, 1954, have since been specified in a book by Mary Anne Staniszewski.⁶⁶ According to the Jansons, the practitioners of Navaho ritual are said to live in Arizona and New Mexico, and thus they, like the authors, are American citizens. Moreover, the ritual illustrated took place eight years before H. W. Janson published his first edition, so that artist and patient are also approximate contemporaries of the father/son team. Nevertheless, the Navahos and their art are still relegated to a chapter about the Old and New Stone Age, and the remarkably diverse ensemble of people and artifacts in this chapter is placed at the beginning of Part One, “Ancient Art.” The result reaffirms what one author has called the standard museum representation of “Native Americans as other, as marginalized and as premodern.”⁶⁷

Space is another device by which Self and Other are constituted in a narrative. At the outset, there is the space of the author, the position taken vis-à-vis the subjects discussed, the point of view, and then the spatial arrangement that the author gives to what is narrated. In traditional histories, the author seldom appears as a person or speaker; the first-person pronoun is admitted only in certain carefully controlled circumstances.⁶⁸ Consequently, direct information about the author’s relation with the subjects discussed is rare. Nevertheless, clues abound everywhere. An immediate example in the subtitle of the Jansons’ book is the word “survey,” an appropriately visual term, deriving from the French “to look over.” The book is thus an overview of art from “the dawn of history to the present day,” or dawn to dusk if the metaphor is continued, which it is not for obvious reasons. Similarly, in his preface to the first edition, H. W. Janson writes about the “facts” of art history constituting “landmarks on the scholarly terrain,” which he, of course, is surveying.⁶⁹

Janson’s “Postscript” signals another way in which the author envisions his relation to the text. There, he proposes “to take the reader on a brief excursion through the domains we have so far omitted.” This Vergil can so lead Dante, that is, his reader, because the author has a clear view of “the wealth of material” that is to be found.⁷⁰ Janson’s metaphors promise a journey, a progression through the dispossessed of the world. Each region—India, China, Japan, and Pre-Columbian

“Truth and Seeing: Magic, Custom, and Fetish in Art History,” in *Africa and the Disciplines*, ed. Robert H. Bates et al., Chicago, 1993, 139–66.

64. Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*, New York, 1983, 32.

65. A general accounting of the ritual and its social context is to be found in Richard L. Anderson, *Calliope’s Sisters: A Comparative Study of Philosophies of Art*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1990, 95–111.

66. Mary Anne Staniszewski, *Believing Is Seeing: Creating the Culture of Art*, New York, 1995, 39.

67. Ruth B. Phillips, “Why Not Tourist Art? Significant Silences in Native American Museum Representations,” in Prakash (as in n. 63), 100.

68. For history, this has been studied most recently by Carrard (as in n. 2), 15–19, 23–24.

America—is accorded its own minihistory, a linear history that provides a construction of time and space that mimics that of Europe, but on a reduced scale in several senses. Individual objects are compared to European ones, maintaining the Western gaze and grid of interpretation.

Janson's rhetorical strategy here, ubiquitous in art history and in many other fields, is a form of "objectivism." As such, it is subject to the trenchant critique of Pierre Bourdieu:

Objectivism constitutes the social world as a spectacle presented to an observer who takes up a point of view on the action, who stands back so as to observe it and, transferring into the object the principles of his relation to the object, conceives of it as a totality intended for cognition alone, in which all interactions are reduced to symbolic exchanges. The point of view is the one afforded by high positions in the social structure, from which the social world appears as a representation (in the sense of idealist philosophy but also as used in painting or the theatre) and practices are no more than "executions," stage parts, performances of scores, or the implementing of plans.⁷¹

History becomes a landscape or a stage. The observer imparts to the action observed or the practice made object his/her relations with the object. These new "objects" are then animated and made to interact with other similarly constituted entities. As Paul Carter has put it, in regard to European accounts of Australia, "it is not the historian who stages events, weaving them together to form a plot, but History itself. . . . [The historian] is a spectator like anybody else and, whatever he may think of the performance, he does not question the stage conventions."⁷²

The Jansons also present us with another visualization of the past, a time line entitled "Comparative Views of the History of Art," first printed in black-and-white on the endpapers of the second edition and then reproduced in color and with photographs added as an insert to the third edition. The first version (Figs. 4, 5) more clearly displays the book's reckoning of time, as well as space, for the authors or their designers, like mapmakers, have had to make decisions about what to put at the top. In the first segment (Fig. 4) the upper bands are reserved first for central and northern Europe and then for southern Europe and the Mediterranean. Europe continues on top at the end of the book (Fig. 5). There, from the late nineteenth century, European time and culture spill far down the page to the level of China. This is possible because the histories of Islam, Byzantium, India,

China, Japan, and Pre-Columbian America do not extend to the present, which, of course, is literally true only for Byzantium and Pre-Columbian America. Fascinatingly enough, Post-Columbian America is nowhere to be found in this staple of American art history.

Thus, history ends everywhere but in the West, here specifically meaning Europe, and with the triumph of the modernist movements, from Realism and Impressionism through Abstract Expressionism and Photo-Realism; postmodernism does not appear.⁷³ History also begins at the top of the diagram, the European register (Fig. 4). The bar for the Old Stone Age, which is theoretically a global phenomenon, is placed in this upper band and is slightly earlier than the New Stone Age in the Near East. Thus, Europe is present as both the oldest and the most modern of the world's civilizations. The fusion of its history of art with that of the rest of the globe's, here drawn as taking place in the late nineteenth century, coincides with the height of European colonialism.

By the end of the last century, the West, now including the United States of America, controlled 80 percent of the world, and peoples everywhere outside this culture did indeed lose contact with their pasts in the pressure to modernize and to acquiesce to Western systems of time and history. Peoples were wrenched from the centers of their worlds and positioned at the margins relative to the West by many political and semantic devices, including the continuation of such categories as "Near East." The West became the most developed, the acme of evolution: the Rest, underdeveloped, developing, or copying. World histories and world art histories function within this larger apparatus to incorporate the Rest into the West.⁷⁴ At the core are the issues of who speaks for whom, the location of culture itself, and how or whether it is possible to write history in a global age, to evoke recent studies.⁷⁵ It is not only the academic discourse of postcolonialism that objects to such global narratives, for the once seamless ideology of economic modernization and artistic modernism today has cracks everywhere, faults that are not superficial but structural and cannot be repaired by nostalgic appeals to past golden ages or by chauvinist, xenophobic rhetoric in politics or culture.

In the year that H. W. Janson published his book, 1962, the Algerian war of independence was ending, the United States had yet to commit fully to a war in Vietnam, Eastern Europe lay outside the economic and political sphere of Europe, and China was represented in the United Nations by Taiwan. While the world has changed profoundly, what Janson wrote is still with us. Repositioning the book, silencing its original

69. Janson (as in n. 56), 7.

70. *Ibid.*, 546.

71. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice, Cambridge, 1977, 96. Bourdieu specifically critiques art history (1): "never having really broken with the tradition of the *amateur*, [it] gives free rein to celebratory contemplation and finds in the sacred character of its object every pretext for a hagiographic hermeneutics superbly indifferent to the question of the social conditions in which works are produced and circulate."

72. Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration of Landscape and History*, New York, 1988, xiv.

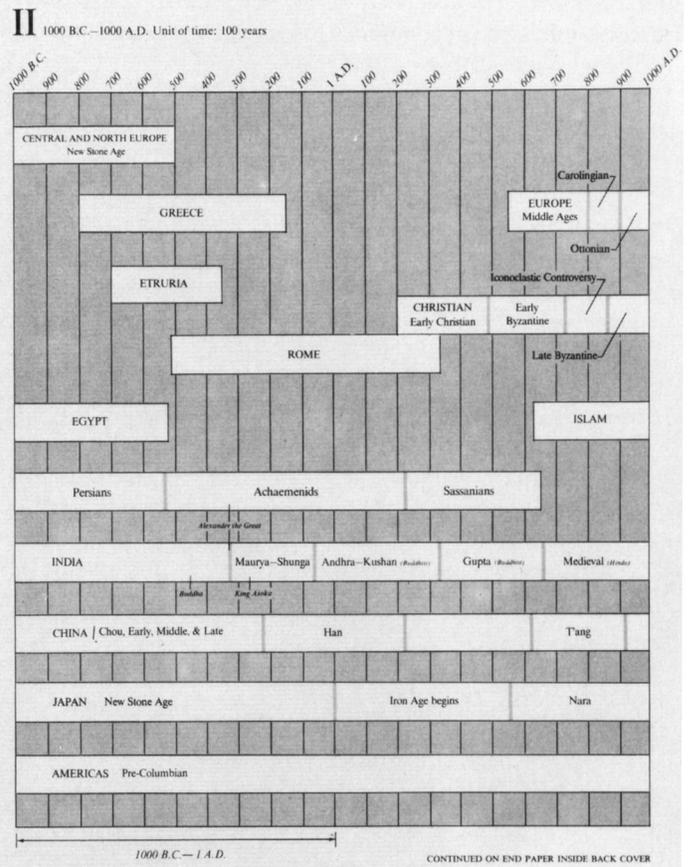
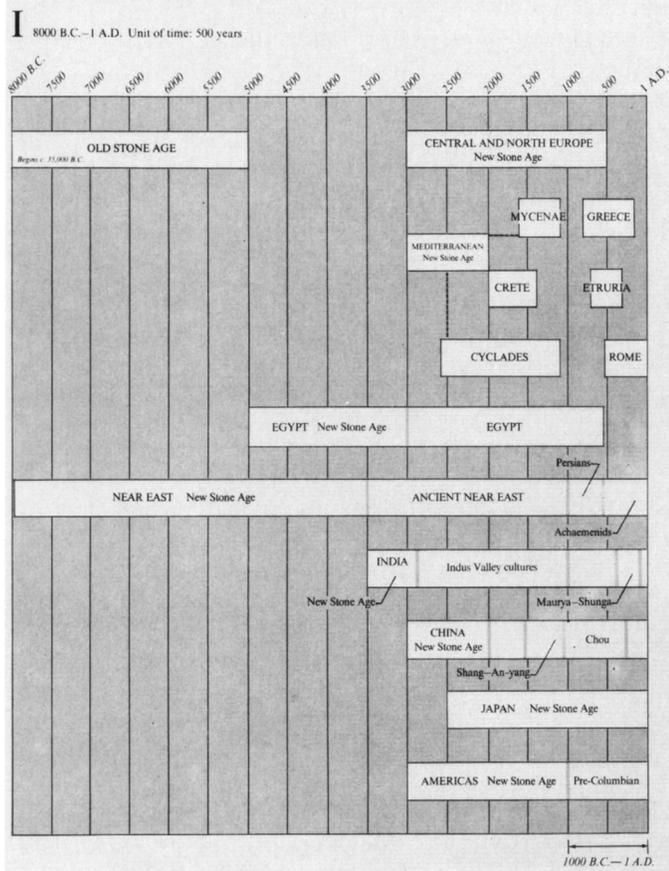
73. Another diagram that describes the triumph of modernism and the West is the chart prepared by Alfred H. Barr, Jr., for the cover of *Cubism and Abstract Art*, New York, 1936. On its power and impact, see W.J.T. Mitchell, *Picture*

Theory, Chicago, 1994, 232–36.

74. There are now many places to read this formulation of the problem. But the critiques from Asia are especially useful, such as Masao Miyoshi and H. D. Harootunian, *Postmodernism and Japan*, Durham, N.C., 1989, viii–ix. More recently, see Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China*, Chicago, 1995; and Xiaobing Tang, *Global Space and the Nationalist Discourse of Modernity*, Stanford, Calif., 1996. An important examination of critical theory and history in this regard is Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*, London, 1990.

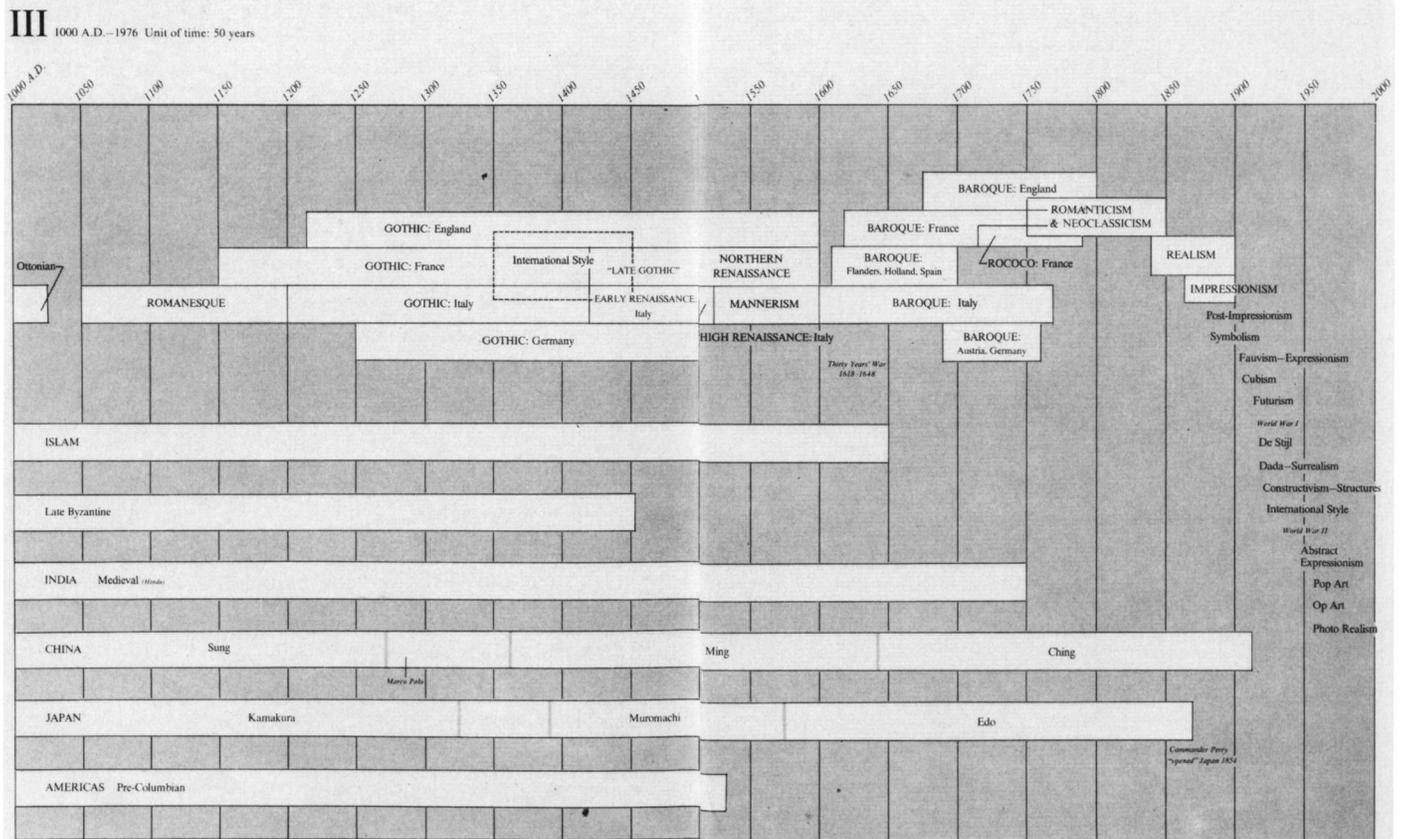
75. Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for 'Indian' Pasts?" *Representations*, xxxvii, 1992, 1–26; Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, New York, 1994; Michael Geyer and Charles Bright, "World History in a Global Age," *American Historical Review*, c, 1995, 1034–60.

COMPARATIVE VIEWS OF THE HISTORY OF ART



4 “Comparative Views of the History of Art,” from H. W. Janson, *History of Art*, 2d ed., New York, 1977, endpaper

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“Postscript,” and censoring its discussion of the “primitive” does not obviate the structural problems with this and other universal narratives of art history. Similar issues bedevil other survey books to varying degrees, even the most global and the least Eurocentric of the group, that of Hugh Honour and John Fleming,⁷⁶ as well as book series with a global intent, such as the forthcoming *Oxford History of Art*.⁷⁷

Spaces

Problems persist with these books, because they belong to a set of structures and concepts much larger than the art historical textbooks, library classifications, or orderings of recent dissertations. Classifying and mapping are devices for describing difference and hierarchy, and they exist within and through assumptions about time and its narrative, history. History in survey books leads inextricably to the Euro-American present, while the spatial mapping of global culture proceeds from Euro-American centers of classification, and in the case of the Library of Congress system, from the United States and New England. These classifications classify whatever enters their lair, whether objects, texts, scholars, or viewers, and thereby constitute them according to their principles.

Our opulent, glossy survey books of today are direct descendants of German historicism and the nearly forgotten *Handbücher* of Franz Theodor Kugler and Karl Schnaase.⁷⁸ They and the disciplinary discourses that incorporate them are products of and still subscribe to that set of epistemological procedures that Foucault describes for the nineteenth century, his modern episteme. Such art historical narratives are grounded in what Foucault calls the “metaphysics of the object.”⁷⁹ They replicate nineteenth-century histories and classifications that derive in part from versions of Hegel’s progressive unfolding of the Absolute Spirit from the dawn of history in the unchanging East to its realization in the progressive European nation-state, which for Hegel was Prussia. That narrative is both nationalistic and teleological, and it belongs to a culture that is waning. Our contemporary world has many centers and cultures. They produce and have produced art, not to serve a teleological development that leads to a Euro-American present of modernity or postmodernity, but for utterly different patrons and audiences. As Joseph Brodsky put it in regard to another past that is all too familiar, “while antiquity exists for us, we, for antiquity, do not.”⁸⁰

At issue here is space and time. Questioning them is

unsettling, for, as Immanuel Wallerstein noted, they are “one of the bedrocks of our intelligence. . . . [yet] we must see how we have been shaping the categories of TimeSpace to read this reality, we must ask *cui bono*, and we must struggle for more adequate categories.”⁸¹ What kind of art history might be written if we were to abandon linear historical time? Whose time should be followed, ours or theirs? And what is the nature of “our” time? Present-day communities of art subscribe to a myriad of different formal and informal rituals and cycles of time: the academic year divided into terms, that Procrustean bed into which art’s scholastic history must be placed; the annual art season of exhibitions and auctions; the conceptual lure of decades (art of the 1980s) in which the “new” styles of the decade are difficult to define until the decade is sufficiently advanced; or the time of dynasty, history, or war, such as Timurid, Reformation, post-World War II.

On the other hand, if we were to write from and in a past time, whose should we choose? Certainly, to adopt the cyclical or dynastic systems of another culture or to imitate its narrative structures would be one logical response to the contemporary demand for contextualization. But past cultures, like ours, had many different times. Jacques Le Goff, for example, has illumined the differences between mercantile and ecclesiastical senses of time in the Middle Ages, and each might be extended to works of art.⁸² Yet what is to be done when categories overlap, as in the case of the chapel in Padua made for Enrico Scrovegni, a merchant and son of a usurer?⁸³ In general, however, we have much to learn from the temporal systems of other cultures.⁸⁴

The history of visual art might be excused for its conventional senses of time, because its art is not one of the “time arts,” but space is another matter. The rhetorical vitalizations of space in art history ought to distinguish it from other fields for which space is seldom a consideration, much less an issue. Edward Soja, after Foucault, has recently argued that modern history and critical theory has privileged time over space, so that “space still tends to be treated as fixed, dead, undialectical; time as richness, life, dialectic. . . .”⁸⁵ If History, as Foucault proclaims in the epigraph to this paper, gives place to organic structures, it does so in a way that renders those places abstract and paradoxically unsocial. In this regard, Foucault’s History resembles Fabian’s Anthropology, which constructs spatial and temporal “topoi” into a cosmos “for

76. Hugh Honour and John Fleming, *The Visual Arts: A History*, 4th ed., New York, 1995. They arrange their material chronologically “across a wide geographical panorama [again the visual metaphor, akin to Janson’s operation of surveying] in order to allow crucial events in world history . . . to stand out clearly. . . .” (xiii). Their intent is admirable, for they want to put art in its original contexts and remove it from our museums. And they recognize that “Western ideas of ‘progress’ have tended to distort our view of the art of the world” (ibid.) Yet they finally never escape the Western-based gaze with which they begin, in spite of a concluding section entitled “Post-Modern Multiculturalism” with examples from Japan, China, and Russia (820–26). In contrast, however, the latest entry in the market, Marilyn Stokstad, *Art History*, New York, 1995, ends as usual with “Art in the United States and Europe since World War II.”

77. This series, according to its prospectus, “will provide fresh, authoritative coverage of the history of world art, architecture and design” and is divided into Western Art, World Art, Western Architecture, Western Design, Western Sculpture, Photography, and Special Volumes. In this scheme, American art, whether Latin American, Native North American, African American, or the

“simple” (which is to say not so simple) “American Art,” belong to the World, not the West. Not surprisingly, the world is different when seen from Old versus New England.

78. Discussed in Schwarzer (as in n. 55), 24–29, with further references.

79. Foucault, 1973 (as in n. 1), 245.

80. Joseph Brodsky, “Homage to Marcus Aurelius,” in Alexander Liberman, *Campidoglio*, New York, 1994, 30.

81. Immanuel Wallerstein, “The Inventions of TimeSpace Realities: Towards an Understanding of Our Historical Systems,” in *Unthinking Social Science: The Limits of Nineteenth-Century Paradigms*, Oxford, 1991, 148.

82. Jacques Le Goff, “Merchant’s Time and Church’s Time in the Middle Ages,” in *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages*, Chicago, 1980, 29–42.

83. Ursula Schlegel, “On the Picture Program of the Arena Chapel,” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, xx, 1957, 125–46, reprinted in *Gotto: The Arena Chapel Frescoes*, ed. James Stubblebine, New York, 1969, 182–202.

84. Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, New York, 1988, 4–6.

85. Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*, London, 1989, 11.

Western society to inhabit, rather than 'understanding other cultures,' its ostensible vocation."⁸⁶

These topoi become memory aids and the subject and object of disciplinary discourse. The Jansons' diagram "Comparative Views of the History of Art" (Figs. 4, 5) is the art historical equivalent; it visualizes space and time to facilitate the student's mastery of the material "surveyed" in the course lectures and the book. Indeed, the heuristic project of this and many other academic disciplines, the creation of a disciplinary map, begins to resemble an actual map with its firm borders and four colors. The literal map, as Anderson has explained,⁸⁷ functions as a foundational icon for national and colonial states and, more broadly, derives from the early modern creation of utopic spaces that Marin has so brilliantly analyzed.⁸⁸ Like actual maps or panoramic views, disciplinary maps necessarily occlude and deny the multifarious practices of everyday life, both in regard to their own practices and those of the peoples surveyed.⁸⁹ And time in these maps, as in utopias, is distilled and erased in the plays of disciplinary space.⁹⁰

In daily practice, art history engages not one but many spaces—aesthetic, architectural, urban, social, religious, political, and so on—and thus bears within itself diverse examples of spatial narratives. In effect, churches, theaters, gardens, libraries, museums, colonies, government buildings, as well as objets d'art, manuscripts, and paintings, are the heterotopias that Foucault wishes to privilege—the actual spaces of daily life that are also symbolic condensations of other spaces and social relations, as well as concrete entities that can be contrasted with the utopias of historical or nationalistic imagination.⁹¹ Ironically, the objects of art history resembled the subjects of postmodern geography and theory long before either was conceived. What remains for the discipline as narrative is to explore the alternative plottings of space, time, and society of the objects that it studies. That investigation might also be conducted with regard for the contemporary discussions surrounding the globalization of culture and economy, a lively debate in part because it is and is not engaged in the production of new utopias.⁹² And this inquiry should attend to human agency, because space, as Henri Lefebvre argues, is socially produced, "a set of relations between things (objects and products)," and "a tool of thought and action," but "also a means of control, and hence of domination. . . ."⁹³

Yet new narratives of art need more than alternative rhetorics; they also need new bases. At one point, Hans Belting proposed a history of art written according to the function of the artwork within culture.⁹⁴ But this latter

objective is also not without its difficulties, for it is also necessary to explore ways to write about Others without speaking for them or rendering them passive. One possibility is for art history to embrace what Homi Bhabha understands as the crucial distinction between cultural difference and cultural diversity. Diversity itself can become an objective system that classifies. For Bhabha, attending to difference instead "is the process of the *enunciation* of culture as 'knowledgeable,' authoritative, adequate to the construction of systems of cultural identification." Born in "liberal notions of multiculturalism, cultural exchange or the culture of humanity. . . . cultural diversity is also the representation of a radical rhetoric of the separation of totalized cultures that live unsullied by the intertextuality of their historical locations, safe in the Utopianism of a mythic memory of a unique collective identity."⁹⁵

Potentially, art histories can be based on function, meaning, form, social and economic context, as well as time and space. Theoretically, the narrative eye and I of those histories could be located anywhere, not just Europe or America. A history of art written from the aesthetic and historical perspective of the thousand-year-old antiquarian tradition of China,⁹⁶ for example, ought to be as valid as one composed according to the tenets of nineteenth-century European historicism, and valid not only for China but also for Europe. Or both written traditions might be replaced by ones proceeding from the oral and performative cultures of Africa. Precisely because the art historical object was made by and for people other than the present writer and reader, it continually reminds us of its alterity, provided that both "art" and "history" remain contingent and the significance or purpose of object and history is not suppressed. The map of art history is drawn by the modern, the national, and the Euro-American and by their culturally derived senses of order, classification, and system. Will all mutate or dissolve when the World Wide Web replaces the World Wide Map? Or will the latter merely remake the former in its and our own image? Time will tell. But also space, society, economy, or order. And, it is hoped, art history.

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86. Fabian (as in n. 64), 111–12. The disciplinary space here described begins to resemble the utopia of Louis Marin, himself writing after and around Thomas More: "Utopia is first and foremost a spatial organization designed for complete human dwelling, an activation of a sort of dwelling fantasy"; *Utopics: The Semiological Play of Textual Spaces*, Atlantic Highlands, N.J., 1984, 203.

87. Anderson (as in n. 40), 170–78.

88. Marin (as in n. 86), 201–37.

89. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkeley, 1984, 93.

90. Marin (as in n. 86), 10.

91. Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics*, xvi, Spring 1986, 24–27; Soja (as in n. 85), 16–21.

92. Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural

Economy," *Public Culture*, ii, no. 2, 1990, 6–7, or, more recently, David Morley and Kevin Robins, *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries*, London, 1995.

93. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, Oxford, 1991, 83, 26.

94. Hans Belting, *The End of the History of Art?* Chicago, 1987, 32–33. Finally, however, Belting cannot give up the traditional history of form and concludes that the work of George Kubler is the solution (94). I thank Thomas Cummins for his advice on this matter.

95. Bhabha (as in n. 75), 34.

96. Wu Hung, *The Wu Liang Shrine: The Ideology of Early Chinese Pictorial Art*, Stanford, Calif., 1989, 38–70; idem, *Monumentality in Early Chinese Art and Architecture*, Stanford, Calif., 1995, 18–24.