Introducing Jewish Identity to Art History

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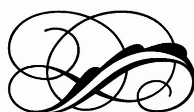

In February 1996 I chaired a session called "Jewish Identity in Art History" at the annual meeting of the College Art Association of America in Boston, Massachusetts. The membership of this organization consists of approximately thirteen thousand museum professionals, university and college art and art history teachers and graduate students, and practicing artists. To my knowledge, this was the first time in the eighty-five-year history of the organization that Jewish identity had been the subject of a session. It also marked the first exploration of several related topics: the meaning of anti-Semitism for art history, the significance of Jewish émigré art historians to the discipline, and the effects of Jewish ethnicity on the interpretation of art. The contributions of Jewish exiles from German-speaking countries prior to and during World War II, while part of the "lore" of art history, have been noted only sporadically by scholars over the last fifty years. The ambivalent structural situation of Jews in art history continues today. Both reluctance and fascination are suggested by the circumstances surrounding the College Art Association session on which the present volume is based: initially rejected, the session was included in the program only after board members prevailed upon the program organizers to reconsider their decision.

In the appendix to an exceptional article, "*Kunstgeschichte* American Style," published in 1969, Colin Eisler listed approximately eighty names of émigré art historians who had fled the Nazis and settled in America.[1] Although not all were Jews, among the art historian émigrés most were German Jews, and Eisler points out that *they* were in large part responsible for the growth of the discipline of art history in America in the latter part of the twentieth century. Very recently, the important work of Karen Michels, a German scholar and contributor to this volume, has documented carefully that most of the best-known art historians of the second half of this century in America and in other English-speaking countries have been Jewish

émigré scholars. In America in the 1930s and 1940s they joined an art world made up of artists, art dealers, and critics, some of them Jews of earlier diasporas. Particularly significant among them for the writing about art were Bernard Berenson, Meyer Schapiro, and Clement Greenberg. Jewish émigrés and their students have trained four generations of students in art, art history, and museum studies, resulting in a definitive formative influence on art and art history. Based on these facts of emigration and influence alone, the importance of Jewish art historians, critics, and artists in the interpretation and exhibition of art in America and the English-speaking world must be considered meaningful for art history.[2]

Numerous studies focus on émigré intellectuals in other disciplines and their impact on American culture and society, but until very recently these art historians and their criticism of art have not been interpreted in light of their Jewishness.[3] Because National Socialist policy toward the Jews in Germany and Austria hit German art history particularly hard relative to other disciplines or, to put it another way, because most of the fortunate art historians who made their way to America as a result of that policy were Jews, this book seeks to understand a historiography peculiar to art history. Despite the experiences of the émigrés and their influence in America, we find in the discipline a critical situation in which significant topics in the history of art related to Jewishness have been elided or are absent.

This situation begins with the accounts of the past given by the art historians themselves. For the most part, these critics wanted to avoid the notion that their religion or ethnicity had anything to do with their art criticism. Thus any topic or method that ostensibly approached issues related to Jewishness or Jewish identity could not be consciously or overtly dealt with. These avoidances over many years and several generations have produced an *aporia* at the very heart of the project of art history, a space of doubt brought about by the suppression of the history of the discipline and its effects on discourse. The subjectivity of the interpreter of art and its presence in the interpretation have been evacuated into this space. It bears emphasizing here that this is not simply a biographical issue related directly and only to the experiences of particular individuals, although these experiences should be remembered and respected. The subjectivity of the interpreter bears upon the written record itself, that is, what the art historian has written, and upon the subsequent history of that writing in citation and in the practices of scholarship and art criticism, where identity and historiography converge and become manifest as discourse.

In this endeavor to understand Jewish identity in art history we must also probe the topic of anti-Semitism, both conscious and unconscious, for its effects on this particular discipline and its discourse.[4] For some years now, historians have suggested that one effect of anti-Semitism on the configuration of the educated and professional classes in Germany was the concentration of a large number of Jews in art-related disciplines and endeavors.[5] The Jewish presence in the discipline of art

history was proportionally greater than the number of Jews in other disciplines, and virtually every study of exiles from Nazi Germany in the United States considers American anti-Semitism a major factor in the reception of all Jewish intellectuals in America. In Europe, too, Jews were discriminated against, both in the academy and in society in general.[6]

Considering anti-Semitism as an "ideology of desire," that is, a prejudice brought about by the needs and desires of the dominant group in order to maintain power, the psychologist Elizabeth Young-Bruehl claims that such prejudices "reinstate inequalities and distinctions when the force of movements for equality has been registered and (often unconsciously) rejected."[7] The perhaps understandable reluctance of art historians to claim and examine critically their own subject positions, particularly in regard to Jewish ethnicity, follows, then, from two factors related to both anti-Semitism and assimilation. In the German context, Jews had some small hopes of finding in art history the professional affiliation not available to them in other fields. Then, particularly after exile from Europe, a significant number of Jews, having attained positions of influence, powerfully affected art and art history, a situation that suggests how they registered and seized the opportunities available—in the form of institutional affiliations in the academy, museums, and galleries. Immigrant Jews in America and elsewhere found new freedom, but they had also become aware of a difference they feared to express, lest it result in anti-Semitism.

This volume unabashedly seeks to explore the Jewish subject position in art history and its manifestations in art-historical discourse. The very possibility of a historiography of Jewish identity in art history reveals that art history has entered a new era, one in which some of its practitioners desire "a description of the facts of the discourse."[8] Given the significance, as well as the large number, of contributions to the discourse by Jews, the project of the historiography of art history will be incomplete, indeed inchoate, until we can situate the function of Jewish identity in the epistemology of the discipline—and by implication the cultural identity of any writer, critic, or historian, as described below. I understand "discourse" here, in the widest possible sense of the term, to include texts, that is, art-historical writing and museum publications, as well as the visual artifacts that are the subject of those texts.[9] Because the history writing discussed here concerns the interpretation of texts, images, and material culture, issues of representation and ethics, images and ideology, cannot be divided conveniently into separate visual and textual realms. The essay in this volume by Larry Silver on the Jewish "history painter" Maurycy Gottlieb demonstrates the interconnectedness of history, painting, and Jewish identity particularly well. Likewise, the essay by Robin Reisenfeld broadens the discourse by considering the implications for art history of collecting by Jewish patrons. When we consider these areas of discourse, visual representation, and subjectivity together, long-held assumptions about art and interpretation come under question.

My presumption here is that the historical subjectivities of art historians, indeed of any writer, are evident and meaningful at more than a purely biographical level.[10] In saying this, I do not mean to deny the importance of the lived experience of the individuals concerned. Many of the essays in this volume gesture to the biographical, and Charlotte Schoell-Glass has found it particularly important for assessing the influence of anti-Semitism on Aby Warburg's cultural history. The case of Aby Warburg demonstrates that at the deep level, below the biographical surface of an individual's existence, lie the resonances with the "facts" of a life that constitute an identity. The essays in this volume take soundings of what lies behind and within discourse to probe the meaning of Jewish identity for that discourse.

The certainty of the interconnectedness of interpreter, interpretation, and audience rests on an epistemological foundation delineated by linguistic theorists, particularly Émile Benveniste. He argues that when language is enunciated as discourse, the speaker establishes simultaneously both herself and the other "to whom the utterance is addressed."[11] Benveniste distinguishes this kind of enunciation from "histoire," in which the speaker effaces herself from an active position, letting history intransitively reveal itself. According to Roland Barthes, history writing embodies a defaulting, which, however, should not be understood as entailing a complete erasure of the speaker. We might think of it instead as an absence that can be recuperated or interpreted—an assimilation, if you will, of the speaker to the text.[12] Benveniste insists that no enunciation can escape manifesting "the attitudes of the enunciator towards that which he or she enounces."[13] Barthes goes further. He believes that "the language of the image is not merely the totality of utterances emitted . . . it is also the totality of utterances received: the language must include the 'surprises' of meaning."[14] These "surprises of meaning" can be understood here as the often unexpressed dimensions of subjectivity, such as how ethnicity and experience manifest themselves. This relationship to the world that is constructed through the self's act of enunciation we might call the cultural identity of the speaker.

In the past twenty-five years or so, this system, in which the speaker and language function together and through which a useful description can be made of the power relationships between individuals and political systems, systems of thought, and ideologies, has been known as discourse. Thus, the domination of art history by Jewish writers raises the question of how or to what degree these art historians create discourse.[15] Conversely, how does discourse "create" them? In what particular ways does Jewish subjectivity resist the situation against which it struggles, and can we see this in the writing on art by Jews? And most immediate to our lives today, does the discourse on art in America in the latter half of this century represent evidence of the struggle of a Jewish identity and, if so, in what ways? These essays suggest some of the reasons for the fascination and attendant repulsion that much of the discipline has exhibited in its reluctance to confront the difficult issues that Jewish iden-

tity raises for art history writing—issues having to do with the mystification of the visual image; the nationalistic and anti-Semitic programs that underpin much of the story of art; the complex problems of identification and interpretation that arise in the diasporic and historically specific contexts of Jewish artist, Jewish art patron, and Jewish art critic.

These are not easy topics to confront, especially, perhaps, for members of a discipline often considered among the most "interpretative" in the academy yet simultaneously resistant to reflectiveness. The most prominent resisters include the Jewish art historians themselves.[16] To what extent is the problem a function of the assimilationist positions of Jewish art historians, both in Europe and, later, in America and England? Many of the essays, such as those by Margaret Olin, Kalman Bland, Larry Silver, Robin Reisenfeld, Karen Michels, and Donald Kuspit, present evidence that anti-Semitism in art history should be understood as a part of the inheritance of the Enlightenment. It is the often undeclared component in the general history of art to which Jews and non-Jews alike have subscribed for two hundred years. The argument, referred to in both Karen Michels's and Louis Kaplan's essays, is that the humanizing potential of art, proposed by Kant in his Third Critique and supported by Hegel's philosophy of aesthetics, resulted in a "policing out" of difficult issues of ethnicity and politics in favor of a narrative based on an ideal humanistic view for the historiography of art.[17]

Even leaving aside the philosophical foundations of this view, an ideal humanistic historiography of art characterizes the contributions from the Germanic milieu since the time of Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1768).[18] Margaret Olin argues in her essay that the interpretation of art according to national styles followed the formation of the nation-state, which erased Jewish art, making it impossible except as a "primitive" precursor.[19] Lacking a nation, Jewish art lacked an identity. The existence of the state of Israel and the history of Zionism since its foundation call for a reconsideration of the ways in which the historic absence of a Jewish state functions historiographically in the discipline, but this volume will not pursue such a line of thought. Ironically, the democratic principle of equality, encountered by the Jewish émigrés to America and predicated on the erasure of difference—the melting pot—supports the idealist humanist historiography of the discipline as constructed in Europe.[20] Whether or not this view of art history as a humanistic discipline—to invoke a famous essay by Erwin Panofsky—has proved true in the actual experience of individual art historians, its strength as myth is found in the resistance to the exploration of issues of subjectivity in the discipline as a whole.

The resistance is addressed explicitly in many of the essays that follow. Indeed, as they reveal, the exploration of resistance in the historiographical realm leads directly to profound questions regarding dogma, atavism, taboo, and aniconism in the critical practices of art history. These cultural concepts, which border on the

psychological, become most apparent in the context of the visual image and artifact, particularly in the domain of religion. Kalman Bland argues that for two centuries Jewish aniconism, defined as the denial of Jewish art, served two, often competing, ideological agendas. If Jewish aniconism was theorized as bad because it differed so strongly from the reverencing of images by Christians, it supported an anti-Semitism whose ultimate purpose became one of eradicating all Jews and their culture from Europe. When Jewish aniconism was viewed positively, it perpetuated the narrative that modern assimilated Jews "learned" the value of images from the dominant Christian ideologies. Lisa Saltzman sheds another light on the dilemma of artistic representation for Jewish identity when she rereads Theodor Adorno's statement on the impossibility of representation after Auschwitz in conjunction with the biblical taboo on imagery in order to redeem both the politics and theory of an antimimetic position. Charlotte Schoell-Glass explores anti-Semitism in relation to theories of atavism, an aspect of genetic theory often used to explain racist ideology. She demonstrates how Aby Warburg attempted to resist such dangers in his creative cultural history.

The exceptional rigor and complexity of art-historical scholarly apparatuses, such as the typical museum catalogue, give the impression of an exhaustive comprehension of the past and its culture. Yet a point of departure for many of the papers in this volume is the serious lack of historical knowledge regarding the very figures who serve many of us as our most central references. The historiographical explorations represented in this volume lead to new insights into issues of content and style in the work of art, as well as to new perspectives on many of the prevailing and historical philosophical positions regarding visual art and the field of aesthetics.

Lisa Bloom's article on the Jewish identities of the artists Eleanor Antin and Judy Chicago presents a particularly strong case for the powerful hermeneutic that ensues when gender, ethnicity, and discourse are considered together. The evidence collected in this volume suggests that the patterns of resistance in history writing may be fruitfully explored, perhaps even delineated, by the cultural markers of ethnicity and gender. In the past such efforts have been made, although rarely in art history, from the perspective of "class," enabling an alternative critique or the revelation of hidden and covert historiographic agendas. An unusual example of this approach from within the discipline can be found in Arnold Hauser's argument concerning the hidden meaning of the power of the film medium.[21] The historical reasons for art history's resistance to class-centered interpretations are too complex to address adequately here, although many of the essays in this volume raise the question, as they must when the topic is the complex socio-economic-cultural construction called art.

Class-based alternatives to the study of art are found most notably in the approaches to culture of the Frankfurt School, particularly in the work of Walter Ben-

jamin. In certain fields, especially in the study of modern art, such studies have offered useful alternatives to the traditional accounts that are focused on the codependent terms of national period styles and individual artists. The more productive models of cultural interpretation proposed by the Frankfurt School, such as those that consider the social situation of the observer, say, or questions of media, deal with the issue of subjectivity. The allure of this alternative cultural criticism for art history is particularly strong because of the Germanic flavor of the discipline, the attraction of one Germanic discipline to the many familiar sounds and modes of argumentation of another Germanic discourse. The mainly German Jewish ethnicity of the members of the Frankfurt School means that their contributions to the study of identity and subjectivity in the realm of art may be fraught with complexities that deserve due consideration when their methods are appropriated. It is true, for example, that many of the members of the Frankfurt School essentially sought to negate, for what may seem legitimate political reasons, the power of art, particularly after their emigration.[22] When Lisa Salzman interprets Adorno's famous statement about the prohibition of images, she warns us about the problematic issues involved in relating Adorno's Jewishness to his criticism of mimetic representation.

Today, in the study of cultural objects and the societies that produce them, ethnicity and gender have offered more flexible and fruitful prospects than class from which to probe the meaning of representations, particularly in the visual media. Both ethnicity and gender allow the interpreter to explore issues of subjectivity in makers, audiences, and critics in ways not possible if the interpretational lens remains fixed on economic factors alone. The field of cultural studies is a nascent discipline in which approaches to culture previously pursued through history, anthropology, art history, and media studies (film, television, and video) are brought to bear upon material culture of every variety and type, including everyday objects, high art, and texts.

In the context of cultural studies Jewish identity has a peculiarly problematic profile. Thus *historiographic resistance adheres to the topic of Jewish identity* more than to other aspects of visual studies.[23] In a recent book with the subtitle *The New Jewish Cultural Studies,* Jonathan and Daniel Boyarin make the important observation that the difficulties in establishing a "Jewish place" in cultural studies relate both to the precedence of the Jewish Diaspora relative to other diasporas currently studied by scholars, such as the black Atlantic diaspora, and to the "retrospective devaluation of Jewish difference in exile since World War II."[24] By revealing the powerful ways that an assimilationist ideology has influenced art history and the interpretation of art, this volume provides substantive insight into the reasons for the current views of Jewish identity in cultural studies.

The problem of Diaspora and diasporas, one writ large throughout the Bible and history, the other plural and lowercase, affects every area of life in America today,

not just the academic field of cultural studies. The competition among and for diasporas in the academy is more than a current ivory-tower sporting event. It indicates profoundly that cultural studies mirror the persistently embattled positions of minority groups in contemporary society. Our academic "culture wars" are just one public articulation of our most serious diasporic social problems. Inasmuch as many, but not all, of the essays in this volume employ strategies often associated with cultural studies to explore the issue of Jewish identity in art history, the tensions inherent in appropriating methods from diaspora studies for interpreting identity issues related to "the Diaspora" deserve some specific comment.

Clearly, no theorist of contemporary postmodern culture would want to claim that a Jewish identity is essential to an understanding of that culture, any more than others would make such a claim for a black, gay, or female identity.[25] David Theo Goldberg and Michael Krausz, the editors of a volume called *Jewish Identity,* understand that identity formation is "never complete, always in process (and after death is often carried out by others, in one's name)."[26] This view locates the understanding of identity in history and, therefore, in flux, open to change and to changes of meaning or signification, retrospectively as well as contemporaneously. For example, the Jewish historian Yosef Yerushalmi brilliantly rereads Sigmund Freud's Jewish identity to reveal a sense of historical situation and vicissitude in the theory of psychoanalysis.[27]

The competition and confrontation between Jews and other minority groups in America, especially African Americans, necessarily play a role in the interpretation of these groups' identity. Such conflicts have occurred during much of the historical period covered by this book. Recently, for example, K. Anthony Appiah has argued that the successful assimilation of Jews into mainstream American culture intensifies, rather than lessens, the differences between "blackness" and "whiteness": "If African-Americans did become white, as the Italians and the Jews did, there wouldn't be any point to whiteness anymore."[28] The reception given to the exploration of Jewish identity, both inside and outside the academy, is bound to be affected when ethnic and cultural concerns elide with "race," as they often do in these debates, for both historical and polemical reasons.

No doubt, at least in the field of cultural studies, some will question the use of approaches that reject the dominant Eurocentric views of history and society, with which Jews are so often associated, to study Jewish identity. In addition, the art historians and critics examined here have written about the high art forms not ordinarily considered in the field of cultural studies. Scholars of cultural studies have concentrated more on indigenous and popular forms of art, such as Afro-Pop or street art, as yielding a greater understanding of diasporic identities. In significant methodological ways this book challenges the field of cultural studies by raising a variety of historiographic and interpretational issues around the subject of Jewish identity.

This volume seeks something more than an understanding of the Jews in art history according to traditional or even the usual postmodern notions of diaspora. The prevailing trends toward subjectivity found in other disciplines, particularly those in which "the visual" is central, have pointed the way for the approaches taken here. In anthropology, for example, a responsible ethnographic method today insists upon an ethical self-awareness on the part of the ethnographer toward the subjects and the ethnographer's own subject position. Charlotte Schoell-Glass's essay on Aby Warburg's research reveals, in his interest in anti-Semitism, just such a perception of responsibility on his part as a cultural historian.

In literary and film studies the issue of the interpreter's relationship to the text has been examined since the late 1960s, beginning with the debates on authorship instigated by Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault. Feminism and queer studies have required that the multiple subjectivities of the interpreter be considered in historical critique. If scholars in the traditional humanities and social sciences were already concerned with issues of subjectivity and authorship, those in the newer field of cultural studies, particularly those actively examining the African diasporas, have extended the issue of identity itself and its many manifestations in overtly political directions.[29]

My own interest in the topic of Jewish identity in art history has been provoked by the thinkers in all these disciplines who have investigated the many ways in which an understanding of subjectivity, both expressed and unexpressed, expands our grasp of the political investments and ethical choices reflected in history writing. But I must admit that my energy for this topic, like that of many of the contributors to this volume, lies in a realm more subjective than what is usually understood by "the scholarly." As historians, we can begin only from where we sit today. I can acknowledge my motivation briefly by confessing my desire to understand my own Jewish identity and its role in my choice of profession and field. I found in art history, both past and present, many others who, like myself—or like my father, whose model I followed—had repressed or suppressed their Jewishness in their professional lives and writing. Somehow they had converted, assimilated, or at least "passed," many of them if only by studying the most Christian of periods in the history of art, the Renaissance, also my own specialization. My fellow authors in this volume have their own reasons for exploring the topic at hand. To examine these fully would require another volume at least, but also the courage to take what we have learned from this volume into our own lives and discourses. If we understand our discursive past in the various complex ways described by these essays, how will that understanding guide us as we write the future of the discipline?

I have suggested here many reasons for the rarity of explicit references to ethnicity in art history. The essays in this volume explore many of these reasons. For the curious, or for those dissatisfied, for whatever reason, with the historiography as it has been explained to date, one way to begin uncovering the missing parts of the

story of art history is to acknowledge the lineage of those who wrote it. This volume begins to do that by pointing to the ways in which Jewish art historians have told the story of a largely Christian art in a Christian world to a mainly Christian audience. Many of these Jews have been called, and have called themselves, "secular Jews." This is a term heavy with meaning in a discipline that deals constantly with religious images and representations. Elements of iconoclasm, as Louis Kaplan's essay on Clement Greenberg suggests, adhere to the secularization, by art criticism or the art historians themselves, of not only their own discourse, but also the work of others.

The most prominent example in the literature of the ambivalence associated with this secularization is the famous article of 1961 by the left-leaning art historian Meyer Schapiro on the politically conservative art historian and connoisseur Bernard Berenson.[30] There is no better place to start investigating the complexities of Jewish subjectivity in art history than this article in which Schapiro comes down hard on Berenson's "zeal for the problem of authorship" and his love of attribution, concerns associated with the art market. As Donald Kuspit notes in his contribution to this volume, Schapiro speculates on some possible influences in Berenson's life and work resulting from his conflicted relationship to Judaism and his disavowal of a Jewish identity, but Schapiro's essay reveals as much about his own Jewish identity as about Berenson's conversion away from Judaism.

Schapiro focuses on Jewishness as a means of understanding Berenson's ethics. He uses Berenson's memoir and his own interviews with the aged scholar as sources for the assessment of "values." He questions the very truthfulness of the autobiographical account, finding discrepancies and omissions throughout. Schapiro slyly employs the stereotype of the "merchant Jew" to criticize Berenson's commerce in art which, according to Schapiro, badly colored his aesthetic positions. Robin Reisenfeld's important essay on the Jewish patronage of German expressionist artists, published here, demonstrates how this stereotype of the venal Jew prevailed in Germany when Berenson was active. Such a Jew was identified with commerce in general and with the art market in particular. As with Schapiro, the stereotype was applied not only by Christians to Jews, but by Jews to Jews. Schapiro contrasts his characterization of Berenson's commercial behavior with the Jewish love of "the Book" and a "more seriously philosophic" system of values operative in Jewish ideology since the Haskalah, or Jewish Enlightenment.

Schapiro is absolutely sure that Berenson "wished his Jewish ties to be forgotten," yet the evidence of the latter's *Sketch for a Self-Portrait* suggests a more complex relationship to Jewish subjectivity than Schapiro allows. In his *Sketch* Berenson compares himself to three historically prominent Jews: Saint Paul, perhaps the most famous Jewish convert to Christianity; Spinoza, perhaps the most famous Jewish secular philosopher and someone who was excommunicated from Judaism; and the Gaon of Vilna.[31] Schapiro believes that for Berenson the first two figures were sig-

nificant because "they broke with the religion of their ancestors."[32] He denies, however, that Berenson's act was, like theirs, one "of courageous conviction," believing instead that it "helped to accommodate him to a higher social milieu."[33] But Berenson's identification with the Gaon of Vilna (Elijah ben Solomon Valman, 1720–1797) calls Schapiro's interpretation into question. As Schapiro points out, Berenson's parents changed the family name to Berenson and identified his birthplace as Vilna when they emigrated to Boston, changes on which Berenson himself was silent. But he claimed descent from a Jewish hero, the famous Gaon of Vilna. *Gaon* is a Talmudic term for the leader of the Exile (or *Galut*), and the Gaon of Vilna, like other *Gaonim,* was a person who stood as a political, religious, and cultural representative of his people to non-Jews.[34] While remaining devoted to Judaism, the Gaon of Vilna welcomed new learning and ideas. Thus one aspect of Berenson's self-definition can be read very differently from those that inspired Schapiro's condemnation of him for self-serving conversion and commercialization. Berenson was more aware of the historical significance of his place in the world and of the place of the assimilated Jew in art history than Schapiro gives him credit for. Berenson's own views and knowledge of Jewish history provide important clues to the negotiation of Jewish identity for both the interpreter and the interpreted.

In *Being and Nothingness* Jean-Paul Sartre characterized the process of knowledge as a social assimilation. He wrote: "There is a movement of dissolution which passes from the object to the knowing subject. The known is transformed into *me;* it becomes my thought and thereby consents to receive its existence from me alone."[35] Sartre later recognized the flaw in this alimentary metaphor for social absorption in the case of the Jews.[36] Jewish hopes for assimilation could never achieve such fulfillment. The Jew could never be totally digested. As Sartre said: "In a word, the Jew is perfectly assimilable by modern nations, but he is defined as one whom these nations do not wish to assimilate."[37] The assimilating culture will absorb those aspects of Jewishness that suit its purpose and violently evacuate those that do not. No longer merely an external substance, for Sartre the undigested becomes the antithesis of the assimilating self, a fetish, if you will, for the dominant group. The rejection of things "too Jewish" transforms them into the refused, the indigestible, the deformed, even the kitsch, to use a Yiddish term. The materiality of things "too Jewish" has recently been the subject of an exhibition curated by Norman Kleeblatt of the Jewish Museum, New York City.[38] Contributors to it attempted to "create" a discourse of power from the dominant culture's views by using the unabsorbed aspects of Jewish-American identity. The responses to this exhibition evidence the ambivalence that adheres to the topic of Jewish identity, especially to those features of Jewishness that defy assimilation.

Michel Foucault has shown that a concept of identity is required by the dominant, assimilating culture as much as it is denied to and negotiated by what he calls

the unassimilated Other.[39] This essentialized self is inevitably achieved at the expense of the Other. The arguments that Sartre and Hannah Arendt made concerning the necessity of anti-Semitism for the success of German nationalism and National Socialism support Foucault's conception of the subject's freedom.[40] The German Jewish émigrés achieved their most successful assimilation after flight, in part by establishing an art-historical discourse from which they had removed any trace of the earlier assimilationist dilemma. But this move prevented them from speaking as fully situated cultural subjects. Silent about their identity, these historians could locate neither themselves nor the discipline they helped to found in the historical moment, or predicament, they actually experienced. Nevertheless, these art historians can be situated today, not to reconstruct an irretrievable past, but to transform the present discourse and to reassess the course of art history. I sense that this project will profoundly affect our understanding of the past and our own significance as interpreters in the world today.

Given that this topic remains relatively unexplored, it seemed appropriate that the essays in this volume relate the problem of Jewish identity in art history to a wide variety of important topics. For all of this variety the writers here are focused on the visual, on representation, on images and imagery in the context of discourse. Chronologically, the topics begin in the nineteenth century and span the twentieth. They address issues in the European, mainly German-speaking, and American contexts. They deal with aesthetics and criticism, collecting and the art market, feminism, psychoanalysis, and cultural history, as well as with individual art historians. In part, the essays were chosen with such a scope in mind, to ensure that all the important areas of the problem of Jewish identity in the discipline were represented, even if they could not be fully explored in a collection of essays. The contributors take a variety of political positions, not all of them held by the editor, nor obviously by the other contributors. Rather than being an entirely collaborative effort—something we have to some degree strived for—such an endeavor is necessarily pluralistic. Although this pluralism is not always desirable in edited collections, or in politics, it can be an advantage where the goal is to understand the complexities of Jewish identity and the introduction of the subject to art history.

Notes

1. Colin Eisler, "*Kunstgeschichte* American Style: A Study in Migration," in *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1930–1960,* ed. Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), 544–629.

2. As an example of the pervasive influence of Jewish art historians, I use my own professional genealogy, which is by no means exceptional in its patterns of scholarly kinship.

As an undergraduate at Bryn Mawr College in the early 1970s I studied with Charles Mitchell, who had been trained in England at the Warburg Institute (originally founded in Hamburg by the Jewish art historian Aby Warburg) by Otto Kurz (A Viennese Jew); James Snyder and Charles Dempsey, both of whom had worked at Princeton with Erwin Panofsky (a Jew formerly with the Warburg Institute in Hamburg); Arthur Marks, a Jew trained at the Courtauld Institute in London; and Dale Kinney, who had worked with Richard Krautheimer and Walter Friedlander, both German Jews, at the Institute for Fine Arts, New York University. A record of my graduate training would make this genealogy even longer. Karen Michels has published as much statistical information as we have about the importance of the German-Jewish genealogy for English-speaking art history; see especially her contribution to this volume and her earlier essay "Transfer and Transformation: The German Period in American Art History," in *Exiles and Emigrés: The Flight of European Artists from Hitler,* ed. Stephanie Barron, with Sabine Eckmann (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1997), 304–15.

3. Recently, two important books on the general topic of Jewish identity and representation have appeared: Tamar Garb and Linda Nochlin, eds., *The Jew in the Text: Modernity and the Construction of Identity* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995); see especially the essays by the editors; and the exhibition catalogue *Exiles and Emigrés.* In the latter volume, Martin Jay summarizes the literature and bibliography on the German intellectual exile in "The German Migration: Is There a Figure in the Carpet?" 326–37. Books on *Exilforschung* (exile, or perhaps diaspora, studies) in Germany and America treat few art historians. See, however, the entries for individual art historians in Herbert A. Strauss and Werner Röder, eds., *International Biographical Dictionary of Central European Emigrés 1933–1945* (Munich, New York, London, Paris: K. G. Saur, 1983), vol. 2.

4. On anti-Semitism in America, see Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). On an argument that turns on anti-Semitism in art history, see Kevin Parker, "Art History and Exile: Richard Krautheimer and Erwin Panofsky," in *Exiles and Emigrés,* 317–25.

5. On this concentration, see particularly Peter Paret, "Bemerkungen zu dem Thema: Jüdische Kunstsammler, Stifter und Kunsthändler," in *Sammler, Stifter und Museen: Kunstförderung in Deutschland im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert,* ed. Ekkehard Mai and Peter Paret (Cologne: Böhlau, 1993), 178–83.

6. I speak here only of Jews in Europe in the modern postemancipation period, when issues of Jewish identity were changed and complicated by assimilation and a moving away from traditional, uniquely Jewish communities. This period coincides exactly with the rise of the study of art's history and its philosophy—that is, aesthetics in the university. For the strongest argument that anti-Semitism was produced by the confrontation with modernity and that together they produced a distinctive "Jewish identity," see Michael A. Meyer, *Jewish Identity in the Modern World* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1990).

7. Elizabeth Young-Bruehl, *The Anatomy of Prejudices* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 30. Significantly, in light of the topic of this book, Young-Bruehl is relying here on the definition of anti-Semitism by the Viennese art historian and Jewish émigré-turned-psychoanalyst Ernst Kris. I will examine Kris's relationship to Jewish identity in a forthcoming essay on Viennese Jewish identity, psychoanalysis, and art history.

8. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock, 1972), 9–10.

9. There are many discussions of the term *discourse.* For the best, see Paul Bové, "Discourse," in *Critical Terms for Literary Study,* ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 54–55.

10. On biography, the history of the term, and its characteristics as a genre, see Catherine M. Soussloff, *The Absolute Artist: The Historiography of a Concept* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), especially Chapter 1, "On the Threshold of Historiography: Biography, Artists, Genre," 19–42.

11. Émile Benveniste, quoted in Toril Moi, *Feminist Theory and Simone de Beauvoir* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1990), 83.

12. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1957), 193–247.

13. Émile Benveniste, quoted in Moi, *Feminist Theory,* 83.

14. Roland Barthes, "The Rhetoric of the Image," in *Image, Music, Text,* ed. and trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), 47.

15. The work of Michel Foucault has been essential to the understanding of how subjectivity and discourse interarticulate. In this essay I have been helped particularly by Paul Rabinow's interview with Foucault published as Michel Foucault, "Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth,* ed. Paul Rabinow, trans. Robert Hurley et al. (New York: New Press, 1997), 162–73.

16. For an example of how this argument plays out, see Parker, "Art History and Exile," in *Exiles and Emigrés,* 317–25. The most thorough disciplinary critique along these lines of resistance and Jewish identity is the important book by Bryan Cheyette, *Constructions of "the Jew" in English Literature and Society: Racial Representations, 1875–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

17. Of particular importance for my understanding of Kant and neo-Kantianism in the context of Jewish identity is the essay by Jacques Derrida, "Interpretations at War: Kant, the Jew, the German," *New Literary History* 22 (Winter 1991): 39–95.

18. For the tensions in Winckelmann's own subjectivity with regard to his view of the history of art, see the excellent book by Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994). For a brief discussion situating Winckelmann's significance in the idealist narrative of the history of art, see my article, "Historicism in Art History," in *The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics,* ed. Michael Kelly (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

19. See also Margaret Olin, "Nationalism, the Jews, and Art History," *Judaism* 45 (Fall 1996): 461–82.

20. In my thinking here I have used the work of Slavoj Zizek in Slavoj Zizek, ed., *Mapping Ideology* (London and New York: Verso, 1994). He has argued that the democratic society's mythology of equality with its attendant erasure of difference is an impossibility in an actual, lived sense. Therefore, according to this view, this imaginary erasure cannot achieve an actual democracy, because a sense of community can only come with the recognition of difference. In actuality the émigrés were not given entirely open and equal treatment when they came to America, as Anthony Heilbut has documented. See Anthony Heilbut, *Exiled in*

Paradise: German Refugee Artists and Intellectuals in America, from the 1930's to the Present (New York: Viking, 1983). Heilbut does not treat art historians to any degree. See the essay by Sabine Eckmann in *Exiles and Emigrés,* 30–39, for further discussion of inequalities of emigration and quotas.

21. Arnold Hauser, *Naturalism, Impressionism, the Film Age,* vol. 4 of *The Social History of Art* (New York: Random House, 1951), 252: "The film, whose public is on the average level of the petty bourgeois, borrows these formulae from the light fiction of the upper middle class and entertains the cinema-goers of today with the dramatic effects of yesterday. Film production owes its greatest successes to the realization that the mind of the petty bourgeois is the psychological meeting place of the masses. The psychological category of this human type has, however, a wider range than the sociological category of the actual middle class; it embraces fragments of both the upper and the lower classes, that is to say, the very considerable elements who, where they are not engaged in a direct struggle for their existence, join forces unreservedly with the middle classes, above all in the matter of entertainment."

22. See the treatment of the Frankfurt School figures by Heilbut, *Exiled in Paradise.*

23. This is the argument of Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1982), who bases it on the historiographical tradition within Judaism.

24. Jonathan and Daniel Boyarin, eds., *Jews and Other Differences: The New Jewish Cultural Studies* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), viii. For a good survey of the issues involved in diaspora studies, see James Clifford, "Diasporas," in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 244–77. The interpretation of the Diaspora (writ large) has everything to do with the changing fortunes of and changed conditions in Zionism: see Yitzhak F. Baer, *Galut* (New York: Schocken Books, 1947), and Arnold M. Eisen, *Galut: Modern Jewish Reflection on Homelessness and Homecoming* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986). For the black Atlantic diaspora, begin with Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Double Consciousness and Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1993). The conflict over Diaspora and diasporas in cultural studies can be related to the social relations of African Americans and Jews in America in the 1990s.

25. See, for example, Stuart Hall quoted in Kobena Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), 25.

26. David Theo Goldberg and Michael Krausz, eds., *Jewish Identity* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 1. I am grateful to Michael Krausz for discussing the topic of Jewish identity with me early in my research.

27. Yosef Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991).

28. K. Anthony Appiah, "The Multiculturalist Misunderstanding," *New York Review of Books* 44 (9 October 1997): 30. The issues of assimilation raised by the example of art historians and their discourse relate to many of Appiah's points, but do not always support them.

29. See, for example, Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic;* Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, eds., *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: Sage, 1996); Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle.*

30. Meyer Schapiro, "Mr. Berenson's Values," in *Theory and Philosophy of Art: Style, Artist, and Society* (New York: George Braziller, 1994), 209–26. This essay is a sort of book review of a biography of Berenson. Presumably, part of Schapiro's point is to "correct the record." When Schapiro uses the term *values,* he clearly means the political and ethical values that he associates with Berenson's writing, his role in the art market, and his personal life. Schapiro's politics were widely discussed in the obituaries that appeared after his death; see, for example, "Meyer Schapiro, Ninety-one, Is Dead; His Work Wove Art and Life," *New York Times,* 4 March 1996. See also Margaret Olin, "Violating the Second Commandment's Taboo: Why Art Historian Meyer Schapiro Took on Bernard Berenson," *Forward* 98 (4 November 1994).

31. Schapiro, "Mr. Berenson's Values," 211 and 225, note 5.

32. Although Spinoza was excommunicated, the evidence is that he never gave up his belief in Judaism. He was known as a Jew all his life but maintained close ties with Catholic clergy and laypeople.

33. Schapiro, "Mr. Berenson's Values," 211.

34. I wish to thank Richard Hecht for his generous assistance in this aspect of my research. There is much more to be said about Berenson and Schapiro and Jewish identity than I can provide here.

35. Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'Être et le néant* (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), 275–76 (my translation).

36. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew,* trans. George J. Becker (New York: Schocken Books, 1948), 97: "He absorbs all knowledge with an avidity which is not to be confused with disinterested curiosity. He hopes to become 'a man,' nothing but a man, a man like all other men, by taking in all the thoughts of man and acquiring a human point of view of the universe. He cultivates himself in order to destroy the Jew in himself, as if he wished to have applied to him—but in modified form—the phrase of Terence: *Nil humani alienum puto ergo homo sum.* [Nothing human is alien to me therefore I am a man]."

37. Ibid., 67.

38. Norman Kleeblatt, ed., *Too Jewish? Challenging Traditional Identities* (New York: Jewish Museum, and New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1996).

39. See especially Michel Foucault, "The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth,* 281–301.

40. See Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew;* and Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951; New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1973). The important study of Jewish artists and art by Richard Cohen, *Jewish Icons* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), appeared too late for me to consider it in this essay.