

美术史与观念史

范景中 曹意强 主编

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HISTORY
OF ART
AND
HISTORY
OF IDEAS

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序 言

夫史者，筆載也，圖載也；求直也，求知也。載籍既存，人類之記憶不滅。雖其人云亡，而其事如在，使後之學者，坐披囊篋，心存千載，摩挲陳編，溯覽百代。此亦求知之一道也。

美術史者，史之一幅也。雖然，尋繁領雜，務信棄奇，明白頭訖，品酌事例，其揆一也；然終以圖像爲指歸，以立載筆之準的。而析理賞覽，探蹟索隱，又以觀念史爲羽翼。蓋非立言無以明其理，非立言無以測其奧；而言之精粹者，觀念也。圖像之妙，非言不津；津言之妙，非像不傳；臻此極境，洵史之美輪美奐者也。但若貴琦辭，賤文獻，廢閣舊籍，鬻爲敗紙，或才翻史略，即楮成文，鑿空立義，任情失正，則亦殆矣。

Ruskin 曾云：*Great nations write their autobiographies in three manuscripts, the book of their deeds, the book of their words and the book of their art. Not one of these books can be understood unless we read the two others, but of the three the only trustworthy one is the last.* 誠哉斯言！史之爲任也重矣！秉筆荷擔，學者負之，邁迹往昔，昭其業績，於是，《美術史與觀念史》出焉。然繩愆匡謬，討論是正，俾其成人文科學之翼宣盛美者，則以俟君子襄事焉。先哲有言：其作始也簡，其將畢也必巨。其是之謂乎？是爲序。

范景中 曹意強 壬午八月

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IN MEMORY OF PROFESSOR ERNST GOMBRICH

Fan Jingzhong

The death of Professor Ernst Gombrich on November 3, 2001 marked the end of the late 19th-century traditional art history. In a sense, his death is more than the termination of that tradition, although some branches of that tradition will continue in various parts of the world. Like the truly great 19th-century scholars, Gombrich was more than a scholar. When we saw among his mourners pianists, architects, artists and philosophers, we could not help but realize that his death has shocked the *Respublica litterarum*. I am afraid that, for a long time to come, we will feel a paleness in the academia, a suspension of our visual experience at least in the field of art history.

To some extent, Gombrich was a culmination of *Kunstwissenschaft* in the German-speaking countries. He elevated the psychological approach to art history to a supreme realm; he synthesized Wolfflin's formal analysis into a more concise and more general language; and he transformed Aby Warburg's iconology into a more cautious and objective method of interpretation. His perspective into art history, as he summarized himself, is a triptych, with representation in the middle, flanked by symbolism and decoration. This new perspective encompasses classical Western scholarship, traditional German phi-

losophy and modern psychology, and it is well illustrated by his three classical books, *Art and Illusion*, *Symbolic Images*, and *The Sense of Order*. These books are among the very few that have won glory and respect for the study of the humanities in the past years. *Art and Illusion*, in particular, has impacted not only the field of visual art and psychology, but has also interested scholars in philosophy of science and literature. It marked a new height for the study in art history.

As a humanist, Gombrich had been throughout his life defending classic values, values that can be summed up simply as the acknowledgment of our ignorance and the willingness to check evidences against rationality, while unyielding to the pressure of authorities and of mass movement. This is not only a formula emphasizing human modesty and strong will, but also a formula stressing the inevitability of human errors. Gombrich refuted all forms of relativism in the history of art, of ideals, and of culture, and he often reminded people of what Goethe once said: Sind eben alles Menschen gewesen (They are after all human beings). He especially detested those nationalists who regarded themselves as superior and elite. As a Jewish scholar, he rebutted the myth that 19th-century culture in Vienna was a culture created mostly by Viennese Jews.

The fact that even the most ethical scholars could sometimes succumb to this harmful myth propelled Gombrich to be alert of a prevailing cliché in the tradition of German philosophy: Hegel's ideal of *Zeitgeist* and that of National spirit. Gombrich strove hard to dispel this dark cloud. He did so not only because he wanted to replace this cheap cyclical view with a genuine approach to history, but also because he stressed the responsibilities of scholars. He was

never shy to remind us that every research result of ours might influence many people, and that we must foresee and do our best to prevent any possible dangers these research might create. This is a powerful appeal to every righteous scholar. There for, if we only pay tribute to Gombrich's academic contributions and ignore his great personality, we would miss something very special to human beings.

Gombrich's sympathy, his modesty, his intellectual sense of humor, and his sense of justice make up his great mind. Even more acute than his desire for knowledge is his strong belief in a better world. His sincere sense of responsibility and commitment to the society was undiminished even in his illness-stricken last years.

I was fortunate to have had fifteen years of friendship with Professor Gombrich, and was tremendously benefited. I will never forget his generous financial help to my family during the days when I was ill, and the photographs of his daily life he sent me before we had a chance to meet, thinking that we might not be able to see each other. While grieving for the loss of a great personal friend, I was also mourning for the vacuum in the *Respublica litterarum* created by the departure of this warm-hearted intellectual giant.

THE VISUAL ARTS IN VIENNA CIRCA 1900

Ernst Gombrich

I think I should tell you at the outset that I am generally not a person who enjoys giving offence. I am afraid it was actually my reluctance to give offence that prevented me from declining the invitation by the Director of the Austrian Cultural Institute to give this Seminar. I fear I should have chosen the comparatively minor evil, because, I find to my regret, that much of what I shall have to say today is likely to cause a good deal of offence to members of the audience if they expect me to extol what our programme calls 'Jewist Culture'. Of course I know of many very cultured Jews, but, briefly, I am of the opinion that the notion of Jewish Culture was, and is, an invention of Hitler and his fore-runners and after-runners.

My brief is, of course, to talk about the so-called *Jewish Culture and the Visual Arts*, a problematic topic at the best of times. It so happens that I have a relatively easy point of entry into the topic, for when I was in Vienna in October 1994, I noticed that the Jewish Museum, which was still in temporary quarters, had arranged an exhibition of the artist Broncia Koller, whose maiden name was Pineles.

I still remember Broncia Koller as a flamboyant personality. In her early days she was a friend of my mother, and actually designed my mother's ex

libris. A pleasing coloured woodcut of a farmhouse hung in our entrance hall. I also remember her very beautiful daughter, Sylvia, who had been a pupil of Egon Schiele. I enjoyed the exhibition of Broncia Koller's work that is somewhat uneven, but obviously gifted, and I took home the catalogue, edited by Tobias Natter.

I confess I was both surprised and gratified to open it and read the introduction, because the sentiments and opinion it expresses happen totally to coincide with my own, about which I warned you at the outset. It is a letter written by Sergei Sabarsky who, as Dr Brix tells me, was an art dealer, much concerned with Egon Schiele's oeuvre. I should like your permission to read the whole text in translation, because, as I said, it relieves me of the necessity to explain my attitude, and reassures me that my stance is not wholly an isolated one:

Dear Dr Natter,

Some time ago you invited me to write an essay about Jewish patronage of art in the Vienna of the turn of the century. I tried to explain that, unhappily, I could not meet your wishes, and so we agreed that I would write you a letter to explain the reasons for my refusal. I was born in Vienna, a child of Jewish parents, in November 1912-that is, after the turn of the century-but I am old enough to serve as a witness of the age. Among the c. 180,000 Viennese Jews, there was a number of very well-to-do families-though far fewer than is generally assumed nowadays. The overwhelming majority of the Jews of Vienna belonged to the middle classes. They were small businessmen and employees and certainly did not belong to

the patrons of art in question. The patrons themselves were members of old-established Viennese families, who nearly all shared one characteristic: they felt themselves fully as Austrians and never thought of distinguishing themselves from their non-Jewish compatriots. They did not regard their traditional religion as a reason for differentiation. Since many of them were not religious, this sense of belonging was facilitated. In fact they felt themselves to be cosmopolitans of Austrian nationality. Even those of them who thought most clearly never accepted the fact that this attitude was considered erroneous by their non-Jewish compatriots. They did not know, or did not want to know, that regardless of their degree of assimilation they were seen by their Christian neighbours as Jews. Their world had at first to be fully annihilated in the Nazi millennium to convince the few survivors of their mistake.

Whether this attitude of the Austrian Jews (which, of course, existed equally in other European countries, most of all in Germany), was morally or ethically correct is not the issue. I do not feel entitled to pass judgement, I only want to report, and I have tried to do that in the present framework as simply as possible, even at the risk of obscuring, through this simplification, what I wished to clarify.

What has all this to do with the requested article about Jewish patrons of art in Vienna at the turn of the century? The patrons referred to never saw themselves as Jewish patrons, and, if you will allow me for a moment to be melodramatic, they would turn in their graves if they knew of this classification, however well-intentioned.

The division of Austrians, Germans and other Europeans into Aryan

and non-Aryan citizens-and this need hardly be proved any more-rests on a racist attitude that was to find its final solution in the holocaust. To make a distinction between Aryan and non-Aryan human beings belongs, *nolens volens*, to the theory of the Nürnberg laws, even if it is done ever so philosemitically, and all the more if it is. But in order not to be misunderstood, and knowing full well that I am repeating myself, I am not asked to judge, only to report.

One does not do a favour to the wealthy lovers of art, who happened to be Jewish, by calling them 'Jewish patrons of art'. No more than when, with equally good intentions, one represents the great members of families, some of which had settled in Austria centuries before, the prominent representatives of literature, music or science, as having been different.

Let me close with a personal note. When I read in German publications, such as the *Stern* or the *Spiegel*, headlines like 'The Germans and the Jews', I like to ask my German friends: 'What was Heinrich Heine - a German poet or a Jewish one? What was Felix Mendelssohn-a German composer or a Jewish one? - Or Max Liebermann - a German painter or a Jewish one? It depends on the answer to this question whether my intervention will be understood or not. I hope that my declaration will meet with your understanding, and I remain yours *Sergei Sabarsky*.

This, of course, is the crux of the matter. How do you define a Jew? In pre-Hitler days the term generally referred to a person's religion, and this definition seems to me still appropriate in the place of worship. From this point of view Heinrich Heine was certainly not a Jew, for he was not a believer; even

less so was Felix Mendelssohn, who had, of course, prominent Jewish ancestors, but who was a devout Christian. I do not know about Max Liebermann, whom I still saw at the opening of an exhibition in Berlin, and who certainly looked exactly like his wonderful self-portraits, and undeniably Jewish, though I frankly know nothing of his religious outlook.

I shall have to return to the ambiguity of the term 'Jewish' later in my talk, but, given my brief of discussing the visual arts in Vienna, it does not seem to me very important.

I am the happy owner of a heavy tome, published in 1909, the year of my birth, entitled *Altkunst-Neukunst*, by Ludwig Hevesi, who may or may not have been a Jew. Its 608 pages provide an unrivalled panorama of the visual arts in Vienna between 1894 and 1908. The index lists nearly 600 names of artists who exhibited during that period; but, frankly, it goes against the grain to enquire whether any of them were Jews or of Jewish extraction. I prefer to leave that enquiry to the Gestapo. In any case, the artists and architects who were prominent in Vienna in that era were certainly not Jewish in any sense of the term. Among the conservatives there was the amiable water colourist Rudolf von Alt, whose topographical views are widely admired. Among the innovators, of course, Gustav Klimt was in the lead, and, needless to say, he was not a Jew either, nor was his rebellious disciple, Oskar Kokoschka. Among the architects, the generation that had built the monumental building of the Ringstrasse, Theophil Hansen and Friedrich Schmidt do not qualify, and nor does one of the great innovators, Otto Wagner, the designer of the *postsparkasse*. Adolf Loos, whom you are more likely to know, was not a Jew either, nor were any of the creators of the distinctive version of *Art Nouveau* in Vienna. The so-called

Secessionists and the *Wiener Werkstätte*, Karl Moll, Kolo Moser, Josef Hoffmann and so on, down to Egon Schiele, who belongs, of course, to another generation. Truly, I do not find this at all surprising, for whatever Jewish culture may have been, it was not a visual culture.

I hope it is not unfair of me if I here take issue with Dr Steven Beller, for the Director of the Austrian Cultural Institute sent me a Xerox of Beller's article in *Zeitgeschichte* on our topic, to appraise me of the alternative opinion, so that I might consider it at this Seminar.¹ Dr Beller's estimate of the importance of Jewish culture in Vienna reminded me of another book I have also possessed for a long time. It is the autobiography of Jehudo Epstein, who was a successful portrait painter in Vienna in my time, and actually portrayed my father's brother, though I never greatly liked his work.

I did, and do like his autobiography, called *My Way from East to West* (Stuttgart, 1929). I think it gives a fully convincing picture of life in the Jewish stetl before the turn of the century. For Epstein was born around 1870, near Minsk, so that he fully qualifies for this study of Vienna around 1900, for by that time, a stroke of good fortune had enabled Epstein to attend the Academy of Fine Art in Vienna.

I wish I could quote extensively from this moving and realistic book, which describes the milieu from which the author came with unprejudiced clarity. 'In this milieu,' writes Epstein, 'time stood still at the same spot for a thousand years, and could not resolve to progress. A whole people lay in a lethargic sleep, dreamt of nothing but the past and did not want to perceive the present. The Exodus of the Jews from Egypt, the sacrifice of Abraham, the seizure of Canaan, Nebuchadnezzar, the Pharaoh, were still topical matters,

and personalities in whom one was vividly interested. For the Exodus from Egypt the Lord was thanked every day, several times; also, God was reminded of Abraham's readiness to sacrifice his son. One still discussed the biblical nations of Amon, Moab, Gog and Magog, and, in particular, Amalek, who had created many difficulties for Israel on its trek through the desert, was frequently cursed. This accursed Amalek, how I hated him in my childhood! How much trouble he had caused for the people of Israel... When, in the synagogue, on reading a section of the Torah, the name of Amalek occurred, the Whole assembly shouted eagerly: '*Jimadh schmoi weisichroi!*' (May his name and memory be erased!). They did not notice that these people, this Amalek, no less than Amon and Moab, had perished and turned to dust long ago. They were not aware of the fact that new people and new religions had arisen around them.

Let me insert here that Dr Beller attaches much importance to the Jewish tradition of Talmudic learning, as an ingredient of their alleged cultural prominence. Epstein confirms that learning was held in high esteem in this community, but he also describes his experience as follows: 'I frequented *schul*, and obviously I disliked it much. What we were taught was monotonous and held no attraction for me. Year in, year out, it concerned the learning of the Hebrew language and its literary content. Since both were taught in conjunction, there was no real joy in learning either the text or the translations... the main interest of teachers and pupils was not centred on the narrative and its beauty, but the correct translation of the words, and their interpretations by commentators-interpretations which were frequently totally hare-brained. The further books of Moses, with their legal content, the many decrees about the sacri-