

Strzygowski and Riegl in America

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The United States was the first nation to leap into a post-metaphysical modernity, into a void unstructured by social class or by nostalgia for an antique golden age. At least this is the story the United States told to itself in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Very few Europeans, certainly few European scholars, were impressed. One old-world scholar who did have great expectations from American modernity was Josef Strzygowski. Strzygowski imagined that American scholars would follow him in his rejection of humanistic 'superstition', his abandonment of historical-philological method, and his disregard for traditional nationalist loyalties and for the great institutions of Church and State. 'I have hopes', he wrote in the pages of a new American scholarly journal, *Eastern Art*, in 1928, 'that America will forge ahead of Europe in revolutionizing methods of research, especially if attention be given to my new book *Forschung und Erziehung*'.¹ He felt sure that Americans would follow him in opening up the history of art to both hemispheres, indeed to the entire globe. We need an 'objective and scholarly and not merely a European and traditional point of view', Strzygowski argued in the *Art Bulletin* in that same year.²

American scholars responded with some enthusiasm. Medievalists, who dominated American art history in these years, took notice of Strzygowski's radical theses. Strzygowski's relentless sequence of publications had opened up a Near Eastern landscape of artistic activity—architecture, sculpture, ornament, carpets, textiles—completely unknown to, indeed never seen by other European scholars. Strzygowski's finds interfered with the organic flow of European cultural history and challenged the idea of the integrity of Mediterranean classical culture. The Princeton art historian Allan Marquand wrote an essay for the *Harvard Theological Review* in 1910, a year after Strzygowski's appointment to the chair in Vienna, outlining the Austrian scholar's ideas, calling attention to his impressive travels in the Near East, unusual in those days, and claiming that his views on the eastern

¹ Strzygowski, 'The Orient or the North', *Eastern Art* 1 (1928): 85.

² Strzygowski, 'North and South in the History of American Art', *Art Bulletin* 10 (1928): 274.

origins of early medieval style were 'gaining adherents amongst the younger writers in various German universities'. Marquand named Franz Wickhoff and Alois Riegl as representatives of the older, Rome-centred view that Strzygowski's scholarship threatened.³ In these years Strzygowski was already in print in English, in articles for British publications.

In 1921 Strzygowski was invited to the United States. In Boston he delivered the series of lectures that would later be published as *Origin of Church Art*,⁴ not at Harvard University but at the Lowell Institute, a private foundation that sponsored lectures by distinguished scholars, aimed at the general public. This was an honor in its own right; Lowell lecturers had included such luminaries as the geologist Charles Lyell, the biologist Louis Agassiz, Judge Oliver Wendell Holmes, the historian Arnold Toynbee, and the philosophers William James and Alfred North Whitehead.⁵ Afterward the Lowell Institute and the Archeological Institute of America together sponsored a lecture tour to various American campuses. Strzygowski wrote his manifesto *Die Krisis der Geisteswissenschaften* in the United States, and dedicated the book 'to his colleagues at Harvard and Princeton'. He had a special bond with the art historian John Shapley of Brown University and New York University, who had written his dissertation under Strzygowski in Vienna in 1914 and for many years was editor of the *Art Bulletin*. In 1921 Shapley published in that journal a review of a book by one of Strzygowski's students where he outlined the master's 'method', reprinting a very methodical-looking table with space for *Gegenstand, Gestalt, Inhalt, and Form*, a kind of primitive, non-philosophical precursor of Erwin Panofsky's famous iconological table. To our eyes it is not a method at all; Strzygowski's ideas about representation and meaning were commonplace to the extreme. But for Shapley, and perhaps for other American scholars as well, whose aptitude for abstract or systematic thought was severely underdeveloped, this was impressive. 'Its pedigree', he explained importantly, 'can be traced back to the encyclopaedic thinking of the early nineteenth century. Strzygowski invokes Goethe'.⁶ Shapley undertook a translation of *Die Krisis der Geisteswissenschaften*, a fact that Strzygowski often mentioned, but it came to nothing.

In the 1920s Strzygowski's reputation in America was at its high point. Arthur Kingsley Porter, the great Harvard medievalist, laid out his ideas for a general audience in an article entitled 'Strzygowski in English' in the magazine *The Arts* in 1925. Here Kingsley Porter explained that '*Orient oder Rom?* touched a match to the fuse of medieval scholarship' and that 'the old archeology of the schools fell

³ Allan Marquand, 'Strzygowski and his Theory of Early Christian Art', *Harvard Theological Review* 3 (1910): 357-365. Wickhoff was already available in English: *Roman Art*, translated by Mrs. S. Arthur Strong, New York: Macmillan; London, Heinemann, 1900.

⁴ Strzygowski, *Origin of Christian Church Art*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923.

⁵ Edward Weeks, *The Lowells and their Institute*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1966.

⁶ John Shapley, book review, *Art Bulletin* 3 (1921): 133.

flat as a house of cards'. Kingsley Porter conceded that Strzygowski's 'breathless' style was 'irritating' and 'exasperating', but felt that his bitterness and sense of isolation was justified. 'He is at once the most prophetic, the most intuitive, the most inspired and most baffling of archeologists'.⁷

Strzygowski was pleased by the attention. He responded by incorporating the Americas into his global schema. His 1928 *Art Bulletin* article 'North and South in the History of American Art', sketched out hypothetical connections between his own favoured styles and modes of northern Asia and northern Europe and the art of ancient America. In the native American art of the far west he saw parallels with Turkish and Chinese art; in the pottery of the mounds of Tennessee and Arkansas he saw the band ornament of northern Europe. Overstepping the bounds of his disciplinary expertise, he noted 'racial similarities' between children in Finland and children on an American Indian reservation that he had visited—a journey that has received somewhat less attention than Aby Warburg's Pueblo Indian sojourn of 1896.⁸ In his book *Early Church Art in Northern Europe* of 1928, where we are all urged 'to see with our own, that is, northern eyes', Strzygowski compared Colonial wooden churches that he had seen in America, with their square, blocky massing giving a 'monumental effect', to the wooden churches he knew from Galicia in the Carpathians.⁹ Strzygowski did indeed find a readership in the States. He was invited back for another lecture tour in 1929-1930. Bryn Mawr College, already in these years one of the most distinguished American programs in art history, offered him a chair in 1926. This was one of at least five job offers that Strzygowski received in these years, all from foreign institutions.¹⁰

Strzygowski, with his bizarre and repulsive racist vision of world-historical dynamics, enjoyed a high international reputation in the decades between the wars.¹¹ Today it is hard to fathom why. In the 1930s, when most was at stake, an international organization devoted to 'intellectual cooperation' published a debate between Strzygowski and the politically liberal French medievalist Henri

⁷ A. Kingsley Porter, 'Strzygowski in English', *The Arts* 7 (1925): 139-140.

⁸ Strzygowski, 'North and South in the History of American Art', *Art Bulletin* 10 (1928): 274-278.

⁹ Strzygowski, *Early Church Art in Northern Europe*, London: Batsford, 1928, 2, 69.

¹⁰ Eva Frodl-Kraft, 'Eine Aporie und der versuch ihrer Deutung: Josef Strzygowski, Julius von Schlosser', *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 42 (1989): 7-52, here 44, mentioning Bryn Mawr. The latter appointment is academic folklore but not easy to verify. Prof. David Cast of the Department of Art History at Bryn Mawr College was unable to find records of the offer in the departmental archive. The Bryn Mawr chair went instead to Strzygowski's pupil Ernst Diez.

¹¹ For a clear assessment of Strzygowski's nationalism and antisemitism, see Margaret Olin, *The Nation Without Art: Examining Modern Discourses on Jewish Art*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001, 18-24.

Focillon about the cultural identity of the 'Germans'. Focillon rejected Strzygowski's Aryanist fantasies, but countered with his own notions of the 'Celtic' genius, a more innocuous but no less dubious thesis.¹² In such a context, it is perhaps not surprising that Strzygowski's ideas got a serious hearing. He was even nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in these years, by the Swedish art historian Johnny Roosval.¹³

American art historians between the wars were eager for contact with European scholars. Admittedly they were oriented mostly toward France and Italy. The First World War had forever altered Americans' perceptions of German culture and society. The shift in attitude was reflected in the learning of languages in American schools. In 1915, 316,000 American high school students were studying the German language. By 1922 the enrolment in German classes had plunged to only 14,000, less than 5% of the wartime total.¹⁴ Nevertheless, many American scholars, remembering that after all the American university with its seminars and lectures had been modelled on the German rather than on the English system, persisted in admiring the German institutions and specialists. Art historians like Charles Rufus Morey at Princeton sent their students to Germany and Austria to meet the great authorities, including Adolph Goldschmidt and Max Friedländer in Berlin, but also Strzygowski in Vienna. In fact, according to Kurt Weitzmann, it was an American student, Raymond Stites, who provoked the final divorce between the two Viennese Institutes. In his memoirs Weitzmann reports that Stites tried to present a dissertation dealing with Leonardo da Vinci and homosexuality to Schlosser, but that Schlosser refused it. Strzygowski then accepted the dissertation, and this led to the severing of all relations between the two institutes.¹⁵

American art historians in the 1920s and early 1930s, even the best of them like Morey and Porter, had little conception of art history as a philosophical project. There was no sense yet of a 'critical art history' descended from Hegel's philosophy of history, nor of artistic form as the yield of a 'pure visibility' that prepared it for structural and comparative analysis. Art history was mostly about collecting material, ordering it in time and space, and fitting it to rough theories of stylistic development. To connect with the German art historical establishment was a matter of making useful contacts. There was no interest in dead German scholars, only in

¹² See Walter Cahn, 'L'art français et l'art allemand dans la pensée de Focillon', in: *Relire Focillon*, Paris: Musée du Louvre et École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts, 1998, S. 35-39.

¹³ Frodl-Kraft, 'Eine Aporie und der versuch ihrer Deutung', p. 28.

¹⁴ Jeffrey L. Sammons, 'The "Tragicall Historie" of German in the United States: Some Scenes from Past and Present', in Edward Dudley and Peter Heller, eds., *American Attitudes Toward Foreign Languages and Foreign Cultures*, Bonn: Bouvier, 1983, 27.

¹⁵ Kurt Weitzmann, *Sailing with Byzantium from Europe to America*, Munich: Editio Maris, 1994, 207. The dissertation was completed in 1927 and Stites published a series of articles based on it in *Art Studies* in 1926, 1928, and 1931.

the current experts. Alois Riegl, for instance, who died in 1905, was already forgotten, except for his theory of the 'optical' character of late Roman art, which Charles Rufus Morey mentioned in an *Art Bulletin* article on 'The Sources of Medieval Style' in 1924.¹⁶ Here Morey attempted to reconcile Riegl's view with Wickhoff's and Strzygowski's. This was one of only two references to Riegl in all the pages of the *Art Bulletin* from its inaugural issue in 1913 to the year 1948 and the only reference to Wickhoff, despite the fact that Wickhoff's *Roman Art* had been translated into English early on. The other early reference to Riegl in the *Art Bulletin* was in Meyer Schapiro's celebrated review of *Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen* in 1933, where he acknowledged the theoretically progressive character of Riegl's followers Sedlmayr and Pächt but condemned the potentially nationalist and racist aspects of their thought.¹⁷

Riegl remained untranslated through all these years. His *Spättrömische Kunstindustrie* did become something of a cult classic, prized by a few. Robert Goldwater mentioned Riegl several times in his important study *Primitivism in Modern Art* of 1938, remarking that Worringer and others had made of Riegl a 'prophet of expressionism'.¹⁸ Bernard Berenson was said to have kept a copy of Riegl's book permanently open on a lectern—a characteristically pretentious gesture—but as Meyer Schapiro acidly pointed out, Berenson's own writings show little evidence of his actually having read it.¹⁹ In his late book *The Arch of Constantine*, Berenson actually dismissed Riegl with a certain contempt for his efforts to rehabilitate the crude art of the provincial Roman empire.²⁰ Some American scholars may have remembered Riegl's rather weak showing in his bitter dispute with Strzygowski in the last years before his death in 1905. Riegl had published Part One of *Spättrömische Kunstindustrie* in 1901. This is the book generally known under that title. In fact, the project was incomplete. The core of the book, the early medieval metalwork found on Austro-Hungarian territory, was to be dealt with in Part Two. Riegl continued to work on the project, but feared that the

¹⁶ Morey, 'The Sources of Medieval Style', *Art Bulletin* 7 (1924): 35-36.

¹⁷ Schapiro, 'The New Viennese School', *Art Bulletin* 18 (1936): 258-266; reprinted in *The Vienna School Reader: Politics and Art Historical Method in the 1930s*, ed. Christopher S. Wood, New York, ZONE Books, 2000, 453-485.

¹⁸ Goldwater, *Primitivism in Modern Art*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1938, 19, 24, 26-28, 33, 42.

¹⁹ Schapiro, 'Mr. Berenson's Values' (1960), reprinted in Schapiro, *Theory and Philosophy of Art: Style, Artist, and Society*, New York: Braziller, 1994, 213.

²⁰ Berenson, *The Arch of Constantine*, New York: Macmillan, 1954, 22-24. See also his comments on Riegl in *Aesthetics and History in the Visual Arts* (New York: Pantheon, 1948), 168-169, 226-227. Berenson professed to value the German art historians, and as late as the 1950s was complaining that too few of their works had been translated into English; *Arch of Constantine*, p. 19.

commission for the second part of *Spätrömische Kunstindustrie* would be taken away from him by the state and instead awarded to Strzygowski.²¹ In 1902 Riegl reviewed Strzygowski's *Orient oder Rom?* The debate turned on the question of whether the so-called 'late Roman' style developed organically out of imperial Roman art or derived from near eastern or northern European sources. Since this anti-classical and ornamental mode was widely regarded as the cradle of early medieval art, and by extension the whole future history of Western art, much hung on this question. Riegl's infuriated, exasperated tone in this essay comes as something of a shock; he was never less nuanced and never more defensive. In effect, Strzygowski succeeded in dragging Riegl down to his level, for they ended up debating who between them had seen more Near Eastern artefacts. Riegl actually conceded the point that Strzygowski was more widely travelled but then disputed, amazingly, the relevance of the point: 'Of what essential worth', he asked, 'is the familiarity with a monument as a historical fact?'²²

Americans probably saw Riegl, if they saw him at all, as a representative of the 'old school', caught up in obscure abstract systems and unwilling to look objectively at the material objects. It is easy to see how Strzygowski's rhetoric appealed to Americans. He spoke of the clear direct force of material evidence, against the dry thin voice of the documents and texts, and against the thought-cathedrals of the new scholastics. He scorned the mindless 'aping' of classical form. He had an eye for the overlooked, the physically unimpressive, the marginal. All this must have appealed to American art historians weary of the bourgeois obsession with great European masterpieces, the continuing fixation on the Grand Tour, the Ruskinian moralizing and cult of virtuous manliness that so often in America accompanied discussion of the fine arts. His spirited contempt for the

²¹ Margaret Olin discovered a letter in which Riegl expressed his worries about Part Two going to Strzygowski; *Forms of Representation in Alois Riegl's Theory of Art*, University Park, Pa.: Penn State Press, 1992, 129 and 219n1. But Strzygowski did not get the commission for Part Two, even after Riegl's untimely death. Instead the work was compiled and completed by Ernst Heinrich Zimmermann, Riegl's successor at the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Vienna, on the basis of a few published articles by Riegl and his lecture notes. That volume was published under Riegl's name as *Die spätrömische Kunst-Industrie nach den Funden in Österreich-Ungarn*, Part Two, Vienna: K. K. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1923. The original publication of 1901, Part One, was later reedited in a compact format in 1927, under the simple title *Spätrömische Kunstindustrie*. This edition of the classic work, no longer bearing the words 'Part One', is the one scholars are most likely to know; the very existence of Part Two, with its ambiguous authorship, has been forgotten. For a discussion of Riegl's thinking on early medieval metalwork, as reflected in Part Two, see Christopher S. Wood, 'Riegl's *Mache*', *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 46 (2004): 155-72.

²² Riegl, 'Spätrömisch oder Oriental?', *Münchener Allgemeine Zeitung*, Nr. 93, 94 (1902); translated by Peter Wortsman as 'Late Roman or Oriental?', in Gert Schiff, ed., *German Essays on Art History*, New York: Continuum, 1988, 173-90.

academic establishment appealed to the eccentric patrician Kingsley Porter. How thrilling for Americans when Strzygowski wrote, in English, 'We can write history and formulate principles, in the manner of Church confucianism, along the lines of our humanistic ancestors. But the time comes when we ask for more. We wish to know not only what has been, but what is, and what shall be'.²³ And, finally, we should not underrate American enthusiasm for Strzygowski's most insane Aryanist theses and convictions of nordic superiority. There was plenty of this in the United States, as there would be plenty of private clandestine support for Hitler in Britain and the United States, especially in elite circles. There were many versions of the cult of the nordic, the teutonic, the nomadic. Since the publication in 1837 of the Danish scholar Carl Rafn's *Antiquitates Americanae*, amateur and professional archaeologists had been hunting for evidence of a medieval nordic presence in North America. They found runic inscriptions, corpses, a stone tower, and other Viking antiquities, as far south as Virginia and as far west as Minnesota.²⁴ These were direct connections to northern Europe, supposedly, long pre-dating Christopher Columbus and thus dampening the pride of the millions of Italian immigrants who were arriving at Ellis Island in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Strzygowski's theories resonated off all of this.

But in the end Strzygowski was to be disappointed. His frustration is reflected in several comments. Walter Cook, in a letter of 1924 to his teacher Morey, reported that 'Strzygowski wasn't especially complimentary [of the American academic scene]; he said that in Cambridge he had some wonderful dinners, and that everyone was very pleasant, but that there wasn't much being done in the history of art'.²⁵ In *Early Church Art* (1928) Strzygowski pointed out that the Germanic Museum at Harvard, a pre-World War I establishment dedicated to the cooperative study of German culture, contained only plaster casts of medieval German sculpture, and nothing of German antiquity. Later in the same book he reported that 'when asked in Washington about my impressions of America, I replied quite seriously that I was surprised to see in the American Art Museum no specimens of ancient American art. The observation', he continued', excited no interest'.²⁶ In 1939, in his ranting contribution to the posthumous Festschrift for Kingsley Porter, Strzygowski's tone was openly bitter: in 1922 'I thought I would carry the Americans off with me along new research paths. It would appear however that the scholars there are not quite done with the attainment and the

²³ Strzygowski, *Early Church Art in Northern Europe*, p. 2.

²⁴ Samuel Eliot Morison, *The European Discovery of America: The Northern Voyages, A.D. 500-1600*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1971, 32-80.

²⁵ Kathryn Brush, 'The Unshaken Tree: Walter W. S. Cook on German *Kunstwissenschaft* in 1924', *Zeitschrift des deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft* 52/53 (1998-99): 42. It is not clear from Cook's letter where or in what context he heard this comment.

²⁶ Strzygowski, *Early Church Art*, pp. 145n1 and 149n1.

overcoming of the old European way. They take on voluntarily the whole burden of a debilitating transmission of scholarly power, they do not recognize how young and immature are the so-called human sciences in Europe, and they persist in the belief that history is scholarship'.²⁷ The process of American disenchantment with Strzygowski is recorded in the obituary prepared by Ernst Herzfeld, W.R. Koehler, and Morey for the journal *Speculum* in 1942. Here at last the authors acknowledge that in Strzygowski's teachings 'one cannot fail to see the influence of the ideology of National Socialism'; and that his 'method' and findings must necessarily be mistrusted for their speculative nature.²⁸ The ground closed over Strzygowski, and all that was left in the United States was a memory of his theory of the Armenian origins of certain medieval building types, a theory cited in two different volumes of the authoritative *Pelican History of Art* only to be immediately rejected. The author of one of those volumes was an emigré scholar, Richard Krautheimer, the other an American trained, significantly, by Kingsley Porter, Kenneth Conant.²⁹

The Americans did not follow Strzygowski's lead, partly because they sensed the dangerous irresponsibility of his thinking, partly because they were drawn in the end to the mainstream European tradition. The great emigré scholars who arrived in the United States in the 1930s reinforced these judgments. The emigrés brought with them not only a vigorous sceptical, empirical method, but also a deep faith in the intrinsic superiority and exemplarity of European culture and the humanistic tradition. As is well known, the American academic establishment was highly receptive to their message.³⁰

Perhaps Gertrude Stein was right when she wrote, in the *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, that the United States was in fact the *oldest* country in the world, precisely because it had been the first to venture into modernity.³¹ America, following this logic, was also the first nation to *tire* of modernity, and to dream of a consoling collapse back into the arms of a comfortable European tradition grounded in an arcadian dream of Mediterranean antiquity.

²⁷ Strzygowski, 'Das irreführende am Begriffe 'Mittelalter', Wilhelm R. W. Koehler, ed., *Medieval Studies in Memory of A. Kingsley Porter*, Cambridge: HUP, 1939, vol. 1, 44.

²⁸ *Speculum* 17 (1942): 460-461.

²⁹ Richard Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, Harmondsworth, 1965, 321-330; Kenneth John Conant, *Carolingian and Romanesque Architecture 800-1200*, Harmondsworth, 1959, 83 (Scandinavia) and 341-2 (Armenia, where Strzygowski's name is not even mentioned). On Krautheimer's and Panofsky's views on Strzygowski, see Olin, *The Nation Without Art*, 22n68.

³⁰ On this topic, see Wood, 'Art History's Normative Renaissance', *The Italian Renaissance in the Twentieth Century*, Acts of an International Conference, Florence, Villa I Tatti, 1999, Florence: Olschki, 2002, 65-92.

³¹ Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1933, 96.

The flight of German-speaking art historians to the United States in the 1930s was Strzygowski's nightmare come true: for emigration meant a new beginning for Eurocentric humanism. The United States, now and for decades to come under the spell of Panofsky, emerged not as the grave of humanism, but as the cradle of a new humanism. Suddenly the old ideas of the sovereignty and freedom of the individual, and the integrity of the work of art, had found a second academic life.

Seen in this light, the later positive reception of Alois Riegl within American art history takes on a new ambiguity. Should the embrace of Riegl be seen, as it usually is, as an aspect of a more general post-structuralist and anti-humanistic rejection of the emigré legacy? Or should it be seen as a sophisticated extension of the Hegelian critical and idealist tradition that in the end leaves the traditional conceptions of form and history in place? This is surely how Strzygowski would have seen it.

Over the last generation, little by little, Riegl has indeed emerged out of his American obscurity. In 1963 Otto Pächt published an assessment of Riegl's work in the *Burlington Magazine*, but this seems to have had little impact.³² Another early voice calling for a re-engagement with the older German literature was that of the social art historian T.J. Clark, who in an influential article in the *Times Literary Supplement* in 1974 lamented the absence of English translations of the writings of Riegl, Max Dvořák, Warburg, and Jacob Burckhardt.³³ Like many Marxists, Clark had been impressed by the interest that Georg Lukács and Walter Benjamin had taken in Riegl.

But the main impetus to a recuperation of Riegl came from French scholars with a structuralist orientation, who began re-reading him in the early 1970s. The key breakthrough in the United States was the essay by Henri Zerner published in the journal *Daedalus* in 1976.³⁴ Since then there have been translations into English of most of the major monographs and essays.³⁵ By now Riegl is wrapped in layers

³² Pächt, 'Art Historians and Critics--VI', *Burlington Magazine* 105 (1963): 188-193.

³³ On the British reception of Riegl, see Richard Woodfield, 'Reading Riegl's *Kunst-Industrie*', in Woodfield, ed., *Framing Formalism: Riegl and the History of Art*, The Netherlands: G+B Arts International, 2001, 56-58, 71-75.

³⁴ Henri Zerner, 'Alois Riegl: Art, Value, and Historicism', *Daedalus* 105 (1976), 177-188. Other important stages in the French rereading of Riegl were Daniel Arasse, 'Note sur Alois Riegl et la notion de 'volonté d'art', *Scolies* 2 (1972): 123-132; Henri Maldiney, 'L'art et le pouvoir du fond', *Regard, parole, espace*, Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1973, S. 173-207; Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Milles Plateaux*, Paris, 1980, translated as *A Thousand Plateaux*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1987, 492-93.

³⁵ *Late Roman Art Industry*, transl. Rolf Winkes, Rome: Bretschneider, 1985. *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament*, transl. Evelyn Kain, annotations and introduction by David Castriota, preface by Henri Zerner, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992. *The*

of English-language commentary: articles,³⁶ book-length studies,³⁷ respectful citations even in fields remote from his own—in writings on twentieth-century art, for example.³⁸ Riegl was locked into place as the pioneer of the various formalisms, more or less systematic, that in the last decades of the twentieth century dominated advanced art history in the United States, and in many ways still do; formalisms that now routinely disrespect the traditional quantities ‘author’, ‘intention’, ‘quality’, ‘content’.

The formalisms and neo-formalisms of twentieth-century art history are easily construed as new idealisms intent on securing art for historical analysis, still after all under the auspices of Hegel. The formalist and crypto-aesthetist Riegl is very much a Riegl that Strzygowski would recognize. The ongoing re-reading of Riegl presents itself as anti-humanist, as an aspect of disenchantment with the liberal consensus of the mid-century, and therefore as part of the rejection of Panofsky. But Strzygowski would say that we have simply exchanged one patriarch for another. (He would say the same about our fascination with Aby Warburg.) And it is probably true that we are working now in an era not of the radical critique of idealist *Kunstwissenschaft*, but rather of the fulfilment of that critical and academic tradition.

Idealistic *Kunstwissenschaft*, now and forever; but is that enough? There is one aspect of Strzygowski’s mad vision that lingers and indeed has never really been absorbed or even confronted by mainstream *Kunstwissenschaft*, namely his global map of art history. The word ‘global’ has become a facile formula of media culture, applied sometimes with wildly optimistic connotations but just as frequently now wildly pessimistic. Perhaps it is a term best suited to the production and marketing of contemporary art. But the word ‘global’ may also point to an incompleteness in the program of *Kunstwissenschaft*.

Strzygowski was a methodological innovator of unsuspected power. As Suzanne Marchand has shown, it was Strzygowski’s ‘outsider’s’ hostility to traditional philological method led him to the insight that material artefacts might

Group Portraiture of Holland, transl. Evelyn Kain and David Britt, Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 1999.

³⁶ See for example: Kurt Forster, ‘Monument/Memory and the Mortality of Architecture’, *Oppositions* 25 (1982): 2-19; Benjamin Binstock, ‘Postscript: Alois Riegl in the Presence of The Nightwatch’, *October* 74 (1995): 36-44; and the essays in Woodfield, ed., *Framing Formalism*.

³⁷ Margaret R. Olin, *Forms of Representation in Alois Riegl’s Theory of Art*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992; Margaret Iversen, *Alois Riegl: Art History and Theory*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993.

³⁸ See for instance Leo Steinberg, ‘The Philosophical Brothel’, *October* 44 (1988): 13-14; or Pamela Lee, ‘Bridget Riley’s Eye/Body Problem’, *October* 98 (2001): 38.

be more reliable evidence of deep historical patterns than literary texts.³⁹ Strzygowski borrowed the mystique of the nomadic, a major theme of modernity. Admiration for the freedom and the flexibility of the nomad is one of the major themes of pastoral thinking in the West, from Mantuanus and Edmund Spenser in the Renaissance to Deleuze and Guattari's *Mille Plateaux*. Pastoral generally is the critical comparison of the real world to an imagined anti-urban and anti-authoritarian world. Strzygowski mobilized pastoral against Riegl's 'metropolitan' art history, scholarship which he saw invested in the institutions of state and cult. Rome—and by virtue of the *translatio imperii*, ultimately Vienna—with its contrived cultural genealogy leading back to Greece and Egypt, was for Strzygowski capable only of a crude, crushing *Machtkunst*. With a disingenuousness worthy of Hitler himself, Strzygowski turned his thesis of Aryan cultural supremacy as an ironic weapon against the grandiose arts of city-building, representational architecture, the 'aulic' arts in general. For Strzygowski, those art historians who relied excessively on written documentation, the archive of the established elite; who favoured representational art, especially the idealized representation of the human body, over abstraction or decoration; and who sat in university libraries instead of travelling, were all nothing better than servants of this *Machtkunst*. Strzygowski had no respect for the category 'artwork': he saw only artefacts. We might compare his radicality to that of George Kubler, the American Mesoamericanist and author of *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (1962), who challenged the humanistic professional orthodoxies grounded in the study of the elite arts of the medieval and Renaissance West with his models of seriality and replication as the fundamental structures of artefact production.

The Strzygowski 'problem' is this: he traced paths on the map that could have upset—in some subfields did upset—all the established narratives of European art history inherited from Vasari, from Winckelmann, from nineteenth-century philhellenic art history. Strzygowski's map shifted the focus away from the Mediterranean basin to the east and to the north, to Asia Minor, Armenia, Iran, the Caucasus, Scandinavia, northern India. Strzygowski's vision was crassly Aryanist, a kind of Alexandrian world-conquest in reverse. But the form-paths he found are in many cases the very paths that are still travelled by scholars today trying to complicate and destabilize the nineteenth-century genealogies of ancient and medieval civilization, the very paths that have made it possible to conceptualize 'marginality', for example, or 'marginality'. Today the fields of ancient art, medieval art, even Renaissance art are being submitted to ongoing revisions in this direction, and perhaps nowhere more than in America.

³⁹ Suzanne Marchand, 'The Rhetoric of Artifacts and the Decline of Classical Humanism: The Case of Josef Strzygowski', *History and Theory*, Theme Issue, 33 (1994): 106-30.

I believe the real function of Strzygowski is perhaps to force us into reconsidering that dynamic map of world art he sketched out—a crude diagram in his hands, but perhaps a tool retaining some force in the incessant, interminable campaign against the humanist superstition of Mediterranean classicism. One thinks of Strzygowski's bizarre vision of a remodelled Germanic Museum at Harvard, as an 'Indogermanic Museum', with the American section in the centre, flanked on the left and the right by the Pacific and the Atlantic, the other great artistic currents of the high north.⁴⁰ We can be grateful that Harvard did not build this museum. Still, there is something appealingly radical about the configuration, especially in light of the 'pathetic', dialectical 'world art historical' vision found in Warburg, where the Orient still figures as a mystifying female threat to Mediterranean reason, a dangerous and passive source of fascination. The non-Western here functions simply as the image of a hidden weakness within the West. It would seem that this is not what we mean by 'globalism' today. But then of course, when we re-read Warburg or Riegl, we are not really looking for a global art history, but rather only falling deeper and deeper into the self-reflection of the West.

Riegl's critical formalism was incapable of sponsoring such radical revisions; after all, formalism did not even help him decisively win the 'Orient or Rome?' debate with Strzygowski. Compare Riegl's and Strzygowski's approaches to late Roman and early medieval metalwork, the brooches and belt buckles of auratic simplicity and density, subject especially of *Spätromische Kunstindustrie*, Part Two, the volume that Riegl feared would be taken from him and transferred to Strzygowski. Walter Benjamin and other perspicuous readers of Riegl admired not his contribution to the unedifying 'Orient or Rome?' debate, but rather his quest for the origins of modern 'optical' art, an art that addresses the free intellect. Riegl argued that late Roman and early medieval mosaics, carved reliefs, and *fibulae*, which set light and dark contrasts vibrating in shallow planes, confounded the clear distinction between figure and ground. The coloristic plane, a dematerialized apparition, integrates the artwork as a whole, detaching it from the rest of the world. The 'radical optical objectivism'⁴¹ of the metalwork was a key step in the development of the self-containment, self-signification, and autonomy of the artwork.

Riegl tethers his reliefs and jewellery only loosely and abstractly to real people and places. On the one hand, this approach risks a loss of historical focus: Riegl gives no sense of who made the objects, how they were made, what purposes they served. His customary method was to address the artefact or image in a critical present tense without worrying much about the historical principles or precepts that might have shaped its production. On the other hand, Riegl's idealist formalism, as

⁴⁰ Strzygowski, 'Das irreführende am Begriffe 'Mittelalter'', 44.

⁴¹ Riegl, 'Spätromisch oder Oriental?'

Sergio Bettini has observed, was the condition for all the advanced models of artistic influence and derivation that characterize modern art history. The formalist discipline of abstracting a quality, 'form', from the material artefact and using it as a third term to compare two artefacts made it possible to contrive an abstract model of the unimaginable complex of exchanges and replications that make up the real history of things—what we might call the 'intertextuality' or 'intervisuality' of artefacts.

Strzygowski, by contrast, never really focused on the objects at all. But artefacts for Strzygowski were little more than the traces of forgotten journeys, raids, exchanges, migrations. Such artefacts were for Strzygowski the material carriers of ethnic form-impulses, the milestones on his maps of Aryan cultural supremacy. Strzygowski's agitated tracing of invisible style-paths could be called a *distracted* in contrast to Riegl's *attentive* or absorbed history of art. Strzygowski envisioned violent irruptions of energetic eastern steppe people crashing through the brittle screen of Mediterranean civilization. Since he never adopted the dogma of opticality, Strzygowski was only able to conceive of the ramification and 'intertextuality' of forms in militaristic fashion; as an invasion, with the new and the fresh simply supplanting the old and the tired. They never acceded to that higher status of 'machine for thought', or to the idealist state of 'pure visibility', the devices which succeed in at least partially redeeming the still-racist, still-historicist schemas that Riegl relied on, and which are the basis for his continuing usefulness.

The political meaning of Riegl's opticality is that the fictional historical network it constructs can be grounded, at least notionally, in individual optical, mental, 'theoretical' experience instead of the 'life of the people'; in the free choices of the liberal imagination rather than in the animal-like urges of the popular beast. Riegl's version of the breakdown of the classical world is a divine sublimation of Strzygowski's earthbound version, in that it fabricates an alternative, fictional 'migration pattern' of artefacts, whose forms are 'freely chosen' by people who come to 'apprehend' the Roman *Kunstwollen*.

This critical formalism which sublimates ethnicist and historicist fallacies would seem to be the core of the 'Vienna School' contribution to modern art history. This was immediately recognized at the time, not only by Benjamin and others outside the discipline, but also by Panofsky, whose system built on it, and by Ernst Gombrich, whose lifework could be understood as an oblique rebuttal of Riegl and Sedlmayr. The malevolent, illiberal phenomenon Strzygowski represented, and indeed still represents, the dim horizon of the *Kunstwissenschaft* tradition. Strzygowski was an atavism in Vienna already at the beginning of the century. Sergio Bettini aptly described Strzygowski as a 'pre-Fiedlerian'.⁴² Konrad Fiedler

⁴² Sergio Bettini, foreword to Alois Riegl, *Industria artistica tardoromana*, Florence: Sansoni, 1953, xxxviii.

was the aesthetician and critic of the 1870s and 1880s who introduced the idea of 'pure visibility'.⁴³ Fiedler's Kantian-flavoured idealism transcended the impasse between an aesthetic of naturalism and the axiom of the absolute authority of the artistic imagination. Strzygowski was deaf to Fiedler, unable to make sense of that civilized tempering of the Romantic, subjectivist imagination that Fiedler's thought offered. For his Viennese colleagues, who saw him succeed the revered Max Dvořák in 1909, Strzygowski was an incubus, unwanted, tireless, seemingly deathless; a mere tradesman's son who attended a *Realschule*, not the classics-oriented *Gymnasium* that led to study at the University, to philosophy, to the higher learning.⁴⁴ Strzygowski was incapable of internalizing the great drama of civilization versus barbarianism because he himself insisted on playing the role of the barbarian. 'Sympathy for the barbarians' had been a major *topos* of German national self-understanding at least since Romanticism. According to this myth, European civilization defined itself against the chaos and brutality of the barbarians, but at the same time required periodic revitalizing infusions of that same alien energy.⁴⁵ In his article of 1937 'Magistra Latinitas und Magistra Barbaritas', Julius von Schlosser reaffirmed the concept of what he called the 'coordinate-system of the late antique world': the idea that the east-west and north-south axes of the empire as reconfigured under Diocletian established the framework for the whole of European history, not only politically but also aesthetically.⁴⁶ But in Strzygowski's writings 'sympathy for the barbarians' took the fatal turn, eventually the descent, into bloody-minded ethnic chauvinism. He took the *topos* literally. Strzygowski was a boorish provincial, roiled by class rage and intoxicated by bloody ethno-geographical fantasies; he was the raw material that National Socialism was made of. And so he became within the history of art history a warning not to push the antihumanist critique of the liberal tradition too far.

⁴³ The most important commentary in English on the theory of 'pure visibility' and art history in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is Michael Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.

⁴⁴ See Marchand, 'The Rhetoric of Artifacts and the Decline of Classical Humanism'. Hostility to Strzygowski was so intense that he was forced to separate himself physically and run his own separate institute, as anti-pope of an anti-institute, with his own students and his own constituency who filled his lectures.

⁴⁵ On the impact of the barbarian myth in the disciplines of art history and classical archeology, see Sybille Ehringhaus, *Germanenmythos und deutsche Identität: Die Frühmittelalter-Rezeption in Deutschland 1842-1933*, Berlin: VDG, 1996, and Suzanne L. Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996, chap. 5.

⁴⁶ Julius von Schlosser, 'Magistra Latinitas und Magistra Barbaritas', *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Philosophisch-Historische Abt. (1937), Heft 2.

The Viennese—indeed, all of us—have found it harder to deal with him than with Sedlmayr, who was not at all an outsider. Sedlmayr, the ultra-Catholic reactionary and eloquent enemy of Modernism, emerged from within civilization as its irrepressible demonic dimension. Sedlmayr was the Lucifer of art history, a fallen angel, a source of great pain and perplexity but still part of the family and for that reason endlessly interesting to write about. Whereas for Strzygowski there was no patience, especially after the Second World War. The eventual American rejection of Strzygowski in favour of Riegl simply recapitulated the sophisticated Viennese hatred for him in the first decades of the century. In the end, European and American art history in the twentieth century are just two interwoven, continuous stories. Perhaps Strzygowski was right to be disappointed in seeing the United States devolve into a tame cultural extension of old Europe, inheritor of so many its prejudices and so little of its refined creativity.

Did Wiener Schule art history purchase its methodological coherence—its fine compromise between empiricism and speculation—at the price of a more open-ended, dynamic vision of world art history? Riegl’s abstraction from history encouraged him to remain within the confines of the Mediterranean. One has to admit that from a certain point of view—Strzygowski’s point of view—Riegl and the other Viennese and perhaps all the rest of us are doing little more than reshuffling and recycling the old primary material, and unadventurously micro-adjusting our Hegelian and other historical schemas. And one has to face the alarming possibility that Strzygowski’s ability to see strange new spatial and temporal patterns in the fabric of culture was a function of his outsider status. A hypothetical critique of traditional *Kunstwissenschaft* cannot come from Strzygowski’s quarter, for in the end Strzygowski had nothing to say of interest about art, representation, or visuality. Strzygowski remained outside the critical tradition, incapable of a critique of Riegl, not to mention a self-critique. Nevertheless he stands as a reproof of the ultimate European vice: self-involvement.

Because they do not support the basic (Hegelian) narrative of dematerialization (haptic to optic), Strzygowski’s theses about the origins of Euro-Asian artistic form have never been thrashed out except within the field of late antique art. Indeed, the study of Roman or early Christian art sometimes seems to have difficulty transcending the terms of the tiresome ‘Orient or Rome?’ debate. Perhaps this why Riegl has had a more dynamic and positive impact in the field of modern art than in these fields.⁴⁷ The definitive American verdict on Riegl’s and

⁴⁷ See for example Annabel Jane Wharton, *Refiguring the Post Classical City: Dura Europos, Jerash, Jerusalem and Ravenna*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, esp. chap. 1 on Strzygowski and Giovanni Tesio Rivoira. Wharton calls attention, though she is not the first to do so, to the nationalist, racist, and colonialist implications of much twentieth-century

Strzygowski's theses was spoken by Otto Brendel in his highly influential article of 1953, expanded and published as a short book in 1979, *Prolegomena to the Study of Roman Art*.⁴⁸ This little text, whose title has been taken literally by generations of teachers and students in the United States, summarized the 'Orient or Rome?' debate in ten crisp pages. Here Brendel rejected Riegl's Hegelian evolutionary schema, but equally rejected Strzygowski for reverting to the traditional disdain for Roman art that had prevailed before Wickhoff and Riegl. And in Brendel's eyes that was really Strzygowski's only sin. What we Romanists need to do, Brendel argued, is get back to the task of defining what is Roman about Roman art. Many scholars have repeated his error, imagining that the solution to the 'Orient or Rome?' debate is just better, more accurate historicism, that is, a tighter equation between artefact and essence; and it little matters, it would seem to me, whether that essence is nation, people, class, or 'culture'.

Brendel's 'expressionist' fallacy, paradoxically, left the Roman field open to a revision in favour of, precisely, the East—the peoples and cultures on the margins of the Empire, whose participation in centralized Roman culture was limited, oblique, or even dynamically subversive. As mentioned, current trends (especially in the American field) favour research into the eastern form-world, and are suspicious of Rome's authority and prestige, just as Strzygowski was. Such trends in research can only be welcomed. But in some ways it is art history caught in the old bind: the life of artefacts, reconstructed on the basis of the material remains, mapped back onto the vanished life of peoples. For the problem was not, as Brendel had it, that Strzygowski was disrespectful of Rome, but rather that such equations between artefacts and the life of peoples are doomed to an amateurish approximacy, both unscientific and unphilosophical.

Strzygowski's 'globalism' was a nineteenth-century vision with all its imperialist and racist inflections: with the arrows reversed, his world art scheme was a campaign map for a potential conquest. But it was also a nineteenth-century vision in the sense that his Aryan geography mirrors the map of the dissemination of Indo-European languages devised by the etymologists and philologists, a map still largely intact after a century of research. The wooden temples of the Indian subcontinent so prized by Strzygowski stood as the equivalent of the priestly ur-language Sanskrit. But this congruence of the linguistic and the artefactual maps is fallacious. Artefacts do not function together as a language; there is no grammar, no syntax, no cognitive and communicative operations to hold them together in any

scholarship on late antique architecture. For another overview from the perspective of the late antique field, see Jaś Elsner, 'The Birth of Late Antiquity: Riegl and Strzygowski in 1901', *Art History* 25 (2002): 358-79.

⁴⁸ Otto J. Brendel, *Prolegomena to the Study of Roman Art*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.

particular configuration. Nor do objects travel *with* people, slowly, the way the forms of a language do. An artefact can be sent on ahead, sold, given, stolen. Artefacts are constantly exchanging hands and contexts, their origins quickly forgotten and re-invented. Their various features are extracted and emulated, deposited in new artefacts, replicated by mechanical and manual technologies. And so it goes, the form-tree ramifying from exchange to exchange, with any local inflections or codings attaching to the artefacts quickly going blurry and vanishing, with provenances and the distinctions between acquired artefacts and new artefacts falling into oblivion, until the network finally reaches an inconceivable level of complexity. Such a system cannot be interpreted as an 'archive' of formal interchanges in sense that languages (possibly) can be.

Idealist *Kunstwissenschaft* was aware of the 'expressionist' fallacy and was in part designed to avoid it. It focused on artworks, which can be defined as artefacts designed to be immediately alienated from the circumstances of their fabrication, with no possibility of tracing a path back to the origin. But all this may only mean the error is inscribed within *Kunstwissenschaft* as its opposite. There is thus a permanent, hidden danger of recapitulating Strzygowski's errors. Today it is possible to comprehend Strzygowski as an effect of the early twentieth-century discourse on visibility. Jonathan Crary has argued that both the attentive absorption implied by pure visibility and its opposite, the 'distracted' vision of mass culture, were contrivances of modernity: '[M]odern distraction was not a disruption of stable or 'natural' kinds of sustained, value-laden perception that had existed for centuries but was an effect, and in many cases a constitutive element, of the many attempts to produce attentiveness in human subjects'. The massive contrivance of attention described by Crary thus *includes* distraction in the same way that Riegl's abstraction includes and implies Strzygowski's crass literalism.⁴⁹ And by the same token it is arguable that Strzygowski was in fact a monstrous, Baroque projection of ordinary empiricist scholarship, materialist in its premises, anti-philosophical. He was by no means the *opposite* of an empiricist-pragmatist scholars like Krautheimer

⁴⁹ Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1999, 49. Crary argues that visual attentiveness needs to be understood as an emergency response to the loss of confidence in perception brought about by modernization. 'Attention' was a cultural program that aimed to reverse the effects of rationalization and industrial specialization, which among other things--according to many late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century commentators--had fragmented experience itself. The new 'distraction' was deplored as 'the product of 'decay' or 'atrophy' of perception within a larger deterioration of experience'. The new regime of attention in turn generated more distraction, in a circular process that we are still trapped in. Riegl's ideal of absorbed intersubjectivity, as expounded in *The Group Portraiture of Holland*, is part of this story, as Crary explains on pages 51-52.

or Conant. He represented a deformation of empiricism, and for that reason had to be suppressed with special vigour by empiricist scholars.

Today 'globalism' in art history is achieved only dialectically, as a negative and critical moment exerted against a still pervasive Eurocentrism. Strzygowski's globalism was by contrast affirmative, a powerful and imaginative fable. Today few are foolish enough to propose an affirmative global art history, unless one is glimpsing the sketches of such an enterprise in some recent scholarship with an anthropological flavour. Some of this work is appropriately cautious, some of it less so; what it all seems to share is a certain impatience with the theoretical orthodoxy of cultural constructionism.⁵⁰ The risk of the new 'anthropologism', which has little to do with the academic discipline known as 'Anthropology' in the United States, is not only the upsetting of the precarious and valuable scepticism of the constructionist position, a hard-won vantage point, not to be abandoned casually; but also a drastic underrating of the basic alienation of artefacts from their anthropological origins, an alienation only dramatized in the case of artworks. All artefacts, but especially artworks, enter immediately into enormously complex and circuitous systems of meaning and exchange; they are always already alienated from any anthropic roots.

Academic art history in the United States was always more open to so-called non-Western art than European art history was.⁵¹ In Europe—in most cases to this day—Art History means European (and eventually American) art from the end of antiquity to the twentieth century. The study of the art of all other cultures is relegated to local departments—Near Eastern Studies, East Asian Studies, African Studies, etc. Whereas in the United States the 'non-Western' arts are taught within the art history departments. It was this openness that appealed to Strzygowski from the start, and vice versa. And this legacy survives in the structure of American art history departments and research institutes, where the potential for the development of something like a global view is inherently greater than in Europe. Paradoxically, American art history today is probably least 'global' precisely in those fields where the old methodological habits inherited from Europe persist, i.e., in those very fields, from late antiquity to the nineteenth century, where Riegl's fable about opticality has dominated. But as Deborah Klimburg-Salter pointed out in the symposium 'Wiener Schule und die Zukunft der Kunstgeschichte', the only

⁵⁰ See for example: David Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989; Lauren Golden, ed., *Raising the Eyebrow: John Onians and World Art Studies*, Oxford: British Archeological Reports, 2001; Hans Belting, *Bild-Anthropologie: Entwürfe für eine Bildwissenschaft*, Munich: Fink, 2001; David Summers, *Real Spaces: World Art History and the Rise of Western Modernism*, London: Phaidon, 2003.

⁵¹ See the interesting essay by Alfred Neumeier, 'Art History: Victory Without Trumpet', in: Lynn White, Jr., ed., *Frontiers of Knowledge in the Study of Man*, New York: Harper and Bros., 1956: 178-93.

models for study of 'non-Western' art have been those developed within the study of Western art. Strzygowski's model, pioneering as it was, is not a usable model. And this means that, as far as globalism is concerned, we are still largely trapped within the old terms, that is, metropolitan versus provincial, civilization versus barbarian. Perhaps we can escape these imperially-flavoured binarisms by finding new paths that lead to 'art', whether conceived philosophically or anthropologically. 'Globalism' as it is understood by the contemporary art market and hyper-exhibition schedule is probably not that path, but rather, after all, an imposition of a historically recent, Western idea of art, just as many people fear.

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