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Alice Goldfarb Marquis, *Art Czar, The Rise and Fall of Clement Greenberg*. Boston, MFA Publications, 2006, 321 pp., 16 black-and-white illus., $35.00 U.S.

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teenth-century visual culture. Batchen suggests that the carte-de-visite's neglect by art history is tied to its non-individualistic mode of operation. He contrasts the carte's dismissal by art history with its centrality to the practice of nineteenth-century photography. His argument positions the image as a space for the construction of bourgeois selves by reading the carte's mobilization of subjectivity with Marx's analysis of the commodity. Ultimately, he situates the carte as partaking in both the creation of an imagined political community and the commodification of the image leading to the cult of celebrity. Fae Brauer's paper, "Dangerous Doubles: Degenerate and Regenerate Photography in the Eugenic Imagination," examines the role of photography in developing the eugenic imaginary. She argues that the need for a norm linked the two unrelated practices of photography. Degenerate photography's unhealthy bodies, initially taken for medical reasons, changed their meaning as they came in contact with the physically improved bodies of regenerate photography. Brauer argues that photography became the site of an imaginary body phantasy and a new body aesthetic linked to a discourse of eugenics and politics of sterilization. Also included in this section are Langford's essay, "Lost Horizons, or The Gates Close at Sunset: Doubtful Realisms and Paradisiacal Gains," on the changing phenomenological conditions of contemporary photography brought on by the emergence of digital practice, and Kirsty Robertson's essay, "Webs of Resistance: Photography, the Internet, and the Global Justice Movement," on photography in new social movements.

The third section, "Pictures as a way of Shutting our Eyes," contains three essays. The strongest of the three, Martyn Jolly's "Spectres from the Archive," looks at the history of spirit photography to situate contemporary photographer's revisiting of its tropes. Jolly argues that spirit photography's refusal to position the past as past provides a set of tools for artists' political and ethical engagement with history. Catherine Bédard, in "Seeing Between the Lines: Imagination, Nothing but 'This,' in Max Dean and Michael Snow" (translated by Peter Feldstein), presents a history of the use of "this" in modern and contemporary art as a way of situating Dean's work. Finally, Petra Halkes's "Gottfries Helnwein's *American Prayer*: A Fable in Pixels and Paint" uses Helnwein's practice to re-examine the relation between photography and paint in light of digital photography.

Overall, the collection presents a variety of approaches to the question of imagination. However, the authors do not all agree that thinking imagination requires abandoning or moving beyond indexicality. They also do not agree on which conception of imagination is relevant to photography – a phenomenological imagination, the psychoanalytic imaginary, or Benedict Anderson's "imagined communities" – or on whether it is primarily a social, personal, political, or ethical imagination that photography draws on. What the essays do is begin to provide a sense of what it might mean to think photography imaginatively.

Together, these two books present a convincing case that there is productive work to be done on photography outside the framework of the index. Neither presents a fully developed framework for doing so, but they bring to light important areas for further study.

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Notes

1 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, trans. Richard Howard (New York, 1982).

2 Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin, "Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity," *Critical Inquiry* 19 (Summer 1993), 693–725.

Alice Goldfarb Marquis, *Art Czar, The Rise and Fall of Clement Greenberg*. Boston, MFA Publications, 2006, 321 pp., 16 black-and-white illus., $35.00 U.S.

Despite the recurrent vituperation of him that has become almost *de rigeur* in the art world, Clement Greenberg remains not only the paramount figure among American art critics but also the object of continual study. Marquis's new biography of him is the second published within the last decade. She acknowledges Greenberg as the "most hated" but also a "prescient," "indispensable" critic, with a "record of influence seldom surpassed." In 1997 Florence Rubenfeld modestly styled her study of Greenberg as simply a social biography,[1] one of two books she felt the critic warrants, the other being an intellectual biography. Marquis's book is also a social biography, but she justifies this new work by her ambition to be both more complete – she had access to the forty-five boxes of Greenberg papers deposited at the Getty Research Centre (Rubenfeld did not) – and also more "fair-minded" than previous studies. Given the importance of her subject, the widespread misrepresentation of his views and practice, and his impact on a wide range of artists, that fairness and completeness is very much needed.

Marquis is adept at situating Greenberg in the context of the prevailing concerns of the 1930s and 1940s in New York: the fashion for American Scene painters like Grant Wood and Thomas Hart Benton as fostered by *retardataire* writers like

Thomas Craven; the struggle of immigrant families who "wrestled with their Jewish heritage" as they attempted to adjust to a new-world environment; conflicting left-wing ideologies as debated in such publications as *Partisan Review* (where Greenberg published his first important article, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," and soon thereafter served as an editor); and the debate over the appropriate foreign policy for the United States in the early years of World War II.

Aside from his bold preference for the Abstract Expressionists over any programmatically American art and his rejection, as a Trotskyite, of Stalinist authoritarianism, Greenberg's position on the above issues now seems thoroughly embarrassing. One of his previously unknown youthful poems laments, "There are too many Jews in New York," and in his later years he could strike the pose of a surprisingly anti-Semitic Jew, castigating Judaism for absurd imagined faults. These views are mercifully omitted from Marquis's account. The article he co-authored with Dwight Macdonald in 1941, "10 Propositions on the War," recklessly argued that the United States should stay out of World War II, on the grounds it was merely a struggle between capitalist nations,[2] while the later Greenberg became a surprisingly uncritical defender of the war in Vietnam, a position Marquis refers to only in passing.

Marquis highlights Greenberg's deficiencies in character: the languid lack of ambition in his youth; the tendency in his twenties to – by his own admission – "get drunk every other night;" his ill-advised, brief first marriage to a woman, Toady Ewing, who did not have his respect; his frequent failure to provide child support for his son, Danny, and his lifelong inability to establish a fatherly relationship with him; his emotional collapse after being drafted into the air corps of the U.S. army in 1943; his prodigious womanizing; his frequent denigration of women curators and homosexual artists; his tendency to abruptly drop friendships, and his bizarre dependency from 1955 to 1961 on the unorthodox psychotherapist Ralph Klein, extending even to acceptance of Klein's dismissal of monogamy and close family relations. All this is fair game, and indeed, Greenberg's personal limitations are legendary. But so are his frequent acts of extraordinary kindness, which get nothing like the same attention here.

When Marquis attempts to deal with Greenberg *qua* art critic, the fundamental weakness of her account is soon apparent. Literary critic René Wellek once perceptively observed that the superior critic knows what he is assuming, and the most distinguished critics typically have a reputation that rests, at least in part, on how very paradigmatic[3] their work is: clear and consistent in establishing appropriate perceptual categories through which art and the world are viewed, discriminating in selecting those questions that might be worth asking, and judicious in choosing effective procedures to answer them. Greenberg was the paradigmatic critic *par excellence*, and he took great pains to ensure that his critical practice was founded on principles drawn from his study of leading philosophers of art, especially Immanuel Kant, Benedetto Croce, R.G. Collingwood, and the like. Of these, only Kant appears in Marquis's text – not as an indication of Greenberg's concern to develop a well-grounded paradigmatic practice but only as a weapon "rolled out as the big gun to settle arguments." His concept of art as an act of mental distancing is not even hinted at. Nor is his notion that art "explains to us what we already feel, but it does not do so discursively," an idea central to Collingwood's philosophy of art and quoted at length in Rubenfeld's biography. His argument, drawn from Kant, that the judgment of art is involuntary and non-rational is simply not taken seriously.

This insensitivity to Greenberg's considerable intellect is matched by equally egregious errors of fact. To Marquis, Surrealism was "a style Greenberg disliked," as if there were not two surrealisms, *peinture peinture* and that of *les imagiers*, with only the latter incurring Greenberg's thorough distaste. She imagines that flatness was "a quality he ... insisted on in painting," not realizing how much Greenberg admired Jules Olitski's thickest mature paintings with their affinity to matter painting, or that the critic viewed flatness not as a *desideratum* but as a dialectical concept – the locus of the tension intrinsic to painting between its literal flatness and the illusion of depth that necessarily comes with the first mark on the canvas. She presumes that "flatness" is the "central criterion" in Greenberg's practice, despite his frequent assertion, again following Kant, that no criteria are available for the judgment of art. Marquis also refers vaguely to a supposed Greenbergian *theory* of "the development of art," when she presumably means his *hypothesis* about the rise of modernism. She even postulates that Greenberg "identified his own judgments of art" as "formalism," his frequent objections to the term notwithstanding.[4] She castigates Pollock as a presumed "aggressively lowbrow artist" – an image propagated more often by the vulgarities of Hollywood – despite Greenberg's own assessment of him as one of the most well informed artists he had ever met.[5]

Clearly then, this book is even less an intellectual biography than Rubenfeld's often quite insightful account. But if not an intellectual history of the man, surely Marquis's biography would give a convincing and informative account of the critic's interactions with other figures in the art world. Sadly, it is inadequate in this respect also.

Much more than most critics, Greenberg was sought out by artists eager for his input in the studio. There have been few if any other such critics, either before or after him – Baudelaire and Ruskin to a degree, and perhaps Roger Fry – but the impact of Greenberg is unparalleled, however controversial it may be. Among the artists whose work has been decisively enhanced by

Greenberg's suggestions are Helen Frankenthaler, Kenneth Noland, Morris Louis, Anthony Caro, Jack Bush, and Dorothy Knowles. His studio critiques of their work are indicative of both a strength and a weakness of Greenberg's criticism, neither of which Marquis addresses.

Greenberg's strength in the studio was greatest in two respects: the choice of direction in an artist's career and the final adjustment of the work before it was exhibited. Helen Frankenthaler's development would probably have been rapid in any case, but it was much enhanced by Greenberg at several points:[6] his comment in 1950 that her Cubist-oriented painting of that time was the kind of work he hoped not to see; his suggestion that she study with Hans Hofmann; and his introduction of her to Jackson Pollock, whose innovative work of 1951 stimulated her to dissociate painterliness from the loaded brush. To Morris Louis, who had been taken by Greenberg to Frankenthaler's studio in 1953, she was a "bridge between Pollock and what was possible,"[7] but to Marquis, Frankenthaler is of interest primarily as a love interest of the critic. Anthony Caro's debt to Greenberg for his admonition to change his life in order to change his art and the sculptor's resultant immersion in the Cubist-Constructivist tradition as exemplified by David Smith are well known, but that also does not receive a single line in Marquis's account, nor does Greenberg's seminal impact on Jack Bush's choice of artistic direction after the critic's 1957 visit to his studio.[8]

In terms of final adjustment, Morris Louis was so impressed by the reliability of Greenberg's eye[9] that he made the critic an executor of his estate with the power to choose the perimeter of unstretched paintings that he was unable to crop himself before he succumbed to lung cancer. Again, none of this merits a line in Marquis's account. Greenberg's practice of taking a painting "around the clock" to determine its optimal orientation, his frequent urging to crop, to simplify, etc., have sometimes been denigrated as painting by proxy, and the critic disparaged as the artist *manqué,* although seldom by the artists themselves, who typically valued his workshop criticism, just as T.S. Eliot valued Ezra Pound's. It would be of interest to know more about these activities. Were there instances where the critic's suggestions were unhelpful or were rejected by the artist, as Jack Bush did in 1974 when Greenberg suggested turning a considerable number of paintings upside-down?[10] But such debates within the studio do not appear in this strangely negligent book.

On the other hand, it would seem, from the record we have so far at any rate, that Greenberg's studio criticism had its weaknesses too, most notably, a tendency to neglect the sources of the artist's creativity. Unlike his immediate predecessor within modernist art criticism, Roger Fry, Greenberg had little or no interest in the persona of the artist and the sources of his creative impulses, so his criticism, both in the studio and on the page, with its heavy emphasis on the finished work, could be charged with the parthenogenetic fallacy. Greenberg may have been mostly silent on this personal dimension of the creative process, but Marquis need not have been silent about that. Given her penchant for psychological speculation, perhaps she could have even related it to Greenberg's difficulty in sustaining personal relationships.

Greenberg's relation with art critics has also been extraordinary. The number of writers who have aimed to follow on paths he established is considerable: Walter Darby Bannard, Terry Fenton, Michael Fried, Rosalind Krauss, Kenworth Moffett, Karen Wilkin, and many others. Some commentators have been so offended by Greenberg's influence on these writers as to write disparagingly of "Greenberg and the group,"[11] as if they were all of like minds. Marquis devotes not a word to Bannard, Fenton, Moffett, or Wilkin, despite Greenberg's close relation with most of them and their own accomplishments as critics. The distinguished Michael Fried is reduced to a "fan" of Greenberg's, without any mention of his eventual break with him. On the other hand, Marquis does give a highly informative and even-handed account of the Krauss/Greenberg contretemps over the critic's decision, in his capacity as executor of Smith's estate, to allow his sculptures to remain in open fields and lose their paint surfaces: Greenberg citing a letter from Smith to a collector that said, "Paint it. Repaint it. Let it rust ..."

To Marquis, it would seem that Greenberg's primary activity was neither his insight into the visual syntax of art nor his creative suggestions in the studio, but rather the way he "promoted" artists and worked to establish the "next new thing." That is scarcely surprising, given that Marquis's previous work on art includes the anecdotal exposé *The Art Biz*,[12] a work that inappropriately resonates throughout *Art Czar*, where "biz" too often trumps art.

The generally low intellectual level of Marquis's biography is in keeping with the way she habitually employs vulgar, pejorative vocabulary. Greenberg's "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" is "a tirade," sullied by "rage" that supposedly had the unworthy source of Greenberg's dissatisfaction with the "repellent middle class values of" his wife and mother-in-law. Pollock's "poured-and-spattered" technique, a term William Rubin justifiably insisted on, becomes the "dribble" technique. Greenberg's pocketbook on Matisse, which insightfully lays out that artist's penchant, ca. 1908, for establishing the oppositions by setting a relatively tactile figure in an optical space and then resolving that tension, is to Marquis "a sea of platitudinous admiration." Greenberg's spare, logical-positivist rhetoric is reduced to "his take-no-prisoners style." His fecund suggestions to artists in the studio are merely a "massage of their work." Canadian readers will be struck by Marquis's hackneyed, parochial account of

Greenberg's 1964 visits to "frigid" Toronto and to the prairies as "an aimless ramble through a barren frozen landscape," rather than as an encounter that Canadian artists themselves often viewed as of great value to their work

Greenberg's reputation rests in large measure on his justifiably celebrated "eye," which often led him to arresting judgments, but Marquis, by and large, is blind to it. Perhaps, for instance, Michelangelo was not better as a painter than a sculptor as Greenberg argued he was, but today almost no one would seriously question that Courbet exemplifies "a new flatness ... and an equally new attention to every inch of the canvas, regardless of its relation to the 'centers of interest'"[13] – an observation Greenberg owed to the German critic, Julius Meier-Graefe, for whom he had a particularly high regard – yet Marquis grudgingly grants only that Greenberg "purports" to see such qualities. Lacking in visual intelligence, strangely indifferent to ideas, Marquis has failed to be either complete or fair, and the publication of this book obscures as much as it illuminates. Florence Rubenfeld's biography remains unsurpassed.

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Notes

1 Florence Rubenfeld, *Clement Greenberg, A Life* (New York, 1997).
2 "10 Propositions on the War," *Partisan Review* 8 (1941), 271–78.
3 For the concept of paradigm, see Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago and London, 1962).
4 See especially Clement Greenberg, "Problems of Criticism II, Complaints of an Art Critic," *Artforum* VI (October 1967), 38–39.
5 Clement Greenberg in conversation with Judith Allsopp, August 1978.
6 John Elderfield, *Frankenthaler* (New York, 1989), 24–31, 34–39.
7 Elderfield, *Frankenthaler*, 65.
8 For a discussion of this issue, see my article, "The Evolution of Jack Bush," *Journal of Canadian Art History* IV (1977–78).
9 For a discussion of Louis's interest in Greenberg's critical suggestions, see John Elderfield, *Morris Louis* (New York, 1987), 77–78.
10 In conversation with the artist, May 1974. Bush said he was rejecting the suggestion, from both Clement Greenberg and Kenworth Moffett, "because they're wrong."
11 Barbara Reise, "Greenberg and the group: a retrospective view, Part 2," *Studio International* 175 (June 1968), 254–57.
12 Alice Goldfarb Marquis, *The Art Biz: The Covert World of Collectors, Dealers, Auction Houses, Museums, and Critics* (Chicago, 1991).
13 Clement Greenberg, "Towards a Newer Laocoon," *Partisan Review* 7 (July–August 1940), 296–310.

Stephen J. Campbell and Stephen J. Milner, eds, *Artistic Exchange and Cultural Translation in the Italian Renaissance City*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, 371 pp., 82 black-and-white illus., 1 table, $75.00 Cdn, ISBN 0-521-82688-8.

This is an important book that will attract not only scholars interested in the Italian Renaissance but possibly others wishing to understand the range of issues associated with artistic exchange, cultural translation, and reception, if one is willing to read laterally and imagine the implications for different areas of study in a transnational context. The forces of exchange and translation are examined here in relation to the idea that Italian states, individuals, and social groups engaged in such strategies in order to negotiate a sense of difference and individualization, as ways of intersecting with various "others" to help define the self (personal or collective). An obvious example of cultural translation would be to consider how Renaissance / early Modern Italians interpreted the past visual cultures of the Greco-Roman world, although this is only a minor note in this volume.

For years many Italianists framed their research within the paradigm of seeing individual cities or regions as distinct; the phenomenon is known in Italian as "*campanilismo*," that is, the sense of identity based on the idea of belonging to a discrete geographic area and being defined by difference from others. Instead, in this book, the case studies examine how people and groups used visual culture in ways that demonstrate mutual interpenetration, recording moments when cultural meanings might change dramatically as a result of the processes of reception and translation. Often the above issues are (rightly) framed within a postcolonial optic that would seem to preclude an investigation of reception, translation, and cultural exchange within a bounded geographic area beginning to have a sense of coherent "national" identity, as was the case with Italy in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. Herein lies the value of this book: it prompts us to reconsider how we approach the visual cultures produced in specific locales, looking not so much for closed borders and boundaries but for expressions of fluid and complex senses of identity.

In addition to the thought-provoking theoretical introduction entitled "Art, Identity and Cultural Translation in Renaissance Italy" (pp. 1–13), there are three short, valuable subsections that examine "how to translate" (pp. 15–16); "regional identities and the encounter with Florence" (pp. 135–37); and "negotiating the cultural other" (pp. 271–72). Even in a path-breaking volume like this, scholars appear not to be able to avoid "Florentinitis," and the bias towards Tuscan culture remains constant, although this book does urge us to look at the region