RACAR : Revue d'art canadienne
Canadian Art Review

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Revue d'art canadienne | Canadian Art Review

Michael Ann Holly, *Panofsky and the Foundations of Art History*. Ithaca and London. Cornell University Press, 1984. 267 pp., $11.25 (cloth)

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Volume 13, Number 1, 1986

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1073563ar
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7202/1073563ar

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Publisher(s)

UAAC-AAUC (University Art Association of Canada | Association d'art des universités du Canada)

ISSN

0315-9906 (print)
1918-4778 (digital)

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Cite this review

Hart, J. (1986). Review of [Michael Ann Holly, *Panofsky and the Foundations of Art History*. Ithaca and London. Cornell University Press, 1984. 267 pp., $11.25 (cloth)]. *RACAR : Revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review*, *13*(1), 70–72. https://doi.org/10.7202/1073563ar

l'architecte fondit dans une élévation intégrée la hauteur des bas-côtés et celle de la tribune normande de Lanfranc pour lancer les voûtes basses à plus de quinze mètres de hauteur. De la nef, vue axialement, on n'aperçoit que les geysers des piles articulées. L'élévation ne s'appréhende que diagonalement, en se déplaçant. Entre la saillie des piles et le géométral du mur se glisse une mouluration continue du pavement à la voûte, qui inscrit les supports dans un ordre colossal réduit, vibrant des demi-teintes de la lumière. Les valeurs plastiques subsument le graphisme sec inséparable des panneautages du style rayonnant. Qui fut le créateur de ce délicat équilibre? Woodman nie que ce fut Henry Yevele, un peu d'après le principe qu'on ne doit pas prêter aux riches. Les documents qu'il analyse suggèrent que Thomas de Hoo dirigea l'œuvre dans la période vitale 1377-1392, et que Stephen Lote ajouta des raffinements. Cependant, Henry Yevele est représenté par deux portraits sculptés dans la cathédrale et son nom figure à la première place dans les comptes. De sorte qu'il est permis de se demander si Henry Yevele, qui supervisa toute l'architecture de cour comme « deviser of masonry » du roi, n'aurait pas fourni le « devyse », ou maître plan, de la nef de Cantorbéry, comme on l'a pensé pour la nef, si remarquablement anglaise, de l'abbatiale de Batalha.

Le splendide pulpitum entre la croisée et le chœur doit être restitué à Richard Beke et doit dater seulement d'après 1440, date corroborée par le portrait de Henry VI (né en 1421) parmi les statues de rois des piédroits de la porte, sculptés à la gloire de la maison de Lancastre. Parmi les satellites de la cathédrale dans les monuments monastiques au nord, il faut faire une place éminente à la gigantesque carène de pierre, réticulée d'étoiles, que Chilleden jeta avant 1411 au-dessus de la salle du chapitre. L'habillage en style perpendiculaire du croisillon nord du transept occidental, débarrassé après 1170 de sa tribune pour dégager l'autel où Thomas Becket avait été tué, eut lieu sous le règne d'Édouard IV, après 1461.

Woodman a rétabli la chronologie compliquée de la nouvelle tour de croisée : souche entreprise en 1433, campanile terminé en 1494, beffroi en 1497. Au-dessus de la tour-lanterne de pierre la construction est de brique revêtue de maçonnerie. Woodman a contrôlé les textes d'archives par l'examen des matériaux successivement employés dans la cage de l'escalier de la tourelle de l'angle sud-ouest : pierre, brique vitrifiée, brique rouge, superposés comme des couches géologiques. Wastell ferma la voûte de la croisée en 1504 avec quatre voûtains en éventail et quatre petits éventails dans les angles. Leur admirable combinaison annonce les voûtes en éventail de la chapelle de King's College à Cambridge, terminées en 1515.

Cette monographie de la cathédrale de Cantorbéry est en même temps le plus complet et le plus passionnant des guides. Son poids et son format permettent de la glisser sous son bras en vue d'une visite détaillée, non seulement de la cathédrale, de ses chapelles et tombeaux, mais des monuments monastiques. Elle ressuscite la splendeur de bien des chefs-d'œuvre en ruines, comme l'étonnant dortoir de Lanfranc, à la mesure de son plan ambitieux de porter à cent cinquante le nombre des moines de la communauté. À ce livre à tant d'égards remarquable, il ne manque qu'une illustration de qualité correspondante. Beaucoup de détails restent indistincts dans les reproductions. Quelquefois l'illustration n'éclaire pas un point spécieux du texte. Et il n'y a même pas de plan exact de la cathédrale avec la projection des voûtes.

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MICHAEL ANN HOLLY *Panofsky and the Foundations of Art History*. Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1984. 267 pp., $11.25 (cloth).

Cornell University Press published this Cornell University dissertation. The author made few alterations in transforming the dissertation into a book. The title, *Panofsky and the Foundations of Art History*, is deceptive since the author focuses on three minor essays written by Panofsky between 1915 and 1925 (Chapters 2, 3, 5) and surveys superficially a highly selective and not very representative sample of art historical writings throughout the remaining chapters. Holly limits herself almost exclusively to philosophical sources for the art historians on whom she concentrates: Panofsky, Wölfflin, Riegl. There is no new primary research and there are few new, convincing ideas in the book. Even as a summary of criticism on the art historians or their texts, the book falls far short of any scholar's ideal. This is a seriously flawed book.

What is a scholar's ideal of a historical essay? Minimal expectations are that the book be well-written, provide new facts or previously unpublished material, and interpret this new evidence along with the old in an interesting and provocative fashion. One expects the author to master the primary evidence prior to evaluating interpretations of it by previous historians or critics. Holly's book does not fulfil any of these criteria, even partially.

The book is replete with quotations on every page, mostly from secondary sources. Holly rarely expresses her own position on a problem. One has to assume that she agrees with every quotation she cites and was unable to express the idea any better. Consider page 53. Holly argues that Wölfflin was a phenomenologist in 'works dating from 1900.' While discussing Husserl's phenomenology in the text, she cites Bochenski, a secondary source, in the footnotes. A quotation appears which we assume is from Husserl, but the footnote refers to Bochenski. We have no idea if Holly has read Husserl or speaks with firsthand knowledge of his work. The more important problem is: how does she prove that Wölfflin was a phenomenologist? The only proof offered is a parenthetical assertion that Wölfflin would have known of Husserl's work through Dilthey. However, Wölfflin was Dilthey's student in 1885, prior to Husserl's phenomenological writings and Dilthey's engagement with them. By 1900, Dilthey was not a primary influence on Wölfflin. It is doubtful that Wölfflin even saw Dilthey between 1885 and 1901 when he joined the faculty of Berlin University (see Joan Hart, *Heinrich Wölfflin: An Intellectual Biography*, diss. U. of California, Berkeley, 1981). Contrary to Holly's 'it seems safe to suggest' this phenomenological project, it would seem safer not to assert it. If Holly means that Wölfflin was concerned with the forms of art and their immediate visual apprehension, we find proof of this in his earliest writings, which predate Husserl's phenomenology and which are unrelated to Husserl's far more philosophical project.

This error highlights one of the most important problems with the book. Holly's thesis is that art historians have always been consumed with philosophical ideas. She adopts Michael Podro's thesis that Hegel is the primary foundation for art history

and this 'Hegelian contextualist' tradition is a positive one. Podro borrowed the idea from E.H. Gombrich who, in *In Search of Cultural History*, viewed the overwhelming influence of Hegel as an unfortunate problem for the discipline. Podro transformed Gombrich's thesis into a mostly positive one in *The Critical Historians of Art*. Podro's book is useful because he argues the point consistently in the writings of art historians, many of whom are no longer read. Podro, because he is concerned with accurate textual analysis, engages our attention. Holly, the epigone of Podro, does not even convince us that she has always read the art historians and philosophers, but only texts about them. She quotes Gombrich and Hauser on the same page in confirmation of the same point, notwithstanding the varying perspectives of the two on Hegel and many other issues. When she discusses Dilthey (pp. 38-40), she refers to Mandelbaum, Plantinga, Hoy and Rickman as sources. Not only is it unclear that she has even looked at a text by Dilthey, but in identifying him (and Hegel) as a historian, rather than a philosopher, our doubts deepen.

The reader would like to be convinced of Hegel's pervasive influence on art historians. Holly provides little evidence of it. Anyone, it seems, who is a 'contextualist,' who cites sources outside artistic ones for the understanding of art must be a Hegelian. Since there are few art historians who are purely formalists in Holly's strict sense of the term, then everyone is bound to be a Hegelian. This is a trivial thesis. I suggest anyone seriously interested in how Hegel might ground a discipline read Gillian Rose's *Hegel Contra Sociology*.

Because Holly is preoccupied with the philosophical foundations of art history, she often does justice neither to the art historian nor the philosophers. In the chapter 'Panofsky and Wölfflin,' Wölfflin is characterized in succession as being a positivist, a neo-Kantian, a Hegelian, a phenomenologist, a biologist. One wonders how Wölfflin managed to avoid severe criticism for maintaining so many mutually contradictory ideologies?

The chapter on 'Panofsky and Cassirer' is exemplary in demonstrating Holly's 'method.' Not only does Holly not convince us of Panofsky's great debt to Cassirer in his essay which is the focus of the chapter – 'Die Perspektive als symbolische Form' in *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg*, 1924-25 – but she does not interpret his essay correctly either. Before discussing this essay, Holly summarizes Cassirer's philosophy for fifteen pages. She begins the chapter by quoting Edgar Wind, testifying to the eminence of Cassirer among neo-Kantians. Although she informs us that Cassirer and Panofsky were colleagues at Hamburg, she does not explain that Wind was a student of both at Hamburg and that Wind was cited by Panofsky more frequently than Cassirer. Holly's discussion of Cassirer is studded with quotations and references to mostly secondary sources, and concludes with the statement that Cassirer did not write much about the visual arts until 1944. The reader begins to wonder why an entire chapter is devoted to Cassirer's influence on Panofsky.

Katharine Gilbert comes to Holly's aid and is quoted at length concerning the importance of Cassirer for Panofsky. Finally, Holly begins to discuss Panofsky on 'Perspective as Symbolic Form,' although the summary is difficult to follow, since it is interrupted by the ever-present quotations from diverse sources (Wartovsky, Riegl, Cassirer, other publications by Panofsky which Holly says are unrelated to the perspective one, Hendel, Wittgenstein, Goodman and so on). Holly states that the main controversial assertion by Panofsky is 'that perspectivally constructed paintings have no absolute validity, no claim to representing space as we actually see it' (p. 131). This is not the core, only the starting point of Panofsky's argument. Panofsky actually says something far more interesting: perspective is a mathematical abstraction from 'real' or 'psychophysiological' space; not only is perspective not veridical, but spatial representations, including perspective, are always interpretations, are always 'symbolic forms.'

That Holly has not understood Panofsky's article becomes clear when she discusses his assertions about the 'retinal image.' Panofsky's whole argument concerning spherical or curvilinear space, based on the idea that we see a 'retinal' image, is patently false. Long before Panofsky wrote this essay, few perceptual psychologists or physiologists would have claimed that we see a retinal image, whether the retina is curved or not. The eye is not a dumb receptor, but is a processor, affected by the functioning of the optical system (accommodation, focus, stereoscopy, cognition are among many factors in seeing). Thus, when Holly accepts Panofsky's or anyone's claims about seeing a retinal image, she misses the error in their argument.

The concave shape of the retina is important for Panofsky's argument, even at this 'lowest, pre-psychological stratum of fact,' because he argues from it to the idea that the size of the *visual angle* determines the sizes of objects seen, not the *distance* of objects from the eye which is the assumption of perspective. Holly does not inform us of this crucial point and describes how bewildering all of Panofsky's diagrams are (p. 135). The diagrams are crucial to his argument, whether they are based on specious assumptions or not, because without them he cannot explain or demonstrate clearly the difference between spatial constructions based on the retinal image ('vanishing axis' constructions) and those of perspective. Section II of Panofsky's essay is a discussion of the purported 'vanishing axis' or fishbone construction that he believes the ancients devised, based on the visual angle and curvature of the retina. After attempting to prove the existence of a vanishing axis construction, Panofsky finds that it results in an unstable and incoherent space, although it should be more like the way we really see. Panofsky is forced to conclude that artificial perspective, although not veridical, is a logical and stylish spatial construction in contrast to the vanishing axis system which he thought to be veridical, but found to be not 'free from contradiction.' Curiously, Panofsky continued to discuss the latter construction in *The Codex Huygens, Leonardo da Vinci's Art Theory* and *Renaissance and Renascenses*, despite his negative finding. Thus, Holly imagines Panofsky to have an 'irrational' argument (pp. 135-138), but on the contrary, Panofsky's logic is consistent, if based on inaccurate assumptions.

Having observed the inadequacy and failure of the ancients' early attempt at a veridical spatial construction, Panofsky continues in Section III to outline the history of spatial constructions up to and including artificial perspective. In tracing this evolution, Panofsky recreates the struggles of each era in attempting to depict solid bodies in immaterial space. He is primarily concerned that we understand exactly what the achievement of Brunelleschi was in inventing perspective: 'What was achieved was a translation of psychophysiological space into mathematical space: in other words,

an objectification of the subjective.' He discusses in Section IV the interpretation of perspective as a symbolic form by its various practitioners. There is no vacillation in Panofsky's argument. He establishes at the outset that perspective is not veridical, he then attempts to describe the fate of a 'veridical' construction, and finally shows the logic of evolution to Renaissance perspective, in all its ambiguity.

Holly never demonstrates that she understands Panofsky's argument, having been misled by Wartovsky and her other secondary sources as to its proper interpretation. She continually interjects inappropriate arguments into her discussion – a long discussion of the division of the article into a 'synchronic,' mechanistic argument versus a later 'diachronic' one where no such division exists; she refers to Riegl as the source for Panofsky on Hellenistic impressionism, when Franz Wickhoff's *Die Wiener Genesis* (1895) is clearly the source. Holly never mentions Kern's articles on perspective which Panofsky cites frequently.

It is a thankless task to catalogue all the errors in this book. Apart from the horrendous writing (consider 'bespeaks historicity'), the misinterpretations and errors concerning Panofsky, Wölfflin and Riegl, the astonishing number of quotations from secondary sources and the inability of the author to speak her own mind, Holly makes the very error in interpretation which she accuses Panofsky of making in regard to works of art (Hauser is her source): an overreliance on philosophy. Panofsky provides much evidence of his sources in footnotes famous for their erudition and rarely are they from philosophers. If Holly had read carefully Fritz Ringer's book, *The Decline of the German Mandarins*, which she cites in her Bibliography, she would know of the structure of the German education system at the turn of the century. Philology still dominated the course of study, psychology was becoming autonomous from philosophy just as art history was becoming independent from history departments. Panofsky, by his own admission, was influenced by individuals in all these fields. Instead of portraying the real world, Holly confounds her subject and us with a startling array of anomalous and anachronistic parallels, as she hops from conceptual island to conceptual island in an archipelago of thought, surrounded by a sea of confusion.

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CHANDRA MUKERJI *From Graven Images: Patterns of Modern Materialism*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1983. $12.00 (paper), $30.00 (cloth).

For the first time since the industrial revolution, we are in a position to look back at the receding culture of modern materialism. Computers, satellites and micro-electronics are changing our perception in the post-industrial world of an information society. While the negative effects of industrialism have made us sensitive to evolution and ecology, new technologies are introducing us to cultural frames of reference, which are radically different from the industrial patterns of modern materialism. In our so-called post-industrial world 'modern' is no longer contemporary, and people are beginning to disown the materialism which has led to pollution and destruction of the natural environment. Chandra Mukerji's book, *From Graven Images: Patterns of Modern Materialism*, appears to be an expression of this reaction. It begins with concern for the problems of a 'man-made' world, and ends with the idea of using attention to their cultural origins as an antidote to the impulsive power of past assumptions.

In spite of the book's claims and aspirations, the author appears unaware of her own identity with the patterns of cultural materialism. With economics and sociology as basic frames of reference, she is embroiled with the academic theories of a receding industrial age, and much of her book unwittingly contributes to its concepts, theories and assumptions. Writing in the shadow of figures like Karl Marx and Max Weber, she tends to ignore the alternate perspectives of other cultures and disciplines – such as cybernetics, information theory and neurology – in approaching the history of culture. The book is an enormous challenge to any writer. In claiming to be 'a broadly synthetic work' (dust-jacket) covering a wide range of materials and disciplines, it poses the problem or relating to a diversity of perceptions and backgrounds in its readers. *From Graven Images: Patterns of Modern Materialism* calls for a global grasp of five hundred years of history and a profound understanding of the major trends, shifts and transformations affecting the period's cultural evolution. It also requires a knowledge of cultures, both before and after the early modern period, in order to avoid the confusion of applying meanings to situations where they do not belong.

I was first fascinated by the prospect of examining the evolution of modern culture through its various manifestations in print. The picture of card players on the cover (Fig. 2) stimulated my imagination as an indication of print proliferating games, which embodied the dealing, speculation, exchanges, banking, profit and competition of early modern materialism. The image of cards also suggested sheet-printing as leaflets, posters, charts, newspapers, paper money, wall-paper and textiles in terms of the information flow of fashion, advertising, trade, finance, news and decoration. A glance at the table of contents increased my awareness of print as a commercial commodity, a form of investment and a source of information stimulating social change and industrialization. I thought of law books, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, catalogues, patents, copyrights, manuals and journals, and of their association with government, academies, museums, galleries, courts, shops and libraries. In contemplating the book, I was ready for a synthesis of developments establishing modern materialism in terms of its aims, values, language, concepts, style, knowledge, assumptions, structures and activities.

My expectations were unfulfilled. I soon discovered the book was more concerned with economics than with art, culture or history, and I was quickly frustrated by the lack of illustrations and basic information. I also discovered the author's tendency to make sweeping statements of a startling nature without any apparent explanation, proof or justification. For instance, I was immediately confused by the assertion that 'the hedonistic culture of mass consumption' (p. 1) existed centuries before the exigence of mass-media and the industrial means of mass-producing goods for the bulk of the population. In attributing mass-production to early printing presses, Chandra Mukerji appears unaware of critical mass and its relation to the history of technology. Printing became a mass-medium in the nineteenth century with the introduction of pulp paper and rotary printing.

The key to *From Graven Images: Patterns of Modern Materialism* appears to lie with its concept of culture. This happens to be materialistic, objective and deterministic. According to Chandra Mukerji, 'Material culture is not located in the human mind' (p. 15). She identifies it with meaning in material objects having the power to determine human behaviour. Carried a bit