

ART HISTORY, GESTALT AND NAZISM

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Gestalt Psychology had a wide diffusion through the twentieth century, but it also had an influence on adjacent disciplines. This paper is about the unexpected success of Gestalt Psychology in German art history, where it served as a model for the formal analysis of works of art. This paper is the first discussion of the extent of influence of Gestalt Psychology in art history, and it reveals hidden affinities between different schools that are otherwise obscure. The investigation undertaken here, however, is more than historical. An unusual situation greets us because some of the very historians who embraced Gestaltism were also sympathetic to Nazism. This paper then becomes a reflection on the resonance of theoretical doctrines on political ideas.

Gestalt Psychology was so interesting to historians because it provided tools to discuss the richness of visual forms that helped bolster earlier varieties of historical formalism descending from Alois RIEGL and Heinrich WÖLFFLIN. But formalism is not popular today. In a contemporary context, there seem to be two standard objections to formalism as it relates to ideology. According to the first and less interesting objection, formalism is simply too neutral to such issues; as the arts reflect issues of struggle, identity, and power, the formalist is content to simply reflect on formal relations. According to the second objection, the formalist is too confident of his methods; formalism merges into 'expressionistic' art history. One not only reflects on formal relations, but 'essentializes' them, and from the essential character of one object then wants to go on to essentialize meta-historical entities like national or racial schools.

It is this latter issue that is most interesting for the appropriation of Gestalt psychology for art history. The appropriation was undertaken by two schools, which I will be arguing are one loosely unified school, the school of *Koloritgeschichte* ['history of coloring'] and *Strukturforschung* ['structural research']. Both were primarily German-language phenomena and flourished during the 'twenties and 'thirties in Germany. During the National Socialist era some of its main practitioners – Hans SEDLMAYR (1896-1986), Hans JANTZEN (1880-1967) and Wilhelm PINDER (1878-1947) – held important university posts under Nazism. They thus provide the interesting test cases of the utility of Gestalt psychology for totalitarian interests. As I shall document, these art historians were able to skillfully manipulate some of the gestalt doctrines in their 'structural' and 'coloristic' methodologies, thereby putting the theories to willful purposes. My investigation underscores the need to differentiate brands of Gestalt theory in historical discussions.

The *Koloritgeschichte* school of art history emerged around 1935 when a small group of scholars began producing works on the history of coloring various periods of western art history. The most important early document is the book of Theodor HETZER (1892-1946), *Tizian: Geschichte seiner Farbe* (BERTHOLD, 1961). While ostensibly about Titian, the book also made generalizations about the development of

color in painting throughout the post-Medieval period. HETZER's friend Kurt BADT (1890-1973) was the other historian of color, although his career lasted much longer (GOSEBRUCH & GROSS, 1961, pp. v-viii). While trained in Italian art, BADT's works address later aspects of the coloring of western art history, especially the nineteenth century. Other members of this school were Heinz Roosen-Runge (1912-1983; DITTMANN, 1983), Ernst STRAUSS (1901-1982; DITTMANN, 1981, 1982; NEUGEBAUER, 1986) and Wolfgang SCHÖNE (1910-1989; SCHLINK & SPERLICH, 1986) whose *Über das Licht in der Malerei* of 1954 provided a synoptic statement of research on color for the next generation.

The most important proponent of this school still active today is Lorenz DITTMANN (1928), interestingly neither a student of SCHÖNE or STRAUSS but SEDLMAYR. DITTMANN's *Farbgestaltung und Farbtheorie in der abendländische Malerei: Eine Einführung* (1987) is the most recent statement of the point of view of the *Koloritgeschichte* school. Recent interest in color by John GAGE and others has brought DITTMANN's point of view under discussion, and has charged him with neglecting technical issues of the preservation of painted works in favor of an aestheticist discourse.

The other school has been called the school of *Strukturforschung* (SCHWEITZER, 1938/1963; NODELMAN, 1966; WOOD, 2000). A product of the so-called 'Vienna School of Art History,' descending from Alois RIEGL and Max DVORAK, these scholars began around the same time to write about the principles of artistic formation (*Gestaltung*) of the art of different periods through the method of 'structural analysis' (*Strukturanalyse*). Like the *Koloritgeschichte* school, numerous monographs were devoted to the structure of various monuments and works of art.

The method of structural analysis is most closely associated with the name of Hans SEDLMAYR (SCHNEIDER, 1990; FIORE, 1985; DITTMANN, 1967, pp. 142-216). Important members of this school were SEDLMAYR's younger colleague in Vienna, Otto PÄCHT (1902-1988; FÜRST, 1972, pp. 8-11; ALEXANDER, 1991; WOOD, 1999), as well as the archeologists Guido Kaschnitz von Weinberg (1890-1958; KASCHNITZ, 1965, pp. 228-239; SEDLMAYR, 1959), Friedrich Matz (1890-1974), and Bernhard SCHWEITZER (1892-1966).

The most important proponents of *Strukturforschung* today are Hermann BAUER (1929-), a student of SEDLMAYR, and Christian NORBERG-SCHULZ (1927-), heavily influenced by SEDLMAYR. BAUER (1976) has not only continued to write monographs with the structural art historical methodology, but has also defended the structural point of view in his book *Kunsthistorik*. Unfortunately, he has had to live down the unfortunate favor his teacher SEDLMAYR found with Nazi authorities in the 'thirties, which has invariable attached to his methods.

The Unity of the Two Schools in their Maturity

On the face of it, there is little connection between the two schools – indeed this is the first treatment of them together. The only scholar to make ostensible contributions to both fields is Hans SEDLMAYR who extremely problematically wrote of both

the 'loss of the center' (*Verlust der Mitte*) and the 'death of light' (*Tod des Lichtes*) in painting (SEDLMAYR, 1948/1958; 1965). Even so, if one looks deeper, one can find a number of consistencies. Indeed, part of my contribution will minimize the differences between the methodologies of Kurt BADT and Hans SELDMAYR, as evidenced in their famous 'Streit' over the interpretation of Johannes Vermeer (VON MENGDEN, 1984). Superficially, historians from one school often cite the works of the other and contribute to the Festschriften of each other. More importantly, they both also rely in fundamental ways on Gestalt psychology. Without discussing Gestalt psychology, which I will save for a later section, I can best sketch this interdependence with a narrative timeline.

The documents we have at our disposal are (1) a stream of dissertations and monographs on the color or structure of a particular work of art, artist, or style/period; (2) methodological writings by structuralists which cite color historians, and vice versa, and Festschriften of structuralists which include contributions by color historians and vice versa; and (3) common methodological discussions of Gestalt psychology. Since I will discuss Gestalt psychology separately, I will here list the major monographs and dissertations in chronological order, along with their dedications or, in the case of dissertations, their advisor and, in addition the relevant Festschriften.

The announcement of the maturity of at least the structural program was made in SELDMAYR's *Die Architektur Borrominis* of 1930 (SEDLMAYR, 1930/1973). SELDMAYR had already sketched his approach to Borromini before, but in this monograph he utilized the structural method to attempt, for example, to determine the original plan of San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane in Rome. Characteristically, he also made interpretations of Borromini's personality, ultimately concluding that he was borderline paranoiac. In the next edition, however, he regretted this conclusion but stood by his formal analyses.

The same year (1935) Theodor HETZER's great book, *Tizian: Geschichte seiner Farbe*, was published (HETZER, 1935/1969). As already mentioned, HETZER treated not only Titian's color, but made observations on all of western painting. For example, he noted a recurring tendency to construct color on a red-green (Giorgione) or on a blue-yellow axis. Following HETZER's example the student Heinz ROOSEN-RUNGE wrote a monograph on an individual artist, Quentin Massys, *Die Gestaltung der Farbe bei Quentin Matsys* (ROOSEN-RUNGEN, 1940). ROOSEN-RUNGEN's efforts are important for taking up a northern Renaissance painter for coloristic analysis. This was to be important for SCHÖNE's later pan-European review. ROOSEN-RUNGE, incidentally, would go on to produce one of the most exhaustive studies of Medieval book illumination, investigating chemistry, contemporary treatises, and formal analysis of color.

In Germany SELDMAYR began to teach and develop his ideas of the decline of art. It was after the war that SELDMAYR had his famous Catholic conversion and began teaching at the University of Munich. A big gap is often noticed here in SELDMAYR's writing. At this point, however, SELDMAYR maintained his structural method but traded his Spenglerian view of history (see below) for one of Catholic redemption. It did not mean a great change in method, however, for if the methodology is loosely based on a Husserlian phenomenology, then it can take either

an historicist, Heideggerian form (as it had) or else a neo-Thomist essentialist form (SMITH, 1994; SEIFERT, 1987). Thus SEDLMAYR began to use the writings of Hedwig Conrad Martius on color. SEDLMAYR's big project after the war (in addition to his diatribes against modern art) was his book on the cathedral, symbol of medieval Christianity (SEDLMAYR, 1950). He utilized much material developed by Hans JANTZEN earlier, and treated not only the structural aspects of 'Gothic church space' (*gotische Kirchenraum*) but pushed into stained glass window.

Wolfgang SCHÖNE was reflecting on what was now a generation of work on color to write his *Über das Licht in der Malerei*, published in 1954. The book, dedicated to Hans JANTZEN, went beyond HETZER's casual reflections on European color history in the context of a discussion of Titian, to offer a truly synoptic survey. Significantly, both SEDLMAYR and Ernst STRAUSS approvingly reviewed the book. In 1955 Lorenz DITTMANN, a student of STRAUSS and SEDLMAYR at Munich, published his *Die Farbe bei Grünewald*. The book treats a single artist and helps to demonstrate the real unity the school of Koloritgeschichte had in the 'fifties, as students directed their attention to this or that artist. The same can be seen in Jutta HELD's *Farbe und Lichte in Goyas Malerei* of 1964, written under SCHÖNE. Also notable is Otto PÄCHT's sensitive attention to color in his contribution to the Warburg Institute monograph on the St. Alban's psalter (1960).

By the 'sixties the Kolorithistoriker and Strukturforscher were becoming old enough to have their own Festschriften. In 1961 a seventieth birthday volume was presented to Kurt BADT (GOSEBRUCH, 1961). It is significant that, although no Strukturforscher are present, almost all of the Kolorithistoriker are: Lorenz DITTMANN, Wolfgang SCHÖNE and Ernst STRAUSS. Also significant is the appearance of BADT's brother in law, Rudolf ARNHEIM, not so much as a relation, but as a Gestalt psychologist. The very next year a sixty fifth birthday Festschrift was presented to Hans SEDLMAYR (BAUER & DITTMANN, 1963). This was edited by not only his student Hermann BAUER, but also DITTMANN. While it is not so interesting from the point of view of either color or structure (it dwells mostly on nineteenth century philosophy), the pairing of BAUER and DITTMANN – the two heir apparents to the two methodologies, is significant. In 1968 Kurt BADT helped edit Werner GROSS's sixty fifth birthday Festschrift which included contributions by Hermann BAUER, Ernst STRAUSS, and a posthumous essay by Theodor HETZER (BADT & GROSS, 1968). Two years later Martin GOSEBRUCH and Lorenz DITTMANN edited Kurt BADT's eightieth birthday Festschrift, which included contributions by Rudolf ARNHEIM and DITTMANN (GOSEBRUCH & DITTMANN, 1970). We could continue almost up to the very present. In 1981 an 80th birthday volume was issued in honor of Ernst STRAUSS, and included contributions by Werner GROSS and Lorenz DITTMANN. In 1982 a Festschrift was published in honor of the 70th birthday of Heinz ROOSEN-RUNGE, with a contribution by Lorenz DITTMANN (ENGELHART and KEMPTER, 1982).

I think it is clear that the structural and color historians saw their enterprises as somehow interlocking. If anything, we could say that their respective subject matters share a division of labor in which color is a subset of the larger structural program. Since color is only (or only largely) relevant to painting, color history dwells almost

exclusively on the latter. Structure, being a feature of paintings, sculptures, and buildings, however, has a broader range of application. One might capture the relationship by saying that, depending on the artistic material at hand, an adequate formal analysis in general necessitates a structural and, possibly in addition, a coloristic analysis.

At the same time, however, the two schools still seem to share different characteristics. Somewhat like the old distinction between *disegno* and *colorito*, *Strukturforschung* has 'masculine' characteristics and *Koloritgeschichte* 'feminine' characteristics. *Strukturforschung* asserts itself as a movement more than *Koloritgeschichte*. It seems more prone to meta-historical thinking than *Koloritgeschichte* (forms, more than colors, are given over to sequencing). It is rooted in the permanent, architecture and stone rather than the ephemerality of easel paintings. This rootedness leads ultimately to the rejection of modern art; SEDLMAYR polemicized against it while BADT and DITTMANN would write sympathetically of the latest developments in modern painting. Thus in the midst of a unity there is a tension of independent characters asserting themselves.

For the present time, I have continually hinted at the dependence of our historians on Gestalt psychology. As a matter of fact, no argument of the unity of the two schools is complete without demonstrating how they both used Gestalt psychology to form a common methodology. Only Gestalt psychology set the historians off from other, earlier formally minded historians; therefore, to Gestalt psychology we must turn.

Gestalt Psychology and the Founding of the Schools of *Koloritgeschichte* and *Strukturforschung*

It is well known that 20th century formalism finds a great deal of inspiration in the works of Alois RIEGL and Heinrich WÖLFFLIN, two of the great founders of the discipline of art history. Since many of the *Strukturforschung* historians were trained in Vienna they found a direct inspiration in RIEGL. SEDLMAYR, in fact, had been a student of DVORAK before his death, thus assuring a direct link to RIEGL himself. Throughout the twentieth century, SEDLMAYR, PÄCHT (and SWOBODA) were engaged in the editing of RIEGL's works. SEDLMAYR wrote the 'Einleitung' to the *Gesammelte Aufsätze* edited by SWOBODA in 1928.

Conversely, some of the *Koloritgeschichte* researchers were students of WÖLFFLIN. As we know, the structure of university education in Germany at the time was unique in that one could study at a different university every year and call numerous professors a 'mentor.' Nevertheless, both Theodor HETZER and Kurt BADT spent time not only with (the undoctinaire) Adolf GOLDSCHMIDT but also WÖLFFLIN. As we shall see below, neither HETZER nor BADT were as strong 'Wölfflinians' as some of their contemporaries would be.

The most important fact about identifying with the progeny of RIEGL and WÖLFFLIN is that they were not merely formalist theorists but also evolutionary theorists. Both, in slightly different ways, absolutely took for granted a grand evolutionary scheme in which art develops. They added to this attention to the individual work of art which represented their 'formalism,' but always with an eye

to placement in the larger development; hence their attention to style. The question naturally arises to what extent both Strukturforscher and Kolorithistoriker shared this assumption.

SEDLMAYR (1931/2), in an early polemical essay, 'Zum Begriff der Strukturanalyse,' said that the only thing wrong with WÖLFFLIN was too much concern with historical morphology and not enough with the individual structure of art works. Thus, Bernhard SCHWEITZER in 1938 spoke of RIEGL and WÖLFFLIN as the 'first' phase of the structural school; it was the 'stylistic' phase of structural theory and not the true 'structural' phase. The separation is evident if we compare HETZER or SEDLMAYR to Paul FRANKL or Wilhelm WORRINGER, both close students of WÖLFFLIN. WORRINGER especially was interested in racial styles ('the Gothic') while FRANKL sought a precise extension of WÖLFFLIN into architecture. HETZER and SEDLMAYR had more or less left this. The difference, I hold, lies in the use of Gestalt psychology.

Gestalt psychology began in earnest to present itself as a unified school after World War I, especially after 1922 and the founding of its journal, *Psychologische Forschung* (ASH, 1995). Like BADT, SEDLMAYR and HETZER, the founders of the Gestalt school – Max WERTHEIMER (1880-1943), Kurt KOFFKA (1886-1941) and Wolfgang KÖHLER (1887-1967) – had an eclectic training. Although all of them spent time in the laboratory of Carl STUMPF (similar to HETZER's and BADT's time with WÖLFFLIN), each came together and crafted a new science.

I do not need to recount for the readers of this journal all of the details of their experimental work, but it is a mistake to think that because the school was called 'Gestalt' psychology, it only concerned itself with form. Form in this sense meant 'organization,' and all psychological phenomena showed its working, including color. Hence, ROOSEN-RUNGE's book on MASSYS' color is concerned with its 'Gestaltung.' Of the art historians, it was Hans SEDLMAYR who first showed interest in Gestalt psychology. According to my conversations with Rudolf ARNHEIM (1904-), SEDLMAYR spent some time with WERTHEIMER, who was then in Berlin, and wrote a foundational paper on the subject of a new methodology for art history, based on 'gestaltetes Sehen' (SEDLMAYR, 1925). In the WERTHEIMER papers at the New York Public Library I discovered a letter dated 13 March 1929 from SEDLMAYR in Vienna to WERTHEIMER. It is clearly a letter of *introduction* (we are a 'kleine Gruppe von Geisteswissenschaftlern'. . . 'die Beweise unserer echten Sympathie und meiner besondern Verehrung in dieser Form Ihr sehr ergebener'), thus establishing a *terminus ante quem* for their contact. This was followed a few years later by his programmatic essays, the 'Einleitung' (1928) to RIEGL's essays and finally 'Zu einer strengen Kunstwissenschaft' (1932/2000).

The most influential documents at the time for the historians would be Max WERTHEIMER's paper on perceptual organization published in *Psychologische Forschung*, Johannes von ALLESCH's *Die ästhetische Erscheinungen der Farben* (1925; CHANDLER, 1934, pp. 87-91, 103-114), and David KATZ's (1883-1954) *Der Aufbau der Farbwelt* (1911/1930), which included his important phenomenology of color appearances (KATZ, 1930/1935). Here the crucial transitional figure is undoubtedly von ALLESCH, who was not only a Gestalt psychologist but also an art

historian. Not only did the color historians take notice of his work, Hans SEDLMAYR wrote a ten page review of his *Die ästhetische Erscheinungen der Farben* in 1931 (SEDLMAYR, 1931/2). ALLESCH had already published his study of the late Gothic Tirolian sculptor and painter Michael PACHER and greeted the latest works of WÖLFFLIN and FRANKL (von ALLESCH, 1922; 1931).

As already noted, the emergence of the color school comes slightly later and less emphatically. We find hints of it in the dissertations overseen by Wilhelm PINDER at Munich in the 'thirties, including those of Ernst STRAUSS (1927) and Harry MÄNZ (1934). MÄNZ's dissertation *Die Farbgebung in der italienischen Malerei des Protobarock und Manierismus* in 1934 may be the first work to make extensive use of both von ALLESCH and KATZ. The other center of research was Leipzig, where the young HETZER worked and directed Herbert SIEBENHÜHNER's dissertation (1935). Although, HETZER does not himself cite Gestalt psychological works, by the time he wrote his own *Tizian: Geschichte seiner Farbe*, the way was clear to wed the two.

I said that Strukturforscher and Kolorithistoriker did not preoccupy themselves so much with evolutionary hypotheses, but this is not exactly true. While most of SEDLMAYR's statements deny an interest in evolution, less guarded statements reveal an intense interest in it; in fact, it sometimes appears that he thought Gestalt psychology would precisely supply the scientific link to speculative historical theorizing. RIEGL was admired by Oswald SPENGLER, and there is a precise element of Spenglerian thinking in SEDLMAYR. When SEDLMAYR wrote the 'Einleitung' to the essays in 1928, he outlined the ways in which he felt that Gestalt psychology could explain SPENGLER's impressionistic approach to historical cycles.

From his conversations with WERTHEIMER and reading of works of Gestalt psychology, SEDLMAYR became familiar with the critique of associationist psychology. When WERTHEIMER, or others, affirmed that visual forms possessed a real emergent form ('Gestalt') and not so many blind, atomic components, they only had perceptible forms in mind. SEDLMAYR, however, extended the analysis to history itself. He asks, 'Is there in historical events. . . a unified direction, an inner tendency, a meaningful inner necessity? Or is the direction only. . . the result of blind contemporaneously working components? (Gibt es im historischen Geschehen, oder doch für gewisse Strecken desselben, eine einheitliche Richtung, eine innere Tendenz, eine innere sinnvolle Notwendigkeit? Oder ist die tatsächliche Richtung, in der es verlaufen ist, nur die Resultate von blind zusammenwirkenden Komponenten?)' (SEDLMAYR, 1929, xxvi). In the very footnote to this sentence he again cites 'Gestalttheorie.'

SEDLMAYR has clearly taken the either-or reasoning of WERTHEIMER and transposed it to a completely different realm, that of history. He might have felt confident venturing into the temporal realm because of the use of examples like melodies by Gestalt psychologists, however, it is immediately clear that a 'directionality' in history is completely different from a directionality in a seen figure. This is just the most conspicuous slip by SEDLMAYR and, as I already pointed out, this historical scheme becomes transformed into one of Catholic redemption; what both share is the idea of the 'decline of the West' enunciated by SPENGLER.

There is no space here to discuss the so-called 'reactionary modernism' of SPENGLER and others (HERF, 1984). Interest in SPENGLER became transposed any way to the figure of Martin HEIDEGGAR. In 1955 Alfred NEUMEYER wrote in his review of Wolfgang SCHÖNE's book how it 'is hardly conceivable without the influence of the existentialist philosophy of Heidegger' (NEUMEYER, 1955). It seems that HEIDEGGAR (like PINDER) could serve both formalist ends as well as reactionary ends; the ambiguity added to the attractiveness of the methodology under SEDLMAYR. In a subsequent section, I shall explore in more depth the extent to which Gestalt psychology can support the irrationalist aims of SEDLMAYR's speculative history of art, but in the meantime I will simply establish more securely the codependence of Gestalt psychology and structural-coloristic history in their maturity.

Gestalt Psychology and Structural History in their Maturity

I do not know of any psychologists and historians working together at the same German University that would have had the opportunity for collaboration. But for one year from 1939 to 1940, after fleeing from Italy (to which he had fled from Berlin) Rudolf ARNHEIM spent a year in London with his now brother-in-law Kurt BADT (VERSTEGEN, 1996). ARNHEIM had written his dissertation under WERTHEIMER on visual expression (interestingly not cited in SEDLMAYR's 'Zu einer strengen Kunstwissenschaft') and was completely up to date on the latest developments in Gestalt psychology (ARNHEIM, 1928). Perhaps more importantly, he had been engaged in his own semi-historical enterprise in his writings on film and radio.

But now, in London, he was able to share these insights with the husband of his sister, Leni, and the historian who would do so much for the *Koloritgeschichte* of post-Renaissance art. When we go to these monographs on Poussin, Delacroix, Cézanne and Van Gogh, published well into the 'sixties the citations of color research are modest, but ARNHEIM's influence must have been substantial (BADT, 1969, 1965, 1961). Even SCHÖNE's lengthy review of color science in his 1954 volume (published, perhaps unfortunately, the same year as ARNHEIM's *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye*) is fairly modest, relying on older works like those of von ALLESCH and KATZ. It seems certain, however, that PÄCHT and SEDLMAYR remained current with Gestalt psychology, especially through Wolfgang METZGER (1899-1979), the orthodox Gestaltist who remained in Germany and enjoyed a prolific academic career as chair of the psychology Department of the University of Münster for many years (PÄCHT, 1963/1977). Furthermore, von ALLESCH remained a prominent elder figure in German psychology, even writing a review of SCHÖNE's book (VON ALLESCH, 1956). It is interesting that when a few years later one turns to *The World of Perception* by Kai VON FIEANDT – who had studied psychology in Vienna but fled to Scandinavia and under the influence of KATZ (who had fled to Sweden) and RUBIN (who remained in Copenhagen) – cites SCHÖNE's taxonomy of kinds of light as a supplement to Katz, and cites both ARNHEIM and SCHÖNE together, apparently indistinguishably, in his chapter on art (VON FIEANDT, 1966).

The Fate of *Koloritgeschichte* and *Strukturforschung* during National Socialism

If I have been successful in convincing the reader of a fundamental unity between *Koloritgeschichte* and *Strukturforschung*, then we may go on to the fate of these researchers during the rise and establishment of National Socialism – a period I just neglected above. Like any other area of academia both Jewish and non-Jewish scholars were numbered in *Koloritgeschichte* and *Strukturforschung*. Some of them received automatic dismissals from University posts (as in the most famous case of Erwin PANOFSKY who lost his Professorship from the University of Hamburg in 1933), and some would remain free to confront the new movement as they saw fit.

Kurt BADT was an independent Jewish scholar at the time, free from University politics. He exiled himself first to Munich and then to London in 1939 and remained there until 1952. BADT had the fortune to be independently wealthy, but GOSEBRUCH and GROSS call his 'ein schweres Exil.' Otto PÄCHT was also Jewish and interestingly ended up in London (unfortunately I do not know of any relationship between the two scholars). Ernst STRAUSS also lost his appointment after he had just won his second degree Habilitationsschrift. He moved to Italy in 1933 and then to California after Mussolini adopted Hitler's racial laws in 1938.

Unfortunately, some of the other historians not only remained in Germany, but were not neutral. Hans SEDLMAYR – the leading light of each of the coloristic and structural methodologies – saw his career greatly advanced as he became a favorite historian of the National Socialists in power. Significantly, the central figure of Nazi sanctioned art history is Wilhelm PINDER, who as we saw directed some of the early dissertations of *Koloritgeschichte* at Munich. PINDER took over as the chairman of the Deutschen Verein für Kunstwissenschaft and churned out works on German artists and German art history which, while maintaining the appearance of serious art historical scholarship, nevertheless, toed to ideas of racial purity of style (PINDER, 1935-37; PINDER, 1935; HALBERTSMA, 1985; SUCKAL, 1987). Hans JANTZEN, who had also taught at Munich and supported *Koloritgeschichte*, was active in Nazi politics. Heinrich Dilly has published extensive correspondence between PINDER, JANTZEN, SEDLMAYR and the Medieval art historian Alfred STANGE during the National Socialist period (DILLY, 1988).

Is it significant that three of the most important Nazi sanctioned art historians all practiced formalist history? SEDLMAYR held up JANTZEN and PINDER as models of keen analysis and fine prose and when asked after the war the names of scholars whose works he most admired, mentioned in addition to Theodor HETZER, JANTZEN and PINDER (SEDLMAYR, 1958, pp. 7-13). We know that SEDLMAYR himself had some stake in this, particularly after the war, and so he might not be trusted. But PÄCHT, who had sought exile, also continued to admire PINDER's scholarship, if not the person! On the occasion of his Festschrift in 1972, surrounded by his British colleagues who had come to accept him, Bruno FÜRST could still write of how, like PINDER, PÄCHT was an 'Augenmensch!' PÄCHT, the exile, successfully separated the art history from the art historian.

SEDLMAYR went beyond mere favor and had the unfortunate honor of having brought PINDER greetings from HITLER, himself, in the introduction to PINDER's

Festschrift of 1938 (FESTSCHRIFT, 1938). It is ironic that Kurt WEITZMANN would not shake SEDLMAYR's hand upon his return to the first post-war German art history conference, but openly greeted JANTZEN (WEITZMANN, 1994). For in addition to JANTZEN's tireless organization during the National Socialism, he authored a thinly veiled Nazi art history called *Geist und Schicksal der deutschen Kunst* (JANTZEN, 1935). Yet SEDLMAYR seems to have redeemed himself in other ways; when Ernst STRAUSS returned from his exile in California, SEDLMAYR helped socialize him back into German academics by inviting him to contribute to his *Hefte* and may have helped him become Professor at Munich.

As we have come to see, it is not the formalist indifference to politics that is most potentially damning to the color and structure historians. It is the second objection stated in the opening paragraph – the 'expressionistic' judgment of the essentialness of the individual work of art bleeding too easily into that of a period or nation – of which they may be guilty. For especially SEDLMAYR has a tendency to let his thinking range in this direction. The next section is intended to answer the question of to what extent these ideas were supported by Gestalt psychology.

Is the Psychology to Blame?

I noted how when SEDLMAYR defended his Spenglerian views of history, he noted a parallelism between the 'Richtung' pointed out by Gestalt psychologists in seen figures and a certain analogous 'Richtung' in history. I said that while Gestalt psychology is holistic and deterministic in its own realm, such an analogizing is insupportable. However, the question is not so clear cut, because its answer depends on what kind of 'Gestalt' psychology we are talking. When, for example, we turn to SEDLMAYR's 'Zu einer strenge Kunstwissenschaft,' we notice citations not only of Berlin Gestalt psychology, but also of Heinz Werner's Hamburg personalistic psychology, as well as the Leipzig holistic psychology ('Ganzheitspsychologie') of Felix KRUEGER (1873-1948) and Friedrich SANDER (1890-1967).

Both Berlin Gestalt psychology and Hamburg personalistic psychology carried 'Jewish' connotations during the National Socialist period. This is especially true of WERTHEIMER's stay at the University of Frankfurt, the 'Jewish' University, also of course the site of the notorious Institut für Sozialforschung of Max HORKHEIMER. While it might seem generous of SEDLMAYR to cite such works, I think it is clear that he identified most with the Leipzig Ganzheit school. It would be unfortunate to lay all of the blame on one related psychological theory, but the fact is that it was more than such a theory (GEUTER, 1985/1994). 'Ganzheit' is not a mere synonym of 'Gestalt.' It denotes organic wholeness, and perhaps stands to Gestalt as 'gesellschaft' ('society') stands to 'gemeinschaft' ('the social sum'). When proponents of that theory said that the functioning of the mind was 'holistic,' it did not mean simply that thoughts or percepts had a unity (as Gestalt psychologists would affirm), but that society formed a unity to which man could belong. Furthermore, not only did man but institutions develop organically according to a predisposed teleology.

The situation was born out in Nazi Germany. While several of the Gestalt psychologists (Rudolf ARNHEIM, David KATZ, Kurt LEWIN, Max WERTHEIMER) were

dismissed from their university chairs as Jews or simply forced to flee, the non-Jew Wolfgang KÖHLER openly denounced Nazism and emigrated, and the remaining psychologists (Johannes von ALLESCH, Wolfgang METZGER) remained relatively apolitical. In contrast, KRUEGER and SANDER were either openly Nazis or published Nazi tracts, KRUEGER becoming rector of the University of Leipzig and president of the German Society for Psychology. While it is true that he lost favor (possibly for praising the Jewish Spinoza) and never linked his theories to the Nazi racial doctrines, he was a true conservative friend of Nazism, apparently in the Heideggerian sense. As the intellectual historian Mitchell ASH recounts, SANDER ironically had to decline the chair of the International Congress of Psychology of 1960 to METZGER when his old war time essays were discovered (ASH, 1985).

It is simply not true that Gestalt psychology and *Ganzheit* psychology can be lumped together, no matter how much historians (or Gestalt psychologists themselves) might cite them for corroborating evidence. It is true that a *Ganzheitler* would serve to refute a point of an oppositely aligned psychologist, but they would go far beyond it! For instance, if one wishes to counter a behavioristic model of human development, one could argue for teleological development, but the Berliner would settle for the settled minima of local physical processes guiding development. Therefore, I tentatively suggest that the relationship of Kolorit- and Struktur- art history and Gestalt psychology be reexamined. When SEDLMAYR invokes Gestalt psychology to say that history has a 'Richtung,' we must counter that only seen figures have a 'richtung,' to analogize to history is taking a bold, and dangerous step (MANDELBAUM, 1984). With these qualifications made, let me go on to state positively what a Kolorit- and Struktur- art history could be.

How Contemporaneity Begets History

In his critical overview of *Koloritgeschichte*, John GAGE suggests that historians such as DITTMANN tend to rely on their intuitive judgment too much and neglect the physical aspect of works of art, ignoring deterioration, over-painting or varnishing (GAGE, 1990, 1993). As the title of GAGE's significant work, *Colour and Culture*, suggests, color is not an unreflective category, and the coloristic concerns of many artists do not necessarily come from pure expression; they are often the product of convention and obscure personal symbolic systems.

GAGE's critique can stand in for the whole of structural and color history. For the structural historian, too, the form of a painting or building might too often be interpreted as an intentional expressive act, when in fact it is the product of practical exigencies, rebuilding, etc. In short, both structural and color historians neglect the sociological stratum. This is a common enough criticism of formalist approaches, but how relevant is it?

I would argue that any ignorance of technical aspects of a work of art militates against the very methodology of the structural-color approach. Part of it is reconstructing the physical context of the work and physical composition of the work of art so that its composition 'makes sense.' Why else would SCHÖNE remarkably have gone to such great lengths to reconstruct the window coverings of the Byzantine structures

at Ravenna, or question the lighting and wall coloring of modern museums? Recall that according to the tired phrase of Gestalt psychology, 'the whole is more than the sum of the parts.' This goes both for color as well as for structure. An adjustment in any form or color can have a profound effect in the resulting organization of the whole.

One could construct a hierarchy of causes of the appearance of the work of art, beginning with the chemical composition of the pigments on to the personality of the artist. Let us say that a work, like the Sistine Ceiling, seems to be painted unusually brightly. First, we could inquire whether the paint had undergone some chemical change; next, we could inquire about the physical context in which it was set; finally, we could look into the iconographic significance of colors and materials. Only after those causes had been exhausted would we be in a position to inquire about the personality of the artist.

The chemical composition of pigments, while directed 'a-historically' to the work before us, points right back to the period in which it was painted. What pigments were available then? What vehicles were used? Are they known to be unstable? To answer these questions we have to know about pigment makers, workshop practice, and artists' commissions (c.f., SUMMERS, 1989). The way in which a work of art fits into its physical context is another aesthetic, and 'a-historical' element. However, when we ask which windows were cut into a chapel wall contemporaneous with a painting, we point once again right back into the period at hand. Do we know how that chapel was adorned? Upon which documents to we base our judgment, and are they reliable? In short, technical and documentary exercises do not represent tiresome wastes of time to the supposed connoisseur of forms and colors. Rather, they represent an exciting experimental ground in which artistic decisions made by artists hundreds of years ago can be tested and understood with a direct immediacy.

One can be quite willing to grant GAGE some ground, however, and this lies in the acceptance that what I have been calling 'contemporaneity' is actually a psychological construct, which necessarily militates against sociology (LEWIN, 1943/1951; MANDLBAUM, 1977). It is only once all the archival, archeological and technical facts are assembled that contemporaneity can be judged, and judgment means perception. It is inherently one-sided because it deals only with the natural scientific aspect of what everyone shares, what we the art historian and they the old artists share in terms of artistic judgment. It has nothing to say about the rise of a style, or the changes in a society; it can only offer what the formal characteristics of some style were that might have been attractive to historical actors at a certain point when causes arose that necessitated a new style.

This brings a new perspective to SEDLMAYR's 'first' and 'second' sciences of art. However, when he argued for a 'streng' or hard science of art, he only had psychology on his mind. The archival aspect of the first science can intersect with science too, but it is then the science of sociology with which it intersects. Art history can be 'scientific' by referring both to the sociological and psychological realms. The fact that theorists like SEDLMAYR ignored sociology does not marginalize their approach, but only serves to delimit its range of application.

Conclusion

This essay has tried to take the problem of the two schools of formal art historical research and delve into their psychological and ideological assumptions. While some of its practitioners adopted regrettable politics during the Nazi era, others did not and many were refugees. The politics is only loosely coupled with the methodology. Furthermore, those aspects of the methodology that do prescribe organicist, and holistic political thought were demonstrated to be based on alien sources. The most consistent basis of color and structural methodology was Gestalt psychology, and through examination of the principles of true Gestalt writings, it was seen that it did not support the uses made of it by such thinkers as SEDLMAYR. It is significant that Lorenz DITTMANN, after obtaining his degree from SEDLMAYR (and STRAUSS) in Munich later came to admire Kurt BADT and become a master of color history. Often the neglect of color is a symptom of rigid thinking. Forms and structures suggest cinematographic transformations, or SEDLMAYR's 'historische Dynamik;' colors resist this. The two endeavors are complementary, but alternating attention to each is a necessity for the balanced appraisal of their potential contributions.

A true coloristic and structural methodology can still bear fruits (e.g., GARAU, 1984; KOBBERT, 1986). The most impressive of its practitioners like Otto PÄCHT combine careful historical documentation with close phenomenological analysis. The result is a reading of works and monuments which can do justice to both the social issues surrounding them – patronage, iconography – and the sensitivity the artists brings to bear on the task before them.

Summary

There has been widespread disappointment with art historical formalism, due to the ready willingness of its practitioners to read off speculative meanings from forms. Our worst fears were realized one version of formalism – *Strukturforschung* – gained some recognition in Nazi Germany in the writings of Hans SEDLMAYR. This article both groups *Strukturforschung* and *Koloritgeschichte* together and considers them as a common art historical endeavor inspired by Gestalt Psychology, for the first time. The various meanings of 'holism' and 'teleology' are distinguished in different schools of psychology, *Gestalt* and *Ganzheit*, and SEDLMAYR's manipulation of its findings toward a deterministic cultural morphology of a Spenglerian bent is exposed. In spite of these unfortunate distortions, the kernel of ideas emanating from Berlin orthodox Gestalt Psychology were a promising start and have given fruit to many important researches, especially in the less aggressive findings of the *Koloritgeschichte* school and above all in the work of Otto PÄCHT.

Zusammenfassung

Es gab eine weitverbreitete Enttäuschung über den kunstgeschichtlichen Formalismus, der auf die willige Bereitschaft seiner Vertreter zurückzuführen war, spekulative Bedeutungen von Formen/Gestalten abzulesen. Unsere schlimmsten Befürchtungen finden sich in der „Strukturforschung“ bestätigt, einer Art des Formalismus, der im Nazideutschland in den Schriften von Hans SEDLMAYR einige Beachtung fand.

Der vorliegende Artikel setzt „Strukturforschung“ und „Koloritgeschichte“ miteinander in Beziehung und betrachtet sie als gemeinsame kunstgeschichtliche Anstrengungen, die von der Gestaltpsychologie inspiriert sind. Die vielfältigen Bedeutungen von „Holismus“ und „Teleologie“ werden nach den unterschiedlichen psychologischen Schulen, „Gestalt“ und „Ganzheit“, differenziert. SEDLMAYERS Manipulation der Ergebnisse in Richtung einer deterministischen kulturellen Morphologie SPENGLERScher Prägung wird vorgestellt. Trotz dieser unglücklichen Einstellungen ist der Kern der Idee, die von der Berliner Schule der Gestaltpsychologie ausgegangen ist, ein vielversprechender Anfang, der viele wichtige Forschungen befruchtet hat, besonders in den weniger aggressiven Ergebnissen der Koloritgeschichte-Schule, vor allem im Werk Otto PÄCHTs.

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