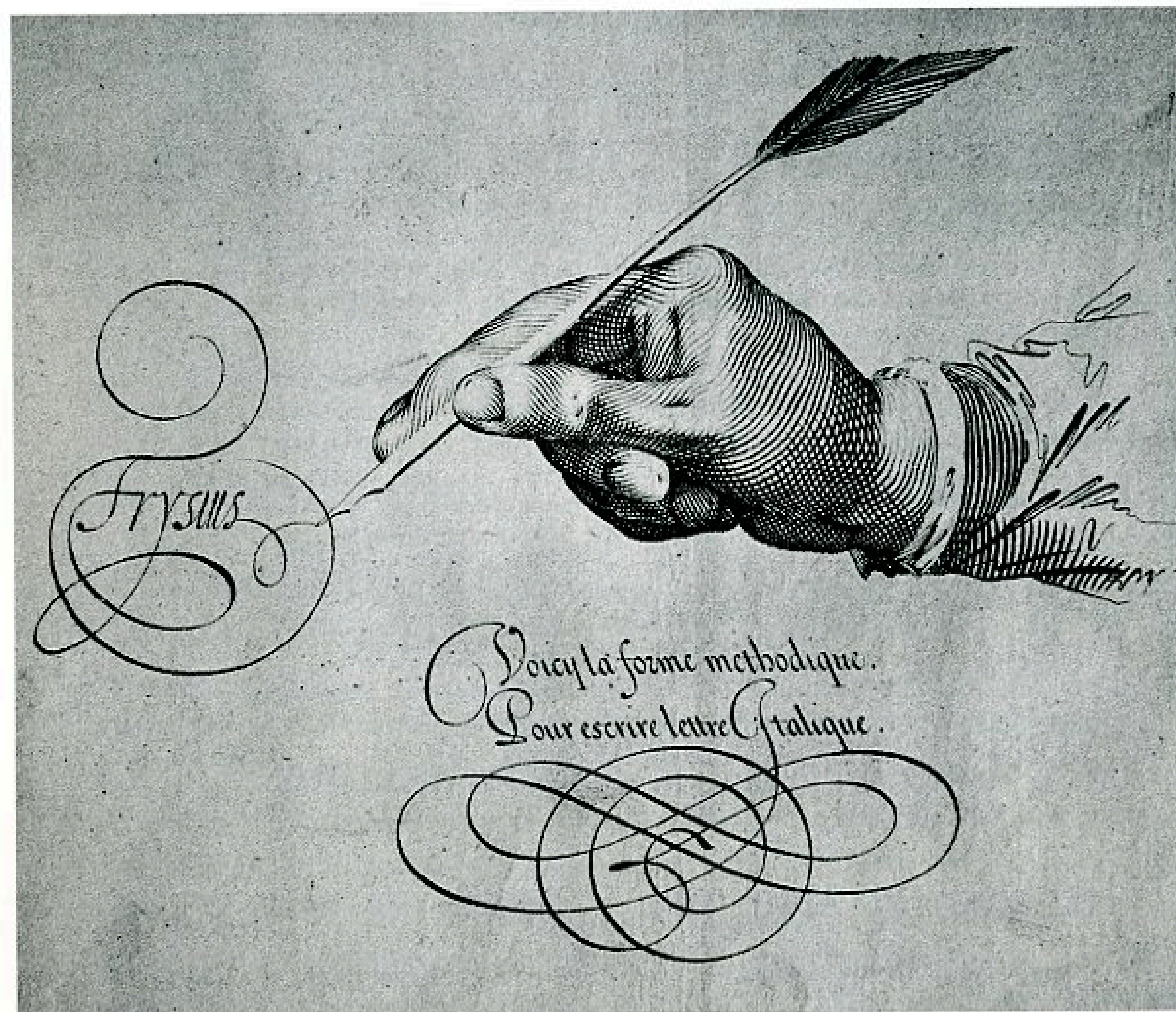

Jan van den Velde, *Instruction in the writing of the Italic Hand*. Engraved by Simon Frysius, from *Spieghel der Schrijfkonste*, Rotterdam, 1605. London, Victoria & Albert Museum. (Photo: Martin Kemp.) See Chapter 9 for full discussion.

Reframing the Renaissance

CLAIRE FARAGO

The initial idea for this collection of essays arose out of my own interest in the sixteenth-century change in status of the visual arts in Italy. I wanted to learn whether and how extensive global commerce affected sixteenth-century Italian discussions of art. I soon realized that existing accounts of the history of western aesthetic theory do not consider contact with non-European societies to have been a contributing factor before the nineteenth century, so I began to wonder how complete our historical understanding really was. It never occurred to academicians discussing the problem of the arts at the seventeenth-century Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture, or to writers who popularized systematic classifications of the *beaux arts* in the eighteenth century, to include nonwestern styles of artistic production.[1] Yet the history of the classification of the arts and categories for judging artistic excellence deserves to be studied from a point of view broad enough to take into account the extensive migration of visual culture long before global contact was initiated at the end of the fifteenth century, and even more so during the era we still call the Renaissance.[2] Non-European art and artifacts were present in Europe throughout the Middle Ages and, after the Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople in 1453, great quantities of new material began arriving from the eastern Mediterranean basin, then Africa, the Americas, Asia, and elsewhere. During this period, the appreciation of art increased dramatically in Italy and elsewhere in Europe. A few extraordinary records – such as Albrecht Dürer's frequently cited admiration for Aztec gold- and silverwork – even attest to the appreciation of non-European objects as products of extraordinary artistic ingenuity.[3] At the same time, the value of certain kinds of artifice became the subject of violent controversy. What did new awareness of other cultures contribute to European conceptions of the arts during this initial period of global contact? And how did the exportation of Renaissance ideals and material culture, from Italy to other parts of Europe and worldwide, fare in this environment of intensified cultural interaction?

I also had to ask why the contribution of non-European cultures to western aesthetics and to the theoretical literature on art that preceded it was not widely acknowledged when the discipline of art history was professionalized in the nineteenth century. The hierarchy of the fine arts, of course, but also the organization of the discipline in terms of national cultures suggest some preliminary answers. It is a complex matter, however, to examine the history of our modern categories of artistic production and aesthetic

appreciation. The recorded wonders of architecture and portable artifacts, even live specimens, that reached Europe during the Renaissance were classified in a variety of ways. My initial investigation of the history of the sixteenth-century status of the arts viewed in historiographical *and* crosscultural terms opened up a vast interdisciplinary field of research that invited a collaborative approach. This volume, which pools the resources of specialists in many subfields of sixteenth-century studies, is the result of that collaboration.

Reframing the Renaissance tries to define a new program for the study of Renaissance visual culture focused on cultural exchange. The essays throughout are addressed to Renaissance specialists and the subjects will, we hope, interest an interdisciplinary audience concerned with the early modern period. The collection grew out of the awareness that any attempt to reimagine Renaissance art as a culturally and historically specific style that originated in Central Italy and was disseminated around the globe should carefully *reexamine* the function, reception, and power of specific kinds of images and other objects of human manufacture. The first, historiographical section of *Reframing the Renaissance*, entitled "New Problems, New Paradigms: Revising the Humanist Model," identifies significant problems of ethnocentrism in past conceptualizations of Renaissance art. The second section, entitled "Renaissance Theories of the Image," presents specialized studies of various conceptual frameworks in which visual representation functioned. The third section, "Early Collecting Practices," treats an important source of information about sixteenth-century cultural exchange. The individual studies throughout the volume emphasize the essentially heterogeneous character of the many kinds of objects and activities we now loosely call art. The final section, entitled "Mediating Images: Developing an Intercultural Perspective," presents case studies of culturally hybrid images – of unruly women, colonial maps of Central Mexico, and a negative ethnic stereotype prominently depicted in an Italian Renaissance religious fresco. The authors adapt traditional techniques of art history – formal analysis, iconography, connoisseurship – to study the asymmetrical process of cultural exchange. An Epilogue relating the central issues explored in this volume to contemporary discussions of how we construct the human subject completes the study.

The quincentennial observance of Columbus's fateful first voyage encouraged many scholars with interests in crosscultural studies to focus on exchanges between "Old" and "New World" cultures. I have retained this focus in *Reframing the Renaissance*, mainly for pragmatic reasons. First, in attempting to control a very large topic, it seemed prudent to restrict some of the parameters. Second, there already exists an interdisciplinary field of study concerned with cultural interaction in the Spanish colonial world. As the five contributions to this volume that treat relations between transplanted Europeans and indigenous Americans in Latin America demonstrate, crosscultural investigations of early modern visual culture in this area are able to draw upon an extensive, theoretically sophisticated foundation of recent scholarship. This is a great advantage in defining a new program for the study of Renaissance art focused on the migration of visual culture and the conditions of reception.

* * *

Whose Renaissance? Revisiting "The Renaissance Problem"

Nearly every reevaluation of the Renaissance – this one is no exception – begins by acknowledging Jacob Burckhardt's *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy/Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien*, first published in 1860. Supplemented by Burckhardt's historical guide to the visual arts in Italy and his other writings on art and architecture, this study – and writings by his immediate contemporaries including Michelet, Ruskin, and Taine – established the concept of the Renaissance as central to the discipline of art history. More than any other scholar, Burckhardt also established a role for visual evidence in the writing of cultural history.[4] As a result of extensive interest in the social and intellectual history of the visual arts over the past thirty years, we have become increasingly aware that our modern distinctions of art matured out of the particular historical and cultural circumstances in which Burckhardt lived and wrote.[5] Realizing that art defined as the object of individual aesthetic contemplation is a relatively recent construct, Peter Burke, in his own reassessment of the Italian Renaissance, recommends a shift in the focus of our attention to a wider range of "communicative events," such as popular songs, sermons, graffiti, and rituals.[6] Burke's revisionist approach to cultural history retains the spirit of Burckhardt's *Civilization*: both historians examine ritual, popular images, and other cultural activities with regard to a wider range of purposes than the category usually implied by "work of art."

Reframing the Renaissance also examines a broad range of communicative events. The present collection of essays tries to suggest, however, that much more is involved in reassessing the history of Renaissance art than trading one modern category for another, presumably less restrictive, one. The aesthetic system of the "fine arts" that designates the triad of painting, sculpture, and architecture emerged gradually over several hundred years. The system of classification that distinguishes the "fine arts" from the liberal arts and from the sciences was codified only in the eighteenth century, on the foundation of an extensive body of theoretical and critical literature in French, German, Italian, and English, and institutionalized artistic instruction at the professional level.[7] Burckhardt's writings are firmly grounded in this humanist model of culture. Yet his inclusion of popular culture to characterize the Italian national spirit in the early modern period, together with his famous characterization of the state as a "work of art," presents a much broader concept of what constitutes a work of art than his predecessors in aesthetic theory had envisioned. The terms of his argument about the state as the product of reflection and deliberation would take us far afield from the present discussion. Yet it is worth noting in the present context that Burckhardt constructed a generalized concept of art by borrowing a metaphor from political theory and analytical philosophy.[8]

The concept that a work of art can be something produced for individual contemplation in any medium or style by any culture or period is even more recent. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Amerindian art was considered only to be of historical interest.[9] Some of Burckhardt's contemporaries challenged existing artistic norms associated with the revival of classical antiquity, being the first to suggest that the entire human race was engaged in the spiritual activity of making "visual art." It has been widely claimed, however, that nineteenth-century art historians and theorists such as Semper, Riegl, and Fiedler (who claimed that a work of art is the product of perception, regardless

of its stylistic conventions) merely naturalized the Renaissance metaphor that art imitates nature. Most of the criticism has come from art historians who, justifiably, point to the untenability of this scheme. Yet they have considered the problems of privileging representational art only within the narrowly circumscribed limits of European art.[10]

In light of all the attention that art historians have paid to the history of our formal categories of art, it is surprising that no one has drawn a connection to the issues raised by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and others, such as Samir Amin, concerned with the history of Eurocentrism. When Burckhardt's conception of the Italian Renaissance first became the "Renaissance problem" in historiography fifty years after the publication of *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, justification for his concept of periodization gravitated to the center of discussion. Then it was argued, largely on the basis of early humanist histories, that Burckhardt's scheme was justified because early humanists like Alberti and Vasari had used metaphors of revival and rebirth to define their historical position as separate from the past.[11] Today Vasari's humanist model of culture should make us ask different questions. Vasari's famous account of the birth of modern art (the "*buona maniera moderna*"), the most complete history written during the Renaissance, follows the established humanist model of historical change as a process of cultural decline and revival: the revival of the ancient art of imitating nature arrested a long decline instigated by "barbarians" who practiced the Byzantine manner (*maniera greca* or *maniera vecchia* "e *non* antichi") in painting and the German manner (*maniera tedesca*) in architecture.[12] No one would wish to dispute the historical influence of Vasari's humanist scheme, or deny the popularity of metaphors of rebirth during the period we still call the Renaissance. What counts as historical truth has, however, shifted considerably since the first contributions to the "Renaissance problem" nearly a century ago.

Vasari's praise of Italian artists at the expense of "barbarian" others could once be unselfconsciously used as evidence justifying the concept of periodization. Gates and other critics like Edward Said have charged that contemporary scholarship keeps itself pure by not taking certain kinds of contexts into account.[13] Said himself has been criticized for imposing his own binary oppositions (such as the oversimplistic concept of cultural domination and subordination). Yet his critique of the conflictual self–other relationship embedded in the European construction of the Orient provoked a richly conceived field of theorizing about the complexities of cultural interaction. Writers like Said who adopt the position of the formerly colonized subject are entirely new voices in the discursive space of cultural history writing – and their ongoing contributions are radically changing our understanding.

This collection of essays accepts Said's challenge of examining the assumptions on which "Renaissance" art history is conventionally based, not by rejecting historical schemes like Vasari's *arti del disegno*, but by making the history of our categories part of our subject of study. As the following specialized studies individually and collectively make clear, the mechanisms by which we discern differences in other cultures and the values we attach to these differences are not linked in any stable union. Samir Amin, the author of a leading study on Eurocentrism, defines Eurocentrism as a phenomenon that emerged fully in the nineteenth century.[14] According to its most sophisticated critics, the term Eurocentrism describes a complex set of dominant ideas associated with the rise of modern national identity, colonialism, and capitalism.[15] Said, Amin, and other critics

regard the academic practices they associate with Eurocentrism as misleading because they are based on the flawed assumption that "internal factors peculiar to each society are decisive for their comparative evolution" culminating in the achievements of European civilization.[16] The Renaissance is regularly charged with providing the roots of these nineteenth-century practices.[17] Emerging interest in the institutional history of the discipline is beginning to reintegrate art history into a broader field of discussion centered on issues of methodology.[18] To open a discussion of methodology here is not meant to discredit the vigorous scholarship that goes on within the established perimeters of Renaissance art history, but rather to ask whether the categories into which our discipline is currently subdivided are really well suited to analyzing questions of intercultural exchange – significant historical questions that Said and many others have been pursuing and asking others to pursue in recent years. There already exists an established field of historical study, greatly envigorated by the Columbian Quincentenary, that examines the global expansion of Europe in the early contact period of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. As might be expected, however, historians like Lewis Hanke, John Elliott, Edmundo O'Gorman, Anthony Pagden, and others have grounded their studies in texts, not visual images.[19]

It is not an easy matter to explain why Renaissance art historians have remained isolated from these debates and from interdisciplinary attempts to recognize Eurocentric practices and institute a more pluralistic historical vision. No doubt part of the answer lies with the polarizing effects of the "Eurocentrism" and "western canon" debates themselves. One of the major obstacles to revision is the nationalistic concern at the foundations of the scholarship. Perhaps another partial answer is embedded in our formal procedures of stylistic analysis, which are still closely associated with the typological thinking of the nineteenth century.[20]

Our understanding of Renaissance culture, fundamentally shaped by Burckhardt's study of Italy, has been changed and enriched by generations of debate over his characterization of historical periods, of individuality, of the Middle Ages and, most recently, of his treatment of gender.[21] Yet we still need integrated accounts that allow the disparate voices that have contributed to European conceptions of art to be heard. Parallel accounts that represent the same events from mutually exclusive points of view do not offer this perspective – the narratives presented by Paul Oskar Kristeller and Gates, respectively, can serve as examples. Kristeller examines only the dominant intellectual tradition with its roots in classical antiquity, while Gates dismisses western aesthetic theory out of hand for its racist elements. What are still missing are integrated attempts to define the issues that produced mutually exclusive narratives in the first place.

Gates grimly reminds us that written language, historically speaking, has been a significant, ethnocentric marker of cultural difference: in his revised narrative of aesthetic theory, Kant was the first to posit differences with regard to mental capacities and aesthetic capabilities on the basis of skin color; Hegel added a new feature when he claimed that, because Africans had not mastered the European art of writing languages, they had no history, and what Africans presumably lacked collectively, they also lacked individually: the childlike nature of slaves was due to their absence of memory.[22] Yet written language (*written* in European terms – that is, by means of an alphabetic script) is not the only ethnocentric indication of cultural difference. In the western tradition,

other important criteria have been social organization: that is, forms of government, civil codes and customs, educational system, and artifacts or productions, including ritual and utilitarian objects, drama, music, and dance – what we loosely call art. All of these areas – language, societal organization, and art – have been powerful indexes of humanness. Many of the Eurocentric practices that Gates and others associate with the rise of the slave trade and other economic conditions have a much longer history concerning the respective roles of mental operations such as reasoning, memory, and the imagination in defining humanness. It is well known that during the same period when European painting, sculpture, and architecture first came to be defined as "theoretical" pursuits that depend on intellect and imagination, European images were exported on a global scale and artifacts also entered European collections from other parts of the world. These circumstances provided a particularly rich setting for the development of new cultural boundaries (inside and outside Europe) in which artistic production played an important role. We are, however, only beginning to formulate strategies for studying the contribution of fluctuating sixteenth-century senses of "art" to later ideas about cultural identity and aesthetic sensibility.[23]

The essays in this volume suggest some avenues for undercutting anachronistic cultural and aesthetic boundaries that interfere with our ability to see the complexity of artistic interactions during the sixteenth century. The history of the category "work of art" is a significant part of our subject of inquiry. Considered as a whole, this volume "reframes" the geographical, cultural, chronological, and conceptual boundaries of the Renaissance as it is usually defined. Part of the challenge of redefining the Renaissance in terms of cultural interaction is the manner in which newly emerging nations in the nineteenth century imagined themselves as antique. Why, asks Benedict Anderson, "[was] supposing 'antiquity' at a certain historical juncture, the necessary consequence of novelty?" – why should awareness of a radically changed form of consciousness in the nineteenth century lead to the construction of a "nationalist memory" reaching back in time?[24] Utilizing a "double vision" – to borrow a term from Joan Kelly – our essays individually and collectively look "inside" *and* "outside" the frameworks traditionally associated with the Renaissance.[25] The "inside and outside" that the problem of "national identity" poses for the study of Renaissance art is this: the history of the concept of national identity emerged along with the history that national identity frames. Considering nationalism in this light, scholars have helped to construct the modern idea of a nation as an enduring collective. A significant aspect of the problem of nationalism for historians of Renaissance culture, therefore, is to take into account the role of scholars who produced histories of "national culture."

Theorizing Cultural Interaction

The 1990–92 seasons offered an unprecedented number of museum exhibitions concerned with the early phase of European expansionism in a revisionist framework. Blockbuster exhibition formats were both diachronic (the "splendors" of Mexico spanned thirty centuries) and synchronic (the theme "1492" suggested reasons to survey artistic production around the globe).[26] As even the most spectacular of these exhibitions

demonstrated, however, political and ideological issues that had been on the table of discussion in other fields, such as history, anthropology, literary and film criticism, for two and three decades have not made a major impact on museum practice. It is worth pondering the negative implications of a display strategy, conventionally regarded as neutral, for exhibitions which claim to represent all cultures on equal footing. To give just one example, for the sake of introducing broader methodological concerns, cultural bias on what might be called the performative level of *Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration*, organized at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., becomes apparent when we compare the presentation of the Asian section with the European Renaissance section of the same exhibition. The selection and presentation of the European objects invited specific visual comparisons from the audience – an audience informed, moreover, by text panels giving the public access to the specialized scholarship in the catalogue. The Chinese objects, however, displayed in the manner of many older museums of Asian art, were encased in large glass vitrines accompanied by the barest of labels, leaving viewers uninformed about the original cultural significance of the diverse materials gathered for aesthetic contemplation.[27]

I do not wish to lay blame for standard museum practices at the feet of any individual, or to deny the extraordinary visual experience that *Circa 1492* and other Quincentennial exhibitions presented, nor to discount the important scholarly contribution that these exhibitions and their monumental catalogues made. My point is that there is a pressing need to revise disciplinary practices at a fundamental, epistemological level. The shortcoming of the collaboration among different subdisciplines of art history (or rather, lack of *real* collaboration) for *Circa 1492* as a whole was that it encouraged viewing practices rooted in European cultural imperialism. For did not American viewers learn a great deal about Renaissance Europe, about which they were already relatively well informed, while the decontextualized presentation of objects categorized by national culture as "Chinese" reinforced longstanding stereotypes of the exotic east in western eyes?

These problematic ideological implications were not lost on reviewers – even those as different from one another as Simon Schama and Homi Bhabha registered similar responses to the exhibition.[28] Bhabha charged that the major narrative message, namely the creation of a global culture around 1492, while it avoided the idea of progress by presenting a horizontal survey, failed to develop a "useful critical response" to cultural difference.[29] Cultural parallelism as an exhibition strategy, Bhabha elaborated, promotes "spectatorship" and, therefore, the parallels begin to look "distinctly circular" when they are framed within a relatively uncomplicated western aesthetic realm. Why, he asked, has this exhibition failed to problematize the notion of the human?

Schama reached a similar conclusion concerning the failure of the exhibition to theorize cultural interaction: he charged the National Gallery exhibition organizers with refusing to consider the phenomenon of Columbus and the historical experience of his four voyages as a European encounter with other cultures.[30] It is now commonplace, chided Schama, that many syncretistic societies "have managed to mutate into forms that reflect the possibility of a shared historical evolution," so why could the *mingling of destinies* not have been the focus of more Columbian commemoratives?[31]

These are good questions – but they have no ready answers. In the terms used by Thomas Kuhn to discuss the nature of scientific revolution, we find ourselves writing at

a time when our inherited paradigms cannot be taken for granted because they do not seem to assimilate the phenomena that need explanation.[32] Some readers may disagree, but I think that the activity of paradigm formation does not usually fall to large museums, which always have to please their sponsors by pleasing the public, or to reviewers whose suggestions, however insightful, are still limited to a few pages of criticism on someone else's project. Scholars conceiving of research programs, on the other hand, have the academic freedom (at least in theory) and the intellectual responsibility to assess, revise, and propose paradigms – those fundamental intellectual armatures that determine what data to seek and how to organize the material on which conclusions are based.

What would the questions posed by Schama, Bhabha, and other critics sound like if art historians were providing extended answers? *Reframing the Renaissance* takes up the challenge of *theorizing* the human complexity of visual culture during the initial period of extensive interaction on a global scale. As editor, I initially framed the main areas of inquiry around epistemological issues raised by changing definitions and functions of art in the last four centuries. The conceptual skeleton of the volume was greatly enriched by ongoing exchanges with *all* the collaborators, who raised many more issues, grounded in diverse kinds of historical evidence. The wide variety of our interests and critical approaches allows *Reframing the Renaissance* to sustain a broad metacritical perspective *and* simultaneously to present a rich body of primary source material.

What would the history of Renaissance art look like if cultural interaction and exchange, and the conditions of reception, became our primary concerns? How can we change our existing paradigm to define this new puzzle? These are the overriding questions that circulate throughout the individual essays. Acknowledging the difference between the actual effects of emerging nationalistic practices and idealized European notions of cultural integrity and discreteness is central to the revisionist enterprise of *Reframing the Renaissance*. To historians of art – and especially to historians of Renaissance art – I hope that the organization of the volume appears as a systematic attempt to reground the discipline in the historical circumstances of its own making. Yet I do not want to make unjustified claims for the unity of what is, after all, an anthology. This volume is still an eclectic representation of the shifting of fields and frameworks that are currently under way in a number of academic disciplines. The format of an anthology is well suited to our interdisciplinary effort of reconceptualizing the Renaissance because anthologies, by their nature, avoid the impression of a unified narrative. At this preliminary stage of defining new analytical categories, it would be misleading to claim that the specialized papers included in this volume frame all the significant issues.

Visible symbols are prominent indicators of cultural identity yet, as Francis Haskell emphasized in *History and its Images*, it is notoriously difficult to establish the value of art as historical evidence. A potentially important contribution that this volume hopes to make to interdisciplinary discussions about cultural interaction grows out of the authors' overriding concern with interpretations of visual representation. In the following section of the Introduction I have tried to suggest how the contributors' shared interest in methodology intersects conceptually with the book's focus on the migration and reception of visual culture, by drawing a concrete example from my own research.

The Grotesque in the Mirror of European Theories of the Imagination

From the mid fourteenth to the mid seventeenth century – the period broadly designated by the term Renaissance – as painting, sculpture, and architecture "rose" from their medieval association with the mechanical arts and productive sciences, they became associated with other theoretical branches of knowledge, such as optics, anatomy, and the arts of discourse.[33] Whether the "nobility" of painting and the other two *arti del disegno*, sculpture and architecture, depended on their association with the mathematical sciences or with letters, however, their intellectualization was granted by a neo-Aristotelian model of cognition that privileges the role of vision above all the other special senses. In the course of the Renaissance, European writers put increasing emphasis on the distinctly human ability to think abstractly and to involve the visualizing powers of sight in combination with the imagination in the process of gaining a rational understanding of the created world and revealed knowledge of God.[34]

Transformations in a neo-Aristotelian theory of the imagination that granted increasingly rational powers to the artist's mental deliberations, together with the classification of human knowledge in a hierarchical scheme that had always subordinated fiction and fantasy to rational thought and divine revelation, are two very important factors in the historical notion of a hierarchy of the arts. Renaissance painting, sculpture, and architecture – defined as theoretically grounded pursuits associated with poetry or perspective, or both, and based on experience – provided the normative standards against which nonwestern cultural products were measured by Europeans for hundreds of years.

It is important to bear in mind that the word art did not yet mean what it does today. In the sixteenth century, art most often signified skill, as defined by the rhetorical tradition, or procedures, and as such it was the equivalent of terms like method or compendium.[35] Both skill and procedures were associated with artists' mental activity, their ability to invent new things out of their imaginations. The evolving definition of art is only one thread in a complex weave of changing attitudes towards human knowledge during this period, but perhaps a concrete example can clarify the negative implications glimpsed in the new sixteenth-century understanding of art for non-European cultures. To anticipate a point raised by W. J. T. Mitchell in the Epilogue about the relevance of an African spoon to the Sistine Ceiling, what would have been the appeal for European audiences of the late fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century ivory Sapi–Portuguese saltcellar with an Italian provenance reproduced in the Frontispiece?

Certainly, a sixteenth-century Italian (or any humanist) collector would have appreciated this magnificent object, commissioned from Sapi artists by Portuguese traders, for its precious material, skillful carving, and especially the figures as products of the artist's fertile imagination. But at the same time, the figures' elongated proportions and disproportionately large heads may have signified the artist's deficient knowledge of anatomy and ignorance of classicizing principles of proportion. Consequently, the maker of this object, should the Sapi carver's identity have been considered at all, might have been characterized as possessing an active but irrational imagination, unaccompanied by the rational powers exemplified in contemporary Italian and Italianate productions, where evidence of scientific knowledge in anatomy and perspective was manifested in the work.

For European audiences, the value of African–Portuguese ivories and similar objects

might even have diminished had the amusing, grotesquely proportioned figures (amusing and grotesque in European eyes, that is) become vehicles of crosscultural communication instead of decontextualized signs of otherness and of universal artistic ingenuity. For the native inhabitants of Sierra Leone, as Suzanne Blier has recently shown, such carved images belonged to an entirely different conceptual framework.[36] The large seated figure at the top, despite its negroid physiognomy, was probably meant to represent an ancestral spirit incarnated in the form of a Portuguese trader (since both were white in the Sapi imaginary), made by artists who may not have had access to a living Portuguese model. The function of this hybrid object as a container of salt was foreign to the Sapi culture, but the severed heads and the main figure's seated position can be connected specifically with Sapi burial traditions. By contrast, the same scene is likely to have encouraged European fantasies of decapitation and cannibalism among "savages" – to judge from the popularity of such stories in sixteenth-century travel literature. Sensationalizing fantasies may even have prompted the commission of the object, although we are likely never to know because no records survive. This lack of documentation – which is characteristic of the entire class of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century African–Portuguese ivories – further suggests that these hybrid cultural products were valued primarily as exotic collectors' items, not as representations of Sapi beliefs, by the Europeans who sought them and assimilated them to their own frames of reference.

Taking part in a complex cultural exchange, exotic objects did not carry just one set of connotative meanings. A wide range of artifacts, regardless of their origins, may have evoked similar responses from European audiences. It seems to me that we have not considered the complex discursive field about artistic invention that may have encouraged such generalizations. The artifice of any work of art was most often evaluated as part of a contest between nature and art but, whatever the narrative framework, the artist's invention was always conceptually conjoined with the needs of both the subject and the particular viewing audience. In this three-way relationship among subject, artist, and audience, the intentions of the artificer were considered manifest in the work of art.[37]

That is, as early as the sixteenth century (and much earlier, in fact), European viewers thought it was possible to read the mentality of the artist out of his artistic productions. Artistic invention, conceived in sixteenth-century terms as any kind of artifice invented by the artist, is a historical, culturally specific category for assessing the epistemological status of a work of art as well as its maker. *Grotteschi* – the word refers literally to a kind of pictorial embellishment composed of playful, monstrous figures in ancient painting and architectural ornament – had long been associated with the active powers of the imagination. In the circle of Michelangelo, *grotteschi* were regarded as emblematic of the procedure of invention in architecture, where the parts are composed in a way not to be found in nature.[38] Such compounds, according to Vincenzo Danti, define an entirely new genius of the art of design, separate from painting, sculpture, and architecture, the arts that can "imitate or truly portray all things that can be seen."[39]

Grotteschi and similar artistic inventions signified in a doublehanded way, however. On one hand, they stood for artists' freedom and capacity to invent images out of their imaginations that nature could never create; on the other hand, and for the same reasons, *grotteschi* were associated with irrational mental activity, the active imagination unrestrained by human reason. The centrality of pure artifice to discussions of artistic

invention is suggested by the circumstance that in 1563 the Council of Trent adopted a theory of images which effectively censured all unnecessary embellishments in sacred images.[40] The religious decorum of sacred images decreed by the post-Tridentine Church redirected previous appreciations of artistic license: too much artistic freedom manifested as too great a display of art was perceived as a threat to ecclesiastical authority. Reformed styles of optical naturalism were often considered outward signs of the truth-telling power of images.[41]

In the sober religious climate of the latter part of the sixteenth century, the subject of *grotteschi* gravitated to the center of discussions about art in Italy.[42] Under pressure to justify and reform devotional practices, writers who once might have praised *grotteschi*, *capricii*, and other pure *fantasie* as inventions intended solely to delight and amaze the viewer, emphasized other possibilities in the age-old European contrast between the fictions of human imagination and the mysteries of divine revelation. One interesting exchange which suggests that non-European objects directly affected these considerations took place in 1582 between Archbishop Gabriele Paleotti, author of a famous treatise to reform contemporary painting (discussed in another context in Chapter 6 of this volume by Pamela Jones), and his close friend Ulisse Aldrovandi, renowned natural scientist and collector of American material, a professor at the University of Bologna.[43] Paleotti's discussion of *grotteschi* (some fifty pages in the modern edition of his treatise) points to a crisis in representation that led to the creation of new cultural boundaries and new discussions of art.

In observing how old categories stretched to fit new situations, we can begin to understand how non-European art may have contributed to theoretical and critical discussions of western art which never directly mentioned their existence. Paleotti and Aldrovandi cast their discussions of *grotteschi* in terms of the Platonic problem of distinguishing between truth and the semblance of truth in artistic representations.[44] Their greatest challenge lay in defining the limits of artistic license, based on the premise that capricious fantasies which have no counterpart in the real world are inadmissable. But what if the capricious fictions of poets and painters actually existed? How is one to distinguish between inappropriate fantastic *grotteschi* and such virtuous naturalistic representations, visually or ontologically? The standard authorities Paleotti summoned to define inappropriate ornament could not have imagined the world that the prelate faced at the end of the sixteenth century. Paleotti, apparently heeding Aldrovandi's arguments, tried to make room for representations that *could* be capricious fantasies, but should *not* be considered as such because they actually *do* exist in nature.[45]

The exchange of ideas about *grotteschi* and other *capricii* in Italy further suggests how unclassicizing images, regardless of their origin or significance for the cultures that produced them, became emblematic of the opposition built into the western definition of image as likeness. It is difficult to imagine that Aldrovandi's material collection of American artifacts and natural specimens did not contribute substantially to Paleotti's theoretical considerations. Aldrovandi countered Paleotti's arguments by offering that the painter, out of scientific necessity to document objects, like those in his own collection, sometimes employs vivid colors and other forms of artifice (that the Council of Trent explicitly rejected for their "sensuous charm"). These visual documents contribute to human knowledge, *sometimes they even revise written authority*.[46] The ideas that Paleotti and

Aldrovandi exchanged about the nature of representation, while exceptional in providing historians with direct connections between Amerindian artifacts and theoretical discussions of art in Italy, were not unique. These and many other such conduits of cultural transmission that wait to be assessed suggest that non-European art played an important role in the construction of European conceptions of the perception of art.[47] For texts can document how exotic objects, regardless of their cultural origins, resonated for European cultures in similar ways.

Visual homologies made it easy to project ideas specific to one culture on to another, as many of the contributors to this volume elaborate. Anthony Pagden has named the mechanism for translating varieties of experience under these circumstances in literary texts the "principle of attachment" that leads to (mis)recognition.[48] In the process of detaching a motif from its original cultural context, Pagden explains, expropriation also encourages positive belief in a universal category of humanity. At present, we need to learn more about the various ways that the so-called visual arts have contributed to this complex process of collective identity formation.

The term "hybrid image" used throughout this study to designate certain types of culturally complex objects is indebted to contemporary colonial discourse analysis. Homi Bhabha, who has developed a concept of hybridity as a "problematic of colonial representation," maintains that, when the colonial subject mimics the forms of the dominant culture, the resulting hybrid forms introduce slippages and excesses of meaning.[49] The doubled form or hybrid repeats the fixed and empty presence of authority by articulating it with differential knowledges and positionalities that take the form of multiple or contradictory beliefs.[50] These hybrids pose a threat to "normalized" knowledge and disciplinary power.[51] Bhabha shifts the study of cultural interaction away from deterministic frameworks of interpretation, and the discussions of hybrid images in this volume are indebted to his model. Yet there are also problems with Bhabha's description of cultural authority. Historically, hybridity is far from being a neutral concept. The possible effects of human hybridization were debated at length by nineteenth-century racial theorists.[52] The overdetermined language of polygenism is inscribed (inadvertently, to be sure) in Bhabha's negative view that the "mutation" (i.e., the hybrid) "weakens" and "deforms" cultural authority. The studies of hybrid images which follow here do not take issue with Bhabha's underlying critique of cultural *authority*, but they focus on a different problem: this collection of essays stresses the ability of the hybrid to revise and envigorate cultural *identity*. Consequently, our understanding of "hybridity" is different. To restate this difference in the nineteenth-century language of racial theory, the anti-evolutionist anthropologist Franz Boas introduced the concept of fertile hybridization at the turn of the twentieth century.[53] Fertile hybrid images, accordingly, produce a surplus of meanings – that is, the same image can be interpreted in multiple ways and no single interpretation is authoritative, just as is the case in Bhabha's model of hybridity – but they exemplify the notion of culture as a constantly emerging form of collective identity, always in a state of transformation. A hydraulic metaphor can illustrate the difference between the two representations of culture, Bhabha's critique of cultural *authority* and our critique of existing models of cultural *identity*: univocal authority is emptied out by hybridity, identity is overflowing for the same reason – it is multiple and contradictory.[54]

Critical Studies in the Migration and Reception of Visual Culture

A responsible history of the dramatic transformation in the status of painting, sculpture, and architecture in the early modern period – and a better understanding of why the arts were hierarchically classified at all – must take many factors into account: the formation of critical literary practices, the rise of academic artistic theory and training, the emergence of aesthetic theory, the institutionalization and professionalization of the discipline of art history, the origins of museums and the history of collecting, the changing function of images – from devotional icons, for example, to objects of aesthetic contemplation. As anthropologist James Clifford observes, the corpus of texts we produce and reproduce about culture constitutes what we call culture.[55] The following studies, some reconstructing forgotten European frameworks for the reception of visual culture, others reconstructing the contributions of dispossessed indigenous cultures to composite collective identities, acknowledge the powerful assimilative mechanisms of individuals and cultures. These mechanisms, Stephen Greenblatt quips, "work like enzymes to change the ideological composition of foreign bodies."[56] Our model of diversity is based less on autonomy and cultural "purity" and more on interrelations and the zones of contact and intersection.[57] The following subsections of the Introduction briefly introduce the principal arguments of the contributors and set them into the conceptual framework of the volume.

New Problems, New Paradigms: Revising the Humanist Model

The three historiographical contributions to this section continue the line of inquiry begun in the Introduction by addressing the manner in which Italian Renaissance art came to occupy a normative role in the history of art. The authors stress that the humanist model of cultural opposition was applied to a wide variety of historical situations. Anthony Cutler leads off with an examination of the humanist model of cultural opposition that made Byzantium into Europe's inferior other over a four-hundred year period of historical writing. In Chapter 1, "The Pathos of Distance: Byzantium in the Gaze of Renaissance Europe and Modern Scholarship," Cutler criticizes the attempt to treat the orthodox Christian East as emerging from the same classical mold as the "West," because this interpretative framework, initiated by early humanist writers, does not evaluate Byzantine culture on its own terms. Judging Byzantine cultural products by Renaissance standards has emphasized factors of minor significance over matters of central importance to Byzantium. Cutler calls for a better interpretative model, one that scrutinizes the "liminal position" attributed to qualities of Byzantine art that do *not* fit the classical mold.

The construction of East and West as antithetical subjects was considerably assisted by the process Cutler describes. What justifies this crude binarism today? The presence of Byzantine art in Europe, especially in Italy, is considerable. The contribution of Byzantine art (and Byzantine theories of images) to European art and western aesthetics urgently demands reexamination in light of the obvious fact that, when Italian humanist writers and artists associated themselves directly with their ancient Greco-Roman roots

(hence the term "Renaissance"), they neglected to mention prolonged cultural interactions with Byzantium (and elsewhere) that had taken, and continued to take, place on home soil.

Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann makes a similar case for the manner in which the humanist model of cultural opposition has affected studies of Renaissance style outside Italy. In Chapter 2, "Italian Sculptors and Sculpture Outside of Italy (Chiefly in Central Europe): Problems of Approach, Possibilities of Reception," Kaufmann argues that the transformations of Renaissance style in central Europe and elsewhere outside Italy have been inadequately conceptualized, above all due to the nationalist interests of (initially, mostly German) art historians. Kaufmann presents evidence of similar transformations of Italianate forms that occurred in places widely separated by geography and culture. He proposes a modern anthropological model to track the diffusion of these forms through interaction and circulation, and to account for the mediating conditions of active reception, even rejection, of the imported style in differing local circumstances.

My own contribution, Chapter 3, "'Vision Itself Has Its Own History': 'Race,' Nation, and Renaissance Art History," also examines nationalistic categories constructed by nineteenth-century German-speaking art historians, but the focus of this study is the paradigmatic role played by Renaissance art in theories of artistic change. The argument develops the premise that Wölfflin, Riegl, and other art historians participated in an interdisciplinary dialogue centered on racial theories of cultural evolution that was disrupted by two world wars; in the interim, in the increasingly hostile nationalistic climate of social democracy, Panofsky and his peers reinstituted the Enlightenment concept of humanist culture that their immediate predecessors like Riegl questioned. By neglecting the broader cultural context in which theories of artistic change developed, we inadvertently reproduce the nationalistic biases of our predecessors without understanding that their arguments were meant to counter prevailing ethnocentric assumptions of the day.

The next section of *Reframing the Renaissance* turns to the primary evidence for the function, reception, and power of specific kinds of visual representations in the sixteenth century.

Renaissance Theories of the Image

Sixteenth-century European appreciations of naturalistic images are grounded in an Aristotelian theory of the imagination which holds that the mind transforms sense impressions into internal images which are stored in the memory and become the basis for higher forms of thought.[58] The next five essays deal with the reception of various kinds of naturalistic images in the sixteenth century. All the authors emphasize that lifelike images were thought to be powerful mnemonic tools working on the imagination.

Since Burckhardt associated the Renaissance with the revival of optical naturalism culminating in Raphael's late work, it is only fitting to open this section with a reassessment of Raphael's pivotal role in defining Renaissance classicism. Janis Bell, in Chapter 4, "Revisioning Raphael as a 'Scientific Painter,'" compares four centuries of

Raphael criticism, arguing that modern aesthetic appreciations of classical style, cast in term of its formal order, are symptomatic of an epistemological break with Aristotelian theories of images that emerged in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Our understanding of naturalism should encompass a range of meaning consistent with its earlier historical use because (here Bell draws conclusions similar to Cutler and Kaufmann) visual qualities that fit the nineteenth-century stereotype of classicism overemphasize certain qualities while neglecting the scientific innovations in Raphael's treatment of color, shadow, and atmospheric effects – visual effects that find support in recent physiological theories of perception.

The next two essays, by Alessandro Nova and Pamela Jones, examine ways in which "aesthetic" response (i.e., an appeal to the mind through the senses) was incorporated into sixteenth-century religious practices in Italy. In complementary studies dealing with institutional attitudes towards sacred images in Italy, both authors indicate that the modern category of "high art" is inadequate to circumscribe the functions of sixteenth-century images because our secular approach to style has obscured the manner in which naturalistic detail in devotional images was intended to elicit emotional reponses from the viewer. Their researches corroborate Cutler's view (in Chapter 1) that the kind of relationship between viewer and the Divine established through the medium of the icon indicates *fundamental* cultural differences.

In the western Church, contact with the Divine is mediated through human intercessors. Nova's Chapter 5, "'Popular' Art in Renaissance Italy: Early Response to the Holy Mountain at Varallo," studies documentation for the late fifteenth-century reconstruction of Jerusalem at Monte Varallo in the Piedmont, founded by the Franciscan Observants and a popular pilgrimage site throughout the sixteenth century. The narrative tableaux at Varallo featured lifesize figures embellished with "real" details such as actual hair, clothing, furniture, and candles that are conventionally regarded today as appealing to an uneducated audience. This interpetation, Nova argues, does not explain why Sacro Monte was patronized by a fashionable, sophisticated Milanese aristocracy. Current scholarship is missing the main point: pilgrimage sites document a sixteenth-century form of material culture that offered a participatory religious experience to all ranks of society, regardless of taste and education.

Nova cites the early sixteenth-century humanist Girolamo Morone's enthusiastic remark that the dramatic episodes at Varallo were completely artless (made "without art"). Does this mean that period writers could consider veristic representations in general to be artless, or that posed figures clothed with actual clothing and hair were "artless" in a way that painted representations could never be? Based on a close reading of the textual and material evidence for Varallo, Nova concludes the latter; but the following chapter, which examines slightly later statements about *painting*, makes one suspect that deeper issues about the nature of imitation were routinely implicated in sixteenth-century discussions of "art." Our modern, secular readings of Renaissance discussions of lifelikeness in art need to be reconsidered carefully in light of the function of religious images. What constitutes the effective imitation of a living, divine presence was *always* a highly charged issue for the Church implicating both artist and audience – long before the Council of Trent in 1563 tried to legislate what kinds of artistic license exceeded the limits of religious decorum.

Pamela Jones' essay, Chapter 6, entitled "Art Theory as Ideology: Gabriele Paleotti's Hierarchical Notion of Painting's Universality and Reception," is significant for documenting the emergence of consciously aestheticizing attitudes and a hierarchy of viewing practices based on education (and, therefore, on class). In the tense atmosphere of discussion about the limitations of artistic license after 1563, a central problem that preoccupied Paleotti in his widely disseminated *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images* (Italian edition, 1582; Latin edition, 1594) was how to justify aesthetic enjoyment of landscape and other non-religious elements. He argued that elite viewers, unlike the uneducated masses, would not be seduced by artistic embellishments designed to delight the senses. To what extent, Jones wants to know, did post-Tridentine theories of the image succeed in creating a category of designated "illiterate persons" at the bottom of the viewing hierarchy, a hierarchy that might have assimilated laborers, peasants, women, and perhaps all the native inhabitants of "new worlds," in a single category?

Styles of scientific naturalism were intended to communicate with viewers through the supposedly universal language of sight. But the actual reception of naturalistic images outside Italy presents a very different view of the negotiations circulating among patron, artist, and viewer in the early colonial period. The last two studies of this section, by Pauline Watts and Thomas Cummins, cross disciplinary, geographical, and cultural boundaries to ask how the same European theories of images were translated to Latin America. Both authors examine records of crosscultural exchanges by exploring the translation of classical and Christian values in Latin America at a time when visual communication was considered an absolutely necessary instrument to overcome the language barrier. In Chapter 7, "Languages of Gesture in Sixteenth-Century Mexico: Some Antecedents and Transmutations," Watts discusses a wide range of colonial texts to reconstruct performative aspects of a purportedly universal language of gesture and expression grounded in classical/Christian rhetorical theory. She finds that the negotiated Christianities of state spectacle and religious drama record an active process of indigenous reception and strong indications of European phobic reaction to native ritual customs.

Like Watts, Cummins investigates how the mimetic aspects of images with mnemonic functions were used to correlate two unrelated cultures. Chapter 8, "From Lies to Truth: Colonial Ekphrasis and the Act of Crosscultural Translation," examines primary source material for slippages between the western sign and its colonial significance. The single common thread among all the categories of visual evidence that Cummins examines – including indigenous colonial paintings used in legal cases and Mexican pictorial manuscripts – is unexpected: Cummins finds that, *regardless* of their conventions of representation, colonial images were judged to contain truthful information if they gave evidence of a prior oral dialogue.

It could be argued further that Mexican calendrical illustrations were judged to contain "truthful" information because astronomical calculations had scientific status in Europe. To state this in the broader terms of Cummins' argument, the relationship of the Mexican calendrical diagrams to prior evidence, and the relationship between the legal pictorial evidence and prior testimony, are based on the same assumption of demonstrability. Indeed, Cummins speculates that the mestizo writer Diego Valadés discussed the reliability of the Mexican calendar in his *Rhetorica Christiana* (1579), written in Rome and published three years before the institution of the Gregorian calendar, as an inten-

tional allusion to the impending reform. In other words, Valadés defended the truth value of Mexican images in terms that could be recognized by Europeans. In this process of cultural exchange, Nahua pictorial traditons were resituated in a European frame of reference.

Early Collecting Practices

The third section continues to examine the construction of new epistemological categories and the tearing down of old ones as people and things migrated on an unprecedented scale. A rapidly growing field of publications on the history of collecting suggests that private museums constitute a distinct form of documentary culture that preserves a rich font of under-utilized information about the contributions that non-European cultures made to European conceptions of the visual arts.[59] The three essays included here discuss the theories that supported the practice of collecting in some unusual areas. The objects considered occupy a liminal position in the history of the visual arts in that they were initially sources of sensual and intellectual delight for European audiences, but were later excluded from the aesthetic systematization of the fine arts. Even the present great interest in the early history of collecting tends to marginalize these early collecting activities, treating the objects as mere curiosities of the "minor arts" or relegating them to the history of science – thus reproducing eighteenth- and nineteenth-century aesthetic categories and viewing practices that are anachronistically applied to the material under consideration.

One of the dominant themes to emerge from the three studies included here is the central role played by the Aristotelian parallel between nature and art across a broad spectrum of collecting activities. Martin Kemp, in Chapter 9, "'Wrought by no Artist's Hand': The Natural, the Artificial, the Exotic, and the Scientific in some Artifacts from the Renaissance," emphasizes the inadequacy of any *rigid* system of classification to account for contemporary motivations behind the making and viewing of objects. From his study of virtuoso examples of human craftsmanship that incorporate natural objects (such as coconut shells and deer antlers), Kemp argues that these "cultural migrators" intentionally defied stable classification and interpretation of meaning. As Kemp discusses hybrids of nature and art invented by Wentzel Jamnitzer, Bernard Palissy, and others in the context of the intellectualization of the crafts, he finds that their display pieces were meant to confer status on a wider range of patrons than we usually assume. These objects were originally ordered by princely rulers, university scientists, courtly craftsmen–engineers, even city councils (as the illustration of the Uppsala cabinet in Figure 9.18 attests), who displayed not only their power but also genuine piety before God's magnificent creations.

The process of expropriating objects from cultures sacked and colonized by European conquest, as Claudia Lazzaro and Eloise Quiñones Keber both discuss, also created new ways of thinking about culture. Lazzaro, who takes a semiotic approach to fifteenth- and sixteenth-century images of animals, finds that the display of wild and domestic creatures produced a new category of culture against which the familiar could be defined. In Chapter 10, "Animals as Cultural Signs: A Medici Menagerie in the Grotto at Castello,"

Lazzaro discusses in detail the grotto of Cosimo I de' Medici's garden, begun in 1537 and developed in the 1560s, as a conveyor of political messages beyond its ostensible constructions of humanist allegory. Paradoxically, imported natural specimens functioned (alongside their domestic counterparts) as cultural signs grounded in the humanist revival of classical antiquity: live animals and their pictorial representations were used to symbolize political dominion and power for European rulers in a variety of cultural settings. As sixteenth-century collections of exotica were formed, new information was incorporated within taxonomic frameworks inherited from classical antiquity, which were often stretched beyond recognition in the process. The classical framework of Renaissance culture translated alterity into terms that were in use for centuries.

Kemp and Lazzaro both focus on the European reception of foreign material completely decontextualized from its original cultural context. In Chapter 11, "Collecting Cultures: A Mexican Manuscript in the Vatican Library," Quiñones Keber addresses a different side of the asymmetrical cultural exchange when she examines a highly prized, sixteenth-century illustrated manuscript known as Codex Vaticanus A. This hybrid document preserves the record of a lost Aztec screenfold book as it was copied into a European-style codex and provided with an extensive Italian commentary. In the process of physically reframing the native book format, the compiler of Codex Vaticanus A also framed Aztec culture in European values. Quiñones Keber argues, however, that the codex is more than a record of cultural expropriation because it preserves an anonymous Italian patron's attempt to understand a completely foreign culture. In her view, the failure of this early effort to "get things right" is a good moral lesson for contemporary art historians because it shows how unrealistic it is to aim for a prejudice-free understanding: we always understand the other by analogies to ourselves.

Mediating Images: Developing an Intercultural Perspective

The preceding sections of the anthology as described here have already begun to consider how European artistic ideals fared in the semiologically complex environment of the sixteenth century. The case studies included in the final section of the book are concerned entirely with the multivalent signifying power of hybrid images. Linguists argue that the potentially endless process of reproduction and transformation of meaning in language is arrested by the consensus of a "community of native speakers."[60] One of the most basic problems with the linguistic paradigm of community consensus, however, is its under-conceptualization of what happens when there is no homogeneous audience of native speakers to arrest the potentially endless transformations of meaning. The conditions of reception and the strategies of interpretation are different in each of the following studies, but every case emphasizes that hybrid images signify in multiple, open-ended ways.

Cecelia Klein, like Quiñones Keber, recalibrates traditional techniques of formal and iconographic analysis to detect tensions between coexisting cultures manifested in hybrid colonial objects. Readers can decide whether these two authors really hold mutually exclusive points of view, or whether they focus on different aspects of the same situation. Quiñones Keber emphasizes the *limits* of true cultural exchange (while *praising* an early attempt to overcome ethnocentrism). In Chapter 12, "Wild Woman in Colonial Mexico: An Encounter of European and Aztec Concepts of the Other," Klein emphasizes the *extent* of crosscultural communication (while *criticizing* the ethnocentrism of European missionaries during the early contact period). Klein situates her argument against extreme deconstructionist readings like Stephen Greenblatt's *Marvelous Possessions* which deny the possibility of real epistemological exchanges across the cultural boundaries of completely unrelated societies. This attitude, Klein maintains, is yet another pernicious form of Eurocentrism because it dispenses with any serious attempt to understand the indigenous colonial experience – such writing dismisses the ways that representation actually operates in a colonizing context. Supporting her argument with extensive evidence from both European and Precolumbian sources, Klein documents the native tradition of Cihuacoatl as it converged with European ideas of wanton, demonic women under asymmetrical conditions of cultural exchange. As the Nahua supernatural was progressively forced into a Christian mold, the native Cihuacoatl, patroness of women in childbirth and guarantor of long life and prosperity as well as death, was reshaped in terms meaningful and familiar to Europeans.

The reception of hybrid visual symbols and its implications are also the focus of Dana Leibsohn's study of maps made by native painters in early colonial Mexico. In Chapter 13, "Colony and Cartography: Shifting Signs on Indigenous Maps of New Spain," Leibsohn argues that the ways in which signs are used on indigenous maps – their lack of homogeneity, the accommodation of European signs through doubling and/or substitution, and the resistance to European introductions – never supplied their viewers with an unambiguous image of the actual world. Her study emphasizes the complexity and indeterminacy of ties that bind forms of visual representation and colonial politics. Leibsohn recognizes that the way we read maps and other symbolic representations largely determines what we understand about colonization: yet it is equally important to bear in mind that the transformations of European and indigenous pictorial symbols are only partially sustained by political motives and events.

The extent to which the original conditions of reception can be reconstructed from the surviving documents is also central to Jonathan Riess's examination of the fundamental historical paradigm for the subordination of all other cultures during the Renaissance: the censure of Jews and Muslims within Europe. In Chapter 14, "Luca Signorelli's *Rule of Antichrist* and the Christian Encounter with the Infidel," Riess recovers asymmetrical cultural interactions with the traditional tools of iconographical analysis. This interpretative strategy enables him to draw connections between Signorelli's representation of a usurious Jew in the Cappella Nuova frescoes, Orvieto Cathedral, 1499–1504, and textual evidence of the pro-Spanish, anti-semitic views of Pope Alexander VI. Riess finds that Renaissance humanist culture created false and pernicious ethnic stereotypes – an aspect of Christian humanism that has been elided from previous art historical accounts.

The final essay is a challenging reflection on the manner in which western writers have constructed the human subject. In the Epilogue, entitled "Iconology, Ideology, and Cultural Encounter: Panofsky, Althusser, and the Scene of Recognition," W. J. T. Mitchell examines the process by which social and cultural hierarchies are naturalized by visual regimes. He compares Panofsky's iconological method with Louis Althusser's Marxist critique of ideology by constructing an imaginary encounter between them.

Mitchell finds that the problematic assumption, so familiar to the Renaissance, that there is a universal ("natural") form of representation still haunts us. The closing essay serves as a striking reminder that no interpretative paradigm is universally valid – however universal its claims might be, every theory is the product of specific historical circumstances.

* * *

In opening this collection of essays, I would like to remind our readers of another anthology, one that has been an inspiring model of scholarship for its *in*clusionary tactics. I think I can speak for all of my contributors in hoping that we live up to our chosen namesake at least in this one respect. In the Introduction to *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, editors Margaret Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy Vickers write that:

> Although the representations of Renaissance culture perceived and created in the present volume of essays are by no means complete or in perfect harmony with each other, they do represent a collective effort to see, and talk, across several sets of boundaries. These include the boundaries that inhibit communication between scholars of different generations, different academic disciplines, and different methodological schools within a single discipline.

Reframing the Renaissance also represents a collective effort to bridge generational, disciplinary, and methodological distances. Yet no matter how conscientiously we interrogate the field of our disciplinary knowledge, we still answer to a "finite system of constraints," as Derrida says.[61] It will be easy to criticize our anthology for being too ambitious, for neglecting Spain, over-emphasizing Central Mexico, ignoring the Irish, slighting cultural exchanges within Europe, not dealing with the Reformation – for any number of valid reasons that, as editor, I can defend only by saying, yes, write those chapters! To get stuck in such a debate at all, however, is to misunderstand this volume. It will take more to revise our histories of western art than eliminating an anachronistic term, enlarging the canon, or reducing the complexity of historical events to a few metacategories. Beyond the *objects* of visual culture are historical theories of human agency that the contributors to this volume emphasize throughout – problematic notions of how the human subject has been constructed that have traditionally been written out of the history of art history altogether. It is worth reconsidering whose Renaissance is at the foundation of the discipline. While the official observance of Columbus's landfall has passed, many questions that five hundred years of intensive cultural interaction raise still need to be addressed. The authors of *Reframing the Renaissance* join voices in encouraging our readers to define many additional subjects worthy of study.

PART 1

New Problems, New Paradigms: Revising the Humanist Model