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GRANT KESTER

WINCKELMANN, JOHANN JOACHIM (1717-1768), German archaeologist and art historian. Winckelmann is best known for his *Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Works* (1755) and *History of Ancient Art* (published 1764, though written some years earlier and continually under revision). Celebrated in his own lifetime, he became still more so in cultural retrospect. His place in the development of aesthetics stems largely from that acquired cultural status, namely, as founder of neoclassicism and of systematic art history.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe hailed Winckelmann as the Columbus of a forgotten land. His picture of an ideal antiquity transformed eighteenth-century taste in the visual arts; the clear outlines of "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur" (*edle Einfalt und stille Grösse*; Winckelmann, 1987, pp. 32-33) influenced John Flaxman in England, Jacques-Louis David in France, and many others. In Germany, Winckelmann had an even larger impact on the literary culture. His humanist norm of *Bildung*—self-cultivation, self-development—shaped an entire scholarly and pedagogical tradition effective well into the twentieth century.

Besides this general significance for cultural history, however, Winckelmann may be said more specifically to have

founded art history as a scientific discipline. Although certain aspects of his archaeology were outmoded soon enough, the dominance of Winckelmann's formalist approach may be traced down through Heinrich Wölfflin and Erwin Panofsky. Winckelmann's originality lay not just in his analytic observations of individual works, but also in his shift away from biographical chronicle to conjectures on the system of stylistic forms. More broadly, he went beyond Enlightenment models of political, pragmatic, or "universal" histories to suggest a new, singular conception of history that foreshadowed *Historismus*.

Inspired by Montesquieu, Winckelmann sought to place the arts in geographic, climatic, and above all political perspective. Although later (for prudential reasons) he would play down any republican intent, Winckelmann held that Greek art stemmed from democratic freedom, an idea that found an ideological resonance at the time of the French Revolution. Yet, it is not merely a question of context: Winckelmann casts art in a still more central role, namely, in articulating a particular culture; he thus anticipates the model of "expressive" explanation found in Johann Gottfried von Herder. For Winckelmann, art gave an insight into the "essential" in human society, and supplied the "systematic" angle on history that he thought his special contribution. "I understand the word *history* [*Geschichte*] in the larger sense that it had in the Greek language," he writes, "and my aim is to make an attempt at a system [*eines Lehrgebäudes*]" (1968).

The expressive model displays also a changed attitude to the past: no longer an Enlightenment search for the origins of the present, it sees all cultures as subject to an intrinsic development of growth and decay. "The history of art should teach us its origin, growth, alteration, and fall, together with the various styles of people, periods, and artists, and demonstrate this as far as possible from the remaining works of antiquity" (*ibid.*). Winckelmann's aim was not to diagnose an overall progress or decline—universal history in Enlightenment fashion—but to show how art (preeminently Greek sculpture) develops of its own accord, passing from schematic rigidity through a "high" style still marked by the older abruptness of outline, then to a "beautiful" phase in which all is gracefully rounded off, before degenerating into imitation and pleasing effects. This fourfold pattern of stylistic development configured the history of art from then on. Ironically—and it is hardly the last of Winckelmann's ironies—the Greek Ideal itself is internally split into "high" (or sublime) and properly "beautiful" moments: a duality repeated in Friedrich von Schiller, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and many others.

Winckelmann was the first to historicize art in a thoroughgoing way. At the same time, that achievement remains ambiguous. As Herder noted, Winckelmann retains a normative primacy for the classical Ideal, for metaphysical Beauty in an almost Platonic sense at odds with any histori-

cizing of art (which would judge each culture in its own terms, whether of context or internal development). Alex Potts suggests that to force such inconsistency on Winckelmann verges on anachronism, and that if he did indeed effect a "paradigm change," it was in the proper Kuhnian sense of shifting discussion to new terrain and a different agenda of problems to solve: how to square history with system, empirical observation with formal distinction, norms of taste (in which Winckelmann strongly believed) with variant circumstance (Potts, 1994, p. 24f.). Such aesthetic problems remain part of the "normal science" of history to this day; Winckelmann was merely their originator. It should be no surprise that divergent traditions such as Weimar classicism, Romantic historicism, or Rankean positivism claimed Winckelmann as progenitor.

This procedural resort cannot decide a further ambivalence in Winckelmann, namely, the dialectical chiasmus between history and art; for if Winckelmann *historicized* art, in turn History becomes *aestheticized*—as if it were (in Herder's image) a collection of picture galleries illuminated by the flickering glance of the historian's consciousness. Not only does an aesthetic perspective unify the whole, but it also demands a certain originality in the historian's composing of his account. Hence, the famous set pieces evoking the effect of looking at Laocoön, the Belvedere Apollo, Niobe, and so on: memorably vivid ekphrases in their day as influential as the developmental account in which they were embedded. Further yet, Winckelmann could be regarded as a forerunner of the systematizing of art itself, whereby culture is made in the image of a newly conceptualized "Art": no longer the several "fine arts," but a self-defining normative field. Art no longer appeared under the aegis of the old classicist canon, nor was it merely the object of "cultivated taste." In that sense, Hegel was right to declare (in a passage cited by Walter Pater) that Winckelmann was one of those who had "opened up for the spirit a new organ . . . a new sense for considering art" (Hegel, 1975, p. 63). Hegel notes that this had less influence on the theory of art, though his own account of the "classical Ideal" imitates Winckelmann's *History* verbatim.

If Winckelmann set out to re-create the original, so to speak, a similar dialectic operates in the appeal to "imitation." He writes in the *Reflections*: "The only way for us to become great or, if this be possible, inimitable, is to imitate the ancients" (1987, p. 5). On the face of it, this is more than paradoxical. It figures the Ideal as necessarily absent, value as found only when lost. It is as if Christopher Columbus glimpses his new land of art only (to recall Winckelmann's image at the end of the *History*) in waving tearful farewell to his beloved Greece. Following Jacques Derrida, Michael Fried (1968) calls such doubling of origins "supplemental": it requires a third term—the Renaissance—to give it referential stability, for then retrospective invention is naturalized as cyclical process. That argument could be extended

to the very conception of the Ideal, of a divine yet human beauty: an impossible identity of Idea and corporeal shape that needs adjacent terms such as the high and the derivative style for its postulation. One can more readily speak about imperfection; the fusion of elements in the beautiful style can only be hinted at.

Even Winckelmann's method suggests ambivalence. Having published the *Reflections*, he went on to pen a biting critique under a pseudonym, then rushed to his own philosophical defense. It shows an ironic awareness of conditions of circulation and publicity framing high speculation. Equally, Winckelmann owns up to the conjectural nature of his activity, applying the metaphor of "scaffolding" (*Gerüst*) to his own building practices (1968). Truth and fiction go hand in hand. His appeal to a system linking art and history—akin to a Linnean *systema* (Dilly, 1979, p. 95)—is an empirical construction, testable against the natural world. (Nor, one might add, is this so far from Hegel's understanding of "philosophical" history, beyond pragmatic, particular, or critical modes, but merging epistemological self-awareness with narrative drive; neither thinker is served by charging their constructions with a priori dogmatism.)

A figure caught between eras, Winckelmann today appears more complex than his marmoreal image implies. He is of contemporary interest in at least two further respects, linked to current revision of eighteenth-century studies: gender, and the bourgeois public sphere (*bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit*). First, not only does Winckelmann split the classical Ideal into the sublime and the beautiful, but he genders them in surprising ways. Edmund Burke's association of sublime with male and beauty with female has provoked recent comment. One might compare Winckelmann's suggestion that the "high" Ideal resists and finally overwhelms sensuous embodiment: Potts sees here "an allegory of desire," as if the masculine Idea ravishes the helpless figure of a woman. With the beautiful, by contrast—as in Laocoön's graceful disposition of limbs even in agony—Idea and human (now male) body melt into each other: in this centerpiece, Winckelmann's male gaze longs for a masculine form.

The second area of contemporary interest concerns Winckelmann's venture into the public sphere of civil society, with its journals, reviews, prize essays, and institutionalized conversation. Here, it is notable how he fought to escape not just his poor social origins, but also the usual resort to a functionary's life as secretary, librarian, or academic (he refused university offers) in a Prussia he detested. Opting instead to become a private scholar and intellectual, he concerned himself with the artistic composition and most effective circulation of his own work in a nascent public sphere. One might compare the situation of a predecessor, Anne Claude de Tubières, comte de Caylus, in 1740s France: an aristocrat who moved beyond patronage yet was unable finally to secure a public forum for discussion of values (Crow, 1985, pp. 116–17). Winckelmann was more

successful, even if much of the "conversation" about his neoclassical Ideal was posthumous. Here, too, one should attend to his social ambitions to be part of and even help form a "cultivated" middle class. In this respect, his own homosexuality, hinted at in his charged descriptions of sculpture, reveals a tension between private and public never successfully resolved in Enlightenment, or indeed later, aesthetics.

[See also Art History; Classicism; Herder; and Historicism.]

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MARTIN DONOUGH

WINNICOTT, DONALD WOODS (1896–1971), British pediatrician and psychoanalyst. Noted for his work with children, Winnicott's contribution to aesthetics centers on a developmental theory of culture and on his concept of the "transitional object." His theory of the work of art as cultural object rests on a triadic epistemology: external reality, inner psychic reality, and a "third area" of play and make-believe shared by child and adult (usually the mother). Within that area, the child is inducted into culture. Psychoanalytically considered, the third area is the space within which therapeutic inquiry with children is carried on. It is from observations made during therapy that Winnicott developed his wider theory of art and culture.

In the process of acculturation, the child meets the first "work of art" as a "transitional object"—a blanket, a doll, a teddy bear, or simply a bit of cloth that the child can carry into the space outside the third area. Winnicott observed

children in their early forays away from the mother, carrying the transitional object, as if a bit of maternal protection that allows the child to explore beyond the third area and then return to it. Within the third area, aesthetic-artistic events have their initial creation, for there the child plays a role, engages in imitations, responds to maternal teaching as roles are assumed, exchanged, and analyzed, and narratives are made up. Play with objects is often accompanied by explanations and interpretations.

Winnicott develops his theory of the "potential space" or "third area" in several directions. First, he elaborates Jacques Lacan's description of the child's first mirror of self-recognition by moving back to the earliest experience of the child with the mother. What the baby sees when he or she looks at the mother's face ought not be construed as a mirror experience, but rather something like this: what the mother looks like is related to what the mother sees in the baby. The child's feeling that the child exists depends on how the mother sees the child. This interrelational exchange characterizes externalizations in the case of cultural objects. And thus painting, sculpture, and narrative all are "seen" as they themselves *see*.

Second, works of art express and project as they are perceived and interpreted. That which they come to mean is a function of an interchange in which the object sustains itself against the perceiver's unconscious acts of destruction ("The Mirror-Role of Mother and Family in Child Development," in Winnicott, 1989).

Third, learning to use an object—that is, play in the "third area"—thus exhibits a developmental trajectory that leads to adult creation and use of cultural objects. Stages in development are as follows: (1) subject (child) relates to object; (2) child discovers the object is an independent event, not placed by the subject in the world; (3) subject "destroys" the object (in fantasy); (4) object survives "destruction"; and (5) subject can now use object in a creative way, for example, endow it with character, place it in a narrative context, shape it as an expression of the self ("The Use of an Object and Relating through Identifications," in *ibid.*). This use of the object is the first use of a symbol, for the object becomes the child's "first not-me possession." This symbol "is at the place in space and time where and when the mother is in transition from being . . . merged with the infant and alternatively being experienced as an object to be perceived rather than conceived of" ("The Location of Cultural Experience," in *ibid.*). In so describing the idea of symbol, Winnicott suggests that there is a psychological precondition that enables human beings to become symbol-using beings. The child comes to realize, through an unconscious process of assimilation, that separation in space and time from the mother can be as well union with the mother, now on a level that needs no actual physicality. Winnicott implies that a psychological-cultural development of this kind leads from this realization to adult aesthetic experience