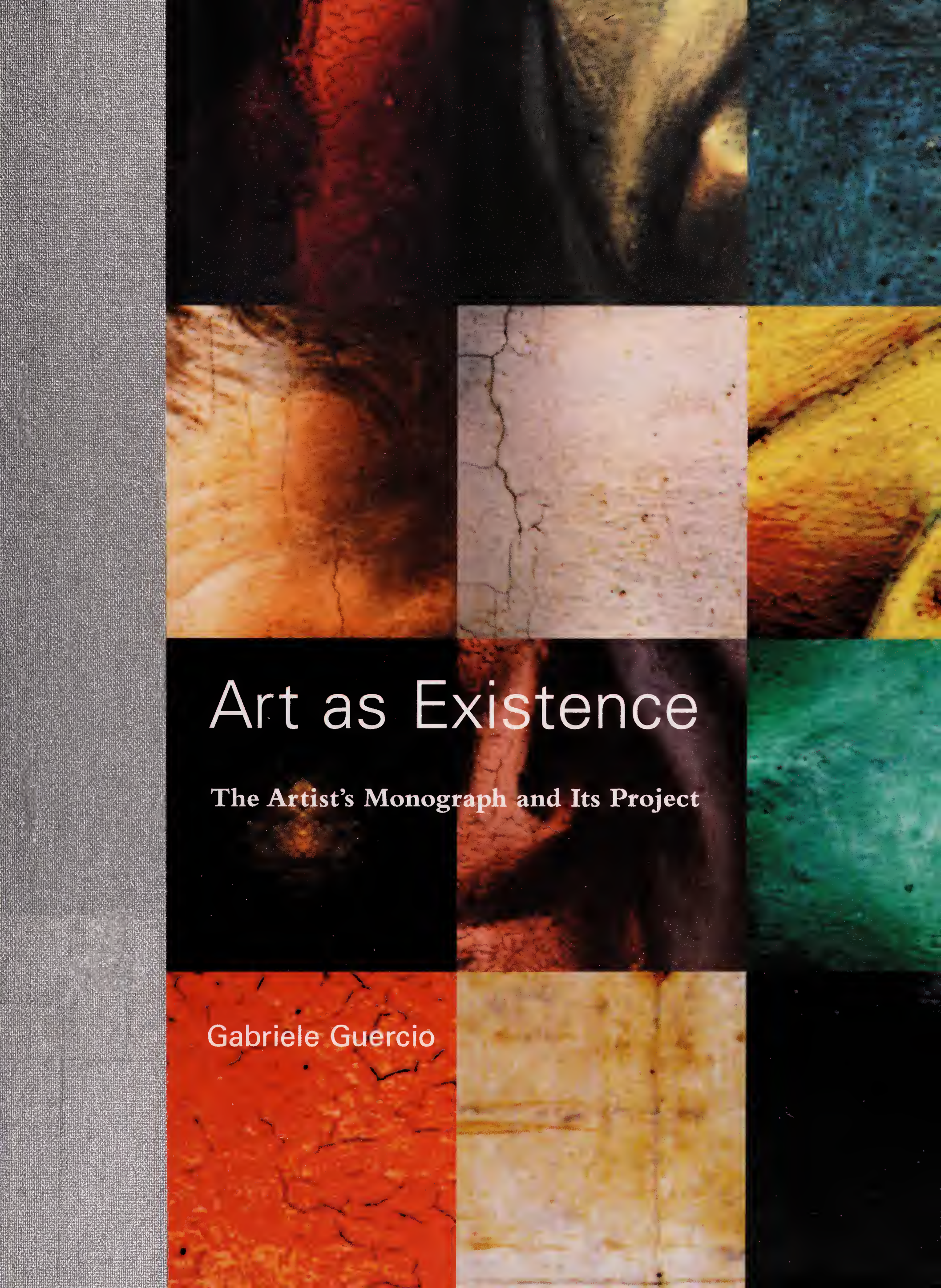


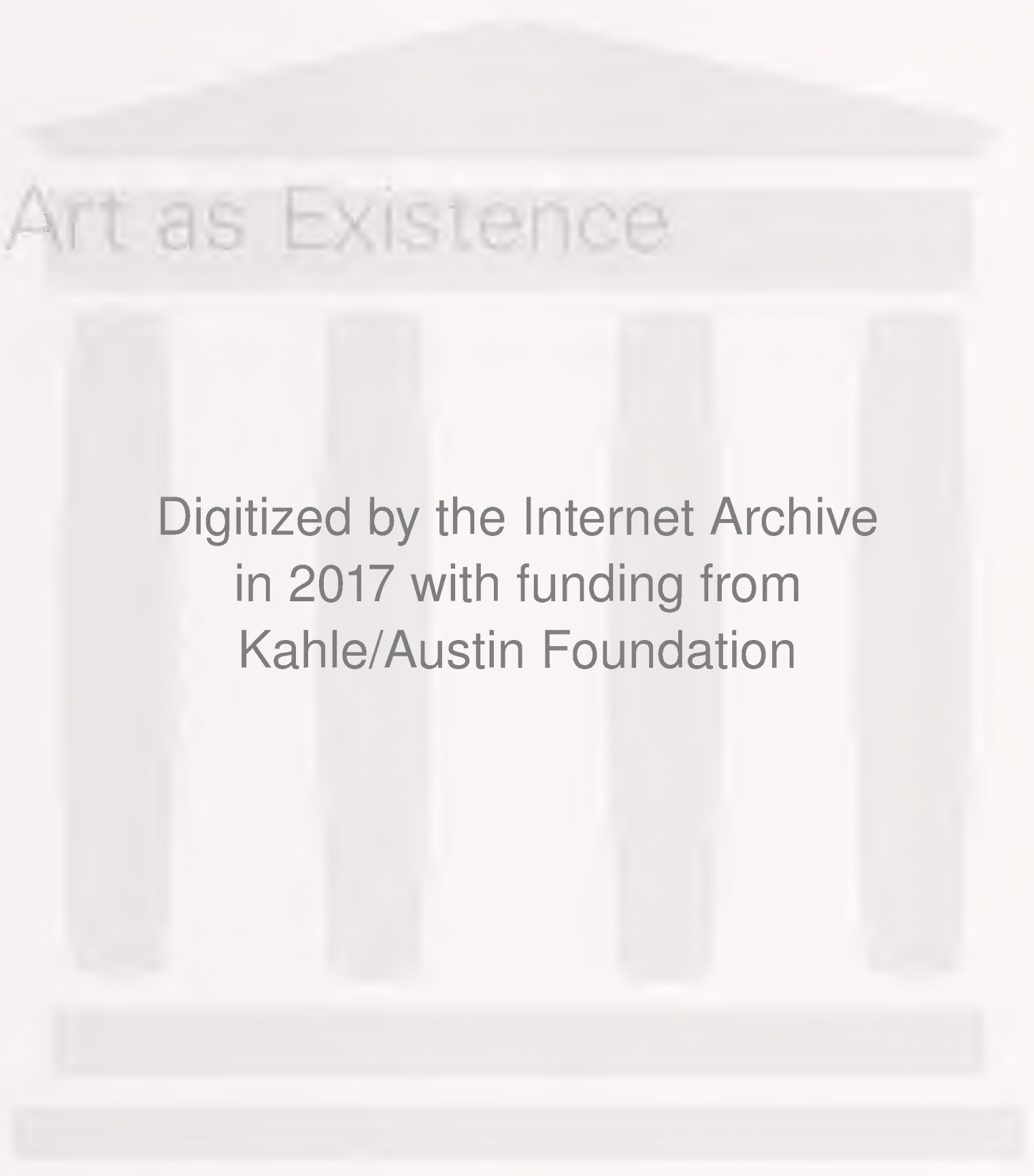


Art as Existence

The Artist's Monograph and Its Project

Gabriele Guercio

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Gabriele Guercio

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The book is dedicated to Laura and Emma, in memoriam.

September 2004

Introduction: The Artist's Monograph as a Project

Whenever we look at an artwork and try to envision the dimensions of life embedded in its images and forms; whenever we think of an artist as a concrete individual as well as a presence in his or her work; whenever we conceive of artistic phenomena as manifesting living qualities and unfolding a sense of humanity, singularity, and identity in the making, we enter into a moment of consciousness in which and for which art is revealed vis-à-vis existence. We activate, even if unwittingly, the kinds of intelligibility and imagination intrinsic to one of the oldest models in the Western literature of the visual arts: the narrative of the artist's life and works.

This book investigates the modern metamorphoses of the life-and-work model:¹ the origins and development of the monograph on individual artists. The model received its first significant modern articulation in sixteenth-century Italy with *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, written by Giorgio Vasari. It reached its apogee about three centuries later, when an increasing number of books devoted to a single artist—from the Renaissance through contemporary periods—were published throughout Europe. Vasari's *Lives* and nineteenth-century monographs on individual artists provide two major points of reference: from *The Lives* we can draw an archetype of the model, and from the monograph as an independent genre we can draw the range of its applications and definitions. It thus becomes possible to understand both the formal and the conceptual trajectories of a mode of writing that has continued to be viable since

the nineteenth century, although its guidelines and ambitions seem to have lost much of their critical appeal and have become constrained.

The history I will narrate, proceeding from Vasari to the modern monograph, is not exclusively chronological nor does it seek to recover an “objective” past. What the monograph was cannot be separated from the discovery of what the monograph is, should have been, and may be to us. Accordingly I will explore the trajectory of the model’s applications, ramifications, and obsolescence from Vasari to the twenty-first century, as well as what we can discern from the diverse aspects of the monograph’s history in relation to contemporary outlooks and demands.

I am not calling for a resurrection of an outmoded genre but for a reconsideration of the potentialities and program of the life-and-work model. Specifically I am interested in an understanding of art as construed by the monograph in its capacity to convey, both as a form of writing and as a discourse, a series of incisive views about artists and artworks. These views encode orders of desire and knowledge while suggesting analogies between an artist’s life and works; the recognition of authorship as the cipher of subjectivity in motion; the belief in artistic creation as the site of a birth to presence; and the idea of an original commingling of the artistic and the existential realms. Although the model is embedded in modern European culture—whose “universal values” have been effectively contested by postcolonial scholarship during the last century—it interprets what it is to be human relative to artistic creation in ways that demand further analysis and reconsideration. Throughout its evolution the monograph has evinced insights and tensions that often verge on the utopian, yet insistently point to a somewhat unexposed project concerning the mission of artists and the status of artworks—the likelihood of a different, more dialectical and fulfilling encounter among the forces pervading art, life, and reality at large. I intend to clarify and explore the potential of this project.

The word “monograph” was coined in the late eighteenth century to denote a treatise dealing with a single restricted topic, particularly one in the field of natural history.² It was not long, however, before the word was associated with a text dedicated to a single artist. One of the first instances

of this usage appears in a review of a book on Albrecht Dürer published by Adam Weise in Leipzig, in 1819. There Ludwig Schorn mused upon the nature of such publications and spoke of the different ways of writing “a biography of Albrecht Dürer as a monograph.”³ From then onward the word “monograph” gained fluency in the context of art writing and publishing, although books on single artists did not regularly include the term in their titles. Most frequently, titles used the artist’s name either alone or with phrases such as “art and life” or “life and times.” In any event, by the late nineteenth century the notion that volumes on individual artists fall under the category of monographs must have been quite widespread: in 1895 a whole series of books of the genre, issued in Germany and written for a large public, was called *Künstler Monographien*. And there can be no doubt that for some time now students and art historians have freely used the terms “monograph” and “artist’s monograph.” As Mark Roskill noted in a 1976 book about art history and its methods, “The most basic kind of publication that art historians produce is probably the monograph on a particular artist.”⁴

Yet the word “monograph” designates the subject of my study not simply because the monograph is commonly regarded by students, critics, and art historians as a publication that focuses on a single artist: the books I discuss are in a class of their own that goes beyond the scope of an artist’s biography. They variously treat aspects of biography and literary fiction, issues of attribution and critical evaluations of artworks, documents and sources concerning the history of an artist, and the collection and ordering of comprehensive lists of works. It will be one of my tasks to sort out how these elements relate to one another in order to clarify the meaning and value of this genre of writing. It is equally relevant that the formats and lengths of these texts vary, as do the motivations and degrees of insight and specialization behind them: the monograph may be a pamphlet or a bulky volume, and it may have biographical, emotional, art historical, historical, philosophical, or psychological overtones as well as a strong concern with the artist’s production. However these terms may be defined, the monograph’s program unequivocally remains an account of the artist’s life and works. In this respect, the monograph modernizes a mode of writing whose rudiments appeared long before the form itself did; in fact, it can probably be traced back as far as classical antiquity.⁵

An artist's monograph, then, is an extremely malleable means of inquiry. It can be scrupulous and exact as much as poetic and imaginative—or even blend these seemingly alien attributes together. The model owes a great deal of its fluidity to the fact that authors from Vasari onward have endeavored to capture what may be called the “open finitude” of an artist's life and works: a space bound by the span of an individual's life and yet free to entertain heterogeneous approaches. The focus on the life and works of a single artist does not prevent a monograph from reinventing itself formally and conceptually. On the contrary, the monograph must adjust its form according to the detours and fluctuations of those two domains in the case of each artist. Moreover, just as examining an artist's life and works tends to highlight the artist's uniqueness and his or her artworks, so the recognition of these qualities sustains the eclectic vocation of the monograph, inspiring diverse approaches to expressing who an artist is and the nature of his or her works. Particularly in the 1800s, the monograph freely interchanged and sidestepped the interests of various disciplines. It combined or disjoined biographical, art historical, and critical methods, introduced elements of fiction, and channeled utopian visions, thus assuming its own distinctive stance in the realm of the literature of art. Then as well as now, this stance resists easy categorization because it belongs neither to biography nor to connoisseurship or art history proper.

Artists of various media, nationalities, and epochs have been the subjects of monographs since this form of writing was first widely adopted in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁶ Since it offered a working model for examining various artistic phenomena, the monograph soon became pivotal in the appreciation of both old and modern masters: Correggio, Dürer, Raphael, and Michelangelo as well as Carstens, Constable, David, Géricault, and Velázquez were all examined in texts about their lives and works. These publications came from a quite varied group of writers; among them were learned scholars and friends of the artists, critics and art historians, biographers and connoisseurs, who operated in diverse contexts, had dissimilar backgrounds, and often followed inconsistent paths. Rather than giving an exhaustive account of the monograph's history, I will explore some significant books that illustrate the model's history at key phases in its evolution. While I take Vasari's

Lives as a source in constant dialogue with later writing, I concentrate on more mature examples of the genre and analyze representative nineteenth-century treatments of Renaissance and later artists.

Vasari's *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (issued in two editions in Florence, in 1550 and 1568) established the embryonic structure of the monograph. He was the first to write a comprehensive history of the Renaissance masters, and *The Lives* became a recurrent source of inspiration, reference, and critical confrontation in the ensuing centuries. In fact the revival of interest in these artists after 1800 coincides with the rise of the monograph as a form. Gustav Friedrich Waagen, A.-C. Quatremère de Quincy, Carl Friedrich von Rumohr, Johann David Passavant, Herman Grimm, Joseph Archer Crowe, Giovan Battista Cavalcaselle, Moritz Thausing, Bernard Berenson, and many others prominent and obscure turned their attention to the masters Vasari had discussed. Each of them saw in his text elements that could be expanded upon. But the rise of the monograph depended not only upon the changing perceptions of the Renaissance masters in the nineteenth century; at the same time, the cluster of issues, beliefs, and procedures potentially conveyed by the Vasarian archetype similarly migrated into books dealing with later and contemporary artists. It was employed and transformed by Carl Ludwig Fernow, Charles Robert Leslie, Charles Clément, Carl Justi, and other practitioners of the life-and-work model.

As a form, the monograph soon outstripped its original limited purpose. Devoted to a single artist, it was structured in a way that suggested interconnections between that artist's life and works. Throughout the nineteenth century it consistently endeavored not only to make the visual arts intelligible but also to retrace their human foundations, relating artists and their works to the contexts of life in which they originated. The life-and-work model presented the artist both as an individual empirically linked to a body of work through historical facts and as a personality created solely by that body of work. It investigated the dynamics through which a mute object such as an artwork becomes "human" as well as how and why human beings construe personal meanings in them and experience themselves and the world through artistic creation. After Vasari's *Lives*, the monograph went through a formative period in which it continually shifted its focus from the artist's biography to the scholarly

investigation of the artist's oeuvre and to the painstaking catalogue raisonné, from the gaining of factual knowledge and historical specifics to the exclusive detection of the qualities of style, meaning, and personality in artworks. Thus the cogently developing model enacted its own understanding of artistic phenomena as it sought to address issues of individuality and visual creation, stylistic progress and talent, as well as questions about the nature of human subjectivity.

However, the monograph did not maintain its reputation. Although numerous books on individual artists are still published today, the monograph's conceptual model and ideas on art, artworks, and artists increasingly diminished in importance during the twentieth century. The supraindividual formalism of Heinrich Wölfflin, the recognition of the viewer's response in the perception of an artwork (what Ernst Gombrich, in *Art and Illusion*, called the "beholder's share"), the investigation of those impersonal external agencies (cultural, political, economic, social) that determine the historical course of the arts, and the contextual slippage of poststructuralism have all called into question the monograph's *modus operandi*—even its legitimacy. Arguably the genre is endangered by its own inflexible credo: its belief in a correspondence between artworks and their authors, between artistic creation and identity formation, and its (perceived) tendency to isolate artist and oeuvre from broader contexts and larger forces.

Meanwhile, as the discipline of art history—in trying to define the objectivity of its field—distanced itself from the life-and-work model, the notion of a prescribed narrative, strategy, and scope for the monograph took root. This led students and art historians to apply a set formula to every artist, epoch, and context of study. During the second half of the 1900s, the traditional monograph, with its characteristic focus on the individuality of the artist, often appeared to reflect a problematic and outmoded metaphysical conception of the human subject that had been discredited through the work of Freud, Heidegger, and Nietzsche. Finally, because the monograph's most suggestive articulations depended upon the study of white European male artists, the usefulness of its model in conceptualizing the nexus between art and human identity was called into doubt after the advent of feminism and the recognition that the history of Western culture does not represent that of humankind itself.

Thus a question naturally arises: Why should we reconsider the life-and-work model and the history of the artist's monograph? The answer is fourfold. First, it is misleading to assume that the monograph is a well-known genre of writing and that its history bears scrutiny only in that it might reveal the origins of what is (already) familiar to us. Roskill writes, rather dismissively, that in a monograph "all the artist's works will be sorted out and catalogued, with illustrations to match; and an interpretative essay will usually be provided to go along with this. There, the development of the artist's work will be dealt with from different points of view (style, subject matter, technique, and so on), and the discussion of how the artist developed and of his total achievement may well shade into criticism."⁷ This description is at best half true. Surely, given the many monographic books published up to the 1970s and its long-established model, one may generalize, as Roskill does, about the monograph's typical outlook, method, and contents. On the other hand, there is a complexity to the monograph model that should not be overlooked. In its nineteenth-century metamorphoses above all, the monograph became open to multifaceted realities and set forth countless mechanisms of interpretation and recreation of its subject. While a monograph's purpose is consistent—to consider an artist's life and work—its methods are virtually unrestricted insofar as they confront those elements of particularity, instability, and excess that mark the life and works of individual artists. Taking the form of the monograph for granted relegates it to the role of a static institutionalized pattern of inquiry requiring no regeneration of its model even when its subjects vary endlessly. Moreover, since such an assumption obliterates the model's dynamic nature and thwarts a work of recollection and memory, it destroys the prospect not only of recognizing the monograph's basic stance but also of interacting with it for what it meant and for what it can still mean to us. Accordingly my study will refrain from discussing only those books that can be seen as antecedents to our notion of a "standard" monograph. I will demonstrate that the life-and-work model is in fact highly dynamic, with fragmentary outcomes and irregular phenomenology.

Second, we must reexamine the alleged association of the monographic tradition with ill-founded views of the human subject. By the late 1960s, philosophy and its related disciplines began to question—if not

to ban entirely—the ideas of human subjectivity and presence transmitted by the history of Western metaphysics since Plato. Interiority, consciousness, and identity—qualities hitherto associated with the individual—were subject to critique or deconstruction.⁸ The effects of this philosophical break were widespread and persistent. They are felt, for example, in Roland Barthes's infamous essay "The Death of the Author," whose title resonated almost as a program to many literary critics and art historians, as well as in Michel Foucault's proposal to redeem the modern notion of authorship from its humanistic content and to examine it as a function of the impersonal orders ruling inception and circulation of discourses.⁹ Something had clearly faltered in the apprehension of the relationships between individual and world, self and language, conscience and history. After Nietzsche's announcement that God was dead, Freud's discovery of the unconscious, and Heidegger's vision of the advent of "Being" and its overcoming of humanism, it became untenable to keep relying upon previous definitions of the human subject as an enduring, immutable essence. An earlier prevailing tendency had maintained the human being's faculty to proclaim himself or herself a "subject" (i.e., *hypokeimenon*, *substantia*, *subjectum*)—namely, something underlying and supporting attributes, and therefore able, by virtue of the firmness of its seat, not only to sustain its internal and external realities but to function in its own right as a transcendental guarantee of knowledge. Under the influence of psychoanalysis and of philosophies weary of the burdens of metaphysics, the idea that a subject is a fundamental essence, consistent and unitary, was undermined and exposed as a vanishing illusion—the product of arbitrariness and supposition.

While subjecthood has lost credibility as a supposition, its questioning has not always meant a total denial of the notions of subject and presence. Instead, such questioning has exposed the possibility of conceiving subjectivity as a state of being and becoming in which unification is unceasingly achieved and metamorphosed rather than arbitrarily given once and for all. No longer a fixed, underlying essence, the human subject can be perceived as unfolding through the dynamic of continuous being and coming into being. Some lines of contemporary thought do not even accept its nihilistic extinction or death: the crisis of the "old" subject ushered in the birth of a post-Freudian and postmetaphysical subject. This

birth can be traced in the development of psychoanalytic theory, in its concern either with the invention of an individual's personal history, most notably voiced by Jacques Lacan, or with imagination, creation, and sublimation as key mechanisms of a self-reflective subjectivity, as in the work of Cornelius Castoriadis.¹⁰ In philosophy and semiotics, the probing continues into language as the terrain of endless inscriptions of a subjectivity in process, or else by viewing the subject in terms of places, positions, and singularities within a structure.¹¹

In retrospect, we see that these debates have gradually led to a new awareness of the “singular existent” and “being singular”—that is, the recognition that the individuality previously implied by the idea of a subject defies divisions as well as suppositions because it engenders and reveals itself through the pure movement of its coming into being. It coincides with the happening of a presence without essence and ultimately attests to its existence alone. Such an awareness entails rethinking metaphysics in ways that, while advocating neither the return nor the liquidation of the subject, would see the singularity of “someone” or of “being one,” and consequently would ask not “what” but “who” comes after the subject.¹² The reflections of Jean-Luc Nancy in particular have significantly focused on sense and existence, as well as on the ideas of the singular existent and of being “someone.” For Nancy there is no longer anything supposed or supposing, but rather someone—singular existence itself—and a multiplicity of someones: “*They* are unto the world. This is what ‘makes’ up the world and ‘makes’ sense. *Someone, some ones, the numerous someones . . . the plural singular* ‘is’ the response that answers the question of the ‘sense of the world.’” And again: “Every one, being born, dying, being-there, exemplifies singularity. Each proposes itself as *an* example. . . . That which is exemplary each time, that which sets an example, is singularity itself.”¹³

The aspiration to focus on the state of being singular, consciously or unconsciously, pervades and informs the monographic tradition; the renewed interest in singularity, therefore, invites an exploration and reconsideration of that tradition. In fact, monographs did not necessarily take the artist's identity for granted as a stable substratum to be reconstructed a posteriori. Insofar as they approached the visual arts by means of the interplay between an artist's life and works, they were almost compelled to

unravel the artist's identity within the incessant doing and undoing of the modes of identification he or she could attract both as a maker of works and as a human being. Accordingly monographs often designed visions of the artist as a "subject" existing not prior to but born within the practice of artistic creation and engaged with the very dynamic of being and becoming. In the nineteenth century, as it helped writers tackle issues of authorship and interweave biographical and artistic dimensions, the life-and-work model looked at the process of a coming to presence within the works of art themselves, offering insights into the object of creation as a form that simultaneously nourishes, houses, and produces a sense of singularity.

Our third reason for scrutinizing the monograph relates to the seemingly outmoded methodology of the life-and-work model. Stubbornly devoted to only one artist, the monograph seems half obsessive and half obvious compared with the far-reaching analyses to which the specialized field of art history became increasingly accustomed during the twentieth century. At that time, having gained confidence in its disciplinary status, art historical practice tended to pursue totalizing approaches to artistic phenomena. Art historians interested in issues of formal analysis, iconology, visual perception, and social history—despite their disparate viewpoints—investigated artworks by accounting for those large impersonal systems or structures within which they come into being. To this end, their art historical narratives reconstructed genealogies of artists and forms, movements and periods, as well as relations between images and ideas, vision and psychology, styles and history, production and reception. They also assumed that the visual arts undergo a progress over time that can be historically mandated yet also based on the internal dynamics of form or style. However, in recent decades this approach has lost some of its appeal. Art theoretical writings speak variously of the "end" of the history of art and art history, of the "anachronism" of the image, of the exhaustion of a view of artistic development through meaningful chronological sequences.¹⁴ This exhaustion is apparent in the work of contemporary artists as well as in that of art historians. For just as contemporary art no longer seeks to legitimize itself within a history or progression, and art can be anything that artists and patrons want it to be, so art history cannot rely upon the principles of stylistic and historical continuity

as a guarantee of its disciplinary specificity. While the earlier trust in a steady narrative direction withered away, the prospect arose of a plurality of histories of art, each with its own agenda and each approaching works of art according to their own particular truths.

An exhaustion of the grand art historical narratives not only casts doubt on the methodologies that had previously sustained the discipline but also suggests another reason why the monograph and its model are worthy of attention. This exhaustion can be seen as the symptom of a need to reorient the understanding of art from impersonal totalizing views of the artistic phenomena toward a discourse that acknowledges and confronts the discrete nature of works and artists, even their absolute insularity. What is needed, in other words, is a *modus operandi* sensitive to the singular being and capable of radicalizing what was announced in the monograph tradition. The monograph model, with its obsessive focus on an individual artist, has the potential to fracture preconceived schemes of inquiry and abstract universal postulations. In fact, since the 1800s the ideas and procedures of the monograph have countered rules of codification and homologation in the study of art with criteria of authenticity and particularity. They have linked the local irreducible oneness of an artist's life and works with the universality of art, history, and the world without subjecting it to a univocal historical time but rather by suggesting heterogeneous times comprising a history of art.

Finally, the focus on white male artists that influenced the making of the modern monograph, objectionable though it may be, does not necessarily undermine the model's potential in postfeminist and postcolonial times. On the contrary: the artist's monograph, in its idiosyncrasy, does not usher in a seamless vision of artworks and artists in the world. It vindicates the realities of singularity and identity in artistic creation, defying essentialist notions of gender, race, and class. In doing so, the model may help to uncover the multifarious modes of being human. Probing an artist's "life and works" entails confronting the issues of identity that have characterized the work of gender and postcolonial theorists in recent decades.

Art historians and critics working within feminist perspectives¹⁵ have sought to unmask methods that risk silencing women's voices and to reformulate the nexus between art and human identity. Their investigation

of gendered subjects, images, and visions encourages the reexamination of many of the desires and insights originally channeled by the life-and-work model. Indeed, feminist writers on art have helped to recast important elements of that model. Judith Butler, in particular, finds that gender is not a fixed category that divides individuals but a variable construct connected with language and culture, entailing creativity and expression as modes of personhood and possibilities of being.¹⁶ Gender has, in brief, just the qualities of a subjectivity in motion that the monograph sought to construe in relation to artists and artworks.

Postcolonial scholarship has challenged the “subject” from a different perspective. Often responding to Edward E. Said’s paradigmatic *Orientalism* (1978), which opened a new field of inquiry by revealing the problems inherent in discourses and representations of “other” cultures, authors such as Homi K. Bhabha, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Ranajit Guha, Stuart Hall, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak have been concerned with qualifying the figures of subjectivity that do not fit within the linear schemes of a progressive Western-centered world history.¹⁷ Their work seeks to reconfigure a revolutionary subject separate from the Marxist notion of the working class. Postcolonial theory emphasizes the differences and coexistence created by the dynamics of diaspora and hybridization that characterize the destiny of an increasing number of people after decolonization. It fosters both the recognition and invention of alternative practices of human liberation in a globalized world. These ideas are relevant here because they suggest that the legacy of the monographic model may offer means of comprehending a multiplicity of lives and histories in and through the study of art, thus increasing the consciousness of the manifold practices of dwelling on the planet.

Gender theories and postcolonial perspectives show that definitions of the human and of life itself, as well as the struggles among multicultural agencies and transnational powers, underlie politics and ethics. Although these concerns seem new, investigations of the human and of life have long influenced European thought—and indeed are seminal to some aspects of the modern understanding of art. Reexamining the artist’s monograph therefore allows one to move not only through humanistic and romantic conceptions of life but right into the heart of today’s predicaments of identity. The monograph’s history offers ways to

rethink, in terms of art studies and art making, the fusion of biologically given and personally created elements that make up a life. Various conclusions can be drawn from an analysis of the uses of the life-and-work model, from the collapse of a supraindividual art history in favor of one that accounts for the differential times of the singular existent to the possibility of new dialectics between artists, artworks, and reality at large. Taken in tandem with their ethical and political implications, these revelations may challenge art studies to endorse a new vision of democracy.

Retracing the monograph's history means rethinking the nexus between artistic practice and human identity, the double equation of art as life and life as art, as well as Western ideas of authorship and individualism in the visual arts.¹⁸ In this history artists are regarded as authorial subjects, if not embodied presences, and artworks as objects that have anthropocentric properties, if not living qualities. Because it has addressed an artist's life and works together, the monograph has had to ascribe images and objects to the agency of an individual. As such, it has gained different insights into the interpolation of the physical and immaterial attributes that make up the ontological status of artworks. Throughout its development, as it tried to come to terms with the artworks both in themselves and in relation to an author, the monograph has fostered an understanding of the dialectics between being and doing, nature and culture. The model's history suggests an anthropological view of artistic phenomena—opening a horizon of desire and knowledge that would highlight the multidimensional character of the visual arts and ultimately allow the perception of continuous transfers between art and life.

The embryonic form of essay passed down through history by Vasari's *Lives*, which represents artists as autonomous agents performing in life as well as in art, is intrinsically analogical and relational in that its structure encourages parallels between the artistic and the biographical domains. On the one hand, Vasari empirically connects artist and works by depicting the artist as someone acting in time and space and yet maintaining his role as the protagonist of a narrative. On the other hand, he simultaneously casts the artist as an identity existing in his own works, either by making attributions or by defining his achievements, mode of representation, and stylistic evolution. Although Vasari's accounts generally keep

the biographical and the artistic dimensions distinct, there are cases in which he clearly sees an artwork as a reflection of its creator. But overall his approach presents artists as original creative personalities while postulating an implicit yet irreducible parallel between their lives and works. Even when they are not openly conflated, the biographical and artistic dimensions function as reciprocal elements of a dialectic that subjects life and works—organic and artistic evolution—to ongoing comparison.

In the nineteenth century, three hundred years after Vasari, the monograph came to regard as mutually comprehensive the ideas of the artist as an author whose agencies traverse a multidimensional sphere and of art as inextricable from the life it defines and reflects. It became a conceit of the monograph that if the artist undergoes a process of becoming that interweaves the space of the works with the time of the life, then his or her works must bear the traces of their human foundations and must be classifiable as moments within the unfolding of a life.

Monographers not only conferred an independent status to the Vasarian archetype but legitimized its analogical structure, whether they were assessing the histories of the old masters or those of contemporary artists. The goals of the genre's practitioners ranged from acquiring biographical and visual data to constructing an exhaustive catalogue, identifying styles, and probing the artist's character; a monograph could convey critical judgments, enhance factual knowledge about the artist by citing unpublished documents, and offer valuable insights into the authenticity and chronology of the works. Some monographs applied the analogy of life and works to the artist's works alone and, fully aligning natural and artistic developments, posited the artist's oeuvre as a living anthropocentric whole made of shifting, interacting parts. In other cases, a concern with the artist's character, life, and context dominated, so that writers pursued not only a thorough account of the artist as a historical figure but also as an individual working within a time and culture.

Whatever its orientations and methods, one trait underpins the rise and transformations of the nineteenth-century monograph: its endorsement of salient aspects of the culture of modern identity.¹⁹ With the outbreak of the French Revolution and its promise of democracy, the validation of the autonomy of will versus historically given laws, and the discovery that the world was shaped by negotiations of value between

individuals and groups, a new constellation of ideas qualified human identity and increased the perception of a space of selfhood. Whereas until about the mid-eighteenth century the branches of knowledge (from physics to ethics and politics) were for the most part granted the capacity to mirror an objective order, philosophers now sought to recast the understanding of nature and culture in a structure of self-relation, criticism, and reflection. Much of the idea of modernity rests on the possibility, traced by epochal thinkers such as Kant and Hegel, of establishing solidarity between the subject and the object of knowledge. Hegel, in fact, saw that freedom of subjectivity was the principle of the modern world and that his age owed its greatness to its recognition of the mind's faculty to pose itself freely. Such a formidable act of self-nomination—so consequential in the history of the metaphysical subject—not only went along with an unprecedented concern with the realm of the individual but also paved the way for continuous interrogation of its status, agency, and mission. That is, the culture of modern identity designs a broad condition of thought and experience ranging from the preromantic to the postromantic era. In that culture the dynamic of being and becoming who one is was simultaneously warranted and open to inquiry. Rather than being prescribed once and for all, the “human” became a figure of restless quest. The nascent monograph, given its exploration of art and life, and its marked interest in individual artists, had many points in common with this conceptual framework.

Artists acquired special preeminence in the culture of modern identity, in which a leading feature was the ideal, or ethics, of authenticity.²⁰ Heralded earlier by Johann Gottfried Herder and Jean Jacques Rousseau but expanded throughout the nineteenth century and later, the ideal demanded that one be true to oneself, that one pursue self-cultivation as a means of discovery, personal realization, and *Bildung*. Its corollary, the idea of originality, contended that each human being's life is determined by his or her unique nature. Central to this stream of thought was a new “expressivist” conception of language as the activity by which one can attain self-definition: language does not limit itself to designating things but effects an awareness of them, a way of feeling and being in the world that reveals our own humanity.²¹ Accordingly, fresh light could be cast on what artists do and who they are. While artistic creation became the ex-

emplary mode through which one could experience an epiphany of self, the artist appeared as the paradigmatic case of the human being, as the true individual, and achiever of original self-definition.²²

The monograph's focus on an individual artist is therefore linked with the modern postulation that selfhood is a process of endlessly becoming who one is. As a process, self-definition and self-expression cannot guarantee the human subject the firmness of traits and qualities characterizing it once and for all. Rather, they point to the cathexis of an individual within itself and the world, to a readiness for being and becoming even at the risk of not having one's subjectivity recognized. A subject, then, presents itself here as both forming and being formed via identity and difference, and through definition and dissemination of self.

While the culture of modern identity provides valuable signposts for reconsidering the monograph's approach, the genre's evolution posited different forms of codependence between art and life, artist and works. In so doing, it entertained eclectic relationships—implying internalization as much as transgression—with the contemporary areas of literary biography, art historical writing, and connoisseurship. As a result of its empirical connotations, the model tended to share with biography the habit of reconstructing a life by gathering together all available documents, facts, anecdotes, and traditions about the protagonist—a technique sometimes adopted by Vasari but perfected in the field of literary biography by James Boswell, who introduced it in his famous *Life of Johnson* (1791). Moreover, just as Thomas Carlyle radically transformed the writing of a life by equating biography and history,²³ so a monograph could link the artist with otherwise scattered events of the period and evaluate the artworks in view of the life—enlightening both art and history through biography.

However, these approaches did not exhaust the potentials of the model: study of the artist's works led to the recognition of a dynamic structure interweaving the whole fabric of an artist's production. For many naturalists of the early nineteenth century—and especially for Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who spoke of a new science that he called “morphology”—to investigate nature no longer meant to classify its parts but to envision the interactions and processes that give meaning to the whole and to consider form itself as the carrier of a living impulse toward becoming and transformation. A monograph could echo these vitalistic

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views of the period because it surmised a unity running through the metamorphoses of the artist's work. The study of the artworks, instead of introducing abstract static categories from without, could in fact coordinate them from within, grasping them as related parts of a structure construed according to their respective values and functions. Images and forms thus acquired the extraordinary property of signifying the processes of life itself because the artist's oeuvre was perceived as a multidimensional whole that virtually corresponded to the becoming of the artist's life.

The monograph's bipolar structure also called for inquiries capable of locating the artist in his own works as well as in the general history of art and the realms of culture and history. When it met these demands, the monograph both complemented and sustained a new course in the study of art history, especially in Germany, starting in the early nineteenth century.²⁴ Inspired by Johann Joachim Winckelmann's *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (1764), this course sought to reorient the literature of the visual arts from normative aesthetic and biographical evaluations to systematic analyses in terms of history and cultural history.²⁵ However, insofar as this new historical vision did not always imply losing sight of the centrality of the artist, the monograph came to be regarded as a cornerstone in the reconstruction of artistic traditions.

Finally, by tackling problems of attribution, pursuing chronological cataloguing of artworks, and viewing the works as moments in the living cycle of the artist's life, the monograph absorbed and newly molded a cluster of tenets and procedures rooted in the culture of connoisseurship.²⁶ A credo of that culture is the belief that an artist has a visual identity that manifests itself upon close inspection of his or her original work—that an artist's production has inalienable traits and inner qualities that the connoisseur must learn to recognize. This belief was closely related to aspirations embedded in the monograph's history and was a determining factor in the gradual shift of focus from the author as an empirical individual related to a body of work to the author as a presence understood only from that body of work.

The resonance of the monograph and its life-and-work model in the nineteenth century—as well as its connections with the practice of connoisseurship and the writing of art history—may be seen in the fact that the modern system of classifying art collections in Europe abandoned the

taxonomy of genre and subject matter in favor of one based on the chronology of individual masters and schools. In this regard it is telling that typical monographs of the period come from authors—Waagen, Passavant, and Julius Meyer—who not only integrated connoisseurial and historical aspects into their publications but were also active museum curators.

But even while the fields of literary biography, connoisseurship, art historical studies, and museum practices present kinships with the fluctuations of the monograph, its history cannot be framed in terms of the genre's variable interrelationships with them. Just as history verged into art history, so connoisseurship conflated with biography, and the combination of viewpoints was quite diversified throughout the monograph's history as well as within a single monograph. In fact, the nineteenth-century monograph was the specimen of a *modus operandi* rebellious against disciplinary dogmas yet steady in its stance and aspirations. The model, albeit unwittingly, adopted what looks like an unsystematic mode of address—both from our viewpoint and according to the criteria at that time in the still relatively undefined areas of biography, connoisseurship, and art historical studies. Its polymorphic character—reinforced by the various formations of its practitioners—was above all remarkably mimetic of the highly indeterminate ideas of singularity and authorship that it endeavored to capture and reflect.

This book will often return to this anarchic aspect of the model. It is useful to note, however, that the monograph owed its position in the literature of art to its methodological freedom, ultimately becoming a *sui generis* genre. As such, the monograph articulated views that proposed alternatives and countermovements to influential trends of the very intellectual context within which it developed. For example, the monograph's insights into artworks do not always bolster the contemporary faith in the autonomy of art.²⁷ The monograph sustained the belief in the artwork as a dialectical object, if not a living entity. Although it is true that suggestive monographs were written by museum curators, and that in museums artworks hang in ways reminiscent of monograph ideas, the monograph did not corroborate the dichotomy between art and reality nurtured by the foundation of modern public museums.²⁸ The monograph sought rather to repair this dichotomy by restoring, albeit ideally, the artworks to the life of their maker as well as to their own wholeness as works by the

transfigurations of the monograph's definition and of artists and artworks in response to, for example, feminist thinking and gender theories, the postcolonial critique, and the new formulation of a post-Freudian and postmetaphysical subject. I will also look at Picasso, Duchamp, and Beuys as artists who acted as their own "monographers," transforming the life-and-work model in the process. Given these developments, I will attempt to demonstrate the ways in which we can absorb the monograph's legacy as well as why its project may still be our own.

The prospect of revealing art as existence continuously enlivens the life-and-work model, from Vasari through its later transfigurations and even during the diminishment of the monographic discourse. Art as existence is this book's underlying motif, where "as" indicates equation and confrontation between two polarities as well as mutual displacements, condensations, and transferences. If we take "existence" in its Latin etymon *exsistere*—to step forth, out, forward; to arise; to be²⁹—then the very act of posing art "as" existence suggests that artistic phenomena be regarded in relation to their making, effecting, and existing. The monograph tends to ascribe to artworks and artists the ability to exist without the assurance of a firm ground. Artworks engender immaterial dynamics within and outside their material boundaries, and artists manifest conditions of being and becoming for the human subject that are inextricable from the creative process. That is, through its continuous interplay of life and work, the monograph tends to supplant the idea of foundation (the root of a metaphysical subject and of a supposition of essence) with that of an attestation of being and existence via artistic creation. Within such a procedure, artworks and artists are revealed as the carriers of something "extra"—of a surplus of signification that in its absolute individuality resists translation and cannot be explained away by judgments of taste, stylistic genealogies, symbolism, formal worth, history, or art history. The "extra" is the trace or remainder of existence in all its manifold movements of revelation, excess, and being. The monograph stubbornly tries to account for the immanence of art as existence by approaching artworks and artists in terms of singularity and presence. Thus, although it was used only intermittently in nineteenth-century art publishing, the word "monograph" describes both the books and the responses they pro-

voke. Meaning “writing on a single thing,” the term conveys the attentiveness to the singular existent that the artist’s monograph so pervasively activates and articulates in the study of artworks, oeuvres, and artists, to the point of equating art and existence.

In reconsidering the artist’s monograph and its history, one can therefore reconstruct not only a special understanding of art but also a more or less hidden project, the ramified outputs of a utopian impulse fueling the genre. Molded upon the life-and-work dialectic—persistently asking “who” questions about artists and artworks, commuting biography into art and art into biography—the monograph construes the otherwise distinct works of an artist as a mutating whole, ascribing to them the ability either to bear witness to life by offering models for living it or to embody life by uniting objective and subjective components. As such, the monograph interlocks the dimension of the living with that of the nonliving and radically reinterprets the objecthood of artworks through its refusal to look at them as if they were confined within an autonomous realm.

However unattainable and untimely it may appear, the project entailed within the history of the monograph is nevertheless potentially open to ongoing regenerations over time. This book therefore focuses on what has happened as well as what we might make of it as we open seemingly closed rooms of history. I propose that, although it would be useless to perpetuate its traditional forms, the monograph can be reconsidered as a fresh project at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The horizon of desire and knowledge inaugurated by the understanding of the life and works of an artist may still intersect with our own. Moreover we may be called upon to grant the promises and fulfill the expectations associated with the monograph project.

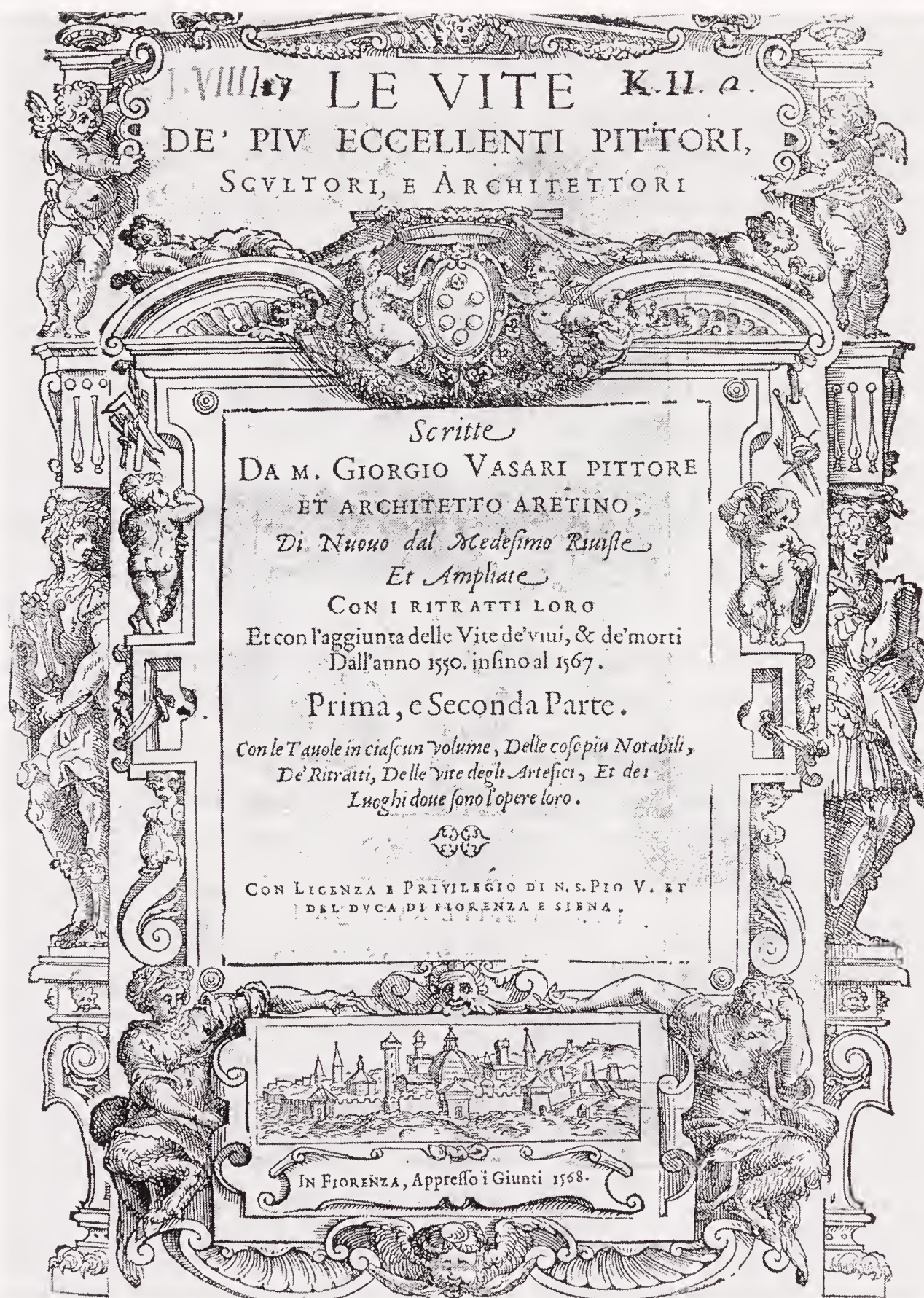
Life and Works

1

Vasari's *Lives* and the Dialectic of the Model

The roots of the nineteenth-century monograph can be traced back to *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (fig. 1.1) by Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574). This is in part because some monographers returned to the artists discussed by Vasari, but above all because *The Lives* was the first and most esteemed model in the West for writing about an artist's life and works. To understand the evolution of this model in the monograph, we must revisit Vasari's *Lives* for its own sake as well as for the potentials it contains.¹

The *Lives* are grouped in three parts or “ages” (artistic periods), each marking the beginning of a different style. Each of the book's parts begins with a preface assessing the progression of artistic proficiency through the period in question. Vasari dates the initial rebirth of the lost artistic perfection of antiquity to around 1240, when Giovanni Cimabue was born to kindle the first lights of painting, and traces its growth up to its perfection in his own times. *The Lives* was intended to rescue from oblivion “the names of sculptors, painters and architects” and to enable readers to discern in what way the masters “differed from each other.”² Reviewing the past in terms of artistic progress, Vasari sought to write a history of the artists, or *artefici del disegno* as he called them, rather than to describe a generic history of artistic styles and modes of representation. Although the artists are shown to be part of the evolutionary process of the arts, each of them is granted the individuality of his own work, talent, and character.



1.1 Title page of Giorgio Vasari's *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori* (Florence, 1568). Courtesy of Kunsthistorisches Institut, Florence.

Vasari raises artists to the dignity of history and biography by underscoring the specificity of their contributions. Previous examples were available, and Vasari assimilates them. But, aside from Antonio Manetti's *Life of Brunelleschi*,³ earlier authors such as Giovanni and Filippo Villani, Bartolomeo Fazio, Cristoforo Landino, and Antonio Billi had produced rather succinct reports. Before Lorenzo Ghiberti discussed his own works and those of his artistic ancestors in his *Commentarii* of circa 1447,⁴ writers did not distinguish between the merits of illustrious men and those of artists.⁵ In Vasari's *Lives*, however, artists became entitled to a history of their own.⁶

This was a breakthrough in contemporary culture and historiography. Until then it was unclear whether painters, sculptors, and architects were truly worthy of biography. The humanist tradition of biography tended to focus instead on eminent figures in other realms, such as military and political leaders. Vasari was well aware of the innovative nature of his project and sought to legitimize it. In the introduction to the second part of *The Lives*, Vasari endorses the humanistic principle of history as *magistra vitae* and invokes as his sources of inspiration those "writers of history" who did not simply report dry facts but investigated the causes of human actions. He claimed for himself the equal right to write a history of artists that would honor them and benefit the arts.⁷ As it epitomized a new literary genre, Vasari's publication resonated in the minds of other thinkers of the period, affecting their conception of history and historical writing.⁸

Vasari is the archetypal monographer because he established a form of writing whose very structure creates a special understanding of the visual arts as inextricable from the dual consideration of the biographical and artistic realms. In writing a *Life*, Vasari identified the artist as an individual operating in life as well as in art. Each artist becomes a distinctive, unique figure, and *The Lives* becomes an extraordinary receptacle of identities. The narrative of each *Life* shifts between the paired axes of the life and works of its protagonist. This literary structure suggests a circularity encompassing the life and the works, the art and its maker, visual and factual domains. Vasari both distinguishes and commingles these domains in *The Lives* by recounting the artist's life and itinerary, recogniz-

ing the irreducible visual qualities of his activity, and matching artworks with the artists' characters and personalities.

In so doing, he implicitly posits two entities: the biographical identity and the artistic identity of the artist. The former defines the artist in the factual domain: who he is, his personality, whereabouts, and so forth. The latter captures the meaning of what he does, his characteristic forms, themes, and style. These two dimensions represent the symbiotic elements of a dialectic encompassing the absolutely generic and the absolutely distinctive aspects of a human life: its participation in the natural, biological cycle of birth and death that we share with all living species, and its simultaneous unfolding through the unique story of one individual's very human experiences, deeds, and work.

The Vasarian archetype posits the view that the visual arts cannot be comprehended without taking into account their human foundations and thus that artworks must be regarded as objects with both independent status and anthropocentric qualities. Vasari does not explicate this analogy, but it is the cornerstone of the dialectical model taking shape in *The Lives*.

Vasari establishes the biographical identity of the artist through empirical information. After an introduction or exordium, each Life recalls the artist's ancestry, birth, childhood, and education; gives an account of his early works and subsequent career; sums up his achievements; describes his character, death, burial, and epitaphs; and finally lists his pupils.⁹ In fact, the chronological data offered by Vasari are often arbitrary; the itineraries of the artists are sometimes sheer fabrications; and Vasari's use of sources does not measure up to later standards.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the two strands—life and works—are key to this form of writing, and they are the one irreducible feature of the monograph model, as we shall subsequently see.

Vasari's life accounts vary from artist to artist, changing according to his historical and geographical distance from the master and his personal opinion of him.¹¹ The paucity of information at hand about thirteenth- and early-fourteenth-century artists frequently obliged him to neglect or misrepresent the artist's youth and to mistake even such basic data as the year of birth. In the Lives of Nicola and Giovanni Pisano, for instance, no

date is given for Nicola's birth, and the only biographical detail provided in the prelude is that he admired the ancient marbles brought to Pisa and sought to imitate them.¹²

However, Vasari could also be extremely thorough, as in his monumental *Life of Michelangelo* of 1568.¹³ Here, emending the eulogistic tones of the 1550 text, enriching it with new information, and seeking to uncover every aspect of the artist's career, he ties the Florentine master to contemporary historical events, discusses the background of his tormented creations, and portrays the people who were associated with him, along with the nature of these associations. Two elements in the revised text illustrate Vasari's thoroughness. The first is his digression about the association between the artist and Domenico Ghirlandaio. Ascanio Condivi had criticized his account of Michelangelo in the first edition of *The Lives*, in particular the section dealing with the artist's apprenticeship to Ghirlandaio.¹⁴ Vasari went to the trouble of transcribing into the narrative the contract between Ghirlandaio and Ludovico Buonarroti, Michelangelo's father.¹⁵ The text of the contract may not have settled the issue, but its publication probably represents the first case in which a written document was used to explicate a moment of an artist's life—a methodology that would thrive and expand in later years. The second noteworthy element is the transcription of the correspondence between Vasari and the artist.¹⁶ Its interest lies not so much in Vasari's inclusion of himself in the text (a device exploited in other *Lives*)¹⁷ as in the feeling of intimacy that Michelangelo's letters produce in the reader.

In keeping with the classical and Renaissance traditions of biography, Vasari evokes the figure and personality of the artist in the openings and epilogues of each *Life*. His evocations range from outward appearance to psychic and moral attributes. For instance, the themes of Piero di Cosimo's "absent-mindedness" and solitude insistently color his *Life*.¹⁸ Masaccio is briefly but incisively styled as a person "very absent-minded and erratic," who devoted his mind to art and paid little attention to himself and still less to others.¹⁹ Vasari could construct a complete personality by shifting between physical likeness and inner qualities, as in the opening of Filippo Brunelleschi's *Life*, where the contrasts between his "small and insignificant physical appearance" and the "greatness of his soul," the "ugliness of his body" and the "brilliance of his mind," imme-

diately introduce the singularity of the master.²⁰ In the Life of Michelangelo, Vasari's references to the artist's character evoke a mighty, heroic individual. The opening casts him as a God-sent artist, a true model in life and work, while the epilogue is unique both in its length and its fusion of all aspects of his personality.²¹

Vasari's forceful insertion of anecdotes into the narratives of *The Lives*—likewise grounded in the biographical traditions of Plutarch, Diogenes Laertius, and Pliny—further allow the reader to glimpse situations that reveal personality. For example, while the story of the buckler painted for his father, Piero, illustrates Leonardo's capacity for deception (Piero was badly startled by the depicted image of a monster emerging from a rocky cleft), his wandering in the streets so as to memorize "some bizarre heads" points to his inquisitive mind. The complaints of the prior of Santa Maria delle Grazie about Leonardo's slow execution of the *Last Supper* enable Vasari to advocate the painter's right to intellectual freedom, because Leonardo explained that "people of genius sometimes accomplish more when they work less, for they are thinking out inventions and forming in their minds the perfect ideas which they then express with their hands."²² And, as an example of Leonardo's scientific experimentation, Vasari describes, among other "follies," how he dressed up a lizard with monstrous little appendages in order to frighten his friends. By mixing these anecdotes with the narrative, Vasari creates the image of an eccentric yet incredibly gifted master. The image finds its apogee in the apocryphal story of Leonardo dying at Amboise in the arms of king Francis I, and is further colored by the report of his contrition, confession, and assent to the administration of the sacrament.²³

Vasari did not limit himself to exploring the empirical domain of the artist's life or describing his personality. He also sought to describe and classify those elements inherent to an artist's work. Parallel to the biographical identity, and at times conflated with it, the "artistic identity" is the stamp of the artist that can be discerned in the body of his works. It manifests itself in *The Lives* whenever the term *maniera*, or "manner," stops referring to general style and begins to point to the art of individuals.²⁴ This happens wherever Vasari makes an attribution or summarizes an artist's achievements, defining what was specific to his mode of representation.

In so doing, Vasari fulfills the promise, voiced in his introduction to the second part of *The Lives*, to take into account the “methods, styles, traits and ideas of the painters and sculptors.” A few paragraphs below, he indicates his method, stating that, in appreciating the ancient masters, one often has to rely upon contradictory written sources, while for those artists closer in time it is possible to look at the works themselves with an eye that is “a better guide and judge than hearsay.”²⁵ Of course, despite his claims to have verified everything in person, Vasari’s scrutiny of the artworks is neither systematic nor constant. But he certainly believed that artists have “personal” styles. In his concluding address to his fellow artists, foreshadowing a belief that will underpin the modern culture of connoisseurship and the monograph’s history, Vasari equates handwriting and *maniera* as two recognizable vehicles of individuality when he argues, “Long experience teaches the careful painters to recognize . . . the various styles [*maniere*] of other masters . . . just as a learned and experienced secretary detects the different and various handwritings of his colleagues.”²⁶

Vasari applies his belief that personal styles can be recognized in cases where he uses visual recognition to make an attribution. For instance, regarding a *Crucifixion* painted by Pietro Cavallini in the lower church of Saint Francis at Assisi, Vasari maintains that he had verified the information given by the sources through visual inspection.²⁷ That Vasari learned about paintings’ authorship from oral and written sources as well as from visual observation is confirmed in the Life of Andrea Orcagna, when he states that in Florence one found many works by Andrea, some recognizable by his signature and some by his style.²⁸ Vasari’s confidence in distinguishing the hands of different masters can also be felt in the Life of Masaccio when, discussing that master’s works at the church of the Carmine at Pisa, Vasari vehemently denies Masaccio’s authorship of a particular picture and attributes it instead to Filippino Lippi.²⁹

Vasari thought that personal style was unique and inimitable, intuiting that all of an artist’s works fell along a recognizable continuum. Although he never articulated this intuition, Vasari perceived an artist’s works as making up a sort of independent, organic whole. He assumed that a consistency of style and an individual mode of representation were characteristic of an artist’s activity. These mutually reinforcing assumptions supported the idea that one can learn to recognize in an artist’s work

the recurrence and stability of certain subjects, forms of visualization, and stylistic traits that are carriers of authorship and human qualities. Vasari devised seminal ways of connecting one work or many works in the whole of an artist's production. Such a *modus operandi* did not establish a true dialectic between the whole and its parts—this would await the nineteenth-century monographs that developed the paradigmatic idea of the artist's oeuvre—but nonetheless it allowed Vasari to come up with syntheses that capture a sense of continuity in the artist's works.

Vasari also sought to elucidate the artwork through the life and personality of its maker. The ancient idea that artists portray themselves in their works and its corollary that descriptions of artists and artistic achievements are interchangeable are important premises in Vasari's biographies.³⁰ However, actual cases of an explicit interchange between artworks and their maker are not very numerous in *The Lives*, and, while sustained by a common creed, such cases present dissimilar features.

The most comprehensive attempt to conflate life and work is perhaps found in the Life of Fra Giovanni Angelico. The narrative draws consistent parallels between Angelico's depiction of religious themes and the Christian faith that led the friar to paint only holy images. Describing Angelico's *Coronation of the Virgin* (fig. 1.2) at the church of San Domenico in Fiesole (now at the Louvre), Vasari claims that not only its representation of the saints but its very system of coloring "seems to be by the hand of such a saint or angel."³¹ To Vasari, Angelico's artistic identity could not be grasped without considering the sainthood of the man—a consideration that inspired the biographer to warn all painters of holy images to be sincerely religious, lest the works not only fail in their purpose but also reveal the authors' lack of faith.³² For instance, as Vasari concludes, Angelico "never painted a Crucifixion without having tears streaming down his cheeks, and the goodness of his sincere and noble nature inspired by the Christian religion can be recognized in the faces and poses of his figures."³³

The correspondences between the artwork and its maker, art and life, show that the uniqueness of an artist as an individual could flow from the uniqueness of his work, and vice versa. However, Vasari's narratives most often address the biographical and the artistic as parallel dimensions, viewing the former in terms of factual knowledge and the latter in terms



1.2 Fra Angelico, *The Coronation of the Virgin* (c. 1450). Tempera and gold on panel, 213 x 211 cm.
Musée du Louvre, Paris. © Photo RMN / © Hervé Lewandowski.

of visual knowledge. Overall, a Life never completely estranges the biographical from the artistic. In endeavoring to narrate the artist's life and works together, it postulates an analogical correlation between them.

From Giotto to Raphael and Michelangelo, artists are represented by Vasari as individuals who experienced a process of becoming that underpinned both their lives and their works. Doing one's work, following one's path to its end, can be seen as the crucial parable of a Life. For Vasari, artistic talent could be an innate part of human nature, even though it requires study and cultivation. He believed that the history of an artist—from providential birth through formative youth to efflorescence in adulthood—was the fulfillment of his natural inclination.³⁴ This belief affected Vasari's appreciation of an artist's works, and led him to place their artistic and natural developments on a more or less equal footing. In Vasari's view, just as the biographical identity is circumscribed by the boundaries of the human life cycle and is impelled by the artist's urge to pursue his own bent, so the development of the artistic identity depends on time and reflects a lifelong process of becoming; it is subject to the natural laws of growth and clearly shaped by the artist's talent.

It would be misleading to conflate Vasari's idea of individual progression with conceptions of personal identity conveyed through notions such as those of subjectivity, selfhood, *Bildung*, and personal realization that became current later in Western culture and would figure heavily later on in the history of the artist's monograph. Nonetheless, a fundamental trait of a Vasarian Life is that its analogical structure, twinning the biographical and artistic domains, formulates the view that an artist's identity is dependent upon a series of interactions between being and doing. In fact, a Life encircles the genericness and the distinctiveness of a life by fusing who the artist was and what he did, his genetic *fatum* and his personal destiny. Because of its double articulation, the model prefigured by the Vasarian archetype could transmigrate in time and be radically transformed according to key concerns of the romantic and postromantic eras: from the characterization of the artist as a paradigmatic achiever of self-definition to the search for a comprehensive unity between art and being and the endeavor to capture artistic creations as true forms of life. It is a model that can fulfill the expectations of a renewed interest in the domain

of the individual and the diverse modes of being human. As such, it opened the consideration of artworks to a space of indeterminacy upon confrontation with questions of identity or attempts to define human subjectivity—who someone is.

Circa 1800: The Artist's Monograph Becomes a Genre

Although Vasari published in separate book form two of his biographical texts from the 1568 edition of *The Lives*—*La vita del gran Michelangelo* and a revised version of the Life of Jacopo Sansovino³⁵—it was the type of collective history of artists devised by Vasari that had a following among both Italian and foreign writers.

The idea of devoting a book to an individual artist became current only much later in Europe, certainly not before the turn of the nineteenth century.³⁶ Earlier endeavors in this direction were sporadic and undeveloped. Pierre-Jean Mariette, the finest connoisseur of drawing in eighteenth-century Paris, apparently thought of writing a biography of Raphael, but the book never saw the light and only a fragment survives as a sign of his plan.³⁷ The artist's monograph began to develop into a true, independent genre in the literature of art because of the conjunction of multiple forces, which the life-and-work model in turn absorbed and transmuted while shaping its own understanding of both artists and artworks.

During the early decades of the nineteenth century, even though the concept of “the Renaissance” had not yet wholly entered into historical consciousness,³⁸ the art of the Renaissance was the subject of renewed interest, particularly invested in the towering figures of Raphael, Michelangelo, Correggio, Titian, and Leonardo. The works of these artists were admired and written about by amateurs and professional writers, sought after by collectors, widely reproduced by means of prints, and displayed for public view in the ambitious national museums created in France, Germany, Italy, and England. Propelled by the advent of new taxonomies in natural history (notably the binomial classifications of genus and species introduced by Linnaeus and Buffon) and the rise of historicism, innovative criteria guided the display of artworks in these galleries. Art-

works were no longer arranged in terms of genre and subject matter, but were shown in ways explicitly designed to illustrate the history of individual artists and schools.³⁹ Accordingly, the study of that history implied returning to *The Lives* and expanding the reports given by Vasari. It meant evaluating pictures, identifying the originals, establishing facts, searching out documents, and amending and reconsidering the sources. In the hands of biographers and critics, local historians, new art historians, and connoisseurs, the writing of the life and works of the artist—published as an independent book—gradually acquired preeminence as a valuable means of reconstructing the art of the past.

The birth of public museums played a role in the formation of new ideas about the nature of artworks, yet it also had the effect of removing the art from its historical context and depriving it of its indigenous meanings and functions.⁴⁰ In a museum, paintings and sculptures could be judged—not only as portraits, landscapes, or historical subjects, but also as they seemed to reveal art itself—as “absolute masterpieces” belonging to history and to the history of art and yet capable of transcending time. These perceptions of the past affected the practice of contemporary art as well, fostering among artists the dream (or myth) of an absolute art as well as the compulsive attempts to achieve the impossible: works that would finally materialize the idea of art itself.⁴¹

Such a shift paralleled the concomitant recognition of the specificity of the individual arts. During the second half of the eighteenth century, the grounds were laid for the foundation of a “modern system of the arts”: neat distinctions were introduced among the practices of painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and poetry, at the same time as a distinction was postulated between the specific domain of the arts—understood as works of autonomous creation—and that of craft, understood as works of manual labor and utilitarian purpose.⁴² The public museums as well as the system of the “arts” both reflected and reinforced the growing sense that the creation of art occurs in a realm of its own characterized by internal, aesthetic elements and specific laws of development. At the same time, less felicitously, both production and reception of works of art became subject to a narrowly defined scope of art. Whereas the ancients had seen art in very general terms as the generative force or potential of a human activity distinct from the activity of nature, and the Renaissance kept

the boundary between art and nature open, in the eighteenth century art was distinguished not only from other more or less specialized fields of human endeavor but also from the world of life.⁴³

From the outset, the monograph resisted the implications of the modern system of the arts, which sharply divided craft from art and marked off rigid boundaries between disciplines based on their specific medium, aesthetic worth, uses, and canons of taste. The monograph could not systematically confine itself to these categories of classification. To trace the continuity between the work of creation and the processes of living, the model often revived and charged with new meaning the ancient view of art as a generative principle potentially exceeding the object. Indeed, it was both untimely and necessary for the monograph to advocate a sense of art *tout court*, freed from exclusive evaluations of medium and artistry,⁴⁴ and each time proposed anew by the discovery of the discrete manifestations of the singular existent.

Equally significant, the monograph revealed an ambivalent stance toward the perception of art as an autonomous activity. On the one hand, practitioners of the genre endorsed a number of notions and attitudes clearly developed to claim the primacy of art for its own sake. Since monographs were often intended to demonstrate the perfection of Renaissance masters or to suggest the equal worth of more recent artists, their authors had to adopt a language capable of communicating the sense of formal proficiency, while also arguing for the intrinsic merits of the artist's works, comparing them with those of other masters and illustrating the degree of success an individual artist had achieved in the respective departments of drawing, color, and composition. On the other hand, the very act of narrating the life and works of an artist together, along with subsequent attempts to reconstruct the entirety of his production or to link that production to the dimensions of biography and history, led monographers into a different realm. In that realm, artworks could hardly inspire the same responses as when admired within the closed walls of a museum. In place of the museum's privileging of skillful achievements and visions of masterpieces alone, the monograph presented a complex web of data that illuminated the artworks' capacity to signify human subjectivity, materialize the dynamic flux of life, seek cultural fluency in the world, and expose the stylistic, thematic, and emotional qualities of

authorship. Sometimes unwittingly, the monograph in its development challenged or even radically subverted the idea that art is autonomous by introducing elements of excess and disturbance to any supposition of autonomy. More significantly still, the monograph displayed a persistent though utopian tendency to refute the separateness of the artworks as isolated objects made by isolated subjects in the world. Whereas the view of art as an autonomous activity sought to establish a fixed characterization of artistic essence, the monograph upset this view through its restless interrogation of the singularity and mutability over time of artworks, oeuvres, and artists.

After the French Revolution, as they found that they could live without the patronage of princes, the state, and the academy, artists were both allured by the prospect of absolute freedom and confronted with the social, political, and cultural uncertainty of making a living by art. Artists suddenly had to curry favor not with a single financial supporter but with the anonymous and fickle art market, raising the issue of artistic legitimation.⁴⁵ It felt natural therefore for artists to ask themselves questions about the meaning of their own activity as well as that of their predecessors. While the artistic achievements of the Renaissance provided models and inspiration for artists, their own age appeared as a time of great instability, in which artists had to fight for recognition and for the right to independent growth.

In this context, the image of modern artists as individuals both liberated and isolated by the loss of institutional support took shape. Some of the early monographs both captured and shaped this state of affairs, as in the case of the *Leben* of Asmus Jakob Carstens, published in 1806 by Carl Ludwig Fernow. Defiantly opposed to working under the control of the state and the academy, Carstens had endured a life of vexation and poverty. Crediting the artist for his uncompromising pursuit of freedom, Fernow claims that genuine artistic activity is bound to meet restraints and that martyrdom is the test of any true artist.⁴⁶ He also argues that Carstens made outstanding works because he struck out on his own self-reliant path without models and academic training.⁴⁷

The emergence of the figure of the “free” artist went hand in hand with a new understanding of what it meant to be an artist. Only at the

end of the eighteenth century did the word “artist” acquire the meaning it still holds today. Previously, there had been no neat distinction between “artisan” and “artist,” and the two words were interchangeable in the literature. Meanwhile, the word *artefice* (adopted also by Vasari in *The Lives*) was often preferred to specify painters, sculptors, and architects.⁴⁸ The later introduction of the word “artist” to designate the practitioners of the visual arts answered, at least initially, the need to differentiate the activities of professionals and academics from those of artisans. Very soon, however, “artist” underwent another transformation, becoming a term that could go beyond, and even oppose, the values of professionals, academics, and artisans alike. It came to define the author of a work of art as a “creative” individual, emphasizing the high degree of freedom, imagination, and personality implied in the “work” of creation as against other kinds of work: not only the strictly manual domain of craftsmanship or the allegedly “normative” practice of academics, but also the abstract labor of workers subjected to the system of impersonal, mechanical production with the advent of industrial capitalism.

Within this frame of discourse, around 1800 the life-and-work model came to be used to legitimate the activity of contemporary artists and to reconsider that of the old masters. The model, in other words, was well suited to reveal and account for the internal, subjective dynamics of creation, which had become a major concern of contemporary art and thought. In particular, in comprehending the life and works of the artist as a narrative, the monograph made sense of who an artist is by looking at both creative and biographical processes. The monograph, accordingly, either validated contemporary artists’ efforts to legitimize their works through the testimony of lives genuinely lived for art, or approached the Renaissance artists on the basis of emerging notions of subjectivity and creativity.

As the turn of the nineteenth century witnessed a strong resurgence of interest in what an artist is, some of the implications of the literary pattern handed down by *The Lives* could be expounded. Vasari’s book was reprinted, reedited, and translated throughout Europe.⁴⁹ All this unprecedented attention paid to the Vasarian prototype did not, however, preclude departures from it or the development of other methods of inquiry.

One of the differences between Vasari and later monograph authors was the latter's pursuit, albeit discontinuous at the beginning, of a different conception of the relationships among art, biography, and history. From its release in 1764, Johann Joachim Winckelmann's *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* was perceived as superseding previous modes of writing about the visual arts. A new awareness grew of the artistic phenomenon as historically and culturally grounded, something that could not be apprehended according to judgments of taste or aesthetic rules alone, much less based solely on the life of the artist. Winckelmann himself was critical of mere biography in the study of the visual arts. He wanted to overcome what he saw as the shortcomings of those collections of artists' biographies that proliferated after Vasari and to open up the field of inquiry to a general history of art.⁵⁰ His views brought about a reorientation of the literature of art, broadening its scope and fostering new methods. However, they were not always received as a complete rebuttal of the life-and-work model. New studies inspired by Winckelmann were undertaken without demeaning the centrality of the artist. While some early monographs were oblivious to this paradigmatic change, in others the issue came to the fore: the art of the past was approached with the view that artists are the ultimate sources of the artistic phenomenon and are units upon which to base the historical reconstruction of larger artistic traditions. In fact, it was in this frame of mind, and with explicit reference to Winckelmann's methodological break, that Gustav Friedrich Waagen conceived his *Ueber Hubert und Johann van Eyck*, one of the most remarkable monographs of the early 1800s.

Connoisseurship, while helping to objectify the gist of the Vasarian model, also augmented the divide between Vasari and later writers of the monograph. For Vasari, the belief that artists have a visual identity was no doubt paramount, and there are cases in which he describes that identity on the basis of his own inspection of the original artworks. However, in the period between Vasari and later authors, a number of writers—from Giulio Mancini to Jonathan Richardson—further refined methods and tenets of the practice of attribution.⁵¹ Moreover, the nineteenth century, especially its second half, witnessed a tremendous increase of interest in the theory and practice of connoisseurship. For some monographers, the firsthand investigation of the artworks was an indispensable step prior

to the writing of an artist's life and works. Accordingly, they undertook difficult journeys to view all of an artist's works in order to ascertain their authenticity, discriminate originals from copies and school works, and acquire the kind of knowledge that would enable them to compile a chronological catalogue of the artist's production. By means of this systematic procedure, the visual recognition of authorship proposed by Vasari finally became a crucial component of the modern monograph and deeply affected both its form and discourse.

Though he focused on the particularity of each master, Vasari was eager to show a uniform course of history, a genealogy interconnecting the deeds of the *artefici* from Giovanni Cimabue and Giotto to Michelangelo and after.⁵² The writers of the monograph increasingly explored the discrete, irreducible aspects of oneness of an artist's works. Viewed in retrospect, their books question, if they don't actually undermine, the faith in the chronological reconstruction of broad artistic contexts and traditions. The nineteenth-century monograph, that is, envisions artists and artworks as points of excess and instability that cannot be squeezed into a totalizing frame of history and art history. It suggests that the dialectic between art and reality be understood by regarding artworks and oeuvres as condensing many dimensions and ultimately presenting the characteristics of a living entity. This last point brings up yet another significant divide between Vasari and later monographers. For Vasari, his fellow artists and predecessors had made the visual arts a perfectible means of representing reality. Relying upon sensory perception, specific rules and techniques, judgments, and values, art could be appreciated as a practice of mediation between the artist's skills and inventiveness and the outside realm of nature represented. For Vasari, then, paintings and sculptures were commendable above all for their capacity to evince qualities of artistry and formal accomplishment. In the nineteenth-century monograph, on the other hand, precisely this sense of art as intermediation between author and world, image and reality, was upset by references to the multidimensional character of artworks, to their dual faculty of engendering and manifesting the immanent traces of a subjectivity in the making. The monograph could ascribe lifelike qualities to the works and artlike qualities to the life of the artist. Vasari's interest in representation was replaced by an interest in embodiment and visual incarnation.

Finally, the nineteenth-century monograph also reworked some of Vasari's premises on the definition of human subjectivity. A sense of personal inwardness, expressive self-articulation, and probing into the intimate spaces of a human being and its multiple facets were all crucial factors in the creation of the modern notion of selfhood.⁵³ They were relevant sources in both the nineteenth-century monograph's progressive realization of the model originated in *The Lives* and its departures from it. *The Lives* discusses artistic achievements and epiphanies of identity without always illuminating the mechanisms underpinning their interconnection. By thinking of a Life as disclosure and fulfillment of the artist's natural inclination, Vasari paved the way for equating work and identity. But he did not necessarily associate the artist's inclination with a highly personalized inner space. In Vasari's *Lives*, that is, there are only rudimentary perceptions of a living force embedded in existence and reflected in the artwork, inextricable from the creative process and simultaneously propulsive of individuality, of what in later times would be called the reality of a human subject. Nineteenth-century monographers, on the other hand, would look more and more closely into that reality as they systematically tackled issues of identity ranging from problems of authorship to reconstructions of biography and personality.

This inquiry into the reality of a human subject suggests some of the reasons why, although they did not entirely ignore the importance of skills and formal proficiency, nineteenth-century monographers nonetheless emphasized freedom of expression and sought increasingly to approach creations of art as sites of singularities, incarnations of selfhood. In so doing, they abandoned Vasari's preoccupation with artistic canons in the estimation of the artist's rendering of the outside world. They also challenged the widespread view among their contemporaries that artworks, as objects autonomous from reality, should be ranked according to their art historical relevance, aesthetic value, technical merits, and power of mimesis. In fact, as issues of identity and "someoneness" became crucial or even overcame other kinds of preoccupations, the monograph deepened its focus on the thin divide between life and work. It looked for places where the biographical and artistic realms could be reunited. The artwork stopped appearing as a means of representation—the duplicate of a world out there or the mirror of a subject's preexisting creation—to

reveal its potential as the vessel of life and the site of a presence coming to being and disseminating itself into the world.

Furthermore, the nineteenth-century monograph deployed some of the recent theories about genius in order to illuminate a creative realm of the identity. No longer viewed as a gift coming from outside, mysteriously exceeding the boundaries of the human, genius became during the eighteenth century and especially with Kant an intellectual quality belonging to the individual alone.⁵⁴ In *The Critique of Judgment* (1790), Kant placed the activity of the genius above any norm or given formulas. Because talent is an innate productive faculty of the artist, Kant argued, genius is “the innate mental aptitude through which nature gives the rule to art.” What characterized the genius of the artist was the capacity to present “aesthetic ideas” originated by the imagination and accessible by means of intuition, yet lacking any corresponding rational concepts. This idea of genius articulated a key point in the modern understanding of identity: the originality of the natural endowments of an individual freely engaged in the employment of his cognitive faculties.⁵⁵ Kant’s arguments affected the discourse about the visual arts both by linking genius and art with the subjective power of imagination and by enabling a special understanding of art, artist, and work as being completely at one with the flux of life and nature.

The romantics soon radicalized certain aspects of Kantian aesthetics. Whereas Kant had located aesthetics and art within well-defined compartments, thus reinforcing the distinction between artistic practice on the one hand and philosophy and other human undertakings on the other, the romantics looked for new all-encompassing principles of identity. They invoked the idea of a natural dynamic that reveals itself in subjectivity as well as in the work of art as a moment in the life of the genius. The doctrine of genius—one who manifests the absolute confluence between art and being—provided a means of overcoming the dichotomy between nature and art.⁵⁶ This imagined confluence—the dream at the heart of the romantic enterprise—spurred the adoption of the life-and-work model, which by its dual structure commingling both doing and being “proved” that the work of genius and imagination does not pertain to an autonomous domain.

With the advent of the romantic era, the idea of the becoming of the artist in life and art conveyed in Vasari's *Lives* was conceived as the natural flow that animates life as much as art while conflating both. To write a monograph, then, was to think the works into the life and the life into the works. The monographers gradually demonstrated that the analogical structure of the life-and-work model could capture a multifocal movement in which each element, whether pertaining to the life or to the work, could move between the two realms, intersect with other elements, and metamorphose itself in the reconstruction of an artist's history. The evolution of the monograph structure also demonstrated that the artist's natural inclination and talent—something that Vasari had spoken of—instead of denoting a tacit substratum, could be seminal notions in conceptualizing how and why a living force materializes itself in an artwork. Some monographs of the early nineteenth century sought to describe the artist in terms of genius or to interpret the artworks in their anthropocentric and inspirational aspects. In the next chapter, I will look in greater detail at some of the key monographs from this period.

In the last decades of the eighteenth century, Europe's intellectual and cultural map changed significantly. The idea of the individual in history and nature was redefined by the agendas of the free democratic states, the politics of national identity, the repeated calls for social emancipation, and new avenues of thought. The world appeared less and less to be ruled by immutable laws. From Herder and Rousseau to Goethe and Hegel, the individual was no longer qualified by the power of detached rational control over reality. Another horizon of intelligibility had emerged: the individual was seen as forming itself via self-recognition and the recognition of others. As the agent of absolute mobility of sense within itself and within the world, an individual came to be characterized by the experience of freedom and by the faculty of expressive self-articulation and understanding that manifested itself in language. Moreover, just as the natural philosophers of the period identified nature with the processes of life itself, so the romantics discovered the presence of a nature within and claimed that we could only know this nature by exploring and expressing what we found in ourselves. The search for an all-encompassing sense of

identity cast artistic phenomena in a totally different light. In one of its most extreme pronouncements, Schelling's *System des transzendentalen Idealismus* (1800), the claim was made that art alone could achieve the objectification of subjectivity because it gave concrete evidence of the unity of being that philosophy could only envision conceptually.

A key propellant of the culture of modern identity was the belief that as an individual one is called upon to realize one's own nature, to follow oneself and embody one's own originality, grasping one's personal history as a narrative of the ongoing process of becoming who one is. Self-discovery and definition require poesis, the act of creation in the full sense, and the ability to recognize meanings as inextricable from the experience of a human being. In this context, artistic creation appeared as the paradigmatic mode through which one could fulfill one's own humanity and the inner potentials of humankind. The artist became the paradigm of a human being, the true achiever of self-definition.⁵⁷ These notions applied to all kinds of arts, visual and otherwise, past and present. The nascent monograph in various ways endorsed and refined them while reviving the histories of both Renaissance and modern artists. In so doing, the new genre conceived the double bind of life and work as something fully reflected in the art. It eventually evolved into a genre of writing that equated art with the immanent plan of existence itself and that examined the emergence of the artist within the practice of artistic creation and through a continuous engagement with the very sense of being an individual.

The individualistic stance that pervaded the nineteenth-century monograph internalized and reciprocated the pivotal association between modernity and subjectivity. Writing an artist's monograph meant not only bringing that association into the discourse of the visual arts but also construing it in ways that disclosed artistic practice as the forum of both aspirations and tensions evoked by the idea of subjectivity. In its own terms and from its own standpoint, the writing of an artist's life and works showed how and why that idea could be the forefront of a new vision of nature and history as well as the motif of endless interrogation and dissemination of self. The monograph turned artworks, oeuvres, and artists into the fulcrum of a process entailing both production of sense and attes-

tation of existence, two dynamics through which the idea of subjectivity was simultaneously posited and questioned, revealed and fragmented.

Both as a form of writing and as a discourse, the nineteenth-century monograph never completely attached itself to a particular discipline; rather, it maintained a certain freedom of approach, absorbing and re-working the influences of different practices and discourses. On reflection, it is hardly a coincidence that the nineteenth-century authors of the monograph were not always orthodox art historians—according to our standards or to those of their own times. Rather, they were amateurs, autodidacts, biographers, art critics, museum curators, connoisseurs, artists' friends, and those art historians who were open to the potential uncertainties provoked by a confrontation with issues of identity. In its metamorphoses, the genre of the monograph was certainly tied up with the concurrent developments of art history and connoisseurship, and indeed shared and strengthened their aims and methods. But it also entertained a peculiar relationship with them because it often exceeded and even neglected some of their specialized concerns. The monograph was about aesthetic judgment, attribution, and art historical and historical explorations as much as it was about the sense of being in the world, the freedom of a life, and art as the avenue for becoming an individual. A monograph could praise the artist, disclose unpublished documents, merge stylistic and historical analyses, or produce a catalogue raisonné of the oeuvre. But it could also perceive forms as materializations of a self, connect visual elements and lived experience, or understand art, culture, and history in absolutely biographical terms. Although all this was not always done effectively, the monograph model was able to enter the territory of identity and authorship due to its polymorphous character, its verging between scholarly attitudes and imaginative approaches.

Bringing to fruition the dialectical gist of the Vasarian Life and at the same time introducing new issues, structuring the life-and-work model with unprecedented clarity and strength, the nineteenth-century monograph elaborated and maintained its own original stance. In retrospect, it is critically suggestive not only for the illuminations into the artworks and artists it provides, but also for the imaginative efforts and utopian drives

it conveys and for what it left undone. The polymorphous character of the life-and-work model and its methodological anarchism, and even the lack of expertise of some of its practitioners, helped shape the monograph's destiny. From the early nineteenth century, the monograph became a *sui generis* genre that could internalize and improve as much as question and defy a series of more or less dominant views of the visual arts. The monograph countered incipient art historical concerns with the reconstruction of the past in terms of large stylistic, geographical, and cultural traditions, revealing instead a "remainder" that eludes that formulation and makes itself known only in the singularities of artists, artworks, and oeuvres. It also opposed the widespread notion of art as an autonomous activity with the idea that art and life are irreducibly interconnected. Indeed, in its most radical pronouncements, the nineteenth-century monograph called into question the separateness of artworks and the boundaries of art. And, in spite of the new hegemony of the modern system of individual arts, the monograph indicated that what qualifies as "artistic" cannot be grasped merely through evaluation of a medium (i.e., painting, sculpture)—and also undermined the very distinctions among the arts by reclaiming the primacy of art in general, the idea of art as a generative force of human activity.

One Artist Only

2

Narratives: Endurance and Metamorphosis

As it was adopted and adapted all over Europe in an increasing number of books, the Vasarian form of writing shifted its focus, structure, purpose, and methods. In its early phases, the form was simply reiterated, and even scaled back, before actually undergoing innovative, meaningful change.

How the monograph model was applied or transformed depended on factors such as the availability of sources and documents about an artist and the writer's willingness or ability to assess the visual character of the artist's work. Moreover, the parallel domains of life and work called for specific kinds of investigation. On the one hand, the study of the artist's life relied upon facts and weighed the evidence contained in documents and literary traditions. On the other hand, the writer evaluating artworks had to come to terms with their visual properties: not only making judgments of taste but also tackling issues of attribution, style, and chronology, and analyzing individual works by the artist as well as the body of work as mediums of agency and humanity.

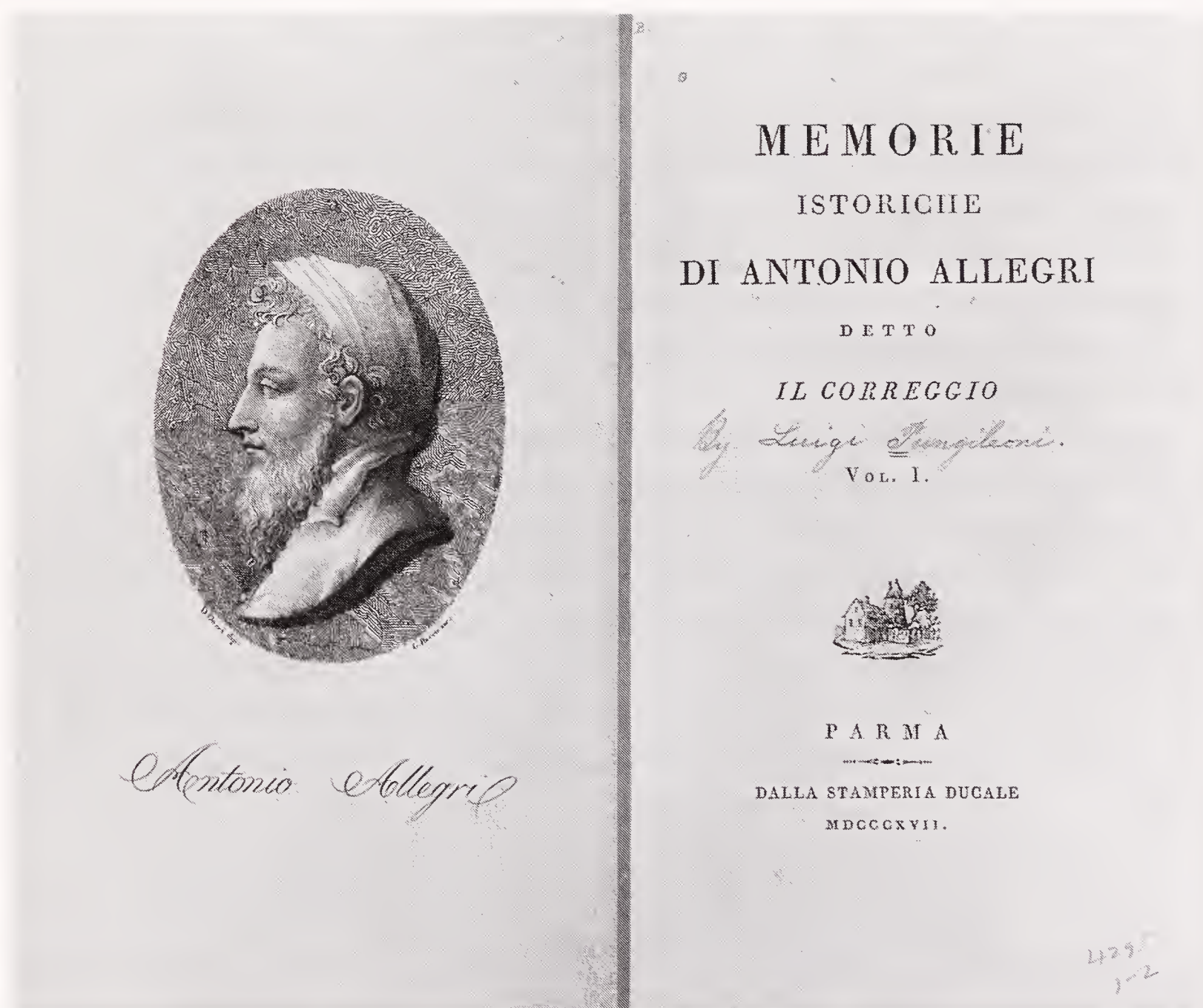
Around 1800, the writing of a "life and works" tended to be unidimensional, trusting in the empirical aspects of the model. The practitioners of the genre reconstructed the biographical and artistic domains without necessarily exploring their interdependence. Assuming a parallelism between life and works, their narratives favored written above visual evidence, judgments of taste above problems of attribution and art historical insights. Some writers concerned with the old masters regarded

Vasari's *Lives* as a source that required correction, augmentation, and re-interpretation. Others limited their task to narrating the life and works by assembling all available materials on an artist. Most writers conducted their research by looking at print reproductions and reading about the artworks rather than traveling to investigate the originals.

This approach to research was particularly the case in Italy. From the eighteenth century, the antiquarian tradition that flourished there was concerned primarily with organizing libraries and writing local histories (often including artists). Working within that tradition, writers producing monographs on Renaissance artists spent most of their time hunting down previously unknown documents and perusing the past literature as well as obscure sources in order to produce a more trustworthy "life and works." The result was a kind of book that, while it sifted truth from received notions, neglected the visual domain of inquiry. These writers were guided neither by connoisseurship nor historical and art historical interests but by a concern with factual knowledge and an unrestrained reliance on written evidence, with biography as the primary focus. While their publications questioned the accuracy of Vasari's reports, they naturally (and uncritically) internalized the dual structure of life and works found in *The Lives*.

Nonetheless, it was in this context that the monograph first proved it could be a valid means of assessing historical specifics. The *Memorie storiche* of Leonardo da Vinci by Carlo Amoretti (1741–1816), a librarian at Milan's Biblioteca Ambrosiana since 1797, showed that the model could fulfill this documentary function. Issued in 1804 along with a reprint of Leonardo's treatise on painting edited by Amoretti,¹ the *Memorie* echoed the contemporary reappraisal of Leonardo as an extraordinary polymath and added substantially to the body of knowledge about the Renaissance master. It remained an important reference work for decades.²

Yet faith in documents became almost obsessive with Luigi Pungileoni (1762–1844), a philologist and student of theology who wrote various books on individual masters of the Renaissance.³ In Pungileoni's *Memorie istoriche di Antonio Allegri detto il Correggio* (fig. 2.1),⁴ Correggio's identity is illuminated through a painstaking scrutiny of all available materials, especially written sources, rather than through his art. Pungileoni compensated for his lack of art historical grasp and connoisseurship with a



2.1 Frontispiece and title page of Luigi Pungileoni's *Memorie storiche di Antonio Allegri detto il Correggio* (Parma, 1817–1821). Courtesy of Harvard Fine Arts Library.

massive exhibition of data: he indexed all the written references that mentioned Correggio's name even obliquely.

Instead of reinforcing its analogical structure, Pungileoni revives the Vasarian mold by sharpening its focus on the factual dimension. He casts Correggio more as an empirical author than as an individual operating both inside and outside the artistic realm. Though Pungileoni pays attention to the artworks, referring to the views of accredited writers such as Anton Raphael Mengs, he is often unable to trace or date them and, mystified by the numerous contradictory attributions, resorts to introducing a work and simply enumerating the different opinions regarding its authenticity. The overall effect is that the works are treated as episodes of the artist's life and hardly ever as capable in themselves of revealing something about their maker.

A slightly different scenario presents itself in the Italian monographs on contemporary artists published about the same time. For example, after the death of Antonio Canova in 1822, quite a few books were released, in Italy and abroad, devoted to his life and works.⁵ Canova had been widely admired in Europe because of both the cosmopolitan appeal of his sculptures and his affiliation with Napoleon: the emperor commissioned several works by the Italian master and appointed him head of the Accademia di San Luca in Rome. Though he was papalist and pro-Venetian in life, in death Canova's charismatic figure stirred feelings of national identity throughout Italy. It was not long before his memory was co-opted by the Risorgimento, which cast him as a symbol of opposition to foreign domination and the political status quo.⁶ Indeed, a year before the artist's death, Isabella Teotochi Albrizzi had already colored his works with political overtones and had even described the *Theseus and the Dead Minotaur* of 1781–1783 as an allegory of the *patria* defeating an enemy.⁷

Francesco Leopoldo Cicognara's *Biografia di Antonio Canova* (1823) is a brief but insightful book, with an appendix containing a catalogue of works compiled by Canova himself, samples of his letters, and a report on his final illness. Cicognara (1767–1834) was a critic, art historian, diplomat, and patriot as well as a personal friend of the artist.⁸ Eager to depict the protagonist's life and character vividly, Cicognara relied partly upon personal reminiscences. He underscores Canova's originality and strong

will in autonomously pursuing the path indicated by the ancients, from which his contemporaries had departed.

Cicognara describes Canova's working method in detail, both to demonstrate his proficiency and professionalism and to try to divine the mechanism of the artist's creative process. He emphasizes the pervasiveness of Canova's authorship, maintaining that Canova personally carried out all the finishing work, that he alone was able to give his statues the "sweetness of contours" that makes them so outstanding.⁹ As for Canova the man, Cicognara portrays the most salient facets of his person—his modesty, faith in friendship, and love for women—but also conveys a vision of Canova as an individual absorbed above all in his work and intensely devoted to art.¹⁰ One memorable episode of Canova's biography that Cicognara recounts is his successful embassy to Paris in 1810 to ask Napoleon and the French government for the return of artworks they had removed from Italian soil. Although Cicognara does not explore the political implications of the episode, he clearly strikes a note of patriotism in calling Canova a "worthy son of Italy" as well as a skilled diplomat.¹¹

When they explore the artistic sphere of the life-and-work model and discuss the artist's works, the early monographers often do so mainly through the lens of preconceived aesthetic criteria. Such was the case with the first attempt in England to document the life and works of a Renaissance master: the 1806 *Life of Michel Angelo Buonarroti with His Poetry and Letters* by Richard Duppa (1770–1831), a draftsman and eclectic writer on botanical, artistic, and political topics.¹² Enriched with reproductions of Michelangelo's works, pictures executed from his designs, and facsimiles of his poetry and letters, Duppa's *Life* drew from the two major biographers of Michelangelo, Ascanio Condivi and Vasari, as well as from other contemporary writers, such as Francesco Guicciardini and Niccolò Machiavelli, to illuminate the historical circumstances of the artist's life and works.¹³ Though affected by tendentious verdicts on Michelangelo, Duppa's work succeeded in disseminating foreign materials in a country where there was a marked interest in the art of the Italian Renaissance and particularly in Michelangelo.¹⁴

Evaluating the artworks through the bias of his neoclassical views, Duppa could not help comparing the overexpressive sculptures of Michel-

angelo with the formal correctness of those of antiquity. The Sistine ceiling intrigued him, but his attention shifted from the Michelangelesque theophany to “the smaller domestic compositions in the lunettes, where, to the most homely and familiar scenes, he has given an air of greatness, without extravagance or diminution of their natural simplicity, in a style which defies competition.”¹⁵ And whereas Vasari wrote of the *Last Judgment* that the “awesomeness and grandeur of this painting . . . are so overwhelming that it defies description,” for Duppa the fresco presages Michelangelo’s artistic decline.¹⁶

Despite these uneven judgments, the *Life* was unprecedented in terms of scope and amount of materials discussed. Equally significant, it bears evidence of the monograph genre’s capacity to situate the artist within the realm of common culture. Welcomed as “the most complete life of Michel Angelo Buonarroti that had ever been presented to the public,”¹⁷ the *Life* became a popular hit and provided English readers with their fullest introduction to the artist for at least fifty years.

Titian was next. In 1829 there appeared in London the anonymous *Notices of the Life and Works of Titian*, a monograph that reflected a different use of the life-and-work model. The author of this “collection of valuable materials relating to the life and labours of Titian”¹⁸ was Sir Abraham Hume (1749–1838). A lover of the arts and a discriminating collector, Hume had first been attracted to Dutch and Flemish paintings but turned to Italian art when visiting Italy in 1769 and again in 1800. The *Death of Actaeon* (now at the National Gallery of London) was among the many paintings by Titian and other Italian masters that he managed to purchase.¹⁹

The *Notices* are more the work of a classifier than a biographer. They contain the kind of information that must have appeared paramount to a collector who had been longing for Titians for nearly fifty years. The book opens with a narrative of the life and works that mainly surveys Titian’s production, at times reinforcing the descriptions of his pictures with biographical data and a few anecdotes. The narrative soon gives way to lists and thematic sections. After enumerating the painter’s known sitters, Hume lists the portraits, pictures, and drawings dispersed among private collections, especially in Italy. He follows this with mention of the pictures left unfinished, further works recorded in the literature, and

self-portraits and portraits of Titian. Hume acknowledges the imperfections of his difficult undertaking.²⁰ Without attempting to date all the works, he transcribes all relevant data from the catalogues of the major European galleries and collections, often indicating not only their subjects, mediums, and sizes, but even the prices they had fetched at the collection's sale and the names of the buyers.²¹ Hume completes the inventory with an appendix of ninety-four pages containing a thematic catalogue of the engravings after Titian's works in the royal library at Paris.

Unlike Duppa's, Hume's readership was limited to a handful of amateurs and collectors like himself. Yet he fulfilled his goal of classifying the artist's production, as much as possible without traveling to inspect and authenticate the works ascribed to Titian. Almost half a century later, the coauthors of an important monograph on the Venetian master, Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovan Battista Cavalcaselle, found Hume's lists of pictures and engravings "still useful."²²

In 1830, James Northcote (1746–1831) tried to supersede Hume by publishing *The Life of Titian, with Anecdotes of the Distinguished Persons of His Time*. This seemingly more ambitious monograph sought to narrate the artist's life and works by pulling together, translating into English, and commenting on all earlier sources. The narrative is saturated with remarks on Titian's achievements randomly cited and paraphrased from his contemporaries or modern authors such as Reynolds, Mengs, William Hazlitt, and Henri Fuseli. A painter and member of the Royal Academy since 1787, Northcote had previously written a biography of Reynolds, his late master and friend.²³ Having been in his youth Reynolds's assistant and housemate for five years, he exploited in *The Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds* the biographical technique introduced by James Boswell in his classic *Life of Johnson* (1791). Following Boswell, Northcote seems to make Sir Joshua paint his own portrait by the interpolation of letters, the use of anecdotes, and recollections by others. His later *Life of Titian* pursues a similar goal. Aiming at recounting Titian's life and works without losing sight of demonstrable facts, Northcote (like Boswell) lays the collected data before his readers as clues able to evoke the personality of the protagonist. Scattered throughout the narrative are numerous letters by Vasari (translated for the first time), Aretino, Michelangelo, and Titian himself, as well as anecdotes about the painter and characterizations of people who

became part of his life.²⁴ Yet, while Northcote's *Life of Reynolds* enacts at times the inductive procedure that generated Boswell's acclaimed effect of factual actuality, the historical distance as well as the lack of a dialogue with the sources jeopardize Northcote's similar attempt with Titian.²⁵

The biographical technique introduced by James Boswell in his *Life of Johnson* had an enormous influence in England.²⁶ In the literature of art, its methodology was especially inspiring and congenial for those monographs devoted to the artists of the recent past. With such artists as their topic, writers could access a wide range of materials and emulate Boswell's achievement, fully endorsing his tenet that biographers should report all kinds of information because, in the lives of great individuals, even trifles are noteworthy.²⁷ From the turn of the century to its end, artists' biographies with a strongly Boswellian cast flourished in England, including first studies of Reynolds, Gainsborough, Turner, Blake, and other British painters.²⁸ These books aimed at depicting the artist's character and representing everything about his life and professional achievements in a lively manner. The authors, who were professional biographers, painters, amateurs, friends, or relatives of the late artist, drew information not only from written sources but from witnesses and acquaintances, recounting actual conversations and anecdotes, and publishing original letters and documents.

One of the most suggestive specimens of this trend is the *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable* (1843) by Charles Robert Leslie (1794–1859).²⁹ Leslie, a painter and professor of painting at the Royal Academy, met Constable in 1811 (upon Leslie's return from America) and soon developed a close friendship with him. In the *Memoirs*, Leslie writes about things he knew from personal experience, uses his correspondence with Constable, and draws from documents and recollections of mutual friends who were part of Constable's private life and professional circle. Being an artist himself, Leslie could appreciate the significance of Constable's achievements.

What characterizes the *Memoirs* is Leslie's constant, almost obsessive use of personal documents. Unlike many monographers considered thus far, he did not rework the materials to give them a personal slant or a particular interpretation of his subject. Letters by and to Constable are

reproduced verbatim and make up the bulk of the book, inserted chronologically to “narrate” the life and works of Constable through his own words and through those of his correspondents.

Leslie writes that his intention is “to give an account of Constable’s life and occupations as much as possible in his own words.”³⁰ However, Leslie is not eclipsed by the volumes of data his monograph contains. Rather, his is a subtle work of selection, combination, and presentation of the materials. By limiting the presence of his own authorial voice, he not only foregrounds the essentials of the artist’s history but draws a likeness of Constable through the progressive interweaving of different viewpoints and reports. While successfully transplanting methods and techniques of the *Life of Johnson* into the literature of art, the *Memoirs* demonstrates how a narrative may emerge out of the careful interposition of oral and written sources. The life-and-work model is used here to register many voices while at the same time depicting a whole scenario of human and artistic activities. By including personal documents, Leslie’s monograph both evokes the events of a life, the milieu, and the character of Constable and reveals his attitudes toward art and some of the implications of his works.

While they established historical specifics, evoked the many facets of the artist’s life and character, and pursued aesthetic evaluations or rudimentary classifications of the artworks, early monographers also began to consider the artist as an authentic, original individual. To a limited degree, this view had been taken by Amoretti, who was not immune to the appeal of refashioning Leonardo as a universal man, and by Duppa, who wrote in a country where Michelangelo appeared as the highest specimen of the Renaissance man. Cicognara, moreover, clearly cast Canova as someone animated by unremitting faith in art. But the idea of the artist as a paradigmatic achiever of self-definition was to affect the monograph form in much deeper ways throughout the nineteenth century.

The idea found one of its earliest articulations in Carl Ludwig Fernow’s *Leben des Künstlers Asmus Jakob Carstens*, published in Leipzig in 1806, eight years after Carstens’s death. An art critic and theorist, Fernow (1763–1808) knew Carstens personally and was fascinated by his work.³¹ Carstens had an unusual career: he freed himself of the demands of pa-

trons and the weight of tradition and was also an artist-thinker, using his work to explore cosmological subjects and abstract Kantian themes of space and time. Fernow approved of Carstens's nonconformist stance and saw him as the quintessential example of the artist who fully trusted in his own genius and imagination.

The *Leben* of Carstens is critically suggestive in that it deliberately pursues a different application of the life-and-work model. Fernow was aware that modern artists yearned for independent development. Accordingly, he sought to legitimate Carstens's status by representing him as an exemplar, both as an artistic genius and as a man true to himself. In Fernow's monograph, we are invited to consider the artist as a unique individual and to appreciate the artworks as manifestations of a singularity of being.

From the outset of the *Leben*, Fernow gives priority to the works over the life: the real life of an artist is to be found not in biography but in the development of his natural tendencies and the progressive expression of his talent. External conditions are relevant only insofar as they hinder or promote the growth of an artist and his work. Fernow intends his *Leben* not as a eulogy of the artist, but rather as a faithful portrait of the "artistic life" of his friend. He laments that artists' biographies do not always investigate the artist's "aesthetic and artistic character."³² Fernow's *Leben* can in fact be read as an endeavor to fathom a space of interiority—the source of Carstens's agency, genius, and originality—and to use the perception of that space both as a means of explaining his art and biography, and as evidence of his freedom and search for self-realization.

Although he wished to illuminate Carstens's artistic identity, Fernow was aware that his friend had lived in a period of change for artists generally. Carstens's life was marked by hardship, isolation, and struggles for freedom. Based on Carstens's experience, Fernow develops the view that martyrdom is the ultimate test of whether an artist is genuinely guided by his vocation.³³ He describes a quarrel in 1795 between Carstens and the government minister von Heinitz, who expected the artist—while on sabbatical in Rome—to submit paintings to the Berlin Academy and reports to the Prussian government on a regular basis. He quotes Carstens's indignant reply to von Heinitz: "I must inform Your Excellence that I do not belong to the Berlin Academy but to humankind. . . . My abilities have been entrusted to me by God; I must make good use of them, so that

when the hour arrives to give account I do not have to say, Lord, I buried the talent you gave me in Berlin.”³⁴ With such testimony, as well as the artist’s self-consciousness of his radical stance and the originality of his works, Fernow uses Carstens to meditate on the present state of the visual arts and to envision how contemporary artists could resist the adversity of their fate and stand up to the pressures of the state.

Fernow underscores Carstens’s self-education and his ability to grow as an artist without pursuing the traditional means of professional legitimation. Carstens avoided any technical or academic training since the root of his creativity, Fernow claimed, was the “force of imagination,” the *Einbildungskraft* that Kant had attributed to genius. By thus depicting Carstens, Fernow opens the door to radical subjectivism in the use of the monograph. More than any writer I have discussed so far, he increases the genre’s focus on the idiosyncratic aspects of the artistic identity while at the same time ascribing to the artist the freedom and power of expressive self-articulation. Through this double move, Fernow shows that artistic creation is a continuous engagement with the very sense of being an individual, and casts Carstens as someone who, despite enormous hardship, was his own man, working always on his own terms.

In a less conspicuous way, the idea of the artist as achiever of self-definition arises again in Adam Weise’s monograph on Dürer, published in Leipzig in 1819. Weise had several motives for looking at the German master as an authentic, original individual. After Vasari and Carel van Mander,³⁵ the literature on Dürer increased little until the second half of the eighteenth century. The romantic rediscovery of Dürer as the personification of a visual tradition coexisting with the Italian and classical modes, but with its roots in northern and Gothic imagery, aided his reception. It absolved him of the charge that his work had been weakened due to poor study of either the Italian landscape or classical art—a charge voiced by Vasari, in the *Life of Marcantonio Raimondi*, but also made by later writers. It also led to his association with Raphael as twin carriers of different but equally valid art historical ideals.³⁶ The association found a powerful articulation in the romantic views of Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, especially in his famous vision of Raphael and Dürer standing hand in hand and gazing at their paintings hung side by side.³⁷

The rescue of Dürer from the dominant canons of Raphael, Correggio, Michelangelo, and Titian implies that, as the original interpreter of a northern artistic tradition, he was both an artist true to himself and a symbol of national identity. Weise's book on Dürer, the first scholarly monograph on the artist,³⁸ conveys both of these perceptions. Weise (1776–1835), a painter and engraver who from 1820 taught art history at the University of Halle, worked on his Dürer book by selecting and pulling together various sources to best render the artist's life and works.

Examining Dürer's art, Weise reiterates the kinship between Dürer and Raphael and maintains that, just as Raphael had outshone Perugino in Italy, so Dürer surpassed his teacher Michael Wohlgemuth in Germany. Dürer is cast as an artist who, disdaining imitation and trusting nature alone, showed a thoughtful, systematic attitude in whatever he did. By creating his own style and means of expression, he realized the profoundly German nature of his own artistic inclinations while staying true to himself. Many themes announced in the narrative—Dürer's capacity for abstracting himself from the misery of his life by creating another world through art, and his dedication to following his own inclination—return in Weise's general characterization of the artist. While Weise does not explicitly conflate the biographical and the artistic, he nevertheless suggests that Dürer's art can not be explained without taking his life into account.³⁹

Another study of Dürer's life and works during this period was never completed. In 1821, *Kunst-Blatt* announced that Joseph Heller planned to write on Dürer and was soliciting materials of almost any type.⁴⁰ Heller (1758–1849) was a private teacher in his hometown of Bamberg who devoted his spare time to the study and collection of art.⁴¹ His initial Dürer project was quite ambitious and is of interest here because it presupposed a merging of the monograph proper with the older genre of the catalogue raisonné. It was to be divided into three volumes: the first a narrative of the life and work, the second a catalogue of the works and writings, and the third a collection of Dürer's correspondence, his diary, and a miscellany of contemporary views on him. Heller published only the second of these books, but that itself was in three tomes, or "sections" as he called them, and amounted to more than a thousand pages.

Of the three sections of this second part of *Das Leben und die Werke Albrecht Dürer's*, two were released in 1827 and the third in 1831. The first

contains catalogues of the drawings, pictures, and supposedly authentic sculptures, which are exhaustive rather than selective.⁴² Since announcing his plan, Heller had spent the years accumulating materials in Bamberg and making a short journey to examine works at the Albertina in Vienna and in other print collections.⁴³ Except for this journey, Heller worked at home with free access to Dürer's prints, but was otherwise limited to published sources and letters from amateurs, friends, and patrons. He used all the written sources available to him, regardless of their reliability.⁴⁴

Heller's project on Dürer inspired an anonymous reviewer in *Kunst-Blatt* to ponder the state of the nascent monograph.⁴⁵ The reviewer writes that some books of this kind are mere collections of data; others show a deeper sense of history and aesthetics as writers examine the most outstanding and famous works, from which they infer the artist's significance, development, and technique.⁴⁶ The first type of book provides basic, often unpublished materials, and the second reworks the extant data, but the two approaches are seldom united. Describing the published parts of the Dürer monograph, the reviewer criticizes Heller for failing to include a chronology of the pictures, which would have provided a better historical context for Heller's overview and made it easier to appreciate the artist's evolution.⁴⁷

By determining the chronology of the artist's works, then, one might overcome the limitations of the two types of monograph that the reviewer defines. While the Vasarian Life foreshadowed the use of a dynamic, chronological reconstruction of an artist's works, by the early nineteenth century such a reconstruction appears to have become a necessary part of the monograph. This need was more pronounced in Germany than elsewhere in Europe because scholars in that country were as much concerned with connoisseurship as they were with historicism. Under the influence of Winckelmann's study on classical art and Carl Friedrich von Rumohr's essays on Renaissance art (about which I will say more later), the visual arts were increasingly seen in Germany as historically determined. The sense of a new *Kunstgeschichte* was taking shape. Accordingly, the monograph form nurtured the expectation in that country that a rigorous classification of the artworks would strengthen both the historical and the art historical nature of the model. In fact, the anonymous reviewer's argument maintains some of the same views of the

monograph that underlie a significant study of the Van Eycks published in Germany a few years earlier.

Waagen's Study of the Van Eycks

Gustav Friedrich Waagen's *Ueber Hubert und Johann van Eyck* (1822, fig. 2.2) reflects a paradigmatic break that affected writing about the visual arts in Germany after Winckelmann's *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (1764). It exemplifies the introduction of methods of historical analysis into the literature of art at the turn of the nineteenth century and the subsequent shift from aesthetic, normative ways of looking at the visual arts to a critical understanding of their historical, cultural, and art historical nature.⁴⁸

Waagen (1794–1868) was an eminent figure in nineteenth-century art history.⁴⁹ Called to Berlin in 1823 on the strength of his Van Eyck monograph, Waagen was engaged there in cataloguing the old masters' works lately acquired by the Prussian state from the English collector Edward Solly. Seven years later, when a new museum of painting designed by Karl Friedrich Schinkel was completed, Waagen was named its first director. In 1844, he became professor of art history at the Berlin University. The directorship of the Berlin museum, which he kept until the end of his life, allowed Waagen to travel throughout Europe, learning about painting through personal scrutiny of the original works. Waagen's travels resulted in the writing of two well-documented books, his *Kunstwerke und Künstler in England und Paris* and *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*.⁵⁰ His frequent visits to England after 1835, as well as the English tour of his friend Johann David Passavant (who, as we will see in chapter 3, was there researching his Raphael monograph in 1831), strengthened the cultural intercourse between the two countries, connecting the new trends in art historical studies practiced in Germany with the arena of taste and collecting that made England at that time one of the richest repositories of artworks.⁵¹

The novelty of the Van Eyck monograph, due to its thoroughness and specialized character, was recognized at that time by Sulpiz Boisserée, a passionate collector of Gothic and medieval art, who reviewed the book for *Kunst-Blatt*. Throughout the century and even after, Waagen's text continued to be perceived as the specimen of a new method.⁵²

Ueber
Hubert und Johann van Eyck.

Von
Dr. Gustav Friedrich Waagen,
correspondirendem Mitgliede der Königlich Bayerischen Akademie
der Wissenschaften.

Breslau.
Im Verlage von Josef Max und Comp.

1822.

2.2 Title page of Gustav Friedrich Waagen's *Ueber Hubert und Johann van Eyck* (Breslau, 1822).

Courtesy of Harvard Fine Arts Library.

Waagen had an unprecedented sense of the monograph's function in the literature of art. He recognized that early German and Netherlandish art still needed the kind of historical assessment that Carl Friedrich von Rumohr, by combining historical data and visual analysis, had given to Italian art of the Renaissance.⁵³ Waagen realized that this need could be fulfilled only by focusing on the unique qualities of individual masters. The monograph's role in the building of a new *Kunstgeschichte* was key. "Only by the accurate study of individual great masters and the close examination of short, important periods of time," he states in his book's forward, "can a true art history gradually develop."⁵⁴

His Van Eyck study turns the life-and-work model into a complex pattern of inquiry. It reinterprets and expands its dual structure, grounding art historical investigation in the correlation between the biographical and the artistic domains. The artist, instead of being eclipsed within this widened area of research, becomes for Waagen the basic unit of art historical inquiry.⁵⁵ Waagen intended his monograph on the two brothers to lay the groundwork for a general history of Netherlandish art. Accordingly, he proves that one can write a "life and works" that focuses on only one artist (or, in this case, two artists with a similar biography) while still incorporating the broader context informing the artist's activity.

In clarifying his methodological stance, Waagen maintains that people who write about the visual arts have to evaluate the relationship between art and nature and have to know artistic techniques in order to appreciate what art can do. He argues that this ability can be achieved only by looking at many artworks. Only after being schooled by this experience should one proceed to the written sources, because those who read too much before seeing the art would be incapable of reaching an unbiased view. Finally, a writer on art must also be versed to some extent in the history of politics, religion, and literature.⁵⁶

By emphasizing a visual knowledge of art, Waagen reveals a desire, quite foreign to the monographers of his time, to integrate seeing and reading in the study of the artist. Personal inspection of the pictures was paramount. Before writing *Ueber Hubert und Johann van Eyck*, Waagen tried to view as many of the extant works by the Van Eycks as possible.⁵⁷ Waagen's work can be considered the first monograph on a Renaissance master written by a connoisseur—that is, by a writer who pursued a

firsthand investigation of the original artworks and believed that an artist had inalienable traits and inner qualities that could be ascertained only by close inspection of his or her work.⁵⁸

Equally noteworthy, the protagonists of Waagen's narrative can be perceived as actors in both personal and collective history. The artist no longer appears as a Vasarian isolated individual accomplishing feats worthy of remembrance, but is shown to be a more or less conscious agent within a far-reaching web of relations. For example, Waagen's interest in identifying the historical agency of the artist is clear in his attempt to sift the truth from the presumably legendary accounts of Jan as the inventor of oil painting.⁵⁹ Waagen asserts that Jan deserved his fame among contemporaries for having discovered a way of mixing colors that would guarantee perfection in their technical application.⁶⁰ This feat, Waagen interestingly concludes, was not due to mere chance but was the outcome of the artist's endeavor to arrive at a faithful representation of nature.⁶¹

In ascribing Jan's innovative use of oil paint to his artistic motivations, Waagen casts the Flemish master as an engaged, creative individual and achiever of self-definition. He also reveals his view of art as a vehicle of the artist's intention—a view that had been articulated in the context of the romantic theory of art, notably by Friedrich Schlegel, who demanded that artworks be interpreted in this light.⁶² Waagen's recognition of the intentional aspects of artistic practice significantly aided historical analysis; it solved the problem of historical distance by surmising a dialogical plan in which the meanings and motivations of authors from the past could be seized and reenacted by later interpreters.

Waagen thus transformed the Vasarian biographical identity of the artist by means of a thorough inquiry that locates the artist historically and critically. He also judged the specific aspects of the artworks on the basis of direct observation, without the mediation of older sources. We see this new thinking at work when Waagen analyzes what he calls the "artistic character" (*künstlerischen Charakter*) of Jan van Eyck, whose achievements appeared far more conspicuous than those of Hubert.⁶³ Fernow also was interested in the "aesthetic" and "artistic" character of the artist, though he chiefly explored its inner mechanisms and driving forces. Waagen, instead, locates both the character and its coming into being in a broader territory, where there are ongoing interactions between inside and out-

side realms. The chapter on Jan's artistic character seeks a truth within the artist's production, and shows its interdependence with the artist's individuality as well as with his historical and art historical situation. Waagen uses both technical analysis and narrative descriptions. He notes recurrent qualities in pictures—such as expression, drawing, and colors⁶⁴—and recurrent subjects. Along with a continuity of religious themes, Jan's works reveal an inclination toward epics, most powerfully communicated by the altarpiece of the *Adoration of the Lamb* at Ghent (fig. 2.3), which connects the major episodes of Christianity. Just as Waagen sees Jan's use of oil painting as inseparable from his artistic intentions, so he perceives the themes favored by the painter as intimately connected with his individual being and experiences. Waagen argues that there was a harmony between the images presented in the works and the character of the artist. Though aware that the patron was far more likely than the painter to



2.3 Jan van Eyck, *Adoration of the Lamb*, detail from the Ghent altarpiece (1432). Oil on panel, 134.3 x 237.5 cm. Cathedral of St. Bavo, Ghent. © Scala / Art Resource, New York.

choose the theme of a painting, Waagen speculates that Jan's accomplishments in the field of religious art were possible because they reflected his religious creed.⁶⁵

Addressing his subject as a connoisseur would, Waagen was the first monographer to endeavor to reconstruct the chronology of the artist's works. This chronology, in the final chapter of *Ueber Hubert und Johann van Eyck*,⁶⁶ introduced a new way of cataloguing artists' works. The annotated lists or catalogues of works given in the monographs of the period (by Amoretti, Hume, Heller, etc.) were based on static classification criteria. Grouping the works in terms of place and collections, they neglected to address the works' chronology in depth, and so deprived the idea of authorship of one of its central features: its susceptibility to time. Waagen, on the other hand, adopted a dynamic mode of classification, one that took consistency, generation, and transformation of style as clues to the process of classification. In so doing, he established a network of connections linking one work to another, enabling one to perceive the artist's inner development over time.

In ordering the undated pictures, Waagen developed a system of stylistic cross-references.⁶⁷ His evaluation of the pictures relied upon a dialectical procedure—one that remains a basic technique of connoisseurship today. This procedure expands upon the idea, found in embryonic form in Vasari's *Lives*, that an artist undergoes a natural progression over the course of his working life that parallels that of his life and is subjected to the organic processes of growth that characterize life in general. Essential too to the dating of the Van Eycks' works was the corollary notion that stylistic similarities and differences reflect contiguity or gaps of time in their execution.

A good example of this approach is Waagen's discussion of *Saint Luke Painting Mary and the Child* in the Boisserée collection, even though it signals not only the characteristic reasoning of the connoisseurial practice but also its fragility and liability to errors since this painting, now at the Alte Pinakothek of Munich, has been reascribed to Rogier van der Weyden (fig. 2.4).⁶⁸ Waagen notes that, in spite of its being one of Jan's most excellent accomplishments in the depiction of the objects, and despite the clear, luxurious rendering of the colors, the painting nevertheless shows some mannerisms in the depiction of the clothes, a lack of skill in



2.4 Rogier van der Weyden (Circle of), *Saint Luke Painting the Madonna* (c. 1435). Oil on panel, 138.6 x 111.5 cm. © Bayerische Staatgemäldesammlungen, Alte Pinakothek, Munich.

drawing, and uncertainty in the postures. These shortcomings—added to the fact that Hubert, painted here in the guise of Saint Luke, looks younger than in his supposed portrait in the 1420–1426 altarpiece of the *Adoration of the Lamb* at Ghent—lead Waagen to conclude that the Boisseree picture must have been executed some time earlier than the more stylistically advanced Ghent altarpiece.⁶⁹

The last chapter of *Ueber Hubert und Johann van Eyck* illustrates how a monograph, by virtue of its very structure, is almost bound to contemplate an artist's works as a whole. Even though Waagen does not reconstruct the whole of the Van Eycks' works and assigns a chronology for only some of them, he nonetheless shows how such a reconstruction could be made. Born out of a desire to classify, the last chapter of Waagen's book foreshadows the integration of the monograph form with the older tradition of the catalogue raisonné—a process that took place during those years and that eventually brought about the paradigmatic idea of the “oeuvre” of the artist.

At this early stage in the metamorphosis of the monograph, *Ueber Hubert und Johann van Eyck* therefore broke with many of the contemporary standards in writing the life and works of an artist. With Waagen's work, the nascent monograph merged the methods of history and connoisseurship. It revealed itself as a crucial tool of scholarly inquiry into the artistic legacy of the past, while also endeavoring to capture that legacy without losing sight of its human foundations. Waagen used the life-and-work analogy at the core of the monograph both as a means of knowledge and as the fulcrum of a dialectic in which various elements—style and history, individual and national character, vocational and formal components, artistic and biographical identities—were intertwined. The articulation of that analogy rendered the artist the basic unit from which one could reconstruct the history of an artistic tradition, a new *Kunstgeschichte* of the Netherlands.

Moreover, Waagen saw Jan van Eyck as a creative human being and his works as infused with personalized visions, religious beliefs, and artistic qualities pointing unequivocally to his individuality. On reflection, Waagen's idea of an “artistic character” was quite prophetic. It showed that the study of the artworks could provide valuable clues to the life and personality of the artist himself. Waagen's recognition of individuality

and naturalism as the main traits of Jan's works paralleled to a degree the individualistic, bourgeois virtues that he saw as defining the character of the Netherlandish people.⁷⁰ That is, Waagen tried to infer the complexion of Jan's art from both features interior to his pictures and those indigenous to his culture. Though still unarticulated in Waagen's text, this parallelism is quite remarkable. It suggests that, in seeking a truth within an artist's production, a monograph not only could throw fresh light upon a conjunction between an artist's creations and the national history of art but also could evaluate the art itself as a form of life and the carrier of definitions of human identity in time and history.

The "Who" Question

From its inception, as it began to transform the Vasarian categories of the biographical and artistic identity of the artist, the early monograph was concerned with determining who the artist is: as author, person, charismatic figure, or historical individual. Because of their focus on the recognition of the artist, monographers were driven to elaborate that recognition while approaching the artist's works. They could do so with different degrees of intensity, through various means, and for quite a number of purposes. Recognizing the artist was paramount; that in turn nurtured transfers and displacements of elements between the biographical and artistic dimensions. But it also meant that the monograph's dialectic of life and works led writers more or less deliberately to pose the question "who" about the artist, his life, and the works of art. Who was he, personally, artistically, historically? Who is evoked or engendered in the artwork? Whose being and dynamics of being does the work bring into existence?

The "who" question says a great deal about the methods and aspirations of the life-and-work model of the monograph. It sustains its attentiveness to being singular by pointing to a situation in which considerations of what an artist *does* go along with considerations of who an artist *is* and *becomes* through artistic creation. As though striking up a conversation, the monograph sets about to discover otherness, exploring borders between times, histories, and cultures. In these encounters not everything can be translated, and yet the sense of someone *being there* is

intensified rather than undermined by acknowledging that difference is tantamount to being and that it can make us more aware of another person rather than distanced from him or her.

The “who” question raises others: about historical and biographical issues, stylistic attributions, manifestations of character, the vindication of the status of an artist, and the expressive power of his or her works. In particular, asking “who?” vis-à-vis the works of art is to see them as things that can materialize anthropocentric qualities, personality, the facts of a life, and history itself. In a monograph, whether the biographical and the artistic dimensions are dealt with separately or interwoven, the “who” question almost always precedes the “what” question: What is art? What renders the works specimens of the category of art, and what do they convey? Whereas the “what” question is more likely to suggest the search for an essence, the establishment of a supposedly solid ground, in asking “who?” a monograph uncovers an irregular, mutable territory of inquiry. It seeks answers that take into account the fluctuations of life itself, as they affect the history of an artist and are in turn reflected in it. These fluctuations can hardly be grasped according to prefixed general criteria; their comprehension must originate from a readiness to discern that particular constellation of elements that makes up the oneness of the artist as author and as human being.

In Vasari’s *Lives*, the life-and-work model began to address the “who” as a biographical and artistic question. It began to delineate the “who” in all of its complex manifestations: as a point of emission, absorption, and intersection of heterogeneous forces—a place where identity could disintegrate as well as come together. It is already partly evident from the books discussed in this chapter that the “who” in a monograph should be regarded as the outcome of a cluster of relations that might be both uncovered and structured within the narrative. Whereas Pungileoni mainly offers glimpses of Correggio as an empirical “who,” Cicognara delivers a vivid description of Canova by highlighting his artistic merits and his moral traits, the interior “who.” Although affected by contemporary standards of taste, Duppa certainly enhanced the image of Michelangelo as a mighty artist and individual. Leslie unfolds the facets of a “who” through a display of personal documents and evaluations of Constable’s character and artistic worth. Fernow identifies the “who” of Carstens with genius,

inwardness, authenticity, and subjective self-expression. Finally, Waagen turns the "who" into an art historical guideline: the Van Eycks are interpreted as differentiated and self-contained individuals and primary units of a new *Kunstgeschichte* of the Netherlands, but are also located in their cultural and historical context.

Despite bearing different, even contradictory results, the nineteenth-century life-and-work model always delivered visions of identities in the making. Art was no longer evaluated solely according to technical merit or conformity with established standards of beauty. Sometimes reviving the histories of the old masters or debating the status of contemporary artists, sometimes based on new documents, aesthetic criteria, emotional responses, connoisseurship, and art historical expertise, envisioning "who" the artist *is* encouraged a transformation in the perception of what art-works *are* and *do*.

The meditations of twentieth-century thinkers such as Hannah Arendt and, more recently, Jean-Luc Nancy have bearing here. It was crucial to Arendt's social theory to establish the *Faktum der Pluralität*, that "human plurality is the paradoxical plurality of unique beings."⁷¹ Arendt argues for a view of the human condition in which everyone's insertion in the world must be understood as a "second birth," a singularity revealed via praxis. This birth "is not the beginning of something but of somebody, who is a beginner himself."⁷² It occurs when one stops belonging merely to a natural species and asserts one's own initiative. Arendt underscores that a who, a someone, is unpredictable. Insofar as "unexpectedness is inherent to all beginnings" and we are agents of beginnings, the unexpected can be expected from human beings. In fact, "each man is unique . . . with each birth something uniquely new comes into the world." While so unique that "it can be truly said that nobody was there before," one is, however, connected to others. Just as an individual actualizes his or her physical birth through *action*, so is he or she engaged with other individuals through *language*: "Speech corresponds to the fact of distinctness and is the actualization of the human condition of plurality, that is, of living as a distinct and unique being among equals." The pairing of action and speech suggests to Arendt, finally, that "the primordial and specifically human act must at the same time contain the answer to the question asked of every newcomer: 'Who are you?'"⁷³

For Nancy, the “who” of human identity is further disentangled from the arbitrariness of prior assumptions. The task of approaching and qualifying “some one” leads Nancy to explore “who” someone is not in itself, as a substantive unity or a thing, but in the actuality of its unfolding and coming to presence. Just as this coming to presence is something that can not be ascertained once and for all but should be perceived as an unceasing production of presence, so the idea of a self should be freed from any preconceived notions and identified with the process of coming “to” of presence, where “to” signifies the movement of the self toward the world. For Nancy, “to engender oneself” is a poor metaphor for “to exist”; the coming to presence of presence ultimately coincides with existence. By thinking of a someone instead of a subject in the traditional metaphysical sense (i.e., as an abiding essence), Nancy therefore proposes to describe the identity of the “one” in view of a dynamic in which a human being, who one is or becomes, stands neither before nor after one’s manifestation but rather consists of one’s existing.⁷⁴

In a similar vein, the “who?” of the monograph illuminates the condition of human plurality and the open-ended process of a birth to presence. “Who?” addresses the figures of the human as if they were each time created and defined anew via artistic creation by associating the reason-to-be of the artworks with the unpredictable trajectory of someone’s passage in time and the disclosure of a singularity of being. The monograph therefore subverts any supposition of essence regarding both art and human identity and interrogates nothing but pure existence. Monographers tend to ascribe to artworks, and to art itself, the very characteristics of life, with “life” signifying the life of the artist as well as life in general. In the ensuing chapters, I will expand on the mechanisms and consequences of this ascription for the consideration of artworks and artists. Here it is worth noting that a monograph may suggest not only the conflation of art and life or the blurring of the gap between them, but also a desire to overcome the even more pervasive dichotomy between the reality of art and reality itself. Viewing the artist’s works as inextricable from a presence, from the epiphany of someone being there, is tantamount to seeing them not simply as objects evincing technical brilliance and successful depiction. Instead, they can appear to “objectify” subjective qualities, selfhood, history, and experience; they can explore the dynamic between the realm of nature and the human search for personal definition, and they

may inspire viewers to regard them as something other than mirrors of an exterior world.

Thus we see that the question "who?" casts the idea of "who" as an event. It binds together author and work, work and interpreter, interpreter and author as pairs moved by forces of mutual reciprocation. From the analogy of life and works announced in Vasari's *Lives* to the methods devised by the nineteenth-century monograph, modes of bipolar animation are determinant to the uses of the life-and-work model. Peter Sloterdijk's theory of spheres is helpful here to qualify "who?" as an event. Just as the "who" question opens a contact zone among multifarious domains and kinds of agency, so does a "sphere" name, according to Sloterdijk, those places or conditions of experience where human beings sense that the gap between inside and outside is overcome. Sloterdijk reconsiders the versions of the creation of man in the book of Genesis and focuses on the description of God breathing life into Adam. This breathing, he argues, is not univocal: it enlivens its addressee, who reciprocates through breathing. The outcome is a form of bipolar interiority. And it suggests the possibility of a "pneumatic" work that overrules hierarchies and temporal priorities between the subject and the object of creation. For Sloterdijk, "the so-called creator does not exist prior to the pneumatic work but originates synchronically with that very work."⁷⁵ The monograph creates a similar condition of sphericity when in asking "who?" it crosses through organic and artistic domains, being and doing, in its various attempts to establish equations between the visual and the existential.

Especially beginning in the early decades of the nineteenth century, the "who" question represents one of the chief means through which the monograph channels the utopian impulse to capture the ineffable. "Who"—the artist—embodies the breakthrough into the visual of the exuberant forces, elements, and tensions of human existence. Over and above any evaluations of artistry and aesthetic worth, "who?" ponders how and why the artist's works transform existence into presence and presence into existence. While methods and responses may vary endlessly, and while there may be no final answers, the "who?" of the monograph nonetheless radically affects the view of the visual arts. It gradually but systematically transforms the field from a repository of objects severed from the world and reality into a space where art shows its power to condense, trace, and disseminate states of being and becoming.

The Oeuvre

3

Unity and Multiplicity in Raphael's Works

The desire to account for both the unity and the multiplicity that characterized a single artist's works was key to the development of the nineteenth-century monograph. The goal of these early writers was to establish a monograph form that could view and assess the artist's works as an interconnected whole, made of interacting parts. Liberated from static taxonomy, the artist's works were understood in their continuous temporal flux. They could appear both as single objects and as parts relating to one another within a whole. Images might be linked thematically and stylistically; compared or contrasted; or taken as tokens of constancy, discontinuity, and metamorphosis in the artist's evolution: in short, they constituted an oeuvre.

I have noted something of the kind in my discussion of Gustav Friedrich Waagen's original attempt to assign a chronology to the Van Eycks' works by establishing stylistic cross-references. This orientation of the monograph can be traced to Vasari's seminal detections of the artistic identity of the artist in his works, and most notably to his intuition that an artist's entire production fell along a recognizable continuum. In fact, to understand the artist's works as a dynamic whole is to articulate that pivotal intuition in *The Lives*. But it also implies that one is attempting to articulate a singularity without a fixed or predefined essence and to make the subjective, internal forces of artistic creation visible through a reconstruction of their manifold dynamics and manifestations. Such a program

merges Vasari with the streams of thought of “modern identity” and the romantic era. It echoes, in part, Friedrich Schlegel in the field of literature, who, besides claiming that a work could not be understood unless it was situated within the totality of an author’s works, also conflated totality and subjectivity by pointing out that “art gives form but it is also formed, for the one who forms is no less an organic totality than what is formed, and in the precise degree that he is an artist.”¹

The implications of this line of inquiry for the life-and-work model become fully apparent in a group of monographs on Raphael published during the early nineteenth century. Between 1800 and 1830 at least twenty monographs, biographies, and volumes of works on Raphael were published in England, Germany, Italy, France, and elsewhere. Few of these merit attention today, but their sheer volume suggests the influence of the artist and the degree to which his work was seen as pivotal. I will examine only four: Georg Christian Braun’s *Raphael Sanzio’s von Urbino Leben und Werke*, Friedrich Rehberg’s *Rafael Sanzio aus Urbino*, Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy’s *Histoire de la vie et des ouvrages de Raphaël*, and Carl Friedrich von Rumohr’s *Ueber Raphael und sein Verhältnis zu den Zeitgenossen*. These works and others gradually affected the monograph form in two complementary ways. First, they use analogy to integrate the parallel dimensions of the artist’s life and works. Second, they present the monograph as a model inseparable from the modern view of human identity and its corollary: that selfhood is a process of endlessly becoming who one is. The overall effect is that answers to “Who is Raphael?” tend to describe his identity in terms of inceptions and recurrences, condensations and displacements, of the visual traits of his art. These answers locate the “who” in its moments of transition and permanence, as a subject in action: not predetermined but rather stretching and contracting itself within a sort of spatialized, humanized, and reversible time.

To understand why the identity of Raphael is so crucial in the history of the monograph, we must first look at his life and works as narrated by Vasari. His *Life of Raphael*, one of the most comprehensive and fascinating of *The Lives*, was the point of departure for nineteenth-century authors. It reflects both his view of the social status of artists and his

definition of the creative personality. Vasari was familiar with much of Raphael's production, knew his patrons and pupils, and collected his records, and his *Life* is accurate and insightful.² However, it is significant here because it foreshadowed interpretive topoi that, after 1800, made Raphael an extremely congenial subject for the fulfillment of some of the monograph's potentials.

Raphael's protean character is suggested in the opening of Vasari's *Life*, where he is depicted as a master who, favored by celestial influences, fused within himself rich gifts normally divided among many artists over long periods of time.³ Vasari's view of this multiplicity within the figure of Raphael renders this *Life* a key source in the monograph's history. The *Life* seeks to address Raphael's extraordinary power to imitate other masters' styles, or *maniere*, which made it challenging for Vasari to recognize his authorship. Discussing his pictures from the time of his apprenticeship with Pietro Perugino, Vasari remarked that Raphael had internalized Pietro's style so thoroughly that one had to be well acquainted with both painters to distinguish the pupil's hand from the master's.⁴

As Vasari's narrative proceeds, he highlights the successive stylistic assimilations and shifts in Raphael's development. This approach has a dual effect. First, it treats Raphael's career in a way often repeated in the later literature, dividing it into three stylistic and geographical phases: the Umbrian period (c. 1494–1504), the Florentine period (c. 1504–1508), and the Roman period (1508–1520). Second, it presents Raphael as the ideal pupil, studying and imitating other masters for the same reason that artists imitate nature: to surpass it. Vasari thus portrays Raphael's artistic identity as continually receptive to outside influence. Aligning the artist's painterly activity with the trajectory of his life, he locates the culmination of that activity in Raphael's last picture, the *Transfiguration* (fig. 3.1), which, according to Vasari, was unanimously regarded as the best work the artist ever painted.⁵ Vasari's vision of this progression had important implications. Rather than simply projecting the artist's works parallel to his life, as he did elsewhere in *The Lives*, Vasari raises questions about Raphael's stylistic consistency and formulated a view of his development that differed from those of other artists.

Vasari examines whether Raphael's art could be circumscribed within the formal shifts of his career, and asks how and why Raphael remained Raphael throughout his whole career, despite internalizing many other



3.1 Raphael, *The Transfiguration* (1518–1520). Oil on panel, 405 x 278 cm. Pinacoteca, Vatican Museums. © Scala / Art Resource, New York.

styles. Raphael's production is understood to be fueled by an inner dynamic capable of both informing and transcending stylistic mutations. Vasari proposes that the mimetic formation of Raphael's style, his achievements as well as his shortcomings, cannot be judged without taking into account the special nature of his talent and his works' capacity to realize it.

In examining the artist's relationship with Michelangelo, Vasari asserts that Raphael's innate talent prevented him from fully internalizing and surpassing Michelangelo's superlative way of representing the nude.⁶ While acknowledging that Raphael turned himself from master into pupil when he looked at the art of Michelangelo, and that he learned a great deal from it, Vasari nonetheless praises him for abandoning Michelangelo as a teacher because he realized that the nude was not the only subject in art worth rendering.⁷

For Vasari, Raphael's imitation resulted not from passive assimilation but rather from intellectual deliberation. Having distinguished between the artistic domain of Michelangelo (the nude) and the domain of Raphael (*invenzioni* and *capricci*),⁸ Vasari addresses a few broad statements to artists generally. These are key not only to the determining role that natural inclination plays in *The Lives* but also to how Vasari thought Raphael could retain his own identity throughout his career:

Every artist should be content to do willingly those things toward which he feels a natural inclination and should never wish to undertake, in a spirit of competition, those tasks for which he lacks a natural gift, if he is not to work in vain and often to his shame and loss. . . . For any artist who is not fit for a task will never, strive though he may, reach the level to which another artist may easily progress with the aid of nature.⁹

In this apologia for the artist's natural inclination, Raphael is held up as a shining example to contemporary masters because, in seeking to realize his natural gifts through the pursuit of specific artistic avenues, he recognized what was most central to his own attitudes and, when necessary, veered away from modes of representation that were alien to them. Vasari thus places Raphael's creativity and authorship above the mutations of his art and honors him as a master who knew how to be true to himself.

Vasari's interpretation is based on two complementary arguments. First, he sees Raphael as prudent and judicious in selecting what to assimilate from other artists' styles, and as participating in the construction of his own artistic identity. His internalization of outside influences was never impersonal, but a process of self-revelation. Raphael's development, then, suggests that a sense of identity can always be discerned in his artworks, even when his mimicry of other artists' styles leaves no conspicuous identifying signs. Second, Vasari denies that Raphael's art was derived from study alone.¹⁰ Indeed, he presents Raphael's art as a balance of natural gifts and systematic study, in which the painter's natural inclination guided his stylistic formation. Raphael's art incorporated both identity and difference. It was the outcome of an inner force, operating in analogy with the course of the artist's life.

The Lives usually implies a relationship between the artworks and the specific traits of their maker's character (not to be confused with the nature of his talent), but Vasari's discussion of Raphael does not entirely follow this pattern. Although his art is sometimes evaluated in terms of his character—charm, grace, and sweetness—it appears primarily as the visual analogue of the artist's natural talent, actively informing and piloting its process of self-identification.

Similar cases can be found elsewhere in *The Lives*, but it is with Raphael that the Vasarian intuition of the artist's activity as a continuum reveals its methodological potential. By taking the artist's innate talent as a potential reflected in his art, Vasari opens the way to conceiving Raphael's creations as organic developments. He provided later writers with a powerful interpretative topos—one particularly suited to examinations of this artist's works, with their enigmatically variable quality, and to seeing them as a dynamically compounded whole that reveals the absolute confluence between art and being.

Raphael was perhaps the most admired of all painters in the early nineteenth century, and writers naturally dwelt upon his art and its legacy. But relatively little of Raphael's historical figure and personality had come down in history. Monographers were thus forced to reach into the artworks to divine the nature of the artist. In the process, they redefined the monograph, its methodology, and its purpose.

Appreciations of the master of Urbino from this period oscillated between classicist and romantic credos.¹¹ Johann Joachim Winckelmann saw Raphael as the only “modern” painter close to the ideals of the ancients, and Anthon Raphael Mengs praised his universality, while Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder traced the source of his genius to God, ascribing his achievements to divine inspiration.¹² While trying to track down new information about Raphael, the period’s monographers largely reiterated these assessments. Some, however, went further: intrigued by the protean variety of Raphael’s art, they saw his works as visual analogues of the artist’s own unfolding nature. With this in mind, they pursued and refined a method that led first to a dialectical, relational sequencing of his works, then to their chronological reconstruction, and ultimately to the creation of a new paradigm in the history of the life-and-work model: the idea of the artist’s oeuvre as a multidimensional whole.

Why was it Raphael who first inspired this trend? Ever since Vasari, Raphael’s capacity for metamorphosis had raised questions about the interdependence of style and innate talent, form and human creativity. It demanded that the writers examine the work’s anthropocentric properties and establish a nexus between the parts and the whole, defining him as a true achiever of self-definition. In fact, as the monographers sought to discern a ubiquitous living presence in his work, over and above the many stylistic shifts in his career, Raphael was revealed as a paradigmatic figure, both in the history of art and the history of humankind. His works seemed to prove one of the pivotal assumptions of the culture of modern identity: that every human is characterized by the freedom of being and becoming a unique individual, and that it is one’s life task to respond to freedom’s intimations through life’s vicissitudes.

Whereas Vasari had referred to Raphael’s natural talent as a gift, a God-given potential he had cultivated, for nineteenth-century authors the “natural” components of artistic talent belonged to the individual alone, and pointed to the freedom of a subject unfolding and defining itself. Regarded less and less as a gift, a given or immutable essence, the artist’s talent was therefore “inner” nature discovered, questioned, and construed by means of expressive self-articulation.

This kind of radical expressivism was in the minds of the early romantics August Wilhelm and Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis when they

proposed a theory of literature as a practice productive of subjectivity.¹³ These authors felt there were no distinctions between nature and art, man and work. They maintained that the artist is a model, a fully human being, because what makes up an individuality is its ability to produce and to produce itself. Even while production follows the dynamic of organic engendering, the very notion of subjectivity could ultimately be thought of as equivalent to production. In the discourse of the visual arts, the monograph was therefore the form of writing most suited to demonstrate the idea that artistic work is the autoproduction of subjectivity. To write on Raphael after 1800, then, meant ascertaining the occurrence of a singularity of being. It led writers to try to overcome the disjunction of life and work and to look at the forms of his art as if they did not so much duplicate a world outside or mirror a subject that preexisted creation but rather partook of the same dynamics of nature, life, and reality by conveying the sense of someone being there and traversing many dimensions.

The Raphael monographs set out to uncover fluctuations of forms in time, resituating and conflating the different moments of creation. As such, they gradually unfold an unprecedented way of looking at artworks, one for which natural and artistic dynamics are interposed and where the visual reveals traces of its latent alliance with the existential.

This way of looking is somewhat evident in a monograph published in 1815 by Georg Christian Braun (1785–1834), a trained draftsman and professor of rhetoric at Mainz. His *Leben und Werke* of Raphael is divided into two halves, which separately consider the life and the works. The first half is a straightforward summary of Vasari's and later writers' descriptions of Raphael's biography and artistic merits. In the second half, Braun—working mainly from engravings and the earlier literature—catalogues the artist's works in three distinct ways. The first evinces moments of artistic completion through a selection of works; the second offers a chronology of Raphael's best works; and the third, a lengthy thematic catalogue, illustrates the artist's prowess in six main classes of representational subjects.¹⁴ In this latter section, Braun demonstrates an organic progression in Raphael's rendering of sacred figures, notably by classifying the artist's Madonnas as either Virgin, Mother, or Queen of Heaven. After noting the absence of images of Virgin Madonnas, Braun moves quickly to the second category,

selecting and analyzing twenty-four pictures in which he claims Raphael had begun to develop an ideal image of motherhood. Among these he includes the *Madonna del Cardellino*, the *Madonna Canigiani*, the *Belle Jardinière*, the *Madonna del Pesce*, the *Perla*, and the *Madonna della Seggiola*.¹⁵ For images of Mary as the Queen of Heaven, Braun chooses the *Sistine Madonna* (fig. 3.2) as “the highest ideal of Raphael’s Madonnas.”¹⁶

Here the topos of an organic progression linking Raphael’s Madonnas—and by extension all his works—is critically suggestive because, without going beyond the paintings themselves, it charts a process of becoming that mirrors the phases of the artist’s life. Equally significant, it adopts dynamic criteria of classification. After selecting the Madonna as subject matter, Braun’s classification employs the Madonna as an index of form and artistic intent, as he draws up cross-references and discovers relations among pictures that are widely separated chronologically and stylistically.

This kind of description resurfaces in other contemporary writers. Friedrich Rehberg’s monograph *Rafael Sanzio aus Urbino* (1824) echos the romantic view of Raphael and tries with limited success to blur the gaps between art and life by linking the works to the maker’s personality. For Rehberg (1758–1835), a history painter who later became close to the Nazarene circle in Rome, the master of Urbino demonstrated that artists have to believe in what they paint. Imagining the artist as striving toward the representation of his innermost belief, Rehberg reiterates the topos of progressive idealization in Raphael’s Madonnas, citing as evidence an apocryphal letter in which Raphael was supposed to have reported a vision of the Virgin.¹⁷

While the idea of a progressive idealization in Raphael’s Madonnas inflamed Rehberg’s romantic mind, it also reinforced the credos of the classicists. In the same year that Rehberg published his book, Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy’s *Histoire de la vie et des ouvrages de Raphaël* appeared in Paris. In this work too an analysis of Raphael’s Madonnas plays a decisive role, but for Quatremère (1755–1849) Raphael personifies an artistic attitude that recurred throughout history. Imbued with Platonism and neoclassical tenets, he approaches Raphael less through a survey of the life and works than through a discussion of the artist’s genius and exemplary qualities.¹⁸

Quatremère’s belief in the *idéal* inspired his view of Raphael. It functions in his monograph as the thread implicitly unifying his evaluations of



3.2 Raphael, *The Sistine Madonna* (c. 1512–1514). Oil on panel, 265 x 196 cm. © Gemäldegalerie, Dresden.

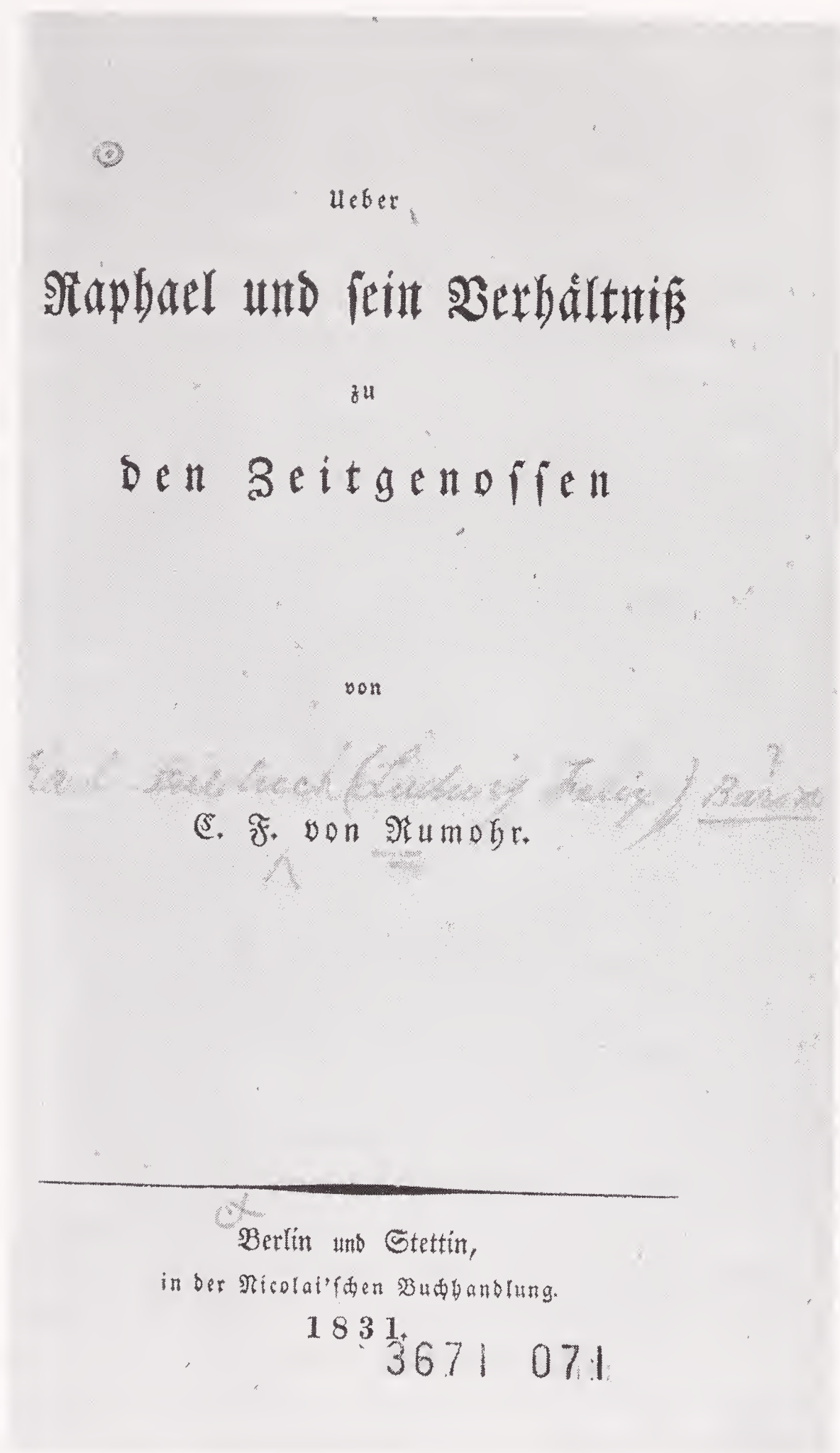
Raphael's Madonnas, through which he creates a system of stylistic classification of Raphael's works. Beginning with the *Belle Jardinière* at the Louvre,¹⁹ Quatremère, like Winckelmann, locates the peak of Raphael's idealization of the Virgin in the *Sistine Madonna*.²⁰

Even as he addresses Raphael from a theoretical standpoint, and with the explicit purpose of holding him up as an example to contemporary artists, Quatremère could hardly resist projecting the artist's works within a whole. Beyond his tendency to see the Madonnas as material evidence of Raphael's march toward the realization of the *idéal*, he also interrupts the narrative of the life and works to claim that scrutiny of this particular group of Raphael's paintings offers "an abridged history of his talent."²¹ In still another instance, Quatremère identifies the three ages of what he calls Raphael's "vie pittoresque," referring to three Madonnas: the *Belle Jardinière* of 1507 (at the Louvre), the *Madonna del Pesce* of 1514 (Prado), and the *Virgin* of 1518 (Louvre).²²

In the years when Braun, Rehberg, and Quatremère were dealing with Raphael's protean identity, many other writers were adding their mite to the enterprise. Some provided new analyses of Raphael's style and significance; others contented themselves with reshuffling the order of his works; still others discovered new facts about the artist's life. With varying degrees of insight, the Raphael monographs of the 1820s for the most part adapted beliefs about the artist that originated in Vasari's Life.

Ueber Raphael und sein Verhältnis zu den Zeitgenossen by Carl Friedrich von Rumohr (1785–1842) is remarkable in this respect. It demonstrates a method for turning Vasarian beliefs into guidelines for the chronological reconstruction of Raphael's pictures. Rumohr's art historical work began in 1820 with some seminal articles in *Kunst-Blatt* and culminated in his important *Italienische Forschungen* (1827–1831), a collection of analyses of Italian art and artists from Giotto to Raphael. Rumohr's method combines visual inspection of the original artworks with a thorough examination of the documentary sources and a critical understanding of art as a historical phenomenon.²³

Included in the *Italienische Forschungen* (with the title of *Ueber Raphael von Urbino und dessen nähere Zeitgenossen*), but also issued as an autonomous monograph in 1831 (fig. 3.3), his Raphael text is in keeping with these



3.3 Title page of Carl Friedrich von Rumohr's *Ueber Raphael und sein Verhältniß zu den Zeitgenossen* (Berlin, 1831). Courtesy of Harvard Fine Arts Library.

methodological tenets. Rumohr intended to visit Urbino and conduct new archival research in Italy but ended up pursuing a much less ambitious endeavor.²⁴ In the monograph as it was realized, Rumohr forms a personal view of Raphael and labors to reconstruct the artist's early production. Addressing the works alone with relatively little biographical information, his text marks a substantial refinement of the idea that an artist's works are a dynamic interconnected whole. Rumohr argues against the Vasarian division of Raphael's works into three styles or *maniere* associated closely with geographic and chronological periods. Instead he tackles Raphael's art chronologically, as a progression parallel to the life. He essentially radicalizes Vasari's interpretation of Raphael, widening the analogy between an artist's life and work that was the basis of the monograph model since *The Lives* while diverging from Vasari's periodization.

For Rumohr, Raphael's pictures produce an impression of uniqueness and commitment to the object represented. This "quality of "objectivity" serves to unite the artist's manifold production (beyond any division into stylistic periods) and provides clues to who Raphael is, the "mildness" of his nature and his disposition.²⁵ As he emphasizes Raphael's capacity to surrender to the object represented, Rumohr notes, as had Vasari, Raphael's unremitting assimilation of outside influences, especially Perugino's. But in imitating Perugino, Rumohr argues, Raphael took his master's art as the object that he strove to represent or to compete with. Further, he showed so much judgment of his own in these pictures that he surpassed Perugino, and his autonomy as an imitator made his transition from the earlier to the later, more independent works scarcely noticeable. This explains why the attribution of no more than two *maniere* to the first half of Raphael's production was both too much and too little. For Rumohr, Raphael's receptivity to his subject was so intense as to rule out any kind of reiteration of other artists' styles or mannerisms in his pictures.²⁶ In fact this receptivity rendered Raphael the true champion of something Rumohr calls "style" (*Stil*), a term to which he gives a distinct meaning. In a way that recalls Goethe's distinctions in his 1789 essay "Einfache Nachahmung der Natur, Manier, Stil,"²⁷ Rumohr suggests that "style" be understood not as a synonym of "manner" but as a pure submission to the essence of the object represented. He pointedly claims that, seen from this perspective, Raphael has more style than any of the great artists of modern times.²⁸

How did Raphael develop a style of his own and remain true to himself? Rumohr posits that the artist's natural inclination was the factor grounding the inimitable aspects and originality of his production. While he does not treat Raphael's biography in detail, he acknowledges that the interdependence between life and works make it possible to understand the process of Raphael's becoming Raphael.²⁹

What intrigues Rumohr about the artist's formative years is not so much Raphael's work under his father, Giovanni Santi, but the lapse of time between Giovanni's death and the artist's meeting with Perugino. Lacking any documents about the date, circumstances, and conditions of that meeting, Rumohr uses visual evidence alone to surmise who Raphael was when he joined Perugino's workshop. The results of this inquiry are not always sound, but the procedure is remarkable.³⁰

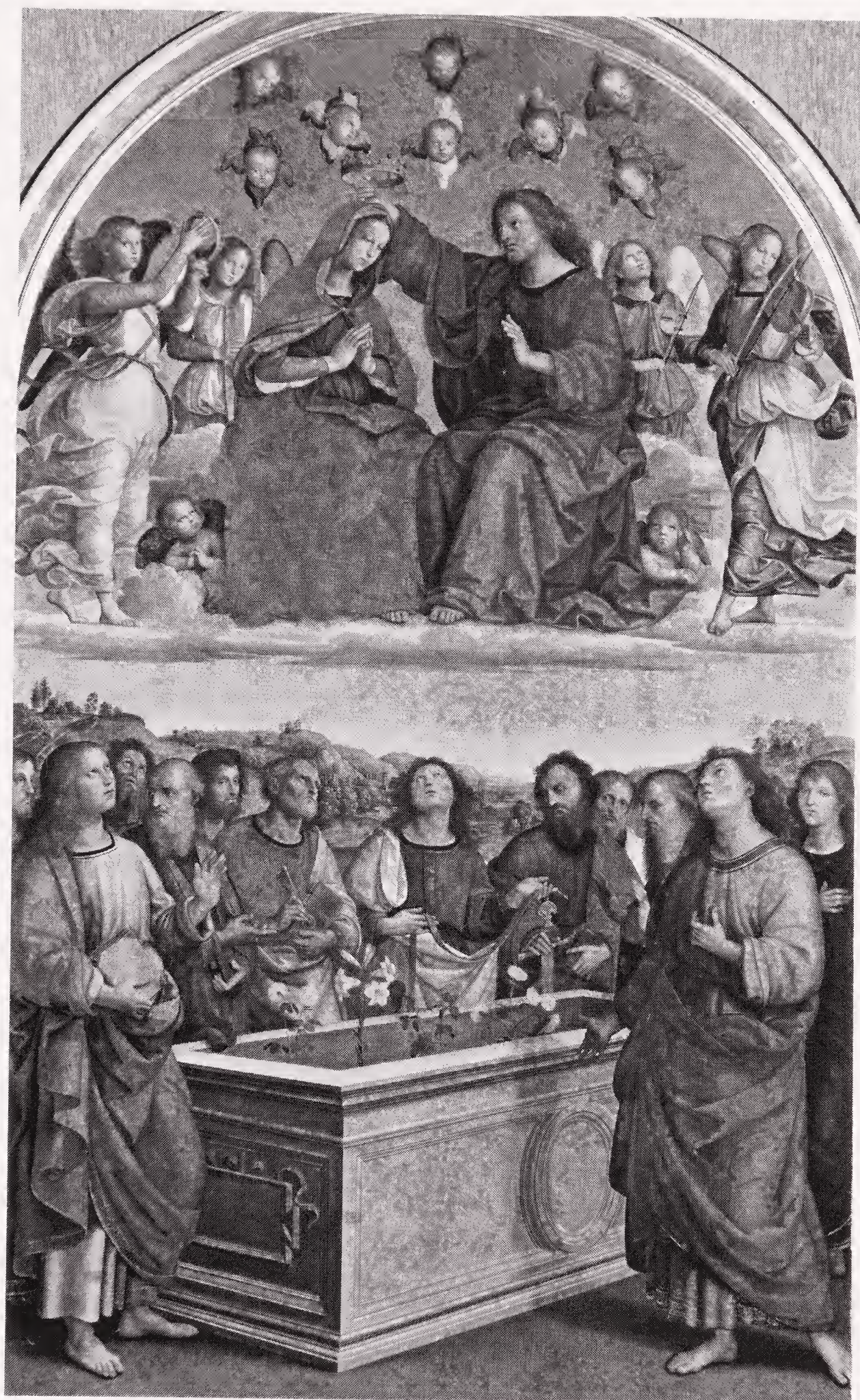
Rumohr argues that after Raphael finished working under Giovanni, he operated more independently than was usually believed—working now for Perugino, now for another artist, now on his own account. Accordingly, choosing the *Marriage of the Virgin* of 1504 (fig. 3.4) as a dividing point on purely visual grounds, Rumohr assesses the artist's activity before and after that year. He detects progress, foreshadowing, and transition in Raphael's forms, and these become key to establishing the artworks' chronology.

Rumohr defines the path foreshadowed by the *Marriage of the Virgin* as beginning with the wall painting in the monastery of San Severo, Perugia, and ending with the altarpiece for Pescia, left unfinished in Florence in 1508. These two works provide the boundaries of a period during which two opposing tendencies warred with each other in Raphael's art, one revealing intense study of other artists and the other a freer attempt at autonomous power. Beginning with the latter group of works, Rumohr identifies the *Coronation of the Virgin* (fig. 3.5) as Raphael's first attempt to test his own pictorial capacities without considerable study. He infers when the *Coronation* was executed by locating it as part of a movement that exceeded the moment of the painting's origin and in which one can detect analogies, recurrence, and shifts among Raphael's modes of representation at various phases of his career.³¹ Among the works of the period that show the artist's opposite tendency—diligent study—Rumohr mentions the *Madonna Tempi* (Alte Pinakothek, Munich) and the *Madonna del Granduca* (Galleria Palatina, Florence). He believes that the former was



3.4 Raphael, *The Marriage of the Virgin* (1504). Oil on panel, 170 x 118 cm. Pinacoteca Brera, Milan.

© Scala / Art Resource, New York.



3.5 Raphael, *The Coronation of the Virgin* (c. 1503). Oil on canvas (transferred from panel), 267 x 163 cm. Pinacoteca, Vatican Museums. © Scala / Art Resource, New York.

an effort to adopt a Florentine thoroughness whereas the latter recalled the influence of Perugino.³²

Discussing the artist's activities and accomplishments in Rome, Rumohr returns to Raphael's continuing development and further articulates the belief in his works as visual analogues of the artist's own nature, taking his entire production as evidence of ongoing self-definition. He argues that neither the rigorous style of Raphael's earlier pictures nor his later, freer pictorial mode should be preferred, because the artist showed himself at his best in both tendencies. As an artist who never trapped himself in habitual modes of representation, Raphael achieved a harmonious correspondence between his biographical and his artistic identities.³³

Rumohr's approach to Raphael's pictures, especially the early ones, clearly evinces a new, deeper sense of the whole of the artist's works, which reshapes and gives credibility to ideas that implicitly pervaded Vasari's *Life*. Rumohr demonstrates Raphael's harmonious growth and reliance on his natural talent through an analysis of the paintings and offers a means of classifying and dating them. The Vasarian intuition of the artist's activity as a continuum both sustains and is sustained by Rumohr's recognition of the ongoing unfolding of Raphael's identity; essential too is his recognition of an interdependence between the biographical and artistic identities. Thus, with Rumohr's approach, the classification of the artist's works turns into an investigation of the dynamic whole that both contains and defines them.

A similar perception, if less developed, is detectable in the monographs from Braun to Quatremère, and the literature of the period is imbued with these interpretive patterns. In 1783, for instance, Mengs summarized Raphael's career as fulfilling, despite a momentary quiescence in his talent.³⁴

As for the intuition of a continuum in Raphael's works, Friedrich Schlegel's scrutiny of the artist's activity probably influenced writers of Raphael monographs. In a letter written to Ludwig Tieck from Paris at the start of 1803, later published in the journal *Europa*, Schlegel recalls viewing Raphael's recently restored *Transfiguration*, hanging at the Musée Napoléon alongside other pictures by the artist and by Perugino. He was fascinated by the relations between this painting and the many other

works that he observed, and summarized the painter's development from the early works done under Perugino to the *Transfiguration*. In some passages of his letter, which were probably the prototypes of descriptions encountered later in Quatremère, Braun, and others, he focuses on Raphael's various Madonnas, from the *Jardinière* to the *Madonna della Sedia* and the *Sistine Madonna*, establishing relations of similarity, contiguity, and transformation among them and proposing a sequence of images that conjure up a dynamic whole.³⁵

The persistence of these interpretative patterns in the Raphael monographs is evidence that he, more than any other subject of monographs after 1800, challenged writers to account for the unity and multiplicity that characterized an artist's work. This situation greatly favored the evolution of the monograph model itself. The study of Raphael inaugurated a mode of inquiry that emphasized the assessment of artistic development by looking at the artist's creations in and of themselves, and as parts relating to one another within a whole. Only later in the nineteenth century did other artists receive this methodological treatment.

Rumohr alone explored the possibilities of this *modus operandi*. Unlike Braun, Rehberg, and Quatremère, he began to employ it to ascertain the chronology of Raphael's art. Although his chronology was soon to be emended, and although he did not examine Raphael's entire body of works, he cleared the path for such endeavors. Greater factual knowledge was needed to reconstruct and classify Raphael's works, and other writers around this time were accumulating data on his life and work. By the early 1830s, conditions were ripe for a reconsideration of these nascent methodologies, and for something more: a systematic survey of Raphael's internal course and an exhaustive chronological catalogue of his production. It would be Johann David Passavant who provided it.

Passavant's *Rafael*

Johann David Passavant (1787–1860) published his monograph *Rafael von Urbino und sein Vater Giovanni Santi* in 1839 (fig. 3.6). Passavant was a painter and enthusiastic spokesman for the Nazarene group. He turned to the writing of art history later in life and became curator of the Städelches

RAFAEL VON URBINO

UND SEIN VATER

GIOVANNI SANTI

VON

Johann David

J. D. PASSAVANT.

IN ZWEI THEILEN MIT VIERZEHN ABBILDUNGEN.

ERSTER THEIL.



LEIPZIG:

F. A. BROCKHAUS.

1839.

3.6 Title page of Johann David Passavant's *Rafael von Urbino und sein Vater Giovanni Santi* (Leipzig, 1839). Courtesy of Harvard Fine Arts Library.

Institut in Frankfurt in 1840.³⁶ He reconstructed Raphael's production through a scrupulous reading of sources and a personal inspection of all the works ascribed to him, to assess their authorship and gain firsthand knowledge of his development. He was the first to publish a catalogue raisonné of the artist's activity separately from a narrative volume dealing with his life and works. As soon as his monograph was published, it was hailed as a landmark in the literature of art. It remains a reference work for Raphael scholars even today.³⁷

For my purposes, its importance lies in the way it brings to light the paradigm of the artist's oeuvre. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, that term was still used primarily to indicate a collection of prints by or after a master,³⁸ and Passavant himself never described his text as a reconstruction of Raphael's "oeuvre." Nevertheless, his monograph should be seen as expressing an important shift in the meaning of the word, leading to its modern usage.

In many languages today, "oeuvre" refers to the complete works of one artist. In art and literary criticism, this usage mirrors even more closely the classificatory ambition of the monograph.³⁹ Passavant's monograph embodies exactly this understanding of the term: a nonstatic space within which all works by the same artist can be contemplated in sequence and can exist both individually and collectively. Never before in the history of this form of writing had the artist's works been presented so explicitly and systematically as a multidimensional organic whole. Passavant's project demanded that he chart Raphael's progress from within, drawing a web of relations among the artist's works that parallels the course of the artist's life. The narrative of Raphael's life and works contained in Passavant's first volume offers a dynamic view of the artworks as a whole; the chronological catalogue of the pictures in the second volume demonstrates that this view can be objectified in entry after entry.⁴⁰

Previous monographers had achieved this effect only in part. They had seen Raphael's works as a totality of sorts and approached them as visual analogues of the artist's own nature. But they conjured up a sense of movement without executing the most essential task: establishing a chronology of Raphael's entire production. The idea of the artist's oeuvre as a multidimensional whole began with Passavant's Raphael monograph and created a new paradigm in the history of the monograph. It

legitimizes the open finitude of its bipolar structure by transforming the analogy between life and work into a powerful relational construct. In this new perspective, to look at the whole of an artist's works is to turn sight into insight, demonstrating the connectedness of a structure or plan of organization that simultaneously accounts for and melds their outward forms and inner forces.

Passavant must have been aware of the earlier form of catalogue raisonné and oeuvre-catalogue of prints, in which prints, naturalia, and artworks were listed and sometimes classified thematically. These publications, which had begun to flourish in collecting and museological contexts during the second half of the seventeenth century, rationalized the contents of heterogeneous collections for purposes of conservation, connoisseurship, and the market.⁴¹ But Passavant substantially overhauled the taxonomical scheme he inherited, following a far more ambitious plan. Since his classifications aimed at establishing the artist's production in its sequence, he tackled issues of chronology that were rarely dealt with in either the old catalogue genre or other monographs of the time.

Like Waagen a few years earlier, Passavant approached his subject as a connoisseur. He firmly believed in the authority of the eye in detecting the authorship of an artwork, and saw the artist as a figure whose inalienable traits and qualities could be established only through close analysis of the art. But, unlike Waagen, he was not inclined to theorize about his own enterprise or to expose his beliefs and methods systematically. Passavant's idea of the oeuvre must therefore be inferred through a close analysis of his book.

One may single out contemporaneous sources that inspired Passavant's work, some more visibly than others. Certain passages of his text echo beliefs originating in German traditions of transcendental idealism, romanticism, and *Naturphilosophie*. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's concepts of *Bildung* and morphology offer valuable keys to Passavant's work. Goethe's interest in defining personal identity in his concept of *Bildung* and his attempt to found a universal science that he called "morphology" bear a striking resemblance to Passavant's twofold endeavor to write the life and works of Raphael and to catalogue his production.

The term *Bildung*, pivotal in the culture of modern identity and its characteristic search for meaning in the life of the individual, emerged

in late-eighteenth-century German philosophy. Its meaning ranges from “personal education” or “self-cultivation” to transindividual “culture.” Johann Gottfried Herder and Wilhelm von Humboldt had articulated the idea before Goethe, and its source may lie even further back, in the zoologist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach’s notion of *Bildungstrieb* (formative drive) as a force affecting all living organisms. The *Bildung* concept allowed these authors to regard human development as the expression of a vital impulse toward becoming and transformation.⁴² Goethe uses *Bildung* to mean “self-formation,” especially in his classic *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795–1796) and *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* (1829). Since it is left unclear whether the eponymous hero of these novels does in fact achieve a complete realization of self, the novels show how self-formation, far from being merely a means to an end, involves ongoing metamorphosis and transformation, a constant state of further *Bildung* as the irreducible condition of human life.

Although Passavant’s work is historical and art historical rather than fictional, his task in writing the life and work of Raphael was not so different from Goethe’s in his Wilhelm Meister novels. Those books address a dualism of natural and cultural growth, inner inclination and outside context—elements that confront each other within the story of an individual’s formation, or *Bildung*. Similarly, there are places in Passavant’s narrative where he clearly speaks of Raphael’s life and works in terms of *Bildung*, either in reference to stylistic shifts in the artist’s career or in order to introduce the milieu and the people who affected his formation as a person and an artist. Indeed, the monograph at various points parallels Goethe’s views on art and self-formation, and its reconstruction of the artist’s works can be seen as a scientifically oriented attempt to arrive at a “morphology” of Raphael’s *Bildung* and artistic development. For Goethe, morphology meant the dynamic apprehension of all the metamorphoses of form. Passavant views Raphael’s works in a way that thoroughly accounts for unity and multiplicity in their development—that is, their metamorphoses. Furthermore, he sees the whole of the artist’s works as recapitulating the artist’s process of becoming in his life and art and sees both the oeuvre and the artist as living presences.

The idea of the oeuvre presented a morphology of the artist’s identity and strengthened the connection between the motivating ideals of

the monograph and those of modern identity. It epitomized in the literature of art the modern conception of the human being as an expressive individual driven to realize his or her nature, whose life's cycle is characterized by a continuous dialectic between being and becoming. If, as the romantics claimed, literary work is subjectivity in process, a true "subject-work,"⁴³ then the oeuvre offers a montage of that process in the history of an artist. Although the montage is *post factum*—for, admittedly, there is no clear sense of an oeuvre until the artist's activity is completed—it is still capable, in spite of its chronological and linear survey, of conjuring up transfers, reversals, and stratifications of forms in time. By mapping out sites and moments of a subjectivity in process, the oeuvre fully explicates the ancient association between the etymons of *Bildung* and *Bild* (image). It delivers a vision of identity in its double articulation of form and energy, likeness and presence, and so it potentially confers on the artworks the faculty of both holding and endlessly exposing the pulsing traces of their osmosis within the immanent sphere of existence. The oeuvre not only interconnects and projects the artworks within the whole of an artist's production but also illuminates their ubiquity, their belonging to the worlds of nature and culture and to the flux of life itself.

The first volume of *Rafael* features an initial chapter on the life and work of Giovanni Santi; four lengthy chapters narrating the life and work of Raphael; and a rich appendix of documents, sources, and information alluded to in the text. The second volume contains three parts: a chronological catalogue of Raphael's extant paintings, frescoes, cartoons, and tapestries, to which is appended a catalogue of works either known only from literary descriptions or revealing only a limited intervention by the painter (or else an erroneous attribution), arranged by subject; a catalogue of the drawings, arranged by location and collection; and finally a catalogue of the engravings after Raphael, divided into those after his portraits and those based on drawings. A large folio of illustrations is appended to the two volumes; it contains fourteen engravings and lithographs executed after drawings by Passavant and others from paintings and drawings by Raphael and Santi (see, for example, fig. 3.7).⁴⁴

The innovations and achievements of *Rafael* reveal themselves in its structure and particulars. After his initial chapter on Giovanni Santi,



3.7 Plate from "Abbildungen zu Johann David Passavant's *Raphael*" (Leipzig, 1839), illustrating Raphael's so-called self-portrait, chalk on paper (now at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford). Lithograph by Ludwig Zöllner. Courtesy of Harvard Fine Arts Library.

Raphael's earliest influence, Passavant starts his real discussion of Raphael in chapter two, with the relationship between the artist and Perugino as well as Raphael's subsequent assimilation of Florentine modes of painting. The chapter follows the artist from 1495 to 1508, and its title, "Rafael's Lehr- und Wanderjahre," echoes those of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* novels. Between chapters three and five Passavant covers the years from 1508 to Raphael's death, in 1520, and illuminates the artist's biographical and artistic identities.

Passavant dates Perugino and Raphael's meeting as master and pupil to 1495, when Perugino's career was at its apex. He shows the pupil's evolution from mere imitation of Perugino to improving on the master. Passavant was the first writer to detect Raphael's hand in the *Resurrection of Christ* that Perugino executed for the church of San Francesco in Perugia (now in the Vatican Museum).⁴⁵ The *Marriage of the Virgin* at the Brera is discussed as an eloquent example of what Passavant calls Raphael's *Bildungsgang*, or process of formation. While surpassing Perugino's painting of the same subject from 1495, the painting indicates that in 1504 Raphael was still untouched by influences outside the Umbrian school.⁴⁶

The fruitfulness of Passavant's research both in its factual discoveries and in his construction of a dynamic, relational view of Raphael's works is especially clear in his discussion of the *Pala Colonna*, the altarpiece executed by the artist for the nuns of San Antonio, Perugia. Passavant was the first to identify all of the altarpiece's parts—its two main sections, in the royal museum in Naples, and the five predellas (three compositions and two single figures), scattered in private and public collections in England.⁴⁷ This multipanel work combines several pictorial modes; to explain why it must nevertheless be considered a single work, Passavant describes the altarpiece's transitional character and argues that it was executed over a fairly long period, beginning before Raphael's first visit to Florence and apparently ending after his return to Perugia. Here Passavant uses stylistic cross-references to elucidate which elements can be traced to the *Coronation of the Virgin* and the *Marriage of the Virgin*, and which reveal the influence of Florence.⁴⁸

At this juncture of the narrative, in discussing a moment vividly symptomatic of the artist's capacity for transformation, Passavant directly invokes Goethe's idea of *Bildung*. Transcribing verbatim a poem by Goethe

on the irrepressible impulse to pursue one's own *Bildung*, he advances it as exemplifying the longing to grow that Raphael must have felt before undertaking his second journey to Florence, in 1505.⁴⁹ For Passavant, then, Raphael's multipart artistic formation points to his self-determining drive to grow, through both introspective analysis and interaction with his surroundings and context.

In the first volume's last chapter, "Über Rafael und seine Schüler," Passavant presents his own view of the artist's significance. Despite the various outside influences that affected him, Passavant argues, Raphael cannot be considered an eclectic master. Rather, he always remained true to himself and revealed his original stance in his artistic creations. He could absorb the influence of Michelangelo, for example, without abandoning objective rendering. Raphael, Passavant writes, was endowed with a rich inner life of the soul (*Seelenleben*) that allowed him to see nature in its variety.⁵⁰

This argument is, in fact, Vasari's approach as seen through the filter of romantic aesthetics. Passavant's remarks take up Vasari's argument about Raphael's mimetic course and reshape it in terms of transcendental idealism. Vasari praised Raphael for realizing that painting has a broader scope than the rendering of the nude, as in Michelangelo, and for avoiding modes of representation alien to his own talent and attitudes. Passavant ascribes this realization to the power of Raphael's "soul." This concept derives from German romantic philosophy, where "soul" replaced the eighteenth-century Enlightenment idea of "conscience" in order to qualify the work of genius in its capacity to absorb inside and outside forces. In his 1807 lecture *Über das Verhältniss der bildenden Kunst zu der Natur*, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling argued that art and the artist represent the much-sought transfer between nature and spirit, and proposed to recognize in the "soul" the source of this transfer.⁵¹ Passavant was familiar with Schelling's lecture,⁵² and so uses "soul" to imply that Raphael's art achieves precisely that unity between nature and spirit, the individual and the world.

Passavant also draws on Schelling's idea of art as a combination of conscious and unconscious forces.⁵³ For Schelling, it was neither religion nor science and philosophy but art that solves the antithesis between man and nature, matter and spirit, infinite and finite, by reflecting the identity of conscious and unconscious, intelligence and nature. Art is the only

place where Schelling finds a true realization of the “intellectual intuition” by which the human self produces itself. Far from being the poles of an abstract dichotomy, nature and spirit are to Schelling the contrasting directions of the same activity and have to be grasped in their ordinary unifying principle. Hence, the process of creative imagination and art itself appear to Schelling as the general organon of philosophy. By representing the mind’s ideas as well as the presence of nature, a work of art traces objectively what philosophy can trace only ideally: it finally makes the unity between nature and spirit possible through the most exemplary objectification of subjectivity. For Schelling, the artist achieves the absolute identity of subject and object in his creations through intuition, rather than through rational application. Passavant also recognizes this sense of the absolute in the work of Raphael, presenting him as an artist who experienced personal realization, or *Bildung*, by overcoming any gap between his inner inclinations and the historical and art historical times in which he lived and worked.

Passavant’s next concern is to evaluate Raphael’s special relationship with the object of representation (a point central in Rumohr’s text on the artist too). More than any other of the Renaissance masters, Passavant claims, Raphael embraced subjects of the most varying kinds, recognizing both general and particular beauty in every field of representation, from portrait to sacred image to narrative scene. In so doing, he elevated nature, illuminated through the spirit, to the realm of the ideal.⁵⁴ Passavant’s crucial argument reflects (as in Rumohr) the influence of Goethe’s definition of style and his thesis that an artwork ought to appear natural and at the same time above nature.⁵⁵ Here the argument also serves another purpose: the identification of art as the expression of *Bildung* and the moral perfection of the artist. Passavant, in fact, shifts from artistry to ethical issues and further illustrates Raphael’s simultaneously objective and spiritually transfiguring approach to nature by citing excerpts from a book by his own uncle, Johann Carl Passavant (1790–1857), a surgeon with a strong interest in philosophy and *Naturphilosophie*.⁵⁶ In attempting to ground Christian doctrine in natural science, his *Von der Freiheit des Willens und dem Entwicklungsgesetze des Menschen* (1836) forwards the idea (cited by his nephew in *Rafael*) that the task of ennobling nature according to human aims is best conveyed by art because art allows humans to

construct a new, transfigured world.⁵⁷ Raphael's pictures, in sum, convey ideals of moral perfection by means of their spiritualized rendering of nature. Highly receptive to nature but going beyond it, they are free from preconceived notions. Each is executed according to the idea that had inspired the artist—an idea that, Passavant maintains, never becomes a rigid formula.⁵⁸ For Passavant, Raphael's creations are immune to habitual reiterations and stylistic idiosyncrasies and inextricable from his own perception of nature, from his drive to personal realization and active intervention in transfiguring reality through painting.

The first volume of *Rafael* was, at the time, the most comprehensive study devoted to the artist ever published. Never losing sight of the broader artistic and historical contexts within which Raphael operated, Passavant's narrative gradually traces the threads linking the artist to his society and his times; it absorbs and discusses a wealth of materials, ranging from the data in earlier literature to new documents, and scrupulously renders both the biographical and the artistic identities of the man. At the same time, it explores and develops the implications of a cluster of beliefs about who Raphael was that had originated in Vasari. In introducing new ideas related to the contemporary discourse of transcendental idealism and romantic aesthetics, as well as to Goethe's vitalistic thinking on art, nature, and individual *Bildung*, Passavant's book casts a key Renaissance artist within another set of references.

In the first volume, *Rafael* clearly discloses a new awareness of the artworks themselves—the paradigmatic idea that the artist's oeuvre illuminates the entire monograph. Later interpreters of Passavant's monograph have tended to favor its second volume. In his *Deutsche Kunsthistoriker* of 1924, Wilhelm Waetzoldt argues that the significance of *Rafael* lies in the catalogues, which, he rightly underscores, were “wholly new at the time.”⁵⁹ Yet the idea of the oeuvre pervades both volumes, which actually complement each other. The first volume, despite its emotional tone and heterogeneous elements, carefully describes Raphael's artistic development over time and articulates the dialectical integration of the artist's works in their chronology. Conversely the second volume, with its dynamic classification of the artist's production work by work, reflects the progressive course of the artist's life.

As Passavant recalls in his preface, writing the second volume was among the most fatiguing aspects of the entire endeavor. Convinced that “only by precise knowledge, and firsthand study of what is considered to be rightfully or unrightfully a work of Raphael, can one expect to receive favorable reports about this object,”⁶⁰ he devoted a great deal of his travel and research to the fulfillment of this task. The volume’s four catalogues are composed of individual entries on each work. The chronological catalogue of Raphael’s paintings—including panels, frescoes, cartoons, and tapestries—lists 251 works, the thematic catalogue lists 36 works ascribed to the artist, the catalogue of the drawings lists 576, and that of the engravings 122. Each entry records the work’s dimensions, media, and technique; comments on its state of preservation, its ownership, and any literature pertaining to it, including places where it is illustrated; and finally describes it. For the paintings, the entries also indicate related drawings and sketches, sources on the original commission, and references to later copies and engravings. This chronological catalogue is divided into five sections, respectively discussing paintings executed under Perugino, those in Perugino’s manner (1500–1504), those from the Florentine period (1504–1508), and those executed during the reigns of popes Julius II (1508–1513) and Leo X (1513–1520).⁶¹

Passavant validates the authenticity of each picture and the relative position of each entry in the catalogue (the term “entry” refers here to the writer’s remarks as well as to the artwork) in three main, often overlapping ways. The first is essentially documentary, based on external evidence: inscriptions on the picture, documents, literary sources, the picture’s location, and references to the biographical narrative in the first volume. The other two approaches stem from visual analysis. The first of these is a sort of comparative procedure similar to that already noted in Waagen and Rumohr: Passavant looks at groups of works in relation to one another. The other visual approach relies on his knowledge of the artist’s whole production, which enables him to notice visual elements in a large context and to discover certain traits in Raphael’s works that were recurrent.

The first procedure can be illustrated, for instance, by Passavant’s construction of the chronology of *La Fornarina*, the portrait of Raphael’s lover at the Barberini palace, in Rome. In light of a love sonnet that the artist composed around 1509, Passavant proposes that the picture be dated to around

that year. Citing a passage from the *Aedes Barberinae* of 1642, which mentions this picture as an authentic Raphael, he argues that of the several copies of the painting in Rome, the one at the Barberini is the original.⁶²

These accumulations of heterogeneous data contributed effectively to his dating of Raphael's works. But Passavant's method is still more striking for the insights it makes possible when the dating of a picture is largely, if not exclusively, supported by visual analysis. A sequence of six entries revolving around the *Coronation of the Virgin* (Pinacoteca Vaticana) is indicative of Passavant's relational and analogical visual examination. This section shows clearly how the catalogue's structure aligns a number of works as moments in a whole. The sequence starts with the *Madonna with Saints Jerome and Francis*, which had recently passed from the Borghese palace in Rome to the Berlin museum. Passavant refrains from dating the picture but notes a stylistic similarity between this Madonna and the *Coronation* in the "forms of the heads, as well as the lively expression of Mary."⁶³ The *Coronation of the Virgin* itself is the next entry. Its date is established by reference to the first volume, where Passavant argues that the picture must have originated before the expulsion of the Oddi family from Perugia in 1503.⁶⁴ He further links the *Coronation* with the work discussed in the following entry, a *Madonna* owned by Count Staffa. Noting the three arabesque figures at the corners of this latter picture, which are in the same style as those in the *Coronation* predella, he establishes an implicit time span.⁶⁵

Passavant places the *Vision of the Knight*, now at the National Gallery, London, fourth in this sequence because of a stylistic link. Whereas the general handling still recalls Perugino (although it is more intense, and the drawing is finer), the young woman's clothes remind Passavant of the treatment of the Christ's mantle in the *Coronation*.⁶⁶ The fifth entry is devoted to a portrait of a young man in the king of England's collection, now in the Royal Collections at Hampton Court. Passavant does not date the portrait, but briefly notes the Peruginesque handling, as well as the work's poor condition.⁶⁷ In the sixth and final entry in this sequence, a set of three round panels that Rumohr had presented to the Prince of Prussia, Passavant once again proposes a chain of interconnections. Even as he remarks on the lack of supporting information, he reports Rumohr's supposition that these panels might be the remains of the predella for the *Coronation*.⁶⁸

Here, constructing the chronological catalogue through a network of relations entails a recognition of both unity and multiplicity in the artist's style. Their complementarity is even more apparent in Passavant's third classificatory mode, in which the author's knowledge of nearly all of Raphael's works allows him to evaluate single pictures by virtue of their position within the whole.

In other instances, this same positional sequencing leads Passavant to reject Raphael's authorship. A *Madonna* in Bridgewater illustrates this point. Although Passavant writes that the composition of this work makes it one of the best exemplars of the subject, the painting lacks what he calls Raphael's enduring traits: "the delicacy and vitality in the drawing and modeling." While the flesh tones are gray in the shadows, "the head lacks the expression of Raphael's grace."⁶⁹

Finally, Passavant's grasp of the whole of Raphael's production allows him to explore the dynamics connecting the single work to the whole. For example, discussing the *Head of a Youth* fresco, which had recently been bought by Ludwig of Bavaria, Passavant observes that the rendering of the features have a particular character, bordering on affectation, that appears from time to time in Raphael's works before 1508. In his consideration of the *Deposition* at the Galleria Borghese, Rome (fig. 3.8), he agrees with prior Raphael literature that it is a crucial work in the artist's development. In this entry on the work, Passavant details the artist's development, teasing out the indications of its place in Raphael's chronology:

The outlines are admittedly still somewhat sharp, since he had not yet arrived at properly observing the effect of the reflections and the vanishing surfaces. Also in the coloring of the garments, the use of glazing is a bit too much at times, and the golden ornaments on the clothes are still reminiscent of his previous, more naive artistic period. And yet all these imperfections vanish when one considers the power and truth of the arrangement and expression, and how moving is the dramatic representation.⁷⁰

This is an illuminating example of the logic underlying the whole catalogue. While emphasizing a sense of movement within Raphael's oeuvre, Passavant also shifts significantly back and forth in time among the artist's



3.8 Raphael, *Deposition* (1507). Oil on panel, 184 x 176 cm. Galleria Borghese, Rome. © Scala / Art Resource, New York.

works. Just as he takes Raphael's earlier production into account in appreciating the mutations demonstrated in the *Deposition*, his knowledge of Raphael's future achievements allows him to grasp what the artist had not yet achieved. This dialectic between earlier and later works has a double effect: it allows him to assess the value of the *Deposition* in and of itself while exposing the picture's place in the artist's lifelong process of becoming.

As Passavant's catalogue of Raphael's pictures tackles issues of attribution and chronology, including and excluding works by virtue of their affinities and differences, it accounts for their diversity. In this way, Raphael becomes both his pictures' empirical individual author and a principle of organization ultimately safeguarding the cataloguing process. Passavant considers Raphael's pictures less as independent entities to be grouped through static, externally imposed criteria than as entities to be approached dialectically from within. Each of them exists in and can be comprehended in terms of a network of relations of closeness and distance, continuity and change, and it is this network that grounds Passavant's vision of a whole. The very process of classifying forms or entries thus generates a sense of stability and unification throughout the metamorphoses of the artist's production.

The sense of identity is therefore mobile rather than given beforehand. The catalogue of Raphael's pictures answers the "who" question of the monograph by establishing that Raphael is more than an author pre-existing his own creations. There is a "pneumatic" relation (in Sloterdijk's sense) between author and work, and the oeuvre both construes and enlivens this relationship. Raphael is an index of multiplicity; his identity cannot be thought of as immutable. Rather, it reveals itself in the play among the visual characteristics shown by his works (renderings, types, styles, techniques, visualizations, etc.). This transverse play continuously questions and redefines who Raphael is by recognizing his being as continuously there and yet different, and so it suggests that being Raphael is tantamount to coming to presence and stems from a web of relationships between the entries or the works themselves.

Passavant's catalogue often affords a kaleidoscopic vision, among isolated parts of distinct artworks as well as within one work alone. The fact that either a single image or the whole of Raphael's production may involve multiple times and spaces indicates that in the catalogue the mech-

anism of recollection and memory does not operate linearly. Rather, that mechanism acknowledges a constellation of forms whose progression is made possible (and thinkable) through reversals, cross-references, divisions, and condensations. Another spatialized and reversible dimension of time is seen to coexist within the chronological and linear scheme of the catalogue, a time rendered subjective by its very reflection of Raphael's being and becoming.

What was already clearly announced in the first volume's narrative of the life and works, then, acquires full consistency in this second volume of the *Rafaël*. Here, the intuition of a continuum encompassing all of the artist's works becomes more than a tacit assumption of the monograph form; it is made tangible in entry after entry, confirming the reality of a correlation between author and works. Whereas Vasari never justified his intuition of the artist's production as a continuum, Passavant offers a rationale for this key notion. His *Rafaël* makes the artist himself the source of an organic movement that threads through the course of his life and works. In short, Passavant's *Rafaël* transformed the monograph genre, creating a new paradigm whose core is the idea of the artist's oeuvre.

Resonances of the Idea of the Oeuvre

Passavant himself touches on this idea of the oeuvre in its modern meaning at the end of his first volume, where he notes how superior Raphael's works seemed when Napoleon installed them in the Louvre and compared them with those of Leonardo, Correggio, and Titian. Whereas these masters' pictures seem to strike a single basic tone, Raphael's pictures show "ever new creations, ever differing sides of a noble and rich spiritual life, that appeal to us in a surprisingly new way, and complement one another just as life does in the process of creation. This is why one never feels tired or weary of looking at so many of his paintings, either next to each other or successively."⁷¹

"Life in the process of creation" implies both the idea of nature as the prime generative force of art and its corollary that artworks have qualities in common with what we find in nature, namely some kind of power, energy, life, or vitality. Therefore, Passavant's image of the works of Raphael

complementing one another, like “life in the process of creation,” should be read as more than a metaphor. It internalizes and transforms the interpretive topoi of earlier writers, beginning with Vasari, and expresses Passavant’s core methodology. The progression of Raphael’s works has a natural cycle, and his art comes into being naturally, as do all forms of life. This image of the world of nature recalls widespread notions of authors of the romantic era. Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis claimed that the artist’s task is to imitate not simply nature’s works but its specific way of working. In so doing, the artwork would bring into consciousness those natural and unconscious forces active within the artist himself and would finally enter into the universal chain of being by aiming at the fullness and variety of nature. For Schelling, whose influence on Passavant’s text has been noted, nature is something alive, a visible *Geist* of the invisible energy. While nature points to a kind of spiritual self-development, art represents the spirit and its informing ideas as well as the creative action of nature. In his 1807 lecture on the relationship between the visual arts and nature, Schelling underscores that such a relationship can be established only when art succeeds in becoming a creative and productive force like nature itself.

Thus Passavant’s monograph marks the apex of a process of “naturalization” of Raphael’s works begun in Vasari’s *Life of the artist*. The tendency of Raphael monographs and literature since about 1800 to construe his works as the analogue of the artist’s own nature culminates with Passavant’s *Raphael*, in which his production is perceived as a living organism and the site of singularity and someoneness. However, this culmination also implies some redefinition of the issues at stake. Who the artist is—no longer perceived as a fixed substratum—is now associated with subjectivity and nature in the making. Nature is temporalized in a life that weaves and transforms both the generic of a biological state and the distinctive of a personal history. Vasari notes Raphael’s “natural” inclination—that which guided his choice of models, styles, and themes of painting—and regards it as the immutable basis of his “talent.” By contrast, Passavant’s idea of “nature” encompasses the whole of the living world, including the inner life of the artist and his works. Nature, that is, denotes excess, “otherness,” and the unconscious. But it engenders and reflects itself in the subjective agencies of artistic creation. Its fluxes may be traced and disentangled in the works themselves.

Influenced by romantic theories of artistic creation, Passavant's view of Raphael's work imparts a new sense to something latent in the literature since Vasari's *Life of the artist*. Even more, this view of nature confirms the presence of Goethe in *Rafael*. At the heart of Goethe's views on art lies the vitalistic notion of the congruence of artistic and natural processes. For Goethe, there is nothing in art that is not brought forth by nature. He demands that artworks represent nature and yet transcend it by revealing its true dynamics. Goethe's deep naturalism—applying notions of the metamorphoses of plants and of the body's growth from embryo to adulthood to human endeavors—led to his contemplation of artwork and of its maker's individuality both in terms of *Bildung* and through the viewpoint of natural philosophy.⁷²

Rafael generates a vitalistic idea of the artist's oeuvre. By enhancing the monographic model's analogy of life and work as dimensions subject to mutual confluences, it posits an equivalence between the corpus of an artist's works and the dynamics of a living organism. Throughout *Rafael*, Raphael's production appears both real and ideal, and charged with human as well as organic qualities. Just as Passavant's connoisseurship links the artworks on the basis of visible, concrete correspondences, so it also lifts them above the factual domain of biography by revealing how they disclose the artist's development in terms of structural relations among the forms of his art itself.

Goethe saw a dialectic between the individual and the world at large, spirit and matter, art and nature. Form—as both source and medium of life in all of its metamorphoses—appeared to him the manifestation of this dialectic. Through comparisons of form in studies of the animal and vegetal worlds, he tried to discern principles of unity and multiplicity so as to discover the dynamic structure of a living organism.⁷³ He believed in the possibility of identifying in the variety of nature an organism's *Urphänomen*—the archetypal, original form from which its many configurations stem. His interest in a comparative study of forms, and in the pivotal concept of metamorphosis, became apparent in 1817, when Goethe called for a new science that he named “morphology.”⁷⁴ In Goethe's work morphology aims at an apprehension of form in all its metamorphoses. It addresses every domain in which forms exist or undergo transformations. Goethe also connects morphology with the meaning of individual *Bildung*.⁷⁵ For if morphology attempts to recognize stability and change in

every phase of a given organic development, then the human subject experiencing *Bildung* can be seen as part of an analogous progression.

There are correspondences between Goethe and Passavant in the second as well as the first volume of *Raphael*. Both writers employ analogy and comparison of form as a means of achieving knowledge. Goethe equates natural and cultural dynamics; Passavant makes explicit the monograph's implicit interdependence of life and works. As writers the two share a fundamental concern with the description of a process of metamorphosis. For Goethe, this process occurs throughout the course of an individual's life; Passavant sees it as implicit in Raphael's development. Goethe's idea of *Bildung*, which Passavant invokes in *Raphael*, has both natural and cultural aspects. This dualism matches the image of the artist proposed by the monograph genre in general, but it is especially useful in defining the protean quality of Raphael.

For Goethe, seeing is never a passive response to appearances or a narrowing of focus to the contemplation of a single part. Instead, it engenders an image of the whole, in both the natural and the cultural domains. The eye functions for Goethe as a kind of thinking organ, apt to move outward from the visible interconnections of parts to the sustaining wholes. He approaches the object by means of *Anschauung* (meaning "view," but also "idea" and "ability to visualize things"), knowing it morphologically. Throughout *Raphael*, Passavant employs a similar *Anschauung*: his eye can also view Raphael's production from every perspective. This active viewing allows a unity of form to become manifest through all the metamorphoses of Raphael's works. Passavant coordinates them dialectically from within, through the intermingling of being and becoming, of permanence and change, as related parts making up a mutating whole. Thus Goethe's idea of form and Passavant's idea of the artist's oeuvre both imagine a structure or immanent plan that brings together a morphologically cohesive whole.⁷⁶

What becomes intelligible in this cohesive whole are the traces of a flux. From the standpoint of the oeuvre, the history of the artist is the history of a flux. This motion is the oeuvre's irreducible referent. In answering the "who" question of the monograph, the oeuvre conjures up someone being there, a living presence that attests to its existence through artistic creation and whose creations cannot be severed from the flux en-

gendering them because nature and art, life and works, the inorganic and the organic are merged. The idea of the oeuvre endeavors to retrieve the individuality of the artist from the evidence of his development and metamorphoses. The paradigm it creates further interrogates the diverse modes of being human, reflecting the efforts of the culture of modern identity to confront the issue of how and why a human being is—and becomes—a true individual. In this paradigm human beings and artworks find their reason-to-be in their shared condition of being *gebildet* (formed) and in pursuing autoformation as the authentic form of life of the subject. In keeping with the romantic understanding of artistic production as “subject-work,” the oeuvre contemplates and actualizes the possibility that artists are doers whose subjectivities can continuously be engendered in and via their deeds.⁷⁷

The idea of the oeuvre allows the monograph to counter the notion of art as autonomous activity and to overturn the sense of artworks as objects severed from the world and from life. Envisioned as an oeuvre, the artist’s works not only become dialectical elements within a whole but elicit responses that overcome, at least imaginatively, the very disjunction between the reality of the artwork and reality itself. The artist’s works, that is, exist beyond the supposedly distinct terrains of inside and outside, genetic and personal, human and art historical. They reify a life in the immanence of the multiple states it attracts and generates.

In fact, through its offer of a morphology of the artist’s identity, the oeuvre conjugates individual *Bildung* and *Bild*, unravels their common roots in *imago* by systematically approaching the latter in terms of both production and reflection of a multifaceted subjectivity. No longer relegated to a domain apart from that of life, the artworks acquire something that escapes understanding unless one goes behind the dichotomies of art and life, representation and reality. This happens not only because artworks weave together visual and temporal dimensions or express various states of being and becoming. Along with revealing these remarkable properties, they are now objects that preserve and manifest the traces of someone’s passage in time. Never before *Rafael* and its introduction of the sense of the artist’s oeuvre had a monograph so clearly indicated the faculty of its model to connect life and works in ways that cogently suggest the immanence of their belonging together.

The Ascendancy of Biography

4

Three Books on Michelangelo

In the early nineteenth century, the idea of the oeuvre transformed the monograph model by postulating a special view of its artistic dimension. After 1850, however, numerous monographs published throughout Europe foregrounded the biographical identity and personality of the artist, which came to be regarded as pivotal. The biography of the artist, no longer addressed in purely factual terms as at the beginning of the century, offered another way to illuminate the bipolar dimensions of the life and works and to connect them. The life allowed access to the art because artistic creation was seen as originating in a state of being. It reflected its author's private and public, emotional and cultural, mental and historical layers. Rather than studying the artist's works as a whole through art historical investigations and connoisseurship, the new adaptation of the monographic model showed that the biography alone could say a great deal about the creativity of the individual. Even though this avenue of inquiry neglected the specific properties of the artworks, it reinforced the notion that they are inextricable from concrete conditions of life and led to the significant equation between art and lived experience. The monograph, that is, endeavored to explicate the authenticity of a life, its quality and intensity, reverberations and moods, as the irreducible source of the artistic phenomenon.

The ascendancy of biography over oeuvre and its implications for the monograph are evident in the books devoted to Michelangelo during

the second half of the nineteenth century.¹ I will consider three cases: the *Leben Michelangelo's* (as the title was originally spelled) by Herman Grimm; the *Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroti* by Aurelio Gotti; and *The Life of Michelangelo Buonarroti* by John Addington Symonds. These books reflect the general conditions of contemporary literary biography, as writers of the period tended to reconstruct their subject by gathering together all available documents, facts, and traditions relative to the artist, and, whenever possible, by having the protagonist narrate his own history. Some monographs aimed at a close commingling of biography and history, following the model of such biographical works as *Oliver Cromwell* (1845) and *Frederick the Great* (1858–1865), by Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881).²

The eventful life of Michelangelo and the often tormented realization of his works appeared to these writers to be the natural building block of history. No other Renaissance master had been so connected with the most influential Italian sovereigns, or so involved in the political turmoil that affected Italy during the first half of the sixteenth century. Besides inspiring a discussion of diverse themes, contemporary events, and figures, his life and works could only be understood in terms of the historical moment in which he was immersed. To write on Michelangelo thus entailed gathering data about him and his times; discussing the historical and cultural spheres in which he lived, the people he met, his religiosity, his patriotism and politics, and his method of working; and finally reaching the core of his personality, clarifying the nature of his emotions and sexual identity.

Following this course, monographers on Michelangelo produced texts that appealed to a broad audience rather than to the narrow circle of art historians and connoisseurs, who typically wrote only for one another. The new books dealt less with the dynamics of the oeuvre or with technical and scholarly analyses of the artworks, and never featured a thorough chronological oeuvre catalogue. Instead, they veered from the art to the artist's life and times, taking his creations as the starting point for learning everything about the man behind them.

Equally significant, the focus on biography gradually gave rise to the perception of Michelangelo as a mighty individual, if not a heroic figure and symbol of humanity.³ The seeds of this perception had been planted by Vasari, whose monumental *Life of Michelangelo* ascribed

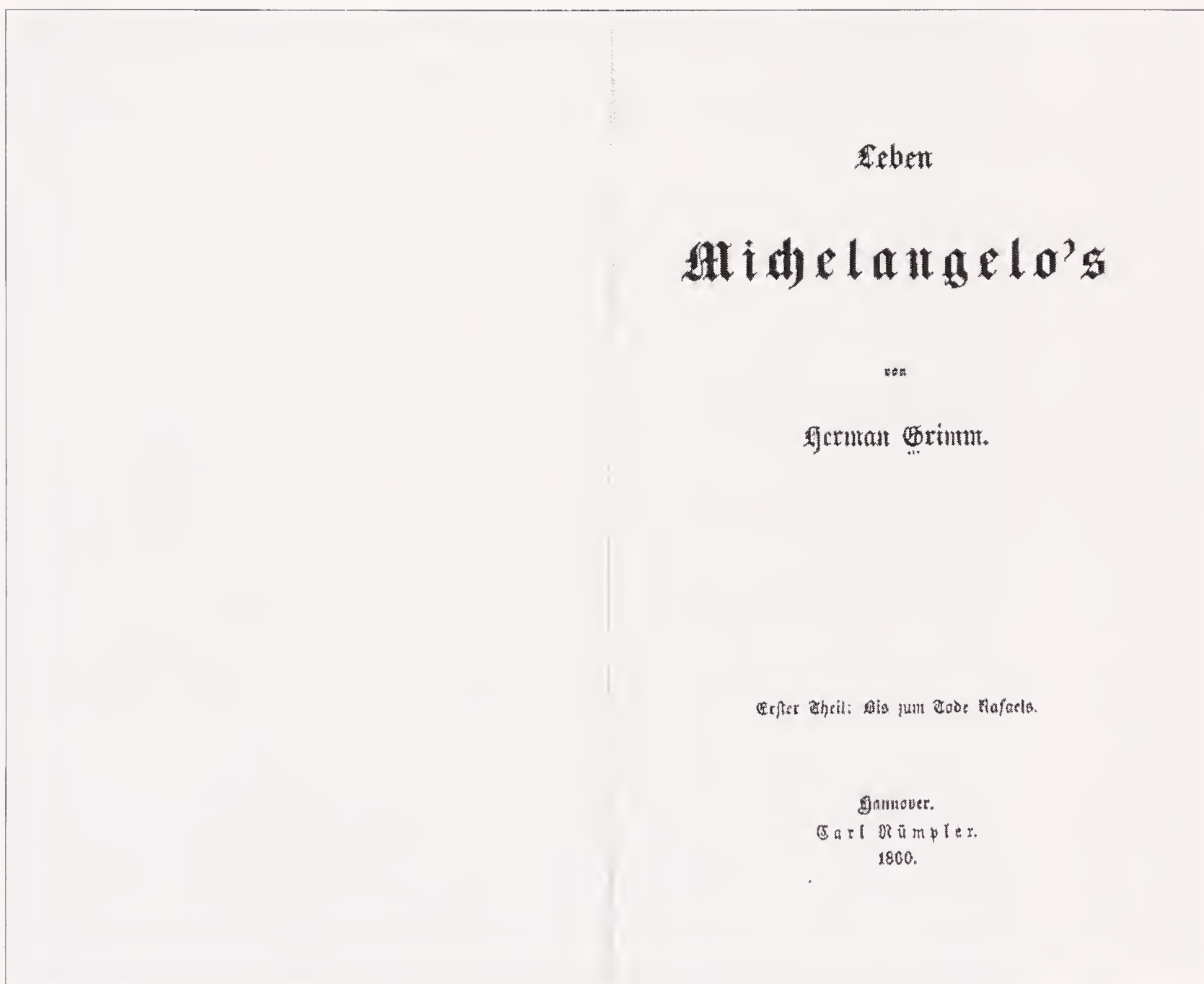
titanic qualities to both the artist and the man. After 1850, the image of Michelangelo was construed in ways that more or less consciously echoed Thomas Carlyle's vision of powerful individuals in history. In a successful series of lectures delivered in May 1840 in London (published as *Heroes and Hero-Worship* in 1841, one of the most popular books of the century), Carlyle voiced his belief that universal history is made of the histories of "great men." Monographers not only took the Florentine master as a confirmation of that belief but, seeking to find out who Michelangelo was and what his life and works represented in his own day and in theirs, also perceived him as an individual who could transcend the ages.

Until about 1875, many of Michelangelo's manuscripts and much of his correspondence remained inaccessible to writers. The papers were kept at the Casa Buonarroti on via Ghibellina, Florence, where Cosimo Buonarroti, the last descendant of the artist, still lived. In 1858, together with the house and its art collection, they were bequeathed to the state and placed under the trusteeship of the mayor of Florence, the director of the Florentine galleries, and the prefect of the Laurentian library. Rosina Vendramin, Cosimo's wife, had carefully ordered the documents and relics before they were passed over to the government. Yet once the last of the Buonarrotis died, and despite the complaints of Italian and foreign scholars, only the trustees and their associates had access to the papers. Cosimo had specified that permission to copy from the Buonarroti archives, and the right to divulge their contents, should be strictly denied.⁴

Notwithstanding this impasse, in 1860 the *Leben Michelangelo's* (fig. 4.1) by Grimm (1828–1901) appeared in Hannover. The book ascribes to Michelangelo art historical values and meanings rooted in his individual experience, and regards the Renaissance master as representative not only of his own times but of a state of being that transcends the ages, a source of perpetual inspiration for humankind.

Grimm's art studies focused on individual artists.⁵ Molding his views of history on the writings of Carlyle and the theory of the "representative men" of Ralph Waldo Emerson (whose essays on Goethe and Shakespeare Grimm translated into German in 1857),⁶ Grimm always sought the man behind the work of art and so could best articulate his heroic vision of the artist through biography. However, he understood biography

not so much as a documentary reconstruction of the life and works but as a meditation on the authenticity of a life and the resonance of the artist in past and present history. It is telling that it was not Michelangelo's works that originally inspired Grimm to write a monograph on the artist; rather, it was the publication in 1853 of the letters of Michelangelo and other artists, edited by Ernst Karl Guhl. Reading these, Grimm found that "the personal connection of the works and their authors became visible," and that one could understand "how the great artists had thought, how life educated and formed them, and how their works could be explained as products of their existence."⁷ Grimm believed it was possible



4.1 Title page of Herman Grimm's first volume of *Leben Michelangelo's* (Hannover, 1860). Courtesy of Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

to make sense of the works from their author's life, and moreover, the artist's life was the irreducible condition of the artistic phenomena. Just as the artistic creation presupposed the quality and intensity of an experience, so the study of the visual arts was valuable insofar as it could help people understand the meaning of that experience.

Frequently revised by its author, and reprinted and translated from the second half of the century well into the next, *Leben Michelangelo's* was a literary hit.⁸ It stimulated the imagination of its readers and helped establish the fame of the Florentine master in common culture. The book is imbued with the belief that history is a chain of influences created by human beings. The greatness of key individuals affects and reflects their age, but it also overflows the span of their existence, inspiring future generations to emulation and solidarity. This programmatic stance echoes the ideas of Carlyle and Emerson,⁹ and its implications can be sensed throughout the *Leben*.

Assuming that Michelangelo typified the dialectics between historical totality and individual agency, Grimm meant to illuminate the connections among the artist's destiny, his country, and the content of his works.¹⁰ The *Leben*, in fact, strives to turn the writing of biography into the writing of history and to uncover the biographical foundations of a historical understanding. The result is a narrative in which Michelangelo seems to vanish among lengthy accounts of wars and politics and long-winded descriptions of various relevant figures. Yet this *modus operandi* reflects Grimm's unconditional identification of his hero with the Italian Renaissance. The point is made explicit in the second volume of the *Leben* when, to those critics who argued that "Michelangelo and His Times" would have been a better title for his endeavor, Grimm retorts that Michelangelo "was" the times.¹¹

Grimm's narrative uses two basic procedures: one conflating Michelangelo's life, his person, and the times; the other, less frequent, explicitly connecting his art with the times. Along with broad historical excursions—on the political contexts of Florence and Rome, the various factions flourishing in Florence, and the politics of the Medicis, for instance—Grimm recounts events involving Michelangelo as a true actor. Confronting the difficult question of why Michelangelo left Florence in the middle of the siege in 1529, for example, Grimm crafts a good excuse

for his flight. He argues that Michelangelo had accepted a government post as master of the city's fortifications because he endorsed the recent popular movement and its defense of the ancient free constitution of the Florentine republic. During the ensuing autumn, he heard about treacherous deeds committed by Malatesta Baglioni, the general-in-chief of the Florentine army, and reported them to the government. When the *signori* dismissed his accusations and the gonfaloniere Carduccio accused him of timidity, Michelangelo had no choice but to flee the city in disguise.¹²

Grimm saw history as permeating Michelangelo's life, and even projected him into the politics of the Reformation. For example, when Grimm describes Pope Paul III's attempt to renew his court by naming cardinals Bembo, Contarini, and Pole, he explains that their mission was to reconcile the Lutherans with the Roman church, that Michelangelo was close to these men, and therefore that "the essential feature of their endeavor was the same as his."¹³

Such conjectures stretch very thin indeed in the few cases where Grimm draws direct connections between Michelangelo's works and his times. The connection Grimm sketches between the *Pietà* (fig. 4.2) and Savonarola typifies his procedure. After describing the friar's impact on the contemporary scene, Grimm remarks that, although the extent to which Michelangelo shared Savonarola's feelings is not known, he probably was among the friar's adherents.¹⁴ Then Grimm turns to the artist's arrival in Rome in 1496 and the state of that city. He wonders how the beautiful and pious *Pietà* could have been produced in Rome, the center of corruption where religion and morality were perfect strangers.¹⁵ Living in this swamp of decayed morals, he argues, must have made it easy for Michelangelo to grasp the characters and events of the New Testament, especially the suffering and martyrdom of Christ. At that very time in Florence, Savonarola's prophecies about his own tragic destiny and martyrdom were fulfilled. Hence, abruptly picking up the link between the artist and the friar, Grimm suggestively projects Michelangelo's *Pietà* within the course of events as he concludes, "and in Rome where one received in great detail daily news out of Florence, they must have ceaselessly filled the thoughts of Michelangelo while he was busy with his *Pietà*."¹⁶

We see that meanings are more important than forms to Grimm: he is not concerned with the style of an artwork, and is even less concerned



4.2 Michelangelo, *Pietà* (1498–1499). Marble, 174 cm high. St. Peter's Basilica, Rome. © Scala / Art Resource, New York.

with establishing a web of relationships among one and many works. Instead he probes behind the strictly empirical realm to uncover the mental fabric of the times, to assess the conflict among various historical agencies, and to locate the artist within that context. Eventually Grimm comes to perceive the *Pietà* as the epiphany of an engaged individual whose experience of himself and the world was so authentic and intensely felt as to be inextricable from what his artistic creations meant. Implicit but consistent with Grimm's perception of the *Pietà* is the desire to redeem the separateness of art. From the standpoint of biography, Grimm strengthened the monograph's ambition to see artworks as multidimensional entities, subject to the same forces that pervade reality at large.

Grimm writes as if all the facets of his kaleidoscopic narrative are essential components that conjure up the artist's identity. Michelangelo becomes the medium of past and present consciousness. Just as Michelangelo "was" the Italian Renaissance, so he reminds Grimm of Beethoven, Goethe, Dante, and Peter Cornelius—other men whose influence he regarded as timeless.¹⁷ Yet what ultimately endures over and above time, and prompts ongoing renewed interest in Michelangelo, is the special condition of the individual in the absolute singularity of its being and becoming.

For Grimm, what persists through the ages is neither the external conditions described by the *Leben* nor the visible traits of Michelangelo's works, but a feeling (*Gefühl*) and its consciousness—the extraordinary communion of goals among the artist, the man, and the times reflected by the life and works of the Renaissance master.¹⁸ Such a communion becomes achievable, and (in retrospect) credible, because the artist acquires his individuality by pursuing his own talent while reacting to and internalizing outside circumstances. The idea of *Bildung* as individual formation, which earlier had affected the view of Raphael, now inspired Grimm's image of Michelangelo. In the *Leben*, what emerges out of the fusion between subjective and objective forces, the actual identity of Michelangelo, is a unique configuration, a singularity that is intelligible in itself as an attestation of existence and being. Michelangelo cannot be circumscribed either by the life or by the works; his identity is engendered and reflected within the commingling of both.

Approaching history through biography and art through history, Grimm reshaped the structure and methods of the monograph while

maintaining some of its motivating ideals. His is another, suggestive way of fulfilling the monograph's ambition to intertwine life and works, casting the artist as a paradigmatic achiever of self-definition and demonstrating a reciprocity between artistic and existential domains. The *Leben* answers the "who" question of the monograph by perceiving the contents of the artist's life as the actual materials of artistic creation. Michelangelo is seen as at one with himself and his times, and as an individual whose acting and doing were indistinguishable from his being.

If Passavant's *Rafael* achieved the morphology of the artist's identity, Grimm's monograph measures the intensity of that identity. The book introduced into the genre of the monograph a new element—the idea that art is *Erlebnis*, a lived experience.¹⁹ Grimm endorsed the meaning of *Erlebnis* in his 1876 biography of Goethe,²⁰ but his view of Michelangelo in the 1860s already presupposed a thorough equation of art and experience. With Grimm, that is, the monograph model became a means of valuing both artistic creativity in its deeply human foundations and the artwork in its capacity to give unrelenting resonance to a lived experience.

Fifteen years after Grimm's book had conferred new, radical meanings on the biographical dimension of the life-and-work model, another monograph on Michelangelo was published in Italy. This book was perhaps less intriguing than the *Leben* but equally remarkable for its capacity to foreground the methods of biography.

The fourth centenary of Michelangelo's birth fell in March 1875. Preparations for a celebration of his anniversary began in Florence in 1872 and culminated in a festival that took place in September 1875.²¹ In conjunction with the Florentine festivities, the archives of the Casa Buonarroti were opened, and Gaetano Milanesi, curator of the state archives and future editor of Vasari's *Lives*, undertook the job of editing the papers there. His volume, issued in 1874, contains nearly five hundred documents, including all the existing letters of Michelangelo, his private memoranda, and a number of contracts and agreements between him and his patrons.²²

The most noteworthy publication inspired by the artist's 1875 anniversary was the *Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroti* by Aurelio Gotti. The director of the Florentine galleries since 1873 and one of the trustees under the will of Cosimo Buonarroti (he was administrator at Casa Buonarroti), Gotti (1834–1904) was among the instigators of the Michelangelo festival.

Knowing that his friend Milanesi was editing only the letters written by Michelangelo and not those by his correspondents, he sought to use his access to the unpublished papers to enhance public knowledge of the artist.

Gotti writes that his aim was to divulge the contents of the Florentine papers and to tell the history of the artist in light of Vasari, Condivi, and of the documents now available.²³ He neither entered the fields of connoisseurship and art history nor wished to become entangled in aesthetic or historical speculations. Gotti's book epitomized and refined a tendency, particularly strong in Italy, to search and assess the philological value of historical documents concerning artists.²⁴

As a biographer, however, Gotti produced an unprecedented monograph. He wrote a penetrating account of the artist's life that surpassed the previous books on Michelangelo because of its original information. This information is conveyed both in the narrative—which runs to nearly four hundred pages in the first volume—and in the appendices contained in the second volume. Here, in addition to transcriptions of the unpublished letters, one finds genealogies of the Buonarroti family, facsimiles of Michelangelo's handwriting, specimens of the contemporary music to which some of his verses had been set, an elevation and section of his wooden model for the dome of St. Peter's, the inventory of his goods taken upon his death, and a catalogue of his sculptures, paintings, and drawings.²⁵

The narrative is enlivened by the numerous fresh insights gained through scrutiny of Michelangelo's letters and those of his correspondents. A letter of March 1497 to his brother Buonarroto, for instance, finally demonstrated Michelangelo's favorable view of Savonarola.²⁶ Of interest too is the letter of May 1506 to Giuliano da Sangallo: for the first time, one could read Michelangelo's own account of a famous episode of his biography, Julius's repeated refusal to grant him an audience and the artist's subsequent decision to leave Rome.²⁷ Finally, Gotti reassesses Michelangelo's flight during the onslaught on the Florentine republic. In light of new decisive documents, he corroborates the nineteenth-century notion that Michelangelo was a patriot and an advocate for universal freedom, in part by publishing two important letters regarding Michelangelo's escape and his subsequent return to Florence.²⁸

On the other hand, Gotti does not probe the intimate aspects of Michelangelo's emotional life. He publishes the passionate letters addressed by Michelangelo to Tommaso Cavalieri but, resurrecting the alleged

romance between the master and the marchioness of Pescara, he holds that only love for Vittoria Colonna could have inspired these letters. Gotti maintains that the letter did not refer to Michelangelo's young friend but were actually meant for Vittoria, who would have divined their hidden meaning.²⁹

Because of the new data it made available, the *Vita* was reviewed throughout Europe. Its reception, however, sheds light on one of the methodological knots that characterizes the development of the monograph: on the one hand, critics recognized the value of documents in the study of the artist's life and works; on the other hand, they conceded that, well documented as it may be, a monograph remains incomplete without a thorough appreciation of the artist's works. Discussing the Michelangelo papers published by Milanesi and Gotti, Jean Paul Richter of Germany cautiously limits himself to acknowledging the wealth of information contained in the *Vita*.³⁰ Hubert Janitschek agrees that "there is no lack of interesting and new material in the *Vita* which Gotti wrote," yet he asks, "Is the value of the work to be restricted to its material?" Offering a negative answer to his own question, he criticizes Gotti for his lack of insight into Michelangelo's artistic development and for the one-sided approach that treats the artist's biographical sphere alone. Gotti, that is, was seen as having written "a biography—in the narrow sense of the word."³¹

Limited though it is, Gotti's "biography" nevertheless provided later researchers with many historical specifics and became a necessary source for future books on Michelangelo. Whereas a critical assessment of Michelangelo's oeuvre would not see the light during the nineteenth century, new clarifications and insights into his personality and character were produced within a few years.

Published in London in 1892, *The Life of Michelangelo Buonarroti* by John Addington Symonds (1840–1893) is not much concerned with the times of the artist, and even less with the historical and cultural digressions central to the earlier biographies. Although it aims at a "fairly complete account of the hero's life and works," its underlying goal is "to concentrate attention on his personality."³²

Symonds was able to produce his interpretation of Michelangelo's emotional life only because he was given access to those papers that, de-

spite the publications of Milanesi and Gotti, were still kept locked up at Casa Buonarroti. In the spring of 1891, thanks to the intercession of his friend Janet Ross in Florence, Symonds began corresponding with Guido Biagi, the prefect of the Laurentian Library. Biagi in turn convinced the Italian government to grant Symonds permission to work in the archives in via Ghibellina.³³ Symonds traveled from his residence in Davos, Switzerland, and remained in Florence for a month to study six large folios of still unpublished papers. What he found unequivocally supported his supposition (already voiced in his *Renaissance in Italy*) that the epistles to Tommaso Cavalieri were not meant for Vittoria Colonna.³⁴

A self-aware homosexual himself, Symonds did not use documents alone to try to tell the truth about Michelangelo. Supported by the insights gained from Michelangelo's papers, he also used a close evaluation of the artist's works to introduce his theory about the man. His *Life*, which until recently was still regarded as the best life of the artist from a literary point of view,³⁵ posits a deep correlation between the biographical and artistic identities, taking the former as the source that both molds and illustrates the latter.

Symonds argues that, from the Eve of the Sistine to the *Aurora* of the Medicean chapel, no woman represented by Michelangelo bears the signs of the feminine. Their sexuality is confined instead to the purely anatomical modeling of the forms. Recalling how artists like Raphael, Leonardo, Correggio, and Titian were all visibly intrigued by the feminine, he surmises that Michelangelo "neither loved, nor admired, nor yielded to the female sex."³⁶ Contrasting the female and male types in his works, Symonds further notes that Michelangelo "did not understand women, and could not reproduce their form in art with sympathetic feelings."³⁷ He concludes that the male figure was more congenial to Michelangelo's art and that his works concentrate exclusively on male qualities.

From our vantage point, it may be difficult to accept these somewhat rigid definitions of gender. But, viewed within the history of the monograph, Symonds's explication of the male and the female in Michelangelo's art is a tour de force: it is unprecedented in its attempt to acknowledge an artist's sexual identity and to connect it with his works.³⁸ His explication allows Symonds to meander from the life to the works and vice versa. On the one hand, it opens up the biographical dimension to include

discussion of the intimate aspects of Michelangelo's psyche, and on the other, it suggests that the artistic dimension is naturally affected by those aspects and could actually manifest them.

In the twelfth chapter, dedicated to Michelangelo's affections, Symonds avails himself of documentary evidence ranging from the artist's published and unpublished letters to the authentic texts of his poems. The chapter's argument evolves from his assessment of Michelangelo's associations with Vittoria Colonna and Tommaso Cavalieri.³⁹ In his discussion of the artist's relationship with Vittoria, Symonds sifts the truth from the legends. He argues that the assumption of a romance between the aging master and Vittoria was first inspired by Condivi's passage about the marchioness. It grew stronger when Michelangelo the Younger, publishing his granduncle's poems in 1623, altered many of the ardent poems and claimed they had been composed for Vittoria. Michelangelo himself, writing just after Vittoria's death, did not sound so passionate: he wrote of her as "un grande amico"—curiously employing the masculine gender, as Symonds did not fail to notice.⁴⁰

Determined to fight the conspiracy of silence that obscured Michelangelo's character, Symonds dismisses Gotti's conjecture about the extravagant letters sent to Cavalieri. Three unpublished replies from the young man leave no doubt that he was the real addressee of Michelangelo's epistles.⁴¹ Michelangelo had similar relationships with Gherardo Perini and Febo di Poggio. Whereas his friendship with Vittoria Colonna stands out as unique in his biography and belonged to the last phase of his spiritual experience, Michelangelo's relationship with Cavalieri was thus more typical of his relationships.⁴²

Once Symonds establishes Michelangelo's predilection for young men, he subjects the artist's relationships to a different analysis, demonstrating that, while consistent with the period's cultural trends, Michelangelo's emotions were sublimated through his assimilation of the doctrines of Plato's *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*. Regarding Michelangelo's Platonism as the key to his art as well as his soul, Symonds cites several of the artist's sonnets that convey a sense of Michelangelo as a mystic lover, and argues that "it was not . . . to this or to that young man, to this or that woman, that Michelangelo paid homage, but to the eternal beauty revealed in the mortal image of divinity before his eyes."⁴³

Symonds's explorations into Michelangelo's character are not exhausted in the twelfth chapter. He also attempts to counter another distorted image of Michelangelo that had emerged more recently. Proposed by the psychologist Carlo Parlagreco in 1887⁴⁴ and thereafter taken up by Cesare Lombroso in his influential *Uomo di genio* (1889), this view—equating genius with insanity—contended that Michelangelo had been the victim of a mental disorder bordering on hysteria.⁴⁵

Symonds's objections to Parlagreco clear the path for his final summary of Michelangelo's character. Symonds acknowledges several "supposed frailties" in the artist's nature as well as his "not altogether healthy nervous temperament,"⁴⁶ but objects to Parlagreco's attempt to read Michelangelo's idiosyncrasies and his insensibility to women as evidence of a morbid, hysterical personality. Were these the signs of a mental disorder, Symonds declares, "then every testy, sensitive, impulsive, and benevolent person is neuropathically hysterical."⁴⁷ Connecting life and works, he argues that Michelangelo's eccentricities "ought to have been ascribed to the severe demands made upon an artist's faculties by the problems with which he was continually engaged."⁴⁸ Symonds's synthesis of the "unique man's personality" singles out three distinctive traits: his sense of beauty conveyed in several forms of art; a sensitivity to contemporary political ferment, as well as to mental influences, and a nervous susceptibility that rendered him all the more receptive to human charm; and finally a striving to tame the latent sensuousness of his nature, as shown by his perseverance in solitary habits, in order to focus his energies on his art.

By interweaving character, will, and artistic inclination, Symonds conjures up a Michelangelo who, though not immune to emotional clashes, nonetheless consciously pursued self-control as the means necessary to reach his ideal. Within this perspective, the life and works of Michelangelo confirm the idea already rooted in Vasari's *Lives*: that doing one's work, pursuing one's vocation to the end, is the crucial tendency in the history of an artist. Michelangelo was thus a paradigmatic achiever of personal definition. However, Symonds's book demonstrates that Michelangelo, the artist and the man, constituted the paradigm of a human being not so much through the view of his oeuvre as through biography and the study of his personality. With Symonds, biography not only becomes ascendant in the monograph but significantly veers to the psychological,

taking the study of character as the main road toward the uncovering of who the artist is and what he or she does.

It is because of his life and character, in fact, that Symonds eventually describes Michelangelo as the symbol of humanity's capacity for self-realization—a mighty individual who, in an explicit paraphrase of Thomas Carlyle, Symonds calls “the Hero as Artist.” Standing out in solitary sublimity, Michelangelo “realised the main end of human life, which is self-effectuation, self-realisation, self-manifestation in one of the many lines of labour to which men may be called and chosen.”⁴⁹

Each in his own way, Grimm, Gotti, and Symonds place biography above history, connoisseurship, and art history. They rarely enter the visual sphere of inquiry to assess Michelangelo's artistic development or his place in the history of art in general. Taking up the life-and-work model, the three authors augment and emphasize its capacity to address the sense of being in the world, the authenticity and freedom of a life, and human work and creativity per se against considerations of aesthetic judgment, attribution, and specific art historical issues. Grimm's heroic historicism does not blind him to the artistic significance of Michelangelo, but his evaluations surpass the strict analysis of artistry and formal proficiency. Gotti, on the other hand, deliberately limits himself to writing about Michelangelo's life. And Symonds uses his insights into the artworks largely to elaborate an understanding of the artist's emotional life. An anonymous reviewer in *The Athenaeum* is correct when, in speaking of the unevenness of Symonds's *Life*, he or she writes that “infinitely more thoroughgoing than the study of Michel Angelo's artistic achievements are the biography and the criticism of his poetical work.”⁵⁰

Moreover, the discussion of the personal history and the times of the artist, particularly when paired with the tendency to represent Michelangelo as a symbol of the human longing for freedom and self-realization, make these books much more likely to engage common readers than the dry investigations of authorship, technique, and style or the scrupulous reconstruction of the artist's development in the works themselves. With the “life” of Michelangelo, then, the monograph found literary popularity. His monographers not only produced books fit for the leisure reader and the demands of the growing publishing industry, but transplanted the

figure of the Florentine master into the public sphere of modern society and culture.

Yet these three books on Michelangelo do not simply lionize the artist. Precisely because of their emphasis on biography, they show the depth of the belief that to understand the visual arts one has to illuminate the interdependence between the life and works of the artist. The result was a substantial revision of Michelangelo's image. Besides unearthing hitherto unknown facets of his personality, these three monographs also portray the Renaissance master as an individual who embodied yet rose above the contingencies of his life.⁵¹ Indeed, Grimm and Symonds in particular bring to its extreme the idea that the life of the artist explains the works. Grimm, with his equation of art and experience, and Symonds, with his scrutiny of the artist's emotional reality, construe Michelangelo vis-à-vis his private conditions and his art as a definition of a way of being human. They envision him as an artist who unceasingly traversed visual, temporal, and anthropological dimensions.

The focused study of Michelangelo's life, as it enriched and transformed the biographical elements of the monograph, demonstrated the intricate paths followed by this form of writing. We see in retrospect that, just as the monograph soon after its inception at the turn of the century understandably appeared incomplete when it did not offer a thorough examination of the works of art, so it might also fail to grasp the complexity of art if it did not explore in depth the circumstances, mind, personality, and experiences that the artworks reflected and projected. The new radical meanings conferred on the "life" of an artist not only suggest that life may come after art, may contain and illuminate it, but also reveal the monographers' desire to overcome the dichotomy between human expression and the manifold forces of reality at large.

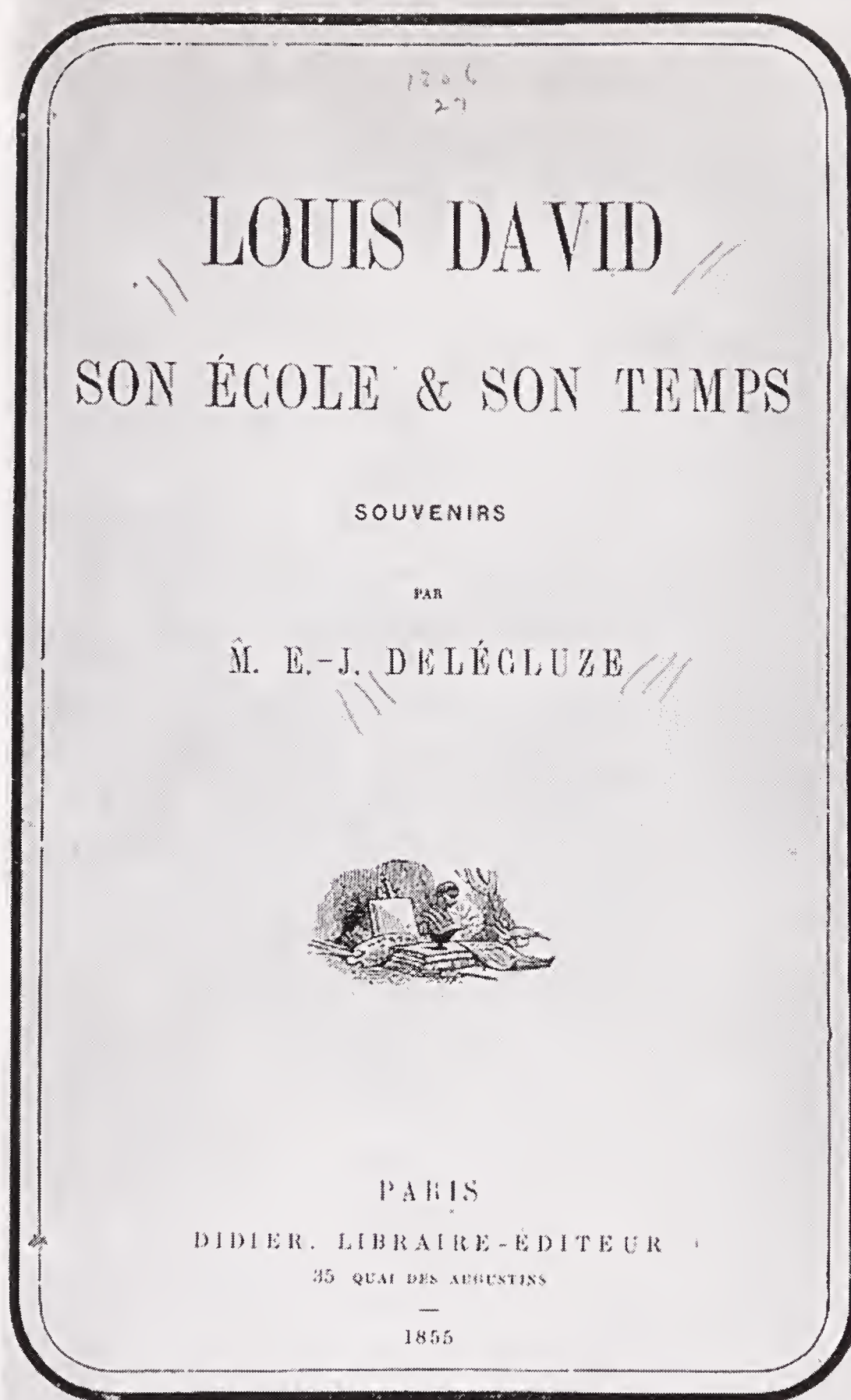
Delécluze's *David*

In the continuous transformations of the life-and-work model, the turn toward biography was motivated as much by the methods and interests of the writers as by the work, circumstances, and personality of the artist. Accordingly, as it became dominant in a monograph, the study of the

artist's life could cover a broad area of inquiry, shifting its focus from character and private matters to context, culture, and intellectual history. Moreover, certain artists—those most integrated into the history of their times—were particularly rewarding to monographers working in the biographical vein.

In the opening pages of his *Louis David, son école et son temps* (fig. 4.3), published in Paris in 1855, Étienne-Jean Delécluze (1781–1863) writes that “one could compare the genius and talent of David to a mirror” because they faithfully reflected all the political and intellectual revolutions the artist lived through.⁵² Delécluze's remark makes it clear that his monograph's goal is to capture the significance of David vis-à-vis his age. It also gives a description of the French artist that is still tenable today, in that Jacques-Louis David's career was entangled with numerous epochal events in the history of Europe.⁵³ Welcoming the French Revolution for its promise of social reform, he devoted himself to politics and in 1792 was elected a deputy of the National Convention. He affected the destiny of the arts in his country (opposing, for example, the conservative power of the Royal Academy and introducing liberal principles of teaching) and produced paintings that endorsed the new ideals of democracy and glorified the republican martyrs. When more moderate attitudes prevailed, his association with extremists such as Robespierre nearly cost him his life, and he decided to withdraw from politics after his release from prison. Yet he was soon fascinated by Napoleon Bonaparte and became the emperor's chief painter, composing images of the court and of military heroism. Finally, with the defeat of Napoleon and the restoration of the monarchy, David went into exile in Brussels, where he continued to paint until his death in 1825.

Delécluze studied in David's studio before turning to art criticism, and his monograph is almost a personal memoir, though he avoids writing in the first person. The life and works of the French master are presented through recollections mixed with evaluations of artworks; retrospective assessments of facts, people, and places; transcriptions of David's discourses; and references to the previous literature on the artist.⁵⁴ David is revealed as a charismatic teacher and founder of a whole artistic tradition. The book conveys more of the public David—citizen, artist, and head of a highly influential school of painting—than the private



4.3 Title page of É.-J. Delécluze's *Louis David, son école et son temps* (Paris, 1855). Courtesy of Harvard Fine Arts Library.

individual. The narrative evolves by drawing a series of concentric circles in and around David's life: his professional activity and political commitment, his students, and their shared cultural and social conditions. The overall impression is that of a choral epic in which David is the protagonist. Just as his works appear to be illustrations of the history of France and intellectual history in general, so Delécluze seems to regard David as an artistic barometer of the age.

Delécluze recognizes that in David the citizen and the artist were often intimately linked. Unraveling the dynamics of that link, however, constitutes a major challenge in the posthumous literature on David⁵⁵ because it raises issues of an ideological, political, and artistic nature. The author has to deal with David's involvement with the Terror, the regicide, and the despotism of the new government; his reversal of opinion and readiness to serve Bonaparte; his harsh opposition to the Academy; his alleged arrogance; and the overrational and almost dogmatic stance he seemingly took as a painter.

Delécluze does his best to soothe the tensions provoked by these issues. He regards the discourses on the arts given by the "deputy" David at the National Convention as purely theoretical, the outpourings of a mind galvanized by the ancient idea of art as a means of public instruction. He also argues that, whereas the *Oath of the Horatii* of 1784 and the *Brutus* of 1789 (both at the Louvre) may have shown an excessive milking of classical imagery in the service of republican beliefs, David's subsequent choice of contemporary subjects for his paintings led him back to a sort of natural "naïveté." Delécluze evades the implications of ideologically charged works such as the *Death of Marat* of 1793 (fig. 4.4) by interpreting them in terms of their compositional simplicity.⁵⁶ In a similar vein, he notes that, during David's imprisonment at the Hôtel des Fermes, the painter abandoned the grandiose theories he had elaborated at the convention to pursue a different kind of work, exemplified by his sketch for the *Sabines*. The episode illustrates how David could adjust to changes in his own situation and in society at large; to some extent, it foreshadows the painter's future transformation during the Empire. Delécluze takes the episode as a sign that David had achieved a new balance. He even argues that David's previous militant pictures seem to have been executed under the effects of a "political fever," almost in a "somnambulistic" state,



4.4 Jacques-Louis David, *Death of Marat* (1793). Oil on canvas, 165 x 128 cm. Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels. © Scala / Art Resource, New York.

and concludes that they represent a significant but rather circumscribed phase in the development of the artist's talent.⁵⁷

In assessing—and excusing—David's work, Delécluze consistently strives to find relationships between the artist's works and his times. These relationships, while sustaining and enlivening the narrative, redefine the biographical dimension of the monograph. In *David*, the career and biographical identity of the artist belong not so much to the factual domain and still less to the intimate sphere of the individual. Rather, they point to events contemporaneous to David's life and their reverberations in his mind as well as in his works and their public reception. Thus structured and interpreted, the exploration of the "life" brings Delécluze to address who David was in terms of his interaction with the crucial moments of his own day.

Brutus, for example, is appreciated because its accurate retrieval of classical imagery, from the physical postures to the clothes of the figures, reflected and fed the expectations of large sectors of French society. The painting had an instantaneous influence on contemporary taste, from fashion to architecture. Delécluze reports how, after its exhibition, women and men in Paris started combing their hair in the ancient Roman style. For Delécluze, David's paradigmatic transformation of the art of painting should also be viewed in the broader context of European consciousness: the culture of neoclassicism was resounding throughout Europe, as were the ideas of Winckelmann, Mengs, Hamilton, and Lessing, and the new science of archaeology along with the recent discoveries of Herculaneum and Pompeii. David's special merit is that he absorbed and interpreted these intellectual trends as both artist and teacher.⁵⁸ Delécluze thus argues that from 1789 to 1795 politics took over the artist, affected his mind and changed his work, because his previous neoclassical orientation had rendered him extremely sensible to issues of moral and civic life. He was an artist primed to become a revolutionary painter, to reflect and channel in his pictures the anxieties, visions, and hopes of radical reform.⁵⁹

David construes the shifts in the artist's career in ways that allow him to epitomize the conflicting ideas that animated France in a crucial period of its history. According to Delécluze, from his neoclassical period until about 1810 David was instinctively searching for a political and ethical foundation for painting through a dynamic give and take with his

volatile times.⁶⁰ The “times” therefore become both the extension of the artist’s life in its singularity of being and the chief parameter through which that life illuminates his works.

After the fall of Robespierre, France experienced a spiritual renewal involving the sciences and literature, to which David and some of his pupils contributed. With the advent of Bonaparte, a totally different political scenario arose, and Delécluze once again describes David’s works as both receptive to and propulsive of changes. The description culminates with Delécluze’s evaluation of the *Intervention of the Sabine Women* of 1799 (fig. 4.5). This magnificent picture, Delécluze writes, expressed the taste that had dominated in France during the five or six years David worked on it, but it also introduced the notion that the study of the nude was



4.5 Jacques-Louis David, *Intervention of the Sabine Women* (1799). Oil on canvas, 385 x 522 cm.

Musée du Louvre, Paris. © Scala / Art Resource, New York.

fundamental to artistic practice and inspired a certain severity in architecture, sculpture, theater, and even industrial arts.⁶¹

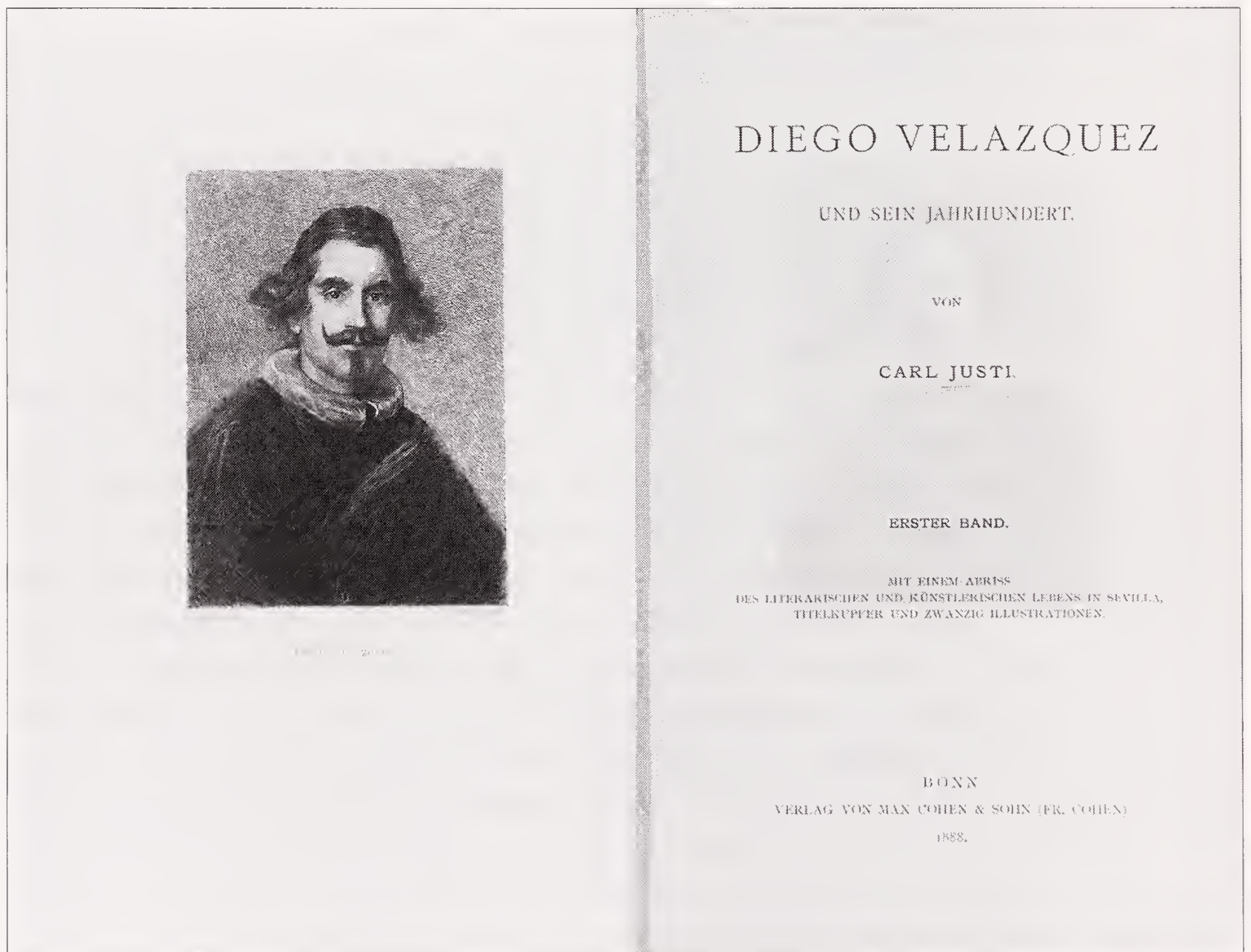
Delécluze's use of the life-and-work model does not produce the same kind of unconditional identification between the artist and the times that Grimm achieved in the *Leben Michelangelo's*. The French critic would never have thought of claiming that David "was" the times. Also, unlike Grimm, Delécluze pays some attention to the intrinsic qualities of the artworks, analyzing them to clarify David's legacy and to credit him with having reconstructed the grammar and syntax of painting. However, by associating David's biographical and artistic identities with the age in which he lived, *David* scores on two levels. On the one hand, the book asserts that never before David had the influence of a man of talent been so strongly felt in France.⁶² On the other hand, it implicitly provides an alibi for David's "political fever" in the making of his most radical pictures, ascribing their origin to the artist's agency as much as to the influence of the times.

What is moreover critically suggestive of *David* is its capacity to communicate the timeliness of the artist's works: the fact that their creation at a particular moment in time may make them the mirrors of contemporary events and contexts, the carriers of historical tensions, concerns, and aspirations. This theme was possible in Delécluze's study not simply because David's artistic stance and life called out for historical examination; it also depends upon Delécluze's adaptation of certain components of the monograph model. By emphasizing the life and times of the French master, *David* is able to probe the reasons for the cultural fluency of the artist's practice and show how certain conditions of life, views of the world, and states of being can transmigrate into the artworks.

Justi and the Indivisible Remainder of Velázquez's Singularity

Published in Bonn in 1888, the two-volume *Diego Velazquez und sein Jahrhundert* (fig. 4.6) by Carl Justi (1832–1912) strikes a peculiar note in the history of the monograph.⁶³ The book is less concerned with the dynamics of the artist's oeuvre, and in its structure and contents it certainly appears much closer to the more biographically oriented monographs. Yet while

it foregrounds the study of the artist's life, its use of biography is unlike that in any text analyzed so far in this chapter. *Velazquez* stands apart. Although it treats the artist and his times, history, painting, cultural phenomena, and society—creating a fascinating image of the world in which the Spanish master lived and worked—Justi does not seem to have intended to elucidate the nature of his art in these terms. Rather, the more Velázquez is juxtaposed with contemporary events, artistic traditions, people, and ideas, the less his pictures and artistic identity can be understood exclusively as products of these forces. In fact, Justi's monograph conveys the idea that—however much the artist was immersed in his artistic, social, and cultural context—the being and doing of Velázquez



4.6 Frontispiece and title page of Carl Justi's *Diego Velazquez und sein Jahrhundert* (Bonn, 1888).

Courtesy of Harvard Fine Arts Library.

cannot be explained solely on the basis of history, nor can they be accommodated within a univocal plan of study. There is always a remainder, some other component that suggests the genius and singularity of Velázquez: the indivisible extra that *Velazquez* attempts to capture.

During the twentieth century, when the monographic discourse lost most of its fluency, interpreters of Justi's work could hardly come to terms with his predilection for great individuals. In his *Deutsche Kunsthistoriker*, Wilhelm Waetzoldt argues that the Vasarian tradition of the history of the artists culminated in Justi's monographs just as the culture of the individual was losing centrality in art historical practice.⁶⁴ Although the model that had originated in Vasari's *Lives* endured in the literature of art for longer than Waetzoldt anticipated, he did have a point. There can be little doubt that Justi's faith in the uniqueness of the artist and his almost ahistorical grasp of the visual arts were at odds with contemporary trends in art history. Particularly in Germany, art history was increasingly a specialized discipline, grounded not simply upon the evaluation of specific artists and works but upon the study of large formal, historical, and cultural developments and genealogies. For Justi, none of these sufficed to unravel the production of an artist.

Justi's atypical stance has been linked with that of Grimm, another unorthodox art writer.⁶⁵ Certainly both authors used the monograph form and were fond of biography, but there are also telling differences. Grimm, as noted above, sought to turn the writing of biography into the writing of history. He thought of Michelangelo as *the* representative of the Italian Renaissance as well as of a state of being that transcended the ages. Justi, by contrast, did not consider Velázquez and his paintings as the source of perennial resurrections and influences. And he did not endorse the view, current at the time, that the Spanish master was the forerunner of French impressionism.⁶⁶ While he defended the Spanishness of Velázquez, Justi did not see an unconditional equation between biographical and historical dimensions. Rather, he employed the procedures of biography together with those of history and art history in his overall endeavor to reconstruct the life and works of the artist.

An intriguing aspect of *Velazquez* is its capacity to dig into different areas of inquiry and narrate the history of the artist through more than one viewpoint. We have already seen how the monograph genre entered

the territory of identity and authorship without attaching itself to a specific discipline but rather by internalizing the influence of diverse practices and discourses. To read *Velazquez* is to discover more of this polymorphous *modus operandi*. Justi's book uses many different types of analysis; produces visual, literary, and factual evidence; and simultaneously builds and dismantles the art historical apparatus of inquiry. On the one hand, *Velazquez* investigates the distinct domains of art, biography, and history as they pertain to the life and works of the Spanish master. On the other hand, it suggests that what Velázquez did and who he was escape historical understanding—that the study of biography may be able to reconstruct the context and the times of the artist, but cannot illuminate all the reasons for his uniqueness. Instead of resulting in a standstill, however, this seeming contradiction launches a process in which the belief in a complete reciprocation between art and context, between individual and collective history, yields to the intuition of the absolutely integral nature of Velázquez's genius. Numerous partial descriptions—biographical, stylistic, historical, and so on—shape a partial likeness of the artist; but what they fail to delineate persists as a kind of indissoluble remainder of a unique, irreducible individual. In this way, *Velazquez* radically reinterprets the monograph's attentiveness to being singular. The likelihood that someone is there—that the creations of art are true forms of existence and carriers of a surplus of signification produced by the dialectic of life and work—is galvanized through the view of Velázquez as both the creator and agent of something that can be evoked throughout the narrative and explored with the aid of various methodologies, yet cannot be understood from the perspectives of biography, history, and art history alone.

Even though there seems to be no direct connection between Justi's *Velazquez* and the philosophical work pursued by Friedrich Nietzsche around the same time, it is worth noting that since the early 1880s (notably with his *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* of 1881) Nietzsche undertook a profound meditation on the figure of the artist and on art itself in order to fight the nihilistic stance that overwhelmed contemporary thought. For Nietzsche, the artist exemplifies the dynamic nature of living, the creative impulse that animates any form of life- and worldview. Art, in turn, is the greatest stimulant of life. A primordial metaphysical tension, art transmits the will to becoming of power. That is, by means of art, the will

can freely will its own becoming, overcoming and augmenting itself to (re)contain the life force endlessly. Arguing that art intensifies and recreates existence, Nietzsche thus defies any supposition of an artistic essence. He opens the way to an understanding of artistic phenomena that appreciates the immanence of the fluxes of life that they generate and contain. Arguably *Velázquez* pursues a similar understanding both by dismantling any essentialistic view of art and by revealing the living component of art through the discovery of a force, a remainder of singularity that aligns life and art within their immanence.

It was in Rome in 1867, while working on the second volume of his *Winckelmann und seine Zeitgenossen* (1866–1872), that Justi happened upon Velázquez's portrait of Innocent X in the Palazzo Doria Pamphili. He was instantly stirred by it. As he later recalled, that unexpected encounter was the catalyst for the journeys and years of research that culminated in *Velázquez*.⁶⁷ Justi traveled to Spain first in 1872 to 1873 and then in 1880, visiting art collections and monuments in Madrid, Toledo, and Seville as well as in other cities.⁶⁸ He immersed himself in visual and literary studies, learning about the artist and his times from firsthand study of the artworks as well as written sources.

Thus Justi interweaves fact, history, and art history to reveal the multidimensional texture of the artist's life. He maintains a rigor of method and interpretation while at times indulging his own imagination; he even went so far as to invent a "document" and transcribe it into the narrative so that he might better describe what he felt Velázquez's impressions of Rome must have been upon his first visit there in 1630.⁶⁹

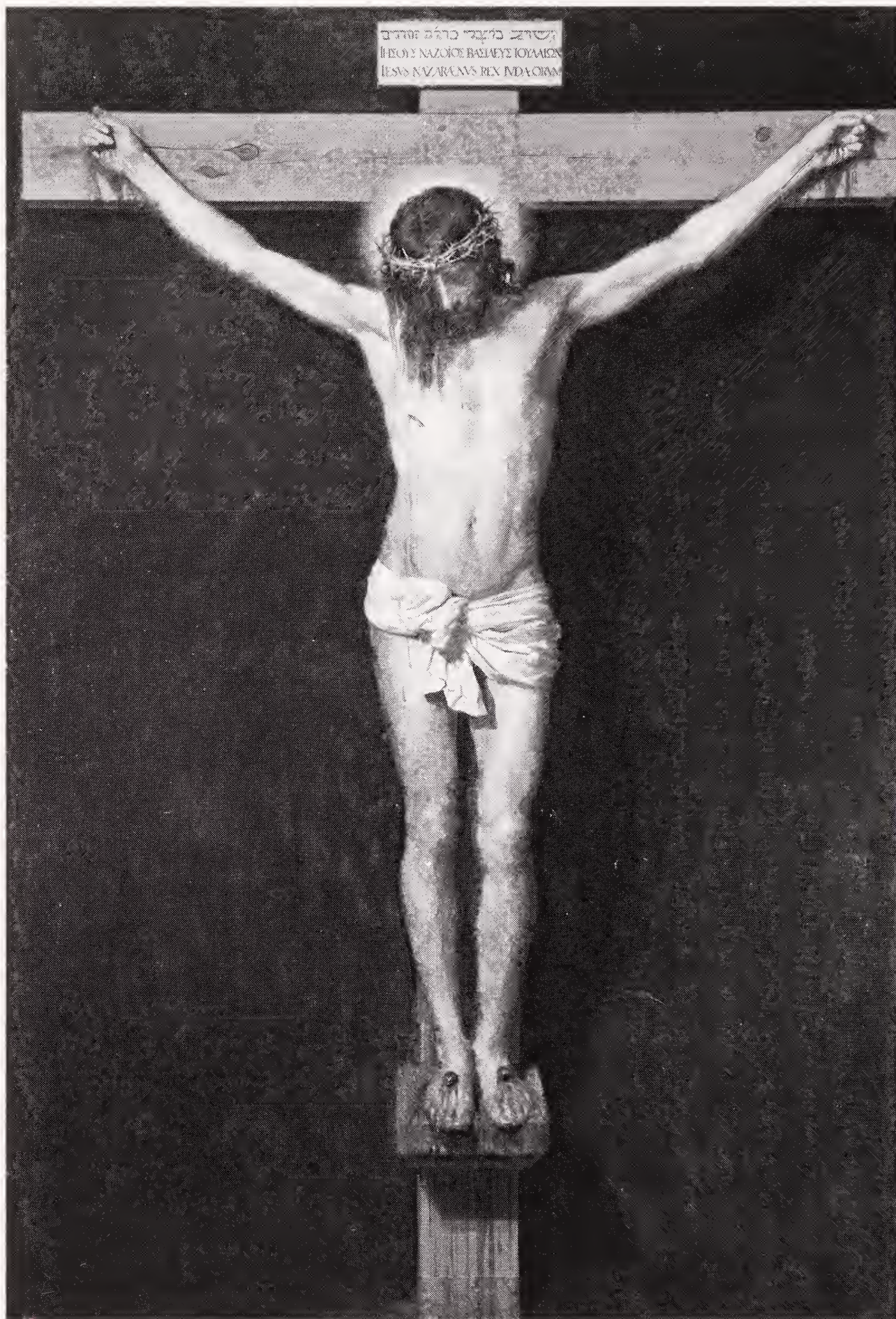
For Justi, the understanding of a life goes hand in hand with the clarification of its context. To this end, for example, he describes in detail the cities and places that Velázquez inhabited. Seville, the city of the artist's birth and formation, is remembered by Justi for its streets and markets, for the mix of people from different cultures, as well as for its poets and native artistic traditions, which had flourished since the Middle Ages.⁷⁰ Madrid was the place of Velázquez's artistic maturity, where he got full recognition for his merits and enjoyed the steady patronage of the royal family. The narrative surveys the architecture of the city and vividly describes the court of Philip IV and his family along with their circle of generals, diplo-

mats, buffoons, writers, and artists. With similar accuracy, Justi describes the cities—Venice, Rome, and Naples—that Velázquez visited during his two journeys in Italy (in 1629–1631 and 1649–1651). Here the emphasis rests on their past and present culture and monuments, the painters (Titian, Tintoretto, Ribeira), and the flourishing art market (notably in Venice).⁷¹

In discussing the artworks, Justi's evaluations do not follow a set pattern. On a few occasions, he turns to the tenets of connoisseurship. Regarding a dubious picture in England, then deemed a second version of the *Bacchus* of 1628–1629 (Prado), Justi denies Velázquez's authorship on the basis of internal evidence.⁷² Again, with the *Christ after the Flagellation* of 1626–1628 (National Gallery of Art, London), which seems to deviate from the general characteristics of Velázquez's oeuvre and could not be ascribed to him on the basis of documentary evidence, Justi relies on internal evidence alone. Having personally examined the style of the picture, he has no doubt that it is by Velázquez.⁷³

A different attitude characterizes Justi's evaluation of the *Crucifixion* (fig. 4.7) completed around 1632 for the church of San Placido in Madrid (now at the Prado). He first notes that the fascination of Velázquez's painting stems mostly from the fact that part of Christ's face is in complete shadow, with his head sagging on his breast, as if the face were covered with a heavy black veil. Justi advances his own interpretation of the artist's decision to depict the face in this manner: Velázquez, realizing the futility of representing a dying God in a naturalistic way, decided to treat this complex theme in the simplest, most authentic way, trusting his own feelings in visualizing the suggestive veil. Here he operated not merely as an artist but also as a religious devotee.⁷⁴ This interpretation points to a set of beliefs crucial to the whole development of the life-and-work model. It demonstrates Justi's awareness that considerations of artistry and aesthetic merits may not always suffice to unravel the dynamic sustaining the creation of an image. The image is inevitably rooted in the humanity of its maker, expresses a condition inextricable from personal states of being, and promotes an understanding of the artworks as objects potentially at one with the sphere of existence.

Because of its subject and formal components, the *Surrender of Breda* of 1634–1635 (fig. 4.8) encourages various methods of analysis. Velázquez represents the Spanish general Ambrosio Spínola receiving the key of the



4.7 Diego Velázquez, *Crucifixion (Christ of San Plácido)* (1630). Oil on canvas, 248 x 169 cm. Museo del Prado, Madrid. © Scala / Art Resource, New York.



4.8 Diego Velázquez, *The Surrender of Breda* (1634–1635). Oil on canvas, 307 x 367 cm. Museo del Prado, Madrid. © Scala / Art Resource, New York.

fortress of Breda from the Dutch governor-general Justinus of Nassau, during the final capitulation of this bulwark of Flanders in June 1625. This victory, achieved through a brilliant use of siege tactics, was a significant chapter in recent Spanish history. But, along with emphasizing the historical interest of its subject, Justi maintains that in the *Surrender of Breda* the artist's soul appeals to us more sympathetically than in his previous works. When the fortress at last yielded, Spínola recognized the valor and endurance of his opponents by granting them the most honorable terms ever conceded to a captured garrison: the right to march out with all arms and in good order. Velázquez's composition seizes on this meaningful event, with all of its heroic implications: inspired by a principle of unity and simplicity, it concentrates on the central action—the handover of the key—as it centers on the two generals, bound together as if by mutual admiration and respect. Justi argues that most artists would not have thought to concentrate on this noble moment, and that this choice of subject therefore reflects Velázquez's humanity. Moving from historical digressions and issues of personality to formal analysis, Justi completes his discussion of the *Surrender of Breda* by commenting on its system of coloring, the relations between foreground and background, and the rendering of the soldiers and horses. Eventually he touches on problems of chronology as well, rightly remarking that the painting must have been executed before the commonly accepted date of 1647.⁷⁵

The above examples show the flexibility of Justi's method in addressing the artist's works. However, in discussing the numerous portraits executed by Velázquez, Justi writes more about the people portrayed than about the artworks themselves, steering his text away from the artistic domain and toward the biographical. Among the painter's many sitters were Philip IV, the count of Olivares, Charles of Wales, Mary of Hungary, the Queen Mariana, the infanta Maria Theresa, and Mateos, the master of hounds. Common to Justi's evaluations of these portraits is his reliance both on the visual data in the picture and on his own study of the period and its historical figures. In *Velázquez*, Justi revives the catalogue-like aspects of the monograph—this time to treat not the oeuvre or the artist's internal development but the realm of history. He gradually builds up a gallery of people who crowd and enliven the narrative, each bearing witness to the multifarious nature of Velázquez's century.

While it continuously reveals new facets of the artist's identity, Justi's narrative projects that identity away from any firm biographical or artistic standing. Justi tends to view Velázquez as an artist who transcended the coordinates of a given time and his paintings as creations independent of outside artistic influences, almost as if they were engendered only from within. In endorsing this view, Justi refused to subscribe to what was (and remains today) a widely accepted art historical tenet: the belief that artists do not operate in isolation but confront contemporary and past traditions, and that their works must consequently be studied against a system of influences and genealogies. That Justi's understanding of artistic creation was more or less ahistorical can be sensed, for example, in his account of Rubens's nine months at the court of Madrid in 1628–1629. This visit was thought by many at the time to have inspired Velázquez's second significant shift of style, around 1630. While Justi recounts Rubens's visit at length, he regards it as of little consequence in Velázquez's artistic development, arguing that Velázquez depended exclusively on himself in his artistic metamorphoses. The argument evolves out of a comparison between the two masters; pointing to similarities and differences, Justi uses Rubens as a counterpoint to highlight Velázquez's uniqueness. He even remarks that it is rather astounding that the Spaniard held himself so aloof from the influence of the Flemish master, to which so many painters in Madrid had succumbed.⁷⁶

Justi creates other counterpoints that underscore Velázquez's singularity in the face of external conditions. His description of the painter's experience at the royal court is one such counterpoint. Velázquez, Justi tells us, was born a portrait painter: his simple, frank, upright nature suited him for portraiture, which requires observation and skillful imitation, and led him to capture the individual characters of men and women in his paintings. Although the painter's life at court was quite circumscribed, Justi maintains that Velázquez was unaffected by court life while being fully immersed in it. Rather, the artist took advantage of the fact that his sitters were people he knew. Even though he could not choose his subjects, he revealed his exceptional talent in portraits through a unique touch and a power to convey absolute convincing truths.⁷⁷

For Justi, what animates Velázquez and his works goes beyond facts, history, and art history. Discussing the stylistic peculiarities in the paintings

of Velázquez's last decades and the artist's attempt to produce the greatest effect in the least amount of time, Justi dwells upon the significance of the characteristically free and unclouded touch of his brush—a quality, he notes, that had also been called the “spirit” of his brush. Yet, Justi queries, “What is meant by spirit [*Geist*] in painting?” The answer he provides is that “spirit” in the visual arts has nothing to do with thought or discursive elements: “True spirit, genius, is pregnant and unexpected expression. . . . Those who have genius see what the ‘profane’ is unable to see, it cannot be predicted how they will treat a given theme, and consequently, as Kant says, they do things that cannot be reduced to rules.”⁷⁸

But Velázquez's singularity is by no means simply a motif of contemplation for Justi. On the contrary, Justi thinks out its theoretical and methodological consequences as well as its implications in the writing of a monograph on an artist such as Velázquez. This deliberation may be inferred from some of his remarks on the tendency to draw art historical genealogies—relations of cause and effect between masters and pupils, works and territory, artists and their epoch. Justi admits that drawing these causal connections is surely a main task in art history, for art historians must clarify the early training, contexts, and influences experienced by artists. However, there are internal and external as well as individual and general causes. Merely noting stylistic similarities or assigning works to a period cannot help one fathom the innermost forces of artistic creation, especially when creation is the work of those “few ones” who deviate from the known paths and bring out something unprecedented. The production of unprecedented artworks is tantamount to a power of initiative (*Kraft der Initiative*) that one calls genius, which is neither completely innate nor “the product of time and environment.” Artistic creation—one manifestation of genius—calls for explorations that go beyond quantitative, chronological, geographical, and genealogical analysis. In fact, Justi argues, writing a monograph on a great master implies trespassing into another realm of knowledge, moving to and from the recognition of a singularity of being:

Monographers often work against their own interest by overlooking what more than anything else would elevate their heroes. W. Bürger said that “Être maître c'est ne ressembler à personne.”

Therefore with real masters one should be reminded of nobody instead of everybody.

Justi takes up the point again a bit later:

The more one succeeds in really approaching a master and . . . brings him to speak, the more distinctly he will appear closed in his works as in a world of his own. To say it in a scholastic way, the general traits of family, school, and time he got from others, shares with others and bequeaths to others, is nothing but his secondary being, whereas the individual, the idiosyncratic is his first being.⁷⁹

These two passages endorse the monograph's fundamental view of the creations of art as the traces of someone's coming to presence. It is also clear that Justi seeks to grasp what he sees as the unpredictable work of genius in terms of an irreducible individuality. The more a sense of identity unfolds itself in the making of artworks, the more an artist can remind us of no one else, and the more the appreciation of the artworks turns into the acknowledgment of a previously unknown singular existent. The traces of someone's passage in time, of the being and becoming of a presence, are thus equated with a remainder. They come to signify an extra: all the effluence of sense that does not get across in the coding and recoding of an artist's life and works because it cannot fit into a preconceived perceptual or conceptual scheme. Put into Nietzschean terms, these traces point to the creative impulse that animates all forms of life and thus signal a dynamic of pure augmentation and differentiation of force.

Justi conveys this idea again during a brief discussion of Murillo. Against the repeated attempts to explain away his pictures on the basis of past sources and influences, Justi vindicates Murillo's originality by complaining about those critics who "fancied they had solved the 'X' of the artist's character by formulating an equation whose value was made up of at least some half-dozen names of the past."⁸⁰ Here both the who and the what of an artist are regarded as a source of otherness, an unknown factor that resists the standard methods of art historians. It is precisely this "X factor" that Justi's *Velázquez* ambitiously endeavors to conjure up. He

defends its integrity by refusing to apply any rigid principle of causation between the artist's life and works and the qualities of a given epoch, context, and art historical system.

If the paradigm of the oeuvre had produced the morphology of an identity in process, the visual analogue of someone's passage in time, in retrospect we can see that *Velazquez* demonstrates that a monograph oriented toward the biographical can achieve, through different means and for different aims, a strong sense of "someoneness" as well. In its own way, Justi's book suggests the oneness of Velázquez because the whole fabric of the narrative systematically projects the artist's life and works within and outside of their external circumstances. *Velazquez* is full of data and insights, but they do not add up to a compound definition of Velázquez. What unites these elements is not a sense of their unconditional reciprocation with Velázquez the artist and the human being. In fact, the very denial of such a reciprocation increases rather than diminishes the recognition of who Velázquez is. The "who" is evidence of a difference recognizable without reference to, or reliance on, any other thing. It ultimately corresponds to a locus of instability and freedom within the overall structure of data and insights built up by *Velazquez*.

Velazquez radicalized the methodological anarchy of a monograph, not only by overcoming the particularities of the fields of biography, history, connoisseurship, and art history, but also by breaking the circularity between internal and external aspects of the artist's life and works. Beyond that circularity lie only fragments, attestations of being and becoming—an "X factor," as Justi calls it, that resists a fixed grid of interpretation in the study of an artist. Justi worked to make the monograph a model commensurate with the absolute oneness of the artist and his works vis-à-vis his century, country, and art historical legacies. He addresses the artist's works not as objects that turn into something else but as entities that defy translations and projections from outside while reclaiming a right to exist over and above this or that time and space.

Sites of Identity

5

Oeuvre and Biography: A Difficult Balance

Oeuvre and biography were two catalysts in the making of the modern monograph. Each of these trends conferred new meanings on the biographical and artistic dimensions of the model and articulated, each in its own particular way, the analogy between life and works at its core. On the one hand, writers concentrating on oeuvre used a close analysis of the art to discover organic and human qualities in the artist's works. Those emphasizing biography, on the other hand, studied the historical situation and the lived experience of the artist to evaluate their pervasiveness and intensity within his or her works or to suggest the works' integrity in relation to a given epoch. In fact, while the idea of the oeuvre arose from connoisseurship and art historical insights, the emphasis on biography in the monograph depended on historical awareness and factual concerns. Biography often emphasized the genius and heroic figure of the artist against the other components of the model.

Shortcomings became evident when the pendulum shifted toward either the oeuvre or the biography. The oeuvre revealed the artist as a subjectivity in process and an achiever of self-definition through his works but did not necessarily convey any concrete indication of his personality or historical situation. Biography, conversely, could shed light on these aspects and even on the recesses of the artist's mind but could easily overshadow the specifically visual properties of the artworks. Finally, the study of the oeuvre required specialized means, and therefore found its warmest

reception among art historians and connoisseurs. In contrast, the study of biography verged on the novelistic and reached a much broader audience.

Thus described, the dichotomy of oeuvre and biography reminds us that as the monograph evolved and sought to dovetail the components of its twin structure, each side of the life-and-work model was investigated in increasing depth. They not only disclosed their respective natures but also inspired the pursuit of distinct paths of inquiry. From the standpoint of the oeuvre, the artworks are virtually equal to existence in that they signal the becoming of someone through the creation of art. Biography studies the artist as a presence in the stream of history, or by showing his or her power to both live in and transcend a given period.

But is it possible to integrate the study of the oeuvre with the new awareness of the biographical dimension? Can one divide and reconcile the sites of identity proposed by the various applications of the life-and-work model? Questions such as these intrigued monographers during the second half of the nineteenth century. Numerous monographs of the period tried to overcome the methodological impasse created by the dichotomy of oeuvre and biography, and to balance a thorough examination of the artworks with an account of the artist's personal history and character. Some attempts were lacking, but others contributed to the further refinement of the model in ways that distinctly enhanced its illumination of the visual arts.

Unsatisfactory solutions to this impasse are not hard to find. The 1880s witnessed a publishing boom in multivolume series devoted to both Renaissance and modern artists, monographs that diluted the complex dialectic of an artist's life and work for a popular audience. The phenomenon started in London, in 1879, when Sampson Low, Marston and Company launched the *Illustrated Biographies of the Great Artists* series, edited by Frank Cundall.¹ In its very first year, the *Illustrated Biographies* brought out twenty titles devoted to such diverse artists as Titian (by Richard Ford Heath), Rembrandt (by James W. Mollett), Holbein (by Joseph Cundall), and Perugino (by T. Adolphus Trollope).

The new trend in publishing was soon taken up in Paris, where in 1885 J. Rouam of the *Librairie de l'Art* initiated *Les Artistes Célèbres*. The French series was supervised by art historian Eugène Müntz (1845–1902), author

of numerous contributions to the field of Renaissance studies. Müntz wrote the inaugural text, devoted to the life and works of Donatello. It was followed in 1886 by books on Fortuny (by Charles Yriarte), Jacques Callot (by Marius Vachon), Rembrandt (by Émile Michel), La Tour (by Champfleury), and other masters.² Another important series, the *Künstler Monographien*, appeared in Germany beginning in 1895, published by Velhagen and Klasing. The editor, Hermann Knackfuss, was a painter of historical and mythological themes who taught art history at the Akademie of Kassel. Knackfuss wrote the first seven books of the series (on Raphael, Rubens, Rembrandt, Michelangelo, Dürer, Velázquez, and Menzel) and six more in the ensuing two years (on Franz Hals, Murillo, and Van Dyck in 1896; on Titian, Holbein, and Terborch and Jan Steen in 1897). These were issued along with volumes on artists such as Watteau (by Adolf Rosenberg), Ghirlandaio (by Ernst Steinmann), and Mantegna (by Henry Thode).³

Handsome, rich in information, and affordable, the monographs issued in these series were very popular, and the series themselves established a pattern that still thrives in publishing today. The contemporary reception was so favorable that books often sold out and underwent many reprints and new editions.⁴ Yet, while they marked the absorption of the monograph form into the eclectic world of popular literature, the books in these series did not include the results of new research or unorthodox viewpoints. Hailed by the *Times* of January 22, 1880, as the “Liebigs of literature” (after a popular brand of beef concentrate), the *Illustrated Biographies* were small books on great subjects, each devoted to the life and works of an individual artist. Written with acumen, often by experts, they tended to distill the gist of an artist’s history and significance in a form and language that would easily hold the attention of nonspecialized readers. In France, *Les Artistes Célèbres* functioned in much the same way, appealing to general readers as well as students and young artists. The authors (often teachers in academies or public administrators of the arts) reported the latest discoveries in biography and the most recent criticism, without tackling specialized issues. As for the *Künstler Monographien*, even though the art historical debate was quite developed in academic and scholarly circles in Germany, the chief goal of this series was once again to create a new, larger public for the history of Renaissance and

modern artists. Knackfuss, who influenced the project and seems to have specialized in the writing of monographs,⁵ was neither a connoisseur nor an orthodox art historian. Rather, being more literary-minded, he echoed the individualistic stance of Grimm and, regarding the protagonists of his books as heroic figures, cemented the use of biography with the aims of the monograph series.

Whether they offered annotated lists of the artist's production or discussed the life and the works together within the narrative, the monograph series books were not necessarily meant either to clarify art historical and historical specifics or to enhance visual and factual knowledge about an artist. In most cases, the volumes consisted of highly informed narratives that served up what had already been presented in scholarly publications. Both the purpose and general conception that inspired these enterprises throughout Europe were well summarized in 1899, when the London publisher George Bell began the series *Great Masters in Painting and Sculpture*, edited by George C. Williamson. "The object of this Series," one reads in the back of each of its volumes, "is to supply short biographical and critical Monographs, sound in matter, adequate in illustration, and artistic in form and workmanship."⁶

This statement conveys a legitimate desire to introduce the histories of the life and works of many artists to a wide readership. To this end, the monograph form showed its malleability in answering the demands of popular culture and literature. In so doing, however, the monograph ran the risk of undermining the complex composition, spectrum of analysis, and range of address of the life-and-work model that had developed since the early nineteenth century. Insofar as it made the conflicted relationship between oeuvre and biography seem almost unproblematic, the approach epitomized by the monograph series drastically reduced a number of methodological tensions that galvanized the history of the genre. Even more relevant, it demeaned the original utopian impulse to construe the visual arts as existence. There was no longer room for imagining new approaches or experimenting with the model in order to further articulate the special nexus between art and life, images and identity. That nexus, left half-formed and unexplored, began to provide the basis for a form of writing that could easily be reiterated and applied in countless cases because its structure, contents, and ambition appeared to be quite well defined and

circumscribed. The boom in popular monograph series stripped some of the most cogent implications out of the model, and also signaled its impending stagnation and decay. It foreshadowed and helped shape the twentieth-century belief that one knows what a monograph is and does.

Nonetheless, it is fruitful to analyze the nineteenth-century monograph in light of the issues and aspirations in its history and the dialectical virtues it could reveal. Before and during the editorial boom in the monograph series, the model continued to metamorphose, increasing the need to reconsider its structure through the invention of more articulated means of entwining its biographical and artistic elements. After 1850, concurrent with the rise of biography and the new popularity of the genre, the monograph reformulated the correlation between an artist's life and works in ways that play out the dynamics between oeuvre and biography, narrative and catalogue raisonné, personal style and historical agencies, specialization and popularization, the truth of the art and the truth of the facts.

Raphael (1867–1868) by Ernst Förster is an early, feeble symptom of this changing situation. A painter and pupil of Peter Cornelius, writer on art, and editor of the German edition of Vasari's *Lives*, Förster (1800–1885) asks at the opening of his text, “How can one best connect the enumeration, description, and evaluation of the works of Raphael with the narration of his experiences [*Erlebnisse*]?”⁷ Self-conscious about the popular interest a monograph might arouse, Förster deliberately wrote his *Raphael* for a wide audience rather than for a restricted circle of specialists. To this end, he writes, he has adopted plain language and avoided learned digressions.⁸

Rejecting Passavant's sharp division between narrative and catalogue raisonné, Förster explains that he himself has opted for a “middle path.”⁹ Whereas Raphael's earlier schoolworks, deemed of more biographical than artistic value, are discussed only in the narrative, the later works, indicative of Raphael's evolution, are both mentioned there and extensively analyzed in separate sections. Although he realized that to envision the whole of the artist's works is to reflect the dynamics of his internal course, Förster was nevertheless skeptical about using chronological ordering for such a purpose. He disdained the kind of classification crucial in Passavant's reconstruction of the oeuvre. A chronological sequence of works,

he claims, would result in a “casual sequence of portraits, Madonnas, altar-pieces, and frescoes” in which Raphael’s development would scarcely be visible.¹⁰

Förster appended a chronological list of Raphael’s works to each volume. He also inserted, between the chapters of the narrative, special sections in which the artworks are grouped and evaluated according to a “more expressive ordering”—their visual correspondences with the poetical genres of the lyric, epic, dramatic, and symbolic. This arrangement resumed, albeit with slight improvement, the thematic classification of the artist’s works adopted in monographs preceding Passavant, as well as the rooted topos of Raphael’s continuous artistic development. Yet despite his ambition to emend Passavant’s *Rafael*, Förster ended up using it as a resource. In retrospect, what is noteworthy is Förster’s desire to rethink the monograph form in relation to the demands of biography and the specialized study of the oeuvre.

Förster was not alone in getting entangled in these issues. In his lifelong project to write a Raphael monograph, Herman Grimm also faced something of the kind and actually arrived at a point where it seemed as if the life-and-work model had been fractured. Raphael challenged Grimm’s belief in biography as the best means of ascertaining the authenticity of a life and of showing the artist as a true representative individual in human history. Grimm could not find enough data to correlate the dimensions of Raphael’s life and works in a way congenial to his historicism. That is, he could not ascribe to Raphael the same sense of art as a paradigmatic moment of lived experience that inspired his view of Michelangelo.

From 1872 to 1896, Grimm published three versions of a Raphael’s *Leben*, each bearing changes that denote his shifting perception of the subject as well as of the monograph’s structure. The first edition of 1872 features a lengthy introduction that reviews Raphael’s influence and how he has been interpreted since Vasari.¹¹ Then follows Grimm’s translation of the Life of Raphael by Vasari, and a commentary in which he contextualizes the biographer’s statements and adds facts that had been discovered in the ensuing centuries. The plan at this juncture was to issue a second volume in which Grimm would narrate the artist’s life and evaluate his production independently from Vasari. However, the second

edition of 1886 consists of only one volume¹² and is a condensed, revised version of the former plan. The 1872 introduction, entirely reworked, appears now under the title of “Raphael’s Ruhm in vier Jahrhunderten”—probably one of the first essays ever written that attempts to grasp an artist’s history in terms of his critical fortunes. The second part offers Vasari’s texts of 1550 and 1568; and, in the third part, “Raphael in seinen Hauptwerken,” Grimm selects from the artist’s oeuvre some special works—the *Marriage of the Virgin*, the *Deposition*, the Stanza della Segnatura, the cartoons for the tapestry, the Sistine *Madonna*, and the *Transfiguration*—which he evaluates in and of themselves as well as in their art historical and cultural contexts. The 1896 edition¹³ features nine chapters, the first comprising two historical essays, “Raphael und die Geschichte der Menschheit” and “Das Quattrocento,” and the last a slightly edited version of the 1872 text on Raphael’s reception. Vasari’s texts are no longer included, and the seven remaining chapters focus on Raphael’s major works. Indeed Grimm continued to revise the project. In 1902, a posthumous text on Raphael emerged, which suggests that a fourth edition of the book was in the making.¹⁴

What Grimm gradually realized over more than three decades is that Raphael is a far more difficult subject for a *Leben* than he had originally thought. Not only did the artist leave behind just a few private documents, but historical and biographical data about him are scarce and his character and movements are poorly known. Grimm’s 1886 preface argues that, unlike Michelangelo, Raphael cannot be thoroughly identified with the history of his times because there are no elements to support such a view.¹⁵ In order to overcome the impasse, then, he veers away from the pattern of a monograph that intertwines the artist’s life and works. This is already apparent in the 1886 edition, which investigates Raphael’s reception through the centuries and examines only the most significant examples of his artistic production. Ten years later, the *Leben* looks even more like a history of the artworks than a biography proper. However, Grimm did not give up his vision of history as biographically based or the key ideas of the monograph model. He interestingly tried to trace (just as he did with Michelangelo) the past and present resonance of the artist in the cultural realm. A sense of the representativeness of the individual ultimately remains, and is actually strengthened, even as the book turns

into a study of the Raphaelesque tradition, of the artist's impact on the history of humankind, and of the formation of the "myth" of Raphael in the West.

While Grimm was experimenting with other possible approaches to the master of Urbino, the "life and works" of Raphael continued to inspire the writing of monographs. In 1881, Eugène Müntz published in Paris a richly illustrated book on Raphael whose merit consists not so much in any novelty of fact, structure, or interpretation but in the skillful incorporation of more or less familiar material in an extremely well connected narrative.¹⁶ Thanks to his profound knowledge of Renaissance art and history, Müntz was comfortable in evaluating the artist's works and highlighting both the place they assumed in the whole of his production and their art historical significance. At the same time, he opened up the horizon of inquiry by giving at least as much attention to the discussion of the historical, social, and intellectual milieus in which Raphael found himself at the various stages of his career.

But Müntz's publication cannot be taken as a token of the monograph form's achieved stability. As epitomes of two opposite orientations of the life-and-work model, the rise of biography and the investigation of the oeuvre challenged the practitioners of the genre to readdress the balance between the monograph's bipolar orders of knowledge. The task became central especially for those monographers involved in connoisseurship and art historical studies. The connoisseur's belief that the creations of an artist reveal inalienable traits and qualities that can be determined only by firsthand inspection of his or her works had already been pivotal in the development of the monograph—inspiring in various degrees the important books of Waagen, Rumohr, and Passavant. But it was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that this belief came to be recognized as an essential aspect of art studies. The practice of attribution began to underlie an increasing number of writings on modern and old masters, and it contributed to a systematic evaluation of their works preserved in public and private galleries in Europe.¹⁷ The monographers who shared these concerns thus regarded the reconstruction of the oeuvre as the true cornerstone of the life-and-work model. At the same time, however, they looked at the artist's life with different eyes.

They realized that just as biography alone was not enough, so the study of the artworks could not be exclusively and formally oriented but had to be coupled with a deeper recognition of the artist's historical situation and personal context.

In this chapter I first discuss a monograph that, with unprecedented clarity, applied the idea of oeuvre to the study of a modern artist, Théodore Géricault. The Géricault monograph, by Charles Clément, reiterates and transforms some patterns of thought and procedures first encountered in Passavant's reconstruction of Raphael's oeuvre. I then turn to four monographs devoted in turn to Correggio, Dürer, Titian, and Raphael. In the monographs on Correggio and Dürer, written by Julius Meyer and Moritz Thausing respectively, the desire to balance oeuvre and biography becomes even more apparent. Coauthors Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovan Battista Cavalcaselle take up the same problems in their monographs on Titian and Raphael but achieve a different balance between oeuvre and biography. While they examine Titian's art and life with equal thoroughness, and in the Raphael monograph seek to learn about his life from his works, in both books they above all explore the genesis of the artist's creations and, severing the art from any empirical relation with the life, end by producing suggestive "biographies" of the artworks themselves.

Clément's *Géricault*

Géricault: Étude biographique et critique avec le catalogue raisonné de l'oeuvre du maître (fig. 5.1) first appeared in Paris in 1867. It was reissued a year later with slight modifications; the definitive edition appeared in 1879. Like *Rafael* by Passavant, it remained a standard reference for later writers on the artist, providing the basis for every accurate examination of his life and art that followed, right up to the present.¹⁸ Also like *Rafael*, Clément's monograph uses the tools of connoisseurship to investigate the whole of the artist's works, drawing insights into the realm of the oeuvre while envisioning the artist as a subjectivity in process. However, *Géricault* departs from *Rafael*'s two-volume format; it brings together in a single volume both a narrative of the artist's life and works and a chronological catalogue of his production. By the time Clément was writing, the word "oeuvre"

had gained some semantic stability, meaning not only the prints by and after a master but the entire corpus of an artist's works. Readers would now understand from the title of *Géricault*, which specifies a "catalogue raisonné de l'oeuvre," that it would present the whole of the artist's paintings, sculptures, drawings, and lithographs.

An art critic and writer on modern and Renaissance art, Clément (1821–1887) began to gather materials for his *Géricault* in the early 1860s. Though there was little literature available on Géricault, who died in 1824 at the age of thirty-two, and rather scant information on his life and works, the artist's significance and charisma were strongly felt among French



5.1 Frontispiece and title page of Charles Clément's *Géricault: Étude biographique et critique avec le catalogue raisonné de l'oeuvre du maître*, third edition (Paris, 1879). Courtesy of Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

artists, romantic and realist alike.¹⁹ So little was known about the artist that Clément had to start almost from scratch. Through interviews with Géricault's surviving friends and acquaintances and a careful examination of facts, documents, and oral reports, he sought to save from oblivion what was still alive in people's memories and to illuminate new details. Yet even as he sought to sketch a faithful likeness of his protagonist, Clément did not limit himself to historical specifics. Regarding art as a means of individual emotion and imagination, he believed that biography and the times contributed to the shaping of an artist's identity.²⁰ Clément found that Géricault's accomplishments resulted from the artist's sincere and subjective commitment to his work and from his ability to draw themes from reality and contemporary history.

The most daring aspect of Clément's undertaking was his determination to recover, evaluate, and date all of Géricault's works. Only a few of them were visible in museums; no inventories or catalogues had been made after the artist's death; and previous writers had discussed only his most important paintings. Nonetheless, Clément produced a catalogue describing 200 paintings, 214 drawings, 6 sculptures, and 101 prints. In his introduction he argues that a chronological assessment is the best way of classifying an artist's works and grasping the development of his genius. He explains that he has adopted this rigorous method whenever possible. Uncertain how to date a number of sketches, drawings, and studies, he eventually decided to place them along with other works of the same nature or subject for which he had established a chronology.²¹

The *Géricault* catalogue does not evince the wide web of interrelations among entries that characterizes Passavant's second volume of *Raphael*. In describing the artworks, Clément communicates the essentials and does not always justify his positioning of an entry or work. Yet since it was informed by a scrupulous analysis of the works, the compilation of the catalogue led Clément to that special awareness of the artworks identified with the idea of the oeuvre. This awareness shines through the narrative of *Géricault*. Moreover, *Géricault* almost unavoidably presents the artist as someone driven to realization and self-definition. It is as if Clément, either consciously or unconsciously, tried to compensate for the premature death of this artist by creating a fluid and lively memory that could revive and contemplate, reverse and interweave all the moments of his creations.

Using the idea of the *oeuvre*, *Géricault* suggests that, regardless of the artist's short life and despite the fact that his genius did not have time to manifest itself fully, Géricault experienced a plenitude of being.

From the start, the narrative sets out to establish that Géricault's works systematically reflect who their maker was. Writing of the artist's early years, Clément argues that Géricault was an innovator because he harmonized tradition and progress by working in a completely spontaneous way, even when he studied other artistic traditions. Géricault, he claims, "loves, understands, and accepts" everything—the severe line of the Greeks and the Florentines, as well as the color of the Venetians and the chiaroscuro of the Flemish—not out of eclecticism but because he was an artist of "absolute sincerity."²² The term "sincerity" is key here, and indeed had a special resonance among nineteenth-century French artists and critics. Often used by Delacroix, Baudelaire, and Zola, among others, the word helped them to articulate the pivotal idea of art as a medium of subjective expression; it also allowed them to tackle the issues of how and why a painted image reflects its author's selfhood, how technical practice itself can bear the marks of individuality.²³ In calling Géricault "sincere," Clément most likely meant that he conveyed a sense of authenticity and interiority. In fact, he later speaks of a "pictorial sentiment" as the "natural" guide of Géricault in both his rebellion against the sterile modes of contemporary painting and his subsequent elaboration of a new, personal viewpoint in art.²⁴ Broadening his argument, Clément construes Géricault's history in terms akin to the life-and-work dialectic, seeing an interdependence between art making and the making of identity. Insofar as his artistic path and creations were naturally inspired by a "pictorial sentiment," then, Géricault created a fusion of painting and interiority, so that what he did and who he was cannot be separated.

In Clément's monograph, Géricault is and becomes who he is by pursuing his own irresistible impulse to expression and by giving consistency to his feeling of empathy with reality. This pursuit impelled Géricault into a restless search for the impossible. From his youth, Clément tells us, the artist was full of hopes that were often undermined by an overwhelming despondency and inability to achieve. Clément interprets this romantic melancholy—the sense of powerlessness before the immensity of one's task—as a token of Géricault's unwillingness to seek easy satisfaction. He

goes even further, arguing that Géricault's extreme longings and ambitions actually provided a "profound enjoyment [*jouissance profonde*]" that propelled his "fight for the impossible."²⁵ This *jouissance* is, in sum, the very urge toward realization that simultaneously makes and unmakes Géricault's identity in and out of his works.

The image of the artist questing for the impossible complements Clément's perception that Géricault felt driven to create even when the object of his investment was unclear in his mind. Clément recalls a significant episode of Géricault's biography: his entry into the Parisian art world. The Salon of 1812 was about to open and, in Clément's account, Géricault "wanted to exhibit," feeling he had the power to do so but lacked a proper subject to paint.²⁶ The acclaimed *Charging Chasseur* (fig. 5.2), which he eventually showed at the Salon, is a painting with heroic overtones that captured the emotions and hopes of the French people at that historical moment, while France was awaiting news of Napoleon's march through Russia and the assault on Moscow. But while history provided the theme, his art implies a far more encompassing engagement with the world. For Clément, it was Géricault's "instinctive attraction for reality" that gave birth to the *Charging Chasseur*. The idea for the painting occurred to the artist one day while riding to the fair of Saint-Cloud, when he saw passing on his road "a large van, of the kind Parisian workmen hire for such occasions and transform into omnibuses, pulled by a grey horse, not at all beautiful but fiery and of marvelous color. Unused to its load, the excited animal frothing at the mouth, its eyes bloodshot, reared in a sunlit cloud of dust." Thus, Clément concludes, "The artist had found his picture."²⁷ Clément ascribes the subject of *Charging Chasseur* to Géricault's readiness to turn the intensity of his immediate visual experience into the images of his art. Born out of an inner drive to expression, the image channels its energies through a synthesis of the objective enticements of nature and the subjective agencies of its maker, the themes provided by the historical context and the artist's imagination. Clément judges the *Charging Chasseur* in hindsight and in comparison with the artist's future achievements. He emphasizes that all of Géricault's qualities as *coloriste* and *harmoniste* can be found in embryonic form in this first painting. Yet he also points out that the execution—so full, so lacking academism—still had not achieved that freedom and *souplesse*



5.2 Théodore Géricault, *Charging Chasseur* (1812). Oil on canvas, 292 x 194 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris. © Photo RMN / © Hervé Lewandowski.

(suppleness) that one can admire in the *Raft of the Medusa*, exhibited at the Salon of 1819 (fig. 5.3).²⁸

In *Géricault*, as already in *Raphael*, the oeuvre's kaleidoscopic structure suggests that the time of creation should not be regarded as strictly unidirectional. Rather it is a spatialized, humanized, and reversible time that reflects the mobility of a subjectivity in action undergoing states of change and stability, and finds its definitions within the morphology of its own manifestations. This is apparent when Clément examines the artist's production toward the end of 1817. Having evaluated a number of works related to Géricault's *Start of the Barberi Race* of 1817 (fig. 5.4), which were executed during the artist's stay in Rome between 1816 and 1817,²⁹ Clément introduces an unfinished oil study on paper, *The Cattle Market* (fig. 5.5). The study, he remarks, belongs to a group of drawings and sketches that Géricault executed in the period immediately following his return to Paris in the fall of 1817. Clément further explains that the work depicts a scene taken from Paris, at the slaughterhouses of the rue de la Pépinière. These pieces of evidence notwithstanding, he has no hesitation in locating and discussing the *Cattle Market* among a sequence of works done during the artist's Roman period. Clément, in fact, defends his inclusion of this picture at this juncture of the narrative by claiming that it was born out of the "same inspiration" as the *Start of the Barberi Race*.³⁰ Clément's claim is suggestive because, instead of circumscribing it to one single moment, it locates the creation of the *Cattle Market* within a process, a cluster of inspirational elements associated with Géricault's stay in Rome and yet admittedly subjected, after Rome, to phases of latency and reminiscence, germination, and culmination. The image of the *Cattle Market* condenses someone's passage in time, the trace of an individuality within the multidimensional domain of the oeuvre.

The sense of the oeuvre in *Géricault* is also nourished by Clément's recognition of horses as a recurring, favorite theme of the artist and by the cross-examination of its various renderings during the span of Géricault's career. Clément operates here much like those Raphael writers who, at the turn of the nineteenth century, evaluated that artist's numerous Madonnas by proposing a dialectic of unity and multiplicity within his oeuvre. Unlike Raphael, Géricault did not paint religious subjects, nor did he have a particular patron to please. His predilection for



PEINT PAR GÉRICAUT

AD. BRAUN & C^{IE}

LE RADEAU DE LA MÉDUSE

5.3 Page from Charles Clément's *Géricault: Étude biographique et critique* (Paris, 1879): illustration of Théodore Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa*.



5.4 Théodore Géricault, *Start of the Barberi Race* (1817). Oil on paper mounted on canvas, 45 x 60 cm. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille. © Photo RMN / © Philippe Bernard.



5.5 Théodore Géricault, *The Cattle Market* (1817). Oil on paper mounted on canvas, 57 x 48 cm.
 Courtesy of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, Bequest of Grenville L.
 Winthrop. Photograph © 2004 President and Fellows of Harvard College.

images of horses therefore has entirely different connotations. However, just as the Madonnas by Raphael demonstrated to nineteenth-century monographers his capacity to outlive stylistic metamorphoses and to create works that were visual analogues of his unfolding nature, so in Clément's monograph Géricault's horses are key to understanding the artist's obstinacy in following his own path and his near obsession with the rendering of that one theme, which eventually became a highly personalized vision.³¹

Through the survey of Géricault's renderings of horses, Clément concludes that "son cheval lui appartient absolument [his horse belongs absolutely to him]."³² Géricault's images do not simply mirror a world outside. While the artist draws inspiration from reality, his creations become in turn something real, endowed with living and anthropocentric properties. They are not merely depictions but are also the products of a human subjectivity moved and engendered by artistic creation itself.

According to Clément, whereas the Renaissance had introduced into artworks a more individual sentiment, nineteenth-century artists added the emotion of a more intense moral life. Art came down to earth—to common life—finding in these sources a new vigor. More than any other artist of his times, Géricault represented with utmost clarity this deep transformation in understanding art. For Clément, new ideas of piety, charity, and solidarity surface in his paintings and bathe them with *humanité*.³³ In retrospect we can see that, throughout Clément's text, *humanité* does not pertain narrowly to the themes that Géricault chose for his pictures. Rather, at the same time that *Géricault* regards the artist's works as concerned with humanity, it also recognizes that a sense of humanity is active within them.

Whereas Passavant's *Raphael* set a new standard in the study of Renaissance masters, *Géricault* achieved something similar with regard to the works of modern artists.³⁴ In so doing, it showed that an artist's oeuvre may evince a subjectivity in process and the search for human realization in ways that do not point to formal dynamics or morphology alone. In fact, *Géricault* forges a new communion between the oeuvre and the biography, although to a limited extent. Clément envisions Géricault's oeuvre in its capacity to compound qualities internal to the painted images with some tangible elements inextricable from the artist's biography.

Géricault's interest in contemporary history, his passion for horses, and the sincerity of his "pictorial sentiment," become both indicators of his identity in the domain of the visual and clues to the recesses of his mental and emotional life. The life of the artist corresponds to the visual analogue of the oeuvre: as in Passavant's *Rafael*, it sustains and illuminates the oeuvre's organic, vitalistic flux of energies and forms. But it can also make itself visible in the artistic dimension as the "life" conceived in terms of the character and times of the artist (as in monographs oriented toward the biographical), and thereby disclose the worldly coordinates of an individuality in its authenticity and intensity of being.

The Truth of the Art and the Truth of the Facts

Meyer's *Correggio* (1871) returns to the same issue raised by Förster a few years before: whether and in what ways artworks belong to a narrative. A writer on contemporary and Renaissance art and director of the Berlin museum from 1872 to 1890, Meyer (1830–1893) divided his monograph into two halves—the first entitled "The Life and Creations of the Master" and the second simply "The Works of the Master."³⁵ His arrangement of the material, he maintains, was intended to please common readers, amateurs, and connoisseurs alike.³⁶

The first part of *Correggio* deals with both the life and the works, approaching the latter in a more comprehensive way than the catalogue (the second part), which focuses on issues of attribution or the technical characteristics and location of a painting. The preeminence Meyer gives to the evaluation of the artworks may be ascribed only partly to the writer's connoisseurship, for little was known about Correggio's life. As Meyer indicates, since the artist's life was a cipher and the knowledge of his works was equally incomplete, Correggio remained the least known among the Renaissance masters.³⁷

Discussing Correggio's works in the narrative, Meyer combines visual and, to a lesser extent, factual evidence. He denies the widespread notion that the striking stylistic improvement noticeable between Correggio's first documented painting, *Madonna of Saint Francis* of 1514 (Gemäldegalerie, Dresden),³⁸ and his paintings after 1518 indicated the loss of many



5.6 Correggio, *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* (c. 1526–1527). Oil on panel, 105 x 102 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris. © Scala / Art Resource, New York.

works. Meyer surmises instead that in the Dresden painting Correggio had already successfully absorbed the types of Mantegna and Leonardo while creating “according to his own nature.”³⁹ Correggio had achieved a full freedom in painting by the time he created the *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* (fig. 5.6). There were three slightly different versions of the same subject (at the Louvre, Naples Museum, and St. Petersburg), and their visual qualities led Meyer to date their execution to around 1517 to 1518.⁴⁰ (Today the painting at the Louvre is dated to c. 1526–1527.)

Tackling the oeuvre as a dynamic, interconnected whole, Meyer deduced the chronology of a work by virtue of its more or less manifest relationships with other Correggios. This *modus operandi* was pivotal in ordering Correggio's altarpieces from the period of his highest development, especially his mythological paintings. At the start of 1524 Correggio painted his famous *Notte* (fig. 5.7; today generally dated 1522–1530) as well as the *Madonna with Saint Sebastian* (both in the Gemäldegalerie, Dresden), the *Madonna della Scodella*, and the *Madonna with Saint Jerome* (both in the Galleria Nazionale, Parma). The first three works hardly posed problems of chronology because their commissions and execution could be traced through documents, but Meyer had to assume a stylistic progression in order to date the *Madonna with Saint Jerome*.⁴¹ Even more vexing was the chronology of Correggio's mythological paintings. Having reached mastery early in his career (with the *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine*), Correggio did not follow definite styles afterward, and so the artworks could not be classified through major formal shifts. Nevertheless, Meyer reconstructed the chronology of this group of paintings by taking clues from the artist's rendering of the subject and his coloring.⁴²

In the second part of *Correggio*, the catalogue entries (especially those on the paintings) chronicle the provenance of each work, list its related documents and comments on them, assess its state of conservation, and mention the preparatory sketches or the known engravings after it. The three main catalogues feature the paintings, the drawings, and a topographical list of all the preserved works (both authentic and doubtful).⁴³ Whereas Correggio's drawings are recorded according to their present locations, the catalogue of the paintings is chronological and divided into two main sections, each including a number of subclasses.⁴⁴ Meyer discriminates between paintings "attested" as authentic (*ächt*) and paintings "regarded" as such (*angeblich*) because of both internal and external evidence. He refers to the former as those whose authenticity rely upon documents or provenance, and to the latter as works in agreement with Correggio's style and with historical data related to his life.⁴⁵ For instance, while the well-documented *Notte* is listed among the *ächt* group of paintings, works of unknown origin such as the *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine*, *Ganymede*, and *Io* (the latter two both at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna) are assigned to the *angeblich* group.



5.7 Correggio, *La Notte* (1522–1530). Oil on panel, 256 x 188 cm. © Gemäldegalerie, Dresden.

Meyer's discrimination is indicative of the methodology that inspired his *Correggio*. Just as his construction of the catalogue relied upon external and internal evidence as means of validating a painting's authorship, so the first part of his monograph took into account insights derived from both historical and visual data. That is, as he realized the necessity of using facts and connoisseurship in order to know more about Correggio, Meyer systematically combined them so that the life could explain the works and the works the life. In his approach, the study of the artist encompasses empirical and formal domains, stylistic features, and, as in Correggio's case, the few ascertained events of the artist's life.

Another kind of integration between oeuvre and biography, the truth of the art and the truth of facts, was pursued in Moritz Thausing's *Dürer: Geschichte seines Lebens und seiner Kunst* of 1876 (fig. 5.8). After a career at the Academy of Art, Thausing (1838–1884) taught art history at the University of Vienna and later became director of the Albertina museum. In his 1873 inaugural lecture at the university, Thausing maintained that the study of art should rise above subjective interpretation of its object and be founded upon both historical knowledge and firsthand investigation of the original artworks.⁴⁶ In keeping with these tenets of the culture of connoisseurship, he examined as many Dürers as possible before writing his monograph. Whenever he was unable to inspect them personally, he relied on drawings and photographs or on descriptions furnished by friends and experts, such as Waagen and Otto Mündler.⁴⁷

Dürer consists of seventeen chapters. Although it does not feature lists or appended catalogues, the narrative consistently addresses both the biographical and the artistic domains per se, as well as their relation to the times and the historical context. Moreover, as contemporary reviewers noted, the book is free of ungrounded speculations or attempts to idealize Dürer.⁴⁸ Thausing's focus on the life—often aided by the insertion of the artist's letters and diaries, coupled with Thausing's commentary—ranges from the genealogy of Dürer's family to his travels and the figures of his notable friends and patrons. In *Dürer*, however, biography explores the lived experience of the protagonist as well as the facts. For Thausing, the biographical reality of Dürer can explain his works, and the works can



DÜRER

GESCHICHTE

SEINES LEBENS UND SEINER KUNST

VON

MORIZ THAUSING.

MIT TITELKUPFER UND MIT ILLUSTRATIONEN

GEZEICHNET VON JOSEPH SCHÖNBRUNNER, HOLZSCHNITT VON F. W. EADER.



LEIPZIG

VERLAG VON E. A. SEEMANN.

1876.

5.8 Title page of Moritz Thausing's *Dürer: Geschichte seines Lebens und seiner Kunst* (Leipzig, 1876). Courtesy of Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

illuminate not only the facts of the life but also his state of being, his perception of himself, and his historical agency. By exploring this circularity, Thausing's monograph reflects the new understanding of biography as well as the paradigm of the oeuvre. It addresses the situation of Dürer—private and public, emotional and cultural, mental and historical—as well as the progressive manifestations of his artistic identity.

In assessing Dürer's biographical identity, Thausing was the first author to pay due attention to his wife, Agnes (so discredited by earlier writers), and to the fable of the artist's poverty. While debunking the legend of the unhappy marriage and the evil Agnes, Thausing evinces Dürer's financial capacities, highlighting, for instance, his earnings during his second stay in Venice. The diary of Dürer's tour in the Netherlands further proves the artist's financial success and the enduring relationship between husband and wife; for rather than being left in Nuremberg, as erroneously reported by other writers, Agnes accompanied Dürer on that journey. A harmonious relationship between them is also suggested by the fact that, when Dürer died intestate, Agnes came into possession of all his belongings.⁴⁹ Finally, Thausing discusses the most troublesome charge against Agnes. Among the curiosities left by Dürer was a pair of antlers (an object of great admiration at the time), which Willibald Pirckheimer coveted for his own collection. When Agnes sold them without informing him, Pirckheimer was very disappointed. Thausing believes that it must have been in this state of frustration that Pirckheimer wrote the much-cited letter to Johann Tscherte blaming Agnes for her husband's premature death. A careful reading of this letter, Thausing argues, shows that its allegation is not as serious as it seems from the initial sentences.⁵⁰

In establishing cross-references among artworks, Thausing identifies one particular specimen—the Landauer altarpiece of 1514, later dated to 1511 (fig. 5.9), sometimes called the *Adoration of the Trinity* or *All Saints*—as a turning point within the artist's oeuvre. In chapter 13 (fig. 5.10), “The Artist and the Man,” Thausing reviews Dürer's art and experiences to date while focusing on this painting.⁵¹ From the opening lines of the chapter, Thausing underscores the charismatic value of the Landauer altarpiece, the special place it assumed within Dürer's production, and its capacity to reveal his universality as artist and human being.⁵²



5.9 Albrecht Dürer, Landauer altarpiece, or *Allerheiligenbild* (1511). Oil on wood, 135 x 123 cm.

© Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

XIII.

Der Künstler und der Mensch.

„dan einer itlichen muler gefelt ir kint wol,
daraws kummt, dafs vill moler machen,
daz inen geleich ist.“

Dürer.



Das Allerheiligenbild ist in jeder Beziehung das werthvollste Denkmal, welches sich noch von Dürers Kunst erhalten hat. Es ist ein Inbegriff seines Schaffens nach allen Richtungen hin, eine Art Mikrokosmos, ein Abglanz seines Geistes, festgehalten gerade in dem Zeitpunkte, da seine Kraft auf ihrer Höhe angelangt war. An kein anderes Werk des Meisters liesse sich darum eine Uebersicht über die Vielseitigkeit seiner Production so geschickt anknüpfen, wie an den Landauer'schen Altar. Zugleich gilt es auch bei der kritiklosen Ueberhäufung unseres Denkmälervorrathes festzustellen, wo der Universalität Dürers als Künstlers und Menschen ihre Grenzen gesteckt sind.

Zunächst und vor allem anderen war Dürer Maler. So hat er sich stets mit Bewusstsein selbst genannt. Das Allerheiligenbild ist denn das Denkmal seiner vollendeten Meisterschaft in der Technik der Tafelmalerei; zugleich umfasst dasselbe hervorragende Proben aus den drei Hauptgebieten der Malerkunst übereinander angeordnet. Nach den uns geläufigen drei ästhetischen Kunststufen erscheint Dürer als Lyriker in der herrlichen, weiten Uferlandschaft, als Epiker in den Stifterbildnissen und Charakteren, als Dramatiker in der höchsten Verherrlichung der heiligen Tragödie, welche er in ihren Höhen und Tiefen erschöpft hat. Endlich berichtet noch das Selbstbildnis mit der stolzen Schrifttafel von dem bedeutamen Hereinspielen der Persönlichkeit Dürers in die grofse Aufgabe seines Lebens.

Aber auch als Architekten und Bildhauer lernten wir Dürer am

5.10 First page from chapter XIII, "Der Künstler und der Mensch," in Moritz Thausing's *Dürer: Geschichte seines Lebens und seiner Kunst* (Leipzig, 1876). Courtesy of Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

Thausing views Dürer's development as a continuous attestation of his singularity. Dürer's activity was not limited to painting, and the Landauer altarpiece, due to its subject and structure, allows Thausing to evoke the master's activities as architect, calligrapher, and sculptor.⁵³ Furthermore, just as it marked an improvement in his painting, the altarpiece demonstrated Dürer's parallel evolution in the fields of etching and woodcutting. Thausing argues that in 1514 Dürer's etching technique underwent a radical transformation, and he traces the artist's increasing freedom in using the stylus from 1510 onward.⁵⁴ The middle group of the Landauer altarpiece, which is a variation of an image that first appeared in the large woodcut of the *Holy Trinity* of 1511, was reworked in a way that reveals the artist's improvement in that medium as well.⁵⁵

At this point of the narrative Thausing digresses from the altarpiece to discuss Dürer's conception of the Madonna, clarifying its deeply German cultural roots.⁵⁶ Then, focusing on that lapse of time previously seen as preparatory to the making of the Landauer altarpiece, he considers Dürer's volumes of prints completed by 1511 (the *Impressum Nurnberga*, *Apocalypse*, *Life of the Virgin*, and small and large versions of the *Passion of Christ*), as well as his contemporary attempts in poetry and the exchange of presents with Raphael.⁵⁷

Thausing returns to this pivotal work again when he argues that self-portraiture played a crucial role in Dürer's production, that "the tendency to self-investigation, to the deepening of his own being, prevalent in Dürer, also led him to the careful observation of his outer appearance."⁵⁸ Having listed the pictures leading to the *Self-Portrait* of 1500 (fig. 5.11), he revisits the Landauer altarpiece, in which the master had painted his own likeness in "der Blute seiner Kraft."⁵⁹ Linking that self-portrait with the description of the artist given by Joachim Camerarius in the 1532 preface to *Proportionslehre*, Thausing inaugurates another conclusive chain of thought. As he argues, Camerarius's alignment of the man and the artist had remained unshaken by modern research because, with Dürer, "peculiarity of character and production" are tied together and "the one without the other would be entirely incomprehensible." The subjects Dürer envisioned in paintings, engravings, and woodcuts confirm this view. Dürer must have seen it as his mission to represent the history of humanity's salvation; in addition, the extraordinary recurrence of the image of Christ within his



5.11 Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait* (1500). Oil on panel, 67 x 49 cm. Alte Pinakothek, Munich. © Scala / Art Resource, New York.

oeuvre shows how, in endeavoring to create the modern ideal of the Savior, Dürer used his own features. Thausing radicalizes the implications of the Christomorphic aspects of Dürer's imagery.⁶⁰ Dürer's identification with the Savior, while reminding Thausing of Goethe's similar relation to his Werther or Faust, allows him to draw a full circle encompassing artistic and biographical identities. Since the artist fashioned the divine and anything else he created as a likeness of himself, Thausing argues that one can fully understand Dürer only by recognizing the irreducible osmosis between being and doing.⁶¹

Arguing that one must go beyond strict evaluations of artistry and technical proficiency, Thausing endorses the monograph's tendency to view the artist as a model of humanity and a paradigmatic achiever of self-definition. In doing so, however, he departs from previous monographers. In contrast to Grimm and other "biographers," who construed the artist as a model of humanity over and above the analysis of his artworks, Thausing does not demote the artistic dimension: he takes full account of the inner particularities of Dürer's visual production and conjures up his individuality along with the dynamics of his oeuvre. But there are also differences between Thausing and Passavant. While Passavant produced a morphology of the artist's identity that aligned life and works through the idea of the oeuvre, without always explicitly linking the forms of Raphael's art with specific aspects of his character and personal situation, Thausing integrates visual and historical information to posit a mutual correspondence between the forms of Dürer's art and concrete aspects of his biography, the multidimensional sphere of the oeuvre and the authenticity and intensity of his life.

In this frame of mind Thausing also connects Dürer's works with the broader context of his times, culture, and history. The links among the artist, his art, and Luther's doctrine surface throughout his text, but the painting that gives Thausing the best opportunity to combine his stylistic, interpretative, and historical concerns is the two-paneled *Four Apostles* of 1526 (fig. 5.12). "In this work," he writes, "the entire master is once again embodied, the way in which he reached his goal with his art, his speculation, and his religious worldview."⁶² Thausing recalls Dürer's previous representations of apostles, such as his two "heads" of 1516 (both at the



Johannes und Petrus.
Gemälde in der Pinakothek zu München.
(Seite 183.)



Paulus und Marcus.
Gemälde in der Pinakothek zu München.
(Seite 183.)

5.12 Pages from Moritz Thausing's *Dürer: Geschichte seines Lebens und seiner Kunst* (Leipzig, 1876): illustration of Albrecht Dürer, *The Four Apostles*.

Uffizi). He indicates how, far from following a preconceived type, the artist created the ideal of each historical personality out of various elements. The same union of observation and speculation was apparent in the preparatory studies for the heads of the four apostles of 1526.

Thausing interprets *Four Apostles* as representative of the four temperaments.⁶³ This view is supported by Dürer's own remarks about the figures in his book on the theory of proportions. Equally crucially, Thausing connects the *Four Apostles* with Dürer's times and his endorsement of the Lutheran doctrine, arguing that the very selection and arrangement of the apostles pointed to Dürer's religious creed. One of the panels positions John, Luther's favorite evangelist, in the foreground. As if to avoid misunderstandings, Dürer transcribed below each panel some biblical passages from the writings of the standing figure, as translated by Luther. The introductory passage by John, which Thausing cites to strengthen his interpretation, is a vehement exhortation to the state's authorities to beware of false prophets.

Thausing therefore sees *Four Apostles* as both a stylistic and a conceptual triumph. His discussion embraces the biographical and the artistic domains, personality and history, and allows him to sort out the visual, intellectual, and religious agencies that affected the making of the painting. Given the multiple levels interwoven in his analysis, it must have felt quite natural for Thausing to conclude by defining *Four Apostles* as Dürer's testament "as an artist, person, patriot, and evangelical Christian."⁶⁴

Dürer methodically encompasses visual and factual knowledge, issues of chronology and interpretation, thematic and formal considerations, and suggestively tries to reconcile biography and oeuvre. The outcome is a book in which Dürer can be perceived at the same time as author, historical individual, and human being, and his creations can reveal specific qualities as well as facts about the artist's life and times and truths about his emotional, cultural, and mental situation.

Crowe and Cavalcaselle's Investigation of the Creative Process

The volumes on Titian and Raphael by Joseph Archer Crowe (1825–1896) and Giovan Battista Cavalcaselle (1820–1897), published in 1877

and 1885 respectively, were the last major undertakings of a long collaboration between the English and Italian writers. Their joint projects began with *The Early Flemish Painters*, published in 1857, and also included *A New History of Painting in Italy* (1864–1866) and *A History of Painting in North Italy* (1871). These publications made substantial contributions to the art historical knowledge of the past and soon became works of reference in England and on the European continent.⁶⁵ As they endeavored to write a monograph proper, the two authors took up the issue of integrating the sphere of the oeuvre and that of biography. The Titian monograph sets oeuvre and biography together; the Raphael monograph tries unsuccessfully to reveal the artist's life through his works.

While offering a detailed account of the artist's biography, particularly in Titian's case, Crowe and Cavalcaselle focus above all on reconstructing the artist's creative process. Both monographs describe a work's technique and sometimes retrace the various steps in its genesis. By establishing stylistic and thematic connections among the artist's works, the authors regard their recurring forms, types, and motifs as if they were self-generating. Their historical insights notwithstanding, they rarely explain a work in terms of its subject matter or with reference to the outside world of culture and history. For Crowe and Cavalcaselle, the oeuvre is dependent almost exclusively on the artist's skills and faculties of perception, ideation, and deliberation. Although reductive, this approach balances oeuvre and biography: it reflects a remarkable attempt to describe the artwork in ways that can capture the flux of the creative process. The analogy of life and works is intensified so that an artwork, or even its isolated fragments, acquires attributes like those of life itself.

In *Titian: His Life and Times* (fig. 5.13), Crowe and Cavalcaselle merge the specialized approaches of art history and connoisseurship with biographical and historical discourse, considering both documentary and visual evidence.⁶⁶ They discuss Titian's times not to establish meaningful relations between his art and the historical process, as Waagen and Thausing had done in their studies of the Van Eycks and Dürer, and even less because they view the artist as a medium of history, as Grimm did in his *Leben* of Michelangelo, or recognize his singularity vis-à-vis his century, as in Justi's view of Velázquez. Reference to the artist's times (introduced in



Titian

Engraved by J. H. Smith

TITIAN: HIS LIFE AND TIMES.

WITH
SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS FAMILY,
CHIEFLY FROM NEW AND UNPUBLISHED RECORDS.

BY
Joseph Archer Crowe
J. A. CROWE AND G. B. CAVALCASELLE,
AUTHORS OF THE "HISTORY OF PAINTING IN NORTH ITALY."

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

WITH PORTRAIT AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET,
1877.

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5.13 Frontispiece and title page of Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovan Battista Cavalcaselle's *Titian: His Life and Times* (London, 1877). Courtesy of Art and Architecture Library, Yale University.

the monograph's title) point to the desire to provide a historical frame for Titian's life and works. Crowe and Cavalcaselle clarify their practice when, in referring to the League of Cambrai of December 1508, they distinguish between the events of general history and those that were germane to Titian's biography. They explain that they describe events whenever these bear on Titian's behavior.⁶⁷ In fact, the most effective passages describing his times are those about his patrons' social status or those connecting historical events with his career.⁶⁸

Their firsthand investigation of Titian's paintings in England and the European continent was evidently a point of pride for both writers. After noting that more than a thousand paintings had been attributed to Titian, they remark in the preface that they had been "at pains to visit and to study all but a few of these works, with which we have compared, when it was possible, numerous engravings and photographs."⁶⁹ They thus analyze an impressive number of pictures in their assessment of the artist's oeuvre and interweave their analyses in their account of his life. But they often regard the works as existing on an independent level, with no empirical connection to the details of the artist's life.⁷⁰

Crowe and Cavalcaselle's belief in the independent, self-generating forms of the artworks is clear, for example, in their analysis of *Flora* (fig. 5.14). Believing that the painting has no external referent or link to the artist's life, they instead see the oeuvre as its true source. Opposing Joachim von Sandrart's assumption that *Flora* depicts a courtesan, perhaps even Titian's mistress (as a much earlier tradition held), they view the painting not as a portrait but as an image of an idealized woman—an image, they argue, that underwent its own life cycle in the artist's production. They compare *Flora* to *Woman with a Mirror* (fig. 5.15), showing a girl at her toilet attended by a man holding two mirrors, an image that, unlike *Flora*, conveys chasteness and candor. The comparison reinforces their notion that Titian intended to paint images of women at different stages of life. Emphasizing the formal continuity between the two works, their analysis locates *Flora* within a sequence of pictures showing similar gestures and types, as well as similar technical solutions.⁷¹

The coauthors' evaluation of Titian's oeuvre also reveals their thorough grasp of the artist's technical means throughout his career. Titian's



5.14 Titian, *Flora* (c. 1515). Oil on canvas, 79.7 x 63.5 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. © Scala / Art Resource, New York.



5.15 Titian, *Woman with a Mirror* (1512–1515). Oil on canvas, 93 x 76 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

© Scala / Art Resource, New York.

method intrigued Crowe and Cavalcaselle because of the paintings' finished look, even when the design was freely painted and the composition had been altered and amended. What made this method unique was the use of color. The authors' desire to describe what it meant to paint like Titian pervades the entire narrative, but is best realized in the analysis of the *Assumption of the Virgin* altarpiece at the church of Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari in Venice (fig. 5.16). They appreciate the artist's technique in this altarpiece, ranging from his use of perspective to his system of coloring, which produced a suggestive rehearsal of his point of view and intentions in the work's making.⁷²

Seeking to discern why and how Titian gradually arrived at the *Assumption*, Crowe and Cavalcaselle explore the work's visual effect as Titian presumably intended it, and investigate his method and the time required to complete the creative process. Approaching the *Assumption* in view of its inner features only, they treat an artwork as a dynamic object that cannot be wholly analyzed and understood without recognizing its maker's agency. Even though they do not correlate the *Assumption* with its historical and cultural contexts, or provide any indication of Titian's own responses to the religious beliefs embodied in his altarpiece, they do offer suggestive insights into both who Titian is and what he does. Their analysis of the *Assumption* increases the awareness of the creative process in its evolving moments; at times it seems almost as if that process and the circumstances of the artist's life are both equivalent and equally explicable.

As they narrate life and works with equal thoroughness and yet tend to sever any empirical connections between them, Crowe and Cavalcaselle align Titian's works as an interrelated whole. They cross-examine the works' salient features, recurring types, and motifs in ways that prove their self-generating properties, the resonance of the living dynamics of that whole in all of its parts. This approach is quite singular. Unlike previous monographers who had similar methodological orientations, Crowe and Cavalcaselle advance the analogy of life and works by identifying its dialectics in the poesis, or formation, of the artwork, and thus reconstruct the artist's creative process in time, capturing any moment of the singularity of being disclosing itself in that time. This reconstruction, whether of a single work or the entire span of the artist's career, stands out



5.16 Titian, *The Assumption of the Virgin* (1518). Oil on wood, 690 x 360 cm. Church of Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice. © Scala / Art Resource, New York.

as a fundamental element of *Titian* and represents its subtle but consistent way of integrating the dimensions of oeuvre and biography.

This approach, characteristic of Crowe and Cavalcaselle, recurs in their monograph on Raphael, published in two volumes between 1882 and 1885. As they state, the book is meant to trace “the progress of the artist.” It was motivated less by the publication of newly discovered documents than by the controversial issue of Raphael’s early formation and the appreciation of his complex production.⁷³ Accordingly, a crucial concern here is again to pinpoint the various stages in the paintings’ genesis. Unlike *Titian*, the Raphael monograph does connect the life and the works, attempting at times to clarify the artist’s whereabouts, interests, and education through the study of his works.

The best attempts of this kind appear in the second volume, in which Crowe and Cavalcaselle follow Raphael’s activities after his move to Rome in 1509. For example, the motif of three seraphim ascending in front of the clouds in the *Disputa* at the Vatican palace is singled out for its power to “afford a fresh clue to Raphael’s life in those days.” The artist, the authors conjecture, must have been assiduously studying classical art not only in the Vatican collection but all around Rome, in particular certain allegorical figures that the Romans had adopted from the Greeks.⁷⁴

In the first volume of *Raphael*, Crowe and Cavalcaselle use a controversial source: a sketchbook in the Venice Accademia containing a collection of more than fifty sheets, mainly copies of other works; these were discovered in 1810 by Giuseppe Bossi, who attributed them to Raphael. However, this attribution had later been seriously challenged—an issue that Crowe and Cavalcaselle refuse to acknowledge.⁷⁵ They use the drawings to claim that Raphael left home immediately after the death of his father, Giovanni Santi, when he was still relatively untutored, and that he began to study with Perugino in 1495. In this hypothesis they differed from the views of Giovanni Morelli, the rising star of European connoisseurship, whose bold attributions and methods were increasingly regarded as breaking new ground in the study of Italian Renaissance art.⁷⁶

Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s account of Raphael’s biography from 1494 to 1504 is mainly grounded in an iconographic and qualitative evaluation

of the Venice sketchbook. These drawings after the Peruginesque frescoes in the Sistine Chapel made it possible to follow the artist step by step, and even to detect a stylistic progression: whereas the earlier drawings from the Sistine were below Perugino's standards, the later ones "far transcended in elegance and purity anything that Perugino could by any possibility have produced."⁷⁷ Linking these images to contemporary events, the writers tried to cast light on the artist's life. They speculated, for instance, that the Venice drawing of *Massacre of the Innocents* might have been inspired by the tragic events the painter witnessed in Perugia on July 15, 1500, when Grifone Baglioni killed his cousin Astorre (son of Guido, ruler of the city) and a number of his relatives.⁷⁸

Crowe and Cavalcaselle's unwavering certainty on the issue of the sketchbook's authorship, as well as their endorsement of the attribution to Raphael of a much argued *Apollo and Marsyas* (now in the Louvre),⁷⁹ made them a target for Morelli and his followers. This group started something of a campaign in Europe and in England, blaming the two writers for not having taken into account Morelli's clarification of Raphael's youth, and therefore accusing them of failing to understand the artist's formative years.⁸⁰ These critics faulted *Raphael* in comparison to the rigor of Morelli's attributions and his "experimental method" of identifying a work's authorship—a method based on identifying the artist's characteristic rendering of anatomical details such as hands and ears. However, they never ventured to ask whether this new connoisseurship could simply have provided theoretical consistency to a long-accepted practice of attribution that was certainly not alien to Cavalcaselle's own way of working (though his results were less dazzling than Morelli's).⁸¹

The criteria and procedures that Crowe and Cavalcaselle use in analyzing the works of Raphael differ little from those they adopted in *Titian*. Studies of Raphael had been extremely influential in the history of the monograph, as we have seen, engendering the paradigm of the oeuvre. It is therefore not surprising that they approach his art through a dialectic between the individual work and the group, finding in it both unity and metamorphosis, and endorsing the rooted topos of Raphael's organic progression. This topos in fact underpins their evaluations of individual works and groups of works according to the types, motifs, and

postures found in them. However, in a departure from the Raphael monographs of the first half of the century (such as those by Quatremère and Braun), Crowe and Cavalcaselle apply that topos to more than just his Madonnas, and they do not use it exclusively as a guide to the paintings' chronology (a practice pivotal in Rumohr and Passavant). When they focus on a certain type, they widen their compass of analogies to other works and demonstrate how that type had its own dynamic within the artist's oeuvre. They posit links among a few paintings—such as the infant Christ in *Madonna Tempi* (Alte Pinakothek, Munich), *Madonna della Seggiola* (Galleria Palatina, Pitti Palace, Florence), and *Sistine Madonna* (Gemäldegalerie, Dresden)⁸²—and recognize traces leading to the final formulation of a type, as with the two putti holding a scroll before the throne in *Madonna del Baldacchino* at the Galleria Palatina of the Pitti Palace, which are seen recurring from the *Belle Jardinière* to the *Madonna di Foligno*.⁸³

A procedure already determinant in *Titian*, as noted of the *Assumption*, also becomes pivotal in *Raphael*. The authors' investigation of the genesis of particular works helps intensify a sense of the artist's creative process. Despite their misattribution of the Venice sketchbook, Crowe and Cavalcaselle's study of Raphael's drawings is crucial in this regard, for the drawings help them clarify the often complex gestation of individual works.⁸⁴ Their painstaking accounts of the making of a painting yield unique insights into Raphael's way of working, his capacity for metamorphosis, and the formation of his oeuvre.

Many paintings, such as the *Ansidei altarpiece* (National Gallery, London) and the *Deposition* (Galleria Borghese, Rome; fig. 3.8), are subjected to this kind of analysis.⁸⁵ The authors often build up a sense of drama, introducing a series of preparatory drawings in sequential order and gradually unraveling the shifts in ideas and sources that inspired Raphael. For the *Coronation of the Virgin* (Pinacoteca Vaticana; fig. 3.5),⁸⁶ for instance, one favorable reviewer opined that Crowe and Cavalcaselle had created a "biography" of the painting itself.⁸⁷

Whether they ascribe self-generative powers to a series of forms recurring in Raphael's works or retrace a painting's genesis through the discovery of the phases and influences that made up his temporal experience, Crowe and Cavalcaselle try to capture the flux of the creative process. Pas-

savant certainly had grasped that flux, as reflected both in his chronological catalogue of Raphael's paintings and in the very idea of the oeuvre engendered by his *Rafael*. And Clément likewise felt that creation does not occur in a strictly unidirectional time; he endeavored to fathom step by step how and why a Géricault painting materialized. But no monographer before Crowe and Cavalcaselle had looked so closely into the recesses of the artist's practice as it defined itself over time through slight fluctuations in the making of a single work. As they describe this process, the authors articulate the interdependence between the artist's life and works in a way that establishes a new, more thoroughgoing temporal equivalence between them. Crowe and Cavalcaselle's approach, that is, corroborates the belief that it is possible not only to identify a painting's authorship and chronology but even to unravel and reconstruct the duration of the artistic creation itself.

For Crowe and Cavalcaselle, the oeuvre both has a dynamic of its own, which reverberates in the specifics of the biography as in *Titian*, and clarifies the artist's life, as in *Raphael*. These monographs share an inclination toward investigating artworks in terms of the creative processes that originated them. This detection of a painting's poiesis represents the books' most characteristic way of balancing oeuvre and biography, the fleeting substance of the narrative and the specialized, stylistically and technically oriented analysis of the artworks in a catalogue. The outcome might not illustrate the artistic phenomenon in its relationships with culture and history, personal events and traits of character, but it is remarkable in its capacity to increase our awareness of the dialectic between being and creating. Both in *Raphael* and *Titian*, as they narrow the monograph's temporal focus and eliminate any external factor or reference in their consideration of a painting, Crowe and Cavalcaselle almost always produce "biographies" of artworks. A single work or even an isolated fragment of that work becomes a kind of microcosm, and its every feature perpetuates the dynamics of the artist's oeuvre and life itself. *Raphael* and *Titian* radically rework the perception, pivotal in the paradigm of the oeuvre, that the making of an artwork points to a spatialized, humanized, and nonlinear time. The factual, chronological, and historical times characteristic of the life-and-work model are therefore virtually

aligned, if not replaced, with time existing only as and through creation—and evidently inconceivable without the concurrent realization of someone being there.

Each of these writers—Clément, Meyer, Thausing, and Crowe and Cavalcaselle—came up with a different balance between oeuvre and biography, which in turn enhanced the monograph's understanding of the visual arts, sometimes combining internal and external evidence, sometimes foregrounding the truth of the art against other information. Through their respective approaches, these five monographers generated a series of pointed answers as well as fascinating new questions.

I have discussed, for instance, how Thausing took the *Four Apostles* as visual evidence of Dürer's endorsement of the Lutheran doctrine. This interpretation was in part supported by external data, such as the artist's statements. But if biography and oeuvre are inextricable domains subject to analogies and conflations, to what extent can one enlighten the other? Or more intriguing still, can the study of the artworks alone (that is, unassisted by external data) ever engender a complete understanding of biography itself? Although the "biographies" of the artworks produced by Crowe and Cavalcaselle do not resolve this last question, they reinforce the notion that one might discover the artist as a presence manifest in all its facets exclusively through the artwork. This notion is not alien to Clément's book, given his trust that a painted image can point to the selfhood of its author and that technical practice itself can bear the marks of individuality.

From Clément's book to those of Crowe and Cavalcaselle, the monographs discussed here bring forth the idea that artworks not only have the characteristics of life itself but can clarify the complex ramifications of biography and thus provide the unifying basis for fulfilling all the demands of the life-and-work model.

They implicitly raise the question of whether the study of the oeuvre alone can contain and explain the biography. The two dimensions of the monograph model might be reconciled by focusing on the artist's works, recognizing in them not only a sense of life through the organic development of their style and forms but also a whole range of elements hitherto mainly associated with the biographical territory, such as the per-

sonality of the artist, his relations with the times and history, the sense of his singularity and self.

We begin to see that, after the creation of the paradigm of the oeuvre, the ascendancy of biography, and the concurrent absorption of the genre into the eclectic world of popular literature, the monograph's endeavor to interweave life and works in its understanding of the visual arts could bring about a new dialectic between art and existence. In this dialectic, interest in the meaning of the artist's biography would no longer supersede the primacy of the visual nature of the art. Similarly, the study of the oeuvre would go beyond strictly formal analysis to draw a concrete sense of selfhood out of the artworks.

Engendering Presence

6

A Unifying Perspective of Inquiry

Bernard Berenson's 1895 monograph *Lorenzo Lotto: An Essay in Constructive Art Criticism* (fig. 6.1) addresses some fundamental issues that affected the evolving monograph. This book substantially transformed the life-and-work model and indicated a new, more comprehensive perspective of inquiry. At the end of the last chapter, we saw the question emerge of whether the study of the oeuvre alone could sustain an exploration of the biography of the artist. Berenson's book represents the affirmative answer to this question. Berenson conceived his study primarily as an attempt to create a new art criticism, the goal of which is to extract an "artistic personality" from the works. He therefore advances the notion that the works of art in themselves bear all the necessary evidence of their maker, both as an artist and as a human being; the dual threads of oeuvre and biography can be reconciled sensitively because in some sense the oeuvre explains and contains the biography. In this way, the monograph has to place unconditional trust in art as tantamount to existence itself.

In fact, for Berenson, Lotto is a presence inscribed and constructed in the artworks themselves. Because of its innovative stance, his book can be seen as completing the monograph's gradual shift from focusing on the author as an individual linked to a body of artworks to focusing on the author as an identity engendered and knowable only from that body of work. Evidence of this important shift can be traced back to various



LORENZO LOTTO

AN ESSAY IN CONSTRUCTIVE
ART CRITICISM

BY

BERNHARD BERENSON

AUTHOR OF "THE VENETIAN PAINTERS OF THE RENAISSANCE"

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

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6.1 Frontispiece and title page of Bernard Berenson's *Lorenzo Lotto: An Essay in Constructive Art Criticism* (London, 1895). Courtesy of Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

moments of the history of the model, notably in the books of Waagen, Passavant, Clément, and Thausing. But *Lotto* goes much further in this direction, ultimately realizing the monograph's aspiration to disentangle the intricate human foundations of its object and to consider the artworks as true places of human incarnation. In other words, Lotto made his paintings just as his paintings made him.

Lotto was published when Berenson (1865–1959) was just at the start of a career that would make him the acknowledged, if controversial, authority on Italian Renaissance art.¹ Even as he began to engage himself in the study of the past, the young Berenson was equally fascinated by the trends of contemporary art, especially by the work of the impressionist painters in Paris. Therefore he saw Lotto, then a relatively unknown painter of sixteenth-century Italy, through the frame of the present, as an artist whose works could now be appreciated with different eyes, given their kinship with the orientations of French avant-garde art.² Berenson was extremely self-conscious about his method and enthusiastically followed the lead of Giovanni Morelli (1816–1891). In a series of essays on collections in German and Italian museums, published under the pseudonym Ivan Lermolieff,³ Morelli had challenged the attributions of many of the works these museums contained, creating something of a scandal and igniting endless quarrels among art historians and connoisseurs from the mid-1870s forward. Berenson sought to draw out both the practical and the conceptual implications of Morelli's "scientific" methods of attribution. In doing so, he ended up writing a monograph that reveals Morelli's influence but also the dichotomy between what Berenson called the science and the art of connoisseurship.

In the *Lotto* text, Berenson internalizes the views of Morelli and others, approaching the artworks from two distinct yet concurrent standpoints. He views Lotto's paintings according to their stylistic and material qualities, as would an orthodox connoisseur, but also in terms of the subjective moods and personal visions that they express, as would a passionate critic. Two voices seem to be intermingled in Berenson: one earnestly retracing the morphology and chronology of the artist's oeuvre, the other subtly exploring the character of the artist, his life, and his historical identity.

"Constructive Art Criticism" in Berenson's *Lotto*

When he began working on *Lotto*, Berenson had developed an interest in methodology and was intending to write a text to be entitled "Methods of Constructive Art Criticism." He wrote only the first section of this ambitious project, publishing it in 1902 as an essay entitled "Rudiments of Connoisseurship: A Fragment."⁴ In the preface to the collection in which "Rudiments" appeared, Berenson states that he had given up his plan of writing on method because he had thought it "wiser to exemplify Method in a concrete instance,"⁵ and had written *Lotto* instead. The monograph's subtitle already shows that Berenson saw the book as "an essay in constructive art criticism."⁶

Morelli maintained that attribution could gain the status of a "science" and that one could ascertain the authorship of a painting through careful identification of a series of formal details that recur in the works of an artist. But Berenson's theoretical ambitions went even further. His feelings of indebtedness to Morelli were soon superseded by a desire to improve on his methods.⁷ He came to see Morelli's approach as irremediably biased by empiricism and, although he had certainly internalized the Italian writer's scientific approach, he tried to refine both the means and the aims of connoisseurship within a broader perspective. Accordingly, Berenson subjected the practice of attribution to a systematic formulation, setting up a dichotomy between the science and the art of connoisseurship. This formulation is addressed throughout "Rudiments" as well as reflected in *Lotto*, which it in some sense propels. "This book," Berenson announces in the preface, "is an attempt to reconstruct Lotto's character, both as a man and as an artist."⁸

In discussing how he proposed to clarify the artist's still obscure formation, Berenson cites the pivotal tenets of Morelli's doctrine while also reinterpreting them. He remarks that he could not have traced Lotto's education without discovering "what habits have become so rooted in the artist as to be unconscious, and under what influences he formed them."⁹ Insofar as the style of the pupil always reflects the style of his master, one could certainly perceive general resemblances among pictures; but, Berenson objects, to make a true assessment of the artist's origins,

one must attend to “certain details singled out from the many, details apt to be neglected in our general impression of a picture, but pounced upon by recent connoisseurship as likely to hold the best clue to a master’s antecedents.”¹⁰ These details are in part the same ones upon which Morelli had lavished attention in his attributions (ears, hands, hair, the folds of drapery, certain landscape features), but Berenson aligns them with stylistic idiosyncrasies that he ultimately sees not only as unconscious but also as the painting’s less expressive features. He argues that fixed habits of execution tend to become strongest where habits of attention are weakest—precisely, that is, in the rendering of such relatively inexpressive details as ears, hands, hair, and drapery. Artists usually learned to paint these minor details from their masters, and tended not to change their technique over the course of their careers. These details therefore provide the best indicators of an artist’s beginnings.¹¹

In claiming that the formal characteristics of which Morelli had spoken are the painting’s least expressive features, Berenson seems to be driving at a psychological explanation of formal genealogies. Written under the powerful influence of Berenson’s Harvard mentor, the psychologist William James,¹² this explanation may have distorted Morelli’s views to some extent.¹³ Berenson views the features of a painting as psychologically pregnant, and believes that the connoisseur must look beyond habits of execution to study habits of attention, visualization, feeling, and thinking as well. He concludes his preface by giving his readers a “further word of warning that the artist is not a botanical but a psychological problem.”¹⁴

The interweaving of these two voices—the empirical and the psychological—is one of the most significant features of *Lotto*, representing Berenson’s endeavor to combine the science and the art of connoisseurship. This approach profoundly affects the monograph’s postulation of the dialectic between life and work, and its ultimate recognition that the oeuvre illuminates the biography. Viewing the artist as a “psychological problem,” Berenson distances himself from a methodology that assumed a parallel between life and work but did not investigate the intimate, subjective recesses of artistic creation. *Lotto* certainly relied upon the vitalistic correspondence between the artistic dimension and the dynamics of

life that Passavant's *Rafael* had so cogently realized. But Berenson also strove to draw a sense of selfhood from the forms of Lotto's art.

A volume of more than three hundred pages with thirty illustrations, *Lotto* reads like an evolving spiral ultimately returning to its original point. Berenson follows the artist's life and works through eight chapters, assessing in turn his affinities with older contemporaries, his pictures' chronology, and his limited influence on other masters. In the final chapter, "Resulting Impression," Berenson tries to sum up Lotto as both man and artist. Along with fragmentary remarks on Lotto's character and personality, the chapters on his career both catalogue his paintings and discuss the dynamic of his oeuvre. The very structure of the monograph and the way the material is presented were innovations within the genre.

Except for the second chapter, which discusses Alvise Vivarini and his school, the narrative is regularly interrupted by separate entries on individual paintings, whose locations and titles are typeset in prominent capital letters. In this respect the book is more like a catalogue raisonné than a life and works of the artist. Each group of entries is divided by year and is preceded by an overview of its contents. Each of the book's five central chapters—corresponding roughly to the five decades from 1508 to 1556, and indicating five distinct periods in the painter's work¹⁵—opens with an extensive discussion of Lotto's whereabouts during that period, the available documents, and the style of the paintings under consideration. Instead of separating the narrative from the evaluation of works in the annotated catalogue (as Meyer did in his *Correggio*, for instance), Berenson alternates the analysis and technical language typical of a catalogue with the fluid prose of a narrative account. The result is a monograph that can be consulted as a catalogue raisonné of pictures or read page by page as a history of the artist's life and works.

Given the lack of sources on Lotto's early years, Berenson bases his arguments about the artist's formation on an analysis of his paintings from before 1509. While highlighting the many formal links between Lotto's early works and those of Alvise and the painters of his circle—such as Jacopo de Barbari, Cima da Conegliano, Bartolomeo Montagna, and Francesco Bonsignori—the analysis casts doubt on the notion (held by

writers from Vasari and Ridolfi to Crowe and Cavalcaselle) that Lotto had been the pupil of Giovanni Bellini. Berenson's procedure here is in keeping with that of Morelli. By precisely mapping formal resemblances, Berenson traces the influence of a circle of painters on the early work and suggests that Alvise, rather than Bellini, must have been Lotto's master.¹⁶

Berenson takes both form and personality into account. Before examining Lotto's activity after the apprenticeship with Alvise, he again objects to a linear, "botanical" view of the artist and expresses his belief in the artist's unfolding of the creative potential of a "temperament" perennially exposed to unpredictable influences:

All we can say is that given a certain temperament *plus* a certain mental, emotional, and manual training, the product (the artist) will *tend* to act and to express himself in a way that is determined. But his training does not cease; he keeps coming in contact with other influences, each one of which tends to modify the product that was the adolescent artist. And the nature of the new influences . . . is what we cannot possibly foresee.¹⁷

These statements resonate throughout the history of the monograph. They can be read as endorsing the Vasarian conception of the artist's inner talent that realizes itself, as well as the vitalistic belief in a human impulse toward individual *Bildung* and self-definition that underpins the paradigm of the oeuvre inaugurated by Passavant's *Rafael*. The idea of temperament corroborates these views but also reframes the "life and works" duality in terms of both psychology and contemporary developments in art and art criticism. Berenson's use of a term such as "temperament" reflects the interest in a personalized vision that had been embraced by French artists and critics connected with impressionist painting. Equally noteworthy, the above passage echoes James's definition of the mind as a theater of simultaneous possibilities, where consciousness "consists in the comparison of these with each other, the selection of some, and the suppression of the rest by the reinforcing and inhibiting agency of attention."¹⁸

That Berenson posits the artist as a "consciousness" in James's sense can be demonstrated by his remarks on Lotto's double portrait of Agostino

and Niccolò della Torre, which he dates to 1515, at the National Gallery of London. The painting was made after Lotto returned from Venice, where he must have seen the works of Giorgione. However, the portrait contains no direct allusion to Giorgione, nor does it manifest Lotto's earlier exposure to the works of Raphael. In 1515, Berenson states, Lotto must have regained his balance, cast out all foreign elements, and "as happens frequently when we have expelled from in ourselves the unassimilable outsider, he must have felt his personality reestablished, and his faith in himself and in his training and habits confirmed."¹⁹ Yet Raphael and Giorgione did not pass before Lotto's eyes without leaving a trace, since, Berenson continues, "we are never so much our old selves as at the moment of asserting our independence of *something*. A little later, we find that that *something* has, after all, left its thumb-mark upon us."²⁰ Thus the vast and airy architecture in the *Madonna with Saints* altarpiece for the church of San Bartolomeo in Bergamo, executed after the della Torre painting, reveals a painter who had directly or indirectly come under the influence of Raphael. Berenson identifies a figure in one of the same altarpiece's predellas that Lotto could never have painted had he not known the work of Giorgione.²¹

In presenting Lotto as a "temperament," Berenson explicates Lotto's modernity and shows that his paintings purport a subjectivity of vision that would only in later centuries become a major concern among artists. For the purposes of my discussion, however, what matters is the resonance between the monographic discourse on the one hand and the stances of the Parisian avant-garde and their critics on the other.

In fact, the vindication of temperament and the individualistic call for self-expression characterized the avant-garde tradition from Courbet onward and provided a basis for the innovative technique and formal experimentations that the impressionist painters were later to pursue.²² Courbet, for example, proclaimed the advent of an "art vivant." Recalling some of the motivating ideals behind the life-and-work model, he said of himself and his mission that, unlike the romantics, the proponents of art for art's sake, and the students of classicism, he worked "plutôt pour être un homme que pour être un peintre."²³ Some years later Cézanne was to describe his work as the pictorial realization of his own sensations, but he also insisted that only temperament would lead an artist to fulfill

the inner drive to realization.²⁴ Accordingly, art critics receptive to these unconventional trends in painting—such as Jules Antoine Castagnary, Théodore Duret, and Émile Zola—saw the need to approach an artwork as a conveyor of living qualities and as a means to overcome the gap between outward and inward realms.

Zola in particular believed that a work of art is “a corner of nature seen through a temperament.”²⁵ He regarded the making of art as a birthing process and artists as individuals who give their flesh and blood, mind and heart, to their creations. “His” Courbet, he states, was nothing but “personality.” Zola’s 1867 essay “Édouard Manet, étude biographique et critique”²⁶ explores how Manet revealed his own temperament in the very way his vision was organized. As to his own *modus operandi*, Zola declares, “What touches me, what delights me in human creation, in works of art, is to find deep within each of them an artist, a brother, who shows me nature under a new aspect. . . . A work of art tells me the history of a heart and flesh, it speaks to me of a culture and a people.”²⁷

Zola’s assertion—that an encounter with art ought to be an epiphanic event comparable to an encounter with another human being—has a familiar ring to it. The hope of such a revelation clearly enticed many monographers during the nineteenth century. Berenson had already expressly established this expectation as a priority of *Lotto*. However, he arguably wished to fulfill it without falling into a wholly subjective mode of address, as other art critics did (Zola included); nor did he wish to ignore the historical, biographical, art historical, and connoisseurial aspects that a monograph was expected to investigate. For, unlike art criticism, the monograph was always written *a posteriori*, after the artist’s career had been concluded, and so it demanded a posthumous reconstruction of all the elements that made up the open finitude of the “life and works” of an artist. Berenson harmonizes this methodological dichotomy partly by viewing Lotto’s works unconditionally from within: as a condensation of painting and temperament, subjective and objective visions that in themselves could stimulate personal responses and also afford insights into their historical and cultural context. In so doing, Berenson does not simply highlight the modernity of Lotto and his pictures’ hidden affinities with the practice of late-nineteenth-century French artists; he also attempts a

reversal of the life-and-work model, foregrounding the artworks themselves as the unifying source of the knowledge of being singular.

Much of the central part of *Lotto* reflects the idea of a multifaceted oeuvre. But what is critically suggestive is that, as he reconstructs the artist's oeuvre and catalogues and evaluates his pictures, Berenson anticipates a stance that he fully articulates in the monograph's last chapter, "Resulting Impression." At times in this central section, he seeks contact with what he calls the artist's "mind." Integrating seemingly distinct procedures, he turns his otherwise formal analyses of Lotto's work into an investigation of transitivity and personality. Lotto's own psychological introspection, his ability to reflect the religious ferment of his time, and his foreshadowing of the modern artistic sensibility are all perceived as supporting this approach.

Especially in discussing Lotto's "Bergamask period," Berenson addresses Lotto's works by envisioning, and even identifying with, the artist. This period was the point in Lotto's career when he most forcefully manifested his bent for psychological analysis. In Berenson's view, the *Bride and Bridegroom* of 1523 (Prado) was the first incontrovertibly humorous representation of characters in Italian painting; the subject's inner states are rendered with the distinctness of a modern psychological novel. Conversely, in *A Family Group* of the same year (National Gallery, London), Lotto expressed not so much irony as a sense of the figures' reciprocal acceptance.²⁸ Even when painting a Dominican at his bookkeeping (*Portrait of a Dominican Steward or Prior*, 1526, Treviso Pinacoteca), he achieved a precise study of the sitter's psychology.²⁹ In discussing a period in which Lotto became increasingly speculative in his pictures, and they came to bear increasing evidence of someone being there, of an engaging personality as their agent, Berenson saw the need for a different *modus operandi*. Indeed, in the entry on the 1518 *Madonna and Child* (fig 6.2), he explicitly discounts the value of strictly formal cross-references, arguing that these would not be sufficient to grasp the personality that unfolded itself within the painting:

But analysing a work of art into its elements and showing how the author came by them, does not account for its quality and



6.2 Lorenzo Lotto, *Madonna and Child* (1518). Oil on panel, 52 x 39 cm. © Gemäldegalerie, Dresden.

value. All the formal elements become in the author's temperament fused into something which is very different from the rough materials; and in this *Madonna* . . . we feel the contact, through its gay, lilac colouring, through the grace and daintiness of the Madonna and the sweetness of the children, with a refined, gay personality, and feelings much like our own, in an age which we are apt to think of as one devoid of human sentiments and wholly given over to men and women of only heroic passions.³⁰

As it pervasively links artistic and human qualities, the shift in Berenson's writing described here foreshadows the subjective interpretive mode of the conclusion to *Lotto*. The root of this mode may lie in the work of Walter Pater (1839–1894). Pater's novels and essays on poetry, literature, and the visual arts suggest that the ultimate function of art is to help people to become something, to make life itself a work of art. A fond reader of Pater's *The Renaissance*, Berenson must have fully absorbed the Victorian writer's aesthetic credo by the time he wrote *Lotto*.³¹ Pater had turned the appreciation of art into a mutual epiphany of individuality: at the same time that the critic registered his own subjective reactions to artworks, he was also to evoke their maker's subjectivity, even if he had to imagine it. Long before *Lotto's* close, it is clear how intrigued Berenson was by the idea of engaging in a dialogue with the artist's mind.

Berenson trusts the paintings alone in trying to establish who Lotto was. It is as if his life, ideas, and experiences all find a visual equivalent in his paintings, and these in turn generate and reflect a state of being. The point is also apparent when Berenson portrays Lotto as an interpreter of sixteenth-century religious ferment, as a man who, from his maturity to his old age, manifested a religious concern that was more profound than one would have expected. Lacking external evidence for this conjecture, Berenson takes the works themselves as evidence that Lotto must have come in contact with Lutheran thinkers in Venice during the last thirty years of his life. He argues that the *Virgin and Child with Saints* altarpiece of 1539 (Pinacoteca Civica, Cingoli) is clear proof of this contact, just as the technique and color of the *Saint Nicholas in Glory with Saints John the Baptist and Lucy* altarpiece of 1529 (church of Santa Maria del Carmine, Venice) offer proof of the artist's contact with Titian.³²

Berenson again uses both form and psychology in describing Lotto as a precursor to the artistic sensibility of the late nineteenth century. He sees Lotto's modernity, for example, in the *Presentation in the Temple* (fig. 6.3), where the paint was applied in a way more modern even than Titian's, very much resembling that of the impressionists, especially Manet (the young man behind St. Anne looks almost identical to a figure in Manet's *Spanish Dancer*). In tone and drawing the *Presentation* also reminds him of Degas's work. In fact, Berenson remarks, the work "is perhaps the most 'modern' picture ever painted by an old Italian master."³³ Lotto's kinship with the modern artists extended to his life and character. Wondering why several masters native to Venice, including Crivelli, Barbari, Sebastiano del Piombo, and Lotto himself, had worked away from home, Berenson contends that the reason was not that they were underappreciated in their own city; rather, he says, they led restless lives, which he associates with the modern spirit of "decadence." With the exception of Sebastiano (whom Berenson sees as a mere trader), "they seemed possessed with a taste for the extraordinary, for what was subtle and refined, and there was in all of them just a touch of what we now should call the 'decadent.'"³⁴

I have already argued that many of the issues touched on in *Lotto* are picked up again in the final chapter, "Resulting Impression." Here, though, the perspective is different and broader. The prose lacks the compactness of the earlier chapters; subjective and impressionistic, this last chapter advances Berenson's aim of tracing Lotto's character as both man and artist. In fulfilling that aim, Berenson brings to a climax his interweaving of formal and psychological concerns, scholarly attitudes and emotional responses. Here we see his monograph's unprecedented orientation and why he calls it "an essay in constructive art criticism."

In the closing pages of *Lotto*, Berenson dissolves the contours of the biographical and the artistic as separate identities. The reconsideration of Lotto's oeuvre is grounded not so much in formal inquiry as in Berenson's apprehension of Lotto as both man and artist:

The critic who attempts to write about a painter must beware of many dangers, but he must be especially careful to avoid being



6.3 Lorenzo Lotto, *The Presentation in the Temple* (1552–1556). Oil on canvas, 172 x 136.5 cm. Santuario della Santa Casa, Loreto. © Erich Lessing Archive / Art Resource, New York.

vague and fanciful. The surest way of keeping clear of these dangers is to treat the painter chronologically, touching upon the various influences he came under, and considering the various phases of his art in connection with corresponding epochs of his life. I shall, therefore, so far as practicable, follow this plan in endeavoring to reconstruct Lotto's artistic personality.³⁵

This passage offers quite a sound definition of any writer's ambitions and scope in tackling the open finitude of the life and works of an artist. Indeed, it reads like an outline of the monograph model that we have watched evolve in the nineteenth century. Berenson acknowledges the essential features that monographs had so far shown, especially when authors had been guided by art historical and connoisseurial interests. Yet something new is added: Berenson ends by equating the monograph's entire program with the reconstruction of what he calls Lotto's "artistic personality." To understand the meaning of this addition, one has to consider that four elements sustain Berenson's ensuing overview of Lotto's oeuvre and ultimately his reconstruction of the "artistic personality": Lotto's artworks in themselves, their connections to artworks by his contemporaries, the few documents concerning the artist, and the history of his times.

Berenson proposes that Lotto's psychological bent is first to be discerned in the *Portrait of a Young Man* of circa 1509 (Hampton Court, London). Then, having reexamined some of the portraits, he argues that the artist's paintings of religious subjects are both psychological and personal. Lotto's deep interpretation of sacred themes disclose his personal attitude to life, showing that, unlike most painters of his and earlier generations, he found inspiration directly in the Scriptures, as a devout Lutheran would.³⁶

As for the relationship between Lotto and his contemporaries, Berenson previously discussed at length his striking formal links with Correggio.³⁷ He now focuses on the two artists' different pictorial "tempers," that is, on traits and qualities that fully amalgamated subjectivity and painting. Correggio is perceived as ecstatic and rapturous, never psychological; even if he was "as tremulously sensitive as Lotto," his sensitivity remained "naively sensuous." Furthermore, because of the sense of self-

consciousness and reflectiveness in Lotto's work, his expression seems to Berenson less complete than Correggio's or Titian's.³⁸

The two most significant Lotto documents available to Berenson are introduced here (as in earlier chapters) primarily to confirm the idea of Lotto's character as already drawn from his oeuvre. The account book Lotto kept between 1540 and 1556 is significant; even more important is his will of 1546 (which is quoted several times). These documents corroborate Berenson's image of him as a solitary yet constant wanderer: "Lotto had no close family ties, although his account book proves that in 1540 he was living with a nephew. His life must always have been that of a lonely wanderer, of a person more or less improvident, very industrious, as the number of his works indicates, but laying up no store whatever."³⁹

In reconsidering Lotto's oeuvre, Berenson establishes a connection between the artist and his times mainly by discussing the sentiment of charity conveyed in his paintings. This sentiment becomes a visual clue for historical understanding, shedding new light on the sixteenth century as a whole, and disclosing a less sensationalistic, more human side.⁴⁰ Finally, having predicted an imminent revival of interest in Lotto and that his pictures in the basilica of the Santa Casa at Loreto would soon become objects of pilgrimage, Berenson concludes by surmising that Lotto, restless and nomadic throughout his life, was "a psychological painter in an age which ended by esteeming little but force and display, a personal painter at a time when personality was fast getting to be of less account than conformity, evangelical at heart in a country upon which a rigid and soulless Catholicism was daily strengthening its hold."⁴¹

One might object that Berenson's final reconsideration of Lotto's oeuvre reiterates the kind of canonical conclusion that Vasari had appended to some of his Lives, and which was a common feature in nineteenth-century monographs. Berenson does indeed echo that pattern, but he radically transforms its conceptual and methodological assumptions. He no longer speaks of an individual, or of a maker of artworks, but of a personality whose singularity seemed to lie in its belonging purely to the sphere of art. There is no founding or supposed essence but rather an attestation of existence that points to who Lotto is. The works of art alone

now inspire both stylistic and psychological analogies between the life and the work, as well as between the work and the artist's character, historical situation, and lived experience.

The effects of this concern with personality on Berenson's own mind are clearly revealed by a passage—a lengthy insert within the overview of Lotto's oeuvre—that seems to supply the physical likeness of the master customarily given at the end of a monograph. While departing from that custom, the passage evinces not only Berenson's psychological understanding of Lotto but also what must have been his experience in working on the monograph:

Long familiarity with the work of an artist often ends by creating a visual image which rises invariably before the mind at the mention of his name. This image is the result of a slow process of selection and combination; certain qualities of expression, certain types of face, certain attitudes, a given scheme of colour, a prejudice for certain effects of light, recur at the thought of the artist with ever greater persistency. At last, by the elimination of all accidental elements, the connection between the artist and a perfectly individualised face and expression becomes fixed. This face is, at bottom, nothing else than a sort of composite mental photograph of all the impressions received from the artist's works. It happens sometimes that among these works one figure or face occurs which answers exactly to this composite mental photograph, and the natural looseness of the mind leads it to regard the image, in some vague way, as the portrait of the painter himself. It is curious that the figure among Lotto's works which answers to such a description should be in Loreto [*Saints Christopher, Roch, and Sebastian* (fig. 6.4)], and it is a stranger coincidence still that it should represent St. Roch, the restless and compassionate wanderer, whom Lotto, it is hardly fantastic to imagine, may have looked upon as his special patron. The St. Roch, although he has a certain resemblance to the print given by Ridolfi as Lotto's portrait, can scarcely be an actual likeness of the painter by himself, for it represents a man of about forty, and Lotto must have been over fifty when he painted it; yet it contains all that refinement,



6.4 Lorenzo Lotto, *Saints Christopher, Roch, and Sebastian* (c. 1535). Oil on canvas, 275 x 232 cm. Santuario della Santa Casa, Loreto. © Erich Lessing Archive / Art Resource, New York.

all that unworldliness, and all that wistful unrest which were at the very foundation of his nature.⁴²

The mental picture of which Berenson speaks suggests more than a desire to envision the author behind the work. Fantastic as it may appear, its likelihood unleashes a series of tensions underlying the monograph's development while also proposing to come to terms with its forceful impulse to construe the artworks as living objects and to respond to them as a matrix of identities constantly engaging our gaze. That longed-for mental picture is the endpoint of a meditation on the artist's oeuvre, in which the implications of the life-and-work model have been carried far beyond the model's dependency on factual knowledge or empirical associations. In the passage above, Berenson shows that just as Lotto existed and could be recognized in the very materiality of his art, so the art bore evidence of not only a living impulse (as in Passavant's *Raphael*) but also a personality. The morphological unity postulated by the paradigm of the oeuvre turns out to be a humanly charged psychological unity that reflected the artistic creation also in the sphere of the biography—both private and public, emotional and intellectual, historical and cultural.

Thus moving away from the standpoint of connoisseurship and outstripping the limitations of its scientific stance, casting Lotto as a prophet of modern painting and describing his works in ways reminiscent of contemporary art criticism, the method of constructive art criticism that *Lotto* exemplifies dispensed with the traditional dichotomies that had affected the monograph genre up to that time. The kind of presence that this new criticism endeavored to extract from the artworks was neither factual nor imaginary but rather the result of a visual incarnation, the synthesis of what Lotto the man and Lotto the artist originated and attested by creating his works. Berenson calls it the artistic personality of the artist. This idea bears further scrutiny in order to judge the paradigmatic value that *Lotto* assumed in the history of the nineteenth-century monograph.

Toward a Definition of the Artistic Personality

Was Berenson truly original in speaking of an “artistic personality”? What kind of understanding of the artworks did the idea of “artistic

personality” ultimately propose? Rather than trying to establish whether Berenson actually coined the term (in any case, it does not seem to have become current in the literature of art until he used it),⁴³ I would like to explore its implications—to try to assess the meaning of the term “artistic personality” as conveyed in *Lotto* both in itself and in the history of the monograph. Berenson’s idea of the artistic personality represents a point of culmination of the nineteenth-century monograph. Insofar as it associates an artist’s production with a production of someoneness congenital to the art itself, the idea radicalizes the matrix of intelligibility of the life-and-work model as well as its imagination and ideals, its attempt to grasp the occurrence of being singular in the evaluation of what artworks, oeuvres, and artists do and are. It imagines that the art itself objectifies human identity and can be regarded as such even without any factual knowledge about its author and his or her biographical situation.

Reactions to *Lotto* varied. Jean Paul Richter saw it as a thorough study of the painter’s stylistic development and career, while the French critic Salomon Reinach regarded it as a successful application of the methods of Morelli.⁴⁴ Both apparently overlooked the broader aims of Berenson’s method and its psychological slant. Only Mary Costelloe, reviewing the book under the pseudonym “Mary Logan,” took a different course: Berenson’s intimate companion during these years, she not only joined him in his artistic pilgrimages but also embraced the credo of modern connoisseurship, inaugurated by Morelli, in her own contributions to the study of the visual arts.⁴⁵ Her description of *Lotto* underscores the significance of the psychological approach; she notes that the monograph aimed at “nothing less than the *psychological reconstruction of the artistic personality of the painter*.”⁴⁶

Despite Costelloe’s unconditional praise for *Lotto* and its originality of method, Berenson’s reconstruction of Lotto’s artistic personality was inspired at least in part by the authors I have mentioned before: James, Pater, and Morelli. From James he may have taken the general principle that the only states of consciousness that psychology can investigate are those that tend to appear as parts of personal selves, that are inextricable from particular individuals.⁴⁷ In fact, James’s correlation between thought and selfhood may have encouraged both Berenson’s perception of forms as codes of personality and his emphasis on self-consciousness as the constant trait in Lotto’s works.

Pater, meanwhile, although he lacked connoisseurship, intrigued Berenson because he could turn criticism into an imaginative summoning of the artist's subjectivity. In his preface to *The Renaissance*, Pater demands that the critic ask, "In whom did the stir, the genius, the sentiment of the period find itself?" and suggests that every artist or poet has a peculiar virtue or active principle that the critic must uncover.⁴⁸ In another essay that was certainly familiar to Berenson, Pater also advances a view of literary appreciation, which anticipates to a degree Berenson's passage about mentally envisioning Lotto's likeness: "There are some," Pater remarks, "to whom nothing has real interest, or real meaning, except as operative in a given person; and it is they who best appreciate the quality of soul in literary art. They seem to know a *person*, in a book, and make way by intuition."⁴⁹

As for Morelli's role in Berenson's conception of the artistic personality, at least two factors merit consideration. First, Morelli cleared the path for Berenson's investigation of personality: while insisting that local styles are not unlike local dialects, he suggested that painters' characters are manifest in the stylistic features of their work.⁵⁰ Second, and more telling, Morelli's objections to Charles Blanc's attribution of a *St. Sebastian* to Leonardo,⁵¹ already voiced in his articles of 1874 on the Borghese gallery, show that he did not discount a study of personality, although he certainly considered formal analysis a prerequisite to undertaking any introspective or psychological investigation. To Blanc's argument that attribution should rely on recognizing the artist's interiority, Morelli replies that he also believes in "*le génie singulièrement complexe* of Leonardo." Nevertheless, he declares that, beyond psychological study, he had "never neglected the study of the *procédés* and *faire* of the master, knowing from long experience just what disastrous tricks the imagination can play on us."⁵² A few paragraphs later Morelli explicitly maintains that "only through serious uninterrupted study of the form can one, by degrees, reach the point where one can recognize and comprehend the spirit [*Geist*] that animates it [i.e., form]."⁵³

In reconstructing Lotto's artistic personality, then, Berenson pursued quite an ambitious plan. While internalizing a number of sources, he above all wanted to rethink Morelli's use of characteristic details and—following another, perhaps more latent concern of Morelli—to improve

the study of both form and personality. Even though Berenson does not speak of Lotto's "artistic personality" until his final chapter, throughout his monograph he is clearly addressing a personality that revealed itself only in the art—from the psychological interpretations of Morelli-like details in his introduction through his exploration of the artist's education and his cataloguing of the pictures. Deducing Lotto's character as both artist and man almost exclusively through visual evidence, Berenson blurs the boundaries between Lotto's oeuvre and biography long before his last chapter. Openly favoring intuitive, qualitative comprehension over scientific, quantitative explanation, the "Resulting Impression" delivered in his conclusion acquires in retrospect the sense of a long-deferred confession: it confirms that his goal in *Lotto* is not simply to classify a body of works and its connection with a certain individual, but to recognize an artistic and human identity born out of the works themselves.

The closing pages of "Rudiments" deal with this dichotomy between the science and the art of connoisseurship. In "Rudiments"—the first section of his never-completed book on methodology—Berenson tries, as he explains in the preface to his 1902 collection of essays, to formulate a systematic classification of the tests of authorship employed in the new connoisseurship. (The overly empirical Morelli had refused to attempt such a formulation.) It is significant, however, that both the understanding and the application of these tests represent for Berenson a "merely initial step in Constructive Art Criticism." In fact, after listing Morelli's details and discussing their reliability in arriving at attributions, Berenson also exposes their shortcomings, pointing out that whenever one faces a possible forgery of a master, these formal tests end up being mere aids in the far more crucial assessment of quality. And just as Berenson's "resulting impression" of Lotto's oeuvre makes no claim to scientific accuracy, so the consideration of quality in a picture exceeds the realm of science and delves into the art of connoisseurship.⁵⁴

The presence of these polarities between the science and the art of connoisseurship in Berenson's writings of the 1890s casts further light on his practice of "constructive art criticism," and on the very idea of the artistic personality conveyed by *Lotto*. Berenson provides another demonstration of his method in an essay of 1899, in which he seeks to identify, without aid from any document or text, the artistic personality of an

anonymous painter whose similarities to Sandro Botticelli induce Berenson to call him the “Amico di Sandro.”⁵⁵ Among works then ascribed to Botticelli and Filippino Lippi, the essay identifies a group of paintings with their own autonomous character. Beginning in a rather undefined imitation of Botticelli, that character gradually turned into a discernible artistic personality, one that revealed “a gayer, more easy-going temperament than Sandro’s.”⁵⁶

When Berenson republished the “Amico di Sandro” essay in the first volume of *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art* in 1901, he explains his methodology in the preface. Here he not only spells out its implications but also calls for a total transformation in art studies, at the core of which he places the construction of the artistic personality:

I, for one, have been for many years cherishing the conviction that the world’s art can be, nay, should be, studied as independently of all documents as is the world’s fauna or the world’s flora. . . . Such a classification would yield material not only ample enough for the universal history of art, but precise enough, if qualitative analysis also be applied, for the perfect determination of purely artistic personalities. Then, and only then, and chiefly for mere convenience of naming, might one turn to documents . . . and attempt to connect with this abstract some actual personality of the past.⁵⁷

From this passage one gets a clear sense that what Berenson intended to exemplify in *Lotto*, and what he henceforth pursued, was a method that enables one to approach artworks and artists regardless of the biographical or documentary dimensions, construing the power of their singular, personalized visions and giving them both formal and anthropological significance. By 1901 Berenson clearly believed that external data were secondary to the kind of insight provided by connoisseurship, and that, as qualitative analysis took the place of scientific analysis, the idea of the artistic personality could offer the unifying thread necessary for evaluating and classifying artworks of different kinds. Indeed, he spoke then of a universal history of art to be conceived in terms of a reconstruction of “artistic personalities.”

In the 1901 preface, Berenson describes the artistic personality as an “abstract” to which one might eventually relate the historical figure of an author. This “abstract,” however, presupposes and reformulates a view of the visual arts rooted in the monograph form and its attentiveness to being singular. It results from the science and the art of connoisseurship as well as from principles at the core of the life-and-work model, beginning with its fundamental belief in a correlation between artworks and human qualities. Berenson’s statements of 1901 recapitulate a stance that originally appeared in *Lotto*, and that actually could not be better expressed than in a monograph: he viewed Lotto’s works as embodiments of a presence that takes shape and can be identified over and above all the information (factual, historical, art historical) we may have about them and their maker.

In sum, Berenson’s kind of “constructive art criticism” of artistic personalities was an inherent potential of the monographic discourse. Although this criticism inherited its meanings from characteristics of the monograph, it also challenged some of the monograph’s most accepted aspects, such as its reliance on factual knowledge and philological accuracy in using sources, and the concurrent investigation of the artist’s life and work. The idea of artistic personality both justified and reinterpreted the monograph’s dialectic between life and works and its view of an artist’s works as together making up an oeuvre. *Lotto* indicated that it was possible to do without the duality of oeuvre and biography because everything potentially exists in the art itself, and the artworks demand ongoing visual and subjective adjustments between our perception and imagination. Berenson’s monograph meant to confront such a demand, and in so doing tried to recreate a sense of multiplicity—formal and art historical as well as personal and historical—out of the investigation of Lotto’s works.

The aspiration to capture the living qualities of the artworks clearly pervaded the monograph long before Berenson; it is with his *Lotto*, however, that a full circle is drawn. The idea of the artistic personality makes fully explicit the motivating ideals and methods of the nineteenth-century monograph. Many different endeavors—such as the use of the monograph to establish the study of art on scholarly grounds, the merging of

the monograph proper with the catalogue raisonné, the reconstruction of the oeuvre, the search for a morphology of the artist's identity and the inverse concerns with the biographical intensity of that identity—can be seen in retrospect as all pointing to the same continuous project: the creation of a view of the visual arts grounded upon the dialectic between the life and works of the artist, with the goal of bringing about a revelation of art as a true form of life and an attestation of the diverse ways of being human.

Due to its eclectic and utopian impulse, the monograph often came to correlate art and life, with “life” meaning the artist's life, the organic processes of life itself, the source of a lived intelligence, and the conjunctive element that provides a condition of knowledge and yet ineluctably escapes our rationality. In so doing, the monograph defined the artworks in their interlocked conditions of being both physical and immaterial entities, delimited objects and conveyers of qualities that go beyond their objecthood.

The idea of the artistic personality identified art as a powerful medium both to engender and recognize who one is or becomes within the processes of signification. This awareness went hand in hand with the nineteenth-century construction of the individualistic character of Renaissance art, but it also partook of a broader dynamics investing modern art and the condition of contemporary artists from the late eighteenth century onward, from Carstens to David and Géricault. In particular, the artistic personality articulated anew widespread tenets among Parisian artists and critics. It echoed and internalized the implications of various stances—from Courbet's claim that he worked more in order to be a man than to be a painter, to Zola's belief in art as a birthing process. It brought into the study of past art the tensions of a movement that sought to reinvent contemporary art on the basis of a new solidarity between subject and object, painting and human reality.

As Berenson proposed, the idea of artistic personality is all-encompassing: it could be extended through the ages and could be used to classify works of many different kinds. As such, it could weather the changes in the history of art. The idea could allow one to contemplate authorship not as the mirror of a condition preceding the artistic experi-

ence but as the trace of a dynamic transmigration of self that weaves together the diverse life forms within the forms of art.

Reinterpreting the Separateness of the Artworks

By the close of the nineteenth century, the monograph as a form of writing had achieved its main definitions. It qualified as a *sui generis* kind of book that could assess visual and written data, elaborate original interpretations, reconstruct an oeuvre, overlap with the tradition of literary biography and the world of popular literature, and meet the demands of the more specialized contexts of art historical studies and connoisseurship.

The monograph had reached conceptual maturity. In many of its nineteenth-century metamorphoses, it critiqued the idea that artworks were isolated objects made by isolated subjects in the world, allowing them in some sense to surmount the disjunction between the reality of the artwork and reality itself.

This job of reinterpretation was prompted by the act of relating the distinct and dispersed works of an artist: once envisioned as a multiplicity, the works lost part of their isolation, became dialectical elements within a whole, and entered into another order of intelligibility and responses. Monographers were inclined to go beyond strict considerations of artistry in the evaluation of an artist's production. The model helped them generate another type of insight, whereby their contemplation of an isolated object allowed monographers to understand its dialectical irradiation in the world and unveil it as a site of simultaneous production and disclosure of identity and being. For as it repeatedly attempted to capture a sense of existence within the artworks, a monograph construed them not only in their stillness and materiality—as objects evincing beautiful forms and taste, technical proficiency, and power of depiction—but also as carriers of a surplus of signification that resisted translations or preconceived schemes of interpretation and attributions of essence.

The monographers' desire to break through the limitation of artworks as physically delimited objects was due also to the special kind of illuminations into the artistic realm favored by the monograph model.

From Vasari to Berenson, the “artistic” identity of the artist and the “artistic” dimension of the life-and-work model gradually exceeded evaluations inspired by the particularity of a medium and thus advocated the sense of art as a human activity *tout court*. Whereas Vasari’s *Lives* conveyed a concern with rules and canons of art, the issue at stake for the nineteenth-century monograph was not whether the works under analysis belong to the category of art and fulfill the requirements of artistry, but rather whether one could grasp a process of coming into being. The modern monograph attempted to uncover the artworks’ human component and to clarify them formally as well as in regard to the domains of nature and culture, thus possibly unleashing the manifold reverberations of a sphere of immanence in which art and life are bound together.

Furthermore, in a monograph, the works of both present and past artists were revealed to exist over and above the frame of a given theory of art. Numerous more or less current ideas, methods, and viewpoints affected the invention of the monograph, yet we have noted how rarely they constituted the exclusive source of inspiration in the making of a book. Instead the model internalized and transformed the discourses of several disciplines, driven by an anarchic method in its overall attempt to interweave life and work. The tendency to reinterpret the separateness of the artworks corroborated this approach and evidently went hand in hand with the monograph’s two crucial components: its attentiveness to being singular and its readiness to explore a range of dynamics from the realms of art and life.

Because of its focus on singularity, the monograph carried the potential of turning the study of art on its head. It could throw into doubt any number of more rigid constructions. It contained points of excess, instability, and differentiation that could not be so easily squared. It exposed as limited and arbitrary the assumption that artworks can be better evaluated when classified according to schools and countries and seen as parts of a linear, chronological history. It indicated that the construction of art historical sequences and genealogies among artists might not be enough to unravel the artistic phenomena. It shook the faith in external, homogenizing criteria that seek to prescribe or ascribe what art is.

At the same time, while bringing into question a number of art historical beliefs that began to be widespread during the nineteenth century

and are still current today, the monograph uncovered alternative paths for the advancement of art studies. It suggested that the dialectic between art and reality may be comprehended by starting with the realization that there are only works and authors or presences within them; it induced one to look at the separateness of the artworks in a different light and to regard them as reifications of a life—“things” virtually dwelling in many dimensions and presenting the characteristics of a living entity.

By exploring dynamics that move through art and life, the monograph's tension affected ideas about art and human nature. “Art” became an unstable term, naming places and moments of singularities in motion, the dynamics of being someone and partaking of life. Conversely “humanity” had no fixed definition in the encounter with the works of art. The sense of humanity had to be negotiated from scratch with each new encounter, as the outcome of responses flowing from both sides. It could not be seen as a given external to the artwork, even less merely as its reference or subject matter. Through the model's interposition of art and life, human identity is or becomes artistic form because it is associated with the signifying process itself, at one with the very materiality of the art. This view of art as humanity allows for differentiation and infinitation: the flux of life, biography, the historical figure of the artist, the morphology of a *Bildung*, the intensity of experience of a self, the epiphanies of a living presence.

In seeking to transcend separateness, the monograph replaced representation with embodiment of presences. The final stage of this replacement could be summed up as a series of radical negations: that there is no gap between who the artist is and what the artist does; no disjunction between image and existence; no schisms between life and art, and none between the reality of the artwork and reality itself. One could now aspire to break the mirror of representation and see behind the veil of illusion and separateness. In this way one could understand the artworks as forms of existence and sites of freedom, intellect, and emotion; moreover, one could finally imagine that, just as life provides a model for art, so art can reveal itself as a model for life.

This ability is precisely one of the strongest implications of the monograph's polymorphous character and orientations—from its analogical structure and constant posing of a “who” question before the artworks

to its kinship with the culture of modern identity, its endorsement of the romantic search for a transcendental unity of nature and art, and its eclectic embrace of biographical, art historical, and connoisseurial procedures and ambitions.

In its utopian impulse to reinterpret and overcome separateness, the nineteenth-century monograph ultimately ascribed lifelike reality to art and artlike reality to life. Monographers made room within their texts for a twilight zone inhabited by latent ideals and aspirations that could be fulfilled only partially. In retrospect, one may speak of the life-and-work model as generating its own imaginary side. Its very structure, mechanisms, and modes of address nurtured and channeled a series of desirable perspectives, which the monograph from time to time explicated and even illuminated in their potentialities.

This imaginary side is key to what I have called the monograph project, and I will pay further tribute to it in the concluding chapter. Here it is worth noticing that the constellation of ideas and desires that emerge in my account of the nineteenth-century monograph does not allow for a seamless image of the history of art and art literature in modern Europe. Reexamining the monograph's transformations, we have encountered something more than simply the dogma of the autonomy of art, the primacy of the idea of art itself, the cultivation of a disinterested taste for aesthetic beauty and technical proficiency in past and modern art, the practice of connoisseurship for its own sake, or the pursuit of art history as a wholly specialized discipline. Even if these constitute prominent features of the period, the modern ideas of art, artists, and artworks are far more complex. At any given time in history there are competing trends and forces; there are breakthroughs and anachronisms, regressions and premonitions, underground tensions and hybrid phenomena. Surely the monograph was such a case in the nineteenth century. And its *sui generis* mold causes very different times to be conflated in the writing of a "life and works," from the humanistic tenets of the Renaissance stemming from Vasari's *Lives* to the ideals of freedom and democracy launched by the Enlightenment, and the conception of nature, creativity, and spiritual life of the romantic and postromantic eras.

In a similar vein, the case of the monograph may shed fresh light on visions of the “human” advocated by the European intellectual tradition during early modernity. The monograph suggests that those visions were less orderly and globalizing than they tend to appear now, after the twentieth century and the homogenizing scenario of our post-Soviet world. In that tradition, the “human” was revealed as a source of ongoing interrogation about the diverse modes of ontic belonging. With unprecedented clarity, it came to signify precisely the shifting locus of a subjectivity, that area of indeterminacy where individuals engage themselves in a practice of self-discovery inextricable from the coeval discovery of and intercourse with others. Rather than denoting an essentialistic and discriminating notion and therefore exclusively serving the plans of colonialist dominion perpetrated by white Europeans, the idea of the “human” provided a platform to meditate upon both the equability of human nature and the variability of human experience in art, culture, and history. Being and becoming “human” was a way of achieving autonomy and difference, envisioning the immanence of a life in the freedom of its unfolding through times and spaces. The making of the artist’s monograph bears witness to these strands of European thought because it apparently echoed and transformed them, indicating how and why its model was alert to the possibility of expounding the visions of the “human” in terms of creativity and identities in the making.

The above remarks do not make a case for historical relativism but rather argue for a deeper grasp of the ever-changing situations that may define time and again both the location of the interpreter and the very composition and transmission of historical data. They question the nature of historical time as well as the uses of habituated categories such as “old” and “new” in the assessment of the past. In particular, one learns from them that, just as the monograph defies the belief in a unidirectional progression of historical time, so should one distrust the objectifying protocols of historiography and try to unravel the implications of the life-and-work model by conjoining and disjoining fragmentary portions of history in the nineteenth century as well as now.

The monograph did not fully realize its impulse to overcome separateness, nor did it systematically demonstrate its chief intuition: a coincidence

between the works of art and the immanent plan of existence. Nonetheless, its metamorphoses illustrate the dawning of a special awareness of the visual arts rooted in the consideration of the life and works of an artist. From our vantage point, the monograph stands out as the beacon of being singular and the singular existent in art studies. The history of its model from Vasari to Berenson contains the threads of what looks like a cohesive set of practices, expectations, and motivating ideals, a project created by the development of the monograph form and its discourse. This project, its sense and destiny, constitutes the constant source of interrogation and inspiration in my exploration of the monograph's history.

The project fell into latency during the twentieth century. But even though the monograph's form declined and its discourse bred discontent as some of the most advanced trends of art history headed elsewhere, it continued to have a following. The ideas at the core of the monograph project were still to be radically rearticulated. For not only does one find strong resonances of the monographic discourse within recent strands of thought in the visual arts, but its utopian claims and characteristic view of the dialectic of life and work became paramount motifs in the practice of some influential artists of the twentieth century.

Fluctuations and Decline

7

A State of Uncertainty

The twentieth century saw the life-and-work model continue to affect the literature of art. But despite the impressive number of books devoted to individual artists during that period, a state of uncertainty and decline has characterized the monograph enterprise since the end of the nineteenth century. The methodological freedom and attentiveness to the singular existent is nowhere to be seen. The history of the twentieth-century monograph cannot be narrated exclusively in terms of paradigmatic metamorphoses. To be sure, the monograph has shown that it can expand into new areas and modes of address, enhance art historical consciousness, and enlighten modern and contemporary art's new sense of the artistic. But the genre has become loaded with formulaic reiterations and a numbing standardization has set in, making it the most institutionalized type of art historical writing. Once it came to be perceived as a handy scheme, the monograph form survived only as a stale construct, demeaned in its mission and inattentive to the demands of its discourse. Above all, readers and writers in the twentieth century presumed to know exactly what a monograph is; this presumption largely drained the form of the powerful imaginary and utopian elements that characterized most of its nineteenth-century transformations. Writers could now explore the analogy of life and works, reconstruct an artist's "oeuvre," and employ the term "artistic personality" without bothering to unravel the methodological implications that the life-and-work model entailed. In this way, using the

monograph form allowed writers to avoid new concerns and stimuli, while indolently benefiting from the prestige of a time-honored form of writing.

Furthermore, like the catalogue, the monograph tends to reconstruct an artist's whole career, often bestowing authorship and pedigree upon otherwise uncertain or anonymous works. It therefore could be seen, and accordingly criticized, as an accomplice in the progressive commodification of art during the twentieth century. The success of the art market relies upon the vetting of names, identities, and oeuvres. By virtue of its characteristic focus on who an artist is, an account of an artist's life and works offers a service that is especially useful for the purposes of commercial classification.

The weakening of the monographic discourse has other roots too. Since the turn of the twentieth century, the writing of art history has undergone major transformations, some of which undermined the monograph. The works of many influential art historians revealed a weariness with the usual tactics of the life-and-work model, and some led to a shift toward more impersonal interpretative patterns, deliberately seeking to dispel notions like "author," "biography," and "oeuvre." Whereas the boundaries among disciplines were kept open for most of the nineteenth century, allowing the monograph to develop a polymorphous nature, the twentieth century's academic pursuit of specialization called for neat divisions of territories, aims, and procedures. The more art history gained confidence in its professional autonomy, the less willing it was to commingle with the unfamiliar, with things extraneous to its disciplinary perimeters. In some sense, it could not afford to deal with the instability produced by considerations of someoneness and singularity, or by endeavors locating works of art within the highly indeterminate plan of existence. It became one of art history's chief concerns to defend the objectivity of the field and to avail itself of supraindividual, totalizing methods. Finally, the twentieth-century suspicion toward the life-and-work model was also indirectly fueled by a philosophical disenchantment with some of the guidelines of the culture of modern identity, namely, its ideas on subjectivity, self-presence, and individuality. This disenchantment led to the denial of any expressive character in artworks, and to the contention that the monograph's construction of the unique

individuality of an artist established a problematic, outmoded metaphysics of the human subject.

In the following section I discuss some representative cases of twentieth-century monographs devoted to new and familiar artists. We notice fluctuations of the model and the symptoms of decline. The implications of this will be addressed more thoroughly in the final section of this chapter, where I examine the decline of the monograph and its discourse.

The purpose of this chapter, however, is not simply to complete a chronological survey or to describe the monograph as it is today, but also to uncover the ideas that arguably rendered the tradition of the monograph less relevant. Whereas here I am concerned with the uncertain position held by the monograph in recent times, in chapter 8 I produce another version of the life-and-work model in the twentieth century in order to discuss its power of transfiguration outside the realm of the monograph proper and to define how and why its project may still be relevant today.

The Twentieth-Century Monograph

The fact that the various typologies of the nineteenth-century monograph have persisted largely unaltered throughout the twentieth is itself a token of the monograph's stagnation. Though the monograph is now more widely used in the field of modern and contemporary art, its function, uses, and motivations are more sharply defined in the study of the old masters.

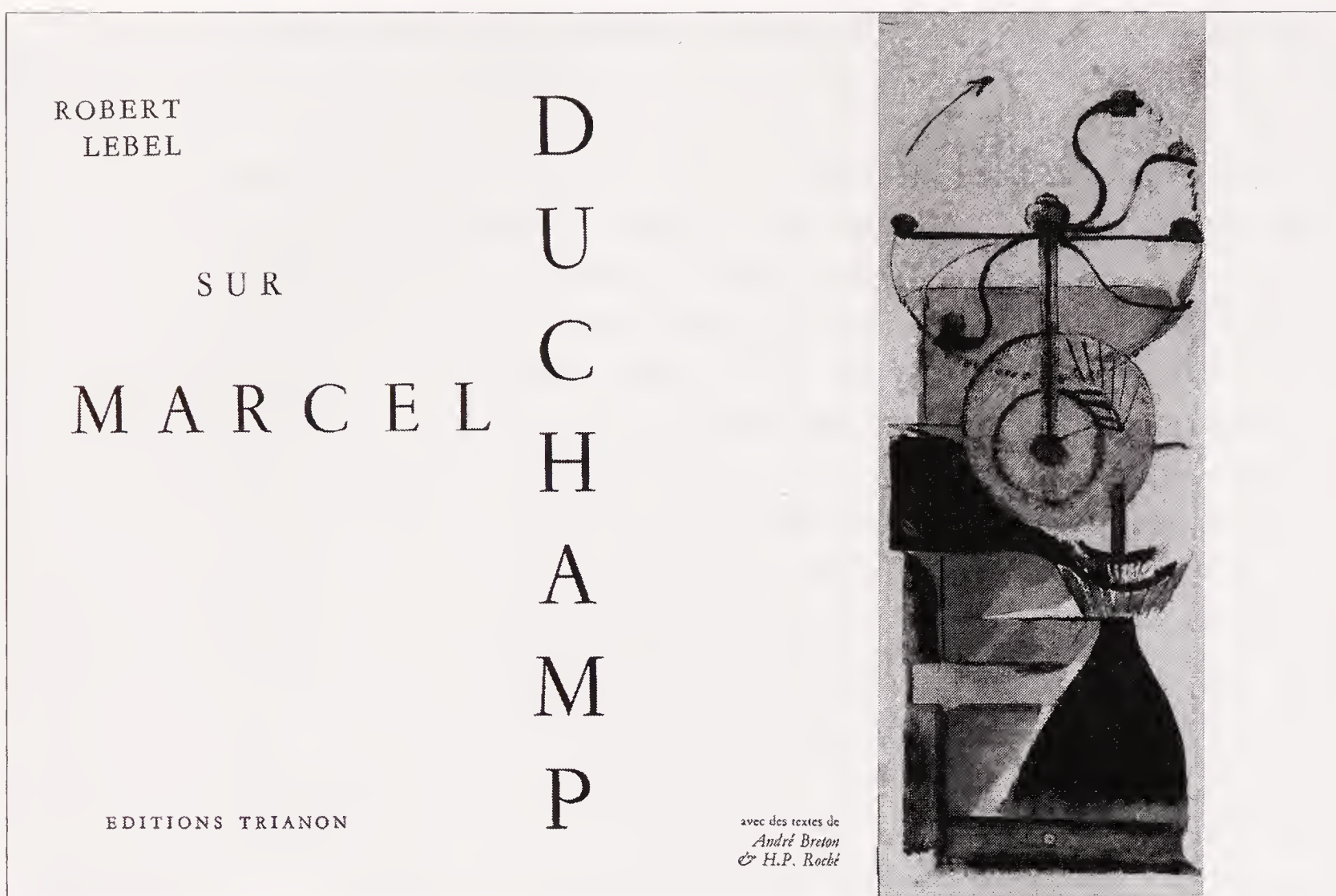
While hovering between movement and platitude, the monographers advanced the form on two specific fronts. The first was a radicalization of some of its previous aims and procedures. The other was a reinvention of the monograph's structure to the point that it could be camouflaged and disseminated within unexpected modes of inquiry.

Throughout the twentieth century, the monograph was employed conspicuously in the field of modern and avant-garde art, affecting and legitimating the reception of an impressive number of artists, both living and

dead.¹ In particular, since about the 1950s the monograph has helped to construct the significance of two crucial figures in the history of modern art: Pablo Picasso and Marcel Duchamp. In many cases the writers of books on these artists knew them personally and could use private documents, reminiscences, interviews, and familiarity with their works. As such, books on these artists often simply reiterate the older guidelines of the monograph tradition. Even those written for a general audience, which do not necessarily meet the contemporary standards of academic art history, contain key components of the monograph's historical development, such as the paradigm of the oeuvre, the interrelatedness of biography and art, and the image of the artist as achiever of self-definition.

As one example, the reversible time of the oeuvre is key to grasping the artistic metamorphoses of Picasso. Writing about the ever-changing styles and periods of Picasso's art, Wilhelm Boeck reports in a 1955 book that the artist's mutability had gradually been perceived as a steady, if mysterious, pattern in his art. However, it was likewise evident to Boeck that "works by Picasso from widely separated periods are interrelated, and that his early ideas sometimes reappear later, transmuted and enriched."²

The desire to conceive the artist's production as a whole is just as compelling in the study of Duchamp, though here, due to his break with the tradition of painting around 1912, the focus shifts from formal to conceptual and thematic unity. Robert Lebel (1901–1986), author of the first Duchamp monograph in 1959 (fig. 7.1), argues that, especially after he gave up his career as a painter, a constant factor in Duchamp's projects was a tendency toward "dissociation." Duchamp's obsession, that is, "would be the distance, the separateness which exists between individuals."³ Arturo Schwarz, who compiled a catalogue raisonné of the artist in 1969 and has continued to analyze Duchamp's oeuvre since then, defines the whole of his works as both "a lofty hymn to the amour fou that overcomes all obstacles and a painful meditation on the lover's solitude."⁴ Schwarz posits a continuum in Duchamp by means of cross-references and thematic associations among his diverse works. In particular, he establishes a complementarity of motifs between *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even* of 1915–1923 (also known as the *Large Glass*) and *Etant donnés* of 1946–1966, the work to which Duchamp secretly devoted himself until the end of his life (both at the Philadelphia Museum of Art).



7.1 Title page and frontispiece of Robert Lebel's *Sur Marcel Duchamp* (Paris, 1959). Courtesy of Jean-Jacques Lebel, Paris.

Biography, in turn, is taken as paramount in grasping Picasso the artist. Faith in the equation between art and life became so unshakable that Ronald Penrose (1900–1984) wrote that “Picasso the painter, the sculptor, the engraver, the ceramist, the poet, coincides with Picasso the friend, the father, the sage, the magician and the clown.”⁵ These sketches of the artist’s life may verge on trite eulogy, but they were deemed necessary even when the response to the works was clearly dictated by sober, scholarly attitudes. Pierre Daix, who aimed to write a thorough account of Picasso’s creative itinerary, biography, and intellectual context, acknowledges in his 1987 monograph on the artist that “the most satisfactory and coherent ‘periodizing’ of Picasso’s output must be based on the stages of his private life.”⁶ These stages could be identified with the inspiring presence of women (Eva, Olga, Marie-Thérèse, Dora Maar,

Françoise, and Jacqueline) who affected both Picasso's emotional life and his artistic development.

In Duchamp's case, the act of interposing biography and art reached uncharted grounds. Duchamp lived and worked in a way that muddled the division between what was work and what was not. Every moment of Duchamp's life could therefore qualify as the "analogue" of an artistic feat or experience. Here the art was analogous to the life, but life also revealed characteristics of the art. The situation's novelty was sensed by Lebel who, fighting the assertion that Duchamp had quit being an artist, held that it would be misleading to discriminate between Duchamp the painter and Duchamp who denied himself.⁷ In another suggestive passage, he even writes, "For forty years, [Duchamp's] own works have been mere visiting cards which he casually leaves here and there to remind us of his watchful presence."⁸

With striking regularity, monographs cast Picasso and Duchamp as achievers of self-definition. Inner drive is invoked to explain Picasso's creativity and his restless urge to work and to express himself. The result is an image of an individual given to a self-absorbing activity and yet still open to the world, responding to its solicitations. Jaime Sabartés (1881–1968), a personal friend and witness to Picasso's career, was one of the first to write of him as an artist always true to himself. In Sabartés's account Picasso is a tenacious worker, stubborn and self-willed since childhood, but also a man alert to his own gifts and aware that he realized his innermost nature through the invention of images.⁹

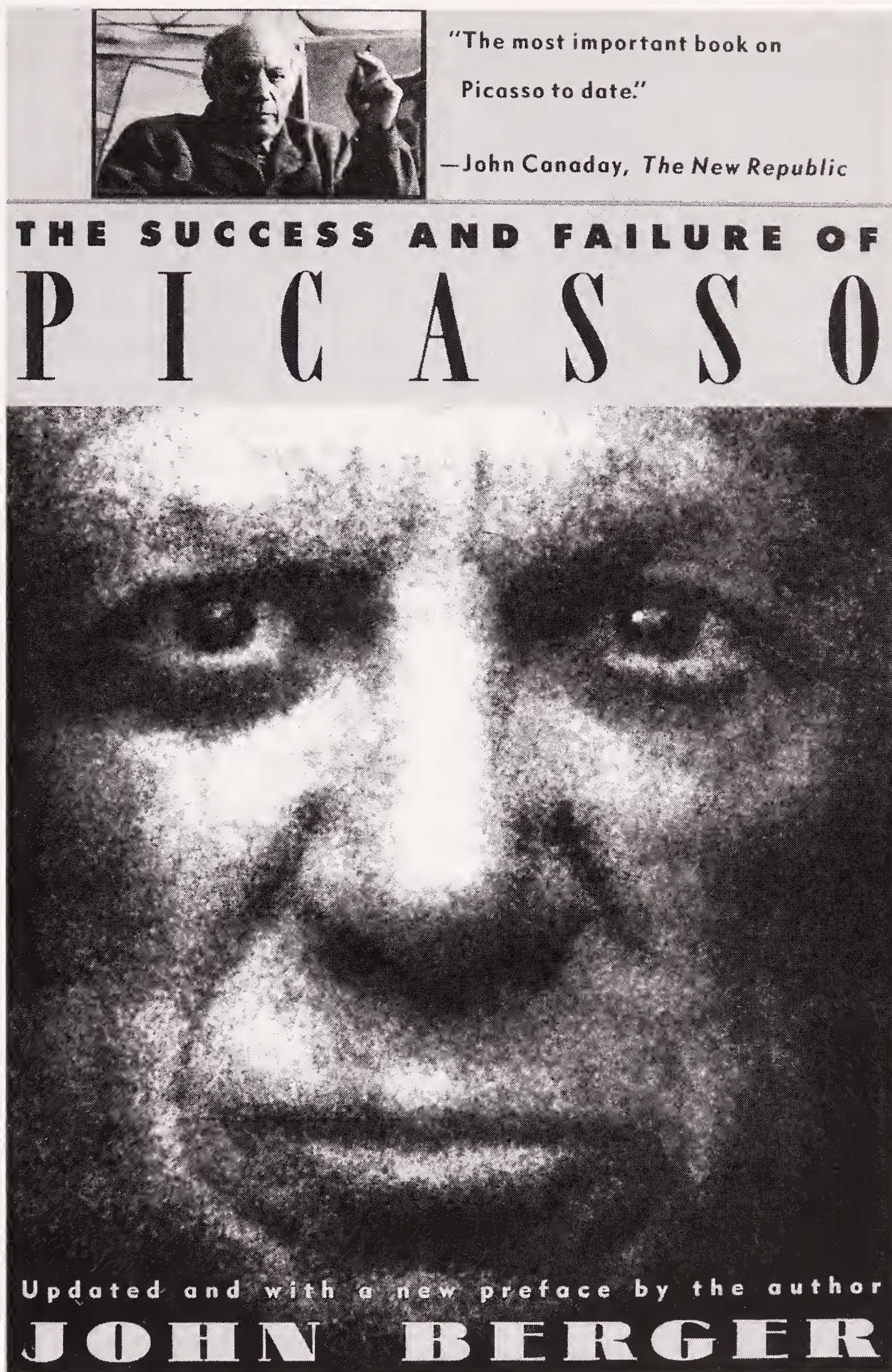
Even though Duchamp did not follow a linear course in his career, often contradicting himself and eluding definitive interpretations of his works, in the hands of monographers his life and works became a clear process of self-definition. Lebel speaks of a thread relating his different actions and claims that there were no changes in Duchamp's life, that he merely carried to extremes the resolution he had reached at the age of twenty-five, when he decided to venture beyond the limited realm of what he called "retinal" art. In Lebel's study the artist's readymades assume both theoretical and existential relevance: originating through intentional designation alone, they confirm Duchamp's continuous endeavor to advocate his absolute freedom of choice against any given artistic values and to establish his own uniqueness.¹⁰ Duchamp's quest for freedom and

self-realization is also crucial to Schwarz's interpretation. Here the conceptual cohesion ascribed to the artist's oeuvre is essential in intertwining the artistic with the existential realms and in envisioning Duchamp as a paradigmatic individual. In fact, likening the harmony of Duchamp's opus to a love poem, Schwarz suggests that, since the experience of love is a way of knowing oneself and finding freedom, the very urge for freedom must have underpinned Duchamp's philosophy of life.¹¹

These examples indicate that use of the life-and-work model enabled writers to come to terms with Picasso's and Duchamp's unprecedented sense that artistic creation is a practice embedded in life and that artworks are pivotal for people to understand themselves and the world. We see from our vantage point that these artists revived a cluster of beliefs and aspirations rooted in the nineteenth-century monograph. Picasso's and Duchamp's use of the dialectic of life and work hints at a deliberate transformation of the idea of what an artist is and does. This will be of interest later, in chapter 8, where I return to Picasso and Duchamp as "monographers" and powerful advocates of the monograph's project.

At this juncture, however, I want to look at how these two artists affected the monograph itself. The genre was used to tackle new issues concerning an artist's deliberate emphasis upon his own "nature," the meaning of a cross-gendered authorship, and the view of selfhood entailed by works that defy stylistic taxonomy. As a result, the monograph structure gave up standard modes and outlooks, either to reflect unprecedented concerns or to take into account the specific demands posed by these two artists' histories.

The Success and Failure of Picasso (1965, fig. 7.2) by John Berger evidences this kind of fluctuation. Berger analyzes the meaning of the artist's "nature" as he examines Picasso's claim that what counts is what the artist *is* rather than what he *does*. Berger remarks that, although it is rooted in the romantic belief in the genius, the implications of Picasso's claim are far more complex: not only does the artist's personality overshadow his art, but many readings of his work become appraisals of Picasso as a person. "Surprising as it may at first seem," Berger writes, "the expert view of Picasso is, in essence, very similar to the popular view. The experts may admire his art, but, whenever they can, they present Picasso as something



7.2 Cover of John Berger's *The Success and Failure of Picasso* (1965; New York, 1989).

other than—or more than—a painter.”¹² Arguing that Picasso himself encouraged this view, Berger proceeds to uncover strata of artistic, emotional, and biographical experiences that nurtured Picasso’s conviction that in art, being is more important than doing.

With Berger the monograph manifests new ambitions; it becomes a biopolitical analysis of the artist’s process of self-conception. Adopting the life-and-work dialectic and combining biographical, art historical, and sociohistorical data, Berger proposes that for nearly fifty years Picasso envisioned a more primitive way of life—an alternative to the one epitomized by modern Europe. Picasso saw himself as a “noble savage” defying the corrupt, overcivilized, and greedy bourgeois society. At a deeper level, he experienced his own creativity as a natural state and thus saw art itself as part of nature. In conversations and interviews, he cited his own “nature” as the true *raison d’être* of his art. In doing so, Picasso certainly sought to affect his public reception, but he also wanted to voice his political belief in self-liberation and to resist the institutionalized world of art. Berger shows how, despite his final defeat,¹³ Picasso strategically played “nature” against the overwhelming culture of the modern artistic apparatus and, in so doing, partially succeeded in both exploiting the art world and challenging contemporary society.

Duchamp monographs had to overcome received schemes of inquiry because they were dealing with an artist whose agency exceeded the morphology of his works. At the same time they still traced the sources, components, and outlets of this agency in the ideational processes of the art and in his life. Despite his withdrawal from the art world, Duchamp continued to involve himself in art projects and to exert an influence upon collectors, dealers, and artists. For Lebel, this activity in part explains the strikingly atypical nature of his reputation: “Whereas the ‘quality’ of his art generally adds dignity to an artist’s personality, Duchamp’s prestige as a person conferred value on his works.”¹⁴ Lebel also realizes that there was more to the dissemination of Duchamp’s agency, because its dynamics suggested a different idea of authorship as well as a different grasp of the interplay of biographical and artistic spheres. He writes that Duchamp “perhaps now and again . . . longed to be an unmitigated artist.”¹⁵ By “unmitigated” Lebel probably means an artist who, no longer begging for validation from the public, critics, and collectors,

aimed at once again becoming the author undivided and reflected in the disparity of his endeavors.

To ask who the “unmitigated” Duchamp is, monographs therefore had to follow the threads of the artist’s agency undivided by life and work. Despite the belief in the “death of the author,” which, as we shall see, began to undermine monographic discourse in the 1970s, late-twentieth-century monographers sharpened the focus on Duchamp’s individualism and the ideas of authorship and selfhood. Writing in 1994, Amelia Jones—against the received notion of Duchamp’s inactivity and anti-art attitude—speaks of the “living author.” She explores its effects by analyzing Duchamp’s life, in particular his behind-the-scenes undertakings as “agent and self-constructor,” as in the founding of the Société Anonyme in 1920, his curatorship and design of exhibitions, and the careful disposition of his works in collectors’ houses and in museums.¹⁶ Even though Jones’s book is structured by issues rather than biography, it endorses and reorients the monograph. It looks into Duchamp’s creative interplay with the public sphere and crafts a sexualized and overtly engendered identity for the artist. This view of identity is foreshadowed in Duchamp’s masquerade or performances as a woman, the fictitious persona “Rose Sélavy” to whom Duchamp himself ascribed works and letters. For Jones, Rose Sélavy denotes an androgynous figure or desire more than another independent ego. The presence of this feminine “other,” which parallels the body of the artist’s works, splits the sense of authorship in Duchamp along gender lines, disrupting “the patriarchal aim of defining sexual difference as oppositionally coded with firmly anatomically male and female bodies.”¹⁷ Jones’s book construes his oeuvre in terms of chaotic eroticism, sexual ambivalence, and authorial uncertainty, showing that Duchamp’s authorship was not necessarily authoritatively masculine and that his works unmask an insecurity of identity.

Finally, *The Private Worlds of Marcel Duchamp* (1995) by Jerrold Seigel illustrates how Duchamp’s life and works provide material for understanding the artist in connection with broader issues of modern intellectual history, such as the relations between individuality and anonymity. One of the arguments of *Private Worlds* is that there is a kinship between Duchamp’s life—with no regular income, free from work as an artist and from bourgeois encumbrances—and the world of the nineteenth-century

bohemians, in that both valued the idea of being an artist more than the actuality of it.¹⁸ Seigel regards Duchamp's shift from working to simply living as a crystallization of what bohemianism meant in modern culture: it illuminated the benefits and harms inherent in the search for individual independence at society's margin. Just as bohemian life exposed the dilemma of how to pursue individual self-liberation and realization without falling into illusory self-centeredness, so Duchamp's life and work reflect this ambivalence. On the one hand, he distanced himself from the cult of the individual and doubted that artists could ever arrive at a form of self-consciousness through their work. On the other hand, he maintained absolute freedom of creation, even identifying the history of art with the history of artists. In confronting Duchamp's idea of selfhood, *Private Worlds* sifts through the contradictions in the artist's statements, which oscillate between denouncing individual coherence and stable identity and foregrounding the artist's responsibility and intentions. Over and above these oscillations, however, Siegel concludes that Duchamp never ceased to believe that what really counts in creative activity is the artist's personality.¹⁹

Monographs on Picasso and Duchamp reveal both reiteration and change relative to the form of writing developed in the nineteenth century. Whereas the nineteenth-century monograph showed that the dialectical coupling of life and work can interlock the artistic and biographical dimensions, monographs on these twentieth-century artists tended to be more rigid in scope and structure, to the point of endorsing preconceived notions and diluting their accounts with eulogy and novelistic devices. They suggest the mobility of the model only in that writers were encouraged to disregard the requirements of the traditional life-and-work narrative and to follow unorthodox paths of study in order to respond to the novelty of the artist's stance and experience.

Moving to twentieth-century publications on old masters, one finds that here too "life" and "work" are not frozen concepts, but that signs of platitude and decadence are setting in. These monographs frequently consolidate the standard methods of art history: namely, a knowledge of the visual culture of the period, stylistic analysis, critical insights into the artworks, familiarity with previous literature on the subject, investigation

of sources, documents, and so on. Moreover, whatever their structure and scope, these books tend to perform two basic, unequivocal functions: they either confirm the reputations of already highly acclaimed artists or foster the rediscovery of relatively neglected figures.

The case of El Greco best illustrates how the life-and-work model can have a positive, groundbreaking effect on the studies of a previously little-known artist. Two monographs on this artist appeared in the first decade of the twentieth century: *El Greco* by Manuel B. Cossío (1858–1936) in 1908, and *El Greco en Toledo o nuevas investigaciones acerca de la vida y obras de Dominico Theotocopuli* by Francisco de Borja de San Román (1887–1942), two years later. While the perception of this artist showed signs of changing in the nineteenth century, these monographs made crucial contributions to the understanding of El Greco: the former by offering the first account of his life and works, and the latter by advancing factual knowledge.²⁰

Cossío's monograph reports the few ascertained facts of the life and charts the development of the painter, classifying his oeuvre according to two Italian and three Spanish phases. In Cossío's view, the art of El Greco combined his Byzantine background with Italian models and arrived, through a further assimilation of Spanish influences, at the foremost expression of the "Castilian soul." Taking up a favorite procedure among monographers, Cossío selects a painting that epitomized the activity of the artist. He views the *Burial of the Count of Orgaz* (fig. 7.3) as a compendium of the major qualities of El Greco's oeuvre: the "living embodiment of the national context in form and substance; familiar realism; contemplative mysticism; high humanistic ideals; tragic spirit; concentration and austerity; balance; nervous intensity, measure and excess; grayish and bitter intonations; a link with the past and advancement toward the future."²¹ Running more than six hundred pages, Cossío's *El Greco*, though tinted by nationalistic ideology,²² is thorough and reliable. Not only did it lay the foundations for all future scholarship on the artist, but even today it remains a source of reference. However, due to the scarcity of documents available, Cossío casts little light on the artist's biography, ironically entitling the first chapter of his monograph "What we do not know about the life of El Greco." This lacuna was soon filled in 1910 by San Román's book. The latter featured a more articulate narrative of the life, using new data discovered



7.3 El Greco, *The Burial of the Count of Orgaz* (1586). Oil on canvas, 480 x 360 cm. Church of San Tomé, Toledo. © Scala / Art Resource, New York.

by the author: about eighty-eight documents concerning, among other things, the artist's will, the inventory of his possessions, and his family.²³ Throwing fresh light on El Greco's history, San Román's monograph is an indispensable complement to Cossío's *El Greco*. Both can be regarded as landmarks of a new historiographic orientation in El Greco studies.

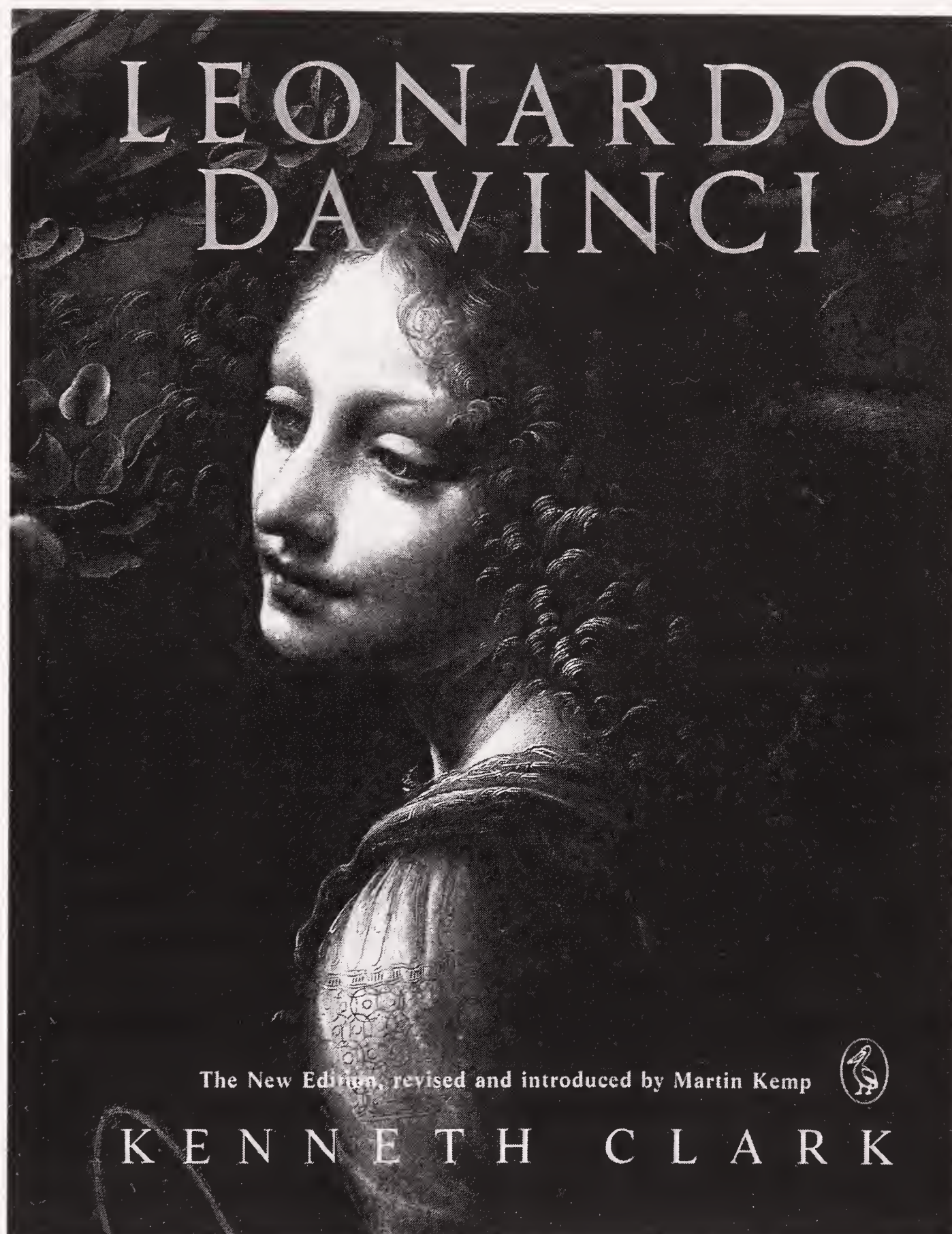
The twentieth century witnessed a recrudescence in monographs written by connoisseurs. For them, as for writers in the 1800s, focal points included issues of attribution, a full grasp of the artist's oeuvre, and the compilation of exhaustive catalogues. Accordingly, the monograph either included an annotated catalogue appended to a narrative of the life and works or featured a narrative informed by the writer's personal investigation of the artworks. In a departure from the past, however, monographs by connoisseurs were now more refined in their specific aims. But just as they gained in objectivity and expertise, they faltered in methodological freedom and imaginative powers, falling into patterns suggestive of stagnation and decline.

The monographs by John Pope-Hennessy (1913–1994) are indicative of this trend. At the start of his career, he chose fifteenth-century Sienese painting as his area of research and devoted his first monograph, published in 1937, to the then little-known Giovanni di Paolo.²⁴ Over half a century, more books followed on individual artists, such as Paolo Uccello, Fra Angelico, Raphael, Luca della Robbia, Benvenuto Cellini, and Donatello. Except for *Raphael*, which mainly deals with the image of the artist and issues of interpretation, and *Cellini*, largely a biography that incorporates data from Cellini's autobiography, these monographs bear a common stamp. Argued with confidence and often richly illustrated, they favor the appraisal of the artist's production against other more or less relevant traits of the life-and-work model. In some cases, such as *Fra Angelico* and *Paolo Uccello*, the book comprises a concise general introduction and a lengthy, elaborate catalogue. With Angelico, for instance, the introductory text is thirty-one pages long, whereas more than one hundred pages are given to plates and thorough catalogue entries. In other cases, notably *Giovanni di Paolo*, *Luca della Robbia*, and *Donatello Sculptor*, the absence of a conspicuous catalogue does not signify that biography or history predominates. On the contrary, even when maintaining the sense of a narrative, Pope-Hennessy did not lose sight of his primary goals as a

connoisseur. The overall effect is that elements such as social and intellectual context, expressiveness and subjectivity in the making, which were deemed of little relevance to connoisseurship, are slighted relative to documentary research, visual appreciation, and judgments of taste.

Thus restricted, however, the monograph dismissed a set of desiderata that had been determinant in its past metamorphoses. Instead of reinterpreting or negating the separation of artworks from the world (a tendency even of nineteenth-century monographers who held museum positions), the writing of a “life and works” now paradoxically endorsed that very separation. It served the ideology of museum conservation, with its unavoidable severance of artworks from their indigenous context. Presumably having the museum in mind (he was a curator at the Victoria and Albert, London, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), Pope-Hennessy did not interlace biographical and artistic domains. In his monographs the life of the artist provides factual evidence, illustrations to the historical period, and clues to the individual’s character, but it nonetheless is merely the empirical frame for the works. The discussion of the works, on the other hand, tends to cast them as objects belonging to an isolated realm, distant from the exuberant and unstable dimensions of existence and ruled by evaluations of taste, style, and technical mastery. Cut off from the richness of its own potentials, the monograph was put to use repressing precisely the kind of tensions previously unleashed by the complexity of its dialectical structure.

Dictated by various motivations and of course resulting in heterogeneous books, the reconstruction of the whole of an artist’s works remained a goal of many monographers of the last century. On the voluminous end of the spectrum, Charles De Tolnay wrote the first complete assessment of Michelangelo’s oeuvre, published in five volumes between 1943 and 1960.²⁵ Each volume narrates one period of the artist’s life and features a critical catalogue of the works of that period, where they are the object of thorough analysis and interpretation. On the slim side, we have *Leonardo da Vinci: An Account of His Development* by Kenneth Clark (1903–1983). First published in 1939, widely read and subjected to new editions and reprints over the years (fig. 7.4), Clark’s monograph balances scholarship, critical acumen, and literary quality. Despite the fact that it contains obsolete data and questionable opinions, it was described even in the



7.4 Cover of Kenneth Clark's *Leonardo da Vinci* (1939; New York, 1989).

1980s as a book that “remains a model for a short, unified study of a creative personality in any field of endeavour.”²⁶ Similarly, art historian Howard Hibbard in 1975 wrote a short, reliable, and very popular book for general readers on the occasion of the fifth centenary of Michelangelo’s birth.²⁷ De Tolnay’s opus on the one hand, and the slender volumes by Clark and Hibbard on the other, epitomize a common pattern in the twentieth-century monograph: the same artist, especially a top figure of Western art, could become the subject of innumerable books of different shape, content, and purpose of address.

The understanding of an artist’s life and works may demand, however, a more thoughtful investigation of the historical, philosophical, and cultural factors that shaped the artist’s identity. This critical attitude was forcefully conveyed in a 1967 study on Nicolas Poussin by Anthony Blunt (1907–1983). “My first idea,” Blunt explains, “was to produce a straightforward monograph on Poussin as a painter, but the more I studied him the more I became convinced that in order to appreciate him as an artist it is essential to understand the intellectual climate in which he worked and the ideas—religious, philosophical, or aesthetic—in which he believed and which affected his method as well as his paintings.”²⁸ A great deal of *Nicolas Poussin* discusses Stoic philosophy, early Christian theology, classical archaeology, and a number of other topics that are normally not as prominent in a monograph. Although Poussin had been called a *peintre-philosophe* since the late eighteenth century, Blunt’s monograph was unique in positing a dialectical interplay between history and individual existence, external influence and inner visual evidence, the artist’s views and letters, and the statements about him made by his contemporaries. At once specialized, passionate, and tenacious, it attempts to see the artist’s mind and agencies reflected within the works themselves and to demonstrate, finally, that Poussin’s paintings mean exactly what he intended them to mean.

The impulse to revisit the history of a highly acclaimed master is also behind Erwin Panofsky’s *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer* (1943).²⁹ Panofsky (1892–1968) speaks of a principle of oscillation informing the artist’s works and posits a cycle of sequential “short periods” in his oeuvre. He highlights absorption of outside sources and autonomous creation, stability, and reorientation. For instance, he finds a period of “intense pro-

ductivity” between 1495 and 1500, when Dürer achieved his artistic independence. During this period, Dürer produced about twelve paintings, more than twenty-five engravings, seven woodcuts, a good part of the *Large Passion*, and the *Apocalypse*—all works that, as Panofsky demonstrates, show originality in style, iconography, and expression.³⁰ Panofsky’s monograph also endeavors to illuminate Dürer’s suppressed modernity, emphasizing his awareness of the value of drawing as an autonomous means of expression. For Panofsky, Dürer’s documented esteem for his own work as draftsman and his appreciation of drawings by other artists reveal an understanding of the significance of the individual author’s hand that was unique for his time and anticipated a sensibility of later periods and cultures.³¹

Panofsky’s *Dürer* is relevant, finally, for something it does not explicitly outline but that probably operated as a latent catalyst for the writer and in the minds of its contemporary readers. An exile from Germany who had found a new home and academic context in liberal America, Panofsky had plenty of reasons to reject the notion of Dürer’s uncontaminated Germanness and to tame the monograph by amending its interest in the artist’s unique subjectivity. He was writing at a time when emphasis upon race, national character, and individual greatness and heroism had proved its devastating effects under Nazi dictatorship. His account of Dürer shows that the Renaissance master combined Italian and German art, and concerned himself with the particular as well as the universal. In short, Dürer was an open-minded individual, striving to achieve harmony within himself and with others, who did not conform to the image of the eternal German type cultivated by the ideology of totalitarianism.

Two relatively recent books on Gustave Courbet break with the monograph’s established form, introducing new perspectives of study while suggestively reinventing the understanding of an artist’s life and works. Although neither of these books qualifies as a monograph proper, they indicate that one may dispense with some of the basic features and strategies of the monograph while still rescuing its purposes from latency.

Timothy J. Clark’s *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (1973) examines only a limited span of the artist’s life and

works. It interprets the dialectic of art and politics in mid-nineteenth-century France, investigates Courbet in both public and private, and discloses the complex dynamics of the creation and reception of some of his most revolutionary paintings. At the same time it addresses issues rooted in the monograph's theory and history, such as the interaction between individual and historical agencies, and between the works and the world at large. *Image of the People* does not focus exclusively on expressiveness and self-formation: its perspective on who Courbet is and becomes via artistic creation is broader. It opens by seizing the elements of continuity and rupture among the artist, the work, and the sociohistorical context, as well as the invisible fabric that holds the three of them together.

Clark intends "to discover what concrete transactions are hidden behind the mechanical image of 'reflection,' to know *how* 'background' becomes 'foreground'; instead of analogy between form and content, to discover the network of real, complex relations between the two."³² To this end, just as the artwork must be liberated from its insularity, and its historical significance must be understood as dependent upon its production and reception, so must the artist be seen as the medium of internal and external forces that intersect with personality, visual culture, and the social domain. Clark maintains that it is the artist who makes the encounter with history possible. Understanding this encounter demands that one connects the art with those latent and yet knowable conditions that make up a whole (i.e., experiential, social, and political), including the artwork and the artist himself. It thus becomes possible to appreciate how and why art not only partakes of a historical process but may itself transform history.³³

Image of the People attempts, for instance, to discover why early in his career Courbet cultivated the confusion between his art and life.³⁴ Clark argues that confusion was instrumental to Courbet, who in 1850 chose the life of a bohemian in order to remain in Paris but was never entirely absorbed in that life. This shifting of identities is symptomatic of his desire for independence. It recurs in his outlook and behavior, and in his paintings and self-portraits: they evince a Courbet enmeshed in the life of Parisian bohemia as well as a Courbet attached to the rural imagery of his native Ornans.

Initially, Clark tells us, Courbet confronted the dramatic events of the 1848 revolution as a spectator. Gradually, however, he devised a politics

of his own. Clark views Courbet's participation in the 1848 Salon as a "farewell to the past" and argues that the paintings he submitted to the 1849 Salon, in juxtaposing the worlds of Ornans and bohemia, reveal another kind of orientation. In fact "the list for the 1849 Salon reflects the biography without much distortion";³⁵ it points to a situation, artistic and personal, of confrontation between town and country. This personal and historical setting enlightens who Courbet was in September 1849, when he returned to Ornans to paint the three epitomes of nineteenth-century realism: *Stonebreakers* (1849), *Burial at Ornans* (1849–1850), and *Peasants of Flagey Returning from the Fair* (c. 1855).

Examining *Burial at Ornans* (fig. 7.5), Clark focuses on how politically dangerous it was in 1851 (the year of its exhibition) to show workers alongside the bourgeois of provincial towns. Exploiting high art to revive popular imagery and to represent rural society in its alarming disunity of class, the painting combines art and politics. Clark demonstrates how in the *Burial*, Courbet's imagery discloses contradictions that affected its conception and sociohistorical context. The reconstruction of such an "alterity," which involves a plurality of levels ranging from the status of art and art criticism to class formation in mid-nineteenth-century France, allows Clark to draw a full circle encompassing the genesis and the reception of the *Burial*. For Clark, the painting disturbed the Parisian bourgeoisie because it deprived them of their mythical past in the countryside.³⁶ As he clarifies early on, the *Burial* and its two companion pictures are historical in a "double sense": they conjure up rural society at a tense moment in its history, and they also expose the history of Courbet's family: "They describe, in an almost secret manner, the family's ambivalent situation, their status between peasantry and rural bourgeoisie."³⁷ Courbet's creation of political works is thus inextricable from his evolving sense of identity, which engages both the artist and his public. As Clark concludes of the *Burial*: "This was painting that disturbed an iceberg of theories and emotions; it was history painting, not of other's people history, but of one's own."³⁸

Courbet's Realism (1990) by Michael Fried, the second case worthy of notice here, is not exhaustive in its discussion of the artist's life and works, nor is it a study of biography and history proper. Nonetheless, it proceeds in chronological fashion, addresses a good part of Courbet's production, and proposes guidelines valid for his whole oeuvre. More relevant still,



7.5 Gustave Courbet, *Burial at Ornans* (1849). Oil on canvas, 315 x 668 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

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while departing from the received form of the monograph, *Courbet's Realism* recasts aspirations fundamental to its model: the core belief in a correlation between artist and work as well as the intuition of the artwork as embodiment of a presence.

Crucial to Fried's book is the argument that Courbet unconsciously transposed himself among his painted figures. As Fried puts it, "Courbet's paintings are powerfully expressive of having been made by an embodied being engaged in a particular activity: the production of those very paintings."³⁹ Fried's thesis, partially inspired by phenomenological theorists such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty, is corroborated by continuous analyses of the artist's oeuvre.

Courbet's early self-portraits, for Fried, instance a congruence, unprecedented in Western painting, between sitter and beholder. Since the first beholder was evidently the artist himself, this congruence encourages us to take the images not simply as depictions of outward appearance and personality but also as mediums of Courbet's drive to materialize in



7.6 Gustave Courbet, *The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory* (1855). Oil on canvas, 361 x 598 cm.

Musée d'Orsay, Paris. © Scala / Art Resource, New York.

painting his preoccupation with his own physical being. The same applies to images that do not qualify as self-portraits. The four figures of *After Dinner at Ornans* of 1848–1849 were adapted from or foreshadowed by previous self-portraits.⁴⁰ In the *Stonebreakers* (1849), moreover, the two figures may be seen as representing the painter-beholder's right and left hands.⁴¹ Finally, concentrating on the central group arranged around Courbet's self-portrait at his easel in *The Painter's Studio* of 1855 (fig. 7.6), Fried expounds on the special space of vision created by the mechanism of the painter-beholder within the painting. He indicates that, just as the figure of Courbet seems "immersed" in the landscape visible in the painting on the easel, which shows a waterfall in the foreground and seems to go beyond the canvas to encompass the seated artist, so the figure of the model suggests an extension of the very landscape Courbet is painting.⁴²

Along with conferring new meanings on the unity of artist and work, *Courbet's Realism* reinterprets the monograph's view of an irreducible analogy between artistic and organic dimensions. The paradigm of the oeuvre originally sustained this analogy by creating a morphology of the identity, a plan of organization that melds the outward aspects and inner forces of an artist's works, regarding them as the outcome of a *Bildung*, an expressive drive leading individuals to realize their intrinsic nature. In Fried's book the analogy is instead expounded in terms of a bodily compulsion exerted upon work after work, and reflected visually, thematically, and formally. Each image becomes the trace of an almost corporeal merging of the artist within the materiality of his practice. The mutating whole of the oeuvre emerges because the mechanism of the painter-beholder within the works provides a unifying thread in Courbet's production, its recurrent anthropocentric quality. Even though it has little to do with *Bildung* and self-realization, and bears no similarities to the epiphanies of an artistic personality, Fried's claim that Courbet sought to express his own sense of embodiment endows images with the faculty of engendering and illuminating a presence, and reignites the imaginary side of the life-and-work model. In fact, in a section of his book called "Courbet and Politics," Fried interestingly reads Courbet's desired relation to his paintings as an archetype of the perfect reciprocity between production and consumption that in Karl Marx's theory defines non-alienated labor.⁴³

Various twentieth-century books, such as these on Picasso, Duchamp, and Courbet, point to a breaking up of the monograph's standard form in texts that nevertheless absorb and further its discourse. Yet, without changing its form, the monograph was able to renew itself by radically dismissing its traditional focus on male artists and becoming instead a means for reclaiming the long-repressed histories of female artists. During the second half of the twentieth century, monographs on female artists proliferated in tandem with the methodological shifts encouraged by feminist theories in art history. One such example is Mary Garrard's *Artemisia Gentileschi: The Image of the Female Hero in Italian Baroque Art* (1989). Although in chapter 8 I will discuss feminism as a driving force in what I call the transfigurations of the monograph project, it is important to note here

that the model was revitalized in books such as Garrard's not because they revised its structure but precisely because their subjects were women.

As it marks a shift in scholarly discussions of Artemisia's painting by ingeniously restoring beliefs and procedures rooted in the monograph tradition, Garrard's book engages the links between imagery and identity. The rape of Artemisia by Agostino Tassi in 1611—well documented from legal testimony by Artemisia's father, Orazio Gentileschi, against his fellow painter and associate Tassi—is discussed as a traumatic episode in the artist's life. The rape points to a contemporary culture of sexual and moral coarseness, but it is also key to understanding Artemisia as a painter and as a woman. In retrospect, her works are critically appealing in that they express and transform the situation of a female artist animated by feelings of rage and visions of emancipation.

Garrard is not primarily interested in issues of connoisseurship (though she sometimes proposes attributions), nor does she infer an artistic personality from the artworks alone. She focuses on the explicit conflation of life and works: on the confluence of private, historical, and art historical elements that made what Artemisia did a dynamic mixture of painting, character, and experience. This approach was unprecedented in the histories of both art and female consciousness. For Garrard, "Within a vigorous style that is not susceptible to gender stereotyping, Artemisia Gentileschi conveyed an intense generic identification with women, whose subterranean struggles against men's dominance are given lucid visual form. In Gentileschi's paintings, women are convincingly protagonists and courageous heroes, perhaps for the first time in art."⁴⁴ Though passionate in its rediscovery of the history of a woman, painter, and proto-feminist, Garrard's monograph does not endorse the sensationalized perception of Artemisia that has lately colored our image of her.⁴⁵

Demonstrating the artist's innovative interpretation of subjects that are freighted with artistic, iconographical, theological, and literary connotations, Garrard both strengthens her case about Artemisia's originality and uses the dialectic of life and work to study the artist's production. Garrard claims that the painter identified with the female protagonists of her paintings and charged them with personal meanings, and cites as an example the theme of Judith and Holofernes that recurs in Artemisia's work. In the Uffizi *Judith and Holofernes* (fig. 7.7), Garrard writes, "Artemisia



7.7 Artemisia Gentileschi, *Judith and Holofernes* (c. 1620). Oil on canvas, 199 x 162.5 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. © Scala / Art Resource, New York.

was able not simply to carry out psychic vengeance against her sexual oppressor, but also to justify rebellious, antisocial instincts.” Creation, that is, blurs the gap between life and art and provides a vehicle of cathartic expression and imagined action in the world. It propels the visualization of states of being and becoming that enact a representation of gender. For Garrard, “Artemisia appears to have drawn personal courage from her subject, to go further than any woman had ever gone—or would go, before the twentieth century—in depicting a confrontation of the sexes from a female point of view.”⁴⁶

Reasons for Its Decline

We could explore many other cases of reiteration and changes in the monograph’s history. However, to clarify its status after the nineteenth century, especially the sense and destiny of its project, we must confront the reasons it decreased in relevance during the twentieth century. I have already hinted at some of these reasons, but the monograph’s effacement has deep implications for the practice of art history and the very understanding of human subjectivity.

During the twentieth century, the life-and-work model was confounded in two major ways. First, as monographs were published with increasing frequency, people came to believe that they knew exactly what a monograph was. Relegated to passive reiteration, the monograph seemed to be a tested scheme of analysis too obvious to call for further adaptations and rethinking of its potentialities. The second problem has theoretical sources and implications: it stems from a shift of priorities within the discipline of art history and its attempts to establish its credentials as an objective field of study, echoing a philosophical disaffection with the metaphysics of the human subject. In this case, the model’s conceptual nature and its utopian impulse were undermined by views and methods that eclipsed the horizon of desire and knowledge inaugurated by the writing of an artist’s life and works.

The proliferation of books devoted to single artists risked turning the monograph into a form dictated by habit while uncritically maintaining

its conceptual model. Simultaneously the monograph became the most basic, institutionalized, and homogenized way of studying the visual arts. Underlying both phenomena was what may be called a “presumption” of knowledge: namely, the assumption that the monograph, its methods and ideas, structure and scope, aspirations and potentials, were so well established and familiar that they needed little or no elaboration, and indeed could function as the tacit support for a series of undertakings. This assumption is now well entrenched.

In the preface to his *Andrea Mantegna* (1901), Paul Kristeller argues that the monograph’s focus on the individual allowed it to easily lose track of the art and culture of a period. The monograph functioned with artists of “extreme genius” because, epitomizing entire epochs in their own development, they not only “meet the great problems of human existence with a new interrogation” but also lived a life that “is in itself a work of art, and excites our interest beyond the sphere of the actual performances.”⁴⁷ For Kristeller, Mantegna belonged to this category of artists. A century later, it is easy to counter that artists of many different kinds may be perceived in the same light. What bears noticing is that Kristeller’s line of argument—indeed the very urge to have an argument—became less and less necessary during the following decades. From about the mid-twentieth-century onward, virtually any artist who had left behind a trail of records appeared to be a worthy candidate for a life-and-works study.⁴⁸ Understandably this trend reflected the broadening territory of art historical research, rediscoveries in taste, and shifts of aesthetic criteria, as well as the legitimate need to pay attention to artists outside the traditional Western canon.

The ensuing increase of publications greatly added to knowledge about many artists of different countries and historical periods, but it also contributed to a progressive flattening of the monograph, both as a scholarly endeavor and as a text aimed at a broad readership. In writing this popular form, the monographers tended to think of their mission as self-evident; they exploited the form to celebrate the lives and personalities of the artists while failing to pursue a more sober evaluation of their works. And since books of this kind were profitable, the publishing industry promoted the genre by producing glamorous, lavishly illustrated monographs. Moreover, multivolume series of monographs about past and

contemporary artists—a nineteenth-century innovation—remained in vogue throughout the new century, adopting handy guises and featuring texts that introduced the life and works of an artist to a wide audience.⁴⁹

What supported the monograph's persistence was the prospect of throwing fresh light upon known or, even better, unknown artists, of either revisioning received histories or producing the "first" account of an artist's life and works. The implications of the dialectic of the model, its powerful imaginary strength, faded into the background or were left unquestioned. At the same time that it served heterogeneous cases, the life-and-work model paradoxically became ever more homogeneous in its structure: a traditional, authoritative scheme of inquiry that accommodated itself to almost any new subject.

By the second half of the twentieth century the monograph came to be recognized as the most elementary form of text in academic art history—the kind favored either by students writing a thesis or dissertation or by art historians at the start of their professional careers. In 1969, Giulio Carlo Argan criticized the limitations of the model, lamenting its pervasive infiltration of the art historical community.⁵⁰ At that point, the writing of a monograph must have seemed a drudgery of set tasks: reconstructing the artist's life, traveling to see the original artworks, critically analyzing the oeuvre (with or without a catalogue), studying the sources, searching out (new) documents, and so on. Moreover, because it was considered especially rewarding, both intellectually and financially, to write about previously unknown artists, the monograph tended to exhaust its critical appeal as soon as it was believed that an artist's life and works had been "captured."

The monograph's troubles do not end here. Just as its construct fell into the commonplace, so in function it appeared to be little more than an adjunct of commerce. As the dynamic of commodification became increasingly pervasive during the twentieth century, the ties among art, taste, and money were further strengthened. Art dealers and collectors disdained anonymous artworks, and the notoriety of individual authors, if not their glamorous mythification, became essential factors in their marketability. Even today, with striking regularity, prices levitate as soon as a work on sale can safely be ascribed to an acclaimed master. In this scenario, to write an artist's life and works is an ambiguous act, particularly

when it concentrates on connoisseurship and fails to address the historical conditions of artistic production or the social role of artworks and artists. Accentuating its study of authorship and conflating with the catalogue genre, the monograph may serve only the commercial apparatus of art, feeding it with data and arguments useful to sustain the dealers' prices. Because they tackle problems of attribution and assess artists' oeuvres, monographers can epitomize a caste of experts whose verdicts on a work's authenticity end up determining both its place in the history of art and its value in the art market. This is not to say that they necessarily neglect the ethics of scholarship, or that the monograph makes the world of art and art history coincide with that of the market. However, perhaps more than any other kind of art writing, the monograph may perpetuate beliefs and procedures that, regardless of their originary significance and critical appeal, often operate today as mere validations within the art market's structure.⁵¹

But if the pretense of knowing what a monograph is led to rigid reiteration, and if its potential alliance with the art market undermined its ethical program, then the monograph's decline is probably even more challenging when it touches the dialectical nub of the model, the meanings and finalities of its theoretical stance and utopian imaginary.

This sense of weakening characterizes some of the practices that punctuated the art historical consciousness of the twentieth century. In fact, as the discipline of art history consolidated itself, discovered new priorities, and shifted its methods over the last century, it at various times either dispensed with or openly challenged the monographic discourse. Influential trends in the discipline, concerned with formalism and the nature of representation, social history and structuralism, brought into play other kinds of questions and answers.

Three often interrelated patterns deserve attention here: (1) the adoption of totalizing methods that granted the objectivity of artistic phenomena and diminished the attention to artistic subjectivity; (2) a progressive distrust for the idea of expressiveness; and (3) a more or less deliberate resistance to asking "who" questions before the artworks.

A decisive step toward adopting totalizing methods and regarding art as a supraindividual category was taken in Heinrich Wölfflin's *Principles of*

Art History (*Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*) of 1915, a book that affected generations of art historians. Here Wölfflin tries to do nothing less than isolate universal visual forms and periodical schemes of representation or styles: their intrinsic causation, recurring problems, and evolutionary rules. Wölfflin's plan is to offer a generative grammar of artistic vision and stylistic mutations. Abandoning classificatory notions of periods such as "Renaissance" and "baroque," the plan finds its essentials in the famous five binary oppositions (linear versus painterly; plane versus recession; closed versus open form; unity versus multiplicity; clearness versus unclearness) with which Wölfflin synthesizes the dynamics of all forms of art. It is telling that in the first edition Wölfflin called for an "art history without names," one that would finally focus on the history of seeing and forms and leave behind traditional concerns with individual authors. The call provoked objections, and so Wölfflin, in the 1922 edition, no longer speaks of an "art history without names" but claims that his views do not degrade individual artists.⁵² Despite these emendations, Wölfflin's "principles" effected a substantial reorientation in art studies, one in which the history of art is understood as ultimately ruled by a system of impersonal laws of seeing and formal development.⁵³

The idea of art as a supraindividual structure plays a decisive role in another book that, like Wölfflin's *Principles*, became a landmark of the history of art history: *Art and Illusion* (1960) by Ernst H. Gombrich.⁵⁴ In it Gombrich (1909–2001) regards as a source of strength and freedom, rather than of weakness and restriction, the fact that artists operate within certain received schemata, need a pictorial vocabulary, and have a limited spectrum of possibilities to refine the field of representation. For Gombrich, art attains meaning only in relation to other art: whatever meets the eye in an image or object—be it a line, a color, or a form—does not mean or express something in and of itself, still less by virtue of a supposed intention of its maker; rather, it means or expresses something in relation to other lines, colors, forms, and to the reality of the conditions within which the image comes to fruition.

During the second half of the twentieth century, social historians also investigated art within a supraindividual perspective. Their methods increased the trust in determinist theories that take objective agencies as the fuel of artistic phenomena. One of the books that best conveyed the

confluence of Marxism and social history of art is *Art History and Class Struggle* (*Histoire de l'art et lutte de classes*) of 1973 by Nicos Hadjinicolaou, which discusses the monograph at some length.⁵⁵ Hadjinicolaou calls the monograph the “thorny” problem of art history: by aligning art history with the history of artists, the model perpetuates the ideology of bourgeois individualism and precludes any approach based on historical materialism. The monograph can function only when it studies the artist’s cultural and sociohistorical conditions—when it concerns artists whose work mediated and transformed those conditions. But even here there may be flaws, for an account of the life and works does not necessarily illuminate the subject matter of art history, which Hadjinicolaou identifies with visual ideologies. To be efficacious, the analysis of visual ideologies (and the monograph itself) cannot stop at the artist. It ought to investigate the artworks, the style of the period, and the web of material relationships, artistic and nonartistic, determining what an artist does. In other words, not only do the agencies of the artistic production overrun the subjective domain, but capturing the “being” of the artist and the artist’s exposure to being also falls outside of the art historical scope.

Finally, a sharp criticism of biography’s shortcomings along with the awareness of the impersonal forces that govern human production characterize an influential book written in another cultural context: *The Shape of Time* (1962) by George Kubler (1912–1996). This book launched the radical proposal of extending the concept of art to all human-made things and of devising new principles of classification, description, and interpretation to account for historical changes and duration. Kubler could not subscribe to what was by then the widespread view of art studies molded upon discussions of meaning, symbolism, and expression. He felt that these discussions should be superseded by concerns with morphology and statistics, making room for inquiries into stylistic disjunctions and reiterations. Kubler hypothesizes that it is possible to survey the physical remains of human presences in time and to draw out of the perception of continuity and discontinuity a system of forms underpinning the occurrence of prime objects and replicas, series and sequences, invention and variation, slow and fast happenings.

Kubler’s hypothesis goes hand in hand with the recognition that the rooted association between artistic production and the span of an artist’s

life cannot offer a reliable criterion of investigation. Only by conflating the spatial and temporal domains can a “history of things” emerge and thus identify the shapes that tell us about time and passages in time. While biography is a “provisional way of scanning artistic substance,” the historian of things must try to reconstruct durations that extend through all individual experience. Kubler speaks of formal sequences linking objects of various periods, whose potentialities are not exhausted by the intervention of a single artist. “Sequence classing,” he contends, “allows us to bridge the gap between biography and the history of style with a conception less protean than biological or dialectic theories of dynamics of style, and more powerfully descriptive than biography.”⁵⁶ Equally evident for Kubler, the artist is not a free agent: prior events matter more than temperament, and they bind artists to a given position within the system of forms.⁵⁷ Kubler concludes that “not biography nor the idea of style nor again the analysis of meaning confronts the whole issue now raised by the historical study of things.”⁵⁸ This study goes beyond the life-and-work model; it sets about to discover a universe of forms whose dynamics and reasons to be are indifferent to the realm of the singular existent.

On the tendency to criticize expressiveness, Wölfflin again provides a reference point. In his *Principles*, artworks do not depend upon a will to express something, nor can they be appreciated for their contents alone. Art history should explore modes of seeing and optical possibilities, and reveal artistic aims and stylistic trends as the outcome of a specific epoch, which in turn epitomizes certain available means of representation and a restricted number of physiological and psychological conditions shaping the making of art. Thus, an overall, totalizing structure is taken to precede and affect the creative process. Wölfflin maintains that “the course of the development of art . . . cannot be simply reduced to a series of separate points. Individuals fall into larger groups . . . to the personal style must be added *the style of the school, the country, the race.*”⁵⁹ Just as personal styles cannot be classed without considering the presence of a general style, so focusing on the artist’s “temperament” does not help to determine the reason-to-be of an artwork or the greatness of the art.⁶⁰

In Gombrich’s *Art and Illusion* as well, we encounter the notion that “if art were only, or mainly, an expression of personal vision, there could be no history of art.”⁶¹ Especially noteworthy is Gombrich’s argument

that the viewer plays a determinant role in sustaining the process of recognition in the visual arts. “The Beholder’s Share” is the title of one of the most original parts of *Art and Illusion*.⁶² Discussing the viewer’s active share in the interpretation of art, Gombrich dispels the notion that the represented image has intrinsic value while also implicitly casting doubt on one of the monograph’s guidelines: that art materializes states of being inextricable from a sense of identity in the making. Far from being a creation of the artist alone, the image is the outcome of a collaboration between maker and user. The latter, even if unconsciously, collaborates with the artist in overcoming the limitations of the pictorial medium (its flatness, stillness, etc.) and makes imitation and recognition possible by activating mechanisms of perception, adjustment, and projection that convert a painted surface into a likeness of the world.

Certain methods key to twentieth-century art history thus produced a gap between the aspirations and strategies of the study of art and those of contemporary uses of the monograph and the previous development of its conceptual model. More significant still, the monographic discourse lost intelligibility as the “who” question—so fundamental to the life-and-work model—was progressively and systematically removed from art studies. Besides being perceived as secondary or methodologically unsound by many art historians, this question began to pose difficulties of a theoretical nature because it conjugated the study of art with an exploration of subjectivity and identity. In fact, this undertaking began to inspire both theoretical mistrust and discontent.

That a supraindividual impetus animated twentieth-century art history is confirmed by subsequent developments of the discipline. In the 1970s the pendulum had clearly swung toward determinist and impersonal methods when, as structuralism and poststructuralism impacted the human sciences, art historians imported the tenets of semiotics into their field. These principles allowed them to look at artworks as systems of signs where the polysemy of the signifiers overflows the realm of the signified and defies attempts to determine once and for all the meaning of an artwork. Consequently, art historians cultivated the assumption that an approach informed by semiotics, amending the inadequacies of formalism and historicism, could emancipate art history from obsolete schemes. If art could be proven a transindividual phenomenon ruled by the free

play of the signifier, then its interpretation must do without anthropocentric notions and views of creativity (intentions, expression, experience, biography). Especially in the Anglo-American context, the influence of Roland Barthes (1915–1980) and Michel Foucault (1926–1984), two French thinkers who reinterpreted the structuralist paradigm, was felt at least through early 1990s. Barthes and Foucault had each written an essay challenging the idea of authorship: respectively “The Death of the Author” (1968) and “What Is an Author?” (1969).⁶³ Even though they did not refer to the visual arts, these seminal essays soon became references for art critics and art historians.⁶⁴ They signaled, in philosophy and in its ancillary disciplines, the necessary epochal demise of the whole metaphysics of the human subject that had founded Western culture.

The decline of the monograph during the twentieth century involves therefore its form as well as its conceptual model. While the form persisted, the conceptual model lost fluency or clashed with the introduction of new ways of looking at the artistic phenomena. In fact, both formally and conceptually, the writing of an artist’s life and works was quite unfit to meet the expectations of many specialized art historians. Art history in this period not only broadened its approaches and defined their boundaries, but it also sought to enhance the idea that mediums are charged with meanings and that vision denotes inventiveness and changing perceptions as well as historical and cultural situations. To art historians and critics receptive to these messages, the study of an individual artist increasingly appeared as a limiting task that frustrated their methodological and intellectual ambitions. In addition, such a study arguably presented them with ethical, political, and ideological problems because it was tainted with the interests of the art market and was strongly inclined to privilege the artist’s subjectivity over the works themselves. Conversely, the enterprise of writing monographs meant inserting fresh data and interpretations into a tired vessel.

In sum, if the monograph held its place in the literature of art, it did so mostly by habituated applications. Surviving as a stale construct, it often did nothing but simulate its originary discoveries, desires, and motivating ideals, tinting the account of life and works with fictional overtones, and aggrandizing the artist. The presumption of knowing what a monograph is paralleled the contemporary creation of a neat divide among

different disciplines. Along with losing its *sui generis* methodological spectrum, the monograph thus ceased to attend to the singular existent, an attestation of a shaky, unaccountable plan of existence that was best repressed, if not banned, in the study of the visual arts as it strove to establish itself on a firmer basis than before.

The fluctuations of the twentieth-century monograph nevertheless suggest that the interplay of life and works could still be a rewarding source for unprecedented insights and knowledge. Here previous orientations of the monograph were advanced as well as changed partially or even totally. Blunt's *Poussin* exemplifies, for instance, how certain procedures inherited from nineteenth-century authors not only maintained their critical appeal but could also be pushed further to reveal a new force. Garrard's *Artemisia* maintains the received narrative of life and works while at the same time defying the male hegemony of the model. In other cases, some of the motifs germane to the monograph's history regenerate themselves in publications whose outlook and purpose do not immediately remind one of the standard writing of an artist's life and works, such as in the books of T. J. Clark, Fried, Berger, Jones, and Seigel. Conceptual kinship, however, indicates a process of continuity as well as the likelihood that the monograph's understanding of art and artists may be channeled via fragments and undergo dissemination and further transformations. Despite their evident differences, these books share a common situation in which the structures of the received form of writing disintegrate, sometimes disappearing entirely. Yet each new book recreates precisely a cluster of principles and methods that were paramount to the advent of the monograph genre.

But it would be useless, I think, to try to tally up the fluctuations and decline, renewal and reiteration, as if one could determine where, when, and in what capacities the monograph is dead or alive. In monitoring the phases of well-being or decay experienced by the monograph during the twentieth century, I have shown that there is a gap between recent and historical developments of the monograph as well as between its theoretical stance and some of the pivotal trends of art historical thought. Whereas the nineteenth century saw the unfolding of methods and visions prompted by the writing of an artist's life and works, the ensuing

century brought about a series of discontinuities and collapses. From then onward, despite evidence to the contrary and the remarkable books on individual artists that have been published, the life-and-work model has been separated from its potential for desire and knowledge.

However, what concerns me is not so much the monograph as a form but its special construction of art and artists vis-à-vis existence: the sense and destiny of what I have defined as the monograph's project. For this reason, a whole set of questions still lies ahead. Given that the form of the monograph has probably exhausted its reason to be and that its ideas are now opaque or erased, what can we gather about its project? What about its imagination and conceptions, the radically utopian stance that the model so cogently manifested in the nineteenth century? Are they simply the remains of a past estranged from us? I believe that they still touch and affect us and that revelation may lie within and beyond vacancy. But in order to answer these questions it is not enough to point to those twentieth-century monographs that attest to a degree of strength and cultural fluency of the life-and-work model. Nor would it suffice to counterpoise the model's current state of uncertainty with a nostalgic vision of its prodigious past. We must look elsewhere. And this is one of the aims of the concluding chapter.

Reconsidering the Project

8

Present Prospects

Both the degradation of its discourse and the formal stagnation of the monograph during the twentieth century render unclear whether and to what extent the life-and-work model belongs to the fabric of our present, and whether it can contribute to our own self-understanding. Yet my argument in this book is that the past of the monograph is intimately linked with the present because of mechanisms of recognition and recollection as well as through processes of recreation and by the discovery of blanks in memory. The history that I have reconstructed thus far is a compound of past and present forces, a condensation of two voices. But the review of the present prospects of the life-and-work model demands a further and final act of self-comprehension. It can help clarify another moment of the model—our own moment—with its discontinuities and uncertainty, but it can also identify the ideas that allow us to see the past in the present as well as the present in the past.

This undertaking requires three steps. First, I will look beyond the monograph proper to find other trajectories of continuity and regeneration, identifying what binds the stance of some thinkers and artists of the twentieth century to the life-and-work model. Second, through this inquiry I will show that the present is increasingly receptive to the monograph's endeavor to construe art as existence, even while its modes of writing have become exhausted. As a third and final move, I will try to construe where we stand and where we may be heading.

Avenues of Transfiguration

From Heinrich Wölfflin's call for an "art history without names" to Roland Barthes's celebrated "death of the author," supraindividual patterns of inquiry in the history of art, influential as they were, did not kill off the ideas at the core of the life-and-work model. This is not simply because monographs were still written, published, and marketed. Rather, throughout the twentieth century those ideas resonated and metamorphosed through means outside the writing of monographic studies. In the process the monograph's understanding of artists and artworks was transfigured.

Writings informed by feminist thought and theories of gender have constituted a powerful rehearsal of the monograph ideas. Feminism, as a worldview and as politics, has brought about a breakthrough in the literature of art since the 1960s.¹ As Linda Nochlin queried in a pioneering text of 1971: "Why have there been no great women artists?" Back then it seemed legitimate to debunk what appeared to be the most traditional beliefs and modes of address in the literature of art—namely, ideas such as those of genius, expression, and personality as well as the received patterns of the monograph and the catalogue raisonné.² But feminism, in endorsing supraindividual methods, posed a new set of problems and provoked new discussion. How could a feminist vocation fulfill itself without meditating on the interconnections of human agency and artistic creation? Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard voiced a widely felt concern when they remarked in 1992, "The death of the author as subjective agent . . . may lead only to the death of feminism as an agent of political—or, indeed, art-historical—change."³ If one declares authorship dead and promotes the primacy of objective conditions over subjective autonomy, if one maintains that individuals are caught in a web of impersonal mechanisms of signification oblivious to their lives, then one negates the emancipatory enterprise of feminism, its ethical and political struggle to vindicate womanhood as an experience affecting both artistic practice and theory. Seeking solutions to this knot, writers have refined their understanding of the artistic enterprise and sharpened their awareness of the individual subject, both as artist and as gendered identity. In this way,

feminism has demonstrated that art studies can achieve dynamic visions of who artists are and what they do, regard authorship as a construct dependent on the maker as well as the user of art, and even convey new views through the writing of the monograph.⁴

In fact, the work of feminist writers constitutes one of the first and most efficacious attempts to counterbalance the influence of those totalizing perspectives that, throughout the twentieth century, named external, impersonal agencies as the chief propellant of artistic phenomena. Feminist practice echoes the monograph's determination to capture identities in the making. Just as the monograph had explored artworks as remainders of singularity and someoneness, so female self-consciousness, in seeking to grasp its own multiple realities, affected the understanding of art when feminists proposed to specify the manifold positions that gendered individuals take or reflect through artistic creation. Feminist politics and ethics challenge art history and criticism with "who" questions regarding works of art. As in the monograph, the "who" now alludes to the unaccountable dimension of existence, to its capacity to subvert any supposition of essence. It is where the feminine is inscribed and revealed in terms of difference, alterity, and excess relative to given art historical, historical, and cultural conditions.

Theorizations of gender also lead to envisioning identity and womanhood as separate from assumptions of static, unitary concepts of subjectivity. In *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), Judith Butler calls for the dismissal of gender as a category of essence. Weary of a brand of feminism still claiming that women are a group with common characteristics and interests separate from those of men, Butler argues that there is no such a thing as a gender core: gender is not a fixed attribute in a person but rather a fluid variable that may shift and change in different contexts and times. For Butler, questioning the received notion that a person bears either male or female identities helps to clear the path toward new unrestrained possibilities of being for individuals. *Gender Trouble* does not explicitly address the artistic domain, but it is nonetheless permeated by the belief in creativity and agency as forces activated in and through the forms of language that engender who one is. Such a belief may animate Butler's pivotal argument that "there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performa-

tively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results.”⁵ Butler’s idea of a subjectivity without ground, freed from the constraints of fixed categories of sex and personhood, finds some of its main qualifications in the mobile terrain of expression, performance, and generation. The need to conceptualize a subject as an event, the outcome of movement rather than permanence, brings us back to issues that are central in this book. It tells us that, since the advent of feminism in the late 1960s and through the progressive refinement of theories of gender, an understanding of both identity and creativity—the discourse of the monograph—has gained fluency, rescuing from latency its vision of art as a general activity that construes being and doing together.

Not long after the dawning of feminist and gender studies in the visual arts, and sometimes overlapping with them, strong interest arose in examining artworks as means of cultural thematization and diaspora, decolonization, opposition, and negotiation for racial, political, and ethnic subjects or communities. Since the late 1980s, this agenda has underpinned a number of significant art exhibitions, such as “*Magiciens de la terre*” (Paris, 1989), the Johannesburg Biennial of 1997, and *Documenta 11* (Kassel, 2002).⁶ The charting of artistic practice in the era of postcolonialism and globalization legitimately questions the interpretative canons shaped by studies of white Western artists. It focuses instead on the long-marginalized contexts of Africa, South Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America, as well as on the processes of transmigration, cross-cutting, and hybridization among different cultures. In this process, some of the ideas and motivating ideals of the monograph’s history resurface. These are now diverted to answer new demands and to account for the visual culture and artistic production associated with the multiple identities that have emerged in the post-Soviet world.

Okwui Enwezor, for example, argued in 1997 for the reintroduction of such “easily evaded notions as identity, hybridity, place, and placelessness, nationality, and home.” In the same essay he counters the concept of nationality with that of “belonging,” remarking that the latter “proceeds from a much broader frame, acknowledging individual situations. . . . It makes critical accommodations for various ways of being, thinking, working, and dwelling in a world where the notion of borders

has been soundly problematized.” Identity, for Enwezor, “has become an ideological problem we struggle to solve. . . . It remains a fascinating object of the transcultural, transterritorial, and transnational narrative of the human enterprise.”⁷

Key to the pursuit of new encounters in art and world culture are both the resistance to novel forms of empire and the avoidance of supra-individual homogenizing approaches. One of the goals of postcolonial theory is to show that just as artists from heterogeneous places are not totally influenced from without, so artworks do not simply react to given terms: artworks and artists gain cultural fluency not only from the large structures in which they find themselves but also from their own capacity to generate personal meanings and emotions, to thematize contradiction and conciliation on the basis of valuations of gender, race, politics, and ethics. Crucial to Documenta II was the possibility of defining new modes of subjectivity for art and artists in the postcolonial realities of displacement and proximities, and thus exhibiting a “spectacular difference” whose “critical spaces are not places for the normalization or uniformation of all artistic visions on their way to institutional beatification.”⁸

Despite the decreasing relevance of the monographic discourse during the twentieth century and the institutionalized uses of its form of writing within academic art history, we see that the intelligibility and imagination of the model have sometimes reemerged indirectly and subversively. Postcolonial theory and gender issues in contemporary art and criticism have forced us to rethink the nexus between identity and human creativity. The monographic discourse is echoed and reinvented as a deterrent or even as a source of countermovement, proposing alternatives to received schemes of interpretation. Monograph ideas also resurface to help uphold criteria of singularity versus homologation, or to build bridges between the local, irreducible distinctiveness of an artist’s works and the global grid of references that sustains the contemporary art world. Finally, by recasting some of the conceptual guidelines of the life-and-work model, the monograph’s vision of art as a primary human activity bears new fruit. Analyses of gender and multiple identities tend to undermine claims that connoisseurship and art historical inquiry embody objective standards and that art is a specialized, autonomous area of en-

deavor. Instead they discuss forms or media in relation to experiential, political, and existential dimensions as well as in view of their dialectical interplay with life and the world.

As I have said, the monograph focuses on art as a primary human activity; its impulse is to overcome the separateness of the artworks. These ideas resound strongly in the practice of twentieth-century artists. Picasso, Duchamp, and Joseph Beuys, in particular, offer valuable clues to the stretching of the monographic discourse as well as to the idea of the artist as his or her own “monographer.”⁹ Although quite different as authors and as personalities, all three at certain points of their careers employed the dialectic and imagination of the monographic model to convey views of their own work and of art itself. The instinctive, earthy, and flamboyant Picasso did so in cooperation with Christian Zervos, initiating a multivolume catalogue raisonné of his works in 1932; the cerebral, profligate, and ascetic Duchamp produced *Box in a Valise* (1935–1941), an object that functions as a portable museum, monograph, catalogue, and self-portrait; and the prophetic, intense, and shamanistic Beuys created *Arena*, a work intended to provide a compendium of his life and works up to 1972.

From 1932 until the end of his life, Zervos (1899–1970) pursued the redaction of *Pablo Picasso*, a catalogue raisonné of the artist’s oeuvre, which runs to thirty-three volumes and covers the artist’s entire career.¹⁰ Each volume documents the works of a limited period, rarely more than five years, which Zervos sometimes prefaces with an essay. While aiming at a chronological order, the volumes are strikingly unsystematic in their layout and structure. They do not organize the works according to media but combine reproductions of paintings, drawings, and sketches on consecutive pages without any intervening text (fig. 8.1). (Lists of the works, with title, date, technique, size, and location, are found at the back of each volume.) The result is a continuum of images in which insights into time and oeuvre overshadow the forms and techniques that Picasso employed. It is hard to say if this unorthodox presentation should be ascribed to Zervos or Picasso; the close collaboration between the two meant that the catalogue project evolved through conversations and an exchange of ideas,

which are reflected in Zervos's prefaces and in essays and interviews he published in *Cahiers d'Art*. At once scholarly and militant, *Pablo Picasso* is a statement of Picasso's stance.

In his prefaces, Zervos insists that Picasso aspired to absolute freedom, that art for him was tantamount to life. Crucial to Zervos's argument is of course the dynamic of identity and difference.¹¹ The idea that the characteristics of life are attributable to the oeuvre is also sustained by his reporting Picasso's views on existence, individual being, and the limitations of scientific thought. Picasso, Zervos tells us, believed that biol-



8.1 Pages 40 and 41 from Christian Zervos, *Pablo Picasso: Oeuvres de 1895 à 1901*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1932). Works reproduced: *Femmes à la fontaine* (1901), oil, 81 x 60 cm, © 2004 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; *Fille au café* (1901), pastel, 67 x 52 cm, © 2004 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; *Les toits bleus* (1901), oil, 61 x 38 cm, © 2004 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; *Enfant au pigeon* (1901), oil, 73 x 54 cm, © 2004 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Courtesy of Art and Architecture Library, Yale University.

ogy alone could not control the formation and growth of an individual: each evolves partly according to a given vital potential but also through the experiences of being, destiny, and spirituality.¹² Picasso's trust in free subjective agencies and the "genetic rights," so to speak, of the individual justifies both his practice and the catalogue project. For it is that heterogeneity of being and its revelations in time that he wished to capture visually in his work and that Zervos's volumes tried to illustrate chronologically. In his 1935 interview with Zervos, Picasso said that "a picture lives a life like a living creature," that he deals with his painting as he deals with living things, and that "one has to act with painting as in life, directly."¹³ Here we have a remarkable reiteration of the monograph's mission to abolish the distance between the reality of the works of creation and reality itself. This utopian mission, the will to transcend canons of taste and formal proficiency in favor of someoneness and being, is also revealed in Picasso's famous statement to Zervos that "it is not what the artist does that counts, but what he is."¹⁴ In conversations with other people as well, Picasso made clear his sense of art as autobiography.¹⁵ In 1943, in conversation with Brassai, he articulated the relevance of chronology in his work:

Why do you think I date everything I make? Because it's not enough to know an artist's works. One must also know when he made them, why, how, under what circumstances. No doubt there will some day be a science, called "the science of man," perhaps, which will seek above all to get a deeper understanding of man via man-the-creator. I often think of that science, and I want the documentation I leave to posterity to be as complete as possible. That's why I date everything I make.¹⁶

Zervos's catalogue, then, contributed to the organization of the "documentation" useful to that "science." What is this "science of man"? It has been suggested that in using the word "documentation" Picasso was invoking methods familiar to the avant-garde artists in Paris and those of contemporary French ethnography: Marcel Mauss's new "science of man," for example, which studies human organizations in terms of structural relations in thinking and behavior.¹⁷ Here, however, we can see that

the science in question has past sources as well. Picasso emphasizes that time and life circumstances are crucial elements for the interpretation of his work and that one should understand humanity via human creativity. With this idea he not only thinks like a monographer but also conjures up the paradigm of the oeuvre first formulated in Passavant's *Rafael*. While reminiscent of the aims and procedures of that paradigm, the "science of man" that Picasso envisions would do without the faulty pretense of determinism that he had ascribed to biology. Indeed, this science would presumably concern itself with a being and becoming singular, the endless partitions of identity in the making, and thus show humanity by examining the fluctuations, dissemination, and freedom evinced by the dynamics of creation. As is well known, Picasso's deliberate fashioning of himself, his emphasis on his own being as the source of his art, dramatically boosted his critical reception, to the point that hundreds of monographs have been written on him.¹⁸ Zervos's *Pablo Picasso* is probably not impervious to this manipulation. Still, there is no reason to regard these phenomena simply as forms of control on the artist's behalf. As one who solicited monographs and especially as the monographer of himself, Picasso launched a program—a means of inquiry that is anthropological more than strictly art historical and biographical—intended to illuminate humanity through human creativity, even beyond the specific media assumed by the arts, and to bring to consciousness a new dialectic between art and reality.

The shadow of Passavant's enterprise also hovers over *Box in a Valise* (*Boîte en valise*) by Duchamp. Opening the valise, one finds a cardboard box containing sixty-nine items: miniature replicas, models, and color reproductions of Duchamp's principal works (fig. 8.2.). The collected paintings, objects, drawings, and readymades are remade through the invention of this remarkable object, of which Duchamp produced multiple copies and editions.¹⁹ Acting as his own monographer, Duchamp vindicated the whole of his main works to date and sought to inspire responses that would in turn comprehend the works as a whole.²⁰ Whereas oeuvre-catalogues and monographs posit an interrelational and positional logic of identity and difference, either by organizing the entries or through the narrative itself, the *Box* develops that logic at another level of consciousness, both physical and conceptual. Besides seeking to capture in a



8.2 Marcel Duchamp, *Box in a Valise* (1935–1941). Leather valise containing pochoir reproduction with autograph correction, miniature replicas, photographs, and color reproductions of works by Duchamp, 40.7 x 38.1 x 10.2 cm. James Thrall Soby Fund. © The Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA. Licensed by Scala / Art Resource, New York.

three-dimensional object the multidimensional character of an oeuvre, it also allows both its maker and its user to directly experience the oeuvre's mobile, dialectical reality. The spatial construction of the *Box* as well as the arrangement of the reproductions are such that, once one begins to unfold the contents of the box, many items can be moved easily, at random or in view of deliberate trials and interventions.

Duchamp initially thought of producing a book (his letters also mention an "album" of his main production) but then opted for an actual object. While he spoke of it years later as a "portable museum," the *Box* was also called his "monograph" by an anonymous writer in *Time* magazine, in September 1942. It was perceived in autobiographical terms by Louise and Walter Arensberg who, in 1943, wrote to Duchamp: "You have invented a new kind of autobiography. It is a kind of autobiography in a performance of marionettes. You have become the puppeteer of your past."²¹ In any event, modifying the monographic discourse via its original presentation, the *Box* delivers a dynamic idea of authorship. It firmly asserts the artist's singularity and someoneness, and tries to jettison merely formal and visual concerns—and possibly the very tradition of art as it had hitherto been known.²²

Throughout his career Duchamp was extremely concerned with the ideas of selfhood, authorship, and agency. In "The Creative Act" of 1957,²³ he argues that artists cannot fully grasp and judge their own work because viewers have an equally relevant part in the process. This opinion did not stop him from pursuing self-understanding nor from thinking of art as a humanizing, emancipatory enterprise and of artists as paradigmatic individuals. In his conversation with James J. Sweeney, he closes with the remark that "art is the only form of activity in which man as man shows himself to be a true individual. Only in art is he capable of going beyond the animal state, because art is an outlet toward regions which are not ruled by time and space."²⁴ The *Box* therefore reinvents the monograph's commitment to one artist only, while at the same time defying the exclusiveness of perceptual values and the very distinction between original work and replica. It suggests that art exceeds the materials employed, and that artistic agencies undergo processes of transference between artist and public. Whereas nineteenth-century monographers promoted, at times unwittingly, the idea of the primacy of works and authors or presences

within them over other kinds of art historical considerations, in the 1960s Duchamp lucidly tells his interviewers that there are only artists, no art or schools, and that the history of art is the history of individual artists.²⁵ This conviction had already been expressed by the *Box*, through a presentation of the artworks where the sense of one artist only is upheld over and above fixed coordinates of space and time, according to placements of identity determined by the maker and the user of the *Box*.

Finally, we may gain further insights into the *Box*'s transfiguration of the monographic discourse by considering it as the visual counterpart of some seemingly extravagant declarations that Duchamp made to Pierre Cabanne. To Cabanne's question about whether he had had any desire to be "artistically cultured" in his youth, Duchamp answers that, though he would have wanted to work, he was profoundly lazy, for he likes "living, breathing, better than working." After belittling his works as of no "social importance whatsoever in the future," he goes on to claim that his art is that of living: "each second, each breath is a work which is inscribed nowhere, which is neither visual nor cerebral. It's a sort of constant euphoria."²⁶ This state of euphoria—in which living, breathing, and working are one and the same—resonates with the imaginary of the monograph model, with the utopian visions of art and artists conveyed by its projection of the works into the life and the life into the works. In particular, Duchamp's image—of each breath as a work that is not visually inscribed anywhere—evokes the awareness of an oeuvre as a multi-dimensional entity that ties the realm of the living to that of the nonliving. Transmitting that awareness to a concrete object, the *Box* contains and animates the dynamic of a "breathing process," where inhaling and exhaling correspond to the shifting phases of dissemination and permanence through which the *Box* locates who the artist is and what he does. Breathing establishes an intimate complicity, a "sphere" enveloping outside and inside; it does not assign priority to a subject or object but rather engenders and enlivens both via a process of mutual exchange and identification, as in the placental phase of life.²⁷ The encounter with the *Box* turns into the recognition of an advent to presence, stretching and contracting itself within the time of both creation and fruition. Viewing time as a spatialized, humanized, and reversible dimension, and authorship, singularity, and someoneness as unceasingly mobile in time, Duchamp

endeavors to transcend the separateness of his own works among themselves and in relation with the world at large, as well as the separateness of the *Box* itself. As a monographer of himself, that is, he imagined for his own production the status of a breathing entity, a work or embodiment where material and conceptual aspects conflate with anthropocentric and organic qualities, ultimately conjuring up a “living” art, if not the absolute equation of working and living (and breathing).

From the 1960s onward, the equation of working and living became an unshakable inspirational motif for Joseph Beuys (1921–1986). Crucial in his development and self-understanding was *Arena—Where Would I Have Got If I Had Been Intelligent!* He began this piece in 1970 for a group exhibition at the Edinburgh College of Arts, and he showed it in its final version two years later in Naples, at the Modern Art Agency of Lucio Amelio.²⁸ *Arena* (fig. 8.3) is made up of 100 panels enclosed in heavy aluminum frames: 3 panels are of handmade colored glass, and the remaining ones display 264 photographs and photocopies treated with sulfur, acid, wax, and paint. Photographs and photocopies—either isolated, in couples, or in groups of three or more—refer to meaningful aspects of Beuys’s life and work from the late 1940s to the early 1970s. They show the artist engaged in his “Actions,”²⁹ represent a miscellanea of his drawings, sculptures, written fragments, and objects, and include a few private situations (such as a photograph of the artist’s mother, Johanna Beuys) and a picture of the famous Arena of Verona.

Beuys had already acted as his own monographer earlier in his career. In 1964 he made an annotated biographical note, *Life Course/Work Course* (*Lebenslauf/Werkslauf*), which he revised and updated until 1970, notably the year when the *Arena* project started. *Life Course/Work Course* served Beuys as a public statement to record his activities and steer their critical reception. Often reprinted in exhibition catalogues, it provided the framing basis for the first monograph on the artist in 1973.³⁰ Beuys wrote the note in chronological order, listing episodes from his biography and art. He aligns both aspects, however, as if they were of equal artistic significance. *Arena* carries on the intent of *Life Course/Work Course* but also substantially departs from it. Images take the place formerly assigned to the written text, and the new autobiographical compendium bears no chronological indications. The installations of *Arena*, furthermore, were



8.3 Joseph Beuys, panel (*Celtic +*, 1971; *Celtic +*, 1971; *Celtic +*, 1971) of *Arena—Where Would I Have Got If I Had Been Intelligent!* (1970–1972). Aluminum and glass panels in metal frame with 264 photographs, wax, paint, acid, and other substances; stacks of fat and waxed blocks, copper and iron plates; oil can. 100 panels, 114 x 82 cm each, framed; two stacks, 25 x 30 x 49 cm. Collection Dia Art Foundation, New York. © Dia Art Foundation / 2004 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

arranged quite at random, with the panels either arbitrarily grouped and piled on the floor one above the other or hung on the walls without following a fixed scheme. Finally, because of the recurrent use of hand-applied layers of wax, paint, and other materials, and the blurred aspect of some photographs, the work resists precise deciphering.³¹ Beuys was intrigued by the biography of others as much as by autobiography, and was convinced that key experiences play a formative role in the life of an individual. He presents his own history by projecting it in a sort of boundless time and open-ended space.³²

The interplay of life and work set forth in *Arena* outstrips factual knowledge, mental categories, and chronological history, as well as the divide between art and non-art. There is no way to draw neat lines between doing and being; the deeds and events summoned up by the reproduced images bring together the artist, the work, and reality at large. *Arena* explores art or creativity in its most general human nature: as pure movement and pervasive agency, a universal faculty disclosed over and above any particular work or artistic form. With *Arena*, Beuys hoped that the work of creation would equal existence. While envisioning that rarefied zone where art forms and forms of life are equated and restored in their immanence, he renewed some of the most imaginary aspirations of the life-and-work model.

In retrospect, the gist of *Arena* and its reinvention of the monograph ideas can be traced throughout Beuys's history. These ideas are among the sources of his continuous endeavor to promote art and art-related activities as living processes, evolutionary and revolutionary avenues for humankind; they stand behind his twin assumptions that "everybody is an artist" and that art should expand itself, become "social sculpture," shape the environmental and spiritual conditions of the future; and finally, they strengthen Beuys's critique of artistic autonomy and specialization as well as his desire to realize art's anthropological nature and clear the path to freedom and democracy through creativity.³³

Picasso, Duchamp, and Beuys neither worked nor thought alike. Nevertheless, their cases demonstrate the abiding strength of certain desiderata and possibilities. The three artists not only put the life-and-work dialectic at the core of their practice but experienced their works as re-

mainders of singularity and someoneness, as an oeuvre inextricable from states of being and becoming. More poignant still, acting as monographers of their own work, they made that experience a launching base to enlarge the consciousness of art, to criticize the legacy of the modern system of the arts in favor of art in general, and to forward the integration of the artistic domain with that of existence.

In fact, if one no longer sees Picasso's imagery exclusively in relation to the traditions of painting and sculpture, if one takes for real the "pneumatic" component of Duchamp's *Box*, and if one appreciates the politics of Beuys's highly personalized art, then one can see that all of their works offer "documentations" of a life in its creative forming between the generic of its biological species and the specific of its expressive and experiential existence. Such a tendency to replace artworks with documentation also characterized portions of the avant-garde movements of the early twentieth century, such as dada, surrealism, and constructivism, and has variously resurfaced in the art of the 1960s as well as in more recent years.³⁴ In retrospect, this tendency is an important token of both an unflagging desire to break the boundaries of art and the deep connections between modern art and modern meditations upon the diverse ways of being human.

Central to the monograph's understanding of artists and artworks is the idea that subjectivity, rather than denoting an unchangeable essence, is better grasped dynamically through the epiphanies of its innumerable advents within the open finitude of a life. This idea brings me to my last point about the transfiguration of the monograph project in the twentieth century. Because conceptual weakening and stiff, formal reiterations of the life-and-work model have made it difficult for us to see the spectrum of that project, it is unclear where a reconsideration of its legacy would lead us. Such reconsideration could devolve into ill-founded conceptions of the human subject; it could merely reiterate a sort of uncritical glorification of the artist, but it could also inspire inquiries into the visual arts that illuminate issues of selfhood and identity.

In its most powerful articulations since the nineteenth century, the monograph delivers visions of the artist that are not so distant from

the definitions of the human subject advanced today in some areas of contemporary thought, particularly where philosophy, linguistics, and psychoanalysis intermingle. In these areas, the questioning of the traditional metaphysical view of the human subject, most notably pursued by Freud, Heidegger, and Nietzsche, is not understood as a call for a total demise—the announcement of a series of deaths (God, man, consciousness, etc.) that one must mourn or celebrate (depending on whether one feels nostalgic for tradition or enthusiastic about its dismissal). Rather, that questioning is reinterpreted for its capacity to uncover directions for rethinking subjectivity and inventing another set of possibilities for selfhood and identity without perpetuating the supposition, characteristic of metaphysics, that the human subject is a transcendental, immutable essence.³⁵

The likeness of a post-Freudian and postmetaphysical subject can be traced to the contributions of different, even theoretically distant, authors—from Cornelius Castoriadis, Julia Kristeva, and Jacques Lacan to Jean-Luc Nancy and Donald W. Winnicott—who over the last decades have responded to the challenge of resituating and refiguring subjectivity, selfhood, and presence. For example, the possibility of qualifying subjectivity in its absolute motion is at the core of the early work of Kristeva, who began to articulate her views in the context of French poststructuralism. Around the turn of the 1970s, combining linguistics and psychoanalysis, Kristeva developed a theory of signification in which a subject is seen as being produced by its very inscriptions within the realm of signs. Her idea of a “subject in process” (*sujet en procès*), initially inspired by breakthroughs that occurred in the language of modern poetry, argues for a speaking, writing, and acting subject that is accountable only for the dynamics of its self-formation and creative becoming. The idea opens the doors to another kind of semiotic analysis, one deciphering through the boundaries of language the instances of the domain of the unconscious drives, with its rhythms and ruptures irreducible to the static conception of a firmly supposed subject.³⁶

Three influential interpreters of Freudian theory offer us further clues to how a different view of subjectivity may emerge. They qualify subjectivity in the following ways: in its relationship with an alterity; as a reflective project of being in time; and in terms of creative living. Starting in the late 1950s, Jacques Lacan (1901–1981) began to advocate a “return”

to Freud on a new, radical basis—the realization that the unconscious is structured like a language. In so doing, Lacan illuminates the crucial function of the word in therapy and in the interplay of the conscious and the unconscious. He also describes the subject as split by its identifications with the signifiers of a language and the distinct yet interposed orders of the “symbolic,” the “imaginary,” and the “real.” Transitional and performative, the Lacanian subject is at the threshold of many times: called here and now where its desire is located, standing between absence and presence, it constantly comes into being and fades away from what it says. But if the speaking analysand is not necessarily identical to the presence that is speaking, through construction and deconstruction of the language of the subject, psychoanalysis may favor the advent of words that make a subject more aware of its history. This can lead to the discovery that what is being achieved in that history is the “future anterior” of who the subject would have been, given who he or she is in the process of becoming now. In fact, Lacan ascribes to the forms of language the faculty of both differentiating and disclosing the subject in its confrontation with the reality principle, which as Freud announced points to what escapes the univocal dimension of consciousness.³⁷

While for Lacan the only solution for individuals is that of dwelling in the dynamic space of their structural alienation, Cornelius Castoriadis (1922–1997) argues for the imaginary and the imagination as the “*vis formandi*” of humanity. Skeptical of the alleged “death” of the subject (he bluntly calls it a cover to avoid intellectual responsibilities), Castoriadis takes up the Freudian legacy in his writings and posits a vision of the subject as both “question” and “project” pertaining to the poietical domain of the psyche. His question “Who comes into analysis?” addresses someone virtually “invisible” not because the “who” stands for an immaterial essence, but rather because of the individual’s potential to gather meanings and to make something out of itself. The “project” of the subject, then, has to do with the subject’s becoming itself through the pathways of its own autonomous being. It implies recognition as well as activation of the psychical qualities of humanity—namely, imagination and self-reflectiveness, creation and historical stratification, sublimation and cathexis of energy. In Castoriadis’s view, “To be a subject, to be an autonomous subject is still to be someone and not everyone, not just anyone or anything.

It is still, and above all, to cathect determinate objects and to cathect *one's own identity*.”³⁸

We encounter yet another association among subjectivity, creativity, and self-realization in the psychoanalytic theory of culture elaborated by the psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott (1896–1971). His views suggest that it is possible to think of creativity as a performance free from any sort of fixed or privileged object of investment. In his late work especially, Winnicott proposes a more fulfilling integration between the individual's inner and outer reality. Integration becomes conceivable both by equating artistic creation and life-enhancement and by demanding that the term “creativity” no longer be restricted to successful or highly praised creations ascribed to great artists. The artist's creativity arguably originates from the same conditions experienced by every human being who has been granted by an empathic mother the opportunity of articulating her or his relation to the world in terms of creativity and self-expressiveness. For Winnicott, the creative impulse crosses through every area and moment of existence and indeed seems to acquire almost the status of a general principle of humankind. Winnicott posits the intimate correlation of artistic creation and creative living in view of their common, unequivocal faculty of inducing in a subject the feeling of being alive and being oneself.³⁹

The post-Freudian and postmetaphysical subject reveals itself in terms of positions and processes, through the guises of multiplicity, heterogeneity, difference, and ceaseless becoming. Born out of productiveness and mechanisms of generation, creativity, and self-creation, it is a subject continuously defined and metamorphosed by its exposure to sense and existence. These characterizations, in fact, suggest bridges that may connect the interrogations of our time with the monograph's conception of the artist as born within artistic creation itself and engaged in the discovery of being who one is. I will take up this connection soon, after reviewing some aspects of the work of Jean-Luc Nancy, particularly his introduction of the idea of “someone,” which I have already freely adapted in this book.

The theme of our exposure to sense and existence runs throughout Nancy's work. It is one of the inspirational motifs of his meditations on

freedom, presence, aesthetics, community, and being in the world.⁴⁰ Asking “Who comes after the subject?” Nancy reorients the issue from a question of essence, supposition, and foundation to one of identity, presence, and existence. Such a move implies neither a death nor a return of the subject as hitherto known, but rather a new kind of receptivity to the unending or plural manifestations of a being singular. The move springs from the recognition that the place of the subject and selfhood in Western culture may correspond to “the thought that reabsorbs or exhausts all possibility of *being-in-the-world* (all possibilities of *existence*, all existence as being delivered to the possible), and that this same thought . . . designates and delivers an entirely different thought: that of the *one* and that of the *some one*, of the singular existent that the subject announces, promises, and at the same time conceals.”⁴¹

Nancy’s idea of someone outstrips any presupposition and self-presupposition of subjectivity as an essence, and thus encourages insights into the experience of being singular and the double bind of sense and existence.⁴² For Nancy, while each individual is singular partly because there are other ones—a community of selves who mutually recognize one another—we should expect nothing from someone beyond his or her being someone. Someone, that is, testifies to his or her own existence and is present by being exposed each instant. This mode of presence is not immobile and permanent, but a constant process of singularization. Insofar as someone is freely engaged with the sense of being someone, or shows the act of being someone as a production of sense, to be someone is to experience the dimension of sense such that sense is tied up with the effective presence of somebody: no longer presupposed (precedent, postponed or future), sense means existence. The paradigmatic equation of sense and existence allows Nancy to replace the idea of foundation (the seat of a metaphysical subject) with that of an attestation of existence. Through attestation, in fact, the world makes sense as a plurality of singular ones, and every living individual exemplifies singularity: each proposes an example, a remarkable model. Attestation is the *modus vivendi* of someone, with her or his uniqueness and characteristic exposure of a singular transitivity of being. The idea of someone, in sum, reinvents the space of subjectivity away from both the postulation of a static, abiding

essence and the nihilistic obliteration of its sense, agency, and dynamic presence; at the same time, the idea also offers another way of thinking about life and freedom, work and humanity, as it introduces the prospect of grounding oneself exclusively in one's own existence.⁴³

Based on the ideas of thinkers from Kristeva to Nancy, we are encouraged to assess both the monograph's image of the artist and our responses to it. Insofar as the idea of subjectivity is under trial—it demands that we ponder the range of its latent implications and radically rethink its place in our culture—we cannot so easily dismiss the monograph's visions of the artist, as if they merely convey stale ideals of plenitude and humanity crafted to exalt the practitioners of the visual arts. As I have indicated throughout this book, the monograph does not necessarily describe or construe the artists as subjectivities given beforehand, predetermined and fixed. Rather, the history of the monograph is the history of a model in which artists of different natures, periods, and formation are revealed as individuals who partake of a continuous dynamic of identity in the making. The “who” question of the monograph is precisely the cipher of this procedure, in which subjectivity and presence, authorship and selfhood, stem from those many elements that may qualify the oneness of a “who” in its visual, temporal, and anthropological manifestations. Ultimately, who an artist is corresponds only to the fluctuations of life itself.

For this reason a term such as “someone” (and its cognate “some-oneness”) can be of particular help in conjuring up what was said in the nineteenth century, as well as what can be said now, of the monograph's constructions of who an artist is. Nancy's idea of “someone”—as the “who” that comes after the subject—has allowed me to demarcate the implications of those moments in which, especially during the nineteenth century, the monograph envisioned the revelation of a coming to presence and sought to fathom its dynamics. In this way the monograph's *modus operandi* has yielded insights into the meanings and desires of the past as well as into our own response to, for example, the morphology of the artist's identity and *Bildung* achieved in Passavant's reconstruction of the oeuvre of Raphael; Justi's attempt to capture the “X factor,” the remainder of Velazquez's singularity; or Berenson's inquiry into Lotto's artistic personality as exemplified in the very materiality of his art.

Revived Overtures

On reflection, then, it seems that the horizon of desire and knowledge inaugurated by the tradition of the monograph may interact, if not wholly line up, with the standpoints of our own sensibility and concerns. A present receptivity may draw inspiration from the remarkable capacity of the monograph ideas to connect with us time and again. No matter how pervasive resistance to the monograph project can be, we are nevertheless exposed to flashes of recognition and awakenings. We can (re)discover desiderata and possibilities that urge us to place the works of creation vis-à-vis the plan of existence, and thus seek a knowledge of the artistic phenomena that can go beyond the physicality of the art while simultaneously crossing life and what is not life, work and what is not work. That is, in attending to our needs and concerns, by means of different and unpredictable routes, we may be called upon to reinvent as a new practice what an entire tradition of writers has done before through the study of the multidimensional wholes of the oeuvres of Renaissance and modern artists, the perception of their lives and works as the source of remainders and singularities, and the pursuit of a form of continuity between art and reality.

What would a renovation of the life-and-work model be like? Could it be that the “time” of the project is not ahead of us but rather with us, as another “now” still closed to us? Could we use this awareness to push the understanding of “life and works” further, to express its still silent potentials?

In trying to answer these questions, one must avoid rigid programs. They would shut down the receptiveness we have gained into the monograph as representative of a fluid moment of consciousness and into the radical implications of its unrestricted equation of art and existence. Not only has the monograph, throughout its historical course, demonstrated a tendency to undo, fuse, and overcome the requirements of heterogeneous disciplinary approaches, but its project has been revealed as a source of methodological disentanglement in art studies.

The monograph’s metamorphoses cannot produce any general rules. Yet they can familiarize us with the kinds of intelligibility and imagination characteristic of its model and can mark valuable signposts for

planning new departures, especially in and around the areas defined by the monograph legacy: the life-and-work dialectic; the view of the artist as a “who” reflected and engendered within the artworks; the focus on the singular existent; and the surmise of a continuum among the objects of creation, the sphere of the living, and reality at large. I suggest that what ultimately endures from the whole tradition of the artist’s monograph lies not in its established modes of writing but in its greater project: in a number of tensions, perceptions, and states of mind that may potentially be activated in our contact with the works of human creation.

One way to deepen the awareness of the project is to look at the fulcrum of the model: the polarities of life and work. Examining these polarities entails moving between two archetypal strands that have been repeatedly designed, obscured, and resurrected within the monograph’s history. The first strand points to a process in which we shift our attention from the appearances of an artwork to the life it bears witness to; the artist’s life and life itself become more significant than the forms in which art manifests itself and may even be tantamount to art. We have seen several cases of this shift of attention, but perhaps Grimm’s study of Michelangelo best exemplifies why life may come after art. Although Grimm did not claim that Michelangelo’s life was his art, in considering the art in view of the intensity of the life, he clearly showed that life is not something tacitly passing into work but the true dwelling space of an artist’s creativity. The second strand, by contrast, indicates a willingness to concentrate exclusively upon the artworks while at the same time suggesting a different apprehension of their visual components. Again, we have seen several cases of this tendency. Among these, Berenson’s idea of the artistic personality bears mention, both because of what it meant in the *Lotto*—the construction of an artist-author as a subjectivity born out of and inextricable from the process of signification—and because of what it came to imply in 1901, when Berenson proposed that works of different kinds and ages could be classified and understood exclusively in terms of artistic personalities.

Each of these positions promises a specific kind of illumination: the former by positing life as art; the latter by envisioning art as life. However, these two extremes share several common threads. For whichever view we take, we are regarding human life in its double articulation, encompassing what is biologically given and what is created. That is, the bio-

logical and the created do not appear distinct in view of unification but mutually “constructed” via art. We are similarly launching toward the final address of art as existence, with “as” meaning an equation achievable through either the forms of art or those of life.

This suggests countless applications of the life-and-work dialectic and a means of rescuing the practice from the doom of a preconceived standard of writing. The monograph’s legacy and stance can be modulated time and again. The endorsement of the project in question implies, in fact, a movement forward that restores the originary fluidity of the monograph model along with the understanding that a “life and works” cannot be limited to any canonical form of address.

Continuing the project demands that we be willing to expand both the meanings and the uses of the “who” question that animates the monograph. In particular, we must move the idea of authorship away from the overestimation of mighty individuals in history—the “great ones”—and toward a regard to the “ones” generally. In fact, if art coincides with the exuberant domain of existence; if artists attest to the uniqueness of identities in the making; if artworks are the homes of unpredictable incarnations, then appreciations of authorship should not be based on rigid values—formal, cultural, and art historical as they may be—nor should they pursue measurements of greatness or classifications of artists in terms of genealogies and mandatory progressions. In this sense, even against the will of its practitioners, the monograph’s history may foreshadow the final collapse of the habitual distinctions between minor and major artists, declared and undeclared authorship. Even anonymous works can reflect dimensions of life and unfold a “who,” a sense of someone being there.⁴⁴ In other words, the focus on the uniqueness of a “who” is completely at odds with the kinds of aggrandizement of the artist’s persona and professional merits to which, especially over the last decades, the public media and sections of art journalism and criticism have succumbed.

Seen in its unconditional qualities, the “who” may address visual, personal, anonymous, emotional, and cultural experiences; the occurrence of gendered and transgendered identities; and the positions of marginal subjects. With regard to the latter, it may connect the uses of the life-and-work model with the ethics of multicultural and postcolonial perspectives. These perspectives have fostered an unprecedented concept of the world:

the more we see it as pervaded by lacerations, struggles, and incommunicability, the more interconnected and transnational the world seems. But these perspectives have also interrogated the forms of life and figures of subjectivity that emerge once the repressed histories of the colonized are exposed, or once transits and realignments of people create new times and spaces of identity.⁴⁵

For example, after analyzing the “subaltern” classes in India and attempting to refigure who a revolutionary subject is,⁴⁶ Ranajit Guha has continued to criticize a Eurocentric “world history” that tendentially reduces human history to the public events of states and empires. An essay by the poet Tagore allows Guha to vindicate a “historicality” beyond the bounds of historiography. For Guha, the poet’s critique of statist historiography, his cry “Off with you history,” and his claim that everything that meets his eye is an object of seeing entirely his own indicate an “appropriative seeing” that provides data for creatively writing “the history which we ourselves are.”⁴⁷ Accordingly, for Guha, a history coextensive with the human condition looks at the past for its qualities of everydayness as well as for its capacity to convey the times of who one is over and above the homogenizing time of “public” history.

However, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak argues, to study the lives of marginal subjects can be an intricate, even problematic, enterprise. It is unclear whether the voices of the Indian subalterns can truly be retrieved from the scattered clues of rebellion and resistance detectable in colonial historiography. While emphasizing a “non-speakingness” in subalternity and warning that something is lost in the translation of cultures, Spivak nonetheless insists on exploring and deconstructing the sites of identities foreclosed to history. In particular, Spivak identifies in the proletarian women of the South the new subaltern of the globalized world, a catalyst of heterogeneity whose destiny, both existential and theoretical, is crucial to the contemporary fusion of politics and subjectivity.⁴⁸

Postcolonial scholarship, then, tends to envisage subjectivity as an irreducible extra, if not a destabilizing agency with regard to imperialistic powers, in modern times as well as now. This acenteredness of human subjectivity is discussed in terms of nonstatist politics by Dipesh Chakrabarty, who proposes to imagine “another moment” in subaltern histories: “one in which we stay . . . with that which is fragmentary and episodic.”⁴⁹ For

Chakrabarty, resisting the notion of totality and envisioning the fragment transform both the idea of politics and “the nature of the political agent.” The subaltern, no longer perceived as an individual struggling to become a citizen and to access the discourse of state and institutionalized politics, “is the ideal figure of the person who survives actively, even joyously, on the assumption that the statist instruments of domination will always belong to somebody else and never aspires to them.”⁵⁰ Chakrabarty thus gives consistency to an ideal subject of politics without transcending history but rather by suggesting the open-ended manifestations of human freedom that can be seized only through fragments.

And it is probably an image of fragments that Homi K. Bhabha has in mind as well when, pursuing yet another line of reasoning, he elaborates an idea of subjectivity that is transitional and mimetic rather than rooted and unfailingly authentic. Emphasizing difference and hybridization in the development of new connections among people relocating and reinventing homes on the planet, Bhabha interestingly names as an “art of the present” the lives lived at the borders of different cultures. He regards these “in-between” spaces of diaspora and reterritorialization as sources of strategies for selfhood, arguing that only through a revision of social temporality is it possible to articulate the signs in which cultural identity may be inscribed.⁵¹

The “who” is therefore crucial to clarifying the monograph project vis-à-vis the contemporary predicament of identity. It may suggest not only that the marginal is a mode of being of the singular but also that all the singularities share a condition of acenteredness, which cannot be explained away through rigid postulations of order. In art studies it can explicate that life itself—the possibility of choosing and living a life both as biologically given and as historically created—may constitute the ultimate terrain of political engagement and struggle for diverse individuals or groups on the planet. From the monograph’s past we know that the “who” is no guarantee of certainty, and yet that its very unpredictable routes and sites are evidence of human autonomy and force.

The “who” question introduces us to the third irreducible topic of the monograph legacy: the model’s pivotal attentiveness to the singular existent. Focus on the singular existent and desires to capture the likenesses of engendering presences do not undermine principles of universality in

art studies. Rather than painting a scenario of scattered figures in isolation and closed off from reality and the world, they reinvent human solidarity through the dialectical patterns of life as art and art as life. One is encouraged to think of single works or bodies of works as singularities interconnected not by means of their ability to represent a certain conception of art or the inescapable regime of given laws and directions of artistic development; instead the sense of their proximity is either “plural singular,” following Nancy’s definition, or else bears evidence of a fragmentation akin to that invoked by Chakrabarty to imagine another kind of political agent. Proximity could stem from the continuous individuation of finite, interchangeable associations between the one and the many. These associations could reveal a spectrum of affinities and connections among artworks and artists of different natures without suppressing their unique ways of being. As such, artworks and artists may partake in a discourse with no presuppositions and boundaries, a space where each of its components discloses its being singular, both *per se* and because of its relations with other singularities.

The image proposed above can also be seen as that of a “multitude.” Recently transplanted from philosophy to political thought, the category of multitude helps to conceptualize a new practice of democracy made of and by a plurality of “acentred” individuals and groups, whose modes of life, communication, and alliances are achieved without acknowledging a centralizing agency (i.e., state, party, class, race) but rather via a fluid adaptation of the human resources of force and creativity.⁵² For Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, “the multitude affirms its singularity by inverting the ideological illusion that all humans on the global surfaces of the world market are interchangeable. . . . [It] promotes through its labor the biopolitical singularizations of groups and sets of humanity, across each and every node of global interchange.”⁵³ As a “multiplicity that acts,” the multitude draws its strength of counterforce from the living “flesh,” and “what acts on the flesh and gives it form are the powers of invention . . . that work through singularities to weave together hybridization of space and metamorphoses of nature—the powers, in short, to modify the modes and forms of existence.”⁵⁴

Just as these visions bring about a different understanding of politics, so does the idea that singularities of artworks and artists create a multi-

tude bring art studies to criticize and radically rethink the relation between individuals and totality in the history of art. While influential strands in twentieth-century art history regarded the history of art as a totality in which artists and artworks are means to a supraindividual end (art, style, form, society, etc.), now such a deterministic view collapses along with the need to represent a totality. What is plural, or supraindividual, is revealed as the living force of a life always singular, or individual. Singularity and plurality partake of the same plan; there are no priorities between them, only movements of conjunction and disjunction, proximity and distance. The life-and-work model touches the heart of this dynamic by showing that each artist stands for a new birth capable of redesigning plurality anew and thus blowing apart any abstract representation of totality. Rather than being naive and familiar as twentieth-century art history had deemed, the model can be methodologically threatening. Focusing on the surprise of a remainder, it signals that only when the comforting assumption of a totality gives way to the uncanny idea of a multitude can one begin to explore the various times and spaces of a history of art truly comprehensive of the human condition.

Equally significant, the discovery that there will always be remainders—that artworks and artists resist translations and enforced uniformity because they convey attestations of existence rather than proofs of essence—suggests that just as artworks and artists are exposed to each other and to us, so must we risk exposing ourselves to them. Through exposure to artworks and artists, art studies may come to design a practice that presents itself differently each time through recognition and assimilation of the unpredictable manifestations of being singular. Just as the nineteenth-century monograph held a *sui generis* place in the literature of art, so can art studies vindicate anew that polymorphous quality in the context of the humanities. No longer strictly defined by the precepts of a determined discipline, they may identify their territory of inquiry with the mobile constellation of all human-made things—from images, statues, paintings, and objects to artists' performances and statements, photographs and digital pictures—that claim to exist in our world first and foremost by signifying existence.

In the same vein, art studies, instead of persisting as a field that mostly talks to itself, could aspire to a knowledge of art and creativity *tout court*

with no need to build ivory towers or to pursue specialization for its own sake. The pursuit of the monograph project in art studies may constitute a political stance, one that sees democracy as no longer strictly dependent on the traditional categories of state, society, sex, race, and history but rather as a form of negotiable coexistence in which human beings experience singularity and proximity. By showing that artists and artworks evince the diversified coming to presence of the human and dissolve the inhibition of totalizing representations of past and present history, art studies can explore precisely how and why singularity and proximity become possible by virtue of the life engendered in and through artistic creation.

As the beacon of being singular in the literature of art throughout the nineteenth century, the monograph has always wanted to stop distinguishing the reality of art from reality at large. Such a desire forces a different understanding of the objecthood of art. Objecthood does not simply mark the edges of contained physicality, but constitutes the niche of unlimited osmosis among matter, form, and life. The existential verve of the “X factor” may encourage intimacies that ultimately turn artworks into nonobjects.⁵⁵

Living art upsets the division among the arts as well as the notion that an artist’s significance depends on his or her adoption of and innovation in particular media of expression. In 1951, in a ground-breaking essay on the gradual installation of a system of the arts from the late eighteenth century onward, Paul Oskar Kristeller noted that the system had begun to show signs of disintegration.⁵⁶ Instances of disintegration and resistance to the classification of the arts pervade the monograph’s history. This history tells us that, both conceptually and methodologically, such a classification is far from the only way of grasping artistic phenomena in time. Displaced from the modern conception of the arts, the monograph attaches a different vision to its most imaginary, utopian impulses. In that vision, objects of creation are no longer doomed to separateness but actually defy any supposition of aesthetic or artistic autonomy by presenting life as a model for art and art as a model for life.

From this perspective, then, art does not function as a practice of mediation between, say, subject and object, the artist’s inner vision and the vision of the natural domain. Artworks play out given coordinates of time and space, closeness and distance, by provoking responses that retrieve

disparate dimensions of life into a mutant “now.” Their stillness and mute materials notwithstanding, they reclaim the status and characteristics of a living person or entity. As an advocate for a living art, the monograph associates art and its literature not only with the dynamic territory of life but also with the enigma of what remains after death. In hindsight, we may ascribe to the life-and-work model a strong impulse to defy the limits of both mortality and physicality through the surmise of a “never-ending” life capable of resisting entropy and material extinction.

For us, however, the monograph’s postulation of a continuum among the objects of creation and the sphere of the living may rest upon the development of new, pointed ideas of productivity and creativity as well as of reception and response. This postulation encourages the view that the “things” made by creative beings exist within and without their very materiality, as objects that traverse time and space, conflate lifelike with artlike qualities, and ultimately yield to the recognition of their multidimensional status. Our reception and response, accordingly, should plunge into a multidimensional sphere, recreating its fluxes and thus illuminating the dynamic exchanges among human beings in and through art.

New ideas of production and reception imply, moreover, that certain perceptions about artworks must be reconsidered: that they cannot be extracted from the history of art; that they reflect only given contexts in history; that they pertain to the aesthetic domain and induce judgments of taste; that they are linked with the destiny of their author and the uses of a particular medium. These faulty perceptions frustrate far-reaching explorations of human creativity and art per se. In a 1989 book on the history and theory of response to images, David Freedberg examines works from “high art” to religious imagery, popular posters, photographs, and African masks, and proposes that images provoke reactions that overrun the traditional disjunction between representation and reality. Freedberg argues, “The time has come to acknowledge the possibility that our responses to images may be of the same order as our responses to reality.” He insists that “when we talk about art we should more freely use the terms we apply to that which exists before and beyond the world of images and of art.”⁵⁷ The monograph has endeavored to “talk” in a way similar to that advocated by Freedberg. As ingenuous as it may seem, it has dared to take at face value the discovery that creation has to do with what

was not there and yet now exists, imagining that art may encode and transmit the traces of a never-ending life.

The monograph's suspension of disbelief before artistic phenomena means that artworks are no longer seen as a means of illusion. Each artwork may become an active installation of forces: the still and yet converging point of many worlds. As a point of excess, distinction, and singularity within any system of reference (art historical, cultural, social, semiotic, etc.), an artwork trespasses various domains of labor, knowledge, and experience. It can change the sense of being here and there, now and then, both at the times of its creation and its fruition. The desire for a living art suggests that, among the products of human endeavor, artworks especially are both emissaries and custodians of the creative forces of existence. They can be approached, following Picasso's dictum that "one has to act with painting as in life, directly," with the same dedicated energies of feeling and mind with which one engages oneself while operating in the real world.

Despite the Eurocentric character of most of its materials, I hope that this book can contribute to another view of the West, one in which the figure of the human—which has haunted European thought, from Renaissance humanism to the Enlightenment and the postromantic era—can reveal itself not as the screen of hegemonic and globalizing designs but as a motif of restless questioning, even incommensurability, in the laboring of sense and existence. Perhaps this very restlessness is a gift Westerners can offer in the encounters among cultures.

The history of the artist's monograph and its project gives us valuable data with which to rethink modern ideas of art, artworks, and artists. It can also provide a unique platform for continuous action. In all of their variety, the episodes recounted in this book demonstrate a common, irrepressible tendency to tackle the implications of artistic creation in terms of life and works; they are also the landmarks of still-unrealized areas of knowledge.

Even though it was already untimely and unorthodox back in the nineteenth century, and then eclipsed and discounted during the twentieth, the monograph project continues to exert its attraction. It may usher in a stance of immanence in art studies, one that resists the impulse to

translate from art to reality and vice versa, because artworks are no longer the double of a subjective or objective datum situated before or after artistic creation. Art would name a practice that, rather than standing apart or mediating between separate contexts, operates within the manifold plans through which we experience the world and our own presence in it. Such a stance, moreover, goes hand in hand with a methodological catharsis. Resistant to the grand narratives of styles and themes of unidirectional history, hopeful for new modes of human proximity, bound to ask “who” comes after the subject, and critical of nihilistic procedures that favor supraindividual analyses over recognitions of subjectivity and identity in the making, art studies cannot repress the illumination of the singular existent. Works and oeuvres, artists and artistic personalities, embodiments and presences are ubiquitous fragments of humanity, creativity, and history: they are the flesh of a multitude that can prevail over any disciplinary frame of investigation. They are the irreducible traces of emission, subversion, and inspiration of what “art” and “human” mean to us in their coevolution. The project, in fact, knows nothing of reassuring essences. It challenges us to acknowledge both the enigma and the freedom of human identity, as well as the ongoing cathexis of its visions, fears, and interrogations, by means of art.

By awakening to the awareness embodied in the artist’s monograph and by appropriating its project, we can meditate not only on the remarkably open finitude of an artist’s life and works and the kinds of history, knowledge, and imagination it generates, but also on our own open finitude.

Notes

Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the author.

Introduction: The Artist's Monograph as a Project

1. By "model" I mean an abstract scheme, a form devised with the more or less conscious intention of presenting and knowing something, rather than the object of imitation or emulation.
2. *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed., vol. 9, s.v. "monograph": "Originally, in Natural History, a separate treatise on a single species, genus, or larger group of plants, animals, or minerals."
3. Ludwig Schorn, "Albrecht Dürer und sein Zeitalter, ein Versuch von Dr. Adam Weise," *Kunst-Blatt* 30 (13 April 1820): 117–119, my reference p. 117.
4. Mark Roskill, *What Is Art History?* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), p. 14.
5. See Rudolf Wittkower and Margot Wittkower, *Born under Saturn: The Character and Conduct of Artists: A Documentary History from Antiquity to the French Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1963); Jerome J. Pollitt, *Art and Experience in Classical Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); Agnès Rouveret, "De l'artisan à l'artiste: quelques *topoi* des biographies antiques," in *Les "vies" d'artistes*, Acts of the International Symposium organized by the Louvre Cultural Service, 1–2 October 1993 (Paris: Musée du Louvre, 1996), pp. 27–40. For the recurrence of biographical characterizations of the artist that originated in ancient literature, see also Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz,

Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist: A Historical Experiment, trans. Alastair Laing and Lottie M. Newman, with additional notes by Kurz and preface by E. H. Gombrich (1934; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979). For the concept of the artist in Renaissance writings and in nineteenth- and twentieth-century art history, see Catherine M. Soussloff, *The Absolute Artist: The Historiography of a Concept* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

6. See Wolfgang M. Freitag, *Art Books: A Basic Bibliography of Monographs on Artists*, 2d ed. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997). From the late nineteenth century the genre was used in Eastern Europe and Russia, North and Latin America, and Africa, as well as in Western Europe. It was not exclusive to Western literature or classical antiquity: writers in ancient China also discussed the lives and works of artists, as in Zhang Yanyuan (c. 815–?), *Lidai minghua ji* (Records of famous paintings of all the dynasties), trans. in William Reynolds Beal Acker, *Some Tang and Pre-Tang Texts on Chinese Painting* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954), and Guo Ruoxu (eleventh century), *Tuhua jianwen zhi* (Experiences in painting), trans. in Alexander Coburn Soper, *Kuo Jo-lisu's Experiences in Painting* (Washington, D.C.: American Council of Learned Societies, 1951). Zhang, who provided the pattern for Guo, was the first to write complete accounts of art theories, establish criteria of evaluation, record works he saw in person, and discuss the lives as well as the styles and personalities of the artists. I am grateful to Shou-Chih Isaac Yen, who gave me valuable information on Chinese art and art literature.
7. Roskill, *What Is Art History?*, p. 14.
8. See Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1967; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (1967; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (1969; New York: Pantheon Books, 1972); and Foucault, *L'ordre du discours* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971).
9. See Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author" (1968), in *Image, Music, Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), pp. 142–148; and Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" (1969), in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology: Essential Works of Foucault*, ed. Paul Rabinov and James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley and others (New York: New Press, 1998), 2: 205–222.

10. The analysand's construction of its own history is given a prominent place in Jacques Lacan's reinterpretation of Freudian theory and practice; see his *Écrits*, trans. Alan Sheridan (1966; New York: Norton, 1977). For the importance of the poietic functions of the individual psyche, see Cornelius Castoriadis, *World in Fragments: Writings on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis, and the Imagination*, ed. and trans. David Ames Curtis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).
11. On the "subject in process," see the early works of Julia Kristeva, in particular *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller (1974; New York: Columbia University Press, 1984). On the individual's bearing witness of its own particularity, see Gianni Vattimo, "Tramonto del soggetto e problema della testimonianza" (1972), in *Le avventure della differenza: Che cosa significa pensare dopo Nietzsche e Heidegger* (Milan: Garzanti, 2001), pp. 47–67. On the subject as a positional and relational notion and the idea of "singularities," see Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, ed. C. V. Boundas, trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale (1969; New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), especially pp. 100–108 and 177–180, and "A quoi reconnaît-on le structuralisme?" in F. Chatelet, ed., *Histoire de la philosophie, le XXe siècle* (Paris, 1973), pp. 299–335.
12. See the essays in Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, and Jean-Luc Nancy, eds., *Who Comes after the Subject?* (New York: Routledge, 1991).
13. Jean-Luc Nancy, "Someone," in *The Sense of the World*, trans. and with a foreword by Jeffrey S. Librett (1993; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 70 and 7; see also "Un sujet?" in Dominique Weil, ed., *Homme et sujet: La subjectivité en question dans les sciences humaines* (Paris: Editions l'Harmattan, 1992), pp. 47–114; *The Birth to Presence*, trans. Brian Holmes and others (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993); and *Being Singular Plural*, trans. Robert D. Richardson and Anne E. O'Byrne (1996; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).
14. See, in particular, Hans Belting, "The End of the History of Art? Reflections on Contemporary Art and Contemporary Art History" (1983), in *The End of the History of Art?*, trans. Christopher Wood from the second German edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 1–63; Georges Didi-Huberman, *Devant le temps: Histoire de*

- l'art et anachronisme des images* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 2000); and Arthur C. Danto, "The End of Art," in *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 81–115, and *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), especially pp. 21–39.
15. For an overview of recent debates, see Patricia Mathews, "The Politics of Feminist Art History," in Mark A. Cheetham, Michael Ann Holly, and Keith Moxey, eds., *The Subjects of Art History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 94–114.
 16. See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).
 17. See Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (1994; London and New York: Routledge, 2002); Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Ranajit Guha's 1981 preface to the first issue of the journal *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Delhi and New York: Oxford University Press, 1982–) and "On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India" and "The Prose of Counter-Insurgency," in Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, eds., *Selected Subaltern Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 35–86; Stuart Hall, "Democracy, Globalization, and Difference," in Okwui Enwezor et al., eds., *Documenta 11, Platform 1: Democracy Unrealized* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002), pp. 21–35; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), pp. 271–313; and Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).
 18. See Rudolf Wittkower, "Individualism in Art and Artists: A Renaissance Problem," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 22 (July–September 1961): 291–302, and "Genius: Individualism in Art and Artists," in Philip P. Wiener, ed., *Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (New York: Scribner, 1973), 2: 297–312.
 19. See Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), and *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992); Remo Bodei,

- Scomposizioni: Forme dell'individuo moderno* (Turin: G. Einaudi, 1987); Alessandro Ferrara, *Reflective Authenticity: Rethinking the Project of Modernity* (London: Routledge, 1998); and Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (1985; Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987). For a general discussion of modernity, see also Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. J. Cumming (1999; New York: Continuum, 1987).
20. See Taylor, *Sources of the Self* and especially *Ethics of Authenticity*. For “authenticity” as key in issues of universalism and for discussions of an “authentic identity,” see Ferrara, *Reflective Authenticity*.
 21. Isaiah Berlin, *Vico and Herder: Two Studies in the History of Ideas* (London: Hogarth, 1976), showed that Herder devised a doctrine of “expressionism,” in which human activity, and art in particular, expresses the personality of the individual or a group and cannot be detached from its maker. Expounding Berlin’s views, Taylor places Herder at the head of his *Ethics of Authenticity*.
 22. From romantic authors to Friedrich Nietzsche, the ethics of authenticity and artistic practice are intimately tied up to modern consciousness. When evaluating a work of art, Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder was above all intrigued by its creator as a unique human being. Novalis went even further, saying that one understands artists insofar as one is or becomes an artist, and so understands oneself. Friedrich Schlegel not only believed that art originates from a free productive individual, but recognized in the artist the unifying principle of any art historical reconstruction of the past. Jacob Burckhardt, in *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860), argued that, since fifteenth-century individuals achieved a sense of themselves as such, artists created perfect works and left a memorable impression as men. Burckhardt also felt that the evaluation of individuals’ greatness in history was a characteristic of his own times. See “Das Individuum und das Allgemeine (Die historische Grösse)” (1870), in Jacob Burckhardt, *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen*, ed. Rudolf Marx (Stuttgart: A. Kröner, 1978), pp. 207–248. For Nietzsche, finally, artists “dare to show us man as he is,” and they alone reveal that every man is a unique miracle; see “Schopenhauer as Educator,” in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Medi-*

- tations, ed. David Breazeale, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (1874; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 127.
23. In his popular lectures on *Heroes and Hero-Worship* of 1840 (published in 1841), Carlyle held that universal history is the history of “great men.” Working on *Oliver Cromwell* (1845) and *Frederick the Great* (1858–1865), he went beyond mere personal narrative and sought to present history biographically.
 24. See Heinrich Dilly, *Kunstgeschichte als Institution: Studien zur Geschichte einer Disziplin* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979); Wolfgang Beyrodt, “Kunstgeschichte als Universitätsfach,” in P. Ganz, M. Gosebuch, N. Meier, and M. Warnke, eds., *Kunst und Kunsttheorie 1400–1900*, Wolfenbütteler Forschungen (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1991), 48: 313–333. Recent studies on the history of art history include Michael Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); Udo Kultermann, *Geschichte der Kunstgeschichte: Der Weg einer Wissenschaft* (Düsseldorf and Vienna: Econ-Verlag, 1966); Germain Bazin, *Histoire de l’histoire de l’art de Vasari à nos jours* (Paris: A. Michel, 1986); and Donald Preziosi, ed., *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).
 25. Around 1800 Winckelmann’s *Geschichte* was seen as superseding earlier histories of art and the very genre of the “lives” established by Vasari, since it proposed a comprehensive approach to the artistic tradition. See Édouard Pommier, “Winckelmann: Des vies d’artistes à l’histoire de l’art,” in *Les “vies” d’artistes*, pp. 205–230; and Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).
 26. Connoisseurship, or the practice of identifying the authorship of an artwork by examining its style, dates back to before Vasari. One of the first cases of stylistic attribution occurred in testimony given in a lawsuit at Padua, on February 14, 1457, in which a certain master Pietro da Milano distinguished Mantegna’s hand from that of Niccolò Pizzolo in the fresco cycle in the Ovetari chapel of the Eremitani church in Padua; see Creighton Gilbert, ed., *Italian Art 1400–1500: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1980), pp. 31–32. Con-

noisseurship informed Vasari's *Lives* and had notable interpreters in the ensuing centuries. Around the mid-nineteenth century, when an increasing number of anonymous pictures became the objects of study, it gradually intertwined with art historical discourse, as in the writings of Waagen, Otto Mündler, Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Giovanni Morelli, and Berenson. See Enrico Castelfnuovo, "Attribution," *Encyclopedia Universalis* (Paris, 1968), 2: 780–83; *Revue de l'Art*, no. 42 (1978), devoted to connoisseurship; Carol Gibson-Wood, *Studies in the Theory of Connoisseurship from Vasari to Morelli* (New York: Garland, 1988); and Giacomo Agosti, Maria Elisabetta Manca, Matteo Panzeri, and Marisa Dalai Emiliani, eds., *Giovanni Morelli e la cultura dei conoscitori*, Acts of the International Symposium, Bergamo, 4–7 June 1987, 3 vols. (Bergamo: P. Lubrina, 1993).

27. The notion of art's autonomy from other areas of human endeavor developed out of the newborn field of "aesthetics." The term was coined by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten in his *Aesthetica* (1750) to argue for a "science of sensible apprehension" or aesthetics concerned with truths as known to the senses. He saw aesthetics as the sister of logic; for later authors, notably Kant in his *Critique of Judgment* (1790), it offered the possibility of grounding the evaluation of an artwork in terms of disinterested pleasure, beauty, and taste. Thus conceived, art was a practice not only distinct from, say, philosophy and science, but also disengaged from society and reality. On the history of aesthetics, see, among others, Benedetto Croce, *Estetica come scienza dell'espressione e linguistica generale* (Bari: G. Laterza, 1908); Katharine Everett Gilbert and Helmut Kuhm, *A History of Esthetics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1953); Władysław Tatarkiewicz, *A History of Six Ideas: An Essay in Aesthetics*, trans. Christopher Kasparek (The Hague: Kluwer Boston, 1980); Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990); and Sergio Givone, *Storia dell'estetica* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1990).
28. The belief that artworks are deprived of their meaning when installed in a museum was first vehemently voiced by Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy in regard to the French army's confiscation of ancient and Renaissance works in Italy; see his *Lettres à Miranda sur les*

déplacements des monuments de l'art de l'Italie, ed. Édouard Pommier (1796; Paris: Macula, 1989). In his 1815 *Considérations morales sur la destination des ouvrages de l'art*, Quatremère contended that in a museum artworks lose their capacity to affect us, becoming “empty simulacra deprived of action, feeling, and life.” Among recent discussions, see Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*, with photographs by Louise Lawler (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993). For the modern museum's role in engendering the idea of the “invisible masterpiece” and the primacy of the artwork as representative of an idea of art, see Hans Belting, *The Invisible Masterpiece*, trans. Helen Atkins (1998; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

29. Throughout this book I use the word “existence” in accordance with this etymon, and therefore removed from any precise philosophical connotations of authors such as Kierkegaard, Jaspers, Heidegger, and Sartre.

1

Life and Works

1. References to the 1568 edition of *The Lives* are taken from Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori scritte da Giorgio Vasari pittore aretino con nuove annotazioni e commenti*, in *Le Opere*, ed. Gaetano Milanesi (Florence: Sansoni, 1878–85). References to the first edition of *The Lives* (1550) are taken from *Le vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani, da Cimabue insino a' tempi nostri*, ed. Luciano Bellosi and Aldo Rossi, introduction by Giovanni Previtali (Turin: Einaudi, 1986). For a bibliography of writings on Vasari, see Julius von Schlosser's *Die Kunstliteratur* (1924), trans. Filippo Rossi as *La letteratura artistica*, 3d ed., updated by Otto Kurtz (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1964); and Patricia Lee Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari: Art and History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).
2. Vasari, *Le vite* (1568), 1: 104.
3. See Antonio Manetti, *Vita di Filippo Brunelleschi* (c. 1478), ed. Domenico De Robertis., with introduction and notes by Giuliano Tanfurlì (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1976).

4. See Lorenzo Ghiberti, *I commentari*, ed. Ottavio Morisani (Naples: R. Ricciardi, 1947), especially pp. 32–47. Originally written in Latin.
5. See Giuliano Tanturli, “Le biografie d’artisti prima del Vasari,” in *Il Vasari storiografo e artista*, Acts of the International Symposium for the fourth centenary of the death (Florence: Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento, 1976), pp. 275–298. For the novelty of Vasari’s biographies in aiming at history rather than mere chronicle, see also Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari*, pp. 151–155.
6. See Paola Barocchi, “Storiografia e collezionismo dal Vasari al Lanzi,” in Giovanni Previtali, ed., *Storia dell’arte italiana* (Turin: Einaudi, 1979), part 1, vol. 2, pp. 5–25; Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari*, pp. 148 ff. For contemporary concepts of history and biography, see Zygmunt Ważbiński, “L’idée de l’histoire dans la première et la seconde édition des *Vies* de Vasari,” in *Il Vasari storiografo e artista*, pp. 1–25.
7. Vasari, *Le vite* (1568), 2: 93. According to Barocchi, “Storiografia,” p. 5, Vasari probably thought of Niccolò Machiavelli when referring to the “scrittori delle istorie.”
8. This new perspective appears, for instance, in *Della historia* (Venice, 1560) by Francesco Patrizi, who argued that artists, not unlike poets, philosophers, and men of law, contribute to the spiritual growth of a community and thus deserve to become the subjects of biography. See Ważbiński, “L’idée de l’histoire,” pp. 10–11 and 21–25.
9. This sequence is not always maintained in *The Lives*, especially in the revised edition of 1568, but is a recurrent scheme. For the components of a Vasarian Life, see Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari*, pp. 157–158, and 187 ff. for the transformations of its structure in the revised edition.
10. Vasari’s relation with his immediate sources, such as Ghiberti, Antonio Billi, and Antonio Manetti, and his way of working were first investigated by Wolfgang Kallab, *Vasaristudien*, ed. Julius von Schlosser (Vienna and Leipzig: W. Grasser & Kie, 1908), pp. 148 ff. See also Schlosser, *La letteratura artistica*, pp. 299, 311–312; Jean Rouchette, *La Renaissance que nous a léguée Vasari* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1959), pp. 115–127. Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari*, pp. 166 ff., however, shows that Vasari’s work should not be viewed against later standards of philology but according to his own standards. For *The Lives* as a work of both history and imaginative literature, see Paul Barolsky, *Why the*

- Mona Lisa Smiles and Other Tales by Vasari* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), pp. xiii ff., 4 ff.
11. See Martino Capucci, "Forme della biografia nel Vasari," in *Il Vasari storiografo e artista*, pp. 299–320.
 12. Vasari, *Le vite* (1568), 1: 296–297.
 13. For Vasari's Life of Michelangelo in 1550 and 1568, see Barocchi's introduction and commentary to the text in Giorgio Vasari, *La vita di Michelangelo nelle redazioni del 1550 e del 1568*, 5 vols. (Milan: R. Ricciardi, 1962).
 14. Ascanio Condivi, *Vita di Michelagnolo Buonarroti*, ed. Giovanni Nencioni, with essays by M. Hirst and C. Elam (1553; Florence: Studio per edizioni scelte, 1998); see p. 6 for the criticism of Vasari's 1550 Life of Michelangelo, and p. 10 for Condivi's allegation that Ghirlandaio had been envious of Michelangelo's talent.
 15. Vasari, *Le vite* (1568), 7: 138–139.
 16. Ibid., 7: 230 ff.
 17. See, for instance, Vasari's recollection of his own meeting with the old Luca Signorelli, *ibid.*, 3: 693.
 18. Ibid., 4: 132.
 19. Ibid., 2: 289.
 20. Ibid., 2: 327.
 21. Ibid., 7: 135 ff. and 268 ff. See also Barocchi, *La vita di Michelangelo*.
 22. Vasari, *Le vite* (1568), 4: 30–31.
 23. For the rhetorical function of these anecdotes and apocryphal stories, see Patricia Lee Rubin, "What Men Saw: Vasari's Life of Leonardo da Vinci and the Image of the Renaissance Artist," *Art History* 13, no. 1 (March 1990): 34–46.
 24. The term *maniera* in *The Lives* may indicate the general style of periods or countries as well as the personal style of an individual master and, at times, assume positive or negative connotations. For Vasari's use of *maniera* and the term's history, see Marco Treves, "Maniera: The History of a Word," *Marsyas* 1 (1941): 69–88. See also John K. G. Shearman, "Maniera as an Aesthetic Ideal," *Studies in Western Art: Acts of the Twentieth International Congress of the History of Art*, vol. 2, *The Renaissance and Mannerism* (1961; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 200–221, especially pp. 205–207; and Martin Kemp, "Equal

- Excellences': Lomazzo and the Explanation of Individual Style in the Visual Arts," *Renaissance Studies* 1 (1987): 1–26.
25. Vasari, *Le vite* (1568), 2: 97.
 26. Ibid., 7: 727. On Vasari's conception of style, see Kallab, *Vasaristudien*, pp. 399 ff.; Schlosser, *La letteratura artistica*, pp. 309 ff.; Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari*, pp. 248 ff. On Vasari's place in the history of connoisseurship and his interest in attribution, see Carol Gibson-Wood, *Studies in the Theory of Connoisseurship from Vasari to Morelli* (New York: Garland, 1988), especially pp. 14–32.
 27. Vasari, *Le vite* (1568), 1: 540–541.
 28. Ibid., 1: 607.
 29. Ibid., 2: 292–293.
 30. See, for instance, Rubin's analysis of the Life of Donatello, *Giorgio Vasari*, especially pp. 330 ff. For the idea that artworks' character and the makers' characters are interdependent, see Rudolf and Margot Wittkower's classic *Born under Saturn: The Character and Conduct of Artists: A Documented History from Antiquity to the French Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1963), pp. 281 ff.; Martin Kemp, "'Ogni dipintore dipinge se': A Neoplatonic Echo in Leonardo's Art Theory?" in Cecil H. Clough, ed., *Cultural Aspects of the Italian Renaissance: Essays in Honour of Paul Oskar Kristeller* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976), pp. 311–323.
 31. Vasari, *Le vite* (1568), 2: 511. Vasari was probably the first to combine Angelico's piety and artistic talent. See Creighton Gilbert, "Fra Angelico's Fresco Cycles in Rome: Their Number and Dates," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 38 (January 1975): 245–265, especially p. 249, n. 14.
 32. Vasari, *Le vite* (1568), 2: 518.
 33. Ibid., 2: 520.
 34. For the artist's birth as a providential event, see, for instance, the incipits of the Lives of Giotto, Brunelleschi, Raphael, and Michelangelo (Vasari, *Le vite* [1568], 1: 370, 2: 328; 4: 315, 7: 135–136), as well as the opening of the Life of Donatello in the Torrentiana (Vasari, *Le vite* [1550], p. 310). For the mythologizing of the artist's youth and the topic of the "childhood miracle," see Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist: A Historical Experiment*, trans. Alastair Laing and Lottie M. Newman, with additional notes

- by Kurz and preface by E. H. Gombrich (1934; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979). See also Paul Barolsky, *Giotto's Father and the Family of Vasari's Lives* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), pp. 20–21; and Rubin's analysis of the Life of Giotto in *Giorgio Vasari*, especially pp. 298 ff.
35. Whereas Sansovino's biography was produced without indication of place and publisher, the *Vita* of Michelangelo was issued in 1568 in Florence by Giunti, the same publisher of *The Lives*. For the *Vita*'s role in building a public image of Michelangelo and Vasari's reasons for publishing it, see Lisa Pon, "Michelangelo's *Lives*: Sixteenth-Century Books by Vasari, Condivi, and Others," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 27, no. 4 (Winter 1996): 1015–1037.
 36. After Vasari, the genre of the collected lives of artists proliferated in Italy and abroad, in the hands of noted writers such as Carlo Ridolfi, Carlo Malvasia, Filippo Baldinucci, Carel van Mander, Joachim von Sandrart, Giovanni Pietro Bellori, André Félibien, and Roger de Piles. Meanwhile, at least until the end of the eighteenth century, only a small number of books devoted to a single artist appeared: Carlo Ridolfi, *Vita di Giacompo Robusti detto il Tintoretto* (Venice: Appresso G. Oddoni, 1642); Filippo Baldinucci, *Vita del Cavalier Giovan Lorenzo Bernino* (Florence: Stamperia di V. Vangelisti, 1682); Jean François Michel, *Histoire de la vie de P. P. Rubens* (Brussels: A. E. de Bel, 1771); Johann Ferdinand Roth, *Leben Albrecht Dürers, des Vaters der deutschen Künstler* (Leipzig: Dyk, 1791). See also Natalie Heinich, "L'accès à la dignité biographique: Les premières mentions de peintres dans les dictionnaires biographiques français," in *Les "vies" d'artistes*, Acts of the International Symposium organized by the Louvre Cultural Service, 1–2 October 1993 (Paris: Musée du Louvre, 1996), pp. 197–203, who cites Eduard Maria Oettinger's *Bibliographie biographique universelle* (Paris: A. Lacroix, 1866) to indicate that in Europe artists were entitled to a monograph after 1700, and in a marginal way up to the mid-nineteenth century.
 37. See Pierre-Jean Mariette's posthumously published papers, *Abecedario de P. J. Mariette et autres notes inédites de cet amateur sur les arts et les artistes*, ed. Ph. de Chennevières and A. de Montaiglon, 6 vols. (Paris: J. -B. Dumoulin, 1851–1860), 4: 259–263.

38. See J. B. Bullen, *The Myth of the Renaissance in Nineteenth-Century Writing* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).
39. On the Louvre's pivotal role in establishing a classification of artworks of all countries according to artists and schools, see Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). On European collections and museums before 1800, see *Les Musées en Europe à la veille de l'ouverture du Louvre*, Acts of the International Symposium organized by the Cultural Service of the Louvre, 3–5 June 1993 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1995). For the progressive distinction between the classification of artworks and natural objects, see Giuseppe Olmi, *L'inventario del mondo: Catalogazione della natura e luoghi del sapere nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1992), pp. 165–209, 300–313.
40. Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy's reflections, in 1796 and 1815, on the museum as a place where artworks are deprived of their significance and become empty simulacra (see note 28 to the introduction) were rare for the nineteenth century. Only during the twentieth century did the realization emerge that museums disconnect art from its genius loci as well as from the world of life. See, for instance, John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Minton, Balch, 1934). Among recent discussions on the museum's removal of art from its living context, see also Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*, with photographs by Louise Lawler (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993).
41. See Hans Belting, *The Invisible Masterpiece*, trans. Helen Atkins (1998; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). On the concept of the masterpiece through the ages, see Walter Cahn, *Masterpieces: Chapters on the History of an Idea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); and Jean Galard and Matthias Waschek, eds., *Qu'est-ce qu'un chef-d'oeuvre?* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000).
42. See Paul Oskar Kristeller, "The Modern System of the Arts" (1951), in Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought II* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 163–227; and Larry Shiner, *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).
43. See Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought II*, and Shiner, *The Invention of Art*. For the contrasting trends in unifying and distinguishing the arts, see

- also Moshe Barasch, *Modern Theories of Art*, vol. 1 (New York: New York University Press, 1990), pp. 146 ff.
44. By “artistry” I mean a repository of norms and judgments of taste underpinning the modern conception of the artwork as an object having a separate status from reality and calling for appreciations that concentrate on its aesthetic value, technical proficiency, and effects of representation.
 45. See Oskar Bätschmann, *The Artist in the Modern World: A Conflict between Market and Self-Expression* (Cologne: Du Mont, 1997). For the history of the first confrontation between artists and a public in the open Salon exhibitions in Paris, see Thomas E. Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). For the new systems of production and reception, see also Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (1992; Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996).
 46. Carl Ludwig Fernow, *Leben des Künstlers Asmus Jakob Carstens, ein Beitrag zur Kunstgeschichte des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1806), pp. ix–x.
 47. *Ibid.*, pp. 301–306.
 48. The distinction between “artisan” and “artist” occurs, for instance, in Claude-Henri Watelet, *Dictionnaire des arts de peinture, sculpture et gravure: Par M. Watelet*, 4 vols. (Paris: L. F. Prault, 1792); see s.v. “Artiste,” 4: 127–146. For the shifts of meaning of the two terms and the word *artefice*, see Luigi Grassi and Mario Pepe, eds., *Dizionario della critica d’arte*, 2 vols. (Turin: Utet, 1978), 1: 52–53. For the introduction of the term “artist” in France, see Nathalie Heinich, *Du peintre à l’artiste: Artisans et académiciens à l’âge classique* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1993). For the new image of the “artist” versus artisan, see Shiner, *The Invention of Art*, pp. 99 ff.
 49. For the critical fortune of *The Lives* during the nineteenth century, see Paola Barocchi’s preface to *Giorgio Vasari: Le vite de’ più eccellenti pittori scultori e architettori nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568. Commento*, ed. Rosanna Bettarini with a commentary by Barocchi, 3 vols. (Florence: Sansoni, 1967–1969), 1: ix–xlv.
 50. See Édouard Pommier, “Winckelmann: Des vies d’artistes à l’histoire de l’art,” in *Les “vies” d’artistes*, pp. 205–230. For an in-depth analysis

- of Winckelmann, see also Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).
51. See Gibson-Wood, *Studies in the Theory of Connoisseurship from Vasari to Morelli*.
 52. See especially Barolsky, *Giotto's Father*, for filiation and family trees among the artists discussed in *The Lives*.
 53. See Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).
 54. See, among others, Edgar Zilsel, *Die Entstehung des Geniebegriffs* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1926); Rudolf Wittkower, "Genius: Individualism in Art and Artists," in Philip P. Wiener, ed., *Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (New York: Scribner, 1973), 2: 297–312; and Giampiero Moretti, *Il genio* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998).
 55. See, in particular, paragraphs 46–49 of Kant's book. Cited from Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 168–182.
 56. See, among others, Meyer Howard Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953); Lilian R. Furst, *Romanticism in Perspective* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1969); Charles Larmore, *The Romantic Legacy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Isaiah Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, ed. Henry Hardy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); and Jean-Marie Schaeffer, *Art of the Modern Age: Philosophy of Art from Kant to Heidegger*, trans. Steven Rendall, with a foreword by Arthur C. Danto (1992; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).
 57. See Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self* and *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992). For the "expressivist" conception of language underpinning the new views of subjectivism, see Isaiah Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism* and *Vico and Herder: Two Studies in the History of Ideas* (London: Hogarth, 1976).

2

One Artist Only

1. Carlo Amoretti, *Memorie storiche su la vita: Gli studi e le opere di Leonardo da Vinci*, in *Trattato della pittura di Leonardo da Vinci* (Milan: Dalla Tipografia di Giusti, Ferrario, e Co., 1804), pp. 7–199.

2. Richard A. Turner, *Inventing Leonardo* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992) shows how Leonardo “went public” around 1800 and indicates that Amoretti’s *Memorie storiche* enhanced the knowledge of Leonardo’s historical specifics (pp. 84 ff). Amoretti was also influenced by Giovanni Battista Venturi’s pioneering work on Leonardo’s scientific thought. On Venturi’s role (for instance, in his *Essai sur les ouvrages physico-mathématiques de Léonard de Vinci* [1797]) in creating the image of Leonardo as an innovative scientist, see Vasilii Pavlovich Zubov, *Leonardo da Vinci*, trans. David H. Krauss (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 287; and Turner, *Inventing Leonardo*, pp. 85–87. Among the documents published by Amoretti are the letter to Ludovico il Moro in which Leonardo lists his skills and talents (the letter allows Amoretti to reach the conclusion, still accepted today, that Leonardo arrived in Milan earlier than Vasari had asserted, around 1483); the sketch of another letter to Ludovico describing the artist’s poor financial situation and the concern for his patron’s imminent ruin; the fragment of April 23, 1490, indicating that Leonardo had resumed working on Francesco Sforza’s monument; Duke Valentino’s patent naming Leonardo as his architect and engineer; and the authentic copy of Leonardo’s will, which Amoretti takes as evidence that his final conversion to Catholicism could not be doubted.
3. See, among others, Luigi Pungileoni’s *Elogio storico di Giovanni Santi pittore e poeta padre del gran Raffaello di Urbino* (Urbino: Vincenzo Guerrini, 1822); *Elogio storico di Raffaello Santi da Urbino* (Urbino: Vincenzo Guerrini, 1829–1832); *Memoria intorno alla vita ed alle opere di Donato o Donnino Bramante* (Rome: Tip. Ferretti, 1836).
4. Luigi Pungileoni, *Memorie istoriche di Antonio Allegri detto il Correggio*, 3 vols. (Parma: Dalla Stamperia Ducale, 1817–1821).
5. See Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy, *Canova et ses ouvrages ou mémoires historiques sur la vie et les travaux de ce célèbre artiste* (Paris: A. Le Clerc, 1824); Melchiorre Missirini, *Della vita di Antonio Canova: Libri quattro compilati da Melchior Missirini* (Prato: Frat. Giachetti, 1824); John Memes, *Memoirs of Antonio Canova with a Critical Analysis of His Works* (Edinburgh: A. Constable & Co., 1825).
6. See Christopher M. S. Johns, *Antonio Canova and the Politics of Patronage in Revolutionary and Napoleonic Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 195–200.

7. See Isabella Teotochi Albrizzi, *Opere di scultura e di plastica di Antonio Canova* (Pisa: N. Capurro, 1821), pp. 61–62.
8. On Cicognara, see, among others, Rosario Assunto, “Leopoldo Cicognara: Teorico e storico dell’estetica,” *Ateneo Veneto*, n.s. 10 (1972): 3–17; Francis Haskell, “Leopoldo Cicognara e la cultura nel Neoclassicismo,” in *Venezia nell’età del Canova 1750–1830*, exh. cat. (Venice: Alfieri, 1978), pp. 319–20; Francesca Fedi, *L’ideologia del bello: Leopoldo Cicognara e il classicismo fra Settecento e Ottocento* (Milan: F. Angeli, 1990).
9. See Leopoldo Cicognara, *Biografia di Antonio Canova* (Venice: G. Mis-siaglia, 1823), pp. 15 ff.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 25–26.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
12. On Duppa, see Francis Haskell, “Michelangelo and Some of His Biographers,” *Times Literary Supplement*, no. 3828 (25 July 1975): 842–844.
13. Richard Duppa, *The Life of Michel Angelo Buonarroti with His Poetry and Letters*, 2d ed. (1806; London: J. Murray, 1807). Throughout the *Life*, Duppa availed himself of translations of Michelangelo’s poetry by Robert Southey and William Wordsworth. Duppa probably commissioned them, since these were the first publications of the kind, and the writers had done no previous translations. For the English translations of Michelangelo’s poetry, see Creighton Gilbert, “Michael Angelo’s Poetry in English Verse,” *Italica* 22, no. 4 (December 1945): 180–195; and Gilbert’s addenda and cross index in *Italica* 24, no. 1 (March 1947): 46–53. For the *Life*’s stimulation of interest in Michelangelo’s poems in England, see Lene Østermark-Johansen, *Sweetness and Strength: The Reception of Michelangelo in Late Victorian England* (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1998), especially p. 35.
14. See Giorgio Melchiori, *Michelangelo nel Settecento inglese* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1950); and Østermark-Johansen, *Sweetness and Strength*.
15. Duppa, *The Life of Michel Angelo Buonarroti*, p. 200.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 201–202.
17. Anonymous, “The Life of Michel Angelo Buonarroti with His Poetry and Letters,” *Monthly Review*, 2d ser., 61 (January 1810): 43.

18. "Notices of the Life and Works of Titian," *Eclectic Review*, 3d ser., 2 (September 1829): 239.
19. On Hume, see Denys Sutton, "Aspects of British Collecting," part 2, *Apollo* 116, no. 250 (December 1982): 396-398. See also Francis Haskell, *Rediscoveries in Art: Some Aspects of Taste, Fashion and Collecting in England and France* (1976; Oxford: Phaidon, 1980), p. 47.
20. Anonymous [Abraham Hume], *Notices of the Life and Works of Titian* (London: William Nicol, 1829), p. 70.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-107.
22. Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovan Battista Cavalcaselle, *Titian: His Life and Times*, 2 vols. (London: J. Murray, 1877), 1: ix. On this monograph, see chapter 5.
23. James Northcote, *The Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1819). The *Life* was reprinted with an introduction by Ronald W. Lightbown, who discusses Northcote and the gestation and reception of the biography (London: Cornmarket Press, 1971).
24. See James Northcote, *The Life of Titian, with Anecdotes of the Distinguished Persons of His Time*, 2 vols. (London: H. Colburn and R. Bentley, 1830), 1: 95 ff., 151 ff., 187 ff.
25. Far from evoking a lively image of Titian and his contemporaries, the book attracted criticism upon its publication; see, for instance, the anonymous review "The Life of Titian," *Monthly Review* 15, New and Improved Series (December 1830): 495.
26. Committed to making readers better acquainted with the protagonist than were most of the people who actually knew him, Boswell set an unprecedented standard in the history of literary biography. See, among others, John Arthur Garraty, *The Nature of Biography* (New York: Knopf, 1957), pp. 83, 93 ff.; Richard Daniel Altick, *Lives and Letters: A History of Literary Biography in England and America* (New York: Knopf, 1969), pp. 46-74; Daniel Madelénat, *La biographie* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1984), pp. 56, 86, 99.
27. See *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, ed. George Birbeck Hill and Lawrence Fitzroy Powell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), 1: 31-33.
28. See, among others, Thomas Wright, *Some Account of the Life of Richard Wilson* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1824); Alexander Gilchrist, *Life of William Etty* (London: D. Bogue,

- 1855) and *Life of William Blake*, completed by Anne Gilchrist, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1863); Walter Thornbury, *The Life of J. M. W. Turner*, 2 vols. (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1862); and *Life and Times of Sir Joshua Reynolds with Notes of Some of His Contemporaries*, begun by Charles Robert Leslie and completed by Tom Taylor, 2 vols. (London: J. Murray, 1865).
29. Charles Robert Leslie, *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1843). Cited from the reprint of the second edition, *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable*, with introduction and notes by J. Mayne (1845; London: Phaidon Press, 1995).
 30. *Ibid.*, p. 230.
 31. On Fernow, see Herbert von Einem, *Carl Ludwig Fernow: Eine Studie zum deutschen Klassicismus* (Berlin: Deutscher Verein für Kunstwissenschaft, 1935).
 32. Carl Ludwig Fernow, *Leben des Künstlers Asmus Jakob Carstens, ein Beitrag zur Kunstgeschichte des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1806), pp. v–vi, xv–xvii.
 33. *Ibid.*, pp. ix–x.
 34. *Ibid.*, pp. 205–206. The statement is also reported by Oskar Bätschmann, *The Artist in the Modern World: A Conflict between Market and Self-Expression* (Cologne: Du Mont, 1997), pp. 64–66, who analyzes Carstens's quarrel with Heinitz and Fernow's interpretation of it.
 35. See Jan Białostocki, *Dürer and His Critics, 1500–1971: Chapters in the History of Ideas* (Baden-Baden: V. Koerner, 1986), pp. 51 ff., 65 ff. Vasari provided the first list of Dürer's graphic work. In turn, van Mander gave the first list of some of Dürer's major paintings in his *Het Leven* of 1604.
 36. For Raphael and Dürer's charismatic roles in German romanticism, see Jan Białostocki, "Raffaello e Dürer come personificazioni di due ideali artistici nel romanticismo," in Micaela Sambucco Hamoud and Maria Letizia Strocchi, eds., *Studi su Raffaello*, 2 vols., Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Studi, Urbino and Florence, 6–14 April 1984 (Urbino: Quattroventi, 1987), I: 133–143.
 37. See Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder and Ludwig Tieck, *Herzensergiessungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* (Berlin: Bey Johann Friedrich Unger, 1797), reprinted in Wackenroder, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*:

- Historisch-kritisch Ausgabe*, ed. Silvio Vietta and Richard Littlejohns, 2 vols. (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1991), 1: 51–146. The image of Raphael and Dürer hand in hand appears in the 1796 “Ehrengedächtniss unsers ehrwürdigen Ahnhern Albrecht Dürers. Von einem kunstliebenden Klosterbruder” (ibid., p. 95).
38. See Matthias Mende, *Dürer-Bibliographie* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1971), p. 288.
 39. Adam Weise, *Albrecht Dürer und sein Zeitalter: Ein Versuch* (Leipzig: Gleditsch, 1819), pp. 56–57.
 40. “Biographie Albrecht Dürers,” *Kunst-Blatt*, no. 88 (1 November 1821): 352.
 41. Besides the unfinished project on Dürer and two studies on Cranach, *Lucas Cranach’s Leben und Wirken* (Bamberg: Kunz, 1822) and *Versuch über das Leben und die Werke Lucas Cranach’s* (Bamberg: Kunz, 1821), Heller’s publications focused on prints: *Geschichte der Holzschnidekunst* (Bamberg: Kunz, 1823); *Praktisches Handbuch für Kupferstichsammler* (Bamberg: Kunz, 1823–1825); and *Zusätze zu Adam Bartsch’s Le Peintre Graveur* (Bamberg: Kunz, 1844).
 42. Like Weise and other writers of the period, Heller believed that Dürer had produced sculptures. See Fedja Anzelewsky, *Dürer: His Art & Life*, trans. Heide Grieve (1971; Secaucus: Chartwell Books, 1980), especially p. 148, who argues there is no proof that Dürer worked as a sculptor.
 43. See Heller’s preface in *Das Leben und die Werke Albrecht Dürer’s. Des zweyten Bandes erste Abtheilung. Dürer’s Zeichnungen—Gemälde—Plastische Arbeiten* (Bamberg: Kunz, 1827); on the drawing and watercolor catalogue entries, see pp. 12–134. The second tome is *Dürer’s Bildnisse—Kupferstiche—Holzschnitte und die nach ihm gefertigten Blätter* (Bamberg: Kunz, 1827), and the third *Dürer’s gedruckte Werke, Schriften mit Abbildungen von und nach Dürer, mit historischen und bibliographischen Anmerkungen, Medaillen auf Dürer und nach Dürer* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1831).
 44. There were two immediate problems with this approach: first, the danger that, unable to see the works directly, Heller might report a single work as several different ones, having found it mentioned in different sources; and second, that in citing auction catalogues and

- distant sources, he could trace a work's provenance but not necessarily its present location.
45. "Künstlerbiographien," *Kunst-Blatt*, no. 79 (1 October 1829): 313–316; no. 80 (5 October 1829): 317–319; no. 81 (8 October 1829): 324; and no. 82 (12 October 1829): 325–326.
 46. *Ibid.*, no. 79 (1 October 1829): 313.
 47. *Ibid.*, no. 81 (8 October 1829): 324.
 48. See Gabriele Bickendorf, *Der Beginn der Kunstgeschichtsschreibung unter dem Paradigma "Geschichte": Gustav Friedrich Waagen Fruhschrift "Ueber Hubert und Johann van Eyck"* (Worms: Wernersche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1985). On the German tradition of philosophers and art historians (from Kant to Panofsky) who rethought the visual arts in terms of critical history, see Michael Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).
 49. See Bickendorf, *Der Beginn der Kunstgeschichtsschreibung*; Alfred Woltmann, "Gustav Friedrich Waagen: Eine biographische Skizze," in Gustav Friedrich Waagen, *Kleine Schriften* (Stuttgart: Ebner and Seubert, 1875); Wilhelm Waetzoldt, *Deutsche Kunsthistoriker*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Seeman, 1924), 2: 29–45; Udo Kultermann, *Geschichte der Kunstgeschichte: Der Weg einer Wissenschaft* (Düsseldorf and Vienna: Econ-Verlag, 1966), pp. 92–93; "Gustav Friedrich Waagen: First Director of the Berlin Gallery," editorial, *Apollo* 102, no. 166 (December 1975): 396–403; Heinrich Dilly, *Kunstgeschichte als Institution: Studien zur Geschichte einer Disziplin* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1979), especially pp. 190ff.; and the papers from the Waagen Symposium (Berlin, 1994) published in *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 37 (Berlin: Gebr. Mann., 1995).
 50. Gustav Friedrich Waagen, *Kunstwerke und Künstler in England und Paris*, 3 vols. (Berlin: In der Nicolaischen Buchhandlung, 1837–1839); *Treasures of Art in Great Britain: Being an Account of the Chief Collections of Paintings, Drawings, Sculptures, Illuminated Mss.*, trans. E. R. Eastlake, 3 vols. (London: J. Murray, 1854–1857).
 51. See "Gustav Friedrich Waagen"; Francis Haskell, "The Growth of British Art History and Its Debts to Europe," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 74 (1988): 203–224; Wolfgang Beyrodt, "Kunstreisen durch

- England: Anmerkungun zu J. D. Passavant und G. F. Waagen,” *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft* 46 (1992): 55–58; and Gordon Waterfield and Florian Illies, “Waagen in England,” *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 37 (1995): 47–59.
52. See Sulpiz Boisserée, “Über Hubert und Johann van Eyck von Dr. Gustav Friedrich Waagen,” *Kunst-Blatt*, no. 54 (7 July 1823): 213–216; no. 55 (10 July 1823): 217–219; no. 56 (14 July 1823): 222–224; Carl Schnaase, “Nachruf auf Gustav Friedrich Waagen,” *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1868), 3: 257–261; and Waetzoldt, who in 1924 maintained that Waagen “created in this book the model for monographical treatment on a small scale” (*Deutsche Kunst-historiker*, 2: 39).
 53. For Rumohr’s role in the history of art history and his 1831 monograph on Raphael, see chapter 3.
 54. Gustav Friedrich Waagen, *Ueber Hubert und Johann van Eyck* (Breslau: J. Max, 1822), p. iv.
 55. *Ibid.*, pp. 26–27: “Once one has gained a clear insight from the direction and artistic development of a people . . . it is also the moment to appreciate all that in which . . . every individual artist differentiates himself and appears as a self-contained individuality. With this representation of the artistic character of the individual, one must consider his place of birth, the circumstances of his life, his disposition, since they contribute to our understanding of his style in art, just as the political history, the constitution, etc. contribute to the artistic orientation of a people.”
 56. *Ibid.*, pp. 27–28.
 57. *Ibid.*, p. v and note. Waagen saw the panels from the *Adoration of the Lamb* at the Louvre in 1814; the works in galleries and churches at Brussels, Ghent, Bruges, Leyden, Amsterdam, Munich, and Schleissheim; and works in the important collection of Sulpiz and Melchior Boisserée and their friend Johann Baptist Bertram in Heidelberg.
 58. For Waagen’s place in connoisseurship, see Waetzoldt, *Deutsche Kunst-historiker*, 2: 13 ff.; Gabriele Bickendorf, “Die Tradition der Kennerschaft: Von Lanzi über Rumohr und Waagen zu Morelli,” in Giacomo Agosti, Maria Elisabetta Manca, Matteo Panzeri, and Marisa Dalai

- Emiliani, eds., *Giovanni Morelli e la cultura dei conoscitori*, Acts of the International Symposium, Bergamo, 4–7 June 1987, 3 vols. (Bergamo: P. Lubrina, 1993), 1: 25–47.
59. Jan's reputation as the inventor of oil painting is mentioned in Vasari's Life of Antonello da Messina, and before that in Bartolomeo Fazio's *De viris illustribus* (c. 1457). However, in his treatise on painting Cennino Cennini revealed that, before Van Eyck, oil was used by boiling or exposing it to the sun before mixing it. Finding this part of Vasari's Life of Van Eyck to be false, Waagen set about to verify other information given as fact, including Antonello's journey to the Netherlands after seeing Van Eyck's *Adoration of the Magi* at the court of Alfonso, king of Naples.
 60. Waagen, *Ueber Hubert und Johann van Eyck*, pp. 124–125. As to when Jan made this improvement, while Vasari and van Mander respectively give the years 1410 and 1450, Waagen suggests that it occurred in between these two dates, citing a *Head of Christ* dated 1420 that was already painted in oil, pp. 127–128.
 61. Ibid., p. 129.
 62. For the whole point, see also Bickendorf, *Der Beginn der Kunstgeschichtsschreibung*, p. 140.
 63. See Waagen, *Ueber Hubert und Johann van Eyck*, pp. 139–164.
 64. The analysis of artworks according to these basic components of painting recurred in nineteenth-century monographs, especially those of the turn of the century. This approach was not constant in Vasari's *Lives*, but originated in the writings of his contemporaries, such as Francesco Lancillotti, Paolo Pino, and Ludovico Dolce. See Julius Schlosser's *Die Kunstliteratur* (1925), cited from its latest edition, *La letteratura artistica*, trans. Filippo Rossi, 3d ed., updated by Otto Kurtz (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1964), pp. 231 ff., 392–393. For the division of painting in Pino and Lancillotti and its roots in classical rhetoric, see Creighton Gilbert, "Antique Frameworks for Renaissance Art Theory: Alberti and Pino," *Marsyas* 3 (1943–1945): 87–106; see also Robert Williams, *Art, Theory, and Culture in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
 65. Waagen, *Ueber Hubert und Johann van Eyck*, p. 142. In 1833 Waagen published in von Raumer's *Historisches Taschenbuch* an essay on Rubens,

“Ueber den Maler, Petrus Paulus Rubens,” that explicitly conflates biographical and artistic identities. Waagen revised the essay and published it in London, with a preface by Mrs. Jameson, as *Peter Paul Rubens: His Life and Genius* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1840). After describing Rubens’s life and the state of painting in the Netherlands, Waagen argues: “To the man’s individual nature we may trace the most striking characteristics of the painter, his turn for dramatic conception, his loose and sketchy treatment. To the jovial, buoyant hilarity of his temper, we owe his decided taste for the powerful, the coarse, the sensual, which allowed him but seldom to approach to a finer appreciation of form, and, only in some few instances, to the dignified expression of elevated and noble, or even of soft and gentle characters” (p. 54).

66. Waagen, *Ueber Hubert und Johann van Eyck*, pp. 195 ff.
67. Introducing the undated pictures, Waagen hints at his method. Moving from the known to the unknown by combining written and visual evidence, he intends to assign a chronological order also to pictures with unsettled dates. See *ibid.*, pp. 205–206.
68. Four versions of this “St. Luke Madonna” from the 1400s have survived, in Munich, St. Petersburg (Hermitage), Bruges (Groeninge Museum), and Boston (Museum of Fine Arts). The latter is now considered the first version, whereas the Munich painting is regarded as the most accurate copy, executed in Rogier’s circle. See Dirk De Vos, *Rogier van der Weyden*, trans. T. Alkins (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999), pp. 200–205.
69. Waagen, *Ueber Hubert und Johann van Eyck*, pp. 210–211.
70. See also Bickendorf, *Der Beginn der Kunstgeschichtsschreibung*, pp. 126–127, who sees a correspondence between Waagen’s definition of national character through the presentation of the country’s attributes and his “bourgeois” definition of Jan’s artistic character through its main and synonymous features of “individuell” and “nach der Natur.” In this way Waagen could establish why Jan earned a place in the national history of Flemish art.
71. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, introduction by Margaret Canovan, 2d ed. (1959; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 176.

72. Ibid., p. 177.
73. Ibid., p. 178.
74. See Jean-Luc Nancy's introduction to Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, and Jean-Luc Nancy, eds., *Who Comes after the Subject?* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 7–8.
75. Peter Sloterdijk, *Sphären I: Blasen* (1998; Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2000), p. 40.

3

The Oeuvre

1. See Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, vol. 2 (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1959), p. 373.
2. See especially Patricia Lee Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari: Art and History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 357–401.
3. Giorgio Vasari, *Le Vite* (1568), in *Le opere*, ed. Gaetano Milanesi (Florence: G. C. Sansoni, 1878–1885), 4: 315.
4. Ibid., 6: 317–318.
5. Ibid., 6: 372.
6. See Zygmunt Ważbiński, “L'idée de l'histoire dans la première et la second édition des *Vies* de Vasari,” in *Il Vasari storiografo e artista*, Acts of the International Symposium for the Fourth Centenary of the Death of Vasari (Florence: Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento, 1976), pp. 1–25, especially p. 12.
7. Vasari, *Le Vite* (1568), 4: 375.
8. Ibid., p. 377.
9. Ibid., pp. 378–379.
10. Vasari was responding to Condivi, who in his Life of Michelangelo wrote that Michelangelo praised Raphael but remarked that his art depended on study instead of “natura.” See Ascanio Condivi, *Vita di Michelagnolo Buonarroti*, ed. Giovanni Nencioni, with essays by M. Hirst and C. Elam (1553; Florence: Studio per Edizioni Scelte, 1998), pp. 5–6. For Vasari's response to Condivi, see also Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari*, p. 399.
11. On these oscillations in German literature, see Manfred Ebhardt, *Die Deutung der Werke Raffaels in der deutschen Kunstliteratur von Klassizis-*

- mus und Romantik* (Baden–Baden: V. Koerner, 1972). For the reception of Raphael through the centuries, see *Raffaello, elementi di un mito: Le fonti, la letteratura artistica, la pittura di genere storico*, exh. cat., Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana (Florence: Centro Di, 1984).
12. See Johann Joachim Winckelmann, “Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildauer Kunst” (1756), in *Kunsttheoretische Schriften* (Baden–Baden: Heitz, 1962), pp. 9–10 and 26–27; Anton Raphael Mengs, “Riflessioni di Antonio Raffaello Mengs sopra i tre grandi pittori Raffaello, Correggio, e Tiziano,” in *Opere di Antonio Raffaello Mengs*, 2 vols. (Bassano: A spese Remondini di Venezia, 1783), 1: 131; and Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, “Raphaels Erscheinung,” in *Herzensergiessungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* (1797), cited in W. H. Wackenroder, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe: Historisch-kritisch Ausgabe*, ed. S. Vietta and R. Littlejohns, 2 vols. (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1991), 1: 55–58.
 13. See Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, trans. with an introduction and additional notes by Philip Barnard and Cheryl Lester (1978; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988).
 14. Georg Christian Braun, *Raphael Sanzio's von Urbino Leben und Werke* (Wiesbaden: Schellenberg, 1815), pp. 78–281. The six classes are historical subjects, allegorical subjects with either mythological or mystical connotations, drawings and sketches of mythical images, representations from human life, decorations, and portraits.
 15. *Ibid.*, pp. 84–108.
 16. *Ibid.*, pp. 119–120.
 17. Friedrich Rehberg, *Rafael Sanzio aus Urbino* (Munich: Fleischmann, 1824), p. 31. The unreliability of this Wackenroderish letter is discussed in Ettore Camesasca, ed., *Raffaello, gli scritti: Lettere, firme, sonetti, saggi tecnici e teorici* (Milan: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, 1994), pp. 168–169.
 18. On Quatremère, see René Schneider, *L'esthétique classique chez Quatremère de Quincy* (Paris: Hachette et Cie., 1910); and Sylvia Lavin, *Quatremère de Quincy and the Modern Language of Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992).
 19. Antoine–Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy, *Histoire de la vie et des ouvrages de Raphaël* (Paris: C. Gosselin, 1824), p. 44.

20. Ibid., p. 221.
21. Ibid., p. 132.
22. Ibid., p. 284.
23. See Heinrich Wilhelm Schulz, *Karl Friedrich von Rumohr: Sein Leben und seine Schriften* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1844); Julius von Schlosser's introduction to a reprint of *Italianische Forschungen* (Frankfurt, 1920), pp. v–xxxviii; Wilhelm Waetzoldt, *Deutsche Kunsthistoriker*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Seeman, 1921–1924), 1: 292 ff.; Udo Kultermann, *Geschichte der Kunstgeschichte: Der Weg einer Wissenschaft* (Vienna: Econ-Verlag, 1966), pp. 161 ff.; Heinrich Dilly, *Kunstgeschichte als Institution: Studien zur Geschichte einer Disziplin* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1979); Michael Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), especially pp. 27–30; and Carol Gibson-Wood, *Studies in the Theory of Connoisseurship from Vasari to Morelli* (New York: Garland, 1988), pp. 152 ff.
24. Carl Friedrich von Rumohr, “Ueber Raphael von Urbino und dessen nähere Zeitgenossen,” cited from his *Italianische Forschungen*, vol. 3 (Berlin: Nicolai'sche Buchhandlung, 1827–1831), pp. iv–v.
25. Ibid., pp. 14–15.
26. Ibid., pp. 16–17.
27. For an English translation of Goethe's essay, see *Goethe: The Collected Works*, vol. 3, *Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. John Gearey, trans. Ellen von Nardroff and Ernest H. von Nardroff (New York: Suhrkamp Publishers, 1989), pp. 71–74. For Goethe, “Through imitation of nature . . . the artist finally reaches the point where he becomes increasingly familiar with the characteristic and essential features of things. . . . While simple imitation therefore depends on a tranquil and affectionate view of life, manner is a reflection of the ease and competence with which the subject is treated. Style, however, rests on the most fundamental principle of cognition, on the essence of things—to the extent that it is granted us to perceive this essence in visible and tangible forms” (p. 72).
28. Rumohr, “Ueber Raphael,” p. 18.
29. Ibid., p. 21: “Style . . . can be learned as something belonging to the artist's craft, by reflective observation and practical imitation. Raphael Dal Colle, Domenico Alfani, Giulio Romano and others were never

able to reach the objectivity of their master . . . because his fortunate combination of loving devotion and clear understanding was based on abilities and formative life experiences which could not have been brought about intentionally.”

30. Rumohr’s account of Raphael’s early production has been superseded by later scholarship, beginning with Passavant’s monograph of 1839; see the next section of this chapter (pp. 91–107). For the difficulties met in the 1800s as well as now in reconstructing Raphael’s formative period, see Sylvia Ferino Pagden, “The Early Raphael and His Umbrian Contemporaries,” *Studies in the History of Art* 17 (1986): 93–107.
31. Rumohr, “Ueber Raphael,” pp. 51–52: “In the strong tone of the coloring of the whole, the face of the Virgin, the relationship of the inner parts of the face with the full outline of many other heads, there is much that reminds one of the oldest paintings of Raphael, which are without doubt not to be derived from the model or instruction of Perugino. On the other hand, the characters of the apostles develop out of Pietro’s favorite or accustomed imaginings. There is, finally, the desire to lend the figures more vitality, movement, and gracefulness. . . . According to all these indications the painting was . . . later than the *Sposalizio*, completed toward the end of 1504, or, precisely, at the beginning of the following year.”
32. Ibid., pp. 58–60.
33. Ibid., p. 98.
34. See Mengs, “Riflessioni di Antonio Raffaello Mengs,” pp. 144–145. A few years later Luigi Lanzi discussed the artist’s early activity so as to show his inborn natural talent; see Lanzi, *Storia pittorica d’Italia*, vol. 1 (1790; Florence: Marchini, 1834), pp. 42–43. The Vasarian notion of Raphael’s inborn talent reappeared in Wackenroder’s *Herzensergiessungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* (1797). See “Der Schüler und Raphael,” in Wackenroder, *Sämtliche Werke*, 1: 69.
35. See Friedrich Schlegel, *Gemälde alter Meister*, with a commentary and epilogue by Hans Eichner and Norma Lelless, 2d ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995), pp. 41–42.
36. See Adolph Cornill, “Johann David Passavant. Ein Lebensbild. Erste Abtheilung nebst Passavant’s Mittheilungen über seine Familie,” in

Neujahrs-Blatt, den Mitgliedern des Vereins für Geschichte und Alterthums-kunde zu Frankfurt am Main dargebracht im Januar 1864 (Frankfurt am Main: Im Selbstverlage des Vereins, 1864), pp. 1–78, and “Zweite Abtheilung: Passavant wird Kunstforscher,” in *ibid.* (1865), pp. 1–112. See also Waetzoldt, *Deutsche Kunsthistoriker*, 2: 14–29; Lionello Venturi, *History of Art Criticism*, trans. Charles Marriott (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1936), pp. 235–236. Elisabeth Schröter analyzes the cultural and artistic contexts of Passavant’s *Rafael* in “Raffael-Kult und Raffael-Forschung: Johann David Passavant und seine Raffael-Monographie im Kontext der Kunst und Kunstgeschichte seiner Zeit,” *Römisches Jahrbuch der Biblioteca Hertziana*, vol. 26 (Tübingen: Ernst Wasmuth Verlag, 1990), 303–397.

37. Many entries, for example, in Leopold Dussler, *Raphael: A Critical Catalogue of His Pictures, Wall-Paintings and Tapestries*, trans. Sebastian Cruft (1966; London and New York: Phaidon, 1971), evince the continuing strength of Passavant’s attributions. For responses to *Rafael* by Passavant’s contemporaries, see, among others, the anonymous review “Raffael von Urbino und sein Vater Giovanni Santi,” *Kunst-Blatt*, no. 47 (11 June 1840): 193–194; and Charles Eastlake, “Rafael von Urbino und sein Vater Giovanni Santi von J. D. Passavant, Leipzig 1839,” *Quarterly Review*, vol. 66 (June–September 1840): 1–48.
38. The French “oeuvre” acquired this meaning by the late seventeenth century. See, for instance, the *Dictionnaire Universel . . . Recueilli & compilé par feu Messire Antoine Furetière, Abbé de Chalivoy, de l’Académie Française*, vol. 2 (1690; Paris: SNL-Le Robert, 1978), p. liii: “A l’égard des Peintres & graveurs, on appelle l’oeuvre d’un Maistre, le recueil de toutes les pièces gravées qu’on trouve.” Until the end of the eighteenth century, “oeuvre” did not denote a group of paintings or sculptures. Claude-Henri Watelet remarked that “comme se mot signifie une collection, il ne s’emploie pas en parlant des ouvrages de peinture ou de sculpture, parce que ces ouvrages sont répandus en divers lieux, & non rassemblés en un seul cabinet”; see *Dictionnaire des Arts de Peinture, Sculpture et Gravure Par M. Watelet*, vol. 3 (Paris: L. F. Prault, 1792), p. 633.
39. The old use of *oeuvre*, in reference to an artist’s graphic works only, has endured in the print field, but the shift toward its more comprehensive meaning can be traced back to the nineteenth century. See, for

instance, *Trésor de la langue française: Dictionnaire de la langue du XIX et du XX siècle (1789–1960)*, vol. 2 (Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1960), p. 432: “Ensemble des compositions (d’un écrivain, d’un artiste, d’un savant, d’une école, parfois dans un genre ou un laps de temps donné).” The term “oeuvre” does not appear in English dictionaries until the twentieth century, but its modern meaning is clear in contemporary English; see the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed., vol. 10, s.v. “oeuvre”: “the corpus of work produced by an artist, composer, or writer, considered as a whole. . . . Hence *oeuvre-catalogue*, a catalogue of an artist’s complete work.”

40. Passavant’s association with the changing meaning of the word *oeuvre* can be supported by his involvement in a catalogue of Leonardo’s works published by Marc Jérôme Rigollot (1796–1854), *Catalogue de l’oeuvre de Léonard de Vinci* (Paris: Chez Dumoulin, 1849). This book’s title represents one of the earliest applications of *oeuvre* in the modern sense. After 1850, especially in France, the word began to resonate with its new meaning. For example, Charles Blanc, in his Rembrandt catalogue, considering that the artworks cover various media, proposes using the term *oeuvre* to denote not only the graphic production of the artist but also his paintings; see *L’oeuvre complet de Rembrandt*, vol. 2 (Paris: Gide, 1859–1861), pp. 373–374. Finally, *oeuvre* clearly means the whole of the artist’s works in Charles Baudelaire’s essay “L’Oeuvre et la vie d’Eugène Delacroix,” published in 1863 in *L’Opinion nationale*.
41. Connoisseurs such as Pierre-Jean Mariette and Carl Heinrich von Heineken participated in this literary trend, which culminated at the start of the nineteenth century with Adam Bartsch, the curator of the print room at the Belvedere Palace, Vienna. Grouping engravings and woodcuts by artist and on the basis of personal scrutiny in his *Le peintre graveur*, 21 vols. (Vienna: Degen, 1803–1821), Bartsch improved the knowledge of prints by masters of all schools and established a concrete status for the catalogue raisonné and the oeuvre-catalogue. Passavant linked himself with the tradition of the catalogue raisonné and oeuvre-catalogue of prints in publishing six volumes meant to continue and emend Bartsch’s *Le peintre graveur*; see Johann David Passavant, *Le peintre graveur*, 6 vols. (Leipzig: Rudolph Weigel, 1860–1864).

42. See, among others, Rudolph Vierhaus, “Bildung,” in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, vol. 1, ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck (Stuttgart: E. Klett, 1972), pp. 508–551; Hans Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode* (1960), trans. of the 1986 revised German edition by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), pp. 9–19; Paola Giacomoni, *Formazione e trasformazione: “Forza” e “Bildung” in Wilhelm von Humboldt e la sua epoca* (Milan: F. Angeli, 1988); Stefano Fabbri Bertoletti, *Impulso formazione e organismo: Per una storia del concetto di Bildungstrieb nella cultura tedesca* (Florence: Olschki, 1990); and Robert J. Richards, *The Romantic Conception of Life: Science and Philosophy in the Age of Goethe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).
43. On the romantic view of “subject-work” as absolute autoproduction of both artist and work, see Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, *The Literary Absolute*.
44. Years later Passavant published a third volume meant as a further appendix to the monograph; see *Rafael von Urbino und sein vater Giovanni Santi*, vol. 3 (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1858). In 1860 a French translation of *Rafael* followed: see *Raphael d’Urbino et son père Giovanni Santi*, trans. Jules Luntenschutz and Paul Lacroix, 2 vols. (Paris: Vve J. Renouard, 1860).
45. Passavant, *Rafael*, 1: 58.
46. *Ibid.*, 1: 75–76.
47. Three panels of the *Pala Colonna* are now at the Metropolitan Museum, New York: *The Eternal between Two Angels*, *Enthroned Madonna and Child with Five Saints*, and *Agony in the Garden*. A *Pietà* is at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston; a *Procession to Calvary* at the National Gallery, London; and *Two Franciscan Saints* at the Dulwich College Picture Gallery, London.
48. Passavant, *Rafael*, 1: 87.
49. *Ibid.*, 1: 91. Goethe’s poem reads:

Ein edler Mensch kann einem engen Kreise
Nicht seine Bildung danken. Vaterland
Und Welt muss auf ihn wirken. Ruhm und Tadel

Muss er ertragen lernen. Sich und andre
 Wird er gezwungen recht zu kennen. Ihn
 Wiegt nicht die Einsamkeit mehr schmeichelnd ein.
 Es will der Feind, es darf der Freund nicht schonen.
 Dann übt der Jüngling streitend seine Kräfte,
 Fühlt was er ist, und fühlt sich bald ein Mann.

50. Ibid., 1: 345.
51. See Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *Über das Verhältniss der bildenden Kunst zu der Natur*, cited from *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. 7 (Stuttgart and Augsburg: Gotta'sher Verlag, 1860), tome 1, pp. 291–329.
52. Passavant refers to Schelling's lecture when commenting on Raphael's capacity to represent strong feelings without undermining beauty in the *Expulsion of Heliodorus*; see Passavant, *Rafael*, 1: 194–196.
53. The notion was pivotal in Schelling's discourse. It recurs in his lecture on the relation between the visual arts and nature as well as in his *System des transcendentalen Idealismus* of 1800 and in the *Philosophie der Kunst* of 1802–1803.
54. Passavant, *Rafael*, 1: 347–348.
55. In his essay "Einfache Nachahmung der Natur, Manier, Stil" (1789), Goethe proposes that, unlike imitation or manner, style rests on "the most fundamental principle of cognition, on the essence of things—to the extent that it is granted us to perceive this essence in visible and tangible forms." See *Goethe: The Collected Works*, 3: 72. In his introduction to *Propylaea* (1798), Goethe claims that "the foremost requirement for an artist will always be that he follow nature, study it, recreate it and bring forth something which resembles it." Ibid., 3: 81.
56. Passavant, *Rafael*, 1: 348, note 1.
57. See Renate Riemeck's introduction and biographical profile in her edition of his writings: Johann Carl Passavant, *Von der Freiheit des Willens* (Stuttgart: Urachhaus, 1981), pp. 7–40.
58. Passavant, *Rafael*, 1: 348.
59. Waetzoldt, *Deutsche Kunsthistoriker*, 2: 27–28. See also Venturi, *History of Art Criticism*, p. 236.
60. Passavant, *Rafael*, 1: xxviii.

61. See *ibid.*, vol. 2.
62. *Ibid.*, 2: 124–125, entry 87.
63. *Ibid.*, 2: 19, entry 16.
64. *Ibid.*, 2: 21, entry 17.
65. *Ibid.*, 2: 24, entry 18.
66. *Ibid.*, 2: 26, entry 19.
67. *Ibid.*, 2: 27, entry 20. This painting's authorship has been questioned by later scholars; see, for instance, Dussler, *Raphael*, p. 60; and Konrad Oberhuber, *Raphael: The Paintings* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 1999), p. 253.
68. Passavant, *Rafael*, 2: 28, entry 21.
69. *Ibid.*, 2: 398, entry 263.
70. *Ibid.*, 2: 73, entry 54.
71. *Ibid.*, 1: 352.
72. See Matthew Bell's *Goethe's Naturalistic Anthropology: Man and Other Plants* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), in particular pp. 192–195. See also Richards, *The Romantic Conception of Life*, especially pp. 325 ff., for Goethe's association between art, nature, and science.
73. I refer, for instance, to Goethe's *Die Metamorphose der Pflanze* (1790), where he sees in the leaf the archetypal configuration foreshadowing the plant's future transformations, and to his essay on the intermaxillary (upper jaw) bone (1786), where, noting a series of analogies among animals, he argues that the human skull must also contain this bone. See *Goethe: The Collected Works*, vol. 12, *Scientific Studies*, pp. 111–116, 76–97.
74. See “The Purpose Set Forth (From *On Morphology*)” (1817), in *Goethe*, 12: 63–64.
75. See Ivar Sagmo, *Bildungsroman und Geschichtsphilosophie: Eine Studie zu Goethes Roman “Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre”* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1982), pp. 81 ff.; and Paola Giacomoni, *Le forme e il vivente: Morfologia e filosofia della natura in J. W. Goethe* (Naples: Guida, 1993). For Goethe's belief in a dynamics common to both the *Bildungstrieb* of plants and the *Denkkraft* of the human mind, see Bell, *Goethe's Naturalistic Anthropology*, p. 264.
76. In surmising such a structure or plan, Goethe's idea of form (explicitly) and Passavant's reconstruction of Raphael's work (implicitly) are

linked to trends in the life sciences of the period. Just as dynamic new classification schemes were being developed in the life sciences, so *Rafael* outstripped the received taxonomy of the catalogue raisonné and the monograph proper with the idea of oeuvre. At the turn of the nineteenth century, scientists such as Georges Cuvier, Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, and Lamarck were reorienting the life sciences toward a vitalistic understanding of their objects rather than pursuing mere classification. For Goethe's relation with scientific thought, see, among others, Giacomoni, *Le forme e il vivente*; Richards, *The Romantic Conception of Life*; and Edward Stuart Russell's *Form and Function: A Contribution to the History of Animal Morphology*, introduction by G. V. Lauder (1916; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) for the claim that Goethe was the first to express in clear terms the idea of the unity of plan (p. 45).

77. For the romantic conception of the artist as absolute figure and the "subject" in its "infinitation" or "absolutation," see Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, *The Literary Absolute*, especially p. 70.

4

The Ascendancy of Biography

1. While the books on Michelangelo are the most representative of this tendency, the focus on biography also affected monographs on other Renaissance artists, particularly Leonardo. For Alexis-François Rio (1797–1874) and Arsène Houssaye (1815–1896), who respectively wrote *Léonard de Vinci et son école* (Paris: A. Bray, 1855) and the *Histoire de Léonard de Vinci* (Paris: Didier, 1869), interest in studying the artist's oeuvre was subordinate to the desire to know about Leonardo's life and personality, praise his worth, and, above all, gain access to the intimate recesses of his mind. For more on these authors in the context of the general rediscovery of Leonardo in Western culture after 1850, see Richard A. Turner, *Inventing Leonardo* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 84 ff.
2. Carlyle's books aimed to be neither biography nor history alone, but history presented biographically. See Waldo Hilary Dunn, *English Biography* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1916), pp. 187 ff.; Richard D.

- Altick, *Lives and Letters: A History of Literary Biography in England and America* (New York: Knopf, 1969), pp. 82 ff.
3. This tendency was likewise influential in the contemporary monographs on Leonardo, where it reached the level of fancy. For example, the Leonardo evoked by Houssaye's *Histoire* is something more than a universal man; see especially p. 322: "His penetrating gaze, his features calm and proud, a disdainful mouth, his majestic hair and beard are those of a sort of hero and god."
 4. The history of the Michelangelo papers at the Casa Buonarroti can be reconstructed from the authors' prefaces to the monographs devoted to the artist after 1850. See also Paola Barocchi's introduction to *Il carteggio di Michelangelo*, posthumous edition by Giovanni Poggi, ed. Paola Barocchi and Renzo Ristori, 5 vols. (Florence: Sansoni, 1965), 1: vii–x; Francis Haskell, "Michelangelo and Some of His Biographers," *Times Literary Supplement*, no. 3828 (25 July 1975): 842–844; and Lene Østermark-Johansen, *Sweetness and Strength: The Reception of Michelangelo in Late Victorian England* (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1998), pp. 21 ff.
 5. On Grimm, see René Strasser, *Herman Grimm: Zum Problem des Klassizismus* (Zurich: Atlantis-Verlag, 1972); Heinrich Wölfflin, "Zur Erinnerung an Herman Grimm," in *Kleine Schriften (1886–1933)*, ed. Joseph Gantner (Basel: B. Schwabe & Co., 1946), pp. 190–197; Udo Kultermann, *Geschichte der Kunstgeschichte: Der Weg einer Wissenschaft* (Düsseldorf and Vienna: Econ-Verlag, 1966), pp. 225–228; Wilhelm Waetzoldt, *Deutsche Kunsthistoriker*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Seeman, 1924), 2: 214–239; and Willibald Sauerlander, "L'Allemagne et la 'Kunstgeschichte,'" *Revue de l'Art*, no. 45 (1979): 4–5.
 6. Grimm played a significant role in introducing Emerson's thinking in Germany. See Frederick William Holls's introduction to the *Correspondence between Ralph Waldo Emerson and Herman Grimm* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1903). On the influence of Carlyle and Emerson on Grimm's vision of great individuals in history, see Waetzoldt, *Deutsche Kunsthistoriker*, 2: 219, and especially Strasser, *Herman Grimm*, pp. 42 ff.
 7. Grimm's statement is cited by Wölfflin in *Kleine Schriften*, pp. 194–195. The two volumes of Ernst Karl Guhl's *Künstler-Briefe* (Berlin,

- 1853 and 1857) offered German translations of documents originally published by Giovanni Bottari, Gualandi, and Johannes Gaye. Grimm arrived in Italy to research his Michelangelo project in 1857.
8. *Leben Michelangelo's* was first published in two volumes, in 1860 and 1863. From that time until 1922, nineteen editions followed in German and translations were made in English and Italian; see Ernst Steinmann and Rudolf Wittkower, *Michelangelo Bibliographie*, 2 vols. (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1967), I: 170–172.
 9. See, for example, Carlyle's first lecture of his *Heroes and Hero-Worship* of 1841: "For, as I take it, Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here." Cited from *Thomas Carlyle's Collected Works*, vol. 12 (London: Chapman and Hall, 1869), p. 3. For Emerson's belief that great men provide great inspiration, see "Representative Men" (1850) in *Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. 2 (Boston: Houghton, Osgood and Company, 1880), p. 17.
 10. Herman Grimm, *Leben Michelangelo's*, 2 vols. (Hanover: Rümpler, 1860–1863), I: 69.
 11. *Ibid.*, 2: 4.
 12. *Ibid.*, 2: 126–127.
 13. *Ibid.*, 2: 338.
 14. *Ibid.*, I: 159.
 15. *Ibid.*, I: 189.
 16. *Ibid.*, I: 193.
 17. *Ibid.*, 2: 281, 354, 534.
 18. *Ibid.*, 2: 543–544.
 19. During the 1870s the word *Erlebnis* entered biographical writings as well as the human sciences, notably in the work of the German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1910), to convey that "experience" is always something one has experienced oneself and which makes a special, lasting impression. Dilthey was the first to assign a conceptual function to the word. Having written *Das Leben Schleiermachers* in 1870, he realized the philosophical worth of biography and, elaborating his theory of *Erlebnis* as key to hermeneutics and historical knowledge, came also to regard aesthetic experience as the essence of experience per se. See Hans Georg Gadamer's *Truth and Method* (1960), English

- trans. of the revised German edition (1986) by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Crossroad, 1989), especially pp. 60ff. For Dilthey's ideas on aesthetic experience, see *Wilhelm Dilthey Selected Works: Poetry and Experience*, vol. 5, ed. Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).
20. As Gadamer indicates (*Truth and Method*, p. 62), Grimm took Goethe's statement that all his poetry had the character of a vast confession as the methodological principle of his biography of Goethe. For instance, Grimm argues, "Many of [Goethe's] works . . . record inward experiences [*Erlebnisse*] so transformed by imagination that . . . various persons in the same story are often repetitions of their author; so that, in many dialogues, it is only Goethe talking with himself. Therefore his works . . . furnish most important material for the story of his life." Cited from Herman Grimm, *The Life and Times of Goethe*, trans. Sarah Holland Adams, 2d ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1881), p. 21.
 21. See Stefano Corsi, "Cronaca di un centenario," in *Michelangelo nell'Ottocento: Il centenario del 1875*, exh. cat. (Milan: Charta, 1994), pp. 13–30.
 22. Gaetano Milanesi, *Le lettere di Michelangelo Buonarroti, edite ed inedite coi ricordi ed i contratti artistici* (Florence: Coi tipi dei successori Le Monnier, 1875). In 1863, Cesare Guasti published Michelangelo's poems from the manuscripts in via Ghibellina; see *Rime di Michel Angelo Buonarroti* (Florence: F. Le Monnier, 1863). Guasti's work made it apparent that, in the first edition of the *Rime* published by Michelangelo the younger in 1623, the latter rewrote many of the poems and changed the sex of the sonnets' addressees, obscuring their meanings and his ancestor's character. When publishing both the originals and the garbled versions of 1623, Guasti also offered his own Italian translation that, while designed to deny any homosexual implications in the texts, perpetuated the confusion about Michelangelo's personality. For twentieth-century editions of Michelangelo's scripts, personal documents, and poetry, see *Il carteggio di Michelangelo. I ricordi di Michelangelo*, ed. Paola Barocchi and Renzo Ristori (Florence: Sansoni, 1963); and *Michelangelo Buonarroti: Rime*, ed. Enzo Noè Girardi (Bari: G. Laterza, 1960).

23. Aurelio Gotti, *Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroti*, 2 vols. (Florence: Tipografia della Gazzetta d'Italia, 1875), 1: iv–v.
24. For example, around the same time of Gotti's monograph, Gustavo Uzielli (1826–1911) produced a documentary compendia useful for reconstructing the life of Leonardo, *Ricerche intorno a Leonardo da Vinci* (Florence, 1872), and *Ricerche intorno a Leonardo da Vinci*, 2nd ser. (Rome: Salviucci, 1884). In Italy this philological tradition continued well into the twentieth century. A remarkable publication of this kind is Vincenzo Golzio's *Raffaello nei documenti, nelle testimonianze dei contemporanei e nella letteratura del suo tempo* (Città del Vaticano: Panetto & Petrelli, 1936).
25. Gotti, *Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroti*, 2: 165. Gotti composed the catalogue with the aid of museum directors and other experts.
26. *Ibid.*, 1: 22. Having heard from Buonarroti of the friar's activities in Florence, Michelangelo wrote back expressing the hope that Savonarola would soon be preaching in Rome so that his prophecies might bring about his canonization. Unless otherwise noted, the documents referred to above were cited by Gotti from the archive in the Casa Buonarroti.
27. *Ibid.*, 1: 43–44.
28. *Ibid.*, 1: 189–196. The first letter, addressed by Michelangelo a few days after his flight to his friend Giovanbattista della Palla, offered a new version of the events. Michelangelo had contemplated for some time the idea of leaving Florence and moving to France when, on September 21, he was approached by someone—unknown to him and left unnamed in the letter—who whispered that there was no time left if he wanted to save his life. After going to Michelangelo's home to arrange for the departure, the unnamed acquaintance escorted the artist out of Florence. The second letter, sent to the artist in Venice by della Palla on October 24, reflects a changed scenario. Convinced of the integrity of his political credo, his fellow citizens had in the meantime invited Michelangelo to return to Florence. Writing immediately after that invitation, Giovanbattista shared with him all his patriotic enthusiasm and hope for an imminent victory.
29. 1: 231–234.

30. Jean Paul Richter, “Die neuen Dokumente über Michelangelo,” part 1, *Zeitschrift für Bildende Kunst* 11 (1876): 56.
31. Hubert Janitschek, “Die Michelangelo-Literatur der Centenarium-Feier,” *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft* 1 (1876): 307.
32. Cited from John Addington Symonds, *The Life of Michelangelo Buonarroti Based on Studies in the Archives of the Buonarroti Family at Florence*, 2d ed., 2 vols. (London: Nimmo, 1893), 1: xx. On Symonds, see Phyllis Grosskurth, *John Addington Symonds: A Biography* (London: Arno Press, 1964); and Creighton Gilbert’s introduction to Symond’s *Life of Michelangelo*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 1: ix–xxxv.
33. See the letter of February 25, 1891, to Janet Ross, in *The Letters of John Addington Symonds*, ed. Herbert M. Schneller and Robert L. Peters, vol. 3 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967–1969), p. 557.
34. See Symonds’s “Life of Michelangelo,” in his *Renaissance in Italy: The Fine Arts*, vol. 3 (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1877), p. 434, note; and appendix 2, devoted to the sonnets, especially pp. 512–513.
35. Kenneth Clark’s view of Symonds’s *Life of Michelangelo*, as cited in Grosskurth, *John Addington Symonds*, p. 350, note.
36. Symonds, *Life of Michelangelo*, 1: 267.
37. Ibid., 1: 274.
38. For a recent attempt in light of Freud’s theory of the unconscious, see Robert S. Liebert, *Michelangelo: A Psychoanalytic Study of His Life and Images* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).
39. Symonds, *Life of Michelangelo*, 1: 117 ff.
40. Ibid., 1: 124.
41. Ibid., 1: 137–141.
42. On homosexuality as an integral aspect of male culture in the social life of Renaissance Florence, see Michael Rocke, *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); for changing views on homosexuality, repression, and the emergence of a subculture in modern Europe, see David F. Greenberg, *The Construction of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 301–345.
43. Symonds, *Life of Michelangelo*, 2: 160.

44. Carlo Parlagreco, *Michelangelo Buonarroti (Il Vecchio)* (Naples: Orfeo, 1888).
45. See Rudolf and Margot Wittkower, *Born under Saturn: The Character and Conduct of Artists: A Documented History from Antiquity to the French Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1963), pp. 98 ff and 286–287.
46. Symonds, *Life of Michelangelo*, 2: 360.
47. Ibid., 2: 363–364.
48. Ibid., 2: 365.
49. Ibid., 2: 372.
50. “The Life of Michel Angelo Buonarroti based on Studies in the Archives of the Buonarroti Family at Florence,” *Athenaeum*, no. 3415 (8 April 1893): 448.
51. A similar approach guides *Léonard de Vinci: L’artiste et le savant. Essai de biographie psychologique* (Paris: Perrin et cie, 1892) by Gabriel Séailles, a philosophy professor at the Sorbonne. Taking art and science as the two equally potent drives of Leonardo’s history, Séailles adopts the monograph form to investigate the mind of Leonardo, whom he regards as the expression of a utopian state of being, a representative man in the Emersonian sense.
52. E. -J. Delécluze, *Louis David, son école et son temps* (Paris: Didier, 1855). This and subsequent citations are from Delécluze, *Louis David, son école et son temps*, foreword and notes by Jean Pierre Mouilleseaux (Paris: Macula, 1983), pp. xxi–xxi. On Delécluze, see Robert Baschet, *E. -J. Delécluze, témoin de son temps, 1781–1863* (Paris: Boivin et cie, 1942); Baschet’s introduction to *Journal de Delécluze* (Paris: B. Grasset, 1948); and Mouilleseaux’s foreword to the 1983 reprint of *Louis David*.
53. See Antoine Schnapper, *David témoin de son temps* (Paris: Bibliothèque des Arts, 1980); Antoine Schnapper and Arlette Sérullaz, eds., *Jacques-Louis David 1748–1825*, exh. cat. (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1989); Régis Michel, ed., *David contre David*, Acts of the Symposium on the artist organized by the Louvre Cultural Service, 6–10 December 1989, 2 vols. (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1993); and Eva Lajer-Burcharth, *Necklines: The Art of Jacques-Louis David after the Terror* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

54. In particular Delécluze drew information from *Vie de David* (Paris, 1826), written by the unidentified A. Th., and from the “Essai sur Louis David . . .” (1827) by P. A. Coupin; for the writer’s list of sources, see Mouilleseaux’s foreword to the 1983 reprint of *Louis David*.
55. See René Verbraeken, *Jacques-Louis David jugé par ses contemporains et par la postérité*, foreword by Louis Hautecouer (Paris: L. Laget, 1973); Antoine Schnapper’s introduction, “David, ses critiques et ses catalogues,” in Schnapper and Sérullaz, *Jacques-Louis David*; and, in particular, Neil McWilliam, “Les David du XIXe siècle,” in Michel, *David contre David*, 2: 1115–1135.
56. See Delécluze, *Louis David*, pp. 175–176. For a recent analysis of *Death of Marat*, illuminating its political significance and inaugural stance in the history of modernism, see Timothy J. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 15–53.
57. Delécluze, *Louis David*, pp. 178–179.
58. Ibid., pp. 123–128.
59. Ibid., chapter 6, especially pp. 133–136.
60. Ibid., p. 325.
61. Ibid., pp. 180–183, 213–216.
62. Ibid., p. 361.
63. On Justi, see Artur Weese, “Carl Justi,” *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, vol. 36 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1913): 157–168; Paul Clemen, *Carl Justi: Gedächtnisrede zur hundertsten Wiederkehr seines Geburtstages* (Bonn: Cohen, 1933); Waetzoldt, *Deutsche Kunsthistoriker*, 2: 239–277; Kultermann, *Geschichte der Kunstgeschichte*, pp. 124–126; Herbert von Einem, “Carl Justi,” *Arcadia: Zeitschrift für vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft* 7, no. 2/3 (1972): 216–230.
64. Waetzoldt, *Deutsche Kunsthistoriker*, 2: 252. See also Weese, “Carl Justi,” p. 157, who speaks of Justi’s eccentric stance in relation to the specific field of art history.
65. Waetzoldt discusses Grimm and Justi in the same section of *Deutsche Kunsthistoriker*, vol. 2, entitled “Die Grossen Biographen.” Kultermann, *Geschichte der Kunstgeschichte*, p. 124, connects them in their tendency to ignore large developments in history and to regard the

art of the past in terms of moments of culmination that coincide with the works of great artists.

66. The French critic Paul Lefort was one of the first to articulate this view in his *Velázquez* (Paris: Librairie de l'Art, 1888).
67. See Carl Justi, *Diego Velazquez und sein Jahrhundert*, 2 vols. (Bonn: M. Cohen, 1888), 1: 4.
68. See Karin Hellwig, "Carl Justi y los comienzos de los estudios sobre arte español en Alemania," introduction to Carl Justi, *Velázquez y su siglo*, trans. J. E. Nuño (Madrid: Istmo, 1999), pp. 7–26.
69. See Justi, *Diego Velazquez*, 1: 284–290. The document is a fictional letter in which the artist describes Rome at the turn of the seventeenth century. This "falsification" of Justi's sources was discovered around 1904 and provoked a stir among German and foreign art historians. In particular, Auguste Bréal in *Velazquez* (London: Duckworth & Co., 1905) vehemently criticized Justi, who argued in reply ("Das Tagesbuch des Velázquez," *Kunstchronik* 17, no. 16 [1905–1906]: 246) that every sensible reader would apprehend that he had never dreamt of passing the letter off as a newly discovered document. See Kultermann, *Geschichte der Kunstgeschichte*, p. 125; and, in particular, Hellwig, "Carl Justi," pp. 24–25.
70. Justi, *Diego Velazquez*, 1: 22 ff.
71. *Ibid.*, 1: 267 ff., and 2: 158 ff.
72. *Ibid.*, 1: 262.
73. *Ibid.*, 1: 421–428.
74. *Ibid.*, 1: 415 ff.
75. *Ibid.*, 1: 354–370.
76. *Ibid.*, 1: 235 ff. For a recent account of the relationship between Velázquez and Rubens, see Jonathan Brown, *Velázquez: Painter and Courtier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).
77. Justi, *Diego Velazquez*, 2: 3 ff.
78. *Ibid.*, 2: 273.
79. *Ibid.*, 2: 123–124. William Bürger (alias Théophile Thoré), to whom Justi refers, was a remarkable French critic and connoisseur who had compiled a catalogue of Velázquez's works for the French translation by G. Brunet, *Velazquez et ses oeuvres* (Paris: Renouard,

1865), of the very first monograph on the Spanish master, William Stirling Maxwell's *Velazquez and His Works* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1855).

80. Justi, *Diego Velazquez*, 2: 412.

5

Sites of Identity

1. The Illustrated Biographies were small and handy. Each volume, bound in decorated green cloth, runs about one hundred pages with an average of twenty illustrations, followed by a chronological table of the events of the artist's life and a thematic catalogue of his works. The series was continued until the late 1920s, when the publisher issued a revised complete edition entitled *The Great Artists*.
2. The book on Donatello, which set the pattern for these French monographs, is a large octavo. The cover of limp parchment is decorated with a border of Renaissance design. The text is over one hundred pages, with forty-eight engravings and references to previous literature on the artist. During the next fifteen years *Les Artistes Célèbres* came to include nearly sixty titles.
3. Each volume of the *Künstler Monographien* offers a text of 100 to 150 pages, about 100 images of various sizes, and sometimes an additional list of the artworks mentioned or a thematic catalogue. Within five years the series had already run to fifty volumes. Its publication endured until 1940, when it featured 150 titles.
4. For example, *Raphael* by N. D'Anvers and *Titian* by Richard Ford Heath, issued in 1879 in the Illustrated Biographies, went to eight and five editions, respectively, before the end of the century. The popular demand for this kind of monograph probably reached its peak in Germany with Knackfuss's *Raffael* of 1895, the first of the *Künstler Monographien*, which had to be printed three times in its first year.
5. At least two similar cases are noteworthy. In England, Lucy E. Baxter, adopting the pseudonym of Laeder Scott, wrote the Illustrated Biographies monographs on Bartolomeo della Porta (1880), Ghiberti and Donatello (1882), and Luca della Robbia (1883); and Maud Cruttwell published monographs in the series of *Great Masters in Painting* and

- Sculpture on Signorelli (1899) and Mantegna (1901); she also wrote two valuable books on Verrocchio (1904) and Pollaiuolo (1907).
6. Already in 1899 Bell's Handbooks of the Great Masters in Painting and Sculpture comprised about fifteen volumes on artists such as Bernardino Luini (by George C. Williamson), Raphael (by Henry Strachey), Correggio (by Selwyn Brinton), and Hans Memling (by James Weale).
 7. Ernst Förster, *Raphael*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Weigel, 1867–1868), vol. 1 (1867), p. xxv.
 8. Ibid., 1: xii.
 9. Ibid., 1: xxiii.
 10. Ibid., 1: xxvi.
 11. Herman Grimm, *Das Leben Raphaels von Urbino. Italienischer Text von Vasari. Übersetzung und Commentar von Herman Grimm. Erster Theil: Bis zur Vollendung der Disputa und Schule von Athen* (Berlin: F. Dümmler, 1872).
 12. Herman Grimm, *Das Leben Raphael's von Herman Grimm. Zweite Ausgabe des ersten Bandes und Abschluss in einem Bande* (Berlin: Hertz, 1886).
 13. Herman Grimm, *Das Leben Raphaels von Herman Grimm. Dritte Ausgabe. Neue Bearbeitung* (Berlin: Hertz, 1896).
 14. "Raphael als Weltmacht," in Herman Grimm, *Fragmente. Zweiter und letzter Theil* (Berlin and Stuttgart: W. Spemann, 1902), pp. 151–184.
 15. Herman Grimm, *Das Leben Raphael's von Herman Grimm* (1886), p. vii.
 16. Eugène Müntz, *Raphaël, sa vie, son oeuvre et son temps* (Paris: Hachette, 1881).
 17. See Enrico Castelnovo, "Attribution," *Encyclopaedia Universalis*, vol. 2 (Paris: Éditeur à Paris, 1968), pp. 780–783; and Carol Gibson-Wood, *Studies in the Theory of Connoisseurship from Vasari to Morelli* (New York: Garland, 1988).
 18. On Clément and his monograph in the history of Géricault studies, see Lorenz Eitner's introduction to *Charles Clément: Géricault* (New York: Da Capo, 1974), pp. v–xv. This book contains an integral reprint of the 1879 edition of *Géricault: Étude biographique et critique avec le catalogue raisonné de l'oeuvre du maître*, from which all my references are taken. On Géricault, see Lorenz Eitner's *Géricault: His Life and Work* (London: Orbis, 1983); and Régis Michel, ed., *Géricault, Acts of the Louvre Symposium on the Artist*, 2 vols. (Paris: Documentation Française, 1996).

19. On Géricault's posthumous reception in France, see Eitner, *Géricault*, pp. 277 ff.; and Bruno Chenique, "Géricault posthume," in Michel, *Géricault*, 2: 937–959.
20. This critical stance was already clear in Clément's essays on Renaissance artists; see Charles Clément, *Michel Ange, Léonard de Vinci, Raphael, avec une étude sur l'art en Italie avant le XVIe siècle* (Paris: Michel Lévy frères, 1861), pp. 43, 170–171.
21. Clément, *Charles Clément: Géricault*, pp. 273–275.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
23. See Richard Shiff, *Cézanne and the End of Impressionism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984). On the concept of "sincerity" and its links with romantic theories of literature in France, see Henri Peyre, *Literature and Sincerity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 111 ff.
24. Clément, *Charles Clément: Géricault*, pp. 9–10.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 47. See also Oskar Bätschmann, "Géricault artiste d'exposition," in Michel, *Géricault*, 2: 679–699.
27. Clément, *Charles Clément: Géricault*, p. 48.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 53–55.
29. In Rome, Géricault made various studies dedicated to the theme of the *Barberi Race*. Two significant versions are now at the Musée des Beaux-Arts of Lille and the Walters Art Gallery of Baltimore.
30. Clément, *Charles Clément: Géricault*, pp. 104–105.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 39–41, 57–58.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 159–161.
34. Even though it would be pointless to speculate that *Géricault* found its direct model in Passavant's *Rafael*, Clément knew that paradigmatic monograph, for he cites it in his Raphael essay (see Clément, *Michel Ange, Léonard de Vinci, Raphael*, pp. 267, 297–298) and gives only a schematic catalogue of Raphael's work, referring readers (p. 381) to Passavant's exhaustive work. It is likewise noteworthy that in 1860, the year when Clément probably started working on his *Géricault*, the translation of the *Rafael* by Jules Luntenschutz, edited by Paul Lacroix, was released in Paris; see *Raphael d'Urbino et son père Giovanni Santi*, 2 vols. (Paris: Vve J. Renouard, 1860).

35. Julius Meyer, *Correggio* (Leipzig: W. Engelmann, 1871), pp. 1–295, 297–512. On Meyer, see Wilhelm Bode, “Julius Meyer,” *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, vol. 17 (Berlin: W. Spemann, 1894): 87–89.
36. Meyer, *Correggio*, pp. vi–vii.
37. *Ibid.*, p. v.
38. The painting is still considered the earliest documented work of Correggio; see David Ekserdjian, *Correggio* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 46–52.
39. Meyer, *Correggio*, p. 105.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 107. Meyer found that no reliable authority supported Pungileoni’s supposition that *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* had been painted by Correggio as a gift for his sister Catherine upon her marriage, an event placed in 1519. Today four different versions of this theme are known—at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; the Detroit Institute of Art; the Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples; and the Louvre Museum, Paris—whereas there is no trace of the St. Petersburg picture mentioned by Meyer; see Tatyana K. Kustodieva, *Italian Painting: Thirteenth to Sixteenth Century. The Hermitage Catalogue of Western European Painting* (Florence: Giunti, 1994), pp. 135–144. For these pictures’ problematic chronology, see Mario Di Giampaolo and Andrea Muzzi, *Correggio: Catalogo completo* (Florence: Cantini, 1993), pp. 18 ff., and Ekserdjian, *Correggio*.
41. Meyer, *Correggio*, pp. 205–207. Arguing that the picture’s beauty exceeded *Madonna of St. Sebastian*, Meyer dated it between 1527 and 1528.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 235–236. Meyer remarks that *Venus and Cupid with a Satyr* (Louvre) shows the same warmth in the flesh tones and lights as the *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine*, a formal similarity that locates the work around 1518. However, he adds that the rendering of the *Venus* displays stronger effects of light and more confidence in technical handling, which suggests that *Venus and Cupid with a Satyr* might have been painted a few years later than the *Marriage*.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 301–420, 421–430, 431–452.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 301 ff., 371 ff. The first section consists of five classes, arranged chronologically: Correggio’s monumental frescos; oil paintings, authentic and conserved; authentic paintings not conserved; paintings considered authentic with grounds; and pictures of doubtful

authenticity as well as uncertain and lost works. The second section, mostly enumerating copies, also features five classes: pictures whose whereabouts are known; copies taken for originals; pictures either missing or whose location was unknown; pictures known only through prints; and sketches.

45. Ibid., p. 301.
46. The lecture, published in the *Oesterreichische Rundschau* in 1883, was reprinted in Thausing's *Wiener Kunstbriefe* (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1884), pp. 1–20. Thausing dedicated this collection of essays to the Italian connoisseur Giovanni Morelli. For Thausing's role in introducing Morelli's views to Viennese art historians, see Gianni Carlo Sciolla, "Il metodo Morelliano e la 'Scuola di Vienna,'" in Giacomo Agosti, Maria Elisabetta Manca, Matteo Panzeri, and Marisa Dalai Emiliani, eds., *Giovanni Morelli e la cultura dei conoscitori*, Acts of the International Symposium, Bergamo, 4–7 June 1987, 3 vols. (Bergamo: P. Lubrina, 1993), 2: 372–375.
47. Moritz Thausing, *Dürer: Geschichte seines Lebens und seiner Kunst* (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann 1876), pp. ix–x.
48. See, for instance, Friedrich Lippmann, "Dürer: Geschichte seines Lebens und seiner Kunst," *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: W. de Gruyter and Co., 1876): 295.
49. Ibid., pp. 110–116.
50. Ibid., pp. 117–119. On the couple's relationship, see also Erwin Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer* (1943; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), pp. 6–7; and Fedja Anzelewsky, *Dürer: His Art and Life*, trans. H. Grieve (1971; Secaucus: Chartwell Books, 1980), especially p. 248.
51. Anzelewsky, *Dürer*, p. 136, proposes 1511 as the date of its execution.
52. Thausing, *Dürer*, p. 313: "The *All Saints* is . . . the embodiment of his labors in all its directions, a kind of microcosm, a reflection of his intellect, captured at exactly the moment when his strength had reached its high point. There is no other work of this master which would so adroitly allow a survey of the many-sidedness of his production."
53. Ibid., pp. 314 ff.
54. Ibid., pp. 329 ff.
55. Ibid., pp. 339 ff.

56. Ibid., pp. 343–344.
57. Ibid., pp. 346 ff.
58. Ibid., p. 355.
59. Ibid., p. 358.
60. For the Christomorphic aspects of Dürer's *Self-Portrait* and Thausing's interpretation, see Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 71 ff.
61. Thausing, *Dürer*, pp. 364–365.
62. Ibid., p. 479.
63. Ibid., p. 483. According to Thausing, John stood for the melancholic temper, Peter for the bilious, Paul for the choleric, and Mark for the sanguine.
64. Ibid., p. 486.
65. See Joseph Archer Crowe, *Reminiscences of Thirty-Five Years of My Life* (London: J. Murray, 1895). On Crowe and Cavalcaselle's relations with the Anglo-German community of connoisseurs that had flourished in London under the auspices of Charles Lock Eastlake, see David Robertson, *Sir Charles Eastlake and the Victorian Art World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); Francis Haskell, "The Growth of British Art History and Its Debts to Europe," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 74 (1988): 203–224; Denys Sutton, "Aspects of British Collecting," parts 4–16, "Crowe and Cavalcaselle," *Apollo* 123, no. 282 (August 1985): 111–117. On Cavalcaselle, see Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti, "Come lavorava un critico nell'ottocento," *Sele Arte* 1, no. 2 (September–October 1952): 3–11; and Donata Levi, *Cavalcaselle: Il pioniere della conservazione dell'arte italiana* (Turin: G. Einaudi, 1988).
66. Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovan Battista Cavalcaselle, *Titian: His Life and Times: With Some Account of His Family, Chiefly from New and Unpublished Records*, 2 vols. (London: J. Murray, 1877).
67. Ibid., 1: 124–125.
68. For instance, a digression upon the Venetians' cunning in contracting political alliances around 1495 reads as a prelude to the presentation of the Borgias and the Pesaros, those historical figures who played a determinant role on Venice's political stage and came into contact with Titian. See *ibid.*, 1: 68 ff.

69. Ibid., 1: xi.
70. Naturally there are exceptions to this pattern. For instance, Crowe and Cavalcaselle connect some representations of nature in Titian's works with the landscapes of his native district, Cadore, which must have impressed his memory since childhood; see *ibid.*, 1: 33–34. This kind of connection, as the two authors acknowledge, was first made by Josiah Gilbert in his *Cadore or Titian's Country* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1869).
71. Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *Titian*, 1: 272.
72. Ibid., 1: 214–221.
73. Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovan Battista Cavalcaselle, *Raphael: His Life and Works, with Particular Reference to Recently Discovered Records and an Exhaustive Study of Extant Drawings and Pictures*, 2 vols. (London: J. Murray, 1882–1885), 1: viii–xi.
74. Ibid., 2: 41–43.
75. For the critical fortunes of the Venetian sketchbook, see Sylvia Ferino Pagden, *Disegni umbri del Rinascimento da Perugino a Raffaello*, exh. cat. (Florence: L. Sl. Olschki, 1982), pp. 140–150; see also Pagden's *Disegni umbri: Galleria dell'Accademia di Venezia* (Milan: Electa, 1984). Passavant, accepting Bossi's attribution, listed almost all the drawings in his catalogue; see *Rafael von Urbino und sein Vater Giovanni Santi* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1839), vol. 2, pp. 446–476, nos. 1–99. Doubts about the sketchbook's authenticity were first cast by Wilhelm Lübke in *Rafael Werk—Sämtliche Tafelbilder und Fresken des Meisters* (Dresden, 1875), p. 13; he took the drawings as a collective production of the Umbrian school.
76. Morelli, ascribing nearly all the drawings in the Venice sketchbook to Pinturicchio, had advanced a novel interpretation of Raphael's education by pointing out that he received his earliest art lessons at Urbino, first from his father, then from Timoteo Viti. See Ivan Lermolieff [Giovanni Morelli], *Die Werke italienischer Meister in den Galerien von München, Dresden und Berlin. Ein kritischer Versuch von Ivan Lermolieff. Aus dem Russischen übersetzt von Dr. Johannes Schwarze* (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1880), pp. 309ff.; and his "Raphael's Jugendentwicklung: Worte der Werstandigung gerichtet an Herrn Prof. Springer in Leipzig von Ivan Lermolieff," *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, vol. 5 (Leipzig:

- W. de Gruyter and Co., 1882), pp. 147–178. Although Crowe and Cavalcaselle never mention Morelli in their book, they implicitly reply to some of his remarks (*Raphael*, 1: 27–30). For a review of the difficulties presented by the young Raphael's chronology from the nineteenth century to our time, see Sylvia Ferino Pagden, "The Early Raphael and His Umbrian Contemporaries," *Studies in the History of Art*, vol. 17 (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1986), pp. 93–107.
77. Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *Raphael*, 1: 67.
 78. *Ibid.*, 1: 101.
 79. The painting, currently attributed to Perugino, has stirred controversy since 1850, when Morris Moore bought it as a Mantegna but then strenuously defended his conviction that it was a Raphael. See Francis Haskell, "Un martyr de l'attribution: Morris Moore et l'Apollon et Marsyas du Louvre," *Revue de l'Art*, no. 42 (1978): 77–88.
 80. See Levi, *Cavalcaselle*, pp. 400–405. Two examples of this reception, which led critics to rate Crowe and Cavalcaselle's work as the product of mere imagination, are Elizabeth Rigby Eastlake's article in the *Edinburgh Review* 157 (January 1883): 168–204, especially p. 189, and Carl von Lütlow's review in *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* 19 (1884): 91–100.
 81. Giovanni Previtali first pointed out that there were more affinities between Morelli and Cavalcaselle than the former accepted; see "A propos de Morelli," *Revue de l'Art*, no. 42 (1978): 27–31. Commenting on Cavalcaselle's habit of drawing isolated anatomical details, Levi argues (*Cavalcaselle*, p. 154) that the practice was current among connoisseurs and that the difference between Cavalcaselle and Morelli lay not in the procedures for attribution but in the latter's methodological awareness. In fact, the recognition of anatomical details as clues of authorship, confined in *Titian* to the annotated list of "uncertified Titians" (see Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *Titian*, 2: 431–469), often became part of the writers' analysis of Raphael's works, as with the *Coronation of the Virgin*, the *Ansidei altarpiece* (National Gallery, London), and others.
 82. See Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *Raphael*, 1: 269.
 83. *Ibid.*, 1: 375.
 84. When they began working on Raphael in 1879, Crowe and Cavalcaselle meant to catalogue the drawings related to the artist's paintings,

but soon the project evolved into the writing of a book that included the life and works; see Levi, *Cavalcaselle*, pp. 389–392.

85. See Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *Raphael*, 1: 224 ff., 300 ff.
86. Ibid., 1: 143 ff.
87. “Raphael: His Life and Works,” *Athenaeum*, no. 2921 (20 October 1883): 502.

6

Engendering Presence

1. On Bernard (originally spelled Bernhard) Berenson, see Ernest Samuels, *Bernard Berenson: The Making of a Connoisseur* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), and *Bernard Berenson: The Making of a Legend* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1987); both volumes include bibliographies of his writings. Today Berenson is credited with having written the first coherent account of Lotto; see Peter Humfrey, *Lorenzo Lotto* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 5.
2. For Berenson’s grasp of Lotto as a “modernist prophet” and his views of modern art and theory, see Mary Ann Calo, *Bernard Berenson and the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).
3. See Ivan Lermolieff [Giovanni Morelli], “Die Galerien Roms: Ein kritischer Versuch von Iwan [sic] Lermolieff. I. Die Galerie Borghese. Aus dem Russischen übersetzt von Dr. Johannes Schwarze,” in *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* 9 (1874): 1–11, 73–81, 171–178, 249–253; 10 (1875): 97–106, 207–211, 264–273, 329–334; 11 (1876): 132–137, 168–173; and *Die Werke italienischer Meister in den Galerien von München, Dresden und Berlin: Ein kritischer Versuch von Ivan Lermolieff. Aus dem Russischen übersetzt von Dr. Johannes Schwarze* (Leipzig: Seemann, 1880).
4. Bernard Berenson “Rudiments of Connoisseurship: A Fragment,” in *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art*, 2nd ser. (1902; London: Bell, 1910), pp. 111–148.
5. Ibid., p. vi.
6. Bernard Berenson, *Lorenzo Lotto: An Essay in Constructive Art Criticism* (London: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1895).
7. Berenson’s gratitude to Morelli is clear in his preface to *The Venetian Painters of the Renaissance* (London and New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons,

1895), pp. ix–x. Moreover, in 1890 Berenson planned to review Morelli's new book on the Borghese and Doria Pamphili galleries in Rome; see Samuels, *Bernard Berenson: The Making of a Connoisseur*, pp. 72–73, 86–87, and 97–105. The review remains unpublished, but excerpts quoted by Samuels highlight Berenson's admiration for Morelli. The object of his review was Morelli's *Kunstkritische Studien über italienische Malerei: Die Galerien Borghese und Doria Pamfili in Rom* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1890). This volume includes a revised version of Morelli's essays on the Borghese gallery (1874–1876), a new text on the Doria Pamphili collection, and an imaginary dialogue at the Uffizi and the Pitti between Lermolieff and an elderly Italian gentleman, who initiates him into his “experimental method” of connoisseurship. This dialogue summarizes Morelli's ideas: that connoisseurship should precede art history and that, in art, knowledge can be gained only through the study of a painting's form and technique. The Italian gentleman teaches his acquaintance to identify a painting's author through an initial examination of the formal details characteristic of each master, especially the hands and ears. On Morelli, see Jaynie Anderson, “Dietro lo pseudonimo,” in Giovanni Morelli, *Della pittura Italiana: Studii storico-critici. Le Gallerie Borghese e Doria-Pamphili di Roma*, ed. J. Anderson (Milan: Adelphi, 1991), pp. 493–578; Matteo Panzeri and Giulio Orazio Bravi, eds., *La figura e l'opera di Giovanni Morelli: Materiali di ricerca* (Bergamo: Biblioteca civica A. Mai, 1987); Hans Ebert, Donata Levi, and Giacomo Agosti, eds., *La figura e l'opera di Giovanni Morelli: Studi e ricerche* (Bergamo: Biblioteca Civica A. Mai, 1987); and Giacomo Agosti, Maria Elisabetta Manca, Matteo Panzeri, and Marisa Dalai Emiliani, eds., *Giovanni Morelli e la cultura dei conoscitori*, Acts of the International Symposium, Bergamo, 4–7 June 1987, 3 vols. (Bergamo: P. Lubrina, 1993).

8. Berenson, *Lotto*, p. v.
9. Ibid., p. xiii.
10. Ibid., p. xiv.
11. Ibid., pp. xiv–xvii.
12. From James's *Principles of Psychology* of 1890, Berenson could have drawn the notion of the economical function of habits in a painter's education. William James emphasizes that every living creature is a

“bundle of habits”; see *The Principles of Psychology*, 2 vols. (1890; New York: Dover Publications, 1950), especially 1: 104–114. Samuels indicates that Berenson read *Principles* in 1892 and renewed contact with his former teacher that same year; see *Bernard Berenson: The Making of a Connoisseur*, pp. 152, 162. Berenson himself, in his diary, listed James among his major sources of inspiration; see Bernard Berenson, *Sunset and Twilight: From the Diaries of 1947–1958* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963), p. 90.

13. Morelli’s “experimental method”—since Edgard Wind reconsidered its significance in *Art and Anarchy* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), pp. 32–51—has received numerous interpretations. See, for example, Carlo Ginzburg, “Spie: Radici di un paradigma indiziario,” in Aldo Gargani, ed., *Crisi della ragione* (Turin: G. Einaudi, 1979), pp. 59–106; Henri Zerner, “Giovanni Morelli et la science de l’art,” *Revue de l’art*, no. 40 (1978): 209–215; Anderson, “Dietro lo pseudonimo,” pp. 494–505; Carol Gibson-Wood, *Studies in the Theory of Connoisseurship from Vasari to Morelli* (New York: Garland, 1988), pp. 237–239; and David Allan Brown, “Giovanni Morelli and Bernard Berenson,” in *Giovanni Morelli e la cultura dei conoscitori*, vol. 2, pp. 391–392. It seems to me that Berenson’s use and revision, if not misrepresentation, of Morelli was first formulated in the introduction to *Lotto*; it was not limited to the interpretation of the formal characteristics but affected even the seemingly less Morellian passages of the monograph.
14. Berenson, *Lotto*, p. xviii.
15. The titles of the five chapters indicate both a classification of the period and the time covered: “The Transition: 1508–1517”; “The Bergamask Period: 1518–1528”; “Maturity: 1529–1540”; “Old Age: 1540–1550”; and “Last Years: 1550–1556.”
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 21–125.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 127–128.
18. James, *Principles of Psychology*, 1: 288.
19. Berenson, *Lotto*, p. 147.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, p. 159.
22. See Denys Riout, ed., *Les écrivains devant l’impressionisme* (Paris: Macula, 1989); Richard Shiff, *Cézanne and the End of Impressionism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Charles S. Moffett, ed., *The New*

- Painting: Impressionism 1874–1886*, exh. cat. (Geneva: R. Burton, 1986); Robert L. Herbert, *Impressionism: Art, Leisure, and Parisian Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).
23. Cited from Gustave Courbet, “Biographie de Courbet par lui-même” (c. 1866); see *Courbet raconté par lui-même et ses amis*, ed. Pierre Courthion, 2 vols. (Geneva: P. Cailler, 1948–1950), 2: 28.
 24. See P. Michael Doran, ed., *Conversations avec Cézanne* (Paris: Collection Macula, 1978); and Paul Cézanne, *Correspondance*, ed. John Rewald (Paris: B. Grasset, 1978). For painters of the time, the word “sensation” referred to both the perception of something external and internal subjective emotions. See Shiff, *Cézanne and the End of Impressionism*, especially part I and chapter 14, “Did Cézanne Have a Theory?”
 25. Zola’s definition first appeared in his 1865 article “Proudhon and Courbet,” cited from Émile Zola, *Écrits sur l’art*, ed. with introduction and notes by Jean-Pierre Leduc-Adine (Paris: Gallimard, 1991), pp. 41–62.
 26. See Zola, “Édouard Manet, étude biographique et critique.” In *Écrits*, pp. 137–169. The essay first appeared in the *Revue du XIXe siècle* of January 1867 under the title “Une nouvelle manière en peinture: Édouard Manet,” and was later reissued as a pamphlet, “Édouard Manet, étude biographique et critique.” For Zola’s view of Manet and the essay’s translation, see George Heard Hamilton, *Manet and His Critics* (1954; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 81 ff.
 27. Zola, “Édouard Manet,” pp. 149–150.
 28. Berenson, *Lotto*, pp. 193–195.
 29. Ibid., p. 211.
 30. Ibid., p. 176.
 31. Walter Pater’s *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* was first published in London in 1873. Berenson also read Pater’s *Marius the Epicurean* (1885). For Pater’s influence on Berenson, see Umberto Morra, *Conversations with Berenson*, trans. Florence Hammond (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963), pp. 51, 157; and Berenson, *One Year’s Reading for Fun* (New York: Knopf, 1960). On Pater, Berenson, and Morelli, see Timothy Verdon, “Il senso religioso dell’estetismo berensoniano in rapporto a Giovanni Morelli,” in Agosti et al., *Giovanni Morelli e la cultura dei conoscitori*, 2: 321–329.
 32. Berenson, *Lotto*, pp. 246, 335.

33. Ibid., p. 292.
34. Ibid., p. 295.
35. Ibid., p. 316.
36. Ibid., pp. 318–319, 324, 334.
37. Ibid., pp. 163–169.
38. Ibid., pp. 325–326.
39. Ibid., p. 338. Lotto's accounting book had only recently been discovered; it was shown to Berenson by Guido Levi, who apparently meant to publish it. See *ibid.*, p. 264.
40. Ibid., pp. 321–322.
41. Ibid., p. 345.
42. Ibid., pp. 340–341.
43. In Berenson's writings, the term first appeared in his review of a monograph on Cima published by V. Botteon and A. Aliprandi in 1894: "This monograph cannot be regarded as a final word upon Cima. It makes no attempt to re-create his artistic personality." See Berenson, "The Life and Works of Cima," *Academy*, no. 1171 (13 October 1894): 284.
44. See Jean Paul Richter, "Lorenzo Lotto," *Kunstchronik* 6 (21 March 1895): 294–295; and Salomon Reinach, "Lorenzo Lotto," *Revue Critique d'Histoire et de Littérature*, no. 14 (8 April 1895): 271–276.
45. Costelloe's *Guide to the Italian Pictures at Hampton Court, with Short Studies of the Artists* appeared, under the name Mary Logan, in 1894. That same year she also published "The New and the Old Art Criticism," *Nineteenth Century*, no. 207 (May 1894): 828–837. On Mary Costelloe and Berenson, see Samuels, *Bernard Berenson: The Making of a Connoisseur*, especially pp. 106–118.
46. Mary Logan [Mary Costelloe], "Of a Recent Criticism of the Works of Lorenzo Lotto," *Studio* 5 (1895): 63–64. Emphasis in the original.
47. See James, *Principles of Psychology*, 1: 226–227.
48. Walter Pater, *Renaissance: Studies*, 4th ed. (London and New York: Macmillan, 1893), p. xii.
49. Walter Pater, "Style" (1888), in *Appreciations* (London: Macmillan, 1901), p. 27. Emphasis in the original.
50. For instance, in *Die Werke italienischer Meister in den Galerien von München, Dresden und Berlin*, Morelli defines Cosimo Tura as "a hard,

dry, and angular painter, but often very impressive.” Cited from *Italian Painters: Critical Studies of Their Works* by Giovanni Morelli, 2 vols., trans. Constance Jocelyn Ffoulkes (London: John Murray 1892–1893), 1: 127–128. In another passage Morelli anticipates Berenson: “Technical methods may be imparted by one school to another, but the conception and feeling in a work of art are inherent and vital qualities belonging, like speech, to each individual, to each nationality and race.” Ibid., p. 125, note.

51. Charles Blanc, “Une peinture de Léonard de Vinci,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (10 September 1861): 65–74.
52. Cited from Morelli’s *Kunstkritische Studien*, 1: 88.
53. Ibid., 1: 90.
54. Berenson, *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art* (1910), pp. 147–148.
55. Bernard Berenson, “Amico di Sandro,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, part 1, no. 41 (June 1899): 459–471; part 2, no. 41 (July 1899): 21–36.
56. Cited from Bernard Berenson, “Amico di Sandro,” reprinted in *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art* (1901), reprint of the second edition of 1903 (London: G. Bell, 1908), p. 49. At the end of his essay (p. 69), following Herbert Horne’s suggestion, Berenson connects the artistic personality to the real person, Berto Linaiuolo, but concludes, “as until further proofs appear, this can be no more than an hypothesis, and as the real name of Berto Linaiuolo is neither more familiar nor more pleasant, I prefer to call our Anonimo ‘Amico di Sandro.’” Later Berenson ends up ascribing many of the “Amico” works to Botticelli; see Ronald Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli*, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), especially vol. 2.
57. Berenson, preface to *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art* (1908), pp. vii–viii.

7

Fluctuations and Decline

1. During the early twentieth century, the late champions of the French avant-garde, such as Cézanne and Monet, became the subjects of an increasing number of monographs. See, among others, Joachim Gasquet, *Cézanne* (Paris: Éditions Bernheim-jeune, 1921); John Rewald,

- Cézanne et Zola* (Paris: A. Zedrowski, 1936); Lionello Venturi, *Cézanne: Son art, son oeuvre* (Paris: P. Rosenberg, 1936); Marthe de Fels, *La vie de Claude Monet* (Paris: Gallimard, 1929); Gustave Geoffrey, *Claude Monet: Sa vie, son oeuvre* (Paris, G. Crès & Cie., 1924). In the ensuing decades monographs also appeared while the artist was still alive, as with Picasso and Duchamp.
2. Wilhelm Boeck and Jaime Sabartés, *Picasso* (1955; New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1961), p. 340.
 3. Robert Lebel, *Sur Marcel Duchamp* (Paris: Éditions Trianon, 1959); citations from Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp*, trans. G. H. Hamilton (New York: Grove Press, 1959), p. 30.
 4. Arturo Schwarz, *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp*, 3d revised and expanded edition, 2 vols. (New York: Delano Greenridge Editions, 1997), 1: v.
 5. Ronald Penrose, *Picasso: His Life and Work* (New York: Harper, 1958), p. 358.
 6. Pierre Daix, *Picasso créateur* (Paris: Seuil, 1987); citations from Daix, *Picasso: Life and Art*, trans. O. Emmer (New York: Icon Editions, 1993), p. xi.
 7. Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp*, p. 2.
 8. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
 9. Boeck and Sabartés, *Picasso*, pp. 10–20; and Jaime Sabartés, *Picasso: An Intimate Portrait*, trans. Angel Flores (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1948), pp. 20–21 and pp. 60–65.
 10. Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp*, pp. 35–36. Lebel echoes André Breton's view of the readymades as "manufactured objects promoted to the dignity of objects of art through the choice of the artist." See André Breton, "Phare de la Mariée," *Minotaure* (Paris) 2, no. 6 (Winter 1935): pp. 45–49; also reprinted in Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp*, pp. 88 ff. On Duchamp's changing reception, see, among others, John Tancock, "The Influence of Duchamp," in *Marcel Duchamp*, ed. Anne d'Harnoncourt and Kynaston McShine, exh. cat., Museum of Modern Art and Philadelphia Museum of Art (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1973), pp. 160–178; Jean Clair, "La fortune critique de Marcel Duchamp," *Revue de l'Art* (Paris), no. 34 (1976): 92–100; and William A. Camfield's reconstruction of the history and criticism of Duchamp's

- Fountain* (1917) in *Marcel Duchamp Fountain* (Houston: Houston Fine Art Press, 1989).
11. Schwarz, *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp*, 1: 250.
 12. John Berger, *The Success and Failure of Picasso*, rev. ed. (1965; New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), p. 8.
 13. For Berger, Picasso's career demonstrates that the feeling of being a revolutionary was not enough in the twentieth century because media, by institutionalizing the artist's image, impeded contact with reality: "[Picasso's] experience proves that success and honours, as offered by bourgeois society, should no longer tempt anyone. It is no longer a question of refusing on principle, but of refusing for the sake of self-preservation" (ibid., p. 205).
 14. Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp*, p. 70.
 15. Ibid., p. 36.
 16. Amelia Jones, *Postmodernism and the En-Gendering of Marcel Duchamp* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 72 ff.
 17. Ibid., p. 160.
 18. Jerrold Seigel, *The Private Worlds of Marcel Duchamp: Desire, Liberation, and the Self in Modern Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 214 ff.
 19. Ibid., p. 225.
 20. See José Á. Lopera, "The Construction of a Painter: A Century of Searching for and Interpreting El Greco," in José Á. Lopera, ed., *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, exh. cat. (Milan: Skira, 1999), pp. 23–52; and Nicos Hadjinicolau, "El Greco Invested with Nationalist Ideologies," ibid., pp. 55–76.
 21. Cited from Manuel B. Cossío, *El Greco*, ed. Natalia Cossío de Jiménez (1908; Barcelona: Editorial R. M., 1972), p. 156.
 22. For Cossío's vindication of the artist as the Castilian painter par excellence, see Lopera, "The Construction of a Painter," pp. 24–25, and Hadjinicolau, "El Greco Invested with Nationalist Ideologies," pp. 60–63.
 23. See Francisco de Borja de San Román, *El Greco en Toledo o nuevas investigaciones acerca de la vida y obras de Dominico Theotocopuli* (Madrid: V. Suárez, 1910), reprinted in Francisco de Borja de San Román, *El Greco*

- en Toledo: Vida y obra de Dominico Theotocopuli* (Toledo: Zocodover, 1982), especially the appendix of unpublished documents, pp. 139–239.
24. The John Pope-Hennessy monographs are *Giovanni di Paolo 1403–1483* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1937); *Raphael* (New York: New York University Press, 1970); *Cellini* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1985); *Fra Angelico* (London: Phaidon Press, 1952); *Paolo Uccello* (London and New York, 1950); *Paolo Uccello: Complete Edition*, 2nd rev. ed. (London and New York: Phaidon Press, 1969); *Luca della Robbia* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1980); and *Donatello Sculptor* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1993).
 25. Charles De Tolnay, *Michelangelo*, 5 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943–1960).
 26. See Martin Kemp, “Clark’s Leonardo,” introduction to Kenneth Clark, *Leonardo da Vinci*, revisions by Martin Kemp (1988; London and New York: Penguin Viking, 1989), p. 28.
 27. Howard Hibbard, *Michelangelo* (London: Lane, 1975).
 28. Anthony Blunt, *Nicolas Poussin*, foreword by Michael Kitson and an appreciation by Brian Sewell (1967; London: Pallas Athene, 1995), p. xvii.
 29. Erwin Panofsky’s *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943) consists of two volumes, the second being a catalogue of the artist’s works. A revised edition in two volumes appeared in 1945 and was reprinted as a third edition in 1948. The fourth edition of 1955 is in one volume only and does not include the catalogue. On Panofsky, see Michael Ann Holly, *Panofsky and the Foundations of Art History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984); and Silvia Ferretti, *Cassirer, Panofsky, and Warburg: Symbol, Art, and History*, trans. Richard Pierce (1984; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).
 30. Cited from Erwin Panofsky, *Albrecht Dürer* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), pp. 39 ff.
 31. *Ibid.*, especially pp. 283–284.
 32. Timothy J. Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (1973; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 12.
 33. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
 34. *Ibid.*, pp. 22 ff. Reasons are provided through the evocation of biography (the artist’s arrival in Paris in 1840 and his returns to his coun-

try) as well as through the reading of Courbet's letters and accounts by critics and friends (i.e., Baudelaire, Max Buchon, Jules Vallès).

35. Ibid., p. 51.
36. Ibid., p. 153.
37. Ibid., p. 114.
38. Ibid., p. 154.
39. Michael Fried, *Courbet's Realism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 49.
40. Ibid., pp. 88–99.
41. Ibid., p. 105.
42. Ibid., pp. 155 ff.
43. Ibid., especially pp. 258 ff.
44. Mary D. Garrard, *Artemisia Gentileschi: The Image of the Female Hero in Italian Baroque Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 138.
45. See Richard E. Spear, "Artemisia Gentileschi: Ten Years of Fact and Fiction," *Art Bulletin* 82, no. 3 (September 2000): 568–579.
46. Ibid., p. 279.
47. Paul Kristeller, *Andrea Mantegna* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1901), pp. vi–vii.
48. For a comprehensive list of such books, see Wolfgang M. Freitag, *Art Books: A Basic Bibliography of Monographs on Artists*, 2d ed. (New York: Garland Pub., 1997).
49. The twentieth century saw the survival of series started in the nineteenth century—such as *Künstler Monographien*, which was published until 1940—as well as the foundation of numerous new ones, including *Klassiker der Kunst in Gesamtausgaben*, published by Anstalt (Stuttgart, 1900–1930), about 150 volumes devoted to old masters; *The Complete Library of World Art*, by Hawthorn Books (New York) and Oldbourne (London, 1960–1965), included 50 volumes on old masters; *The Taste of Our Time*, by Skira (Geneva, 1950–1970), on old and modern artists, including about 150 volumes; *Penguin Modern Painters*, by Penguin Books (Harmondsworth, 1940–1950); *I Classici dell'Arte*, by Rizzoli (Milan, 1960–1980), on old and modern artists in roughly 200 volumes; and *I Maestri del Colore*, by Fabbri (Milan, c. 1960–1970), on old and modern artists. In most cases the volumes

- were copiously illustrated and the texts came from experts and art historians as well as noted writers, poets, and scholars.
50. See Giulio Carlo Argan, “La storia dell’arte” (1969), in *Studi in onore di Giulio Carlo Argan* (Florence: Nuova Italia, 1994), p. 37.
 51. The prestige enjoyed by catalogue-makers and monographers and their almost unavoidable contribution to the commodification of art have become nearly a cliché in our culture; see, for instance, François Duret-Robert, “La dictature des cataloguistes,” *Connaissance des Arts*, no. 448 (June 1989): 131–143.
 52. See Heinrich Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art*, trans. M. D. Hottinger from the seventh German edition (1929; New York: Dover, 1950), p. viii. Wölfflin responded to art historian Hermann Voss’s objections to an “art history without names”; see Meinhold Lurz, *Heinrich Wölfflin: Biographie einer Kunsttheorie* (Heidelberg: Werner’sche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1981), pp. 18 ff.
 53. See, for instance, Arnold Hauser’s discussion of Wölfflin’s theories and his dismantling of their impersonal stance, in “The Philosophical Implications of Art History: Art History without Names,” in *The Philosophy of Art History* (1958; Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1985), pp. 117–276.
 54. Ernst H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, 5th ed. (1960; London: Phaidon, 1977).
 55. Nicos Hadjinicolaou, *Art History and Class Struggle*, trans. Louise Asmal (1973; London: Pluto Press, 1978), pp. 19 ff.
 56. George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 36.
 57. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
 58. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
 59. Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, p. 6. Italics in original.
 60. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
 61. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, p. 3.
 62. *Ibid.*, pp. 153–244. For Gombrich’s antihistoricist view and rejection of expressivism, see Carlo Ginzburg, “From Aby Warburg to E. H. Gombrich,” in *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method*, trans. John and Anne C. Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), pp. 17–59.

63. Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author” (1968), in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. and ed. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), pp. 142–148; and Michel Foucault, “What Is an Author?” (1969), in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology: Essential Works of Foucault*, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley and others (New York: New Press, 1998), vol. 2, pp. 205–222. Barthes argues that the writing process destroys both voice and origin: language sets forth the dynamics of signification over and above the individual authors’ identities. Since a text is open to endless interpretation and discloses a multiplicity, the place of this multiplicity coincides not with that of the author but with that of the reader. Whereas Barthes surmises the primacy of the reader versus the author, Foucault addresses the conditions that make authorship possible. He approaches authorship not in terms of a “who” but of a “what” that points to the objective forces giving rise to the idea of author. Authorship is not a discovery of personality but a cultural production. For Foucault, given the changes occurring in the contemporary world, one could envision the advent of a culture in which discourses arise and become public without the function-author, through anonymous forms.
64. Discontent with the idea of authorship was particularly felt in the writing on modern and contemporary art. See, for instance, Rosalind Krauss, “Re-Presenting Picasso,” *Art in America*, no. 10 (December 1980): 91–96, and “In the Name of Picasso” (1980), in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), pp. 23–40. For the “death of the author” in contemporary art and criticism, see also the essays in Brian Wallis, ed., *Art after Modernism: Rethinking Representation* (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984).

8

Reconsidering the Project

1. See, among others, Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, eds., *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982); Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, eds., *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History* (New York: Icon Editions, 1992);

- Griselda Pollock, ed., *Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996); and Patricia Mathews, “The Politics of Feminist Art History,” in Mark A. Chetham, Michael Ann Holly, and Keith Moxey, eds., *The Subjects of Art History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 94–114.
2. Linda Nochlin, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” (1971), in *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), pp. 145–178; and Griselda Pollock, “Artists, Mythologies and Media Genius, Madness and Art History,” *Screen* 1, no. 3 (1980): 57–96.
 3. Broude and Garrard’s introduction in *The Expanding Discourse*, p. 4. On this divide, see Seyla Benhabib, *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), pp. 213 ff.; and Mathews, “The Politics of Feminist Art History.” On the demise of authorship as obstructing feminist theory and commitment in art, see also Linda S. Klinger, “Where’s the Artist? Feminist Practice and Poststructural Theories of Authorship,” *Art Journal* 50, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 39–47.
 4. As, for instance, with Garrard’s *Artemisia Gentileschi* (1989); see chapter 7. See also Griselda Pollock’s *Mary Cassatt: Painter of Modern Women* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1998), which sees in Cassatt’s oeuvre an artist confronting the issues of modernity and womanhood.
 5. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990; New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 33.
 6. See Jean-Hubert Martin, ed., *Magiciens de la terre*, exh. cat. (Paris: Editions du Centre Pompidou, 1989); and Okwui Enwezor, ed., *Trade Routes: History and Geography*, second Johannesburg Biennale, exh. cat. (Johannesburg: Thorold’s Africana Books, 1997). Among the publications produced in the context of Documenta 11, I refer below to Okwui Enwezor, Carlos Basualdo, Ute Meta Bauer, Susanne Ghez, Sarat Maharaj, Mark Nash, and Octavio Zaya, eds., *Documenta 11, Platform 1: Democracy Unrealized* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002), and Okwui Enwezor, ed., *Documenta 11, Platform 5: Exhibition* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002).
 7. See Okwui Enwezor’s “Travel Notes: Working, and Travelling in a Restless World,” introduction to *Trade Routes*, pp. 9, 12.

8. Okwui Enwezor, “The Black Box,” introduction to *Documenta 11*, *Platform 5*, p. 43.
9. Though Picasso, Duchamp, and Beuys were white male artists working within a Western tradition, it is worth returning to their cases here because they challenged that tradition by aligning artistic and living domains, thereby identifying art as a form of singularity and difference. However, these three cases, though paradigmatic, are not exhaustive. The sense of art as a general human activity can be traced to various moments of twentieth-century Western art. It had a significant outbreak with dadaism, which not only criticized the autonomy of art but sought to invent a praxis of life on the basis of art; see Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (1974), trans. of the 2d German ed. by Michael Shaw, with a foreword by Jochen Schulte-Sasse (1980; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984). This view of art resurfaced during the 1960s when artists made artworks that, going beyond the restrictions of a particular medium, produced what Lucy R. Lippard identified as the “dematerialization” of the art object; see her *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (New York: Praeger, 1973). More recently art as a *tout court* practice has become pivotal for artists of various cultures willing to raise issues of biopolitics and to liberate art by imagining a community based not on categories of race, gender, citizenship, or militaristic conquest but on a recognition of the manifold ways of constructing life and human nature.
10. On Zervos, see Pierre Daix, “Critiques et témoins de la peinture moderne: Jean Paulhan, Christian Zervos, Tériade,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 85 (January 1975): 39–46; and Andrzej Turowski, ed., *Les fragments . . . (1) Arts et artistes autour de C. Zervos* (Dijon: Editions Universitaires de Dijon, 1997).
11. See Christian Zervos, *Pablo Picasso: Oeuvres de 1895 à 1906* (Paris: Cahiers d’Art, 1932), vol. 1, pp. xi, xiii, xv.
12. See Zervos, *Pablo Picasso: Oeuvres de 1912–17* (Paris: Cahiers d’Art, 1932), vol. 2, part 2, pp. xiii–xv. Although Zervos indicates that he was paraphrasing Picasso, the passages are in keeping with the artist’s general stance; since they touch on complex issues of genetics and human freedom, they deserve more commentary than I am able to offer here.

13. Christian Zervos, “Conversation avec Picasso,” *Cahiers d’Art*, no. 7–10 (1935): 174, 176.
14. Ibid., pp. 176–178: “It is not what the artist does that counts, but what he is. Cézanne would never have interested me if he had lived and thought like Jacques Émile Blanche, even if the apple he painted had been ten times more beautiful. What interests us is Cézanne’s anxiety, the lesson of Cézanne, the torments of Van Gogh, that is, the drama of the man. The rest is sham.”
15. See Françoise Gilot and Carlton Lake, *Life with Picasso* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), which reports Picasso saying that he paints “the way some people write their autobiography. The paintings, finished or not, are the pages of my journal, and as such they are valid” (p. 123).
16. Brassai, *Conversations with Picasso*, trans. Jane Marie Todd and with a foreword by Henry Miller (1964; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 133.
17. See Christopher Green, “Zervos, Picasso and Brassai, Ethnographers in the Field: A Critical Collaboration,” in Malcolm Gee, ed., *Art Criticism since 1900* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 116–139.
18. In *Picasso: A Comprehensive Bibliography* (New York: Garland, 1977), Ray Anne Kibbey lists 345 monographic studies on the artist and 11 catalogues raisonnés of his works.
19. From 1936 to 1941 Duchamp gathered photographs of his work and supervised the reproductions and three-dimensional smaller versions of his works. The *Box* was meant to be a multiple work; after completing its first exemplar in 1941, Duchamp made further editions, which included additional items and varied in presentation and materials. See Ecke Bonk, *Marcel Duchamp: The Box in a Valise*, trans. David Britt (New York: Rizzoli, 1989); and Francis M. Naumann, *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Making Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999), especially pp. 124 ff.
20. Bonk, *Marcel Duchamp*, pp. 18–19, reports Duchamp’s statement to James Johnson Sweeney (in the unpublished text of a filmed interview of summer 1955, broadcast in January 1956 by NBC): “I always felt that showing one painting in one place and another somewhere else is just like amputating one finger or a leg each time.”

21. For references to the “album” in Duchamp’s correspondence, the article in *Time*, and the Arensbergs’ letter, see Naumann, *Marcel Duchamp*, pp. 124, 136, 141, 149, 156; for Duchamp’s discarding of the initial idea of a book and calling the *Box* a “portable museum,” see “Regions Which Are Not Ruled by Time and Space,” edited version of “A Conversation with Marcel Duchamp,” television interview conducted by James Sweeney (as in note above), in *Salt Seller: The Writings of Marcel Duchamp (Marchand du Sel)*, ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (1959; New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 136.
22. On the *Box* as the most complete of Duchamp’s self-portraits and its demand that we disregard stylistic disparity to enter into the consciousness that brought all its elements together, see Jerrold Seigel, *The Private Worlds of Marcel Duchamp: Desire, Liberation, and the Self in Modern Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 232. On the *Box* as “allegory of the self” within a mechanism of compulsive repetition of reproduction, see David Joselit, *Infinite Regress: Marcel Duchamp 1910–1941* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), pp. 188–193.
23. Duchamp’s “The Creative Act” was given as a talk for the meeting of the American Federation of Arts at the Museum of Fine Arts of Houston, on April 3, 1957. It was published in *Art News* 56, no. 4 (Summer 1957): 28–29.
24. “Regions Which Are Not Ruled by Time and Space,” p. 137. The belief in art as a humanizing activity also animated Duchamp’s 1960 speech at Hofstra University, entitled “L’Artiste doit-il aller à l’université?” cited from Michel Sanouillet, ed., *Duchamp du Signe* (Paris: Flammarion, 1975), pp. 236–239. Here he based artists’ emancipation in modern society on their responsive capacity of being totally engaged in individual self-analysis.
25. See, for instance, Marcel Duchamp in “What Happened to Art? An Interview with Marcel Duchamp,” by William Seitz, *Vogue*, no. 2 (February 1963): 113; and in “An Interview with Marcel Duchamp,” by Dore Ashton, *Studio*, no. 6 (1966): 244–247.
26. Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, trans. Ron Padgett (1967; New York: Viking Press, 1971), p. 72.
27. For the notion of “bipolar intimacy,” see Peter Sloterdijk, *Sphären I: Blasen* (1998; Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2000), pp. 31–45.

28. See Lynne Cooke and Karen Kelly, eds., *Joseph Beuys: Arena: Where Would I Have Got If I Had Been Intelligent!* (New York: Dia Center for the Arts, 1994).
29. Performed in art galleries, museums, and open spaces, Beuys's "Actions" focused on himself, as well as on objects or animals, and meant to transcend separateness and to advocate art and creativity as living processes; see Uwe M. Schneede, *Joseph Beuys: Die Aktionen* (Stuttgart: G. Hatje, 1994).
30. See Götz Adriani, Winfried Konnertz, and Karin Thomas, *Joseph Beuys* (Cologne: M. Du Mont Schauberg, 1973). For an account of *Life Course*, which began to circulate as a brochure for the Fluxus event in Aachen in 1964, see Karin Thomas, "Lebenslauf/Werklauf," in *Beuys vor Beuys* (Cologne: DuMont Buchverlag, 1987), p. 222.
31. For the relationship between *Arena* and *Life Course/Work Course*, see Lynne Cooke, "Installing *Arena*: An Introduction," and Pamela Kort, "Joseph Beuys's *Arena*: The Way In," both in Cooke and Kelly, *Joseph Beuys: Arena*, pp. 12–17, 18–33.
32. See Kort, "Joseph Beuys's *Arena*," pp. 23–24. Caroline Tisdall reports Beuys's 1978 statement, "Biography means more than just a personal thing. It means the interrelationship of all processes and not the splitting of life into separate compartments: a wholeness." See Tisdall, *Joseph Beuys: We Go This Way* (London: Violette Editions, 1998), n.p. For the function of autobiography in Beuys's works, see also Peter Nisbet, "Crash Course: Remarks on a Beuys Story," in Gene Ray, ed., *Joseph Beuys: Mapping the Legacy* (New York: D.A.P., 2001), pp. 5–17; for Beuys's view of personal key experiences, see Georg Jappe, "Interview with Beuys about Key Experiences" (1976), in Ray, *Joseph Beuys: Mapping the Legacy*, pp. 185–198.
33. Aside from the already cited texts, see also Joseph Beuys and Michael Ende, *Kunst und Politik: Ein Gespräch* (Wangen: Freie Volkshochschule Argental, 1989); and *Joseph Beuys in America: Writings by and Interviews with the Artist*, compiled by Carin Kuoni (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1990).
34. For an overview of the tendency in the 1960s, see Lucy Lippard's *Six Years*; for its more recent articulations, see Boris Groys, "Art in the

- Age of Biopolitics: From Artwork to Art Documentation,” in Enwezor, ed., *Documenta 11, Platform 5*, pp. 108–114.
35. For general discussions and further references, see, among others, Claude Lévi-Strauss, ed., *L'identité* (Paris: B. Grasset, 1977); Elisabeth Guibert-Sledziewski and Jean-Louis Vieillard-Baron, eds., *Penser le sujet aujourd'hui* (Paris: Méridiens Klincksieck, 1988); Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, and Jean-Luc Nancy, eds., *Who Comes after the Subject?* (New York: Routledge, 1991); and Dominique Weil, ed., *Homme et sujet: La subjectivité en question dans les sciences humaines* (Paris: Editions l'Harmattan, 1992).
 36. See, in particular, Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1974), trans. Margaret Walter (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); Julia Kristeva, “Le sujet en procès: le langage poétique,” in Lévi-Strauss, ed., *L'identité*, pp. 223–246; and her discussion of Artaud in *Polylogue* (1974; Paris: Seuil, 1977), pp. 55–106.
 37. See, in particular, Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*, trans. Alan Sheridan (1966; New York: Norton, 1977); Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959–60*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. with notes by Dennis Potter (1986; London: Tavistock/Routledge, 1992).
 38. Cornelius Castoriadis, “The State of the Subject Today” (1986), in his *World in Fragments: Writings on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis, and the Imagination*, ed. and trans. David Ames Curtis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 170; see also Castoriadis, *Sujet et vérité dans le monde social-historique (La création humaine I)*, ed. Enrique Escobar and Pascal Vernay (Paris: Seuil, 2002).
 39. See Donald W. Winnicott, “Creativity and Its Origins,” in *Playing and Reality* (1971; New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 65 ff.; and Winnicott, *Home Is Where We Start From: Essays by a Psychoanalyst*, ed. Clare Winnicott, Ray Shepherd, and Madeleine Davis (New York: Norton, 1986).
 40. See, among others, Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Sense of the World*, trans. with a foreword by Jeffrey S. Librett (1993; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997); Nancy, *The Birth to Presence*, trans. Brian Holmes et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993); Nancy, *The Muses*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (1994; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, trans. Robert D. Richardson

- and Anne E. O'Byrne (1996; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).
41. See Nancy's introduction to Cadava, Connor, and Nancy, *Who Comes after the Subject?*, p. 4.
 42. For the new perspective associated with the idea of "someone," see in particular Nancy's "Un sujet?" in Weil, *Homme et sujet*, pp. 47–114.
 43. See *ibid.*, and "Someone," in Nancy, *The Sense of the World*, pp. 68–75.
 44. Mostly through stylistic analysis, especially since the nineteenth century, anonymous artworks have been construed in terms of "conventional" authors or artistic personalities. See Enrico Castelnovo, "Attribution," *Encyclopedia Universalis* (Paris, 1968), vol. 2, pp. 780–783; Nicole Reynaud, "Les maîtres à 'noms de convention'" *Revue de l'art* 42 (1978): 41–52. One such case is that of the "Amico di Sandro" discussed in chapter 6.
 45. For positions and views of postcolonialism, see Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001).
 46. See Ranajit Guha, "On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India" (1982) and "The Prose of Counter-Insurgency," in Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, eds., *Selected Subaltern Studies*, foreword by Edward E. Said (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 37–44 and 45–86. Derived from Gramsci's definition of the southern Italian peasant, the term "subaltern" denotes for Guha (and for most postcolonial scholars) "the social groups and elements . . . [who] represent *the demographic difference between the total Indian population and all those . . . described as 'elite'*" (p. 44).
 47. Ranajit Guha, *History at the Limit of World-History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 81.
 48. See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. with an introduction by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), pp. 271–313; and Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 231 ff.
 49. Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Subaltern Histories and Post-Enlightenment Rationalism" (1995), in *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of*

Subaltern Studies, foreword by Homi K. Bhabha (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 34.

50. Ibid., p. 36.
51. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (1994; London and New York: Routledge, 2002).
52. While it radicalizes Arendt's view that "human plurality is the paradoxical plurality of unique beings," the category of multitude can be traced back to Spinoza and to Deleuze's analysis of Spinoza's notions of immanence and multiplicity. See Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley (1970; San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988); and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (1980; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987). "Multitude" is key in rethinking the agenda of autonomist Marxism in Italy during the 1960s and 1970s, notably its attempts to question the traditional notion of classes and to establish a nonrepresentational democracy as a practice of life pursued outside institutional contexts. See, among others, Mario Tronti, *Operai e capitale* (Turin: Einaudi, 1966); Sylvère Lotringer and Christian Marazzi, eds., *Italy, Autonomia: Post-Political Politics*, *Semiotext(e)*, 3, no. 3 (New York: Columbia University, 1980); Antonio Negri, *Kairòs, Venus, multitudo* (Rome: Manifesto Libri 2000); and Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude*, trans. Isabella Bertolotti, James Cascaito, and Andrea Casson, foreword by Sylvère Lotringer (2002; Cambridge, MA: Semiotext(e), 2004).
53. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 395.
54. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, "Globalization and Democracy," in Enwezor, *Documenta 11, Platform 1*, p. 334.
55. For the modes of "correalities," and a theory of medias as "coexistence," see Peter Sloterdijk, *Sphären I*, pp. 297ff., 549ff. Sloterdijk refers, p. 298, to Thomas Macho's argument about the "nobject" versus a psychoanalysis too focused on the identifications via the "object"; see Macho, "Zeichen aus der Dunkelheit," in Rudolf Heinz, Deitmar Kamper, and Ulrich Sonnemann, eds., *Waldwelten im Zusammenstoss* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1993), pp. 223–240. For a psychoanalytic revaluation of the fetal status as engendering images of a

body in coexistence, see also François Dolto, *Le sentiment de soi*, ed. Gérard Guillaumault (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), pp. 181 ff.

56. See “The Modern System of the Arts” (1951), in Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought II* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 163–227. Larry Shiner has argued that the category of “fine” arts is neither ancient nor eternal but a modern invention that, since its eighteenth-century inception, has also given rise to a parallel tradition of resistance; see Shiner, *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).
57. David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 437–438.

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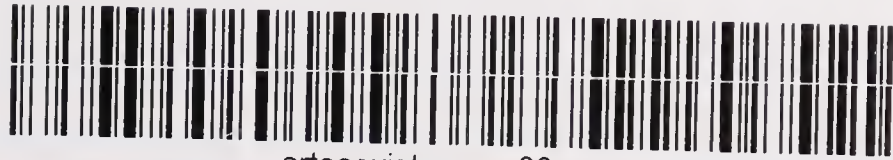
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Art as Existence

The Artist's Monograph and Its Project

Gabriele Guercio

The narrative of the artist's life and work is one of the oldest models in the Western literature of the visual arts. In *Art as Existence*, Gabriele Guercio investigates the metamorphosis of the artist's monograph, tracing its formal and conceptual trajectories from Vasari's sixteenth-century *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (which provided the model and source for the genre) through its apogee in the nineteenth century and decline in the twentieth. He looks at the legacy of the life-and-work model and considers its prospects in an intellectual universe of deconstructionism, psychoanalysis, feminism, and postcolonialism.

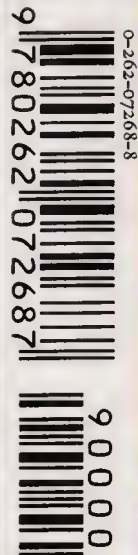
Since Vasari, the monograph has been notable for its fluidity and variety; it can be scrupulous and exact, probing and revelatory, poetic and imaginative, or any combination of these. In the nineteenth century, the monograph combined art-historical, biographical, and critical methods, and even added elements of fiction. Guercio explores some significant books that illustrate key phases in the model's evolution, including works by Gustav Friedrich Waagen, A. C. Quatremère de Quincy, Johann David Passavant, Bernard Berenson, and others. The hidden project of the artist's monograph, Guercio claims, comes from a utopian impulse; by commuting biography into art and art into biography, the life-and-work model equates art and existence, construing otherwise distinct works of an artist as chapters of a life story. Guercio calls for a contemporary reconsideration of the life-and-work model, arguing that the ultimate legacy of the artist's monograph does not lie in its established modes of writing but in its greater project and in the intimate portrait that we gain of the nature of creativity.

Gabriele Guercio is an independent writer living in Milan. He has a doctorate in art history from Yale University and has lectured at the Universities of Rome and Naples. He has been a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery and a recipient of a J. Paul Getty Postdoctoral Fellowship in the History of Art and the Humanities. Editor of *Art after Philosophy and After* by Joseph Kosuth (MIT Press, 1991) and *De Dominicis. Raccolta di scritti sull'opera e l'artista*, he has written on modern and contemporary art as well as the history of art theory.

"In this impressive and engagingly written first book, Gabriele Guercio poses a focal question for the history of art: what have been the forms and goals of the centuries-long art-historical construction of the monograph, which aims to join the who of the artist—his/her inner and mundane life—with the oeuvre? Guercio's overview of the monograph from the Renaissance to the present day is enriched by his command of the philosophical and theoretical roots of its evolution." —James S. Ackerman, Arthur Kingsley Porter Professor of Fine Arts Emeritus, Harvard University

"Gabriele Guercio's informed and original reading of the monograph from its origins in the era of Vasari to the late twentieth century is a revivalist ghost story narrated around the embers of the 'death of the artist.' *Art as Existence* offers not only an intriguing critical narrative of the 'life-and-work model' but also engages its central propositions with a range of recent reflections on intention and imagination, singularity and social extension as they are played out in the particularity of the artwork. Essential for students of methodology, genre, and historiography; and a useful exorcism for the structural abstraction in all of us." —John C. Welchman, Professor of Visual Arts, University of California, San Diego

"Guercio's study of the life-and-work model for the understanding of art is impressively comprehensive, deeply researched, and judiciously argued. It probes the significance of relatively obscure but notable artistic biographies as well as the most celebrated ones. Guercio succeeds in relating modes of biography to the cultural values of their particular historical moment, linking artists to the accounts constructed for their careers, and hence to a social context." —Richard Shiff, Department of Art and Art History, The University of Texas at Austin



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