

## AAH TALK DRAFT 1

In 1990, the Getty Research Institute asked me to direct an oral history project that would examine the experiences of art historians from continental Europe who fled to the United Kingdom and the United States in the 1930s and 1940s. Over the next decade, we conducted 45 interviews with surviving scholars, students who worked with them in their new homes, as well as students working with the first generation of American and British art historians trained in then-new Central European methods. The scope of the project expanded to include a look at archaeology. Transfer of ideas to new intellectual and academic institutions, and their indigenization over several generations offered an opportunity to see how the underlying ideas of a discipline changed over several generations. All interviews are available at the Library of the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, California, under the series title "Interviews with art historians, 1991-2002." The series description can be found on line at

<http://library.getty.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=355988>

Four interview transcripts from the series are currently on line, including the interview with Michael Baxandall.

Twelve interviews were with art historians and archaeologists who spent a large part of their professional lives in Britain. Four of this group came to England from Germany as young men and women and built careers in their new home. Three of the immigrants moved to the United States, after establishing careers in English universities or museums. Seven were British-born students. One had been

born in Poland but came to the United Kingdom as a child. Of these eight, five spent a significant portion of their careers based at one or more U.S. institutions. The interests of the art historians at the Getty Research Institute skewed the sample in many ways, particularly to people who were considered to be at the top of the field with strong international reputations, a category that could easily be conflated with scholars who had regular interaction with U.S. universities and museums. Given the numbers interviewed, no reliable generalizations can be derived from these accounts, but the overall numbers about movement across the Atlantic do reflect the once much-much-discussed “brain drain” that plagued British academia. Beyond that, the life-trajectories of most European-born interviewees underscore the high degree to which movement across national boundaries was a feature of mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century intellectual life, a sociological fact that reinforced ideas of humanist “scholarship” as transcendent activity whose objectivity and value was independent of but vulnerable to social categories. A central motif in the interviews with German- and Austrian-born scholars was that they never felt they could adapt to intellectual life in their new homes, regardless of where they landed or how prominent a position they secured. In exile, they became guardians of humanism in remarkably philistine societies where the autonomy of scholarship and learning largely derived from the deeply anti-intellectual nature of the so-called “Anglo-Saxon” world.

This ideological position had been vital to scholarly identity in the generation that emerged between the two world wars, particularly to those who reacted against race-based national projects. Ideas of scholarship as transcending

immediate social realities broke down after World War II, though never completely, even, as I shall be arguing, among strong supporters of a social constructionist model of knowledge. As the interviews in this series are now beginning to appear on line and given that I'm addressing a group in England, I decided to focus my remarks today on interviews with the postwar generation of British art historians. I will focus on the interviews with Michael Baxandall and Griselda Pollock because two of the interviews currently have restrictions. I can discuss some of the general experience, but with those interviews I cannot go into details. My primary goal is to make people aware of a series, people who can make much better use of it than I could.

Francis Haskell (12.5 hrs recorded in 1994) was interviewed because Nikolaus Pevsner had directed his dissertation and because Haskell was a self-styled Warburgian. Hence, he appeared to us to be a good representative of a generation of English art historians who became "Germans" in their methodological approach. The story Haskell told was of course much more complicated. While stressing his on-going debt to Pevsner, Warburg, and Gombrich, he also emphasized the centrality of his having belonged to a "republic of letters" at Cambridge, the presiding figure of which was E. M. Forster. Much of the story he told emphasized a strongly moral personal commitment to redeem English scholarship from a variety of theories, starting with Freud and Marx in his youth but then as those theoretical frameworks became exhausted, a plethora of speculative thinking associated with continental philosophy (post-structuralism but more) and feminism. The empiricist edge of his approach took on greater salience, a fact that he was keenly aware of and

to some degree apologetic for, as he thought he was living up to stereotypes about British antipathy to ideas of any sort and a rather slavish adherence to tradition for its own sake as a substitute for deep thinking. An image that he rebelled against, indeed felt stood in for a whole social complex in Britain that needed demolition after 1945 but which had been reborn in a particularly brutish form with the ascendancy of Margaret Thatcher.

Yet for all that, his identity was formed in a particular island of “old England” that he personally liked, and at least as far as educational and cultural life was concerned, he definitely did not like what both right and left had come up with to replace the decadent England that had produced him, among many other things, good and bad. These dilemmas/paradoxes were at the core of our conversations, as in effect he tried to negotiate of a set of contradictions that were not new to him but which he did not need to think about much as he went about teaching his classes, attending to his university duties, and writing his books and articles. As was typical of his generation, Haskell never received, or even thought of seeking, a Ph.D. Haskell explicitly refused the connoisseurship-driven methods found at the Courtauld under Anthony Blunt, and for that reason he turned to Pevsner and the Warburg for other perspectives pertinent to the study of art. Art criticism in England had been rich, but not scholarship, so he needed what German exiles offered. Yet his deeper commitment was to a type of scholarship that was older: a *return* to 19<sup>th</sup>-century English historical approaches, particularly Namier and Buckle, a return to scholarship that was about finding out what happened not about imposing one or another interpretive structure. Along these lines, he also deeply admired the work

of Jacob Burckhardt. The return to 19<sup>th</sup>-century historians was essential to Haskell's definition of his project, and fit with his indication of E. M. Forster as a primary guiding figure. He turned to Pevsner and the Warburg for technical assistance, but he agreed in fact with very little that its major scholars proposed about art, artists, or society, but not theory. To him, the Warburg meant analysis of art grounded in a variety of social realities, not iconography per se much less iconology, and certainly not the scientism of Ernst Gombrich's approach to perception. He felt that he had done unusual work, work that took the study of art in England in decidedly new directions; but he also was convinced that after 1980, increasingly fewer younger people shared his interests, while he did not find feminism, conceptions of hegemony, or French post-structuralist/deconstructionist theories *useful*. His body of work had shown that stylistic changes did not correspond to the hegemony of something or other at the time because the decisions that shape art are simply too contingent, grounded in too many factors, that must be identified and accounted for before one can make credible generalizations.

One goal of the project was to get a snapshot of each personality, which paradoxically required going on at length with multiple sessions and 10 hours or so of conversation, in a sense "wearing down" the narrator, with the risk of misspeaking increasing along with the letting down of the various guards one might have. It was important to have interviewees articulate their utopian visions (which may well be banal) and to identify who the "enemies" are, in this case, the "enemies" of "culture" and "learning."

The choice of English interviewees skewed away from the Courtauld given the project's focus on German influence, which in this case meant "Warburg," and its indigenization. But Haskell taught me that indigenization might well mean rebellion. It was interesting to see that this was one of the differences marking interviews with students of German exiles in the United States and the United Kingdom. U.S. interviewees of Haskell's age described themselves as having converted to German methods, throwing aside older approaches to visual and material culture that U.S. academics had developed, with some success. They declared themselves "Germans," and their work as a continuation of their teachers' legacies. The primary exception to this were art historians trained at Yale, where Marcel Aubert and Henri Focillon had started the art history program and hence their students were unambiguously "French." Their British counterparts did not reject their English predecessors but sought to build upon what they had done by borrowing from new methods without sacrificing an inherently *national* character in one's work.

But I need to problematize this difference with another aperçu I formed during the course of the interviews. With many of the U.S. interviews, art historians when asked an initial question about when and where they were born, typically responded with a family anecdote from 1635 or 1660. Initially, I thought of this as the product of individual quirkiness, but as it continued and I wound up with some 15 of these responses, actually a large majority of the US art historians who came of age in the interwar period, I saw this as a patterned response that was typical of a generation. In effect, it was an assertion of one's belonging to an aristocracy of sorts as well as a claim of unimpeachable American roots. The ubiquity of the response

suggests that it was an important factor governing who was selected for professional success in the United States. And the conversion to “German” or “French” intellectual fathers could in no way diminish one’s privilege as an autochthonous American. In the interviews done with art historians from Britain, however family stories invariably indicated considerable detachment from English society and often a claim for outsider status that on the surface might not be warranted given a high level of professional success and often comfortable, upper-middle-class family backgrounds. The return to national roots was a moral choice, to throw in one’s lot with the best of what one’s place had developed.

Michael Baxandall (8 hours, 20 minutes recorded) was born in 1933, grew up in Cardiff, Wales. He attended Cambridge University from 1951 to 1954, where he studied literature with F. R. Leavis. He was a junior fellow at the Warburg Institute from 1959 to 1961, before becoming an assistant keeper in the department of architecture and sculpture at the Victoria and Albert Museum. He left the V&A to teach at the Warburg, where he was based from 1965 to 1988. He left the Warburg to be a professor of art history at the University of California, Berkeley. He was selected to be interviewed because of his close connection to the Warburg, which like Haskell’s was more complicated than his long tenure at the Warburg might indicate.

Leavis’s role in Baxandall’s intellectual development was central, in many ways as indicating a moral commitment to rigor, accuracy, and independence that Baxandall admired as an important tradition within English learning:

*I enjoyed the close reading he [Leavis] did, and the rather aggressive tone. ... The Cambridge style was urgent and scientific and moralistic, all of which I liked. [p. 26]*

*Leavis's seminars typically worked from reading sheets. You'd have a sheet or a couple of sheets with half a dozen or maybe ten extracts. The first exercise was to attribute, the notion being that if you couldn't, you hadn't read. Having stated your reasons for thinking this was Thomas Hardy, or whoever, you went on to discuss the nature of Hardy's verse, or Blake's, or whoever—in what respects it was good, and in what respects it was bad. Leavis was a very evaluative teacher. In other words, he encouraged discriminations of quality in a way that is nowadays rather awkward. Many people find that discriminations of quality played a very big part in this, and the quality wasn't simply technical or linguistic, or even literary; it was partly moral. Again, the moral and the literary were interfused. ... he was suspicious of any deductive thinking in criticism. His interests were in particulars and differentiating, not large notions. One read with huge attention to detail, and with an eye on what was individual and different about these texts. ... Leavis was a great teacher, and he had a huge influence on me in ways which weren't simply a matter of style of literary criticism. He's certainly one of the half-dozen "readers over my shoulder," when I ask myself, "What would they think of this?" [pp. 29-30]*

Baxandall also had a close family relationship to English traditions in art and museums. His father had been a museum keeper, eventually winding up as director of the municipal museum in Manchester. His grandfather had also been keeper of scientific instruments at the Science Museum in London. Baxandall's father was not an art historian, but an antiquarian specializing in medieval pottery who also wrote criticism of contemporary English art. Very much influenced by Roger Fry. Reading Erwin Panofsky's *Meaning in the Visual Arts* directed Baxandall back to the visual arts, which he avoided because it was his father's area. He had not been impressed by Pevsner's lectures at Cambridge. Not enough moral feeling. Not enough intellectual playfulness. After graduating from Cambridge, he spent time on a fellowship in Italy and Germany, developing his interests in visual art in both places. When he returned to England, the Warburg seemed the natural place for him to deepen his studies further. He rejected the Courtauld because he was not interested in connoisseurship but in the moral and social value of art. Yet he knew nothing about the Warburg.

*I had no idea what the Warburg was when I went to it. I had not learned in Germany anything about the Warburg Institute. It was a quite different sort of art history. [p. 55]*

*I wasn't really trained, I just struggled. Unlike some of my students, I don't have great archival skills. I've worried a lot about what one should do for students in training for this. [p. 59]*

*I certainly found it sometimes a bit difficult to communicate with Buchthal or Otto Kurz. Partly it was shyness on my side, partly an awareness that I didn't have the sort of good, classical Gymnasium education they had. I felt sort of undereducated in many ways. I think to some extent one has to distinguish a little bit between the Austrian and the German, and my sense was that the Germans found it easier in England than the Austrians did to feel not altogether alien. [p. 66]*

Gombrich's interest in the relation of rhetoric and painting in the Italian renaissance steered the direction Baxandall's research interests. Baxandall prepared a course on rhetoric in the Renaissance for the Warburg in 1965. He was emphatic: "*I doubt if I'd have found it for myself*" [p. 83]. He did not teach art history at the Warburg. In addition to rhetoric, he taught courses on dialectic, the concept of the Renaissance, patronage, the economic history of Italy, German humanism, the Reformation.

Baxandall is famous for embedding the creation of art in social history. This was a conclusion he wanted to complicate. The opening sentence of *Painting and Experience* reads, "A fifteenth-century painting is the deposit of a social relationship." The simplicity of the declaration, Baxandall explained was intended, in the spirit of his Cambridge education, "to irritate people" (among them Ernst Gombrich). The effort to explore the layers of *meaning* in material objects took Baxandall away from social structures per se and even from the formal vocabulary people used to discuss those objects. *Meaning* pointed to emotional response, a sense of connection that

began with feelings but which could be abstracted into words. Sensation mattered, not linguistic structures; art history required a study of structures of feeling, for which clues could be found in the iconography of a period, but only clues. *Tact* was needed to think through the relationship of sensation to the verbal descriptions that were available without submerging one into the other.

*a painter has to be explicit about certain things which a writer doesn't have to address. Saint Luke telling the story of the Annunciation has to use tenses. A painter has to use colors. So one really cannot use these formal color symbolism systems. [p. 107]*

The “period eye” could not be reduced to the words the people of a time and place used to describe visual experience, particularly the words of people expert in the works and the traditions surrounding their creation, or as he put it in *Painting and Experience*, language is a conspiracy against experience. This conclusion took him into art history and into specifically English art criticism. By 1980, after finishing his book on German limewood sculpture, Baxandall no longer saw himself as doing something different from art historians. Instead, he began to feel uneasy the people might lump him with social historians. But as an art historian, he saw himself working in an “old-fashioned English aesthete” following in the footsteps of John Ruskin and Roger Fry. His Warburgian intellectual framework did not fit with his English aesthete inclinations. His emotions sided with old-fashioned English ways of looking at things and increasingly guided the direction of his work. The aesthete

tradition could not sustain a developed argument, and Baxandall turned to his Warburgian training to find the tools he needed to best the arguments that his Warburgian colleagues were making.

*One of the reasons why I talk about art criticism quite often rather than art history is that it does seem to me very important to be clear about the fact that we are addressing our own descriptions of the thing, and that implicit in any description, however value free it seeks to be, there is a very elaborate system of evaluation. ... there's a physiological habit of eye movement, which is related to various processes of cognition. There's a set of rather obscure but very important processes that go on after that in the course of putting together sensation into the world, experience, and beyond that, to my mind, there is a set of very powerful psychic needs we have, what the French in the eighteenth century called inquietude, which has a huge amount to do with why we look at pictures and the way we do it. ... when we are looking at a picture seems to me to be distorted if one uses the notion of attention as one's prime concept for it. So I have moved away from attention to inquietude; it's that inquietude that interests me now. ... The three levels of inquietude are eye movements, cognitive movements, and the restlessness which art serves. ... I see myself as Warburgian, but I don't see myself as Warburgian quite in the image of Aby Warburg, who in the last ten or twenty years in Germany has become an important bearing. I simply read Warburg rather differently from them, and I*

*am aware that I do it because I'm coming from Roger Fry, you know. I would dramatize myself as "Roger Fry trying to do a Warburg." [pp. 153-158]*

I was struck at the time, and remain struck today, by the echoes with Francis Haskell's account. My general methodological assumption about repetitions of motifs in oral history narratives is that we are encountering patterned responses that developed with a given community over a period of time. That the responses are deeply personal is not in question, but scripts were available that made particular sense. Identifying these common structures provides evidence for the existence of discrete discursive communities. The motifs I've indicated are repeated in other British interviews in this series, and I imagine reflect the experiences of the generation that developed interests in visual and material culture in the decade or so following the end of the Second World War. Changes in the British academy were viewed with a high degree of ironic discomfort. Neither Baxandall nor Haskell earned a Ph.D., yet they had to train doctoral students in a discipline, art history, that they only slowly came to accept as theirs. The formation of the Association of Art Historians was another historical marker that generated equally ambivalent responses, as adhesion meant accepting a specific professional identity that was not felt as equivalent to either English or Warburgian values of scholarship and critical inquiry.

In the overall project, we interviewed only one art historian from the generation that entered the field after 1965, Griselda Pollock. Born in 1949, Pollock was the youngest person interviewed for the project. She did her undergraduate

studies at Oxford University, where she was Francis Haskell's first student; the connection was an important reason behind her interview. She earned her Ph.D. from the Courtauld Institute. She was the only English art historian interviewed in this series who had a Ph.D. We had previously interviewed Linda Nochlin, and Pollock's interview made sense if we were to extend the series into the emergence of feminism in art history. I had developed a list of potential interviewees whose work came out of feminism, queer studies, and the study of art by people of color. After much debate, the Getty chose not to explore that direction, but opted instead to extend the project to interviews with classical archaeologists from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany, following a research design closely modeled on the interviews with art historians. After eight interviews with archaeologists were concluded, I decided to withdraw from the project, and it came to a close after the remaining transcripts were prepared and approved by the interviewees.

The interview with Pollock stands as an intriguing fragment of what might have been a more detailed study of generational transmission to the generation of '68. There were echoes of motifs found in the preceding generation. *"Although my parents had been born in this country, I don't feel in any sense English,"* Pollock declared early on in the more than 9 hours we recorded. She had been born in South Africa, where she lived until she was seven. Her father then took a job in Canada, and she was educated there until she was thirteen.

*I always now feel more at home in North America. For instance, there is a very classic example that I can give you. In North American education you are encouraged to speak, so there's a level of verbal competence, and vocabulary, and I was taught ... English grammar in a very organized and disciplined fashion. When we came back to England I was sent to an English boarding school. ... the English education system for girls aims to prevent them from being too clever. It doesn't want educated women and it quite consistently works out how it's going to provide an education that will be for clever girls who can achieve academic results, but without making them intellectual. It's an incredible achievement, and I've watched it happening to my daughter here—compared to what they do with my son, who goes to the same kind of school. ... the highest accolade the school could give me was that I could, if I did well enough in the sixth-form year, get a certificate to say that I was now qualified to be a governess. I still have it. I am a qualified governess—in addition to having got A-levels and having been to university. [p. 8]*

Feminism develops in her personal narrative as a necessary strategy for dealing with a strong sense of exclusion *as an intellectual* from English society, a marginalization felt more intensely, more clearly. As a doctoral student at the Courtauld, she had no contact whatsoever with Anthony Blunt, because, she was convinced, that he never spoke to women enrolled in the program he led. Whenever she received communications that Blunt typically gave to male students himself, it was the deputy director who spoke with her. Even in seminars, Blunt restricted his

exchanges with female students to the bare minimum. On one occasion, the deputy director on Blunt's behalf asked Pollock to withdraw her application for a grant.

*he said, "There are two other people who've applied for this grant who've just finished their B.A.s"—not their M.A.s, and not distinctions, but they were men. He said, "Surely your father would support you. Would you be willing to stand down?" That really is as blatant as it gets, and that's what happened, so I said, "No. I have not been supported for two years by my father. I've worked in shoe shops to keep myself going and I'm not intending to let these two— " I was so angry, because it was so clear. They were two years behind me, their results weren't as good, and just because I was a woman I could be supported. [p. 60]*

Pollock used very little of the self-deprecating humor running throughout the interviews with her male predecessors whenever they examined the peculiar fact they are not quite genuine Britons despite being distinguished professors at universities with global reputations. Feminism provided her a more practical way of understanding and confronting the barriers blocking her full participation. Feminism effected a rupture by privileging theory as necessary to converting raw experience into meaningful understanding. Theory separated her from humanist conceptions of knowledge:

*I'm now twenty-five years down the line in a theoretical project which I think would have been different had I been a standard art historian and simply spent*

*twenty-five years researching French nineteenth-century art history, which is what I was being directed to do. I would have accumulated a lot of knowledge, but in a sense I would still be at the same point. Some of my teachers had been lecturing for twenty years, but they still were doing it from one point of view. They had more information to give me, but it was a framework, which was very comforting. I think that's what art history students would like their teachers to do, whereas what I am doing all the time is revising and revising and revising. [p. 11]*

And while critical of the limitations of her teachers, she singled out Francis Haskell as particularly important for the development of her larger project.

*Francis Haskell was going to do a course on the nineteenth century. I thought, "Aha, this is wonderful," and I went to a lecture Francis Haskell gave. ... Haskell gave this unbelievably wonderful lecture which was mostly about Gros, Girard, and Girodet—the early nineteenth-century French paintings. They were exactly the paintings that had I gone to a museum I would have walked by. They were illegible to me. Francis Haskell gave these extraordinary lectures about the relationship of these paintings to the Salon and to Napoleon and post-Napoleonic France and the Restoration. It was so enthralling to see someone reveal something that was essentially indecipherable for me, or that fell beneath my attention, and suddenly I thought, "This is it, I want to do this." [p. 39]*

The model however was used to indicate scholarship that was distinct from “art history,” narrowly understood, hence the model continued the conception of doing work that was apart from the main stream.

*the curatorial model of art history has become so predominant in the way in which we deliver this story of art that we lose the sense of the complex field, and that's what Francis Haskell's course gave us. We were not looking at this "ism" and that "ism," but the complexity of a cultural moment through the prism of one critic's engagement, passionately and partisanly, with completely discontinuous artistic moments. So there would be the legacy of Romanticism, but what did he have to say about Classicism at that moment? And equally, what did he say about the development of "Nature," and what could he say and not say? We looked at prints and photography and drawings, and the key book was [Leon] Rosenthal's From Romanticism to Realism, as well as some of the older books that had never been translated. All this could have inspired me, like some of his other students, to become absolutely focused on that complex history of the nineteenth-century salons, patronage, and criticism, up until about the 1860s. I still think it's very profound and interesting, but I didn't get stuck as a Haskellite. [p. 42]*

Pollock wondered if the separation she felt from the scholar whose approach inspired her to study visual culture was personal or whether it had to do with gender. She did not view herself as continuing Haskell's project.

*but I didn't seek out Francis's company or try to ingratiate myself; I did not assume that we would be part of a network. But I noticed, particularly at the Courtauld, that some of the young men just assumed that because they were the academic "sons of the fathers," they would claim a certain kind of social interaction with their teachers—they would hang out with them and they would go to the pub. They would assume that the relationship was available. I think obviously because of the sense of sexual proprieties and all the rest of it, I didn't. I never assumed that one would cross that barrier, and I kept a certain kind of academic discipline. ... I think I would claim that I am fatherless. ... I'm in constant dialogue with certain people; I suppose Tim Clark came to be the nearest person who could function like that, but it's more a sibling relationship. I'm in interesting relationships collaterally, but there isn't anybody else up there doing the stuff I do. I've had to invent it myself. ... My generation, it seems to me, taught ourselves everything through the bookshop. ... I joined a Marxism and literature reading group, and then there was a kind of Marxism and culture reading group, and when I came to Leeds I joined a Capital reading group. And then we had a Foucault and Lacan reading group, because none of that was on offer in the universities. ... I don't know whether I'm misleading myself, but I constantly go over this, and I think it was a major break ... there wasn't a patriline. [p. 46]*

Pollock dismissed the idea that she had students working in her matriline, because, as she put it, even if influenced by Pollock's ideas, "they're so bloody independent,

*they just go off and they bounce off me” [p. 49].* This position I should add makes sense in terms of Pollock’s relation with her dissertation adviser at the Courtauld Institute. The most important influences on Pollock—Francis Haskell, Linda Nochlin, T. J. Clark, Fred Orton—had no official relationship with her student work. She chose to do her dissertation on van Gogh because Orton substituted for her adviser at the Courtauld when the adviser was on leave. She said:

*Fred came in and literally made us cry, because he'd suddenly say, "What are we talking about? Why was that important? What is this date? Is this significant? What's this drawing about? Tell me about it. Why are you showing it to me?" ... no one had ever asked [us] to do anything other than be smoothly polite and just tell the story. And suddenly somebody's saying, "What's it about? Why are you telling me this?"—just asking us questions. So I just thought, "This is it." This was what I'd been waiting for. ... We were just struck dumb by the total intellectual and historical inadequacy of everything that we'd been given as art history in the previous few terms. Here was something that was possible; it was as if the door opened. We discovered that there were twenty-five books in the library on Van Gogh, but only two of them represented any serious research. It was just the usual garbage, and there was everything to be done. Every drawing, every letter, every painting, every period of his life was all there waiting to be properly researched—I mean "properly researched" even in the traditional, art-historical way. So that was what got me into my dissertation. ... This was just so obvious that you couldn't believe it. [pp. 50-51]*

A large part of the interview reconstructs Pollock's path towards feminism and the development of her approach towards feminist art history. This was a complicated discussion that weaved together very personal aspects of Pollock's life in the 1960s and 1970s, political commitments she made (at times regretted), her efforts to promote a history of women artists, her dissertation on van Gogh, and a web of theoretical readings she undertook in a variety of study groups. To summarize would be difficult and, more importantly, beside the point. The detail, with all its confusions, is what matters in understanding how one scholar's work grew out of a complicated set of social conflicts. Feminism, more than post-structuralism, characterized the rupture that in international scholarship during her (and my) lifetime. I have suggested how the interviews reveal discursive continuities between Pollock and the art historians we interviewed from the preceding generation. Feminism is the primary marker of how deeply conceptions changed. That is obvious, but one of the regrets I might have about the project not pursuing more interviews with other historians of Pollock's generation is the inability to explore these leads further. Two more obvious developments that were directly related to a new grappling with role of gender were increased importance of subjectivity as a theme, that a theory of the subject was equal in importance to having a conception of the object being studied; secondly, the question of pleasure had to be addressed as critical to the construction of the subject. Both topics were discussed at length, and the conversation I think reveal to a better degree than published writings the continuing confusions, ambivalences, and compromises

involved in putting together an intellectual project.

Oral history interviews do not capture the sophistication or the logical complexity of ideas that intellectuals expound and debate in print. Any given topic of importance to a field has generated hundreds of thousands of pages. Theoretical definitions have been debated over and over again, with each generation bringing new considerations to the issue, depending on their theoretical or philosophical predispositions. The conversational nature of an interview however undercuts any tendency an interviewee might have to lapse into lecture mode—though of course on occasion that does happen. Responses to interview questions about categories of analysis grow from how the interviewee has translated theorized frameworks worthy of a lecture or an essay into working concepts suitable for the practical situations of everyday work life. Oral history privileges tentative, practical conclusions typical of conversational exchange rather than well-argued principles prepared for publication and/or conference presentations. Working concepts need to be communicated easily to a variety of people whose help will be critical to the success of a class, an exhibition, or a publication, and they need to be phrased in terms that are comprehensible to those with whom one works that do not pay attention to more complex discussions.

In the course of on-going professional activity, summary statements allow concepts to be put to work in a variety of practical situations. Concepts that are complex and theorized in literature appear in records of everyday discourse as ready-to-hand precepts that can guide whether or not to buy a work of art, what to include in an exhibit, which slides to include in a lecture, how to write about an

object in a book or article, who to invite to participate in a symposium or to contribute to an anthology or a to an exhibition catalogue. Participation in discussions, some of them in formal settings, most of them not, as well as reading, provide a backdrop to choices made, but decisions are practical and situational, regardless of whatever ideals lurk in penumbra.

Oftentimes, the most telling influences come as flashes of insight that take time to be digested and because of a strong emotional resonance, their development as ideas cannot be separated from the feelings they generate. As I mentioned early, both Haskell and Baxandall equated meaning with feeling. Both spoke of writing about particular works because they enjoyed the works as objects, not because they the works addressed some big historical question. The historical arguments, the interpretations, developed out engagement with work whose primary appeal was the pleasure they provided. The ideological dimensions of the process were not entirely disregarded and was not examined systematically. Pollock, on the other hand, needed to explore emotional responses to objects as clues to the formation of subjects embedded in particular constructions of gendered experience. Pleasure had to be taken apart. Pollock recalled having understood this in a naïve way before she encountered Laura Mulvey's essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" in 1975, which had a strong emotional appeal that impelled her to expand her reading. The result, she understood, was confusing. *"I hope what'll come out of this is that I have no consistent position and I have no consistent project. I don't know what I'm up to, I just keep on doing it as it comes" [p. 91].*