

How Many Klees Today?

O. K. Werckmeister, *The Making of Paul Klee's Career, 1914-1920*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989, 335 pp., 126 black-and-white illus.

Christine Hopfengart, *Klee: Vom Sonderfall zum Publikumsliebbling; Stationen seiner öffentlichen Resonanz in Deutschland 1905-1960*. Mainz, von Zabern, 1989, 284 pp., 105 black-and-white illus.

Claude Frontisi, *Klee: Anatomie d'Aphrodite, le polyptyque démembré*. Paris, Adam Biro, 1990, 64 pp., illus., 89 Fr

Rainer Crone And Joseph Leo Koerner, *Paul Klee: Legends of the Sign*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1991, 96 pp., \$29 US

Marcel Franciscono, *Paul Klee: His Work and Thought*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991, 304 pp., \$47.50 US

Mark Roskill, *Klee, Kandinsky, and the Thought of Their Time: A Critical Perspective*. Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1992, 272 pp., \$47.50 US

Marianne Vogel, *Zwischen Wort und Bild. Das schriftliche Werk Paul Klees und die Rolle der Sprache in seinem Denken und in seiner Kunst*. Beiträge zur Kunstwissenschaft 43. Munich, Scaneg, 1992, 216 pp., 20 black-and-white illus., DM 60

Jenny Anger

Volume 18, numéro 1-2, 1991

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1072990ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1072990ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

UAAC-AAUC (University Art Association of Canada | Association d'art des universités du Canada)

ISSN

0315-9906 (imprimé)

1918-4778 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Anger, J. (1991). Compte rendu de [How Many Klees Today? / O. K. Werckmeister, *The Making of Paul Klee's Career, 1914-1920*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989, 335 pp., 126 black-and-white illus. / Christine Hopfengart, *Klee: Vom Sonderfall zum Publikumsliebbling; Stationen seiner öffentlichen Resonanz in Deutschland 1905-1960*. Mainz, von Zabern, 1989, 284 pp., 105 black-and-white illus. / Claude Frontisi, *Klee: Anatomie d'Aphrodite, le polyptyque démembré*. Paris, Adam Biro, 1990, 64 pp., illus., 89 Fr / Rainer Crone And Joseph Leo Koerner, *Paul Klee: Legends of the Sign*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1991, 96 pp., \$29 US / Marcel Franciscono, *Paul Klee: His Work and Thought*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991, 304 pp., \$47.50 US / Mark Roskill, *Klee, Kandinsky, and the Thought of Their Time: A Critical Perspective*. Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1992, 272 pp., \$47.50 US / Marianne Vogel, *Zwischen Wort und Bild. Das schriftliche Werk Paul Klees und die Rolle der Sprache in seinem Denken und in seiner Kunst*. Beiträge zur Kunstwissenschaft 43. Munich, Scaneg, 1992, 216 pp., 20 black-and-white illus., DM 60]. *RACAR : Revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review*, 18(1-2), 102–111. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1072990ar>

Tous droits réservés © UAAC-AAUC (University Art Association of Canada | Association d'art des universités du Canada), 1994

Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>

érudit

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/>

Book Reviews: How Many Klees Today?*

JENNY ANGER, BROWN UNIVERSITY

O. K. WERCKMEISTER, *The Making of Paul Klee's Career, 1914-1920*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989, 335 pp., 126 black-and-white illus.

CHRISTINE HOPFENGART, *Klee: Vom Sonderfall zum Publikumsliedling; Stationen seiner öffentlichen Resonanz in Deutschland 1905-1960*. Mainz, von Zabern, 1989, 284 pp., 105 black-and-white illus.

CLAUDE FRONTISI, *Klee: Anatomie d'Aphrodite, le polyptyque démembré*. Paris, Adam Biro, 1990, 64 pp., illus., 89 Fr.

RAINER CRONE and JOSEPH LEO KOERNER, *Paul Klee: Legends of the Sign*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1991, 96 pp., \$29 US.

MARCEL FRANCISCONO, *Paul Klee: His Work and Thought*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991, 304 pp., \$47.50 US.

MARK ROSKILL, *Klee, Kandinsky, and the Thought of Their Time: A Critical Perspective*. Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1992, 272 pp., \$47.50 US.

MARIANNE VOGEL, *Zwischen Wort und Bild. Das schriftliche Werk Paul Klees und die Rolle der Sprache in seinem Denken und in seiner Kunst. Beiträge zur Kunstwissenschaft 43*. Munich, Scaneg, 1992, 216 pp., 20 black-and-white illus., DM 60.

The last Klee review in these pages posited that since book-length studies were devoted to particular aspects of the artist's oeuvre, Klee scholarship had attained a certain sophistication.¹ The proliferation of Klee studies since the mid-1980s supports Mark Cheetham's thesis even as it problematizes it. The Klee literature has come to exemplify many divergent courses of art-historical research, and since this multiplicity of approaches is associated in many circles with disciplinary "crisis," it is no longer sufficient to claim "sophistication" merely on the basis of plurality.² In this review plurality becomes an object of study. The many Klees it promises to produce somehow dissipate under the strain of the modernist dichotomy—pure vs. impure—which remarkably continues to structure even those analyses attempting to dislodge it. I evaluate the approaches of all the recent studies for their capacity to provide detailed visual analysis, subtle social contextualization, and self-conscious use of terms and paradigms. I consider the books chronologically according to publication both because of their intertextual referencing and because of the effects this chronology has on my readings of them. Finally, I pay special attention to which kinds of objects the methodologies engage, and to what these analyses enable one to say or see. From this critical rather than apocalyptic or celebratory perspective I will suggest ways in which Klee studies might take greater advantage of the various possibilities at what appears to be a crossroads in art history, exploring the persistence of the pure/impure dichotomy.³

O. K. Werckmeister's *The Making of Paul Klee's Career, 1914-1920* (1989) arguably inaugurates a new phase in the Klee literature.⁴ The culmination of Werckmeister's work on Klee for over a decade, this in-depth study of the formative years of Klee's career

represents a rupture with previous, largely hagiographic monographs, and many subsequent Klee publications have felt the necessity to contend with it. One is grateful for Werckmeister's relentless attack on the long-standing mythology of Klee as detached, mystical modernist, and for his contextualization of Klee within a cultural milieu and market. However, Werckmeister's "historical critique of culture as ideology"⁵ proves in the end to be limiting because of the rather reductive notion of ideology on which it relies. As David Craven has argued, Werckmeister's "ideology" has continued since the mid-1970s to be that of a crude and retrograde marxism, seeing art, as part of ideology, implying "false consciousness." Since capitalism is bad, art produced under it is bad; ideology based on contradiction and the possibility of subversive art are forsaken to Werckmeister's "profoundly *non-dialectical* project."⁶ Rather than working on contradiction, Werckmeister simply disdains it. He berates both Klee and the reader with the words "ambivalence" and "contradiction,"⁷ though he never analyzes the words. For example, "The ambivalence of . . . [Klee's] caricaturistic mode embraces both privilege and resignation"; or "Soon, however, even critics sympathetic to modern art found the balance between childlike spontaneity and formal refinement claimed by Klee and his admirers to be contradictory and suspect."⁸ This problem forever hints that Klee failed to have a consistently radical, unified politics, though Klee's intentions are read as unified in another way. Even when Klee decisively leaned to the left in ways Werckmeister could approve, it was never far enough because Klee, according to Werckmeister, was fixed in capitalism and therefore must essentially (I use the word carefully) have believed in capitalism. Werckmeister quotes from the now oft-cited letter to Alfred Kubin, in which Klee describes his impressions of the failed *Räterepublik* (council/communist republic) in Munich in 1919:

However ephemeral this communist republic appeared from the beginning, it nevertheless offered an opportunity for an assessment of the subjective possibilities for existing within such a community. . . . Of course a pointedly individualistic art is not suitable for appreciation by all, it is a capitalist luxury. We, however, ought to be more than curiosities for rich snobs. And that part of us which somehow aims beyond this, for eternal values, would be better able to receive support in a communist community.⁹

Werckmeister concedes that "Klee's letter to Kubin confirms once more that he had sided with the left wing in Munich art politics,"¹⁰ but in the following pages he twice accuses Klee of opting for the "capitalist luxury" he had negatively invoked: in his choice of "artificially coarse and ragged" rather than "political" pictures to show in the 1919 New Munich Secession exhibit,¹¹ and in his decision to secure a general sales contract, signed 1 October 1919, with the dealer Hans Goltz in Munich.¹² According to Werckmeister, Klee is exploited by the deal, "an exemplary capitalist appropriation of an artist's work,"¹³ because his guaranteed salary would not be adjusted to the great inflation to come. Thus Klee is maligned for being part of capitalism and for being subjected to it.

There is no way out of Werckmeister's logic, which limits the scope of his analysis in ways I can only suggest here. For example, Werckmeister chastises Klee again and again for making and exhibiting works that he believed would sell. Taking "sales" to be impure, Werckmeister fails to explore the myth that art need not sell, a myth whose modern incarnation probably dates to Kant's aesthetic of functionless art and which reinscribes the myth of the poor, struggling artist. Secondly, though Werckmeister dislodges the traditional, heroic artist narrative, the artist nonetheless reappears as a fully self-possessed intentionalist, not creating masterpieces, as in the old model, but mastering the market as a genius entrepreneur. Finally, this reductive approach keeps Werckmeister from assessing some of the compelling facts he himself has carefully compiled. Witness Werckmeister's contention that on numerous occasions Klee changed the titles of his works so as to take advantage of the market.¹⁴ Certainly titles were changed, since titles are crossed out and added in Klee's own numbered Oeuvre Catalogue, and these titles, as well as the ones written directly on the works, sometimes differ from the ones in exhibition catalogues. However, Werckmeister never offers evidence that Klee, as opposed to curators or dealers, changed the titles for the exhibitions. Werckmeister assumes that Klee made these changes, and that he did so to make titles more literal in appeal to the public. Yet in the case of Klee's first Sturm exhibition in 1915, "at least seven of these changes were in the direction of greater thematic legibility of the subject matter" while "six other changes went in the opposite direction, from vaguely suggestive titles to precise but abstract form descriptions."¹⁵ This is not a consistent sales strategy. What is more, the analysis of which ones went which way is hardly precise: for example, *Memory of an Experience* (1914/111) to *Oriental Experience*, a change Werckmeister claims promoted legibility, arguably remains equally allusive, just differently so. In the end, Werckmeister's fixation on title-changing as market strategy prevents him from elucidating other data he includes, namely that on at least five occasions the works that actually sold were watercolours done in the style Klee developed on his trip to Tunisia in 1914, "in the mode of *Tapestry of Memory* (1914/193, Paul-Klee-Stiftung, Bern)."¹⁶ Why were these selling, and why are their images and titles not discussed?

Werckmeister does not examine these paintings, nor in fact, does he look very carefully at images in general. His readings of journal images as intertextual counterparts to the texts which appear near them are helpful for they consider the physical context in which those images were viewed. However, Werckmeister's overdetermined scope makes his readings excessively literal when they are called on to prove Klee's "ambivalence," and most uncritical when the images demand consideration beyond Werckmeister's concerns. For example, Werckmeister's reading of Klee's lithograph *Death for the Idea* (1915/1), which was published in the war-time journal *Zeit-Echo* (December 1914) facing a poem called "Night" by the Austrian expressionist Georg Trakl, is excessively literal.¹⁷ Since a figure with a spiked helmet lies horizontally at the bottom of Klee's lithograph, and since it "appears crossed out by the lines

scratched over his body, helplessly obliterated," Werckmeister reads it as emblematic of Trakl's death, but since the picture is placed in what is an "apparently planned sequence" of images and texts on the "glorification of death in war" and since Trakl committed suicide, as Klee *may* have known, Werckmeister concludes that "Trakl's death, as it had occurred, was a confirmation of Klee's emerging sense of a potentially mortal contradiction between art and war."¹⁸ Werckmeister's sole proof is the scratchy, heavy drawing over and above the figure. Yet there is no evidence Klee knew his lithograph would be placed next to Trakl's poem, so Trakl's death could hardly confirm Klee's state of mind (assuming for a moment that anything could, or that one would want to establish this).

Werckmeister's closed notion of ideology produces limited, less than careful readings in some cases where more varied approaches are clearly necessary, as in his discussion of Klee's illustrations for the second, limited edition of Curt Corinth's expressionist novel, *Potsdamer Platz, oder die Nächte des neuen Messias—Ekstatische Visionen* (Munich, 1920).¹⁹ The subject of the novel, as Werckmeister presents it, "was the revolution"; its plot, he writes, consists of an anti-bourgeois visionary man "who leads the prostitutes of Berlin to shed their lot as paid sexual workers and instead embark on the enjoyment of free sexuality."²⁰ Chaos ensues until troops come into the city to restore order, but the women "incapacitate these soldiers by seduction" and the redeemer "ascends to heaven."²¹ Werckmeister's primary concern is at what point during the actual revolution in Munich Klee may have made the illustrations. Meanwhile, the explicitly violent misogyny of the project (Corinth's and Klee's) is never problematized; in fact, it is reproduced in Werckmeister's prose. He writes: "Another [Klee] illustration, *You Strong One, oh—oh, oh You* (1919/14; fig. 82, full page), shows a woman enthusiastically submitting to violent treatment by a man."²² Werckmeister acknowledges something of the scene's brutality because he notes Klee may have borrowed from George Grosz's painting *John the Woman Slayer* of 1918, "where the cubistic parcelling of the body is used literally to represent its physical dismemberment."²³ Beyond his superficial recognition of similar subjects, however, Werckmeister does not seem to have looked closely at either picture. The compositions differ radically: Klee's nude female lies sideways across the centre of the picture plane, with heavily and regularly drawn areas sometimes representing thrashing limbs, hers and perhaps another's, emanating out from her. In contrast, Grosz's painted cubist facets cover the entire picture plane, and his more traditionally modelled nude female turns along a diagonal axis into almost three-quarter view, keeping her highlighted right hip squarely in the center of the picture, with the phallic silhouette of the clothed male attacker's nose penetrating into the plane of her hip, echoing the violence that his knife has wrought. Because Klee represents only one full figure plus "limbs," Werckmeister claims that "[b]y joining the two fragmented bodies into one complete set of limbs, and thus suggesting the shared sexual satisfaction of victim and attacker which Corinth's text evokes, Klee satirically defused the violence of Grosz's picture, in line with his own cherished concept of complementary

contrasts."²⁴ Werckmeister, rather, defuses Klee's violence by conjuring a more legible model for it, only to insist that Klee cleans up the source and turns it into an image of mutual sado-masochistic pleasure consistent with Corinth's representation. But in Corinth's text the young prostitute, "scum of life," must be whipped and throttled before she falls to her knees and recognizes her attacker as the messiah.²⁵ Werckmeister cannot see the stakes of this revolution because they fall outside his limited concerns.

Werckmeister's contribution to Klee studies is nonetheless substantial, in that he has provoked others to dismantle the persistent heroicization of the modern artist by insisting on contextualization. For her dissertation at the University of Cologne, published as *Klee: Vom Sonderfall zum Publikumsliebbling; Stationen seiner öffentlichen Resonanz in Deutschland 1905-1960 (Klee: From Special Case to Public Favourite; Stages of His Public Resonance/Response in Germany 1905-1960)*, Christine Hopfengart acknowledges, "despite real reservations," her debt to Werckmeister's earlier Klee essays for their "substantial methodological impulses."²⁶ Though she uncritically adopts some of his weaknesses that maintain the myth of the pure, unified artist, i.e., the assumption of ideology as false consciousness, the reproduction of the language one is ostensibly analyzing, and not looking carefully at images (to which I will return), she nevertheless produces a thoroughgoing critical history of the production of Klee as "Klee" in art literature.

Hopfengart takes on an immense field: not only articles and books on Klee, but also general art histories, group and solo exhibitions, their physical organization and their catalogues, collectors and collecting, art reproductions, including calendars, posters, postcards, interior design advertisements,²⁷ and even sweatshirt designs.²⁸ Hopfengart's impressive chronological bibliography lists all these publications, including the more ephemeral calendars, posters and postcards. She draws upon these media to prove her thesis that Klee did not become "Klee," central figure of modernism, until post-Second-World-War German art writing claimed him as father figure for contemporary German artists. In a compelling analysis she asserts that heralding Klee was not (as one might imagine) a direct result of the post-war cultural policy of *Wiedergutmachung* (atonement/compensation), which was meant to compensate for Nazi atrocities in the realm of *Entartete Kunst*²⁹ and *Künstler*. This policy did, however, shield Klee and others from criticism and it cultivated an accepting public for modern art.³⁰ Leopold Zahn, who had written the first monograph on the artist in 1920, took advantage of this fertile ground, instigating a major shift in Klee's reception with the publication of his article, "3 x abstrakte Kunst," in *Das Kunstblatt*, I (1946-47), 27-30. Zahn positioned Klee (in text and reproductions) following Kandinsky and Marc, and yet, as Hopfengart points out, preceding the one reproduction of current work (a drawing by a Berlin artistic hopeful, Heinz Trökes), and thereby representing him as the bridge from the "classic moderns" to the present.³¹

The success of Zahn's model depended on nationalism, an important leitmotif in Hopfengart's narrative. Klee was first regarded

as a bridge to the future in New York during the war, as Hopfengart shows. Immigrant dealers Curt Valentin and Karl Nierendorf vied for Klees precisely because they were held to be emblematic of the future; his work seemed to mediate abstraction and surrealism, providing a palpable model for New York School production.³² Assuming this position, Zahn was able to capitalize on American popularity, a boost for a "German" artist since the war had so thoroughly discredited Germany morally and culturally.³³ The view of Klee as father figure specifically for German artists, despite his Swiss birth, was then institutionalized with the first full-length, extensive monograph, Werner Haftmann's *Paul Klee*, which emphasized the formal characteristics of the artist's work and concluded with analysis of his formal legacy in the work of his students.³⁴ Hopfengart convincingly argues that after the publication of this book Klee's popularity in Germany surged and continued to rise throughout the 1950s, creating an ever larger audience for major solo exhibitions in Hannover and Munich (1954), Hamburg and Bern (1956) and Berlin (1960);³⁵ a monograph by Carola Giedion-Welcker, a work too little discussed to my mind, and the standard monograph by Will Grohmann, published simultaneously in Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy and the United States in 1954;³⁶ and finally Haftmann's central positioning of Klee both in his *Malerei im 20. Jahrhundert* and in his organization of the huge exhibition "Documenta, Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts" in Kassel in 1955.³⁷

Unfortunately, Hopfengart's conclusion, that skepticism about Klee set in at the beginning of the 1960s, is passed over too quickly, is not amply demonstrated, and seems too dependent upon her self-professed preference for the "Aktionen und Happenings"³⁸ of the 1970s, a preference she invokes without further ado to explain her distaste for the "classic moderns." Indeed, her emphasis on Klee's post-war critical success causes her to minimize its earlier manifestations, but she does trace some important sources for the production of the post-war "Klee." For example, Hopfengart writes that Grohmann, whose "sober" 1954 monograph remained the standard until very recently, had already rationalized Klee in his 1924 essay for *Der Cicerone*. Grohmann apparently sought to "correct . . . expressionist excesses" in previous criticism and in the short monographs of 1920-21 by Zahn, Hermann von Wedderkop and Wilhelm Hausenstein.³⁹ She quotes Grohmann from 1924: "Paul Klee today is neither a musical intermezzo, nor a mystical faith, nor an exotic province. One does him wrong, one wants to isolate him as a special case and diminish his share in contemporary painting in Europe."⁴⁰ Grohmann emphasized the most theoretically based abstraction of Klee's current (1923-24) Bauhaus production, thereby laying the foundation, Hopfengart claims, for the Bauhaus-centric, streamlined Klee narrative institutionalized by Grohmann and Haftmann some thirty years later.

Despite her considerable contribution to analysis of the discursive production of Klee and the artist generally, Hopfengart's book is weakened, as I suggested earlier, by her uncritical adoption of some of Werckmeister's approach. Her analysis of Klee's production as an artistic ideal is trenchant—but she treats this develop-

ment as somehow impure or representative of false consciousness. She writes, for example, that “outside forces,” Klee’s success in Paris and Flechtheim’s “art-dealing propaganda,” facilitated Klee’s increased status in Germany in the later 1920s.⁴¹ The assumption is that there might or should have been “inside forces” naturally inspiring critical acclaim (and perhaps that the lack of these “inside forces” means Klee did not deserve critical acclaim). She uses the language of advertising and propaganda to invoke the suspicion that Klee’s success was, again, as in Werckmeister’s account, due completely to marketing. She characterizes Herwarth Walden’s Berlin operations as “merciless activist propagandizing” with the “brand name Sturm,”⁴² and she claims that together, Goltz’s Klee retrospective in Munich in 1920, Zahn’s accompanying monograph, and their printing of one lithograph and many postcards for public consumption constitute an “advertising campaign.”⁴³ Her inclusion of popular media is fascinating, but she is, unfortunately, merely disdainful of it: it “limited” his work to the “easily consumable,” she laments.⁴⁴ Still, Hopfengart’s viewpoint does not prohibit her from showing how some developments are independent of masterful marketing, for example, that the conception of Klee in Germany after the war was influenced not only by the various publications and exhibitions she scrupulously lists, but also by the specific works in one collection, that of Rudolf Ibach. She explains that in the difficult post-war years, his Klees were the only ones able to make the rounds to most German Klee exhibitions.⁴⁵

Hopfengart’s advertising language and the centrality of the Ibach collection exemplify other problems she shares with Werckmeister: namely, reproducing paradigms that need to be interrogated, and not examining images closely, both of which perpetuate an idealization of art which the authors set out to criticize. The language of advertising, for example, was often used in the 1910s and 1920s to distinguish high art from consumer culture, as Hopfengart’s quotation of Ernst Kallai from his catalogue essay on the Blaue Vier (including Klee) from October 1929 demonstrates: “Strangers to this world of the universal department store, of sensations and confections: the best, that could be said about an art today.”⁴⁶ The stakes of this distinction are lost on Hopfengart. In her description of the works from the 1910s in the Ibach collection as tending toward the “ornamental,”⁴⁷ she also reiterates the language of the decorative arts, which had been invoked to criticize Klee early in his career. She cites a review by Karl Scheffler from 1920, where Klee is dismissed as a “talented artisan” with works like “embroidery patterns and that ilk.”⁴⁸ Though she cites the review herself, she cannot read it critically because once again she employs the same paradigm. Hopfengart is also unable or unwilling to look closely at images, thereby continuing the myth that they exist in some pure space. Though she lists the postcards and lithograph Goltz and Zahn produced in order to “advertise” Klee, and she catalogues which exhibitions included the Ibach Klees, she does not provide or analyse reproductions of these works herself (and not for want of images in her book). One is left wondering what kind of “Klee” Goltz, Zahn and Ibach more and less intentionally produced.

Despite these drawbacks, Hopfengart’s thorough and careful study, along with Werckmeister’s, would seem to condition the tenor if not the precise critical perspective of Klee studies for years to come, such that one could only profess again Klee’s unconditional genius if one were to avoid Hopfengart and Werckmeister altogether. Claude Frontisi’s *Klee: Anatomie d’Aphrodite, le polyptyque démembré* (*Klee: Anatomy of Aphrodite, the Dismembered Polyptych*), a completely ahistorical and laudatory Klee monograph, does just that. Frontisi, an art history professor at the University of Paris X, Nanterre, who has written monographs on Juan Gris (1975) and the art nouveau architect Hector Guimard (1985), neither reads the current Klee literature nor concerns himself with the specificity of dates or context. An example of his less than accurate scholarship is his dating of Klee’s widely published and sole public lecture as 1912 rather than 1924. He claims Klee grappled with the “dilemma of abstraction” along with Kandinsky, Delaunay and Léger (this last an unusual and unlikely pairing for Klee, though he is but one of many Frenchmen invoked along the way), citing evidence for the first two as Klee’s mention of them in his Jena lecture in 1912 (sic).⁴⁹ Frontisi draws attention to the confusion traditionally surrounding the two watercolours which are the subject of his study, though he may inadvertently perpetuate that confusion. For clarity, a fold-out illustrates the two images, and Frontisi provides a reproduction from Klee’s personal Oeuvre Catalogue to show their entries: *Anatomy of Aphrodite* (1915/45) and <Side Panels for 1915 45> (1915/48).⁵⁰ Frontisi points out that Gualtieri di San Lazzaro’s (peripheral) Klee monograph from 1957 and a Düsseldorf exhibition catalogue (1971 in a footnote, 1977 in the bibliography) reproduce the latter image under the title of the former.⁵¹ Following his argument, Frontisi himself provides a rough graphic sketch of what the works might have looked like together,⁵² but the proportions are different from those of the reproductions, which show the images at about the same height (convincing the reader that they belong together?). Rather than the relatively obscure and imprecise references and Frontisi’s sketch, one wishes, in the interest of his argument, that one could see the reproductions spliced together in the manner Frontisi describes, as they appear, for example, in an unmentioned exhibition catalogue from Munich in 1989.⁵³

If, however, one is willing to indulge his inaccurate scholarship and extravagant imagination, one is rewarded with a wild, misogynist, “psychoanalytic” account of the production of Klee’s *Anatomy of Aphrodite*, an example of what can only be called “subjunctive criticism.” Frontisi conjectures that if the two *Side Panels* were switched from left to right and rotated top to bottom, and if the *Anatomy of Aphrodite* were placed between them, the three panels would line up and could therefore initially have been one painting.⁵⁴ He argues that it was precisely Klee’s act of cutting the pieces apart that created the larger work which is the focus of his study: “this ‘operation’ gives birth to the *Anatomy of Aphrodite*.”⁵⁵ The painting materializes the otherwise “floating subject,” that is, it is not a representation but rather the figure itself; it is the “word”—language—that reconstructs the solidity of the works into one

"body"; the term "anatomy" evokes a double meaning of cutting, on the one hand, the visible, never-healing "wound" conserved in the gap between the two *Side Panels* and, on the other, the "primordial" separation of the panels which "gives birth to a new organism, an autonomous painting"; and the work resonates with the myth of Aphrodite's own birth from the sea or, as Frontisi quotes Hesiod, from "'the white foam of the divine member,' a consequence of Uranus's castration."⁵⁶

This is a criticism about what might have been or could be in the mind, but for which no shred of evidence exists. Nonetheless, one is constrained to acknowledge Frontisi's creativity in conceiving of the work of art, imaginativeness that is lamentably lacking in those critical approaches which consider belief in the work or the artist to be "false consciousness." Unfortunately, Frontisi's fabrication leaves the objectionable tradition of misogyny and the myth of genius in Western art firmly in place: "if the feminine anatomy were ever to be exhibited, it is in this watercolour by Klee."⁵⁷ The "eternal feminine," it would seem, has finally been nailed down, and the genius Klee has done it. But she is ripped up, too: describing the gap between the two parts of the *Side Panels*, Frontisi writes, "even more strange, the surface [feminine in French, *la surface*] tears herself, hides herself, annihilates herself."⁵⁸ This passage invokes the violence to women at the heart of much modernist production, a concern I will not put aside, because it is central to my critical understanding of what has come to signify "modernism" and "Klee."⁵⁹

Rainer Crone and Joseph Leo Koerner's short book, *Paul Klee: Legends of the Sign*, seems at first to signal the return of context after Frontisi's subjunctive criticism. The two essays which make up this book will be considered together because of their close relationship: Koerner's essay came out of a graduate seminar with Crone at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1983.⁶⁰ In the first essay, Crone, who currently teaches at Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich, provides an introductory lesson in semiotics. After a lengthy explication of Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles S. Peirce, Crone invokes this field, rich with implications for the specificity of painting's signification within a society, but then limits himself to formal abstractions, and Koerner follows his example. Their dalliance with the signifier alone leaves the larger implications of the social practice of painting unquestioned, and in my estimation results in a semiotic formalism that again relies upon the pure/impure dichotomy.⁶¹ Koerner, for example, refers to "pure signs" which signify nothing,⁶² and he implies that Klee's totally abstract "magic squares," painted between 1923 and 1937, somehow improve upon the works with (impure) remnants of linguistic signs, like those in *Einst dem Grau der Nacht Enttaucht* (1918/17, Paul-Klee-Stiftung, Bern), though he has just adeptly analysed this work.⁶³ He returns to the Bauhaus-centric formalism of Grohmann, whom he invokes to justify his valorization: "In these compositions, which Will Grohmann places at the 'innermost circle' of the artist's oeuvre, we see painting at its furthest remove from any narrative or illustrative elements."⁶⁴

Crone's reading of Klee's *Hammamet with Its Mosque* (1914/199, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) reveals the range of

semiotic analysis forsaken by this kind of semiotic formalism. He claims that the grid structure of the watercolour is a kind of *langue* Klee has chosen to work within, while the idiosyncrasies (colour, diagonals, flora, architectural details) are signs of Klee's free choice within that system, i.e., his *parole*.⁶⁵ This may be a useful distinction, but it reduces *langue* to one particular system operative in the painting, and, what is more, it assumes that Klee could simply choose a *langue* to work within, rather than his being subject to *langue* in its entirety. The *langue* (to continue with the Saussurian concept) which defines the realm of possibilities of the work is, in fact, much more complex, including drawing and painting techniques, tracts on associations of colours, a common visual repertory of images including famous paintings, popular media, advertisements and so forth.⁶⁶ Klee's work (*parole*) within this *langue* has its own cultural significance. The non-perspectival quality of Klee's Tunisian landscapes like *Hammamet with Its Mosque* is often construed in the literature as signifying Klee's break with European convention. His diaries are cited as transparent source material: "The watercolour of the beach still somewhat European. Could have been painted near Marseilles just as well. In the second [assumed to be like *Hammamet*], I encountered Africa for the first time."⁶⁷ The use of the grid signifies the "pre-cultural" and "primitive" of the colonial imagination, and these cultural meanings, which implicate Klee, need to be interrogated. Here Crone reduces the possibilities of semiotic analysis to an abstract formalism reconditioned with more current jargon. Thus, Klee emerges in Crone and Koerner as the brilliant artist who prefigured the "linguistic revolution in our era," as Crone characterizes it.⁶⁸

I want to make it clear that I do not use the pejorative term "jargon" to describe Crone and Koerner for the same reasons Marcel Franciscono, in *Paul Klee: His Work and Thought*, bashes the "abstractions of the reigning critical theories . . . the sociological and literary 'methodologies' now in style."⁶⁹ Crone and Koerner set the stage for a productive use of one of these "methodologies," but their conclusions remain largely formal and uncritical. Franciscono, on the other hand, overtly claims to be "traditional," beginning with "the assumption that Klee's art has an intrinsic interest—not, indeed, an interest divorced from life . . . but distinct from what it can tell us about Klee the person or about the social and economic conditions of his time."⁷⁰ This attitude might seem far from the critical approaches of Werckmeister and Hopfengart with which I began, but Franciscono's defensive traditionalism is a response precisely to Werckmeister (he never refers to Hopfengart and does not seem to be aware of her work). Franciscono acknowledges Werckmeister's "attempt to place Klee within a sociopolitical context," saying condescendingly that Werckmeister "has added greatly to our knowledge of Klee's involvement in the events of his time."⁷¹ Franciscono's project is not, as he claims, the pictures' "intrinsic interest," but rather a last-ditch effort to stake out high art as a pure, autonomous territory, albeit with some paradoxical connections to life. Of Klee's work he claims: "his wit and his shrewd observations of character . . . offer, in these times of disputing ideologies, a relief and even a certain

consolation.”⁷² But this consoling Klee is constructed in opposition to the threat of Werckmeister, with whom Franciscono is continually in dialogue, as his footnotes show.

A crucial difference in Franciscono’s more traditional formalism is his emphasis on representation rather than abstraction, which was the centrepiece of Grohmann’s standard narrative and the attraction for Frontisi still in 1990. The change of focus is legitimate, Franciscono claims, “if only because the technical and abstract means of his pictures have been intensively analyzed in recent years. . . . The principle reason, however, is that Klee’s work depends overwhelmingly on representation.”⁷³ Franciscono does not, then, so much question the long-lived centrality of abstraction, as displace it by emphasizing instead Klee’s poetry, line and irony—gathered together under the rubric “representation.” An example is Franciscono’s comparison of Klee’s lithograph *Destruction and Hope* (1916/55) with Albert Gleizes’s lost painting *The City and the River* of 1913:

Gleizes’ picture, for all its symbolic overtones (the city of Paris), remains an experienced landscape, its details fragmented and recombined kaleidoscopically in order to bring its breadth and variety more fully to life. Klee, instead, uses Gleizes’ fragmentation literally, to shape an image of chaos or collapse. It hardly matters whether his title and the idea it expresses came first or, as may well be the case, were afterthoughts. . . .^[74] And even if we assume that its various titles were only afterthoughts, the major differences between Gleizes’ pictures [there are a few versions] and Klee’s print remain: the diagonally titled [sic—tilted] planes which shift emphasis, as Werckmeister observes, from Gleizes’ architectural stability to Klee’s dynamic subjective movement; the absence of Gleizes’ clear descriptive details; and the presence of the two mysteriously large and bulky figures, all of which take the print out of the realm of the observed into the symbolic.⁷⁵

Looking closely at Klee’s works, Franciscono can make the following conclusion: “It is the ironic literalness with which Klee uses a line of force, a coloured shape, a fragmented field to create them that makes his work distinctive.”⁷⁶

I quote at length from Franciscono because he writes with a particular gracefulness of style missing in the other books under review. This style works rhetorically to sweep the reader along in its flowing narrative, but one needs to step back and attend to some of the assumptions on which this grace is based and which it tends to conceal. The first is that there is a unified “work” of Klee’s to reveal. Franciscono can surmise what precisely “makes . . . [Klee’s] work distinctive,” because his is an essentialist project, where the word “essence” appears in its various forms with incredible regularity.⁷⁷ He imagines that he presents the truth of Klee’s production; the richly illustrated book is weighted heavily toward the collection of the Paul-Klee-Stiftung in Bern (admittedly an outstanding collection), but with no contextualization of who may have seen the works when, what they meant in particular settings, etc. There is no discussion of exhibitions or journals, let alone the more ephemeral, popular posters or postcards. The “works” and the artist are

thought to exist in some pure space. Franciscono presents Klee in the kind of artist’s developmental narrative that recalls Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz’s *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist*: the genius artist with a perfect pedigree paradoxically produces autonomous work.⁷⁸ As a matter of course Franciscono either claims Klee’s precedence in formal breakthroughs, or if he acknowledges an important influence, he quickly dismisses it as irrelevant. For example, he cites a little-known drawing, *Pessimistic Symbol of the Mountains* (1904, Paul-Klee-Stiftung, Bern) to assert that Klee invented cubism for himself “a full two and a half years or more [before] the famous ‘splayed’ figure seated at the right in the *Demiselles d’Avignon* [Pablo Picasso, 1906-07, Museum of Modern Art, New York].”⁷⁹ Franciscono relates Klee to Max Ernst, only to disavow his influence, leaving a trace of pedigree. He perceives simultaneous achievement in Klee’s and Ernst’s mechanical/sexual works of 1920-21. After exploring the possibility that Klee influenced Ernst, Franciscono admits that “[i]t is much more likely that Ernst’s discovery came first and that the result affected Klee’s work.”⁸⁰ However, some pages later Franciscono takes care to minimize the effect of dada and Ernst on Klee: “Klee is not like any of the dadaists. The strangeness of many of his pictures of the time almost matches Ernst’s. . . . Yet bizarre as Klee’s pictures can be, few of them have the final arbitrariness of Ernst’s dada works. For all their outlandish convention, they are usually grounded in something like a rational conception.”⁸¹ This paradoxical autonomy yet dependence recurs throughout,⁸² and the reader’s recognition of the formula eventually casts doubt on Franciscono’s findings.

There are many modernist themes in Franciscono’s work that one wishes were addressed, such as the assumption that modern art is “personal,”⁸³ that “decoration” is inferior,⁸⁴ that Klee felt “dissatisfaction with people,”⁸⁵ that a modernist could “escape the look of cultured art,”⁸⁶ and so on. Franciscono’s preoccupation with Klee as singular genius makes welcome *Klee, Kandinsky, and the Thought of their Time: A Critical Perspective*, by Mark Roskill. It “is the final book in a series of three [by Roskill] dealing with modern art and its theory between 1880 and 1945.”⁸⁷ Its non-monographic form claims to situate Klee in relation to Kandinsky and contemporaries, and the “critical perspective” of the title promises that the author will interrogate critical assumptions. However, though Roskill brings years of experience and data-gathering to bear on his study, his “critical perspective” consists largely in supplementing traditional art history with a description of contemporary thought that was not but could have been brought to bear on the art at the time, another version of subjunctive criticism.⁸⁸ His recurrent metaphor of light (“illuminate,” “shed light on,” “see in light of,” etc.)⁸⁹ along with the unnamed subject of illumination decontextualizes the readings that the contemporary texts had ostensibly been employed to contextualize, as the following example suffices to show. Roskill claims Georg Simmel’s “visionary” article of 1908, “The Nature of Culture,” provides a parallel for Kandinsky’s *On the Spiritual in Art* (1912), which elaborated concerns shared largely by members of the Blaue Reiter, including Klee:

In the same sort of way as Kandinsky conceives in *On the Spiritual* of a future audience for art that, as “the spiritual triangle moves slowly forward and upward,” is emancipated from the constraints of believing in “prescriptions of universal application,” Simmel takes woman’s anxiety about fashion to be predicated historically “on her strict regard for custom, for the generally accepted and approved forms of life, for all that is proper.” If therefore woman could be freed from her “weakness of social position” relative to men, and her relative lack of differentiation from other members of her sex, this would liberate her from needless concern over the relative degree of “individualization and personal conspicuousness” that presently remains open to her. . . .

One cannot ask directly how this affected Kandinsky, since Simmel was simply part of the same larger cultural environment; but one can see Kandinsky as shaping his idea of the subjectively motivated and liberated elite that would respond to his art along analogous lines.⁹⁰

In this confusing passage it is difficult to differentiate speakers; Roskill lumps these texts and his own together and imagines that so doing will somehow provide “illumination,” but it becomes rather a study in “context” run amok.

Marianne Vogel’s *Zwischen Wort und Bild. Das schriftliche Werk Paul Klees und die Rolle der Sprache in seinem Denken und in seiner Kunst* (*Between Word and Picture: The Written Work of Paul Klee and the Role of Language in his Thought and in his Art*) brings what can more legitimately be termed a critical perspective to bear on Klee’s writings and the Klee literature. Completed as a dissertation at the University of Leiden in 1991, but the last of these monographs to be available in North America, Vogel’s conscientious study corrects some of the more glaring weaknesses in the other scholarship. She draws upon a small and curious pool of texts for her methodological framework, yet she capitalizes on its potential. To begin with, she relies on an article by the German historian Thomas Nipperdey for its emphasis on history’s discontinuity compared to the “diachronic continuity” of much history writing.⁹¹ Vogel rightly criticizes the persistence of the latter in Klee studies, citing, for example, the one-sidedness of one monograph Cheetham praised in 1985 specifically for its specialized approach, namely, Andrew Kagan’s *Paul Klee: Art and Music* (1983). In Kagan, as Vogel points out, everything is configured in its relation to one principle. Kagan writes: “[Klee’s] ultimate goal was the development of color ‘polyphony,’” a goal he reached after “a quarter-century of dedicated explorations” with *Ad Parnassum* (1932/274, Paul-Klee-Stiftung, Bern), “his ultimate polyphonic work.”⁹² Given her focus on Klee’s writing, Vogel is especially critical of the lack of historical accuracy with regard to Klee’s written texts; a quotation from one period is often invoked to support a claim about another or is held to be valid for all time. She cites, for example, the Museum of Modern Art catalogue essay by the late director of the Klee-Stiftung, Jürgen Glaesemer. Glaesemer takes Klee’s famous quotation “*Diesseitig bin ich gar nicht fassbar* [In this realm I cannot be grasped at all],” first published in Zahn’s 1920 monograph, as authoritative for Klee’s work twenty

years later: “It might be objected that Klee did not experience any such tragic disjunctions but only spoke about them. It is true that conclusive proof of his sincerity, in the sense of a congruity between his experience and his artistically shaped content, is difficult to find in his early and middle periods before 1933. But his late work provides that proof.”⁹³ Interestingly, Vogel places Werckmeister’s work in the same category of “diachronic continuity”: she writes that “Glaesemer turns—rightly—against the one-sided mercantile-opportunistic interpretations of O. K. Werckmeister.”⁹⁴ With Vogel’s book we have for the first time a critical reading of the assumptions constituting not only more traditional, cohesive studies arguing for a unified Klee but also the critical approaches of Hopfengart and Werckmeister. Alone among the books reviewed, Vogel attests that one’s categories of analysis need to be interrogated as much as the ostensible object of study.

In contrast to the “diachronic continuity” she criticizes, Vogel insists upon contextualization, drawing upon not only Nipperdey but also the concept “*Differenz*,” the distinction between a text and its context, as theorized by her colleagues at Leiden, following the work of sociologist Niklas Luhmann.⁹⁵ Klee’s rational defence of abstract “deformation” in art in his 1924 lecture at Jena, she argues, must be read against a book published in Jena a mere two months earlier, Willi Rosenberg’s *Moderne Kunst und Schizophrenie. Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Paul Klee* (*Modern Art and Schizophrenia: With Special Consideration of Paul Klee*), which interprets Klee’s well-known “*Diesseitig . . .*” as a schizophrenic episode.⁹⁶ Attacks on modern art, Vogel asserts, were not uncommon; yet given the proximity of Jena to Weimar, where Klee was teaching at the Bauhaus, and the fact that the book specifically targeted Klee, Klee studies cannot afford to dehistoricize the Jena lecture into a timeless utterance on the nature of art.⁹⁷

Vogel’s practical, demystifying approach presents an invaluable reference for future Klee studies. To counteract the ahistorical practice of citing Klee’s writings regardless of context, she provides a taxonomy of seven types of Klee’s writings—poems, autobiographical texts (including the diaries), correspondence, reviews, essays on art, art-theoretical notes, and “*Varia*” (including the personal Oeuvre Catalogue, “*Diesseitig . . .*,” pocket calendars, etc.). She thoroughly documents each text’s provenance and current location, and she includes “*Commentary*” that uncompromisingly identifies misattributions and falsities in published accounts. Finally, she draws some fresh conclusions that future scholars must consider: Klee’s writings are mostly art theory, a claim that counteracts his image as mystical poet, and most were published only posthumously, allowing for no contemporary responses and thereby contributing to their reputed aura of timelessness.⁹⁸

Yet for all its virtues, and they are considerable, Vogel’s book also has its faults. She relies on an outdated notion of intentionality roundly undermined in the last twenty years or so.⁹⁹ She professes trepidation at reading images if there are no written texts to help ascertain Klee’s pictorial intentions. It is not that she fails to read images; she simply does so without close formal analysis and

without questioning her own assumptions about what she sees. For example, she describes *Crafty Courting* (1913/56A, Paul-Klee-Stiftung, Bern) in the following way:

A man and a woman are represented in this drawing; out of the mouth of the man comes the word "love." This word is however contradicted by his largely drawn phallus, which shows that the man is only after a sexual conquest. Only through the word "love" written on the drawing does it become clear what the "craftiness" of his courting consists in. Klee could not have expressed this point, the contrast between what the man says and his actual intentions, without the letters in the representation.¹⁰⁰

Vogel believes Klee intended the reading she offers, namely that the large penis must contradict the man's professed "love." However, perusal of the drawing illustrated in Vogel's book shows that the man's contorted body—with hands curled up in front of his face, one leg awkwardly outstretched toward the woman, his body supported by the other leg even as he leans way back on it, away from the woman, and his admittedly large penis (about the size of his forearm and hand), shooting off directly away from the woman—could also signify confusion or insecurity, and suggests that the "craftiness" is something of a joke on him, because he does not realize how ridiculous he appears. Such a reading comes admittedly from a feminist perspective which does not assume men are "only after a sexual conquest" and that women succumb to their deceitful seduction. The point is that there is no way to know what Klee intended, that one must look closely at images in order to read them responsibly, and that every reading has its own context—something that Vogel understands well for written texts but not apparently for visual ones. For Vogel, Klee is knowable in his situated utterances and in *her* personal responses to his images.

Nonetheless Vogel's study could push Klee studies in productive and as yet unforeseen directions. In her reading of written texts, Vogel does not try to access some originary truth, as Frontisi and Franciscono do. She situates a text in the specific context of its inception and audience (unlike Crone and Koerner, Frontisi or Franciscono) without allowing "context" to spread into infinity, losing all relevance (as Roskill does). She reads the text critically, not simply disdainfully (as Werckmeister does and as Hopfengart can). That is, Vogel is not nostalgic for some impossible state of purity in which the artist does not market his or her works (Werckmeister) or in which discursive forces do not produce the artist but rather reflect (or not) some truth of his or her greatness (Hopfengart). However, Vogel's reliance on intentionality lamentably reunifies artistic subjectivity, most damagingly in her readings of visual texts. Of the works discussed here, the more critical and groundbreaking approaches (Werckmeister, Hopfengart, Vogel) all fail to look closely at images. So far, this practice has been left to imaginative if suggestive fantasies, like Frontisi's, and more traditional art historians, like Franciscono. Crone and Koerner begin to consider the *langue* of painting in its specificity, but Klee returns in their analysis as a brilliant precursor of poststructuralism. The decentering of the art-

ist that the more critical methodologies promise remains unfulfilled: Werckmeister's Klee is a master entrepreneur; Hopfengart's Klee is an impure product of advertising, a poor reflection of the true artist who supposedly emerges free of public relations; and Vogel's verbal Klee must be contextualized while her visual Klee is somehow transparent. What first seems to be a breadth of analyses producing many Klees becomes, after closer analysis, a re-naturalization of the unified artist and his oeuvre. Critical methodologies must now be brought to bear on themselves. Authors must interrogate their own terms so that they can analyse the verbal and visual terms of Klee, his contemporaries and historians. Only then will one see the many Klees Klee was and what the stakes of maintaining his purity have been.

* I want to thank my faithful(ly) critical readers, Kermit Champa, Mark Cheetham, Christina Crosby, Steve Evans, Kerry Herman, Dian Kriz, John Marx, Karen Newman, Bob Scholes, Naomi Schor, and Elizabeth Weed.

- 1 Mark A. Cheetham, review of Jim M. Jordan, *Paul Klee and Cubism* (Princeton, 1984) and Andrew Kagan, *Paul Klee: Art and Music* (Ithaca, 1983), *RACAR*, XII (1985), 83.
- 2 In the postscript to his important book, *Rhetoric of Purity*, Cheetham himself addresses Klee more complexly as an antidote to the prevailing modernist "rhetoric of purity." In this review, however, I concentrate only on book-length studies of Klee. Mark A. Cheetham, *The Rhetoric of Purity: Essentialist Theory and the Advent of Abstract Painting* (Cambridge, 1991), 139–51.
- 3 The books examined are the latest scholarly Klee monographs, with a few exceptions. I have included Roskill's book, though it is not a monograph, because it focuses largely on Klee. Two noteworthy exclusions are those edited by Josef Helfenstein and Stefan Frey of the Paul-Klee-Stiftung in Bern, *Paul Klee. Das Schaffen im Todesjahr* (Stuttgart, 1990) and *Paul Klee. Verzeichnis der Werke des Jahres 1940* (Stuttgart, 1991). The former, an exhibition catalogue, includes wide-ranging essays by many scholars. The latter, closely related project is the first volume of what the Klee-Stiftung in Bern intends to be a complete catalogue raisonné of Klee's works. Rather than approaching these very different genres of art literature, it seemed more useful to examine the current possibilities of one predominant form, the monograph. I also chose not to include Ernst-Gerhard Güse, Meinrad Maria Grewenig and Richard Verdi, *Paul Klee: Dialogue with Nature* (Munich, 1991), because the multi-authored text presents another genre. On the other hand, I consider Crone and Koerner's book, since the authors have worked together for years (see note 60). Unfortunately, I was not able to obtain two other monographs in time for this review: Richard Hoppe-Sailer, *Ad Parnassum* (Frankfurt, 1993) and Wolfgang Kersten, *Paul Klee. Übermut. Allegorie der künstlerischen Existenz* (Frankfurt, 1990). Finally, this review may not appear to problematize the genre of the monograph itself, with its potential to reinscribe the unified genius artist; however, the conclusions I draw denaturalize the category of the artist and his oeuvre.
- 4 I closely paraphrase the title of Werckmeister's own review, "Die neue Phase der Klee-Literatur," *Neue Rundschau*, LXXXIX (1978), 405–20, revised in his *Versuche über Paul Klee* (Frankfurt, 1981), a collection of his essays on Klee in German.
- 5 O. K. Werckmeister, *The Making of Paul Klee's Career, 1914–1920* (Chicago, 1989), 9.
- 6 David Craven, "Karl Werckmeister and the Role of Critical Scholarship," *Oxford Art Journal*, XIII (1990), 94, emphasis in original. Craven argues that Werckmeister's concept of ideology has not changed since he wrote *Ideologie und Kunst bei Marx und andere Essays* (Frankfurt, 1974).

- 7 I am grateful to Kai Liiv for confirming my suspicions with data. Forms of “contradiction” (“contradicts,” “contradictory,” etc.) and “ambivalence” (“ambivalent,” “ambivalently,” etc.) appear at least 40 times in 257 pages of text, or about once every six and a half pages.
- 8 Werckmeister, *Making*, 182, 247.
- 9 Quoted in Werckmeister, *Making*, 177–78.
- 10 Werckmeister, *Making*, 178.
- 11 Werckmeister, *Making*, 187–88.
- 12 Werckmeister, *Making*, 209.
- 13 Werckmeister, *Making*, 208.
- 14 See, for example, Werckmeister, *Making*, 72, 76, 136–37.
- 15 Werckmeister, *Making*, 72.
- 16 Werckmeister, *Making*, 123; see also 56, 74, 88, 98.
- 17 Klee numbered *Death for the Idea* the first work of 1915 although it was published in the December 1914 issue of *Zeit-Echo*.
- 18 Werckmeister, *Making*, 31.
- 19 The first edition without illustrations is Curt Corrinth, *Potsdamer Platz, oder die Nächte des neuen Messias—Ekstatische Visionen* (Munich, 1919).
- 20 Werckmeister, *Making*, 148.
- 21 Werckmeister, *Making*, 148.
- 22 Werckmeister, *Making*, 153.
- 23 Werckmeister, *Making*, 153.
- 24 Werckmeister, *Making*, 156.
- 25 Corrinth, *Potsdamer Platz*, 45–47, with Klee's illustration between pp. 46–47.
- 26 Hopfengart, *Klee*, 16. Translations from Hopfengart, including her quotations, are my own.
- 27 On pp. 227–28 she points out that in the late 1950s Klee's late works were reproduced in more upscale interiors, while more popular pictures were shown in middle-class apartments or offices. What constitutes “more popular” and “more upscale” and how specific works relate more particularly to class are unfortunately not pursued.
- 28 On p. 235 she reproduces an advertisement from the early 1960s with a model sporting a *Revolution of the Viaduct* (1937/153, Kunsthalle, Hamburg) sweatshirt. She reports that the company which produced the sweatshirt was disappointed that the major Klee exhibition in Berlin in 1960 did not include the original work, which could only support its marketing.
- 29 “*Entartete Kunst*” (degenerate art) is the name of the infamous exhibition of confiscated modern art which Hitler had organized in Munich in 1937, drawing record attendance. Based on photographs Hopfengart analyzes the positioning of Klee within the exhibit (pp. 107–10).
- 30 Hopfengart, *Klee*, 125–26, 240.
- 31 Hopfengart, *Klee*, 140–42. The relevant pages from Zahn's article are also reproduced in reduced size in Hopfengart, *Klee*, 140–41. Zahn's monograph is: Leopold Zahn, *Paul Klee, Leben, Werk, Geist* (Potsdam, 1920).
- 32 Hopfengart, *Klee*, 120–24.
- 33 Hopfengart, *Klee*, 149.
- 34 Hopfengart, *Klee*, 157–63. Werner Haftmann, *Paul Klee. Wege Bildnerische Denks* (Munich, 1950), translated as *The Mind and Work of Paul Klee* (New York, 1954).
- 35 I include the double exhibition in Hannover because Hopfengart shows its importance in establishing the “Germanness” of Klee: see Alfred Hentzen, *Paul Klee and Max Beckmann* (Hannover, 1954), discussed in Hopfengart, *Klee*, 182–83. The other catalogues are: Walter Hess, *Paul Klee* (Munich, 1954); *Paul Klee* (Bern, 1956); Alfred Hentzen, *Paul Klee* (Hamburg, 1956); and Friedrich Ahlers-Hestermann, Will Grohmann, Felix Klee and Hans Scharoun, *Paul Klee* (Berlin, 1960).
- 36 Carola Giedion-Welcker, *Paul Klee* (New York, 1952; Stuttgart, 1954); Will Grohmann, *Paul Klee* (Stuttgart, Paris, Geneva, Florence and New York, 1954).
- 37 Werner Haftmann, *Malerei im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich 1954) and *Documenta, Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Kassel, 1955).
- 38 Hopfengart, *Klee*, 11.
- 39 Hopfengart, *Klee*, 58. The monographs are: Zahn, *Klee*, Hermann von Wedderkop, *Paul Klee*, Junge Kunst, XIII (Leipzig, 1920), and Wilhelm Hausenstein, *Kairuan oder Die Geschichte vom Maler Klee* (Munich, 1921).
- 40 Will Grohmann, “Paul Klee 1923/24,” *Der Cicerone*, XVI (1924), 786ff., quoted in Hopfengart, *Klee*, 58.
- 41 Hopfengart, *Klee*, 239.
- 42 Hopfengart, *Klee*, 26.
- 43 Hopfengart, *Klee*, 41.
- 44 Hopfengart, *Klee*, 241.
- 45 Hopfengart, *Klee*, 139–40.
- 46 Ernst Kallal, *Das Geistige in der Kunst* (Berlin, 1929), 1, quoted in Hopfengart, *Klee*, 86.
- 47 Hopfengart, *Klee*, 139. See pp. 11, 19, 82, 141, 176, for additional repetitions in this mode.
- 48 Karl Scheffler, review of Paul Klee, *Kunst und Künstler*, XVIII (1920), 341, quoted in Hopfengart, *Klee*, 46–47. For an analysis of Scheffler's shifting use of decorative arts language, see my “Forgotten Ties? The Lost Relationship between the Decorative and the Abstract,” College Art Association, Seattle, February 1993, forthcoming in expanded form in *Domesticity and Modernism*, ed. Chris Reed (forthcoming, 1994).
- 49 Claude Frontisi, *Klee* (Paris 1990), 17, 19. I am grateful to Kerry Herman for her help translating Frontisi.
- 50 Klee's original entry for the latter reads “<Flügelstücke zu 1915 45>,” literally, “Wing Pieces” but conventionally translated as “Side Panels.”
- 51 Frontisi cites Gualtieri di San Lazzarzo, *Paul Klee, la vie et l'oeuvre* (1957; Paris, 1958); the English edition is *Klee: A Study of His Life and Work*, trans. Stuart Hood (New York, 1957), with a reproduction of the *Side Panels* under the title, *Anatomy of Aphrodite*, on p. 17. The Düsseldorf reference remains unclear. Frontisi, *Klee*, 58 n.4, 63.
- 52 Frontisi, *Klee*, 32.
- 53 Stefan Frey brought the Galerie Thomas catalogue *Paul Klee. Aquarelle, Mischtechniken, Zeichnungen, Graphiken* (Munich, 1989) to my attention. I am grateful for this tip.
- 54 Frontisi, *Klee*, 31–32.
- 55 Frontisi, *Klee*, 31.
- 56 Frontisi, *Klee*, 54–55.
- 57 Frontisi, *Klee*, 14.
- 58 Frontisi, *Klee*, 28.
- 59 As I already noted, Frontisi invokes Uranus's castration as implicit in the work, expanding the realm of violence to (mythological) men. However, he does not expand on this potentially fruitful assessment; nor does he insist on it repetitively, as in: “*la surface s'y déchire, se dérobe, s'antantit.*”
- 60 “[T]he two essays presented here are the product of an ongoing dialogue between their authors which dates back to a research seminar on Klee conducted by Crone in 1983 at the University of California at Berkeley.” Crone and Koerner, *Klee*, xi.
- 61 My argument is indebted to Alice Jardine's in *Gynesis*, where she asserts that the fixation on the signifier to the neglect of a signified reinscribes a mysterious, abstract “feminine” that feminist politics have sought to undermine. Alice Jardine, *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity* (Ithaca, 1985).
- 62 Crone and Koerner, *Klee*, 59, 68–69, 71, 73.
- 63 Crone and Koerner, *Klee*, 65.

- 64 Crone and Koerner, *Klee*, 65.
- 65 Crone and Koerner, *Klee*, 22–24.
- 66 Crone's analysis also misses the history and significance of the repetitive, "original," modernist grid theorized by Rosalind A. Krauss in "Grids" and "The Originality of the Avant-Garde," *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, 1988), 8–22, 151–70.
- 67 Paul Klee, *The Diaries of Paul Klee 1898–1918*, ed. Felix Klee (Berkeley, 1964), 290 (926i). This generally weak translation is fine in this instance. Cf. *Paul Klee. Tagebücher 1898–1918, Textkritische Neuedition*, ed. Wolfgang Kersten (Stuttgart, 1988), 342.
- 68 Crone and Koerner, *Klee*, 2.
- 69 Marcel Franciscono, *Klee*, ix, scare quotes around "methodologies" in original.
- 70 Franciscono, *Klee*, ix.
- 71 Franciscono, *Klee*, 11.
- 72 Franciscono, *Klee*, 14.
- 73 Franciscono, *Klee*, 12.
- 74 This is a reference to Werckmeister—footnoted shortly thereafter—in which, predictably, Klee's "ambivalence" is the subject. Werckmeister, *Making*, 52, 82–84, 177, 191, cited in Franciscono, *Klee*, 353n49–51.
- 75 Franciscono, *Klee*, 161–62. Werckmeister's observation is from Werckmeister, *Making*, 177.
- 76 Franciscono, *Klee*, 162.
- 77 I am again grateful to Liiv, who counted 38 appearances of "essence" in its various forms in Franciscono.
- 78 Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist: A Historical Experiment* (1934; New Haven, 1979).
- 79 Franciscono, *Klee*, 63.
- 80 Franciscono, *Klee*, 224–25.
- 81 Franciscono, *Klee*, 232.
- 82 See, for example, Franciscono, *Klee*, 23, 28, 53–54, 63, 67, 108, 121, 175, 188.
- 83 See especially Franciscono, *Klee*, 18, 169.
- 84 Franciscono, *Klee*, 23, 39, 54, 59, 95, 103–04.
- 85 Franciscono, *Klee*, 92.
- 86 Franciscono, *Klee*, 94.
- 87 Roskill, *Klee*, xiii.
- 88 See Roskill, *Klee*, xvi–xvii, for the explanation of his method.
- 89 See, for example, Roskill, *Klee*, xvi–ii, 103, 140.
- 90 Roskill, *Klee*, 52–53. He quotes from Wassily Kandinsky, *On the Spiritual in Art*, 1912, *Complete Writings on Art*, trans. and ed. Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo (Boston, 1982), I, 139–40, and Georg Simmel, "The Nature of Culture," 1908, *On Individuality and Social Forms: Selected Writings*, trans. and ed. Donald N. Levine (Chicago, 1971), 308.
- 91 Vogel, *Zwischen*, 2, 43. Translations from Vogel are my own. The reference is Thomas Nipperdey, "1933 und Kontinuität der deutschen Geschichte," *Historische Zeitschrift*, CCXXVII (1978), 86–111. Despite her emphasis on context (see below), Vogel oddly does not contextualize this article. Nipperdey's argument hinges on pre- and post-1933 Germany, Hitler's ascension to power. His article was originally a lecture, with no references added to it before publication, so it does not contextualize itself either.
- 92 Kagan, *Klee*, 77, 86, quoted in Vogel, *Zwischen*, 50.
- 93 Jürgen Glaesemer, "Klee and German Romanticism," *Paul Klee*, ed. Carolyn Lanchner (New York, 1987), 69, quoted in Vogel, *Zwischen*, 50. "Diesseitig . . ." appeared in Zahn as a handwritten facsimile with a caption claiming it stemmed directly from Klee's diaries, though it does not exist as such in any of the known diaries. Vogel discusses the passage's citation history in chapter one (her overview of Klee's writing and its dissemination), Vogel, *Zwischen*, 34, and Werckmeister discusses the passage as a "public statement in disguise" in Werckmeister, *Klee*, 8. I borrow his translation. Both Vogel and Werckmeister rightly compliment Christian Geelhaar on his important edition of Klee's published writings, which initiated a sorting out of their contexts. See Christian Geelhaar, ed., *Paul Klee. Schriften. Rezensionen und Aufsätze* (Cologne, 1976).
- 94 Vogel, *Zwischen*, 50. She reads consistency and continuity defining Hopfengart's book, as well. Vogel, *Zwischen*, 54. She does not, however, elaborate.
- 95 Vogel, *Zwischen*, 2, 48. She never cites Luhmann directly, just claims his relevance to her work. The Leideners using Luhmann for art history include Hetty Burgers, Jos Hoogeveen and Kitty Zijlmans. Sjaak Onderdelinden, ed., *Interbellum und Exil* (Amsterdam, 1991), includes essays by these three and Vogel. Vogel does not situate "Differenz" relative to Saussurian "différence," Derridian "différance," or the Lyotardian "différend," nor does she problematize metalepsis, i.e., the circularity of having the text determine its context which determines the text. (Norman Bryson and Mieke Bal gloss the problem of metalepsis in "Semiotics and Art History," *Art Bulletin*, LXXII [1991].) Nevertheless, using "Differenz" she begins to read texts for their historical specificity in interesting ways.
- 96 Vogel, *Zwischen*, 60.
- 97 See, for example, Frontisi above, whom Vogel does not cite.
- 98 Vogel, *Zwischen*, 36.
- 99 Her third source of methodology—after Nipperdey and Luhmann—is Quentin Skinner, the Cambridge political scientist known best for his studies of Machiavelli. Vogel cites Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," *History and Theory*, VIII (1969), 3–53, and "Motives, Intentions, and the Interpretation of Texts," *New Literary History*, III (1972), 393–408. These essays attack New Criticism and, specifically, W. K. Wimsatt and M. C. Beardsley's influential essay "The Intentional Fallacy" from 1946. Later essays central to the debunking of the "intentional fallacy" include: Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 1968, *Image Music Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York, 1977), 142–48; Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" 1969, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, 1980); and Nancy K. Miller, "Changing the Subject: Authorship, Writing, and the Reader," *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies*, ed. Teresa de Lauretis (Bloomington, Ind., 1986), 102–20.
- 100 Vogel, *Zwischen*, 126.