

PHŒBUS 3

A JOURNAL OF ART HISTORY



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Preface

This is the third in our series of publications on the history of art from an Arizona perspective. We have been delighted with the reception that *Phoebus 1* and *Phoebus 2* have received. We hope that this issue will find similar favor among our readership which stretches across both the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans.

As in the two previous issues, *Phoebus 3* represents, to a large degree, the research activities of the art-history faculty at Arizona State University. We are pleased that this issue includes articles on the history of photography, for the first time, and Native American art history. Both of these areas of art history are important parts of the teaching program of the School of Art at ASU.

This issue is the first in which scholars outside of the state of Arizona have been invited to submit articles about works of art in Arizona collections. Both Professors Gerald Eager and Joan Seeman Robinson were participants in the 1979 MidAmerica College Art Association conference hosted by this University. They saw the works of Homer and Roszak in the Oliver B. James Collection of American Art at Arizona State University. We are grateful to them for sharing their specialized knowledge about these artists.

The Phoenix Art Museum has again made a substantial financial gift to this journal. This support we acknowledge

with thanks. We hope that the Museum's gift will encourage other, similar institutions in Arizona to contribute to make *Phoebus* a truly state-wide venture.

Thanks should also go to Jules Heller, Dean of the College of Fine Arts, and Leonard Lehrer, Director of the School of Art, for their continuing support. *Phoebus 3* would never have gotten beyond the talking stage without their encouragement.

Finally, Eileen Avery, student designer in the Graphic Design Workshop, School of Art, who served as our art director, deserves our gratitude for shepherding this journal from a collection of manuscripts into this final printed form.

Jack D. Breckenridge
Editor

A Possible Interpretation of the Bird-man Figure Found on Objects Associated with the Southern Cult of the Southeastern United States, A.D. 1200 to 1350*

by Lee Anne Wilson

Despite the large body of material that exists on Southern Cult¹ artifacts, little has been written about the iconography found on these objects. While a number of iconographic themes can be identified and isolated on Southern Cult objects, one theme that repeatedly appears on Southern Cult shell and copper work, and occasionally on incised pottery,² is a composite human and bird figure which may have been invested with mythic, ritual, and even political significance. To unravel some of the mystery surrounding this figure, information has been drawn from three separate sources—the visual record provided by the artifacts themselves: shell dippers, gorgets, and copper plaques, the archaeological record, drawn mainly from the burials at Spiro Mound, Oklahoma, and Etowah, Georgia, and the verbal record drawn from the mythology of the ethnographic tribes of the Eastern Woodlands. Alone, none of these methods is sufficient to provide more than a small portion of information, but by combining them, a more complete picture of Southern Cult iconography, especially the bird-man image, emerges. Of these three sources, the use of ethnographic material to explain archaeological images is the most controversial and uncertain method. A complete analysis and justification of the use of this method would fill another paper easily. There are, however, both specific models as well as more general-

ized studies that can serve as precedents. For example, Waring's 1968 paper, "The Southern Cult and Muskogean Ceremonialism,"³ and Howard's 1968 article "The Southeastern Ceremonial Complex and Its Interpretation"⁴ both draw analogies between the ethnographic tribes of the Southeast and Southern Cult artifacts in an attempt to more fully interpret the Southern Cult images. Other studies such as Donnan's 1976 *Moche Art and Iconography*⁵ and Linares's 1977 *Ecology and the Arts in Ancient Panama*⁶ set standards for and define the limits of the use of ethnographic analogy. None of the interpretations in this paper can actually be proved correct or incorrect, but are offered here in an attempt to further our knowledge about certain images of the Southern Cult.

In the past various scholars have attempted to identify the bird-man image, both with actual birds found in the Southeast and in the mythology of the Southeastern Indians. In the mid-1940's Antonio Waring suggested that the bird-man figures were not "representations of people dressed as eagles, but rather . . . representations of a being with eagle attributes . . . [and] . . . that the object . . . was to represent a supernatural winged being rather than a man dressed up as an eagle."⁷ Earlier, Charles Willoughby had attempted to use Creek legends and myths to explain the bird-man gorgets from Etowah and the surrounding area.⁸



Fig. 1. Spiro Mound, engraved shell dipper with bird-man design. Length: 13 inches. Museum of the American Indian 18/9121. Photograph courtesy of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation.

While Waring disagreed with some of Willoughby's conclusions, both scholars agreed that the bird represented is the eagle because of the high esteem with which the Southeastern tribes regarded the eagle. Howard, however, disagreed and felt that the bird depicted is a hawk or falcon based on the forked-eye motif that is similar to the markings found on most New World *Falconidae*.⁹ Unfortunately, the forked-eye motif does not appear regularly or with any particular pattern on either the copper or shell images. For at least the Spiro shell images, the basic rule seems to be that the more the bird characteristics are empha-



Fig. 2. Drawing of image on the shell dipper illustrated in figure number 1.

sized, the more likely we are to find the forked-eye design or a variation of it also appearing. For example, the shell dippers from Spiro that have mainly bird characteristics display the forked-eye (figures 3 and 4), while the bird-man images do not (figures 1, 2, 5). In Etowah-style shell work, virtually none of the bird-man gorgets display the forked-eye (figures 6 and 7), nor do several of the embossed copper plaques (figure 8) which do have other bird characteristics such as wings, tail, and a beak-like nose that appears to be part of a face mask. However, at least one Etowah copper plaque (figure 9), the majority of the Spiro copper plaques¹⁰ (figures 10 and 11), and the eight Wulfing plates¹¹ have a forked-eye design or variant of it regardless of whether or not the figures are mainly bird forms or bird-human combinations. In fact, the forked-eye or a variant of it appears on humans (figure 14), birds (figures 3 and 4), felines (figures 15 and 16), and snakes, as well as on



Fig. 3. Spiro Mound, conventionalized bird image on shell dipper. Length: 12½ inches. Drawing after H. W. Hamilton, "The Spiro Mound" *The Missouri Archaeologist*, Vol. 14, 1952; Pl. 100.



Fig. 5. Spiro Mound, bird-man design on shell dipper. Length: 8 inches. Drawing after photographs by author. United States National Museum 448825, 448861.



Fig. 4. Spiro Mound, conventionalized bird image on shell dipper. Length: 4¼ inches. Drawing after photograph by author. University of Oklahoma, Stovall Museum Lf40/33.

composite and/or unidentifiable creatures. Thus, it seems that the forked-eye is not solely associated with bird imagery.

Material from mythology as well as the shell and copper depictions suggests that the Southeastern Indians were aware of the various types of birds in their environment and may have utilized at least four distinct birds: the hawk or falcon, the eagle, the turkey, and the pileated or ivory-billed woodpecker. From the mythic descriptions of the turkey as well as several depictions of turkeys and pileated woodpeckers on shell gorgets¹³ we may eliminate the turkey and pileated woodpecker as possible candidates for the bird-man depictions. However, it



Fig. 6. Etowah, bird-man design on shell gorget. Diameter: 2½ inches. Drawing after various photographs. Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts 62042.

is more difficult to eliminate either the eagle or the hawk, since the bird-men have characteristics of both, and both played important roles in the mythology of the Southeastern tribes.

When studying the actual visual images of the bird-man figure on both shell and copper work, several phenomena become apparent. For example, two distinct types of bird-men can be identified despite wide stylistic variations in the images. The first type, Type A, always has feathered wings in place of arms (figures 1, 2), while the second type, Type B, has both arms as well as wings that seem to sprout from the figure's shoulder blades, similar to the wings of angels in Christian art (figures 5, 6, 7).¹² While both Type A and Type B bird-men are found on shell work from both Etowah and Spiro, Type A predominates at Spiro, while Type B is the most common in the Etowah area. However, on the embossed copper work Type B is the most common at both



Fig. 7. Hixon Site, Tennessee, double bird-man image (often referred to as two bird-men fighting) on shell gorget. Diameter: 4½ inches. Photograph courtesy of the Frank H. McKlung Museum, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Spiro and Etowah (see figures 8-12), while the one anthropomorphic bird-human of the Wulfing plates is Type A.

There are, however, important differences between the copper work images at Etowah and Spiro. While the Etowah copper plaques generally depict the figure in a bent-knee stance, often referred to as a "dancing" posture representing movement (see figures 8, 9), the Spiro plaques frequently depict a limp, lax figure that suggests the lack of motion (figures 10, 11). Furthermore, the Spiro figures are shown from the front,¹⁴ while the Etowah figures are shown in profile. The frontal posture, dangling arms and legs, and extended hands and feet of the Spiro figures not only indicate the loss of self-generated motion, but also suggest that these figures could represent deceased individuals laid out for burial, an impression strengthened by the manner in which the figures are superimposed



Fig. 8. Etowah, bird-man design on repoussé copper plaque. Length: 20 inches. United States National Museum 9117. Photograph courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution.

on top of the costume elements. Considering the elaborate burials found at Spiro this is a likely possibility. For example, James Brown has identified at least three distinct types of burials at Spiro of which the most prestigious was the litter burial upon which were deposited the skeletal remains of the deceased along with large amounts of grave goods.¹⁵ Brown also suggests that these burials “may represent succeeding paramount rulers.”¹⁶

Like the Spiro burials, those at Etowah also suggest some sort of stratified society. In excavations at Etowah, both Willoughby¹⁷ and Larson¹⁸ uncovered burials of humans wearing some of the paraphernalia depicted on the copper bird-man plaques. Larson suggests that



Fig. 9. Etowah, bird-man design on repoussé copper plaque. Length: 15½ inches. United States National Museum 91113. Photograph courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution.

these burials represent some sort of kinship group that used exotic goods “to legitimize and emphasize their position in the society”.¹⁹

Despite Waring’s conclusion that the bird-man images were meant to represent some sort of bird-human supernatural, the presence of humans buried at Etowah wearing elements of the bird-man paraphernalia suggests that certain humans may have dressed in bird-man costumes. Larson’s conclusion that the

Etowah bird-man burials were not based on any kind of achieved status, but rather represented some sort of kinship group,²⁰ seems to preclude the idea that these individuals belonged to some sort of priesthood or shamanistic group. Instead, both Larson²¹ and Brown²² suggest that the burials at Etowah and Spiro reflected an elaborately stratified hierarchy that was probably hereditary, with the most elaborate burials such as the Etowah bird-man burials and Spiro litter burials reserved for those individuals at the top. Since at Etowah these individuals wore elements of the bird-man costume, the Spiro and Etowah copper and shell Type B bird-man images may have been intended to depict this group of individuals. If Type B bird-man images represent a human costumed as a bird, then, perhaps, the Type A bird-men were meant to represent some sort of supernatural anthropomorphic bird as Waring had suggested earlier, since the existence of masked and/or costumed humans often implies the existence of a supernatural model for the costumed humans.²³

One image in the mythology of the ethnographic tribes of both the Eastern Woodlands and the Plains that could fit the Southern Cult bird-man image is the supernatural figure known as the Thunder, Thunderer, or Thunder Bird and variously referred to as a human, bird, anthropomorphic bird, and disembodied spirit in the mythology of this area. While Alexander described the Thunder Birds as "great birds of the hawk family",²⁴ Jones believed the Thunder Bird was "most commonly typified by the eagle",²⁵ just the same identity problem found with the shell and copper work where Howard believed the bird-man represented the hawk or falcon²⁶ while Waring felt it was the eagle.²⁷ A

visual comparison of both the shell and copper bird-man images with actual hawks and eagles suggests that it was the falcon or hawk which was intended to be depicted. Both the scalloped design on the wings as well as the banded tail are characteristic markings of certain falcons (*Falconidae*) and hawks (*Accipitridae*).²⁸

Despite regional variations, the Thunder Bird was closely associated with thunder and lightning, as well as with storms, clouds, rain, wind, the rainbow, and weather in general.²⁹ A number of myths tell of the great importance of the thunder and lightning caused by the Thunder Bird. In one Cherokee myth lightning flashed from the eyes of a Thunderer³⁰ and the belief that the Thunder Bird caused the lightning simply by blinking or flashing its eyes was common among the Algonkians of the Great Lakes as well as the Plains tribes.³¹ Another common belief was that the Thunder Bird could cause the thunder simply by flapping its wings³² or by snapping its beak,³³ while both the Creek Indians of the Southeast and the Ojibwas of the Great Lakes thought the Thunder Bird possessed thunderbolts similar to arrows.³⁴

The Cherokee further believed that both the lightning as well as the rainbow were part of the Thunderer's costume³⁵ and the Natchez believed the rain was the Thunder's child.³⁶

The Thunder Bird also had important cosmological associations. Virtually all the tribes of this region believed in a cosmos composed of three areas—an upper world generally somewhere in the sky, an earthly world often seen as a floating island, and an underworld often located under water.³⁷ Often this cosmology was divided further into a series of tiers or levels extending from one



Fig. 10. Spiro Mound, exact reproduction of repoussé copper plaque depicting bird-man image. Photograph by author. University of Arkansas Museum, Fayetteville.

Fig. 11. Spiro Mound, exact reproduction of repoussé copper plaque depicting bird-man image. Photograph by author. University of Arkansas Museum, Fayetteville.



Fig. 12 Spiro Mound, exact reproduction of repoussé copper plaque depicting human figure. Photograph by author. University of Arkansas Museum, Fayetteville.



Fig. 13. Sumner County, Tennessee, engraved shell gorget depicting human figure. Diameter: 4 inches. Museum of the American Indian 15/853. Photograph courtesy of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation.



Fig. 14. Spiro Mound, composite feline-human creature depicted on engraved shell dipper. Length: 8 inches. University of Arkansas Museum, Fayetteville 37-1-43, photograph number 000243. Photograph courtesy of the University of Arkansas Museum.

realm to the other. For example, the Cherokee of the Southeast believed that the cosmos was composed of seven levels that stretched from the upper world to the lower world. In this scheme, the Thunder Bird, like other supernaturals of the air, occupied the upper levels.³⁸ The Menomini and other tribes of the Great Lakes thought the cosmos had eight tiers, four in the upper world and four in the lower, separated by the earth in the middle. Each tier was occupied by specific supernaturals whose power intensified as their distance from the earth increased. For example, the Thunder Birds occupied the third tier above the earth and symbolized good.³⁹

By relating this information to the Southern Cult bird-man images we may be able to suggest possible interpretations for these images. For example, the

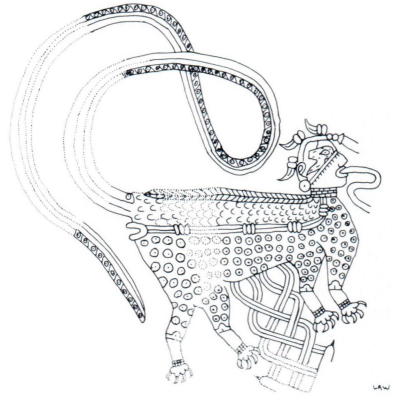


Fig. 15. Reconstruction of complete image of which figure 15 is one fragment. Remaining fragments in the Oklahoma Historical Society and other collections. Drawing by author.

description of the Thunder Bird as both eagle and hawk matches the confusion found when trying to identify the shell and copper images. The importance of the flapping wings for creating thunder could account for the displayed posture of the bird-man emphasizing his wings. The large beak-like nose of many bird-man figures could be a further allusion to his bird characteristics, but could also be related to the mythic belief that the Thunder Bird causes lightning by snapping his beak. The forked-eye design found on some, but not all, bird-man figures might indicate that the bird represented is the falcon, but it might also represent the lightning that flashes from the eyes of the Thunder Bird.⁴⁰ The stepped lines above the head of at least one bird-man (figures 1, 2) may be meant to represent the various levels of the cosmos as described in Eastern Woodlands cosmology.⁴¹ Thus, one possible identification for the mythic bird-man depicted on Southern Cult shell and copper work could be the supernatural Thunder Bird.

In conclusion, the existence of two types of bird-men figures has been suggested for Southern Cult objects, Type A, a supernatural being, and Type B, a human costumed to represent this supernatural figure. Based on mythology and folklore the Type A image may be seen to represent the mythic being known as the Thunder Bird. Finally, using the archaeological findings, especially the data from the Spiro litter burials and the Etowah Mound C bird-men burials, the Type B depictions of costumed humans may be seen to have represented actual people buried at Etowah. Since Larson has suggested that the figures buried with bird-man paraphernalia belonged to some sort of official grouping that represented “the remains of a descent group

that occupied a superordinate position in the total society”,⁴² the depictions of the bird-men on the copper plaques and shell work from both Etowah and Spiro may be representations, perhaps even stylized portraits, of the members of this group, who also may have been the ruling class.



Notes

*This article was originally presented at the first annual *New Directions in Native American Art History* symposium held at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, October 24-26, 1979.

¹The concept of the Southern Cult has been defined, redefined, criticized and even abandoned. For a summary of these problems see J. Brown, "The Southern Cult Reconsidered," *Mid-Continental Journal of Archaeology*, I, II (Kent, Ohio, 1976), pp. 115-135. For the purposes of this paper, the Southern cult can be described as a series of "special artifacts, iconographic themes, and basic motifs" (J. Brown, "Spiro Art and its Mortuary Contexts," *Dumbarton Oaks Conference on Death and the Afterlife in Pre-Columbian America*, ed., E. Benson (Washington, D.C., 1975), p. 3) found at the three major sites of Etowah, Georgia, Moundville, Alabama, and Spiro Mound, Oklahoma between A.D. 1200 and 1350. This paper further emphasizes the copper and shell work from the Spiro and Etowah areas.

²C. B. Moore, "Moundville Revisited," *Journal of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*, XIII (Philadelphia, 1907), fig. 38.

³A. J. Waring, "The Southern Cult and Muskogean Ceremonialism" in S. Williams, *The Waring Papers, Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology*, LVIII (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 30-69.

⁴J. H. Howard, *The Southeastern Ceremonial Complex and its Interpretation*. *Missouri Archaeological Society, Memoir*, VI (Columbia, Missouri, 1968).

⁵C. Donnan, *Mocbe Art and Iconography* (Los Angeles, 1976).

⁶O. F. Linares, "Ecology and the Arts in Ancient Panama: On the Development of Social Rank and Symbolism in the Central Provinces," *Studies in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology* XVII (Washington, D.C., 1977).

⁷A. J. Waring, "The Southern Cult and Muskogean Ceremonialism," p. 41.

⁸C. C. Willoughby, "History and Symbolism of the Muskogean and the People of Etowah" in *Etowah Papers* (Andover, 1932).

⁹J. H. Howard, *The Southeastern Ceremonial Complex and its Interpretation*, p. 37.

¹⁰H. W. Hamilton, J. T. Hamilton, and E. F. Chapman, *Spiro Mound Copper*, *Missouri Archaeological Society, Memoir*, XI (Columbia, Missouri, 1974).

¹¹V. Watson, "The Wulfing Plates, Products of Prehistoric Americans," *Washington University Studies, New Series, Social and Philosophical Sciences*, VII (St. Louis, 1950).

¹²Phillips refers to these two types as "composite" and "nonarticulated" and does not think such a division is especially meaningful iconographically. (P. Phillips and J. Brown, *Pre-Columbian Shell Engravings from the Craig Mound at Spiro, Oklahoma*, Part I (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1978), pp. 124-131).

¹³For examples see T. M. N. Lewis and M. Kneberg, "The Prehistory of Chickamauga Basin in Tennessee," *Tennessee*

Anthropological Papers, I (Knoxville, Tennessee, 1941), plate III; L. M. Funda-burk and M. D. Foreman, *Sun Circles and Human Hands* (Luverne, Alabama, 1957), plates 27 and 45; P. Phillips and J. Brown, *Pre-Columbian Shell Engravings from the Craig Mound at Spiro, Oklahoma*, fig. 192; W. H. Holmes, "Art in Shell of the Ancient Americans," *Bureau of American Ethnology, Annual Report*, II (Washington, D.C., 1883), plate LIX.

¹⁴There are, however, a few profile dancing figures from Spiro. See Hamilton, Hamilton & Chapman, *Spiro Mound Copper*, plate 4 (figs. 8 and 9) and plate 13 (figs. 24 and 25) and figs. 66A, 67, 69 as well as figure 12 of this paper.

¹⁵J. Brown, *Spiro Studies, Volume 2: The Graves and their Contents* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1966) and J. Brown, "Spiro Art and its Mortuary Contexts."

¹⁶J. Brown, "Spiro Art and its Mortuary Contexts," pp. 9-10.

¹⁷C. C. Willoughby, "History and Symbolism of the Muskogean and the People of Etowah."

¹⁸L.H. Larson, Jr., "Archaeological Implications of Social Stratification at the Etowah Site, Georgia" in *Approaches to the Social Dimensions of Mortuary Practices*, ed., J. Brown, *Memoirs of the Society for American Archaeology*, XXIV (Washington, D.C., 1971), fig. 4.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 66.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 66.

²¹*Ibid.*

²²J. Brown, "Spiro Art and its Mortuary Contexts."

²³Compare with Hopi and Zuni kachina figures and Navajo Yei and Yeibichai figures.

²⁴H. B. Alexander, *The World's Rim* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1953), p. 90.

²⁵D. E. Jones, "The 'Thunder Motif' in Plains Indian Culture," *Papers in Anthropology*, VIII, I (Norman, Oklahoma, 1967), p. 5.

²⁶J. H. Howard, *The Southeastern Ceremonial Complex and its Interpretation*, p. 37.

²⁷A. J. Waring, "The Southern Cult and Muskogean Ceremonialism."

²⁸Bill Holmes, personal communication, 1979.

²⁹H.B. Alexander, *The World's Rim*, pp. 90 and 180; A. F. Chamberlain, "The Thunder-bird Amongst the Algonkins," *The American Anthropologist*, III (Washington, D.C., 1890), 51ff; D.E. Jones, "The 'Thunder Motif' in Plains Indian Culture," 2ff; C. A. Lyford, *Ojibwa Crafts* (Lawrence, Kansas, 1943), p. 84; A. Skinner, "Material Culture of the Menomini," *Museum of the American Indian, Notes and Monographs*, XX (New York, 1921), p. 48; J. Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee. Bureau of American Ethnology, Annual Report*, IX (Washington, D.C., 1900), p. 257; J. R. Swanton, "Social Organization and Social Usages of the Indians of the Creek Confederacy" and "Religious Beliefs and Medical Practices of the Creek Indians," *Bureau of American Ethnology, Annual Report*, XLII (Washington, D.C., 1928), p. 486; J. R. Swanton, *Myths and Tales of the Southeastern Indians, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin*, LXXXVIII (Washington, D.C., 1929), pp. 239-240; W. J. Wintemberg, "Repre-

sentations of the Thunderbird in Indian Art," *Thirty-sixth Annual Archaeological Report, Ontario* (Ottawa, 1928), p. 27.

³⁰J. Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee*, p. 346.

³¹A. F. Chamberlain, "The Thunderbird Amongst the Algonkins," p. 51; D. E. Jones, "The 'Thunder Motif'", p. 4; W. J. Wintemberg, "Representations of the Thunderbird in Indian Art," p. 27.

³²A. F. Chamberlain, "The Thunderbird Amongst the Algonkins," pp. 51-52; D. E. Jones, "The 'Thunder Motif,'" pp. 4-5.

³³D. Boyle, "Stone Pipes," *Twelfth Annual Archaeological Report, Ontario* (Ottawa, 1898), p. 46.

³⁴J. R. Swanton, "Social Organization and Social Usages of the Indians of the Creek Confederacy," p. 486; A. F. Chamberlain, "The Thunderbird Amongst the Algonkins," p. 52.

³⁵J. Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee*, p. 257.

³⁶J. R. Swanton, *Myths and Tales of the Southeastern Indians*, pp. 239-240.

³⁷J. Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee*, p. 239; A. Skinner, "Material Culture of the Menomini," p. 29.

³⁸J. Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee*, p. 240.

³⁹A. Skinner, "Material Culture of the Menomini," p. 29.

⁴⁰W. J. Wintemberg, "Certain Eye Designs on Archaeological Artifacts from

North America," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Third Series, XVII* (Quebec, 1923) p. 64; W. J. Wintemberg, "Representations of the Thunderbird in Indian Art," p. 33.

⁴¹C. Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians* (Knoxville, Tennessee, 1976), p. 123.

⁴²L. H. Larson, Jr., "Archaeological Implications of Social Stratification at the Etowah Site, Georgia," pp. 65-66.

John Milton's "Unholy Trinity" (Satan, Sin, and Death)

by Anthony Lacy Gully

Each at their head
Level'd his deadly aim; their fatal hands
No second stroke intend, and such a frown
Each cast at th' other, when two black clouds,
With Heaven's artillery fraught, came rattling on
Over the Caspian, then stand front to front
Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow
To join their dark encounter in mid air:
So frowned the mighty combatants, that Hell
Grew darker at their frown, so matched they stood;
For never but once more was either like
To meet so great a foe: and now great deeds
Had been achieved, hereof all Hell had rung,
Had not the snaky sorceress that sat
Fast by Hell gate, and kept the fatal key,
Risen, and with hideous cry outrushed between. . . .

Thus does Milton in Book II of *Paradise Lost* (lines 711-726) describe the first encounter of Satan with his daughter Sin and their offspring Death. The titanic struggle between these shades was a singularly popular image among artists of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The illustrations of Satan, Sin, and Death are of two types: those which faithfully illustrate Milton's text and those which utilize the sublime encounter to make an observation on the human predicament or the character of the political state.

The first known illustration of the theme was executed by Sir John Baptist Medina (1659?-1711?), sixteen years after Milton's death. Born in Brussels of Spanish parents, Medina studied art with the Flemish master François Duchastel, himself a student of David Teniers the Youn-

ger. Emigrating to England at age twenty-six, Medina secured a good living fashioning portraits of the petty nobles of Scotland and the Northern Counties. In 1688, the year he arrived in Great Britain, he was asked by the publishers Flesher, Bentley and Tonson to design plates for a projected edition of *Paradise Lost*. His designs were engraved by Michael Burghers and enjoyed tremendous success. Eighteen editions published between 1688 and 1784 served as a paradigm for the majority of subsequent illustrators. Medina's presentation of "Satan, Sin, and Death" (Figure 1) owes a great deal to emblematic and biblical illustration. These first illustrations of *Paradise Lost* appeared ten years after Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* which, with the *Bible*, was the chief stimulant of popular illustration. Many of



Fig. 1. Sir John Baptist Medina, "Satan, Sin and Death," wood engraving, *Paradise Lost*, published 1688.

Medina's designs are medieval in character, often including more than one episode in a single plate. The twelve subjects Medina isolated, one from each of the twelve books of *Paradise Lost*, became standard until the very end of the eighteenth century.¹ Medina's composition is awkward and fails utterly to capture the dinotherian power of Milton's text. Aside from the limitation of his own talent and the transcription of his design by the engraver, Medina was plagued by

the absence of a native tradition of history painting. Milton imbues Death with Apollo-like grace. Medina, ignoring Milton's description of Death, elects to repeat the convention of Death as a skeletal figure as encountered at an early date in the decorations of the Charnel House in Paris and repeated in Hans Holbein's "Dance of Death" engravings (1538) which Medina certainly knew. Death wears not the kingly crown assigned him by Milton and insecurely rattles a spear. Satan, in the center, is poised for his descent into Hell after the Gate has been opened for him (Book II, lines 917-929). His horns, bat-like wings, and monstrous ears do not accord with Milton's comely depiction of the fallen archangel, but relate to the many visualizations of devils and demons which haunt emblem books and anti-papal and anti-protestant satires published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. To the right is Sin, a lustful creature, whose incestuous relationship with her son Death (the product of her incestuous affair with her father, Satan), has bred the Cerberian monsters which envelop the lower regions of her body. Her form in the Medina composition is very close to Cavaliere Cesare Ripa's image of Deceit in the *Iconologia* where Deceit is interpreted as a serpent-woman.

In 1720 Louis Chéron (1660-1731) was asked by Sir James Thornhill, William Hogarth's father-in-law, to illustrate an edition of *Paradise Lost* (Figure 2). His drawings were engraved by Du Bosc. Chéron's interpretation of the first meeting of Satan, Sin, and Death is singular. Satan is portrayed as a satyr, suggesting Chéron's classical bias; he had arrived in Britain from Italy in 1695. A *Prix de Rome* winner, Chéron's reputation rests on several large-scale decorative projects completed for English country houses.

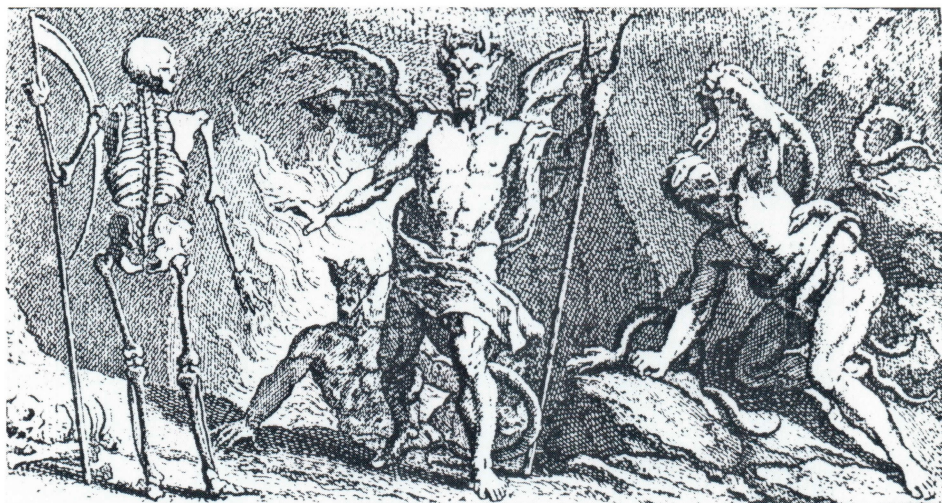


Fig. 2. Louis Chéron, "Satan, Sin and Death," wood engraving, *Paradise Lost*, published 1720.

The allegories at Burleigh, Chatsworth and most especially Boughton, where he completed two ceiling paintings, "The Assembly of the Gods" and "The Judgment of Paris," clearly confirm his links with Italianate art and explain his disinterest in the broadside tradition so important to Medina and others. Sin, too, is classically inspired, her form derived from the Laocöon. She is seen blindfolded, for which there is no textual support. The only iconographic parallels appear in Ripa's *Iconologia* (1709): Human Error is portrayed as blind; Synogoga is blind and bandaged, and Sin is a male youth, black but also blind. Chéron produced a second set of illustrations for an Irish edition which was published in Dublin in 1724. They differ in small details from his first illustrations for *Paradise Lost*.

Between 1735-40 William Hogarth executed an oil version of the theme,² (Figure 3) presently in the Tate Gallery, London. The Hogarth painting is pivotal in

the evolution of the treatment of the theme even though the painting remained unknown for many years.³ It was through engraved versions of Hogarth's composition that artists such as Henry Fuseli, William Blake, Thomas Stothard, and James Gillray learned of Hogarth's unique concept of the meeting of the "Unholy Trinity" and re-worked his composition. Charles Townley engraved the Hogarth design three years after the artist's death in 1767. Only three or four impressions of this print were made, and none are known to be extant. Samuel Ireland, Hogarth's early biographer produced a pitiful copy for his *Graphic Illustrations of Hogarth* (London, 1776). More influential in disseminating Hogarth's version to other artists was Thomas Rowlandson's engraving after a drawing by Richard Livesay. (Figure 4). Livesay resided with Mrs. Hogarth from 1777-1785 after Hogarth's death. Though the Rowlandson print is undated, stylistically it belongs to the artist's early career



Fig. 3. William Hogarth, *Satan, Sin and Death*, ca. 1735-40, oil on canvas. Reproduced courtesy of the Trustees of the Tate Gallery, London.

and most probably dates from the mid-1770's when Livesay was overseeing the reproduction of Hogarth designs from his establishment in Leicester Fields. Rowlandson's print, faithful to the Hogarth painting, is strikingly different from Rowlandson's light-hearted attitude towards death realized in his amusing drawings for *The English Dance of Death* (1814-1816).

Samuel Ireland claims, with no documentary support, that Hogarth's painting was commissioned by the actor-producer David Garrick. But as David Bindman has observed, Garrick's fame does not date before 1741 when he

made a sensation in Shakespeare's *Richard III*.⁴ The style of the Hogarth work clearly suggests an earlier date.

It is not insignificant that it was Hogarth who first ventured on a monumental scale to illustrate the work of an English author. Hogarth's chauvinistic hopes for an English art of distinction are central to his art. Hogarth's figure of Death and the costume and accouterments of Satan are essentially parallel to Medina's, a more plausible source than Frederick Antal's suggestion that Hogarth modelled his design on ideas gained from a print after Salvator Rosa's "Saul and the Witch of Endor" (Louvre),



Fig. 4. Thomas Rowlandson after Hogarth/R. Livesay, *Satan, Sin and Death*, ca. 1774-78, engraving, British Museum.

in which poses, costumes, displacement and gestures of figures and setting are dissimilar.⁵ But whether Hogarth chose to look at Medina, Rosa, or emblem books⁶ is not as significant as Hogarth's genius for illustrating a specific moment in time. He isolates the climax of the scene as Sin rushes between her lover/father and lover/son to forestall the deadly conflict. Hogarth is the first illustrator of Milton to isolate and concentrate our attention on the interaction of the protagonists. As with his "Modern History Paintings," Hogarth individualizes each of his figures; they seem to embody real spirit rather than to stand as

wooden symbols. Dr. Samuel Johnson's criticism of Milton's encounter of Satan, Sin, and Death comes to mind. Johnson argued that to attribute actions to the allegorical figures of Satan, Sin, and Death is "to shock the mind by ascribing effects to a non-entity." But Hogarth manages very well. The most powerful effect in the Hogarth is the expanded gesture of Sin as she rushes to separate the combatants. There exists no known precedent for this inventive pose except in Hogarth's own art. In the artist's scene from Act IV of *The Beggar's Opera*, especially the sixth and final version in the Mellon Collection (1729), British Art



Fig. 5. William Hogarth, *The Beggar's Opera, Act IV*, 1729, Oil on canvas. Reproduced courtesy of the Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

Center, Yale University (Figure 5), the gesture is encountered twice. The painting illustrates Scene II of John Gay's satiric comedy, the sentimental climax of the play as Polly Peachum and Kate plead for Macheath's life.⁷ Both figures, especially that of Kate, seen from the rear, presage the pose of Sin in "Satan, Sin, and Death."

The domestic character of Gay's comedy and the familial links of Satan, Sin, and Death raise the issue of the connection between Miltonic illustration and radical writings of the period. Repeatedly, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries one encounters the metaphor of familial discord or harmony as a literary

device to reflect the respective health or weakness of the political and social fabric. Writers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Denis Diderot, Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine, Mary Wollstonecraft and William Blake employ the eternal triangle as a literary construction to examine social ills.

Rousseau in his *Confessions* (1770) laments how dancing masters and other social parasites succeeded in seducing their mistresses. The sexual license of these aristocratic women has undermined the authority of the father/husband. This sexual predicament is equated with the growing weakness and ineptitude of the French government.



Fig. 6. Francis Hayman, "Satan, Sin and Death," engraving, *Paradise Lost*, published 1749.

Many of these themes are also encountered in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1760), where Rousseau argues for fidelity in the family unit and the restoration of "natural" relationships with the body politic.

In his *Reflections on the French Revolution* (1790), Edmund Burke describes society in familial terms. The father figure is often associated with the constitution, and Burke's celebrated fictional account of Queen Marie Antoinette fleeing nude from Versailles suggests that her nude flight is analogous to

the rape of the state.⁸ Burke goes so far as to draw comparisons between Milton's vision of Hell and the "Jacobin Hell" of Paris. The allusion to Milton's writings and the familial metaphor are even more explicitly implied in his Parliamentary address of April 11, 1794. The French nation had been destroyed by an errant son who challenged and defeated the Father—imagery which parallels Milton's dramatic encounter between Satan, Sin, and Death.

Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) employs the familial metaphor in its exposition of the need to redefine the role of woman in society. Objecting to Rousseau's sentimentalism and primitivism, she argues forcefully for the education of women so they may participate in producing a virtuous and democratic society. Wollstonecraft frequently alludes to the child and parent bond as a parallel to a vital and productive social order.⁹ Diderot in *La Religieuse* similarly uses the child/parent metaphor. He employs the love-child as a metaphor for the need for a new generation to rise up and challenge the older restrictive order.

The beauty of Sin in Hogarth's work is original with him, derived from Milton's text. Her serpentine form, accentuated by the snakes, recalls Hogarth's implied arguments about sensual entrapment and pursuit in his *Analysis of Beauty* (1753).¹⁰ The Venus de Medici, Laocöon and Apollo Belvedere of Plate I of Hogarth's treatise seem to have coalesced into the lustful creature that dominates the center of Hogarth's canvas. Hogarth was attracted to the formal as well as to the sublime features of Milton's epic. In Hogarth's painting there is no beauty as Edmund Burke would have understood it; rather it presages the sublimity which Burke will define in 1759.

No form is passive; the composition is replete with the tension and unease so typical of Hogarth's work. Hogarth was attracted to the breadth of Milton's vision, which stepped beyond the everyday, and yet could be found lurking within the human spirit. Hogarth's interest in Milton may have resulted from the meetings of The Club, a group of literati, who in 1734 gathered to hear Jonathan Richardson read his *Explanatory Notes on Paradise Lost* which was published later the same year. Richardson wrote in part:

The main of Milton's poem, the epitome of the whole argument of *Paradise Lost* which is a kind of paraphrase of the words of St. James, I:15, is that when Lust hath conceived it bringeth forth Sin, and Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.¹¹

In 1749 Francis Hayman (1708-1776) provided drawings for an edition of *Paradise Lost*.¹² Hayman's composition owes nothing to Hogarth's "Satan, Sin, and Death" (Figure 6). Hayman, in all probability, never saw the Hogarth painting. Hayman is the first illustrator of Milton to treat Satan in the "God-like shape and form, excellent (in his) princely dignity" as sketched by Milton. Hayman was not interested in the high drama that attracted Hogarth but conceived the subject in an elegant and essentially decorative style. The Hayman has been characterized by Geoffrey Keynes as "classic" in contrast to the Hogarth, but Hayman's design should be examined with more precision. Hayman gained his reputation for his decorations for the pleasure grounds of Vauxhall Gardens. His art possesses none of the bite and intensity of Hogarth. There was nothing of the revolutionary or social critic in Hayman, unlike Hogarth, who argued vociferously against the creation of the Royal Academy, fearing that once it was established

the wealthy and elite could exercise control over artists. Hogarth was, of course, correct in his assessment. Hayman joined the Academy and served as its librarian from 1771 until his death in 1776. Though he never travelled to Italy, Hayman consciously strove to impart a "classical" grace to his work. It is not surprising to find him turning to Raphael as a figural source for his Miltonic illustrations. Hayman's Satan is almost identical in pose, costume, and spatial displacement to Raphael's "St. Michael" (Louvre, 1507-1515),¹³ and the figure of Sin is a quotation from Raphael's "Galatea" (Farnesina Villa, Rome, 1513). Hayman probably knew both works through prints. Five editions of Hayman's designs were published between 1749 and 1815.

Another member of the classical school of British art to illuminate Milton's text was James Barry. In the late 1790's he produced his "Satan, Sin, and Death" (Figure 7). Barry's design owes something to Hogarth's composition and/or to Fuseli's re-interpretation of the Hogarth conception. Robert Wark proposed in 1954 a novel relationship between Barry's art and Edmund Burke's essay, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1759).¹⁴ For Burke the beautiful was founded on the principle of pleasure, while the sublime was akin to the awesome, the terrifying, and ultimately, the painful. Barry's own work is realized in two styles which accord with Burke's two aesthetic categories. In works such as his "Jupiter and Juno on Mt. Ida" (1790-99, Sheffield) one encounters the "beautiful"; objects are smooth, undulating, modest in scale and evenly lit. In designs such as his illustrations for Milton's *Paradise Lost* we encounter the "sublime"; objects are of vast dimension, angular and enveloped in a gloomy and



Fig. 7. James Barry, "Satan, Sin and Death", late 1790's, *Paradise Lost*.

theatrically lit atmosphere. The stylistic dichotomy in Barry's work parallels the two nascent styles of the eighteenth century, Neoclassicism and Romanticism. For both Barry and Burke the two modes were not mutually exclusive but rather were simply means to different ends; both were recognized as legitimate in contrast to the arguments launched later by the Classicists and the Romantics. William Blake, always willing to compound, to spiritualize, wrote of Barry's Miltonic illustrations: "The hard and wirey line of rectitude, with its depiction of the ineffable figure of death is glorious." It is doubtful if Barry would have understood Blake's mystic definition of his art, but Barry's work captures the Burkean sublimity inherent in Milton's verse.

Henry Fuseli exhibited four versions of the "Satan, Sin, and Death," subject

(Figure 8) in 1799, the year he opened his Milton Gallery with forty paintings illustrating the works of Milton. This enterprise, modelled on the publisher James Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery, was a critical and financial disaster.

Fuseli had access to David Garrick's home and may have known the original William Hogarth oil.¹⁶ Quoting Hogarth's design, Fuseli repeats the up-raised arm of Satan, a feature not repeated in any of the surviving prints after the Hogarth design.

Though a political radical, Fuseli having been forced to leave his native Switzerland because of the publication of radical literature, the versions of "Satan, Sin, and Death" are conceived as aesthetic problems, with no allusion to the political state of France or Great Britain. Fuseli provided the minimum of setting as all emphasis is placed on the dynamic movement of the figures who strain, push, and pull against each other. Portrayed as a lithe, graceful, and yet muscular hero, Satan is a subtle fusion of the erotic femininity of Sin and the masculine strength of Death. Sin, as she reaches up athletically to restrain the combatants, is the focal point of the painting. Docking and Schiff have made the fascinating hypotheses that after Fuseli's treatment of the theme of "Satan, Sin, and Death," the artist treats woman as an erotic, corrupting force. Certainly in this work, and in the pornographic drawings after 1800, this interpretation of woman is very apparent.

Fuseli's figure of Death is positively bestial; the artist takes a good deal of liberty with Milton's description. The exaggerated drama of Fuseli's design is not surprising in an artist who had been nourished on the *Sturm und Drang* of German literature. Though Fuseli abandoned the skeletal vision of Death favored by previous illustrators, he does



Fig. 8. Johann H. Fuseli (Füssli), *Sin Separating Death and the Devil*, 1790-1800, oil on canvas, Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick M. Nichols, Mr. and Mrs. Harry B. Swerdlow and Mr. and Mrs. William K. Glikbarg.



Fig. 9. James Gillray, "Satan, Sin and the Devil," June 9, 1792, engraving, published in London.

create the most dramatic confrontation of Satan, Sin, and Death. The gloom and violence of his composition accord perfectly with Edmund Burke's impressions of this scene. Burke cites Milton's figure of Death in his *Enquiry* as a paradigm of the sublime. He writes in Part II, Section III on "Obscurity":

No person seems better to have understood the secret of heightening, or offsetting terrible things, if I may use the expression, in their strongest light by the force of a judicious obscurity, than Milton. His description of Death in the second book is admirably studied; it is astonishing with what a gloomy pomp,

with what a significant and expressive uncertainty of strokes and colouring he has finished the portrait of the kind of terrors.

*The other shape,
If shape it might be called that shape
had none
Distinguishable, in member, joint, or
limb;
Or substance might be called that sha-
dow seemed,
For each seemed either; black he stood
as night;
Fierce as ten furies; terrible as hell;
And shook a deadly dart. What seemed
his head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.*

In this description all is dark, uncertain, confused, terrible and sublime to the last degree.¹⁷

Fuseli's fascination with unseen forces and titanic literary visions served him well in his Miltonic illustrations as it did earlier in his many versions of "The Nightmare." In 1802 F. J. du Roveray published an illustrated edition of *Paradise Lost* based on the drawings of Fuseli and William Hamilton (1751-1801). A second edition appeared in 1807.

All the illustrators of Milton cited above have either viewed their Miltonic compositions as amplifications of the text or as opportunities to explore the new romantic and sublime sensibilities which were developing in the course of the eighteenth century. James Gillray's broadside, "Satan, Sin, and the Devil," published by Mrs. Humphrey on June 9, 1792 (Figure 9) represents yet another artistic manipulation of Milton's encounter in Book II. Gillray took the Hogarth model and twisted its meaning. Queen Charlotte, consort to King George III, has become Milton's "snaky sorceress." The pungent satire, not surprisingly, displeased the Court of St. James. William Pitt, the Prime Minister and the Queen's favorite, is seen as "Satan." His close association with "Sin" alludes to the alliance between the Queen and Pitt during the incapacities of King George III. Challenging "Satan and Sin" is Lord Thurlow, Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the guise of "Death." Thurlow was forced from office by Pitt and the Queen. Around the Queen's waist is the key to the royal bedchamber, and the Cerberian monsters are represented with caricatures of Dundas, Secretary of War, Grenville, Foreign Secretary, and Richmond, Master-General of Ordnance. Gillray converts Milton's personages from the universal to the mundanity of

contemporary British politics. The acerbic tone of this satire is typical of the bitterness of Gillray's best broadsides. Gillray's anger at figures in authority echoes that of Wollstonecraft, Thomas Paine, and Richard Price.¹⁸ Unlike these writers and artists such as William Blake, Gillray chooses not to cloak his sardonic jibes behind a veil of complicated iconography and symbolism.¹⁹ Prior to the Reign of Terror in 1793 Gillray had provided the radical wing of British politics with satires in support of the republican ideals of the French revolutionaries.

"Satan, Sin, and the Devil" like so many of Gillray's satires is double-barreled. He not only criticizes contemporary political corruption but also sets out to puncture the self-inflated sense of importance he finds among his fellow artists.²⁰ The letterpress attached to the caricature of "Satan, Sin, and Death" reads:

NB. The above performance containing Portraits of the Devil and his relatives taken from life, is recommended to Messrs. Boydell and Fuzelli (sic) and the rest of the proprietors of the Three Hundred and Sixty Five Editions of Milton, now publishing, as necessary to be adopted, in their classick (sic) Embellishment.

Clearly, Gillray found the plethora of Miltonic pictures and prints rather precious; his distaste for the Royal Academy and "high-toned" art was pronounced.

Between 1806 and 1808 William Blake produced two sets of watercolor drawings illustrating *Paradise Lost*; neither set was engraved.²¹ Blake's vision of "Satan, Sin, and Death" (Figure 10) is based upon the Hogarth/Fuseli formulas but is imbued with Blake's distinctive spirit. Though the contest between Satan and Death is not as dramatic as Fuseli's it is perhaps more successful in suggesting



Fig. 10. William Blake, *Satan, Sin and Death*, 1806-1808, watercolor. Reproduced courtesy of the Trustees of the Henry E. Huntington Art Gallery, San Marino, California.

the universal significance of the conflict. Sin's face is stamped with horror and the ultimate degeneration of Satan is suggested. Satan, who detests ugliness, has just learned of the corruption attending Sin's birth; her degeneration implies his own fate. Blake, as many scholars have noted, completely turned Milton's imagery about face in his own writings with Satan emerging as the true hero. Satan embodies the energy and dynamism that Blake finds essential to personal and spiritual liberty. Satan is cast in the role of Blake's Orc, the youth who challenges tradition and power in several of his allegories. Interpreters of Blake suggest that Satan, Sin, and Death are associated with the mythical characters who appear in Blake's prophetic books. Bindman sug-

gests that Death is Urizen; Keynes draws parallels between Enitharmon and Sin, and between Rintrah and Death from Blake's *Europe, A Prophecy* (1794). Erdman interprets a plate from the same epic of Rintrah and the two queens as an allusion to William Pitt and Queens Charlotte and Marie Antoinette, all three maneuvering to defeat liberty. The references to contemporary politics are enmeshed in a constantly shifting and changing fashion with the myth and symbol of the historical sequence of Britain's war against France.²² The following passage from *Europe, A Prophecy* is derived from Milton's description of Satan, Sin, and Death, yet pictures the chaos wrought by the French Revolution:

Go tell the human race that woman's
love is sin . . .
Orc the horrent demon rose sur-
rounded with the red stars of fire
Whirling about in furious circles
around the immortal fiend
And the vineyards of red France
appear'd in the light of his
Fury

One of the startling effects of Blake's drawing is its ethereal quality, resulting from the clear coloring and the marvelous transparency of the figure of Death.²³

George Romney, in his notebooks, which date from the 1790's, also was attracted to the theme of Satan, Sin, and Death (Figure 11). An associate of Blake and Fuseli, he would most likely have known both artists' interpretations of the theme. Bindman suggests that Romney never intended to work up his sketches²⁴ but the artist's letters refute this. On February 2, 1792 he wrote to his son: "I have made and am making designs for Milton; and mean to make several before I begin to paint them, but it is quite a secret." And in response to an

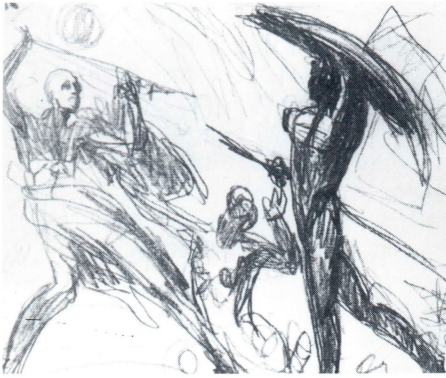


Fig. 11. George Romney, *Sketch of Satan, Sin and Death*, 1790's, Reproduced courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum, London.

enquiry from the Reverend William Hayley, who had contracted Romney to illustrate his *Life of Milton*, Romney writes in January, 1794: "My plan was, if I should live and retain my senses and sight, to paint six other subjects from Milton; three where Satan is the hero, and three of Adam and Eve."

Any number of English artists illustrated Milton's epic in the nineteenth century: Stothard, Heath, Charles Williams, and Samuel Clark. The latter's engraving of 1853 (Figure 12), reflects the diminished power of these later interpretations; the cosmic conflicts of Milton's verse are reduced to decorous vignettes. However, one illuminator in the nineteenth century did succeed in reworking the theme in a monumental fashion akin to Hogarth, Fuseli, and Blake. Between 1825 and 1827 John Martin produced a set of twenty-four mezzotints to embellish an illustrated edition of *Paradise Lost* published by Septimus Prowett. The denseness and sonorous quality of these plates (Figure 13), coupled with Martin's extraordinary vision



Fig. 12. Samuel Clark, "Satan, Sin and Death," 1853, engraving, *Paradise Lost*.

of a hellish landscape, are splendid additions to Milton's majestic verse. Martin's deep, cyclonic vistas owe something to Turner's apocalyptic landscapes.²⁵ It has been suggested that Martin's designs also allude, with a strange subterranean echo, to Brunel's tunnel under the Thames for the London Underground which was just then being constructed. The vast tunnel-like cavern dwarfing the three small figures captures the colossal scale of Milton's verse:

... the hole immense wrought on
Over the foaming deep high —
arched a bridge
of length prodigious . . .

(Book X, 300-01)

Satan, Sin, and Death are building a bridge over chaos, bringing hell into the universe. The monumental vistas of Martin, the concern with spectacular spatial

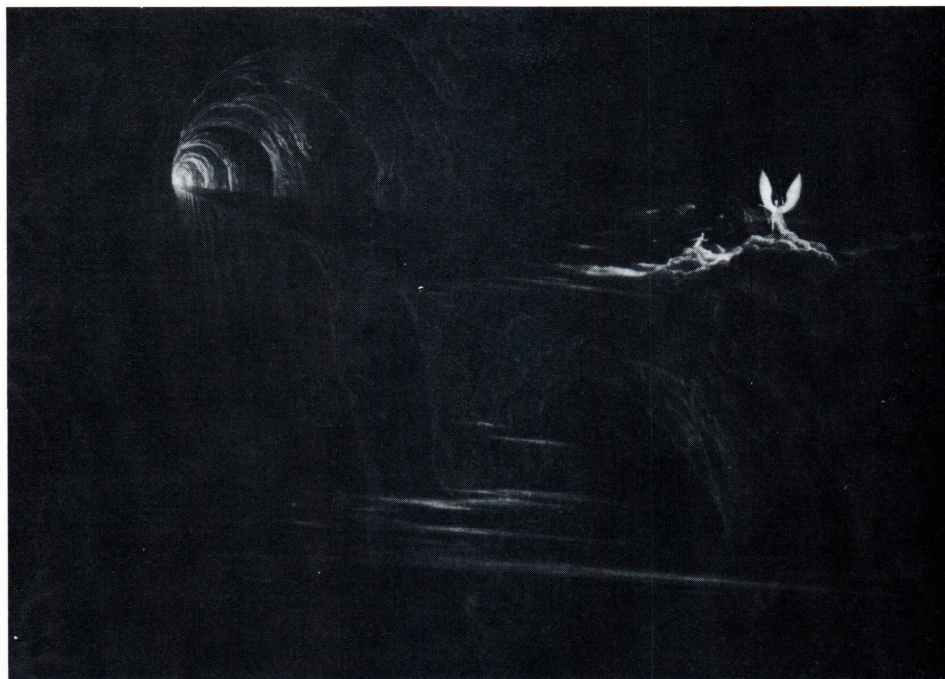
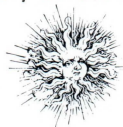


Fig. 13. John Martin, "Building the Bridge over Chaos," 1825-27, mezzotint, *Paradise Lost*.

effects, far outdistance his interest in the personal struggle which attracted the imaginations of Hogarth, Fuseli and Blake.

As the nineteenth century progressed and the tensions of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars ceased to stir artists' imaginations, the illustrations of Milton's texts became increasingly polite and decorous. The designs published by Gustave Doré in 1884 and 1886 are typical of this declining interest in utilizing Milton's text as a vehicle for exploring political allegory or the sublime.



Notes

¹In 1730 Pierre Fourdrinière copied Medina's design for an illustrated edition of *Paradise Lost*; he reversed the composition. In 1752, Richard Cooper made a pathetic copy after Medina's engravings. Cooper's plates appeared in a second edition published in London in 1784. The presence of Medina's plates and those which imitated his designs provided a visual source for subsequent illustrators of Milton.

²The oil measures 62 x 74.5 cm. Though undated, most scholars agree that the work must date from the mid-1730's to 1740. For a complete discussion of dating see: David Bindman, "Hogarth's Satan, Sin and Death," *Burlington Magazine*, March, 1970, 153-159.

³Ronald Paulsen has suggested in *Hogarth, His Life and Work*, Vol. II (New Haven, 1971), 281-3, that the painting may have been purchased by David Garrick from the artist's widow after Hogarth's death. At Mrs. Garrick's death the painting was sold to Thomas Seaton Foreman, who sold the work to Charles Fairfax Murray in 1899. It appeared on the block at Sothebys in December 1964. It was purchased by Sabin Galleries, London and purchased subsequently for the nation. See: Bindman, "Satan, Sin and Death," 153. The actual painting was not known to subsequent illustrators of Milton, with the possible exception of Fuseli. All other artists based their knowledge of Hogarth on the three prints cited in the text.

⁴Bindman, 153.

⁵Frederick Antal, *Hogarth and His Place in European Art* (London, 1962), 155.

⁶Emblem books such as those by Quarles were still in wide circulation in the first half of the eighteenth century. See: Rosemary Freeman, *English Emblem Books* (London, 1948), 114.

⁷For a penetrating analysis of "The Beggar's Opera" see: R. Paulsen, *Hogarth, Life and Work*, 180-191.

⁸Edmund Burke, "Reflections on the French Revolution" included in: Ray B. Browne, *The Burke-Paine Controversy: Texts and Criticism* (New York, 1963), 262.

⁹Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (New York, 1967). See especially Chapter XI, "Duty of Parents," 229-235. Another writer to use the familial metaphor is Richard Price. His sermons, especially those from 1789 forward, dismayed the conservative Edmund Burke yet both authors employ the same imagery to characterize the political chaos in France or concern over freedom in Great Britain.

¹⁰See R. Paulsen, *Hogarth, Life and Work*, Vol II, 189-192 for discussion of the sensual, even erotic, significance for Hogarth of the serpentine line. Hogarth himself quotes from Milton's *Paradise Lost* in his *Analysis of Beauty*, implying the entrapment of man by feminine beauty:

So vary'd he, and of his torturing train
Curl's many a wanton wreath, insight
of Eve,
To lure the eye.

¹¹Jonathan Richardson, *Explanatory Notes on Paradise Lost* (London, 1734), 71-72.

¹²Bindman, 155, fails to give a date for this suite of Milton drawings. Hayman's designs were engraved by J. Miller.

¹³The Raphael painting was in a French collection in the eighteenth century. Hayman would have known the Raphael composition from prints in circulation. Hayman's figure may also have been derived from a print after Guido Reni's "St. Michael," 1626-27, in the church of Santa Maria della Concezione, Rome, which is ultimately also based on the Raphael work.

¹⁴Robert Wark, "A Note on James Barry and Edmund Burke," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*, XVII, 1954, 382-85.

¹⁵The earliest version of "Satan, Sin and Death" by Fuseli is a pen and ink drawing with wash dated October 1776 in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (For illustration see Bindman, 156, Figure 34.) A later oil version dated 1802 is in the collection of Bavarian State Museum, Munich. For a discussion of Fuseli's interest in this theme see: Gert Schiff, *Johann Heinrich Füssli*, (Munich, 1973), pp. 189-197.

¹⁶Fuseli's influence can also be seen in the Miltonic illustrations by Edward Francis Burney (1799); Thomas Stothard (1792-93); and Richard Westall (1816 and 1821).

¹⁷Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (London, 1759), 100-101.

¹⁸Draper Hill, *Fashionable Contrasts: Caricatures by James Gillray* (London, 1966), 13-15 and 139-140.

¹⁹Draper Hill, *Mr. Gillray, the Caricaturist* (London, 1965). See especially Chapter Nine, "Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin," pp. 88-101.

²⁰A good number of Gillray's satires are amusing variants of notable paintings by Gillray's contemporaries. A select number of examples include: "Weird Sisters; Ministers of Darkness; Minions of the Moon" (December 1791), based on Fuseli's "Macbeth and the Witches"; "Presages of the Millenium" (June 1795), composed in imitation of Benjamin West's "Death on a Pale Horse" and "The Death of the Great Wolf" (December 1795), based on West's "The Death of General Wolfe."

²¹A complete set exists in the Henry E. Huntington Art Gallery, San Marino. These drawings measure about 8 x 10 inches. A larger, but incomplete set is in the collection of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The Huntington possess both versions of "Satan, Sin and Death." Figure 9 is from the second, larger set; it measures 19½ x 13⅛ inches.

²²Very notable in Blake's art after 1791, the year Blake decided along with his publisher Johnson not to publish his inflammatory and radical *French Revolution*, is a retreat behind constantly shifting and complicated symbols of his protestations against the repression he sensed in the political atmosphere in England.

²³One is reminded of one of Blake's comments in his *A Descriptive Catalog* (1809) which accompanied the artist's only one-man exhibition. Blake writes: "A spirit and a vision are not, as modern philosophy supposes, a cloudy vapor, or a nothing; they are organized minutely articulated beyond all that mortal and perishing nature can produce." This

argument counters Burke's suggestion that obscurity is essential for the sublime.

²⁴Bindman, 157-59.

²⁵Around 1830, Jonathan Martin, John Martin's mad brother, produced a drawing loosely based on the Hogarth composition. This version of "Satan, Sin and Death" is replete with strange and cryptic symbols only meaningful to the mentally-deranged Martin, who was institutionalized after setting fire to York Minster. For an illustration of the Jonathan Martin drawing see: Bindman, "Hogarth's Satan, Sin and Death."

Arizona Portfolio

Voyage of the *Sesostris*: Elihi Vedder in Egypt*

by Hugh T. Broadley



Fig. 1. Elihu Vedder, *Egyptian Landscape*, 1891, oil on panel, 10x20", Phoenix Art Museum. Accession number 65/56.

Egyptian Landscape (Fig. 1), a small painting by Elihu Vedder (1836-1923) in the Phoenix Art Museum,¹ is a product of a trip to Egypt made by the artist in the winter of 1889-90. The picture has never been satisfactorily identified, and of the trip itself virtually nothing is known except for a few nostalgic observations which the artist included in his book *The Digressions of V* published two decades later.²

A potential remedy in both instances has recently become possible through the chance discovery of a cache of documents,³ which includes a journal kept by Vedder during his trip, a large quantity of letters written to his wife Car-

rie, and an equally large number of letters which Carrie wrote to him. The quantity of all relevant documents is such as to preclude publishing them *in toto*. Instead, through a process of selection and editing it is the aim of this paper to create a sense of the trip and to suggest something of the effect it had upon him and his attitudes during this mature period of his life. Further, a more specific identification of the Phoenix Art Museum's picture will be proposed on the basis of those documents.

There can be no question of Egypt's having held an appeal for Vedder since his youth. *The Questioner of the Sphinx*,⁴ undoubtedly his most famous Egyptian

picture, was painted when he was only twenty-five, more than two decades before he was to see the real Sphinx face to face. There is nothing, though, to suggest that Vedder ever dreamed of visiting Egypt. Indeed, he was caught completely by surprise when the opportunity to do so presented itself.

In mid-September, 1889, the Vedders returned to their home in Rome after visiting the Exposition Universelle in Paris where long lines of other tourists discouraged them from ascending the Eiffel Tower; and upon their arrival found a letter written on behalf of Rhode Island industrialist George F. Corliss inviting Vedder to accompany him to Egypt.

Carrie Vedder's reaction was more distressful than enthusiastic. She wrote immediately to her mother in Boston:

"Among the letters awaiting us was one inviting Vedder to go up the Nile, his expenses from the last of October until some time in March paid on a dahabeeyah. I fear it is another case of the longed for come too late. Had we only known this Spring perhaps it might have been managed but now—my brain is in too much of a whirl to think . . ."⁵

The anxieties of Carrie Vedder, financial agent and gallery manager as well as wife and mother, had an economic basis and were quickly communicated to friends and acquaintances. Bessie (Mrs. Frank) Benedict, who had extended Corliss's invitation, responded:

"Thanks so much for your candor—*entre femmes* we can speak plainly then. Don't let me be the means of disturbing your very necessary calculations—I should never forgive myself . . . If Mr. Vedder is a rapid sketcher with a keen eye for color and an ability to finish from photos, he would be

sure to make a goodly *porte feuille* for future work; but the wind is the master of such journeys, dehabayahs depending on the sail. . . . Finally, for finishing his work there would hardly be time or space, but I think the work would be possible, if he is not dependent on roomy & comfortable painting quarters—wh. would not be possible on a boat 120 ft. long with 18 people in all for our service. . . . The river is full of artists . . . At present England is buying Mr. Newman's⁶ things and America is going up the Nile in Cooks' caravans. Who can tell what they will buy!"

Further encouragement came from the Vedders' long-time English friend, Amelia B. Edwards, author of the immensely popular *A Thousand Miles Up the Nile*, which was illustrated with an engraved reproduction of Vedder's *Questioner of the Sphinx* beginning with the first edition of 1877. She paused in the midst of preparations for an American lecture tour to eagerly assure Mrs. Vedder:

"He will sell pictures on the trip and send you home cheques, depend on it. *They all do.*—& certainly he will. Do not feel anxious about it dearest friend. . . . Egypt is *the* popular subject, both in art and literature now."

And to Vedder himself, she wrote encouragingly:

". . . You will make wonderful studies of colour, distance, ruins & natives. And again—Egypt is a *popular* subject; and your pictures from those studies will be in tremendous demand. . . . Again—an artist in Egypt can always sell 'pot boilers' on the river & at Cairo. People while traveling buy eagerly. I know that . . . others sell largely while there every season—& this will supply grist to the mill at home."

Other opinions were sought and by late October apprehensions were suffi-



Fig. 2. Elihu Vedder, "Opposite Our mooring place in Cairo." (*Journal, "Cairo, Nov. 1889"*, Elihu Vedder Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.)

ciently allayed for Vedder to advise his aged father:

"... I have been invited to go up the Nile for about a thousand miles and shall there see the tombs of people who hoped to repose in them forever when they were stowed away, four thousand years ago."

It was entirely characteristic of him to conclude with a sentimentally nostalgic reference to his childhood in the Caribbean:

"I shall go far enough south to see the Southern Cross and shall think of you and how we used to see it in Cuba."

Carrie Vedder, much more matter-of-factly and no less characteristically for her, wrote to her mother in Boston:

"... It is quite settled that Vedder will go to Egypt for the winter with Mr. Corliss leaving early in Nov (from the 10th to the 12th) and you may imagine how much there is to attend for him alone when I was even before wild with all the rest on my hands."

In the end, practical more than romantic considerations determined Vedder's acceptance of Corliss's invitation. Clearly, the trip was expected to produce

paintings or, at least, sketches and photographs which could serve as the basis for paintings. Vedder told his father:

"We shall have room on the boat ... to paint and photograph at our ease. I hope to make a quantity of valuable sketches."

Once in Cairo, Vedder assembled materials to supplement those brought from Italy. He told Carrie of his preparations before the Nile voyage began:

"I spread my canvas to dry on the roof this morning. It makes a line about a mile long ..."

Months later, when the voyage was nearly over, he came close to exhausting his supply of drawing paper and wrote anxiously:

"Paper getting fearfully low. I counted on painting rather than on drawing and will explain some time why one paints so little."

At Assiut he went ashore to search for paper, but his supply was not sufficiently replenished until the party finally returned to Cairo. And once there, realizing his time in Egypt had about run out, Vedder painted, sketched, and photo-

graphed feverishly, even desperately, right up to the moment of his departure. Somehow, he also found time to purchase photographs of what he called “useful things.”

In any event, Corliss’s invitation was accepted and on November 9 Vedder departed, leaving Carrie in charge of the studio where she was to continue the weekly open-house and teas. She wrote frequently to Vedder, keeping him advised of the number of Sunday visitors, and was as scrupulous in identifying those who did *not* appear as those who did.

Vedder went from Rome to Naples where he took passage on the P. & O. steamer *Bengal* for Port Said and Ismailia. Carrie explained to her mother that Vedder did not mind that the sea voyage from Naples was longer than from Brindisi, even if there was a greater likelihood of becoming seasick. Besides, it was more economical. Mr. Corliss with Bessie Benedict and her daughter Helen met Vedder at the Hotel Angleterre in Cairo; they made the crossing from Brindisi.

As the party searched for a suitable dahabeah, Vedder reported to Carrie:

“We have seen every tub on the river . . . we have seen about all—the old Phili included, which will please Miss Edwards.⁷ . . . After careful examination I concluded that they must have been built about the time of Thothmup III and are now held together by pack thread and glue and will surely go all to pieces when away from the bank.”

Ultimately, they selected a new, iron-hulled dahabeah called the *Sesostris* and made preparations for departure which included “a great blowout” as Vedder described it:

“Late in the afternoon quite a crowd of ladies from the Hotel Angleterre had

tea on board and the Consul (and others) dropped in. The Ark was gorgeously dressed out with flags, lanterns and palm branches and presented a grand appearance.”

Not until two days later, however, was there sufficient wind to move the *Sesostris* into the Nile and upriver against the current. And then rather promptly, it ran aground on a mudbank. But the voyage had begun and Vedder wrote frequently to Carrie, carefully noting in his Journal the content of each letter so as not to repeat himself or omit any item of interest; there was virtually nothing lacking interest. As often as not he passed along bits of gossip and impressions of personalities encountered. Flinders Petrie, working then at Amarna, was “little—insignificant—pleasant absolutely unaffected” in Vedder’s estimation. He was impressed by Sir Francis and Lady Grenfell and rather intrigued by the Bishop of Truro, “a little man with legs like a tuning fork,” accompanying a daughter rumored to be recovering from an unhappy affair of the heart. And with no editorial comment, he reported meeting the American painter Edwin Blashfield on board *The Seven Hatbors*, a luxuriously appointed dahabeah belonging to expatriate Charles E. Wilbour, Blashfield’s father-in-law.

Vedder endured the physical impact of Egypt somewhat testily: the heat, the dust, the wind—“windstorms that fill your eyes with broken obelisks and bones of mummies”—and the cold—“Anthony and Cleoptra if they did any lovemaking in the musky shadows above Thebes must have done so—he in his Ulster and she in her fur jacket.” “Cold as blazes” was a favorite and frequent expression.

The visual impact of Egypt was another matter. Much of what he saw

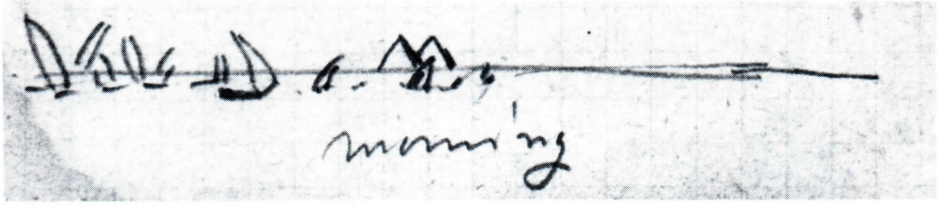


Fig. 3. Elihu Vedder, “Morning,” November 16. (*Journal, “Cairo, Nov. 1889,”* Elihu Vedder Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.)

struck him as familiar. The landscape near Aswan was:

“a perfect bit of desert just exactly what I had imagined it to be. In fact it looks very natural and familiar to me.”

The Valley of the Kings elicited:

“such desolation I never saw but it was *exactly* the kind of thing I have always been trying to paint.”

He was pleased when his dream pictures of Egypt were confirmed in those and other instances but he relished every experience:

“... at a great distance on the green plain sat two gray figures. The Memnon statues. I can’t explain what a curious sensation it gave me,”

“... a great ride by moonlight to Karnak—wonderful.”

And above all, his first view of the Pyramids and Sphinx at Giza:

“... we went about sunset ... I was simply struck dumb. I never saw nor shall I ever see such a thing again and I cannot imagine such another evening. Words are vain ... There are hotels and buildings but you lose sight of them as you get near the first pyramid ... you have to pass the first pyramid some distance before you come on the Sphinx—when you do what a sight meets you. We saw it with the foreground gradually going into shadow. I remember the shadows of the pyramid

stretching over the dark mud plains toward Cairo ...”

There were moments of disappointment, even irritation, though, when Vedder’s romantic visions were contradicted as happened very soon after his arrival. He wrote to Carrie in the heart of Cairo where

“... everything is a picture except the view from my window which is an unfinished prot-episcopal church.”

His first encounter with the Sphinx, breath-taking though it was, also had its disappointing side. He observed sadly:

“it is a pity that the Sphinx has been dug out but it will fill up again I hope.”

At Abutig he winced at the sight of cast-iron balconies on minarets and called them “beastly.” He deplored even the presence of imported European goods in a little shop in Girga, which spoiled for him an otherwise “splendid—untouched” vision of what he imagined an ancient town to have been.

However, his terse comments suggest there was almost nothing that did not hold some appeal. Vedder was captivated by “stunning effects of cloud shadows over plains and mountain.” He marveled at sunsets and moonrises; and he observed, “Moonlight seems to permeate all things. The mountains which are always pink are pink at night



Fig. 4. Elihu Vedder, "Afternoon," November 16. (*Journal*, "Cairo, Nov. 1889," Elihu Vedder Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.)

as well—." He savored: "a perfect bit of desert . . . the sand lodged in the hills like yellow snow with absolute barrenness of all—the cold wind and a bit of steel blue water to the south." He was no less fascinated by camel drivers, dervishes, dancing girls, ragged children, and other native types wherever they were encountered. Unexpectedly, he is also revealed in the *Journal* and letters as an avid birdwatcher. At Meidum he reported:

"Yesterday it was storks and beautiful white spoon bills — ducks, geese, now immense flocks of geese — thousands — swimming and sleeping on sand banks."

And at Luxor:

"... near at hand a flight of storks and it was something grand. They sailed along forming beautiful lines in a most stately manner and seemed to know perfectly well what a fine figure they were making."

He was delighted with the barren and forbidding desert, but he was also enamored of the crowded, noisy life of villages—"really poetic scenes . . . nothing better." Typical was:

"... an arab town in the midst of a most wonderfully wild sunset—the palms

and pidgeon towers against the sky the mud huts—the smoke arising everywhere—the dust—the dogs the people the mysteries of the gathering gloom . . . as thoroughly Egyptian as the simple grandeur of the desert."

On every hand and almost daily Vedder noted possibilities for paintings. Of the countryside north of Luxor, he remarked:

"I can't help thinking how much it looks as if *painted*. Last evening I saw a group of palm trees nearby with rich golden trunks and the whole thing looked as if nature tried to imitate a good picture."

Then he added in an aside to Carrie:

"You I know will say why did you not try to paint it in reality."

Interesting though Vedder's word-pictures were, Carrie did not find them a satisfactory substitute for paintings. With the voyage of the *Sesostris* perhaps no more than one-third completed, she demanded:

"Do you find it impossible to paint on the boat? You know that even impressions from your brush are valuable and I should think some of your memory sketches would be better than nothing. To me almost the worst is your getting

so out of the habit of work. I would paint every day just to keep my hand in and do something. Don't think because you can't have time to do all you want to that therefore you can do nothing, but rather do what you can and leave what you can't and *do* something every day if it is only to spoil canvas."

A distraught Vedder responded:

"I wish to God you could be here . . . so as to see for yourself how much time one has to sit down to paint as you may well imagine I know and feel all that is expected of me without being told of it and the thought keeps me nervous & excited and is the only thing which spoils my pleasure without doing any good but it has always been so. I suppose it will continue to the end of the chapter."

Mindful of her anxieties and perhaps stung by Carrie's scolding, Vedder made frequent reference thereafter to work in progress and difficulties encountered:

"going too fast . . . to draw anything," "always moving . . . everything alters so suddenly that the drawings I fear are of no value," "I bag as many outlines of them (i.e. mountains) as I can only the boat moving makes it rather hasty work." "Would fain draw the mountains and things better but we must *take* advantage of the wind and get on." ". . . But lord, how quick I had to be—a group of palms on the left would be far to the right before I had outlined the hills behind them. Nevertheless you will be astonished at the efforts I have obtained and also at the quantity of drawings."

Despite vicissitudes of the voyage, Vedder managed to produce an impressive quantity of paintings, sketches, drawings, and photographs. Exactly how many pieces, it is difficult to estimate, but they must have represented a considerable addition to the artist's baggage

when it was loaded on the Brindisi steamer in Alexandria on April 22, 1891.⁸

On April 26, once again in Italy, Vedder quickly scribbled a note to Carrie:

"Dear Chick, I telegraphed you yesterday of our arrival and I hope it will give you some of the pleasure that the fact gave me—for it would be impossible for anyone else to feel as glad as I did yesterday. In fact the greatest pleasure I have had since leaving is the getting back."

Vedder, accompanying the Corliss party which traveled by way of Naples and Pompeii, finally arrived back in Rome after an absence of nearly six months. Dutifully, Carrie reported to her mother:

"Vedder arrived on the third of May with his companions of the winter and they stayed in town until the following Tuesday. Sunday evening they all came to the house. . . . I am happy to find that Vedder is delighted to get home and in spite of all the luxury of the winter finds his *own* work most welcome and his *family* a pleasant change from the company of strangers. Let us hope it may last through the summer & until the time for strangers comes around again."

Although Vedder's winter in Egypt had been a very productive season for him, there is a curious lack of evidence that he painted many Egyptian subjects after the trip. In Carrie's records of pictures sold between 1856 and 1907, only one Egyptian subject is listed under 1891, the year immediately following Vedder's return to Rome. That entry reads:

"To Thomas K. Lothrop: Sketch on the Nile (small)."⁹ Actually, *two* pictures were sold to Lothrop whose first name was Thornton, not Thomas. He wrote from Boston on September 23, 1891:

"We have the pictures . . . and we are all much indebted to you for two charm-



Fig. 5. Elihu Vedder, *Double Page with Sketches and Entries*, December 18. (*Journal, "Cairo, Nov. 1889,"* Elihu Vedder Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.)

ing sketches, which, small as they are, contain in them nearly all Egypt—the Nile, the fertile valley, the desert sand hill, the sky, the atmosphere and the monuments make Egypt, and these all are there—I enclose you a draft on London for £100 . . .”

Vedder himself acknowledged there was sometimes little relation between the list and pictures actually painted and sold. In the same year that Lothrop bought his two paintings, Vedder presented another to Corliss as a gift, a sufficient explanation for its not being listed among works sold. Carrie described it as “a \$300 picture of a Nile subject” and told her

mother it had been sent in May. Not until August 30, though, did Corliss acknowledge its receipt in Providence:

“ . . . at last the painting is here, a delight to the eyes, and potent remembrance of days that were but are not, for us at least . . .”

References to additional pictures indicate that Vedder did occupy himself with Egyptian subjects immediately upon his return. Helen Benedict, writing on September 19, 1890, alluded to:

“the Sphinxes etc. you are working on. How I should like to see them!”

Perhaps it was one of these that Corliss

saw when he visited Vedder's studio in late January or early February, 1891, and asked the price of a "... Sphinx with the dust storms or flurry yet to be added."

The Phoenix Art Museum's picture (Fig. 1), unmentioned and unidentified to this point, but dated 1891, belongs unquestionably to this group of paintings executed within a year of Vedder's return from Egypt. The picture's subject, because it is not a familiar monument, is difficult to identify. However, Vedder's letters to Carrie and the notes in his Journal do offer a possible identification that is more specific than that suggested by the picture's present title.

References abound in letters and the Journal to hills, mountains, and deserts; to buffaloes, donkeys, and camels; to mosques, domes, and minarets; and—above all else—to tombs. The fascination they held for Vedder was such that after the trip, Helen Benedict teased him:

"By the way, I am glad you had the opportunity of seeing some *tombs* in Naples, having been so deprived of that cheering pastime last winter."

Vedder's *Egyptian Landscape* could easily be thought of as a representative scene including "typical" elements met with anywhere and everywhere in Egypt, much as Lothrop had regarded his pictures. Such a supposition is supported by one interesting drawing in the Journal. In the midst of an unusually lengthy entry for December 18, Vedder sketched a picturesque group of figures and camels (Fig. 6)—not dissimilar to the massed forms of camels and men to the right of the Phoenix picture—and without otherwise identifying the sketch, labeled it, "Everywhere." Another typical or general feature of the picture is the impression of intense and bright light. References show Vedder to have been fascinated by the glare of Egyptian sunlight and at the

same time by the softness and subtlety of color which he also noted "everywhere."

In the Journal there are numerous sketches of domed structures and tombs that are close relatives of those in the painting (e.g. Fig. 5), leading one to assume that those in the painting may not necessarily be specific or particular. Yet there is one Journal entry which, with passages from letters to Carrie, suggests more than a general connection with the picture.

On January 29, Vedder wrote to Carrie:

"Here we are tied up to the bank of the small island of Elephantine opposite Assuan... British will not permit any to go farther into Nubia."

While the *Sesostris* and other boats were prohibited from sailing farther, Vedder was urged to secure passage on a British sternwheeler and complete the trip as originally planned to Abu Simbel, Wadi Halfa, and the Second Cataract. This he did, but while waiting for permission from Cairo to do so, Vedder made excursions into the region about Aswan and produced a considerable body of work. He visited Philae at least twice and there discovered Newman,

"... tranquilly painting in the temple ... laying siege of course to the most striking subject. He only proposes painting two or three pictures during this stay. The other one I saw was a general view of Philae which between ourselves I think very stupid, both works of patience rather than of art ..."

Other Journal entries show how Vedder spent his time while waiting to ascend the river into Nubia:

- "1/22 over towards Ctn Convent in the desert
- 1/23 made sketch of rocks in river

- 1/24 Philae
- 1/25 long donkey ride
- 1/26 sketch of tombs and desert—Sunday
- 1/27 big sketch tombs and desert—
Monday
- 1/28 long walk with H. sketch rocks, trees
- 1/29 took sail down river tombs heaps of
bones thrown out
- 1/30 Sketch morning of tombs on road
white domes—background for figs
...

He amplified the last entry with its specific mention of white domes—essential and strikingly conspicuous elements of the Phoenix picture—in a letter to Carrie:

“30th made sketch of a roadside with tombs for which I wanted the photographs of figures but of course the next day when I went out they wouldn’t pass by.”

“... the people had gone on to Philae on donkeys and I stayed to paint and being on the desert road I waited for them and rode back with them by moonlight. It was wonderful out among the tombs. ... I went photographing on my own hook and took six things which will be useful particularly camels.”

On the basis of this testimony provided by the artist himself it is possible to advance a tentative identification of the painting as a scene on the desert road between Aswan and Philae where Vedder painted tombs and, specifically, white domes—the only such reference in the entire body of documents. This, he wanted to use as a background for figures which he hoped to photograph the next day. When he did return to the site for that purpose, though, “they wouldn’t pass by.” The figure groups of “staffage,” consequently, were invented by Vedder, presumably on the basis of sketches and photographs—perhaps the “six things

which will be useful particularly camels”—made in the same locale.¹⁰

It is strange that the Egyptian journey should have resulted in so few finished paintings, among them the Phoenix Art Museum’s *Egyptian Landscape*, particularly in view of how carefully the trip was justified before it was undertaken. Financial pressures may have prompted Vedder to immediately resume painting subjects that had demonstrated ability to attract visitors and potential purchasers to his Rome studio—instead of speculating in untested Egyptian subjects—in an anxious effort to regain his financial position so unfavorably affected by his absence in Egypt. Throughout the trip Vedder had been troubled with reports of declining sales from Carrie and possibly other disturbing matters. At one point he consoled Carrie:

“Poor Chick why should you be disappointed at not being able to sell any of my pictures. I can see that no one wants that sort of thing. What can I do about it I don’t know but that I leave till I get back. I foresee I shall have to pay for this outing, however dearly enough so and won’t think of it now and there is no use.”

Matters did not improve at home and on April 6, with the voyage over and the *Sesostris* once again moored in Cairo, Vedder wrote to Carrie:

“... I had been in a state of joy and excitement at the near prospect of sailing for home but your beastly letter took all the pleasure out of me and I am not over it yet. I was trying to write up my journal in the hot little cabin fighting the flies meanwhile and seeing if I could *do it* and not miss the rapidly moving scenes outside—making drawings when possible—but I gave up the Journal and don’t know if I shall write anymore. I see it is no use—nothing can satisfy permanent discon-



Fig. 6. Elihu Vedder, "Everywhere," December 18. (*Journal*, "Cairo, Nov. 1889," Elihu Vedder Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.)

tent. If you had kept back all troubles and annoyances then you had better have gone on doing so and not spoiled it all. I see all the trouble ahead God knows well enough but had tried to forget for a brief space as it could do no good brooding over it but you have pretty well brought it all to mind and so I come back—but I don't *now* know whether I am glad to. As I said I was full of the thought of getting home again but if that is the sort of things I am coming back to I had rather stay away."

In the end Vedder saw no solution but to request a loan of \$2000 from Corliss. Carrie was distressed and her feelings can be measured in terms of her elation one year later when the loan was repaid in full. She wrote jubilantly to her family in Boston (May 15, 1891):

"... our great news of the winter ... Vedder has sold his large painting of *The Last Man* ... Had we *only* been out of debt this would have made us feel quite rich, but \$2000 (less \$100) had to be instantly paid to Corliss—the money he lent Vedder last year when they came back from Egypt; on Ved-

der's note falling due the 17th of May. He would not have troubled us about payment I am sure, but what happiness of writing him on the 6th that we were prepared to pay principal and interest as agreed. You will see that he declined interest, for which we thanked him very kindly. Vedder was inclined to insist on paying the interest but I have no pride on such a point & took good care to only deposit to his account the frs9500 actually lent, and to draw the extra 500 which I had deposited for interest. Vedder has given him a \$300-picture of a Nile subject, so I don't think even he has done badly and Vedder gave each of the ladies something—to Mrs. Benedict a medallion bas-relief of St. Cecilia \$150 which he made last fall and to Helen a colored print of the Pleiades such as he sells for \$30 and I certainly feel that he has thoroughly paid his way for nearly 7 months very greatly adding to the distinction of their party and their pleasure."

While such practical "preoccupations" may partially explain the dearth of Egyptian subjects, another explanation

may be sought in easily established spiritual or psychological bases. For Vedder, Egypt had existed in his imagination for almost a quarter of a century before he confronted it as physical reality. The experience was unsettling. He expressed dismay at the appearance of the excavated Sphinx and hoped that sand might once again bury it. His original and instinctive urge, though, was to paint the Sphinx; but facing the mute colossus, he hesitated:

“All the things I have seen strike me as absolutely vulgar. If it has been at all well painted I have not seen the works. Indeed all the things I have seen . . . seem to be somewhat trivial—perhaps my things will look the same.”

At the end of the trip when he finally did set to painting the Sphinx, it was apparently at Corliss’s suggestion. In Giza, he explained to Carrie:¹¹

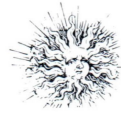
“Mr. Corliss wanted me to try something here. I would have been contented to paint in Cairo however. Yet it is all right.”

The physical facts of the hulking, eroded ruin could only compromise the romantic vision of Egypt Vedder had nourished since his youth. That there may have been a reluctance to betray his vision is suggested by an explanation he offered in another context. Contemplating the mysterious fascination and appeal of ancient monuments, Vedder declared that their attraction

“. . . would only be dulled or lessened by a greater unveiling of their mysteries. . . . to me Isis unveiled would be Isis dead. The Roman Forum was infinitely more poetic buried than it is disinterred, and the sight of the skeleton is more painful than poetic.”¹²

It may be less speculative to consider also the professional opportunities that

confronted Vedder soon after his return from Egypt. Increasingly he became aware of and preoccupied with possibilities for monumental architectural commissions in America which included Bowdoin College, the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, C. P. Huntington’s New York Mansion, and, ultimately, the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. In the face of negotiations for such grand projects as well as planning and executing them, there cannot have been much time or inclination to indulge a romantic impulse to paint small pictures, intimate in scale and rich in personal associations, recalling a winter’s voyage on the Nile.



Notes

* Grateful acknowledgment is made of assistance lent by personnel of the Archives of American Art in Washington, D.C., Detroit, and San Francisco in the preparation of this study. Help and support of Phoenix Art Museum staff members is no less warmly appreciated.

¹Acc. no. 65-56. Oil on canvas (re-lined), 10" x 20". First exhibited in 1959 as *Scene in the Holy Land*. Erroneously described as "Signed, lower left: *E. Vedder* 1917," *Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture in the Phoenix Art Museum Collection*, compiled by James Harithas (Phoenix, 1965), p. 204. The painting is in fact dated, "1891."

²Elihu Vedder, *The Digressions of V* (Boston & New York, 1910), pp. 451-454.

³The discovery was made in 1957 by Regina Soria who drew heavily upon them for her *Elihu Vedder: American Visionary Artist in Rome* (1836-1923). (Rutherford, Madison, Teaneck, 1970). The Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, are presently custodians of these materials which cover a 40-year span of the artist's life.

⁴Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Bequest of Mrs. Martin Brimmer. Oil on canvas, 36" x 41¾", 1863.

⁵Unless noted otherwise, all quotations are from the Journal and correspondence preserved in the A.A.A.

⁶"Mr. Newman" is Robert Rodrick Newman (1833/43-1918), an American who studied briefly with Gérôme and collaborated with John Ruskin on illustrations for the latter's *Stones of Venice*.

He and his wife were popular members of the British and American colony in Florence where he maintained a studio.

⁷The *Philae*, the dahabeah on which Miss Edwards made her 1000-mile Nile journey in the winter of 1873-74, was 100 feet long, 20 feet broad, had a main salon with white and gold paneling, a bright Brussels carpet, and a piano!

⁸Soria, *op cit.*, p. 203, estimated, "In all, including the oil ones, which he numbered, he brought back from Egypt 160 sketches." Journal references, however, indicate he had completed at least 163 drawings or sketches—*exclusive* of those done in oil—by March 31. Moreover, he continued to produce work for nearly three weeks more until his departure for Alexandria on April 20.

⁹Carrie's sales records, as published in Vedder, *op cit.*, p. 488.

¹⁰The Vedder files of the A.A.A. contain an interesting assortment of photographs, but none connected with Egypt which might corroborate the artist's statement.

¹¹The picture in question is presumably that belonging to E. P. Richardson, Philadelphia.

¹²Vedder, *op cit.*, p. 451f.

Theodore Roszak's *Emergence: Transition I* At Arizona State University

by Joan Seeman Robinson

Emergence is the first of Theodore Roszak's sculptures to suggest organic nature and to possess an aura of aggressive force. Since 1932 he had created smoothly machined objects symbolizing a technological ideal in content and technique. One of his principal themes had been modern flight, rendered poetically by geometric forms whose purity suggested transcendent states as well as the scientific means toward a utopian future.

But by the end of World War II he reassessed his earlier optimism and the premises upon which it had been based. He said, "Constructive purposes and intentions exist, [but] the world is fundamentally and seriously disquieted and it is difficult to remain unmoved and complacent in its midst." Rather than assembling his sculptures of separately formed elements he began welding and brazing, wishing to reflect the unquiet times through emotional content and through a more volatile, intuitive handling.

Of *Emergence* he said, "It marks a period of transition from deliberate and precisely executed relationships to gradual evolvment into freer forms . . . I like to feel that material which can be shaped at white heat and is subject to various nuances of chemical action is the best means for implementing the spirit embodied in the work of this period."

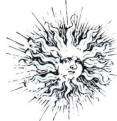
Emergence suggests a figure burdened by flailing and rent wings, whose

knobby and metallic body—though welded—seems to have grown, or to have been crudely poured and then congealed, rather than to have been constructed. Its X-form torso divides at the base into minimal legs. At the top the symmetry of its branching appendages is superficial: equal in breadth they are alike in detail, suggesting an insidious malformation. These top-heavy extensions are of a "many-pointed form, like a Victory's severed wing which suggest antlers," to adopt Lawrence Alloway's description used to characterize similar biomorphic shapes then occurring in painting.

When he made *Emergence* he wrote of this period, "Transition, among other things, implies a degree of change which for me constitutes an end and a beginning." This comment suggests a watershed experience—the awareness that he was crossing a divide. But what he did not remark upon was the awful aspect of the work, its ravaged and demonic character, which assigns to his temporal definition of "transition" and "emergence" a terrible and even traumatic quality. Such emotional content will emerge in his famous *Spectre of Kitty Hawk*, 1946-47, another menacing, striding form, in what seems to have been a determined solicitation of hitherto rejected states of mind, imagination, and sensation for his art.



Fig. 1 Theodore Roszak, *Emergence: Transition I*, 1945 (Steel and bronze) Oliver B. James Collection of American Art, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona.



La peur donnant des ailes au courage,
by Jean Cocteau; a drawing in the
Phoenix Art Museum

by Anne Gully and Susan Benforado Gunther

In his *Opium, Journal d'une Désintoxication*, Jean Cocteau warns us off artistic biography,

Je me demande comment les gens peuvent écrire la vie des poètes, puisque les poètes eux-mêmes ne pourraient écrire leur propre vie. Il y a trop de mystères, trop de vrais mensonges, trop d'enchevêtrement.¹

Poetry for Cocteau was creative expression, whatever the form. Tangles, mysteries, and oxymoronic, truthful lies abound in Cocteau's own *poésies*, the *poésie graphique*, *poésie plastique*, *poésie de roman*, *poésie critique*, *poésie de cinéma*, and, most particularly, in a *poésie* not acknowledged as a type by Cocteau, but which at once subsumed and fired all the rest, a *poésie de la vie*.

A drawing in the Phoenix Art Museum by Cocteau, *La peur donnant des ailes au courage*, (Fig. 1)² reflects Cocteau's preoccupation with his own experiences, real, imagined, and mythologized, his almost obsessive use of various motifs, and his frequent employment of unusual juxtapositions and dream-like images, a technique associated with the Surrealists, with whom he had an uneasy relationship.

Measuring five by nine feet (152 x 273 cm) and done in black crayon with touches of pink and green on two pieces of linen stitched horizontally, the drawing is signed *Jean* on a small banderole, with Cocteau's emblematic star ap-

pended, and is dated 1938. At the lower right, Cocteau has written *Paris-Londres*, undoubtedly a reference to the drawing's composition in Paris in the early days of 1938 for his one-man show in London at Peggy Guggenheim's gallery, Guggenheim Jeune, from January 12 to February 24, 1938, a show organized by Marcel Duchamp.³

British customs officials at first refused to allow the drawing into the country, but relented, according to Peggy Guggenheim, when she promised not to display it; she hung it, with fig-leaves attached, in her office at Guggenheim Jeune, and eventually bought it.⁴

Four personages, almost theatrical in their appearance and disposition, are set close to the picture plane: from left to right, a turbaned female, nude except for a cloth swathed low about her hips and inscribed, bandage-like wrappings around her torso, head, and arms; a man, red-haired and green-eyed, dressed in fish-net underwear, the shorts overlaid with swathed cloth; a figure of indeterminate sex, wearing only a helmet and the same draping as the others, its arm clasping a female bust with long hair and staring eyes, its left leg extending behind the red-haired man to reveal a winged foot; a fragmented male, suspended in space, clad only in suspenders and garters and a crayoned fig leaf.

The drawing contains one indisputable reference to Cocteau's life at the



Fig. 1. Jean Cocteau, *La peur donnant des ailes au courage*, crayon on linen, Accession number 64/86. Collection of the Phoenix Art Museum; Gift of Mr. Cornelius Ruxton Love, Jr.

time—the red-haired young man is a portrait of Jean Marais (Fig. 2), the protagonist of several of Cocteau's films, whom Cocteau had met in 1937 and with whom he lived until the early 1950's. This rendering, one of many Cocteau did of Marais in various incarnations, presents him as straightforward, even ingenuous, his pose, bearing, and expression harboring no hidden thoughts, no surprises, the ideal youth, "that Antinous sprung from the people,⁵ who seems to have provided Cocteau with profound and rejuvenating inspiration. Cocteau appears here to confess his attraction to Marais, to admit again what he had never concealed, his admiration for "*le beau sexe, le sexe fort*," particularly when young and fresh.⁶

Although the other figures in the drawing seem to be types characteristic of Cocteau, rather than portraits,⁷ they can also be seen as embodiments of cer-



Fig. 2. Jean Cocteau, *La peur donnant des ailes au courage*, (detail).

tain of his memories and obsessions, evoking that interpenetration of discrete worlds he described in *Opium*,

... l'intuition très nette de mondes qui se superposent, se compénètrent, et ne s'entre-soupçonnent même pas.⁸

Cocteau attributes this perceptual conjuring trick to opium. However, it probably relates more closely to Surrealist techniques of free association, seen in films such as *Le Sang d'un Poète* and *Orphée*, and commonplace in Cocteau's work as a whole. Further, despite the astonishing range of Cocteau's creative output, the components and themes of his *oeuvre* are remarkably consistent, allowing, even urging, the interpretation of an individual work in the light of the whole.

The female figure at the far left in *La peur dormant des ailes au courage* (Fig. 3) appears as sinister as Marais does sincere. Her shifty eye, her serpent-like tongue, out-thrust in a gesture mingling contempt with sensuality, the brandished Ace of Spades, a symbol of death, the drop of her swathings to reveal her genitals, all speak of woman the untrustworthy, woman the entrapper, again, a theme familiar from Cocteau's plays, novels, and later, his films, and related to his own, male-dominated life.

This figure may represent, in allusion if not in fact, a woman with whom Cocteau was involved from 1930, when he met her at a private viewing of *Le Sang d'un Poète*, until the early forties, and, on the available literary evidence, into the fifties as well. She was Nathalie Paley, to posterity the Princess, beautiful, aristocratic, and married, with whom Cocteau "seems almost instantly, amid clouds of opium, to have decided to 'fall in love' and beget a son,"⁹ the one form of creation that Cocteau the poet, the

creator, had not yet assayed.

Cocteau's many "adoptions" of young men, whether euphemisms for his homosexual affairs or, as later, real attempts to acquire progeny, bespeak his unachieved, and in view of his self-confessed "*amour des garçons*" unachievable, desire for a son of his own. Despite his misogyny, the only way to produce a child was, as Peter Wimsey has observed, via the "old-fashioned procedure," which, unfortunately for Cocteau, required a woman. That he did attempt to sire a child seems clear from various accounts of his affair with Nathalie Paley. She herself said,

I was mad about Jean's wit and charm, but for him the affair with me was purely physical. He wanted a son, but he was only as potent with me as one can be who is completely homosexual and full of opium. It was all shameful and disgraceful. There was no love. I didn't inspire a single one of his poems—I had no good effect at all on his writings: everyone knows that that was the least productive period of his life . . . There was much gossip and my husband asked for a divorce. Finally I went to Switzerland to think things over . . . He said he wanted to marry me, but I doubt that he would have gone through with it.¹⁰

Cocteau himself apparently talked of nothing else for a year. The persistence of this obsession, and its unhappy finish, is documented by an account of Cocteau's behavior after leaving Paris to escape the Occupation in June, 1940, during his sojourn in the south of France with the family of Dr. Pierre Nicolau. Nicolau's oldest son, who was sixteen at the time, recalls Cocteau as ill and upset, worried about the war, about Marais, about his work, and about his feelings for Nathalie Paley. He told the family that



Fig. 3. Jean Cocteau, *La peur donnant des ailes au courage*, (detail).

he had loved only one woman in his life, the Princess; he said further that she had been pregnant by him and had gone to Switzerland for an abortion, an act which had killed his love for her.¹¹ Earlier, this had made the rounds of Paris society, which joked that all this was clearly an impossibility, as “there had always been a opium tray between them.”¹²

What is significant about this affair is not its consummation or non-consummation, the Princess’s pregnancy and subsequent abortion or their invention, but rather Cocteau’s belief that he had lost the longed-for son and that a woman was responsible for his loss. It cannot be coincidence that the figure of the Poet’s Death in the film, *Orphée*, made in 1950, is called the Princess. In the earlier play, *Orphée*, 1927, the Poet’s Death was simply a beautiful woman. In conversation, Cocteau often referred to Paley as “Prin-

cess Fafner,” a reference to the Norse ogre, and, in old age, to women in general as “those killers of poets’ children.”¹³

The words and phrases written on the bandeaux wrapped about the woman at the left in *La peur donnant des ailes au courage*, at first reading cryptic, even meaningless, in the aggregate reinforce the identification of the figure with the incident of the Princess and Cocteau’s lost child.

Transcribed, the phrases read as follows, on the head: *un enfant est/ je me/ dans un monde/ il est terrible de ne pas/ le coeur* (illegible)/ *et votre*; on the neck: *ce qui m’apparaît/ je suis chargé de/ je/ et votre/ et je cou* (illegible)/ *non pas*; on the right arm: *no non/ et si/* (illegible)/ *et so(n?) style/ je ne veux/ de la beauté/ et toi/ et le vrai*; on the left arm: *elle était belle/ non, (vous?) ne/ et encore je/ si* (illegible)/ *en 1938, (illegible)/ je n’ai/ j’(aimerais?)/ mon destin/ si je* (illegible, perhaps *te?*) *rencontre*; on the torso: *et le danger que j’aime/ qu* (illegible)/ *du(?)* (illegible)/ *noblesse/ j’ai vo* (illegible)/ *le sortilege* [sic] *de votre voix* (with star drawn at the end of the phrase)/ *non/ la chevreuse(?)*. In addition, on the outstretched arm of Jean Marais is the word *merde*.

Just as the apparently meaningless sentences issuing from the car radio to inspire the poet Orphée in the film of that name actually carry a poetic weight of their own—“*Toiseau chante avec ses doigts*,” for example, comes from a short poem in a letter Apollinaire wrote to Cocteau—so the scribbled phrases in *La peur donnant des ailes au courage* suggest a meaning beyond the literal.

The mention of a child (*un enfant est*), the persistent negatives (*il est terrible de ne pas, non pas, je ne veux, je n’ai, and non*), and the allusion to feminine beauty in the past tense (*elle était belle*) bring

to mind the Princess and the story associated with her and Cocteau. Further references to beauty, including *le sortilege de votre voix*, could apply equally to a woman or to a man, in this case to Marais, while *noblesse* could conceivably serve as a double-edged reference, to Paley's aristocratic lineage, with a sarcastic secondary comment on her behavior, and to Marais's unremarkable ancestry, coupled with nobility of spirit and form. The long phrase on the torso, *et le danger que j'aime*, recalls Cocteau's *Livre Blanc*, a confession of homosexuality and a description of the dangerous games the narrator, a thinly veiled stand-in for Cocteau himself, played, living his life while concealing from family and society its peculiar character. *Et encore je* on the left arm implies an unfulfilled wish, while, further down, *mon destin* may hint at an acceptance of things as they are, even a realization that they will never be any different. These suggestive phrases seem to reinforce the message of the drawing, figures, and title, as we shall see below.

At the extreme right in the drawing (Fig. 4) is a man, fragmented, off-balance, star-stunned. The jagged angles behind this figure, and its disposition, lacking feet to hold it firm on the ground, the suggestion that it might be falling backwards into space, inevitably recall another long-lived obsession of Cocteau's, a fascination with angels and their nature. In *Orphée*, Heurtebise's angelic nature manifests itself in two ways, in his ability to hang suspended in space, and in his ability to pass himself and others through mirrors, an attribute he shared with the Princess, the Poet's Death.

Based on "moving," if erroneous, information provided him by a Hebrew scholar,¹⁴ Cocteau was convinced that



Fig. 4. Jean Cocteau, *La peur donnant des ailes au courage*, (detail).

the words angel and angle were synonymous,

La chute des anges peut aussi se traduire: chute des angles. La sphère est faite d'un amalgame d'angles. Par les angles, par les pointes, s'échappe la force ... Chute des angles signifie donc: sphère idéale, disparition de la force divine, apparition du conventionnel, de l'humain.¹⁵

Cocteau proceeds to define the angelic nature, and to note the poet's possession of it,

Désintéressement, égoïsme, tendresse, pitié, cruauté, souffrance des contacts, pureté dans la débauche, mélange d'un goût violent pour les plaisirs de la terre et de mépris pour eux, amoralité naïve, ne vous y trompez pas: voilà les signes de ce que nous nommons l'angélisme et que possède

tout vrai poète, qu'il écrive, peigne,
sculpte, ou chante.¹⁶

Finally, after citing Rimbaud, Verlaine, and Satie as poetic, angelic types, Cocteau describes the angelic poet's status, that of a person without a country, bereft of the necessary identity papers, singled out by the world for harassment,

L'au-delà noie les uns et coupe la
jambe aux autres. L'hôpital, l'assassinat,
l'opium, l'amour, tout lui est bon
pour en finir vite et reprendre ces en-
fants perdus.¹⁷

It seems likely that this transcendent, almost other-worldly figure, without legs, and surrounded by falling angles, represents the poet, Cocteau and all creative artists. His posture prefigures a scene in *Le Testament d'Orphée*, 1959, in which the Poet, played by Cocteau, rises without bending his knees, after having been speared, and returns to life like the phoenix.¹⁸

Recurring in Cocteau's work and central to the two films mentioned above is the symbolism of the mirror. In *Orphée*, mirrors are the doors by which Death and her angelic attendants come and go. The poet figure in the Phoenix Art Museum drawing, a silhouette-like mirror image visible behind his head and along his back and legs, appears to fall into or emerge from the water which is broken like a mirror. In just this way do we see the Poet in *Le Sang d'un Poète*; he entered a pool of water, photographed to resemble glass, and emerged by a reversal of the film.

The presence of Cocteau's lover and "son," Jean Marais, the sinister female, and the mirror imagery combine to suggest an allegory of creation, poetic and physical. As Margaret Crosland has written of Cocteau's imagery in general,

The mirror and its inevitable association with Narcissus, is never far away from the image of death, and from the realization that homosexual love cannot bring total happiness in ordinary human terms because it cannot perpetuate life.¹⁹

The helmeted central figure in the Phoenix Art Museum drawing seems to provide the logical completion to the allegory. Its winged foot, heroic stance, and the classical bust it holds imply that it is an allegorical figure, most likely the Courage of the drawing's title. The figure links the female and Marais on the left with the fragmented poet/angel figure on the right. Its action, pulling a laurel-like vine from the poet's mouth, suggests that the poet is not meant to put forth a vine, to produce physical descendents; rather, his task is to produce poetry, and for these creations, the poet's wreath is his reward, everlasting fame his progeny.²⁰

Finally, the title of the drawing is, at first glance, merely one in a long line of enigmatic inversions, familiar from Cocteau's films, where unreal, even surreal, statements issue from an off-screen narrator or from a radio. In fact, the title has a coherence of its own, as well as a previous existence in Cocteau's graphic work.

"*Donner des ailes à quelqu'un*," literally, to give wings to someone, has, in French, the sense of accelerating the course of something, or of investing an emotion or task with enthusiasm.²¹ Cocteau's earlier use of the phrase, *La peur donnant des ailes au courage*, occurs in a drawing dated 1926 and published in 1930 as one of the illustrations to *Opium*.²² This drawing shows an agonized man, his eyes blinded, his mouth open in pain, a fitting accompaniment to

a book about the trauma of drug withdrawal, and acknowledged as such by Cocteau who said, in *Opium*,

Je laisse au dessin la besogne d'exprimer les tortures que l'impuissance médicale inflige à ceux qui chassent un remède en train de devenir un despote.²³

The 1926 drawing relates to the Phoenix Art Museum work in significance rather than in style; though less complex, the earlier work's subject is similar, representing the physical and, no doubt, the mental, torture involved in ridding oneself of a noxious habit, or by extension, with relation to the 1938 drawing, of an egregious *bête noire*. In addition, the *Opium* drawing has appended to the title the word *Allégorie*, allowing the inference that Cocteau re-used the title, *La peur dormant des ailes au courage*, with allegorical intent, delineating the childless poet's dilemma, and the solution urged upon him by Courage, to endure and to create.

The drawing in the Phoenix Art Museum brings together actors, events, and obsessions from Cocteau's life, melding them into a whole which is at once charming, emblematic, revelatory of Cocteau's deepest concerns, and which suggests a degree of consciousness in construction that Cocteau was often at pains to deny in his work. Cocteau was, clearly, no Horace, and this drawing, regardless of thematic analogies, no "*Exegi monumentum*." Nevertheless, Cocteau, in the persona of the Poet might say, with Horace, "I have raised my monument, more enduring than brass," or, in his own deliberately contradictory words, taken from the Preface he wrote to his 1938 exhibition at Guggenheim Jeune, for which *La peur dormant des ailes au courage* was destined,

Le moment est venu de ne plus faire ce que je fais, le moment est venu de faire ce que je fais, le moment est venu de ne plus jamais faire ce que j'ai fait et défait . . . Mesdames, Messieurs, il est fou de s'exposer inutilement.²⁴



Notes

¹“I ask myself how people think they can write poets’ lives, since poets themselves are incapable of writing their own lives. There are too many mysteries, too many truthful lies, too many tangles.” Jean Cocteau, *Opium, Journal d’une Désintoxication* (Paris, 1930), p. 244. Translation by the authors.

²The authors thank Katherine Dee and Andrea Rubenstein of the Phoenix Art Museum staff for photographs and for access to the drawing itself and to the museum’s files. The drawing is mentioned in Francis Steegmuller, *Cocteau, A Biography* (Boston, 1970), p. 494, and in Peggy Guggenheim, *Confessions of an Art Addict* (New York, 1960), pp. 48-9. It is listed in *Paintings, Drawings and Sculptures in the Phoenix Art Museum* (Phoenix, 1965), p. 20, which states, incorrectly, that Cocteau (1889-1963) was born in 1892 and that the drawing is signed “Cocteau.” The date is also omitted. The drawing is illustrated in *Jean Cocteau: Poète Graphique*, edited by Pierre Chanel with a preface by André Fraigneau (Paris, 1975), p. 115.

³A catalogue for the show survives in the National Art Library in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Cocteau wrote a preface which appeared with a translation by Samuel Beckett, Peggy Guggenheim’s lover at the time. She was married to Laurence Vail from 1922 to 1929 and did not marry again until 1941, when she married Max Ernst. The story that the Phoenix drawing was a wedding gift from Cocteau to Peggy Guggenheim, as supposed in the Phoenix Art Museum files and catalogue, is therefore unfounded. The drawing is popularly called a bedsheet, but its proportions and

the roughness of the cloth make this improbable.

⁴Peggy Guggenheim sold the drawing to Cornelius Ruxton Love, Jr., her second cousin’s husband, around 1960, and Mr. Love gave it to the Phoenix Art Museum in October, 1964. In a letter in the Phoenix Art Museum’s files to F. M. Hinkhouse, then director of the Museum, dated 21 September 1964, Mr. Love wrote,

We have just visited Peggy Guggenheim in Venice. She said you had just left. A few years ago I bought from her the famous Jean Cocteau painting on a sheet that he gave her as a wedding present. She asked if I still had it—when Cocteau saw her the last time he asked her about it—and she told him she still had it . . .

Mr. Love then asked if the Phoenix Museum would like to have the drawing, and added a postscript, “It’s extraordinary!” This is followed by a letter from Peggy Guggenheim to Hinkhouse, dated 8 November 1964, which says, “I am glad you got the Cocteau Sheet. How did you know about it?” We thank Mr. Love’s widow, Mrs. C. Ruxton Love, and her daughter, Miss Iris Love, for their assistance. Peggy Guggenheim wrote in *Confessions of an Art Addict* that Cocteau made two large drawings for her show at Guggenheim Jeune. We also thank Angelica Rudenstine of the Guggenheim Museum, New York, and Professor Samuel R. Peterson of Arizona State University who tried to locate this second drawing. It does not appear to exist. The Phoenix drawing was hung again in 1938 at the Galerie Rive Gauche in Paris from 22 November to 6 December, and though the Bibliothèque d’Art et d’Ar-

chéologie and the Bibliothèque Nationale kindly replied to our inquiries, they had no information to offer about this exhibition.

⁵Steegmuller, p. 435. A photograph of Marais as the Chorus in the 1937 production of Cocteau's *Oedipe-Roi* shows him in a costume designed by Gabrielle Chanel, consisting of wrapped and knotted strips of cloth, like bandages, very similar to the wrappings on the female figure. See Pierre Chanel, *Album Cocteau*, p. 119. A drawing by Cocteau of the same subject is reproduced in Chanel, *Poète Graphique*, p. 111.

⁶Cocteau, *Le Livre Blanc* (Paris, 1970; reprint of original ed.), p. 9.

J'ai toujours aimé le sexe fort que je trouve légitime d'appeler le beau sexe. Mes malheurs sont venues d'une société qui condamne le rare comme un crime et nous oblige à reformer nos penchants.

Translation by the authors:

I have always loved the strong sex that I find reasonable to call the beautiful sex. My unhappiness has come from a society which condemns the unusual as a crime and obliges us to change our inclinations.

⁷As suggested by Francis Steegmuller in a letter to the authors, 26 June 1980.

⁸Cocteau, *Opium*, p. 148. Translated by Margaret Crosland in *Cocteau's World* (London, 1972), p. 433,

Opium, which changes our speeds, procures for us a very clear awareness of worlds which are superimposed on each other, which interpenetrate each other, but do not even suspect each other's existence.

⁹Steegmuller, p. 420. He does not name her in his biography, but does mention her by name in his letter to the authors of 26 June 1980. She is discussed, too, by Elizabeth Sprigge and Jean-Jacques Kihm in their *Jean Cocteau: The Man and the Mirror* (New York, 1968), p. 148-9.

¹⁰Steegmuller, p. 420 and p. 426. He notes that,

A frame displaying her photograph stood near Cocteau's bed; hidden within was a second photo, representing, in the words of one who prefers to remain anonymous, "un jeune homme assez souple et assez bien pourvu pour pratiquer sur lui-même ce que les médecins appellent laidement le *fel-latio*."

¹¹Sprigge and Kihm, pp. 148-9.

¹²Quoted in Steegmuller, p. 427.

¹³Steegmuller, p. 427.

¹⁴Jean Cocteau, *Le secret professionnel*, 1922, in Jean Cocteau, *Poésie critique*, I (Paris, 1959), p. 38,

A ce propos, Mme Bessonnet-Fabre, si profondément, et, pourrait-on dire, si bourgeoisement versée dans la science de l'hébreu, me donne une leçon émouvante. Angé et angle, dit-elle, sont synonymes en hébreu.

We would like to thank Caroline Benfordo for her assistance with this and the following citations from *Le secret professionnel*.

¹⁵Cocteau, *Le secret professionnel*, p. 38. Translation by the authors,

The fall of angels may also convey: the fall of angles. The world is made up of

an amalgam of angles. From the angles, from the points, power escapes. The fall of angles thus signifies: the ideal world, the disappearance of divine force, the sudden appearance of the ordinary, the human.

¹⁶Cocteau, *Le secret professionnel*, p. 39. Translation by the authors,

Dispassion, selfishness, tenderness, compassion, cruelty, endurance of human contact, purity in debauchery, a blend of relish and scorn for earthly pleasures, an ingenuous amorality, do not delude yourselves: these are the marks of what we call the angelic nature, which every real poet possesses, whether he writes, paints, sculpts, or sings.

¹⁷Cocteau, *Le secret professionnel*, pp. 40-1. Translation by the authors,

The other world drowns some and cuts the legs off others. Illness, murder, opium, love, it will use anything to finish this quickly and to take back its lost children.

¹⁸Jean Cocteau, *Two Screenplays: The Blood of a Poet, The Testament of Orpheus*, translated by Carol Martin-Sperry (New York, 1961), p. 134.

¹⁹Crosland, p. 14.

²⁰In a photograph by Serge Lido, done about 1938, an impeccably dressed Cocteau holding a crystal ball studies the disembodied hands of three men. See Chanel, *Album Cocteau*, p. 127. The photograph itself commands attention as a characteristic device of Cocteau's, posed, suggestive, impermeable, and is of interest to this study for the drawing on the wall behind Cocteau. A fluidly executed profile of a young man is iden-

tifiable as a faun by his oversized, pointed ears. The profile is remarkably like that of the poet figure in *La peur donnant des ailes au courage*, the resemblance intensified by the leaf or vine protruding from the faun's mouth.

²¹*Grand Larousse de la langue française* (Paris, 1971) and *Trésor de la langue française* (Paris, 1973). The authors thank Frances Clymer and Lucile Couplan-Cashman for their help in interpreting the title.

²²Illustrated in Roger Lannes, *Jean Cocteau (Poètes d'aujourd'hui series, 1945 and 1968)*, p. 45, where it is misidentified as a drawing for *Maison de Santé*, published in 1926. The confusion arises, no doubt, from Cocteau's having written *Maison de Santé* on the drawing, Cocteau's whereabouts at the time rather than a reference to the album of drawings by that name. The drawings for *Opium* were done in a clinic near Saint-Cloud in 1928.

²³Cocteau, *Opium*, p. 19. Translated by Crosland, pp. 415-6,

I leave to the drawings the task of expressing the tortures inflicted by medical impotence on those who drive out a remedy which is in the process of becoming a despot.

²⁴Translation by Samuel Beckett,

The time has come to do no longer what I do do, the time has come to go on doing what I do do, the time has come never again to do what I have done and undone . . . Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a mad thing to exhibit oneself in vain.

John Mix Stanley, A “Hudson River” Painter in Arizona

by James Ballinger

Firebox No. 53 sounded its alarm on the crisp, clear afternoon of Tuesday, January 24, 1865, beckoning fire wagons to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. By the time of their arrival, a newspaperman for the *Daily National Intelligencer* informs us, “the fire mounted the main tower and burst forth from the roof, the sight was magnificently grand; the red flame bursting from all the windows, mounting high to clutch the anemometer, which despite the fire-fiend raging below, faithfully indicated the velocity of the wind.”¹ When the conflagration was finally controlled and extinguished, the upper floor’s main section of this unique structure was a total loss, as were the hopes of John Mix Stanley (1814-1872), a painter whose “Indian Gallery” was loaned to the institution with the goal of Congress making an appropriation for the purchase of the collection which numbered one hundred fifty-two paintings. The painter’s efforts were the result of seven years’ travel in the western reaches of the young Republic, which included his experiences as the first American painter in, what is today, the state of Arizona. The collection, which depicted individuals and scenes of America’s rapidly vanishing native inhabitants, had been deposited with the Smithsonian Institution almost thirteen years earlier, and its purchase had been continually debated throughout those years. Flames con-

sumed all but five of Stanley’s works, losing his gallery to the nation, and, most likely, his reputation to the history of American art. His talent certainly surpassed that of his colleague, George Catlin (1796-1872), who had earlier traveled the northern plains and was likewise attempting to sell his resultant works to the national government. Stanley must have been viewed on a par with the other great Indian painter, Charles Bird King (1785-1862), because the majority of King’s one hundred forty-seven works (actually purchased in 1858) were also lost to the fire but go unmentioned in news reports. Catlin’s numerous works may today be viewed in the galleries of the National Collection of Fine Arts and the National Gallery, but it remains the task of the researcher or museum curator to bring together the works of King and Stanley.

King had been trained at the Royal Academy in London as a student of Benjamin West (1738-1820). Returning to the United States, he finally settled in Washington, D.C. during 1819, and, from 1821 to 1842, he painted the important members of Indian delegations traveling to the capital. King’s academic approach to his Indian gallery was the complete opposite of Stanley’s, whose earliest efforts were also in portraiture but who is now remembered for his landscape and genre paintings of America’s western wilderness in Oklahoma Territory,

New Mexico Territory, and Oregon Territory, beginning in 1842. The tutelage of James Bowman, an itinerate portrait painter with whom Stanley worked in Detroit during the early 1840s, nurtured his career, but it was Stanley's natural talents and pure desire which eventually left their mark. His abilities increased with maturity, as can be demonstrated in a selection of representative works from his *oeuvre*, with resultant paintings proving him to be a successful delineator of America's western Indian tribes. The common label of "explorer-artist," continually placed on Stanley and many artists sharing his sensibilities, is unfair when he is viewed with his contemporaries and not apart as an "illustrator" of government documents. It is the premise of this essay to document this point through examination of the artist's works created during and as a result of his early travels in Arizona and to position Stanley as a mature landscapist with his peers at mid-century.

Stanley painted his first Indian subjects at Fort Snelling, Minnesota, during 1839 and did not return to the West until 1842 when he traveled to Arkansas Territory and New Mexico Territory during the summer and fall. No doubt his initial travels along the Santa Fe Trail encouraged him to make a lengthier sojourn in 1846 and 1847, touring from Fort Leavenworth, Missouri, to San Diego, California. This trek, in the employ of General Stephen Watts Kearny's Army of the West, provided numerous subjects for the artist's projected Indian Gallery in addition to his commissioner status as expedition draughtsman. Stanley's official duties were typical of an expedition artist, the first of whom began accompanying government surveys in 1819 when two young Philadelphians, Titian Ramsey Peale (1799-1885) and Samuel

Seymour (active 1795 to 1823), explored along the Platte River into Wyoming Territory with the Stephen Long expedition. These artists' duties were "collecting specimens suitable to be preserved, in drafting and delineating them, in preserving the skins, &c. of animals, and in sketching the stratification of rocks, earths, &c. presented on the declivities of precipices."² In addition, Seymour, the chief artist, was to "furnish sketches of landscapes, wherever we meet any distinguished for their beauty and grandeur. He will also paint miniature likenesses, or portraits if required, of distinguished Indians, and exhibit groups of savages engaged in celebrating their festivals, or sitting in council, and in general to illustrate any subject that may be deemed appropriate in his art."³ A quarter of a century later, an expedition artist's arduous task could not be better defined. Turning the leaves of Lt. William Emory's published report of Kearny's expedition, *Notes of a Military Reconnaissance from Fort Leavenworth, in Missouri, to San Diego, in California, Including Parts of the Arkansas, Del Norte, and Gila Rivers (Washington, 1848)*, the reader sees lithographs of the Pima and Maricopa Indians, landscapes of New Mexico Territory (including churches and ruins), and illustrations of the flora encountered on the trip. The great majority of these lithographs may be attributed to Stanley. Even though the artists' works were intended for lithographic reproduction in the official survey reports, one would be in error to utilize the term, "illustrator," when discussing most of these painters' works. Rather, this teamwork of art and science occurs at a point in American art history when painters were encouraged to carefully scrutinize nature in all her aspects and to create works of a location's repre-



Fig. 1. John Mix Stanley, *View of Mount Grabam*, 1846, oil on board. Collection of Mrs. Dean Acheson.

sentative spirit. Remember, Stanley is traversing what is today New Mexico and Arizona, only two years prior to the death of Thomas Cole (1801-1848) whose influence established the style of what is termed the Hudson River School. Only fourteen original works created by Stanley on his trip with Emory and Kearny are extant, but examination of these paintings and later works based on Arizona experiences prove Stanley should be placed with his colleagues of the Hudson River style (fig. 1, *View of Mount Grabam*, November 2, 1846, collection Mrs. Dean Acheson).

Many writers, over a long period of

years, have discussed the style, technique and merits of the Hudson River painters. Their willingness to escape the studio to sketch *en plein air* is well documented, as is their formulated approach to composition; that is, a detailed foreground, utilization of atmospheric perspective, and oftentimes a road or stream meandering into the distance to solidify a feeling of actual space. These painters ventured long distances for their sketches which were transformed into final statements in their studios. Barbara Novak, in her discussion of Cole's career, has convincingly stated the chief problem this process created, titling her

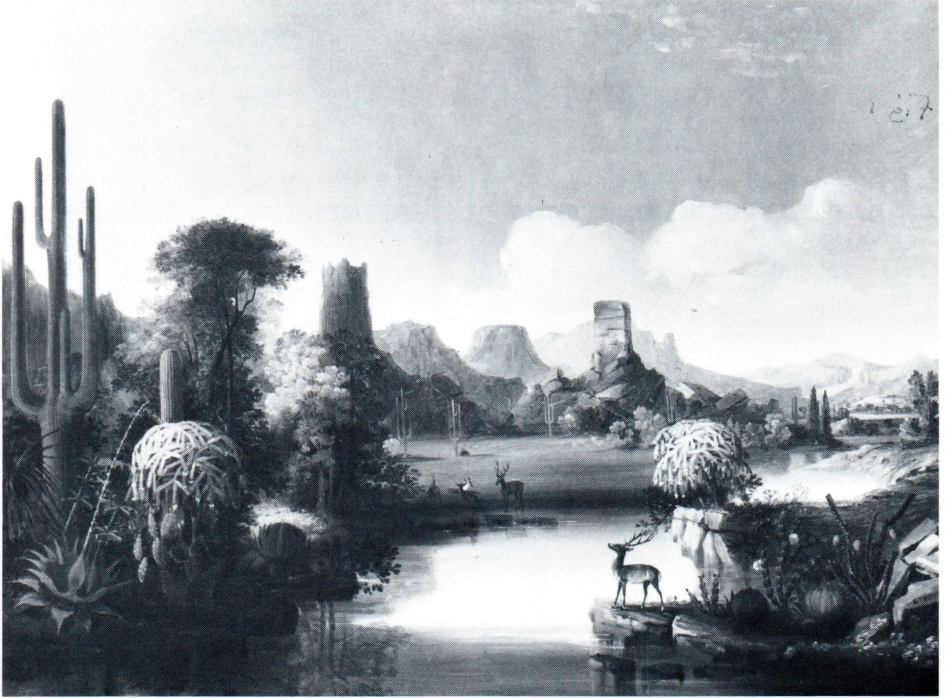


Fig. 2. John Mix Stanley, *Chain of Spires Along the Gila*, 1855, oil on canvas, (78.7x106.7 cm). Accession number 68/20. Collection of the Phoenix Art Museum.

chapter "The Dilemma of the Real and the Ideal."⁴ A painter such as Cole, or the scores of landscape painters active in America during the middle years of the nineteenth century, made imitative sketches of nature and then idealized the scene at the studio easel. Cole stated that "by looking intently on an object for twenty minutes I can go to my room and paint it with much more truth than I could if I employed several hours on the spot."⁵ Further, it was perfectly acceptable for a painter to utilize earlier sketchbook notations allowing "time to draw a veil over the common details, the unessential parts which shall leave the great features, whether the beautiful or the sublime, dominant in the mind."⁶ This

method is precisely Stanley's approach when one compares the later easel work, *Chain of Spires Along the Gila* (1855, fig. 2, collection Phoenix Art Museum), to his earlier oil sketches and lithographs made in the manner of his original sketches. Unfortunately, no pair (a sketch and finished painting) exists for a direct comparison, but we can conjure up the appearance of the original sketch for *Chain of Spires Along the Gila* from the published lithograph titled *Chain of Natural Spires Along the Gila* (fig. 3) and the other oil sketches, such as *View of Mount Graham, View of the Copper Mine* (October 18, 1846, collection Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas), and *The Hieroglyphic Rock of the Gila* (October

22, 1846, collection of Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas). All of these works provide foreground detail of trees, figures, or army encampments, with the space closed off so that the artist is able to report in detail the exact scene encountered. Granted, Stanley's duty was to document what he saw, withholding expression when possible, but even easel pictures painted in San Francisco immediately following his adventure have like attention given to detail (see *Black Knife*, 1846, collection National Gallery of Art). Thus, Stanley's work of 1846 and immediately following can be said to lean heavily to the real side of Novak's "dilemma." The artist's faithfulness can be further established by consulting Emory's published journal for which the sketches were made. His entry for November 8, 1846, reads:

About two miles from camp, our course was traversed by a seam of yellowish colored igneous rock, shooting up into irregular spires and turrets, one or two thousand feet in height. It ran at right angles to the river, and extended to the north, and to the south, in a chain of mountains as far as the eye could reach. One of these towers was capped with a substance, many hundred feet thick, disposed in horizontal strata of different colors, from deep red to light yellow. Partially disintegrated, and laying at the foot of the chain of spires, was a yellowish calcareous sandstone, altered by fire, in large amorphous masses.

For a better description of this landscape, see the sketch by Mr. Stanly [sic].⁷

Emory's lavish attention to this scene and Stanley's oil sketch add weight to the artist's decision to recreate this scene, somewhat altered, nine years later in his Washington, D.C. studio.⁸

It is impossible to know what went through Stanley's mind when he decided to paint *Chain of Spires Along the Gila* in 1855, but one can almost reconstruct the materials on which he had to draw, as well as the prevalent attitude toward America's landscape at that time. This nine-year hiatus placed Stanley, not in the field with troops of the Mexican War, but comfortably in his studio seated next to an easel. He was a much more experienced painter, having painted in Hawaii, Oregon, New York, and then in Washington, where the previous year he had executed and exhibited a panorama of western America (presumably destroyed). It is almost the identical span of years that Henry David Thoreau utilized for *Walden*, first moving to the tranquil pond in 1846 and, finally, publishing the volume in 1854. In addition, if one consults the exhibition record of the National Academy of Design, he or she will discover the middle years of the century were the apogee of landscape painting in this country. During the same year Stanley is at work on *Chain of Spires Along the Gila*, Frederick E. Church (1826-1900) is painting the first of his great South American canvases, *The Cordilleras* (collection Mrs. Dudley Parker), and George Inness (1825-1894) is commissioned to paint *Lackawanna Valley* (collection National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.), perhaps the greatest painting of his early years. Finally, it was at approximately the same moment that Asher B. Durand, successor to Cole as America's foremost landscapist, is publishing his widely read "Letters on Landscape" beginning in the premier volume of *The Crayon*, a journal dedicated to the arts in the United States. A passage from his first letter, published January 3, 1855, could be read almost as an invitation to Stanley and his career to this point,

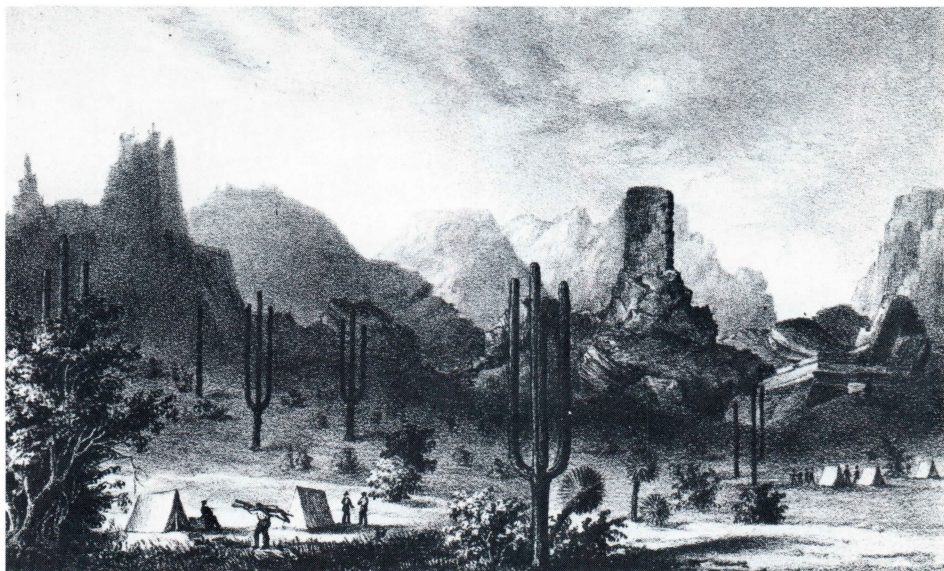


Fig. 3. E. Weber and Company, Lithographers (after John Mix Stanley), *Chain of Natural Spires Along the Gila*, 1848, Lithograph, (10.5x17.4 cm).

You need not a period of pupilage in an artist's studio to learn to paint; books and the casual intercourse with artists, accessible to every respectable young student, will furnish you with all the essential mechanism of the art . . . study in . . . the Studio of Nature."⁹

Stanley's "pupilage" over the past fifteen years had readied him to produce a work of excellence like *Chain of Spires Along the Gila*.

Comparison of Stanley's painting to his earlier published lithograph crystallizes the dilemma of the real versus the ideal. The progression of Durand's "Letters," published intermittently through June 6, 1855, provides practically a scenario for Stanley's development. Letter number II encourages the painter to study nature early, because the world's external appearance "is fraught with lessons of high and holy meaning, only surpassed by the light of Revelation."¹⁰

Durand lectures that the proper approach to a landscape is to place detail in the foreground and next approach atmosphere through darks (Letter V) and then administer the lighter tones (Letter VI). Atmosphere, Durand states, should be "felt in the foreground," "seen beyond that," and "palpable in the distance."¹¹ These terms can be applied directly to Stanley's painting of 1855, which carefully displays the many cacti of Arizona in the foreground along the banks of the Gila River which meanders for miles into the far distance of the scene.

The painter did not merely recreate his earlier sketch either. Major changes may be noted. The tents of the encampment have been removed from the foreground which is greatly expanded to include even greater detail of the desert flora and fauna that the artist recalled from his earlier adventure. His attention

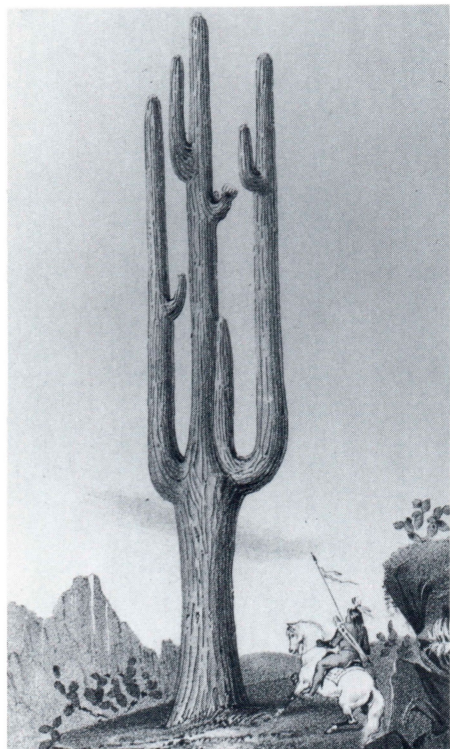


Fig. 4. Graham and Company, Lithographers (after John Mix Stanley), *Cereus Giganteus*, 1848, Lithograph, (17.3x10.4 cm).

to detail is so precise that he has directly copied the saguaro cactus (*Cereus Giganteus*) from the published lithograph of the same subject made nine years earlier (fig. 4). Likewise, the chollas standing as entrance gates to the scene are copied from another such lithograph in Emory's published report (page 76). Perhaps the greatest shift in approach is the painter's willingness to turn the stereotyped "great American desert" into a "garden of Eden" by utilizing golden light and a purely tranquil approach to the river and its bordering verdure. In fact, juxtaposition of these

two works magnifies Stanley's mythologizing the symbol of the West to what Henry Nash Smith has termed the "Garden of the World" in his superb study, *Virgin Land*, first published in 1949. Smith explores the development of this myth from the late eighteenth century through the middle years of the nineteenth century following Alexis de Tocqueville's visit to America and his publication of *Democracy in America*. De Tocqueville felt that Americans valued their wilderness for what they could make of it, transforming raw nature into a rural, pastoral environment of peace and happiness. Smith states, "The master symbol of the garden embraced a cluster of metaphors expressing fecundity, growth, increase, and blissful labor in the earth."¹² This philosophy, so well depicted by the painter is in total opposition to the feelings expressed by others on the original trek through Arizona in their journals. Emory continually wrote of the unknown. Another recorder, Henry Smith Turner, could complain just six days prior to experiencing the chain of spires:

I constantly feel as though I were in a dream, to be thus surrounded day after day with a wilderness, not one familiar object in nature except the sun, the moon and the stars—all else is wild and strange to me . . . I wish from the bottom of my heart I had seen the end of this toilsome march.¹³

Turner's interpretation of the march to San Diego was not a scientist's as was Emory's; thus his entry for November 8, the date of Stanley's original sketch for the chain of spires, speaks of the site being "the only grass said to be on the route for many miles—here we are for the night, a most sad, gloomy looking place it is; in any other country it would be distinguished as being destitute of

grass."¹⁴ A third chronicler, Captain A. R. Johnston, discussed the geologic interest of the area that clear day following the previous night's showers and added that the campsite was "the last grass on the road from this to California. They tell us there is none; this is very scant, and could not well be worse."¹⁵ The artist's deviation from the diarist's is easily explained by the artistic process of idealization of the subject with the goal being a presentation of what Durand called "truth" in Nature. Stanley's attempt is somewhat exaggerated, but he held the advantage that few viewers would ever know the difference!

Durand's final "Letter on Landscape," published in *The Crayon* of June 6, 1855, examined "the conventional distinctions of Idealism and Realism, together with the action of the imagination with them."¹⁶ Keeping in mind Stanley's composition of the same year, the reader may approach Durand's question, "What is Idealism?" His description of an ideal work is "that picture . . . whose component parts are representative of the utmost perfection of Nature, whether with respect to beauty or other considerations of fitness in the objects represented."¹⁷ Realism, on the other hand, "must consist in the acceptance of ordinary forms and combinations as found . . . the term Realism signifies little else than a disciplinary stage of Idealism."¹⁸ Durand's thesis strikes to the very heart of Stanley's growth in landscape subjects, from a factual painter in 1846 to a Hudson River disciple in 1855, and can be demonstrated in no better way than in his two versions of *Chain of Spires Along the Gila*.



Notes

¹*Daily National Intelligencer*, January 25, 1865, p. 3.

²Quoted in Jessie Poesch, *Titian Ramsay Peale 1799-1885 and His Journal of the Wilkes Expedition* (Philadelphia, 1961), p. 24.

³*Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁴Barbara Novak, *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century: Realism, Idealism and the American Experience* (New York, 1969), p. 61.

⁵Quoted in Novak, *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁷William Emory, *Notes of a Military Reconnoissance from Fort Leavenworth, in Missouri, to San Diego, in California, Including Parts of the Arkansas, Del Norte, and Gila Rivers* (Washington, 1848), p. 79.

⁸In addition, upon receipt of Stanley's Indian Gallery at the Smithsonian Institution in 1852, the *Daily National Intelligencer* of February 23 singles out four paintings from the total collection, two of which were Arizona subjects. Special attention was paid *View on the Gila* (1851, destroyed) as "that ravishing view on the Gila, disclosing an order of the vegetable kingdom and a style of geology as different from what prevail in our region of the continent as if they were the belongings to some other planet."

⁹Asher B. Durand, "Letters on Landscape," Number I, *The Crayon*, January 3, 1855 (reprinted New York, 1970), pp. 1 and 2.

¹⁰Asher B. Durand, "Letters on Landscape," Number II, *The Crayon*, January 17, 1855 (reprinted New York, 1970), p. 34.

¹¹Asher B. Durand, "Letters on Landscape," Number V, *The Crayon*, March 7, 1855 (reprinted New York, 1970), p. 186.

¹²Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (New York, 1950), p. 138.

¹³Henry Smith Turner, *The Original Journals of Henry Smith Turner with Stephen Watts Kearny to New Mexico and California*, 1846, edited by Dwight L. Clarke (Norman, 1966), pp. 100 and 101.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 106.

¹⁵A. R. Johnston's Journal was published as an appendix to Emory, *op. cit.*, p. 594.

¹⁶Asher B. Durand, "Letters on Landscape," Number VIII, *The Crayon*, June 6, 1855 (New York, 1970), p. 354. Oddly, Novak does not discuss Durand's definition of idealism and realism in her examination of the topics.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 354.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 354.

Corn Husking by Winslow Homer

by Gerald Eager



Fig. 1. Winslow Homer, *Corn Husking*, 1878, oil on canvas. Oliver B. James Collection of American Art, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona.

There are occasional years when, after spring has leafed and blossomed, a long series of storms and rains destroys one's sense of summer. Suddenly one raises one's eyes to the trees and discovers that autumn has arrived . . . The Civil War shook down the blossoms and blasted the promise of spring. The colours of American civilization abruptly changed. By the time

the war was over, browns had spread everywhere . . . Autumn had come.

Lewis Mumford
The Brown Decades

The seasonal subject matter represented by Winslow Homer (1836-1910) in *Corn Husking*, 1878, from the Arizona State University Collection of American Art (Figure 1), is seen in several other



Fig. 2. Winslow Homer, "Husking Party Finding the Red Ears," *Ballou's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion*, November 28, 1857.

works by Homer. Surveying this subject as it is treated by Homer from its first appearance in 1857 to *Corn Husking* is to follow the strides taken by Homer from young illustrator to mature artist, and to sample the change in the spirit of American art from the pre- to the post-Civil War period.

Winslow Homer's career began with the illustrations for the wood engravings that appeared in *Ballou's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion*, a Boston weekly illustrated magazine. Among the first work done by Homer for *Ballou's Pictorial* was a series which appeared in the November 28, 1857 issue that represented four popular late autumn and early winter entertainments — children playing blindman's buff and sleigh riding, and young adults at a husking party

and playing fox and geese. One illustration from this series, *Husking Party Finding the Red Ears* (Figure 2), relates to the painting in the Arizona State University Collection in the choice of the corn husking subject matter. The early illustration emphasizes an amusing aspect of the subject, showing young men who search for and discover the red ears of corn for which they are rewarded (sometimes) by the young ladies with a kiss.

While employed by *Ballou's Pictorial*, Homer did free lance work for the New York illustrated magazine, *Harper's Weekly*. Homer illustrated the corn husking party theme for *Harper's Weekly* in *Husking the Corn in New England* (Figure 3) which appeared in the November 13, 1858 issue as one of a series of three



Fig. 3. Winslow Homer, "Husking the Corn in New England," *Harper's Weekly*, November 13, 1858.

illustrations all dealing with the late autumn subject of corn husking—bringing home the corn to be husked, the husking party, and a dance after the husking. *Husking the Corn in New England* has twice as many figures as *Husking Party* and *Finding the Red Ears*, and the assortment of anecdotes surrounding the finding of the red ears is not only richer in variety, but also is easier to read because the figures are represented more convincingly and the composition is organized more skillfully.

A second illustration from this series, *Driving Home the Corn* (Figure 4), also places emphasis on amusing anecdote—the little dog peering expectantly into the hollow of the tree stump—and on light hearted romance—the young ladies demurely glancing at the man car-

rying an armload of corn stalks. However, the sense of leisure time entertainment in this illustration is subdued a bit by the field hands at work loading a wagon in the background, and the ox cart hauling the corn stalks in the foreground. In the cart, atop the corn stalks is seated a youthful male figure who, in his profile pose and his connection with the routine chores and not just the pleasant pastimes of the harvest, brings to mind the appearance and activity of the figure in *Corn Husking*.

The seasonal subject of corn husking was illustrated by Homer once again in *The Last Days of Harvest* which appeared in the December 6, 1873 issue of *Harper's Weekly* (Figure 5). When *Ballou's Pictorial* ceased publishing as an illustrated magazine in 1859, Homer moved



Fig. 4. Winslow Homer, "Driving Home the Corn," *Harper's Weekly*, November 13, 1858.

to New York and continued to do illustrations for the wood engravings in *Harper's Weekly* until 1874. During this time, Homer began painting, taking up oils in 1861 and watercolor in 1873, and many of Homer's illustrations for *Harper's Weekly* are closely related to his paintings of the period. It seems likely that an important factor contributing to the growth of Homer's art was the exchange of ideas in both imagery and execution that took place between illustration and painting. In any event, the frequent interrelationship of illustration and painting in Homer's work is exemplified by the dependence of Arizona State's *Corn Husking* on *The Last Days of Harvest*.

The Last Days of Harvest is not an assemblage of separate anecdotes that the viewer reads, as were Homer's ear-

lier illustrations, but a single experience that the viewer shares. The theme of entertainment and the mood of romance that were uppermost in *Driving Home the Corn* are absent from *The Last Days of Harvest*, and the routine tasks of farm life that existed at the edges and in the background of *Driving Home the Corn* are brought front and center. The men pitching pumpkins into a wagon in the middle of the scene and the boys husking corn in the foreground appear as unselfconsciously accepting of the job at hand as are the horses hitched to the wagon—and seemingly are no more thinking of husking parties or finding red ears than are the pumpkins in the field.

Homer has selected the figure of the boy at the right in *The Last Days of Har-*



Fig. 5. Winslow Homer, "The Last Days of Harvest," *Harper's Weekly*, December 6, 1873.

vest to be the focus of *Corn Husking*, moving him to the center of the composition and stabilizing his position by placing two pyramidal stacks of corn behind him. The landscape, however, is equally the center of attention in *Corn Husking*, from the corn shucks and the stubble of the corn stalks in the foreground, through the field of pumpkins, to the row of trees behind the fence and the overcast sky in the background. The compositional structure of *Corn Husking*, which locks the figure in the landscape, and the thematic concept of this painting, which links the activity of the figure to the forces of nature, are ideas which will occupy Homer in his major works in the decades to come.

In composition and concept, as well as in the liquid look of the painted surface,

Corn Husking is closely related to Homer's watercolor of the same year, *The Pumpkin Patch—Harvest Scene* (Figure 6). In the right center of this work a group of boys, encircled by three stacks of corn stalks, shuck corn. Another boy in the left center, bracketed by two stacks of corn stalks, carries a large pumpkin through the stumps of corn stalks toward the right. This boy carrying the pumpkin brings to mind the man gathering pumpkins in a field of harvested corn in Homer's illustration for the August issue of *Scribner's Monthly*, *Pumpkins Among the Corn*, also of 1878 (Figure 7). And often the children in Homer's illustrations and paintings of the 1870's are shown engaged in light chores or pastimes that forecast the occupations of the adults represented in Homer's later



work. Picking berries, gathering nuts, hunting for eggs, fishing for suckers, digging clams—and husking corn—are preparation for the tasks which children will be responsible for as the fishermen (and fishermen's wives), the huntsmen, lumbermen—and the farmers that the children will grow up to become.

Winslow Homer's first entertaining representation of the autumn corn husking subject, *Husking Party Finding the Red Ears*, depicts young adults frolicking like the children playing blindman's buff or sleigh riding in the companion works from this early series of illustrations. Homer's *Corn Husking* describes a boy, poised near the edge of manhood, working like a grownup in an autumn landscape that marks the end of summertime and suggests the winter to come. It fixes for somber reflection an instant in the swift passage of childhood and a moment in the inexorable course of the seasons.



Fig. 6. Winslow Homer, *The Pumpkin Patch—Harvest Scene*, 1878. Collection of the Canajoharie Library and Art Gallery.

Fig. 7. Winslow Homer, "Pumpkins Among the Corn," *Scribner's Monthly*, August, 1878.

A Plate from the Meissen Swan Service in the Phoenix Art Museum

by Barbara Nachtigall

Recently, the Phoenix Art Museum acquired a plate¹ made at the Royal Porcelain Manufactory at Meissen in the late 1730's as part of an armorial service for Heinrich, Graf von Brühl, the factory's director.² This plate is the work of Johann Joachim Kändler, chief modeler at the Meissen factory, and the service of which it is a part is without doubt the crowning achievement of porcelain tableware with molded decoration.

The plate's underlying shape is that of a shell, suggested by the scalloped rim and the ground of twisting fluting. The sunken center panel is molded in shallow relief displaying two swans swimming against a background of water grasses and rushes. To the left of the swans, a crane or heron hides behind a clump of rushes while another flies overhead. A pair of shells floats on the water near the base of the relief, and the head of a fish breaks through the waves beneath the swan on the right.

A limited palette of rich enamel colors and gilt has been used sparingly, but to great effect. The painted decoration is confined to the border of the plate and consists of the arms of von Brühl impaling those of his wife, Gräfin von Kolowrat-Krakowski, and small sprays of *indianische Blumen*.³ The scalloped rim has been traced with delicate gold edging.

The museum's plate was originally conceived as a single element in a larger entity, the spectacular Swan Service, cre-

ated at the Royal Meissen factory between 1737 and 1741. The service acquired its name in the nineteenth century, inspired no doubt by the swan motif which prevails throughout. Though the swan is the most prominent motif, the molded decoration of the service is unified by a theme of flora, fauna, and mythology of water, and within this unifying theme there is a great variety of forms, including dolphins, river gods, nymphs, sirens, nereids, shells, masks and scrolls. Water was a fashionable theme in these early days of the Rococo, and the overall aquatic theme of the service is a reference to the name Brühl, which means "marshy place." The marsh scene on the Phoenix plate is derived from an engraving in a travel book published by Leonhard Buggels in Nuremberg in 1700.⁴

One of the most distinctive features of the Swan Service was its size. It was a dinner, tea, coffee, and chocolate service for one hundred people and comprised at least 2,200 individual items. Production of the Swan Service took place during the early stages of the Rococo age, at which time the use of a table service with a harmonious design reached its peak. The well-laid table stood then in its full glory as a single composition, a work of art in which each individual element played its part.⁵

The Swan Service is probably the single most important work produced at



Fig. 1. *Plate, Swan Service*, German, Meissen, c. 1738, hard paste porcelain. Accession number 79/141. Collection of the Phoenix Art Museum.

the Meissen porcelain factory, and the Phoenix plate which belongs to it is one of the finest objects produced by Johann Joachim Kändler. The molded relief which covers the entire surface of the plate and the restrained use of painted decoration were radical departures from the previous handling of such surfaces at

Meissen. Up to that time, painted designs had been the most prominent feature of surface decoration, while modeling had been used infrequently, if at all.

The Swan Service marks the ultimate triumph of the *Modelmeister*, Kändler, over Johann Gregor Höroldt, the director of the painters. No longer would the



Fig. 2. *Plate, Swan Service, (back).*

modelers simply be expected to provide a flat surface on which the painters could display their skills. The modeled surface now had decorative qualities all its own, forcing the painted decoration into a secondary role.

The painted decoration, as exemplified by the Phoenix plate, is completely subordinate to the modeling. White accented by gold, a prevalent feature of Rococo interior decoration, is echoed in the meticulous application of the gilding

to the pure white surface of the body. Enamel colors used with great restraint further enhance the lustrous translucent surface of the porcelain.

Trained as a sculptor, Kändler was also able to assimilate features from the work of contemporary French and German silversmiths.⁶ In so doing, he was the first to recognize the wide range of possibilities available, and he created a completely new vocabulary for porcelain. For the first time a molded relief covers

the entire surface of the plate so that the plasticity and whiteness of the paste, as well as the brilliance of the glaze, are exploited to their utmost. With the modeled design of the plates of the Swan Service, as typified by the Phoenix plate, Kändler has liberated porcelain tableware from the domination of the oriental patterns popular in the early Meissen services, as well as from its almost total reliance on painted decoration.

Kändler worked on the Swan Service for four years, from 1737 to 1741, and at no time in his career was he ever so totally involved in a project, down to the smallest details. Those pieces which he did not actually create, he thoroughly supervised in development and production.⁷ He also supervised the painted decoration himself, considering it an integral part of the entire conception.

The Swan Service not only marks the turning point in the ascendancy of modeled over painted decoration, as mentioned above, but also marks the beginning of the production of porcelain wares in the Rococo style, a style which prevailed at Meissen for most of the eighteenth century. Though this monumental project was extremely costly, it undoubtedly stimulated the artistic vitality of the factory and inspired many new ideas which made Meissen the leading porcelain factory in Europe until the outbreak of the Seven Years War (1756-1763). Further, this undertaking established Kändler as the predominant figure at Meissen, until his death in 1775.

Of the original two thousand plus pieces of the Swan Service, at least 1400 are believed to be still extant. In the United States alone, there are examples of Swan Service pieces at the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Toledo Museum of Art, and the Los Angeles

County Museum of Art. The Phoenix Art Museum is indeed fortunate to possess one of the most elegant pieces of this magnificent service.



Notes

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Donald Rabiner, under whose guidance the paper from which this article was drawn was written.

¹Purchased from Christie's New York, on 30 November 1979; one of two dinner plates formerly in the collection of Mrs. John W. Christner of Dallas, Texas.

²Immediately upon the death of Augustus the Strong in 1733, von Brühl began to oversee the Meissen factory and remained its director until his own death in 1763.

³*Indianische Blumen* are the formalized, oriental flowers, derived from the Japanese Kakiemon-style decoration, which were used at the Meissen factory until about 1740. See: George Savage, *18th Century German Porcelain* (New York, 1958), pp. 69-71.

⁴George Savage and Harold Newman, *An Illustrated Dictionary of Ceramics* (New York, 1974), p. 280.

⁵Carl Hernmarck, *The Art of the European Silversmith 1430-1830* (London, 1977), p. 178.

⁶William B. Honey, *Dresden China* (New York, 1946), p. 99.

⁷Otto Walcha, *Meissner Porzellan* (Dresden, 1973), pp. 107-108.

Death in the Darkroom: Poisonings of Nineteenth Century Photographers

by Bill Jay

The pages of 19th century photographic periodicals are littered with the tales of hardships and dangers endured by early photographers. Many did not endure—they were defeated or killed by their insatiable need for pictures. Photographers fell off mountains and buildings while “stepping back” for a better view; they were attacked by brigands, scalped by Indians, pursued by robbers, and harassed by “heathens” of every color in practically every country. They were charged by bulls, elephants, and rhinoceroses; mauled by lions and tigers; attacked by alligators and wild dogs. They were shipwrecked at sea and fought for survival in jungles, deserts, and blizzards, and faced battles with armed and irate natives. They faced bullets, deadly snakes, swarms of insects, jealous husbands, and angry customers. They resourcefully reset and splinted their own broken limbs while alone in the wilderness, and turned tragedy into vaudeville by confounding hostile natives with the ‘magic’ of photography. The above list could be endless and it is not a list of fictional possibilities; each case of hardship, tragedy, or survival refers to a specific event in the life of a 19th century photographer. In pursuit of pictures, photographers bravely and recklessly risked, and sometimes lost, their lives—and they did so with such frequency that the cumulative effect of their reports is to understand an aspect of

early photography which is often missing from the history books. This awareness is enhanced by the understanding that the photographic process itself was fraught with difficulties and hardships. It is one thing to be in peril and yet another to be so when encumbered by all the paraphernalia of the wet-plate process. For good reason, this can be called the “Heroic Age” of photography.

The dangers did not diminish with the relief of transporting the hard-won glass plates back to the photographer’s home base (in itself, no mean feat). The darkroom could be a deadly place even for those who never ventured outside the studio. And the dangers of processing and printing are all the more insidious for being unseen and often unrealised, until it was too late. A poison arrow from a band of attacking natives and a poison gas in the comfort of a private darkroom might have the same ultimate effect, but there is a sense of injustice in the fact that danger exists in a personal space. At least the photographer-adventurer had confronted and accepted the risks (and it was these risks which might have spurred his need to travel). A feeling of bewilderment suffuses many of the reports of death in the darkroom, particularly if the cause was sudden and unseen.

It is no exaggeration to state that 19th century photographers ran as many risks in the dark as they did in the act of finding and taking pictures. Practically every

week the photographic press reported an accident or death of a photographer which occurred during his chemical manipulations. The student or historian, reading these journals page by page, cannot escape the strong impression that darkroom health hazards were rife and real.

An omnipresent danger in the darkroom was the risk of poisoning. Throughout the 19th century the photographic process demanded that photographers employ exceedingly dangerous chemicals. Poisonings were so frequent that rarely a week went by without a report of a death in the photographic press. Editorial writers and their expert correspondents incessantly implored their readers to be careful, to observe proper precautions, to understand probable results of inhaling, ingesting or simply handling their chemicals.

One of the most useful, if frightening, contributions was published in *The British Journal of Photography* in 1860, "A Table of Antidotes to the Poisoning Bodies used in Photography (Drawn up from the Most Recent Medical Authorities), by Samuel Highley, F.G.S., F.C.S., etc. Late Lecturer on Medical Mineralogy at the Saint George's School of Medicine, Grosvenor Place, London."¹ Highley prefaces his table with the remark that "the list of deadly poisons employed in photography make (sic) a formidable array" and gives a few preventative tips, such as "During the preparation of gun cotton care should be taken not to inhale the fumes." He then advises his readers how to act in the case of poisoning. He lists twenty-one poisons with their symptoms and recommended treatment. What is frightening about the treatment is that a sense of hopelessness suffuses the remarks. "No antidote" is the sparse conclusion or try "an emetic of mustard in warm water."

Highley was right to emphasize that "prevention is better than cure," particularly when no cure was known. Editorial writers continued to stress the dangers and plead for precaution. Typical of these editorials was one published in *The Photographic News* during the same year,

Perhaps there are few professions connected with the arts of peace, which involve the daily use of so many dangerous and destructive agents as photography. Corrosive acids, caustic alkalis, and deadly salts are its constant familiars. Whilst the dangers consequent upon the indiscriminate sale of poisons have been for some years past constantly impressed upon the public mind, and ingenuity has been taxed to the utmost to enact precautions, and provide bottles of different colours and shapes in which poisons should be vended, the photographer has been able to purchase, unchallenged, cyanide of potassium, bichloride of mercury, and other equally fatal agents sufficient to poison a colony.²

The frequent editorials warning photographers of the danger of their chemicals had a predictable outcome. Photographers, especially latent hypochondriacs, became aware of symptoms and were able to blame them on their darkroom processes. Naturally, they wrote long letters to the magazines asking for advice. Typical is the letter from "a sufferer" who listed the following symptoms: "Attacks of biliousness; spasms in the stomach; very acid stomach, and general indigestion." He complained that his life had been a misery for the past nine years: "ever since I began photography."³ The editor recommended more exercise, regular eating habits, well-ventilated darkrooms and avoidance of taxing the nervous system.

This editorial on "Photography and

Disease” in *The Photographic News* led to an unusually long series of correspondence. Evidently it had touched a highly sensitive spot in the lives of many photographers. The letters of complaints about symptoms and possible cures of illnesses continued in the journal from February to May 1868. These correspondence columns are well worth reading, giving a cumulative impression that, hypochondriacs apart, this was an issue which seriously concerned the professional photographer. Photography as an occupation was, and was known to be, an unhealthy pursuit. It is impossible to quote many of these letters at length but it is worth examining one example as being typical of the rest. The correspondent was J. M. Burgess, who was “well-known in the profession as a skillful photographer of much art and culture—and especially as the inventor of the eburneum process.”⁴ Burgess neatly summed up the problems of health hazards in the darkroom:

My own opinion is, that the ill effects cannot be attributed to any one chemical agency, but that they are the result of breathing for several hours every day an atmosphere contaminated with noxious fumes arising from the colloid, developer, and, in some cases cyanide, to which may probably be added, absorption of poisonous substances through the skin, when the system has been already debilitated from over work, both of mind and body.⁵

Burgess then referred to the editorial’s mention of “overtaxing the nervous system.” He felt convinced that photographers were particularly prone to stress arising out of their work—and the strain often resulted in severe physical symptoms:

There is a very great temptation to this in the case of any one who is very fond of the pursuit, and has also to make his

living by it. He is never satisfied with the results he obtains; each improvement only makes him more anxious for higher attainments; hence many hours are spent in thought and experiment; and then, when rest is required, there is the work which must be done. The result is that exercise in fresh air is neglected, and work continued to unreasonable hours. Meanwhile, the excitement and pleasure afforded by the pursuit blind him to any symptoms of injury to the constitution until it is almost too late for recovery; too late, at least, for care and exercise alone to effect a cure. Indigestion, wind spasms, violent colic pains, extreme nervousness, and something like local paralysis are induced, until the sufferer is brought to such a state of weakness as to be unable to digest any solid food. So violent at times is the pain, that the sufferer is convulsed, and symptoms not unlike poisoning by strychnine produced. The face assumes a leaden hue, the limbs become rigid, with the hands tightly clenched, and the back arched, so that the body rests on the back of the head and heels. But is it possible that this can in any way result from the practice of photography?

Burgess answers the question by declaring that his symptoms disappear if he takes a break from photography and has a few weeks holiday in the country, and he therefore concludes that there is a direct link between his illness and his work. This becomes all the more poignant in light of the fact that Burgess died less than five years later—at the age of 31.

A more facetious letter was signed “Hypochondriac” and he reiterated the symptoms of photography-related illnesses, and added a new one—copious bleeding of the nose. This was due, he said, to “my face coming into somewhat rude contact with the hand of a vulgar

boor, whom I endeavored to eject from my angle of view, persuasion having failed."⁶

With this single exception all the letters in this series of correspondence took the matter of health hazards in the darkroom exceedingly seriously. Most of the solutions were of the common-sense variety—better ventilated darkrooms, the use of tongs in dangerous chemical baths, walks in the fresh air, regular meals, frequent washing of the hands, and “to sponge daily with cold water the whole surface of the body”—but a few writers had more specific antidotes to noxious chemicals. A Dr. Napias recommended that photographers drink lemonade or seltzer water “which tend to annihilate the effects of the ether fumes.” On arriving home the photographer should down a glass of claret laced with quinine or drink sugar water to which is added a few drops of ammonia or vinegar.⁷

Approaching the problem of poisons from another direction, a Bill was introduced in the House of Lords at the end of this series of correspondence which attempted to restrict the retailing of dangerous substances to registered pharmaceutical chemists. All poisons had to be distinctly labelled. A list of chemicals was drawn up which constituted the poison substances covered by the Bill, most of which were commonly employed by photographers.⁸

During the 1860s and 1870s, there was a good deal of confusion about photographically-related illnesses. No statistical evidence or empirical proof at that time could associate a specific disease with a particular photographic operation. Both Oscar Rejlander and T. R. Williams died from diabetes.⁹ A photographic magazine seems to imply that photography may have contributed to

their illnesses and deaths. As late as 1895 a photographic magazine noted that “the frequent appearance of diabetes among photographers is . . . remarkable.”¹⁰ Camille Silvy was dangerously sick at one point during his career due to cyanide absorbed through a small cut in his finger while his hands were in the fixing bath. Thomas Sutton attributed “fits of deafness, followed with lethargic sleep”¹¹ to the inhalation of ether fumes from the collodion process. Throughout the 1870s photographers continued to write long letters to the photographic press listing symptoms which they attributed to their photographic work, giving fellow photographers rules and regulations for healthy lives, and objecting to all the fuss about health hazards. J. H. Fitzgibbon boasted that he had been in the business for thirty-six years, twenty of which were spent in the darkroom:

I suppose I have inhaled enough mercury to make a shining mirror for others to reflect from, and if it could be possible for a chemist to extract the chemicals and compounds that have made acquaintance with the interior of my darkroom, he might get enough ether, alcohol, cyanide, iodine, gold, silver, bichloride of mercury, bromides and chlorides, acids, and other chemicals of minor note, to open a small stock depot at a small cost.¹²

Fitzgibbon challenged anyone to doubt his robust health, by setting in front of him “a plate of good old English roast beef, and a slice of plum pudding thrown in.”

In spite of Fitzgibbon’s assurances, the vast majority of 19th century photographers were understandably worried about the dangerous chemicals which they daily handled. The journals regularly listed photographic poisons and their suggested antidotes. The following are

typical: "Photographic Poisons and Their Antidotes," *The Photographic News*, 4 May 1877, pp. 207-208; "Poisonous Qualities of some Photographic Chemicals," *The Photographic Times*, Vol. X. 1880, pp. 77-79; "Dangerous Photographic Chemicals," *The Amateur Photographer*, 21 December 1908, pp. 605-606.

"It would seem," said *The Photographic Review of Reviews* in 1895, "that the average dangers which the ordinary soldier has to encounter are not nearly so great as those which beset the photographer's path. It is a wonder that any of us manage to live through it all . . ."¹³

It is worth listing a few of these chemicals, in common use in 19th century photography, which presented such dangers in the darkroom.

During the early years of the medium, the daguerreotype process necessitated the fuming of the plate over heated mercury. And mercury vapor is a deadly poison. As far back as 1797 it was known that small traces of mercury, from, say, a broken thermometer, were enough to kill all plants in a greenhouse. The problem was confounded drastically when daguerreotypists breathed the fumes of mercury placed over a spirit lamp. The photographic magazines attributed many cases of bad health among daguerreotypists to this essential practice. All they could recommend was that the darkroom was well ventilated. Even then, some photographers succumbed. Jeremiah Gurney, one of America's foremost daguerreotypists, was close to death in 1852 due to the effects of mercury. "He has suffered the most acute pain, and been unable to move his limbs; his legs and arms have been swollen to nearly double the ordinary size."¹⁴ The magazine which reported Gurney's illness stated that this was the fourth case of this nature which it had known in the

previous two years. Photographers were warned not to allow any mercury to spill on the floor as "many cases of bad health have been traced to the presence of small quantities of mercury in the cracks in the floor . . ."¹⁵

Even though mercury poisoning was the most likely cause of illness among daguerreotypists, the fumes of iodine and bromine were far from harmless. Even the copper plates on which the daguerreotype silver image was formed could be dangerous. In 1850 a photographer cut his hand while handling a copper plate—the resultant poisoning necessitated amputation of the hand.¹⁶

By the mid-1850s, the daguerreotype process had been largely superceded by the collodion process. But even here mercury poisoning was common. Salts of mercury, particularly the bichloride which was called "corrosive sublimate," were "to be found in every photographic studio, being commonly employed for intensifying negatives."¹⁷ Fortunately the wet-plate photographer, who drank his intensifier in error, had a convenient antidote to hand. The recommended treatment for this virulent poison was albumen, or whites of egg, used in the production of his printing paper.

As late as 1901, when the collodion process had given way to the dry-plate, mercury poisonings still took place. In that year, one of Lafayette's assistants drank mercury intensifier by mistake. Even though he was immediately rushed to hospital he died a few days later.¹⁸

The explosive and flammable dangers of ether vapour have already been mentioned. But an equally real, if less dramatic, health hazard existed for the photographer who breathed ether fumes from his collodion in a hot, cramped and often ill-ventilated darkroom or tent.

Alcohol fumes were also a source of

trouble in the same situation. *The Photographic News* of 1865 published a long article on the toxic effects of these chemicals.¹⁹ The dangers listed were so gruesome that it is a wonder that any photographer ever again practised the collodion process. The only consolation was that the article admitted photographers could become tolerant of the poisonous atmosphere in their dark-rooms through habit. If the plate-coating assistant was rendered unconscious, magazines recommended “sprinkling with water.”

Collodion was not only explosive and the source of dangerous ether and alcohol fumes, it also required two other major ingredients for photographic use, both of which were potential health hazards: potassium iodide and silver nitrate.

In 1861 two year old Henry Giblett died after swallowing a bottle of potassium iodide which he found in the van of an itinerant photographer while his guardians were having their portraits taken.²⁰ A similar case occurred in 1870. A photographer had visited the Stoke-on-Trent Workhouse in order to photograph its governor, Mr. M’Nish, and his family. He left behind a bottle of potassium iodide. When M’Nish asked for a glass of gin, his wife poured from the wrong bottle—and her husband died an hour later.²¹ In both these cases the victims were “innocent,” unaware of the nature of the liquid which they drank. Photographers would be less likely to make such a mistake and, even if they did, they would be more likely to know the recommended treatment: drinking albumen, starch paste or milk of magnesia. The effects might have been unpleasant but rarely fatal.

It was also true that silver nitrate poisoning rarely killed photographers; it

was not a virulent enough poison to be ingested by the suicidal and its effects could be counteracted to some degree, in the event of accidental swallowing, by the same antidotes recommended for potassium iodide or a good dose of salt water. The fatalities attributed to silver nitrate were usually to the non-photographer. A typical story, with comic undertones, concerned the Abbé Salvy, vicar of a small town in France, who was an enthusiastic photographer. He was transferred to a new parish and asked three of the locals to help move his furniture. The Abbé placed some bottles of cider in the wagon to refresh the men on their journey. He also placed in the wagon a smaller bottle, well-covered and tied up, which he told them they must not touch. The day was hot . . .

“That must be right good stuff, which the *curé* told us not to touch.” “No doubt,” replied another, “it must be far better than the cider.” “Let us try it,” said all three. The bottle was produced. The man who took a good sup said it was not good. “See,” said he, handing it to one of his companions. The second tried, and pronounced a still more unfavorable opinion. “As it is so bad,” said the third, “I shall not have any; let us put back the bottle.” Scarcely was this done than the two who partook of the liquid fell on the ground writhing in dreadful agony. In a short time both were dead.²²

As silver nitrate in the presence of a reducing agent blackens on exposure to light, it had a few bizarre uses. A popular story among 19th century photographers was the image-seeking adventurer in Africa who was captured by natives. The situation looked dangerous. But with admirable presence of mind, he noticed that the chief had a grey beard. He washed the chief’s hair in “water,” which was in fact silver nitrate, and in a

few minutes the beard was black again. The photographer was hailed as a miracle-worker and set free. The blackening effect of silver nitrate could be used for less salutary reasons. M. Thiebaut was a photographer—and a ladies' man. His wife objected to his adulterous liaisons, and her actions led to a scandalous court case in Versailles in 1860. "It is a long tale of love, jealousy, infidelity, and vengeance," said a reporter.²³ The wife was charged with disfiguring her husband's mistress with photographic chemicals. She admitted that she had been in the habit of carrying a bottle of silver nitrate in her pocket for the purpose of disfiguring her rival. When she learnt that this would blacken the skin, but little more, she switched to a more serious solution. "She subsequently threw a quantity of sulphuric acid over her, and beat her severely with a stick."

Not everyone considered photographic chemicals to be entirely harmful. The French photographer Eugene Ogier claimed that the inhalation of fumes in his darkroom had cured him of pulmonary consumption.²⁴ F. B. Gage, an experienced American photographer, claimed that silver nitrate had cured his chronic bronchitis.²⁵ This solution was applied to his throat with a brush. Although this relieved the pain, after a few days the coagulated surface would slough off and the inflammation would begin again. The answer, he found, was to coat the throat with silver iodide—which not only gave temporary relief but the iodine began to cure the inflamed membranes of the throat.

Even the sulphuric acid, used by Mrs. Thiebaut to disfigure her rival, had its medicinal uses. *The Photographic Times* of 1882 asserted that sulphuric acid, in a dilute solution, could cure dysentery, hemorrhages, fevers, ulcerations of the

throat, chronic inflammation of the joints, rheumatism, and skin diseases.²⁶ It was also useful as a hair invigorator and to remove dandruff as well as prevent undue perspiration of the feet.

Most of the 19th century articles on photographic chemicals were not so hopeful. Death seemed to be an ever-present concomitant of being a photographer. Even the commonly used developer, pyrogallic acid, was a deadly poison. In spite of warnings in more than 30 years of publications, photographers were still susceptible to silly accidents. In 1891 E. C. Tweedy, a well known photographer of Baltimore, met his death by mistaking in the dim light of his darkroom a solution of pyrogallic acid for a glass of whiskey and water. He knew the danger he was in, and immediately took a powerful emetic. To no avail. "In three days he was a corpse."²⁷ A few years later, Dr. Browning's wife mistook pyrogallic acid for a bottle of medicine. She, too, died.²⁸

The photographic journals published more than the usual number of articles warning photographers of the poisonous qualities of bichromates. Potassium bichromate was in "general use in the every day practice of many photographers," mainly in such processes as gum printing, carbon-printing, and practically all photo-mechanical reproductions. As little as fifteen grains of potassium bichromate is enough to cause serious illness. The major problem, however, was not that the solution was ingested, although that too often happened by accident, but that the chemical was inhaled from the polluted air and absorbed through cuts and abrasions in the skin. A fascinating article on the subject was an editorial in an 1864 issue of *The Photographic News*.²⁹ Almost the same article was used in *The Amateur*

Photographer of 1901. Very little had changed in nearly 30 years. Both articles asserted that snuff-takers seemed immune from potassium bichromate poisoning through breathing molecules of the chemical in the air. Both warned photographers about cuts in the skin when placing hands in solutions. The warnings were obviously necessary as carbon printers were particularly susceptible to what was known as “bichromate disease.”³⁰ A long and detailed article entitled “Poisoning by salts of chromium,” asserts that “cases of poisoning by compounds of chromium are not rare,” and details many specific case histories from eminent medical authorities.³¹ Again, there were the odd instances of death due to drinking the chemical in mistake for more refreshing beverages. Thomas Crump, of Scarborough, died in this manner in 1870.³²

The list of photographic chemicals which caused sufferings and deaths in 19th century photography could be extended almost indefinitely, but there is one last substance which must be mentioned as it accounted for more deaths among photographers than all the other hazards combined: potassium cyanide. This deadly poison, which is particularly noxious in that death occurs so rapidly, was a stock chemical in every photographer’s darkroom. It had two main purposes—as a fixer for negatives, and as a stain remover for spots and blemishes from drippings of silver nitrate.

What is so intriguing, and ironic, is that a harmless fixing salt (sodium thiosulphate, or “hypo”) had been employed from the earliest years of the medium. There seemed to be no good reason why photographers would subject themselves to such a virulent poison as potassium cyanide when an equally efficient and harmless alternative was available.

The editorial writer of *The Photographic Times* in 1880 was equally bemused:

Many people are puzzled, and with good reason, to account for the habit into which numerous photographers have got of using the poisonous cyanide of potassium as a fixing agent, when the innocuous hyposulphite of soda answers the purpose, not merely equally as well but in most instances a good deal better.³³

It is difficult, if not impossible, to discover where this practice originated, or why. An early textbook by J. B. Hockin, *Practical Hints on Photography: its Chemistry and its Manipulations*, published in 1860, asserts the superiority of potassium cyanide over hypo, and claims the use of cyanide is a “necessity” in the production of positives (such as ambrotypes). He does not give any reasons for these recommendations—and worse, declares that cyanide is only injurious if imbibed. In fact, he declares that its odour is “by no means unpleasant” and “not at all injurious.” This was obvious nonsense, but Hockin’s book may be one of the reasons for the continued use of cyanide over hypo. *Napier’s Metallurgy* outlined the symptoms of poisoning from inhaling fumes from potassium cyanide:

Poisoning by cyanide gives to the mouth a saline taste and scarcity of saliva; the saliva secreted is frothy; the nose becomes dry and itchy, and small pimples are found within the nostrils, which are very painful. Then follows a general languor of body, disinclination to take food, and a want of relish. After being in this state for some time, there follows a benumbing sensation in the head, with pains, not acute, shooting along the brow; the head feels as a heavy mass, without any individuality in its operations. Then there is bleeding at the nose in the mornings when

newly out of bed; after that comes giddiness; objects are seen flitting before the eyes, and momentary feelings as of the earth lifting up, and then leaving the feet, so as to cause a stagger. This is accompanied with feelings of terror, gloomy apprehensions, and irritability of temper. Then follows a rushing of blood to the head; the rush is felt behind the ears with a kind of hissing noise, causing severe pain and blindness; this passes off in a few seconds, leaving a giddiness which lasts for several minutes. In our own case the rushing of blood was without pain, but attended with instant blindness, and then followed with giddiness. For months afterwards a dimness remained, as if a mist intervened between us and the objects looked at; it was always worse towards evening, when we grew very languid and inclined to sleep. Then we rose comparatively well in the morning, yet we were restless, our stomach was acid, visage pale, features sharp, eyes sunk in the head, and round them dark in colour; these effects were slowly developed. Our experience was nearly three years. We have been thus particular in detailing these effects as a warning to all using cyanide; but we have no doubt that, in lofty rooms, airy and well ventilated, these effects would not be felt. Employers would do well to look to this matter; and amateurs, who only use a small solution in a tumbler, should not, as the custom sometimes is, keep it in their bedrooms; the practice is decidedly dangerous.³⁴

Although photographers occasionally complained about one or more of these symptoms which they attributed to working in a darkroom with potassium cyanide, far more serious effects were caused by absorbing the cyanide through cuts or abrasions in the skin while fixing plates. The photographic press occasionally reported the suffer-

ings of a photographer whose hands swelled up and were covered in open wounds from this cause. The only solution was amputation. The problem was so real that as early as 1857 John Sang invented a handle for collodion plates in order that the photographers' hands need never be in contact with the cyanide solution.³⁵ In the same year, one of the major suppliers of cyanide to photographers, Harvey and Reynolds, of Leeds, issued a circular to all their customers "respecting the danger attendant upon the incautious use of cyanide of potassium amongst photographers."³⁶

In spite of innumerable warnings, from the 1850s to the early years of this century, photographers continued to die from cyanide poisoning — either by drinking the solution in mistake for some other beverage, or as a quick and certain method of suicide. Only a few examples can be given, from the scores of cases reported in the photographic press.

In 1855 G. W. Greatrex narrowly escaped death when he made a pot of coffee from water which an assistant had polluted with a cyanide solution. Even though the dilution was considerable, Greatrex was still violently sick. But he guessed the cause, threw away the rest of the coffee and drank the recommended antidotes — iron sulphate, powerful emetics, anything that induced vomiting, inhaling the vapour of ammonia, and cold water "poured from some height in a stream on the naked head, neck, and spine."³⁷ Green tea was also recommended.

These antidotes might well be administered in cases involving extremely dilute solutions. Otherwise, the effect of cyanide is so sudden that nothing will help. This was true in the case of a German photographer in 1860. He was

cleaning a glass plate, with difficulty. He got angry. He “became suddenly transported with passion, and, in his madness, dashed the plate on the floor, and seizing a vessel of cyanide of potassium, poured it down his throat. He dropped as if he was shot, and died in half a minute.”³⁸

In 1865 *The Photographic News*, in reporting two more suicides from cyanide, commented that such deaths are “becoming lamentably common.”³⁹ The next month it reported the death of G. Cameron Hodgson, a photographer from Sunderland, who sipped his fixer after becoming maudlin drunk.⁴⁰ Within a few months it asked: “When will cyanide be banished from the photographer’s laboratory? Every week we hear of somebody being either maimed, paralysed, or killed by this deadly, and, to a photographer, totally unnecessary poison.”⁴¹

Ignorance and carelessness continued. A photographer reported that he visited a druggist to buy some cyanide and the chemist found one lump was too large to enter the neck of the bottle—so he bit it into two pieces! “Nothing but very prompt measures saved his life.”⁴² Carelessness caused the deaths of innocents, often the children of photographers. A photographer named Kenneth, of Lochee, Scotland, saw his child drink from a phial of cyanide but he was too late to save it.⁴³ Other deaths of children from cyanide continued to be reported with alarming frequency.⁴⁴

In 1866, Frederick Poller, aged 28, died from inhaling hot potassium cyanide fumes⁴⁵; in 1867 a photographer’s lady assistant committed suicide by drinking the fixer⁴⁶; in 1868 a lady poisoned herself in New York by taking a dose of cyanide in mistake for rhubarb(!)⁴⁷; in 1869, Frederick Guinness died from drinking cyanide in mis-

take for a medicine⁴⁸; in 1870, Elizabeth Lyons committed suicide after a quarrel with her lover, a photographer named Bocock of Liverpool⁴⁹; in 1871, Cordine Gee, daughter of a photographer, in a burst of temper through a trivial domestic quarrel, ran to her father’s darkroom and swallowed cyanide⁵⁰; in 1872, Charles E. Pelton, a young photographer, was eating cloves which laid on the darkroom shelf. He picked up a piece of cyanide by mistake⁵¹. And so on, week after week, year after year. The overriding impression from reading so many of these reports is that the suicides were often for trivial reasons and that if cyanide had not been so readily available, the victims would certainly have recovered enough from their grief, spite, rage, or jealousy, to continue life quite happily. The accidents were also wasted lives when such a harmless alternative as hypo was not only available but recommended by many editors.

Magazines constantly affirmed that there was no good reason for potassium cyanide to be used in any photographic darkroom.

This fact makes the death of Professor Fischer, of Czechoslovakia, all the more melancholy. Although he was only twenty-five years of age, he had gained a reputation as being “of the highest eminence in his profession,” and occupied the Chemical Chair at the Prague High School. An ardent experimentalist, he had conceived the idea that the poisonous properties of cyanide could be neutralised without affecting its efficiency as a fixing agent. He mixed his solution in the laboratory in the Gymnasium of Prague, turned to his assistant and said: “Science has now so far advanced as to be even able to render harmless so dangerous an agent as cyanide of potassium.”: With these words he drank the

mixture — and died within minutes “with the most violent and excruciating agonies.”⁵²

There is some suggestion that Fisher might have committed suicide under the guise of a scientific experiment. This seems unlikely, but if true, he was more successful than the photographer satirized in the popular jingle *The Ballad of Billy Baker*.⁵³ In this ballad, sung to the tune “One-horse Shay,” William Baker “*carte-de-visite* taker,” falls in love with one of his sitters, Jemima Jenkins. She will have nothing to do with poor Billy Baker, who decides to take cyanide:

On suicide intent,
To the darkroom then he went;
But instead of cyanide he swallowed
th' hypo.
Although it gave him pain,
He soon got well again,
But never flirted after in his stu-di-o.

The moral was clear: keep bottles properly labelled otherwise when you want to kill yourself you may drink the wrong solution.

When Jemima rejected Billy Baker's love she said: “Take such black paws as those/with heart that's quite as black, for anything I know,” and struck a blow at every 19th century photographer's weak spot. The reason why Billy had “black paws” was that his hands were stained with silver solutions, which, as has been mentioned, turned everything black with which it came into contact. Queen Victoria did not allow photographers to use the wet-plate process in any royal residence, as soon as a dry process became practical, as the silver bath drippings ruined the carpets. The most common method of removing these black marks, from hands and furnishings, was to scrub them with potassium cyanide. Photographers had the habit of rubbing their fingers with solid lumps of cyanide,

at the end of each day's work. Although risky, “photographers do it every day,” claimed *The Photographic News* before reporting the death of a Belgian photographer.⁵⁴ He had no apparent cut on his hands so proceeded to remove the black silver with a lump of cyanide. A little piece of the lump chipped off and pushed under his finger nail where it broke the skin. He died in a few hours.

In spite of constant warnings that cyanide could be absorbed through the skin, photographers continued to use their hands in the solution. Usually, they escaped harm; often they suffered badly. One photographer wrote:

I have not yet been able to resume my work in the chemical room. The last few weeks I have passed at the Springs, trying to extract the poison from my hands, which pain me so much that I have been obliged to keep them constantly in cold water. The first apparent effect of the poison was a feeling of numbness after using cyanide. This would soon pass away by a little friction in rubbing both hands together. I did not even then think of any further injurious effect. After some time this was followed by an eruption on the joints and between the fingers, accompanied by a constant itching sensation. This soon increased, until both hands were covered with watery blistering sores, and the itching pain became so intolerable that no words can describe the torture, which could only be borne by keeping both hands in cold water.⁵⁵

Cyanide sores on the hands were a common complaint of photographers. The recommended treatment was rain-water. Several photographers on both sides of the Atlantic claimed to have been cured by this method. A typical letter reads:

The winter of 1867-68 I had cyanide sores on my hands for several weeks.

My family physician failed to heal them. I then, on going to bed, wrapped my hands in muslin wet in rain-water, and kept them wet all night from a dish by my bed. After three nights' treatment in this way they were well.⁵⁶

Such cures might or might not have worked but it seems strange that photographers continued to expose their hands to the risk of cyanide sores when safer hand cleaning solutions were available. For example, in 1868, M. Carey Lea wrote an article on "Poisoning by External Use of Cyanide of Potassium" in *The Philadelphia Photographer* in which he states "there is no recognised treatment for such troubles." He suggests prevention, by avoiding cyanide to remove silver stains. He recommended a solution of potassium bichromate, 1 part; hydrochloric acid, 2 parts; water, 20 parts. Once this has removed the silver stains, rinse the hands in sodium thiosulphate (hypo) and wash with soap and water.

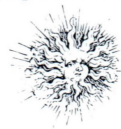
A similar method was recommended in "A Safe Method of Removing Silver Stains from the Skin," in *The Photographic Times* in 1881.⁵⁷

Not everyone agreed that an alternative to cyanide was necessary. E. P. Ogier, for example. He was a writer from St. Heliers', Jersey, who suffered from bronchitis which, he believed, was turning into consumption. His doctor advised more manual labour, so he became a photographer. He not only used cyanide for fixing but also for cleaning his hands, using a particularly strong solution and often rubbing the stubborn stains with a pumice stone. The abrasions absorbed the cyanide: "In a couple of months the serious symptoms with which I had been troubled had passed away, and now for three years I have enjoyed, relatively speaking, perfect health. My chronic bronchitis even, that had troubled me so

long, almost disappeared."⁵⁸ The next week, D. Welch, a photographer from Newry, Ireland, also attributed the relief of his consumption to photography.

But apart from these isolated examples of the beneficial effects of potassium cyanide, the overwhelming mass of evidence condemned the use of this chemical in photographic darkrooms.

Potassium cyanide was not an *essential* ingredient in 19th century photography—yet it accounted for hundreds, and probably thousands of deaths. In many respects it represented a puzzling phenomenon of almost willful masochism—yet it led to small news items which readily bring to the senses the *zeitgeist* of an age. Historians constantly write about and talk about the establishment figures, the rich and famous among 19th century photographers, those whose names regularly appeared in the photographic press. The suicides of failures remind us that there was another, more shadowy and insubstantial, but none the less equally human side of the medium. So, just for the record, let one essay on photographic history mention the name of W. Dickson. In April 1883, he was 40 years old. He was discovered by a policeman on the east side of Calton Hill, near Edinburgh, far from his home town. An envelope was found in one of his pockets. On it was written: "Have no work, no money, no friends and no place to sleep in tonight.—W. Dickson, Photographer, April 12, 1883." Alongside the body was a small bottle of potassium cyanide.⁵⁹



Notes

¹*The British Journal of Photography* (London), 1 June 1860, pp. 160-161.

²*The Photographic News* (London), 19 October 1860, p. 290.

³*The Photographic News*, 28 February 1868, p. 98.

⁴*The Photographic News*, 31 January 1873.

⁵*The Photographic News*, 6 March 1868, p. 117.

⁶*The Photographic News*, 20 March 1868, p. 143.

⁷*The Photographic Times* (London), Vol. IV, 1874, pp. 124-125.

⁸*The Photographic News*, 29 May 1868, p. 263.

⁹*The Photographic News*, 19 February 1875, p. 90.

¹⁰*The Photographic Review of Reviews* (London), January 1895, p. 22.

¹¹*The Photographic News*, 19 September 1876, p. 458.

¹²*The Photographic News*, 16 March 1877, p. 129.

¹³*The Photographic News*, 16 March 1877, p. 129.

¹⁴*Humphrey's Journal* (New York), Vol. IV, 1852, p. 28.

¹⁵*The Photographic News*, 16 August 1867, p. 399.

¹⁶*The Daguerreian Journal* (New York), Vol. 1, 1850, p. 228.

¹⁷*The Photographic News*, 26 January 1877, p. 37.

¹⁸*The Amateur Photographer* (London), 12 July 1901, p. 36.

¹⁹*The Photographic News*, 24 February 1865, pp. 86-88.

²⁰*The Photographic News*, 15 November 1861, p. 550.

²¹*The Photographic News*, 7 January 1870, p. 11.

²²*The Photographic News*, 10 July 1868, p. 335.

²³*The Photographic News*, 7 December 1860, p. 384.

²⁴*The Photographic News*, 2 February 1872, p. 50.

²⁵*Ibid.* pp. 50-51.

²⁶*The Photographic Times* (London), Vol. XII, 1882, pp. 99-100.

²⁷*The Photographic News*, 22 May 1891, p. 384.

²⁸*The Photographic Review*, October 1896, p. 326.

²⁹*The Photographic News*, 24 June 1864.

³⁰*The Amateur Photographer*, 22 March 1901, p. 230.

³¹*The Photographic News*, 16 September 1887, pp. 578-580.

³²*The Photographic News*, 11 March 1870, p. 119.

³³*The Photographic Times*, Vol. X, 1880, p. 17.

³⁴Quoted in *The British Journal of Photography*, 20 December 1867, p. 609.

³⁵*Journal of the Photographical Society* (London), 21 September 1857, pp. 33-34.

³⁶*Journal of the Photographic Society* (London), 21 September 1857, pp. 33-34.

³⁷*The British Journal of Photography*, 1 June 1860, p. 160.

³⁸*The Photographic News*, 9 November 1860, p. 335.

³⁹*The Photographic News*, 17 March 1865, p. 131.

⁴⁰*The Photographic News*, 21 April 1865, p. 192.

⁴¹*The Photographic Journal* (London), 16 November 1865, p. 200.

⁴²*The Photographic Journal*, 16 November 1865, p. 200.

⁴³*The Photographic News*, 1 January 1875, p. 12

⁴⁴For examples: *The Photographic News*, 2 November 1866, p. 527; *The Philadelphia Photographer*, Vol. IV, 1867, p. 403; *The Photographic News*, 22 November 1867, p. 568.

⁴⁵*The Photographic News*, 17 August 1866, p. 388.

⁴⁶*The Photographic News*, 17 May 1867, p. 240.

⁴⁷*The Photographic News*, 3 January 1868, p. 457.

⁴⁸*The Photographic News*, 11 June 1869, p. 288.

⁴⁹*The Photographic News*, 19 August 1870, p. 395.

⁵⁰*The Photographic News*, 8 September 1871, editorial.

⁵¹*The Photographic News*, 21 June 1872, p. 299.

⁵²*The Photographic News*, 20 September 1878, pp. 445, 450-451.

⁵³*The British Journal of Photography*, 7 February 1868, p. 66.

⁵⁴*The Photographic News*, 22 October 1875, p. 505.

⁵⁵*American Journal of Photography*; quoted in *The Photographic News*, 12 October 1866, p. 487.

⁵⁶*The Photographic News*, 18 March 1870, p. 131.

⁵⁷*The Photographic Times*, Vol. XI, 1881, pp. 182-183.

⁵⁸*The Photographic News*, 16 June 1871, pp. 277-278.

⁵⁹*The Photographic News*, 20 April 1883, p. 256.

Oral History in Art: A New Tool

by Winberta Yao

This is the age of the interview. Since the 1960's, this mode of communication has quite pervasively permeated the field of art and photography. Rather than penning written statements and personal missives, artists have been resorting to the spoken word, presenting their ideas and providing information about themselves in response to outside questioning. As Lawrence Alloway has noted, the first statements of Pop artists, an "informal group, without manifestoes or a common program" were "in the form of interviews, elicited externally." It was the first time that the verbal definition of a new tendency . . . was performed entirely by interview.¹ Such interviews devoted to the contemporary art scene have continued to appear in the pages of art journals, often entitled "Conversations with . . ." or "Dialogue with . . .". *Phoebus* is no exception. In its second issue (1979), the reader will find "A Conversation between Adolph Gottlieb and Jack Breckenridge."² There have even been entire periodical publications concentrating on interviews—notably a production conceived by Andy Warhol in 1969 entitled *Interview*, and *Visual Dialogue*, published in California from 1975 to mid-1979.

This is not to say that the interview as a medium of communication with artists was never used before. As Alloway has pointed out, Matisse, throughout his

long career, was a participant in a number of interviews.³ But widespread publication in the direct question-and-answer format did not exist in art journals until the last twenty years, nor were they presented often in entire book-length publications. There are now two recent examples of the latter, one covering artists and the other photographers. Since they are not the first and will not be the last of this genre,⁴ it may be well to comment on them and examine the nature of their contribution to the organized body of information available on artists and photographers.

Neither volume consists of interviews done specifically for the purpose of publication in book form. In Paul Cummings's *Artists in Their Own Words*, interviews with eleven artists and one photographer (Walker Evans) completed between 1968 and 1973 for the Archives of American Art of the Smithsonian Institution have been condensed for inclusion in this book.⁵ Because of the shortened format, breaks in the continuity of a conversation are sometimes evident. Paul Hill and Thomas Cooper's *Dialogue with Photography* includes almost twice as many interviews as Cummings's interviews, conducted between 1974 and 1978 and originally published in the Swiss periodical, *Camera*. The photographers selected were from the ranks of the most revered pioneers of

the field in the twentieth century. Unlike *Artists in Their Own Words*, which has been edited so that all interviews are more or less the same length, the difference in individual responses in *Dialogue with Photography* is readily apparent. Words and thoughts spill forth animatedly from such men as Robert Doisneau, Helmut Gernsheim, Beaumont Newhall, and Minor White, while there is more reserve and less ebullience on the part of others. The material in these two volumes is at once current and retrospective in nature. Five artists and five photographers from these two groups have died since their participation, imparting a certain poignancy and meaningfulness to their words as we read them now.⁶ Additionally, since seven of them at the time they were interviewed were between seventy-one and ninety-two, their thoughts in many instances have historical connotations.

The presentation of these interviews is simple, with a minimum of supporting material. In Cummings's book there is a brief, informal biographical section preceding the interview that serves as a recapitulation of the artist's life and art, and one or two black-and-white illustrations of his work. A similar biographical introduction would have been desirable in the work on photographers, which has, on the other hand, a selected bibliography of the interviewee's published photographic work.

As attested to by the large number of interviews on record in recent years, and despite occasional protests to the contrary, artists and photographers seem quite able and willing to verbalize, at least within the setting of an interview.⁷ The interviewing of artists is essentially an autobiographical quest, not only for personal information, anecdotal details, and eyewitness accounts but for memo-

ries, perceptions, nuances, and feelings. Guided by a deft interviewer, free association and free expression are encouraged. Observations and opinions that are not common knowledge or of public record are sought. Traits of personality, characteristic manners of speech emerge. There is a probing for motivations and there are revelations of influences and relationships, articulation of artistic philosophies, analytical discussions of stylistic and technical concepts and practices. The social and cultural milieu is depicted. Perhaps more than in any other field of human activity, the information coming from artists is of a highly subjective, introspective nature; they themselves are indisputably the best sources on their own art. This "single source," wherein the work of art and its verbal/textual interpretation issue from one individual, turns the words of artists into highly valued "inside information."⁸ As less and less material of a holographic nature, in the form of personal records, letters, and diaries, is being produced in modern society, the interview is regarded as a new, fertile source.

The term "oral history" is commonly used to categorize this unique information source—although it is descriptively inaccurate because it is not yet established history but, in this form, raw material of history. Its method is to create an ambience, through direct, neutral, open-ended, "unloaded" questions and comments,⁹ whereby individuals can be spontaneous, candid, conversational, and relaxed in expression. Thomas Hart Benton, for instance, discloses that he never had many students at the Art Students League when he taught there between 1926 and 1935;¹⁰ Fairfield Porter provides us with a possible explanation when he discusses the difference be-

tween Benton's and Boardman Robinson's styles of teaching.¹¹ Isamu Noguchi, stressing his belief in the need for alternative modes of artistic expression, makes an arresting point when he observes that "If Mark Rothko hadn't been tied to his brush . . . he could have had a new life and started all over again."¹² Among the many opinions offered on Alfred Stieglitz, both positive and negative, there were at least two with similar judgments on an aspect of his character. Referring to his father, Edward Weston, Brett Weston said, "When Dad became famous, I think probably Stieglitz resented the fact that he didn't pay tribute to him."¹³ Commented Walker Evans, "I wasn't sycophantic or worshipping of him . . . So he had no time for me at all."¹⁴

However, for all the enlightenment and excitement that can be generated by the information acquired through the oral history and interview process, it must be kept in mind that the contents of books like *Artists in Their Own Words* and *Dialogue with Photography* do not constitute the final word, being only one among other primary sources. Trivia and insignificant items — or "inconsequential persiflage," as Walker Evans termed it¹⁵—have to be identified (although it has also been said that "One man's trivia may be another's gold.")¹⁶ Imprecise recollections, fading memories, repetition, personal biases, and partisan judgments, creative temperaments—all are among the hazards of oral history, though by no means exclusive to it. These are factors that must be recognized and resolved by art historians as they delve into these materials and integrate them with other kinds of sources.

The concept of oral history as it is understood today dates from 1948 at Co-

lumbia University as the brainchild of Professor Allan Nevins of the Department of History. Shortly thereafter, in a fortuitous co-development, the portable tape recorder came into use and became an inseparable partner of the oral history process. In December 1958, the Archives of American Art inaugurated its Oral History Program, the first one on artists and those active in the art-related world of museums and galleries, collectors, and critics. Its historical strengths lie in the period from the late 1930's to the late 1960's. As the director of the Oral History Program of the Archives for a number of years, Paul Cummings conducted many of the interviews himself. A total of two thousand interviews have been completed to date, with most of them transcribed from the original tape.¹⁷ (As far as can be ascertained, Philip Curtis is the only Arizona artist with an interview on file in the Archives.) The transcripts of these interviews are available only after a qualified researcher has received written permission from the artist or his estate to use the material. As archival material, it is subject to restriction to protect the rights and privacy of the interviewee for a certain designated period. Though there is no dictum against publishing oral history interviews, if proper permission is obtained, *Artists in Their Own Words* does depart from standard oral history procedures by having its contents made available in published form outside the customary archival channels.

Dialogue with Photography, on the other hand, is a product of different circumstances, since it was not a part of an archival project. The interviews by Paul Hill and Thomas Cooper—both photographers and active in a host of other photographic activities in England¹⁸—were done for direct publication in a

magazine. It has been pointed out that an interview *per se* does not automatically qualify as oral history.¹⁹ As we have seen, the key factor that must be present to make it a genuine primary source is the element of privacy and confidentiality which permits an interviewee to express himself freely and credibly. This privacy is preserved by holding it in archival reserve for future scholarly consultation and withholding free, immediate, public access to it. *Dialogue with Photography*, therefore, is not oral history in the conventional sense.

There is every sign, however, that oral history is not a static phenomenon and that, as evidenced by the publication of these two volumes, more liberal, freer definitions and practices are evolving. The Archives of American Art, for instance, has recently said that it will be removing restrictions on the use of its interviews.²⁰ And, as will be seen, oral history is being extended into still other formats.

Scholars and researchers should also be aware of other oral history collections in the field of American art and photography. Although not as comprehensive in terms of the number of artists interviewed, in depth and breadth of treatment the individual oral histories often surpass those of the Archives. In the Columbia Oral History Collection, the original and leading oral-history program in the United States, there are, for example, a 185-page transcript of an interview with Thomas Hart Benton in 1972 (compared with the Archives's 68 pages), 348 pages for William Zorach in 1957 (25 pages in the Archives), and 520 pages in 1958 for Max Weber, who was never interviewed by the Archives. Among Columbia's special projects there is also one entitled "New York's Art World," consisting of 1,209 pages of interviews

conducted by Barbaralee Diamonstein (author and contributor to *ARTnews*, among other activities) at the New School for Social Research in New York City, revolving around museum/art gallery relationships with artists in New York.²¹ Memoirs of artists and others connected with American art activities in the Columbia Oral History Collection have received exposure in yet another format. Seven of them (Jack Levine, Isabel Bishop, Holger Cahill, Paul Manship, Thomas Hart Benton, Max Weber, and Mahonri Young) are included in a microfiche collection, "The Arts" — a part of the *New York Times Oral History Program* produced by a New York Times subsidiary, the Microfilming Corporation of America. Available since 1972, on microfilm and microfiche, this constitutes a major breakthrough for the dissemination and wider use of oral history interviews.

Other university programs display a characteristic strength of oral history— regional and local coverage. Such are the Archives of Northwest Art, a project of the Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington; interviews on art and photography (combined with architecture and literature) in the San Francisco Bay Area, conducted by the Regional Oral History Office of the University of California, Berkeley, and a continuing program in the fine arts, including a major project, "Los Angeles Art Community: Group Portrait", a series of thirty interviews carried out under a National Endowment for the Humanities grant between 1975 and 1977 at the University of California, Los Angeles. For several of the interviewees in this project, whose transcripts in some cases range over 500 pages in length, there are also documentary materials as well as an interview on deposit with the Archives of

American art, providing a rich record of their life and art. Both California programs will be available in microformat through the aforementioned Microfilming Corporation of America. A summary report of the UCLA program not only presents the methodology and implementation of a carefully designed operation, but also illuminates clearly the unique purposes of oral history—to provide source material in an undocumented area and to present a multifaceted record of all the forces interacting within a particular setting.²² The non-participation of three artists important to the project (Richard Diebenkorn, Sam Francis, and Peter Voulkos) was lamented, but was possibly an indication of their dislike for this form of communication rather than a lack of cooperation, since the Archives of American Art also has had no interviews with any of them.

One of the salient features in the UCLA Project on the Los Angeles art community represents the latest development in oral history interviewing in art. Just as the portable tape recorder provided the technological means for oral-history to develop and become established, so another new electronic medium has emerged to give it another dimension—the videotape recorder. UCLA videotaped twenty-one of its thirty Los Angeles art community interviews. Beginning in that same period, in 1975, an innovative museum video program was inaugurated by the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, New York, which has interviewed on location a total of thirty-five Modernist and Abstract Expressionist artists represented in their collections and exhibitions for showing to patrons and distribution to outside sources.²³ It has termed its collection of video interviews “A Video Vasari.” Commercial gal-

leries in New York, also use this new medium, and the Archives of American Art has recently declared that it, too, will be embarking upon videotape interviews in the near future.²⁴ Here is, then, another ramification of the oral-history process in art—“visual history”—which serves, among other things, to “demythify and rehumanize” an artist,²⁵ thus bringing his audience to a closer level of understanding of him and his work.

The videotape recorder has undoubtedly provided the impetus for and shaped the content and character of a new body of oral histories which has been developing in the last few years in the field of photography. Although the Archives of American Art has interviewed some photographers in the past, since 1975 the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House in Rochester, New York and the Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona both have pursued archival programs unparalleled in the history of oral history interviewing in the arts by displaying, analyzing, and discussing dozens of photographic images in the course of their interviews with photographers. Relevant background interviews with others have also been a part of the complete tape documentation for each photographer. At the International Museum of Photography, transcripts of the material (some of it still in process) are in the form of computer printouts. At the Center for Creative Photography, the audiotapes remain untranscribed and unedited; to oral-history purists, tapes are the true primary source, although transcripts are much preferred by researchers.²⁶ With the expiration of the International Museum of Photography’s two year grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1977, activities in photographic oral history are cur-

rently being carried on in the United States only at the Center for Creative Photography in Arizona, where these are funded under the auspices of the Visiting Artists Program of the National Endowment for the Arts. Though the two organizations have together compiled somewhat less than a dozen major interviews, the accumulation of material²⁷ is laying the foundations for strong archival resources in photography, thus enabling photo-historians of the future to develop much needed intensive studies in this field.

Has this new resource of oral history had any impact on and acceptance in art-historical research and criticism? How extensively have recent works of scholarship utilized the interviews of, for instance, those conducted by the Archives of American art? Searching the literature of the recent past for substantiating evidence, references were readily found of citations to and use of six—or half—of the interviews included in *Artists in Their Own Words*. They were incorporated in publications ranging from three artist monographs and two anthologies to a catalogue raisonné and an exhibition catalogue.²⁸ On the other hand, listings were found for only two *Camera* interviews in bibliographies.²⁹ And the 1971 Archives interview with Walker Evans was apparently overlooked in two recent publications both of which, however, listed and quoted another magazine interview done about the same time.³⁰ Generally speaking, it would appear that when an autobiographical account has been previously published, an oral history interview may be of somewhat less significance and value. Sam Hunter's recent monumental monograph, *Isamu Noguchi* (New York, 1978) makes liberal use of this artist's autobiography, *A Sculptor's World*

(1968), but none at all of the Cummings' 1973 interview, even though it purported to update and cover subjects not discussed in the autobiography.³¹ In the 1973 interview with Thomas Hart Benton, much of the same ground was covered as in Benton's *An American in Art: A Professional and Technical Biography* (1969), but in less detail. Since it has been found that there is generally a median of ten years before oral history materials become published history,³² the potential for future writing in the field of art is promising.

In summary, it can be seen that there exists a fine distinction between oral history and the interview, becoming at times somewhat blurred. But as the Columbia Oral History Collection continues to remind us, the essence of true oral history lies in its guarantee of privacy *at the time* of communication of memories and recollections, and for a certain period thereafter, in order to be assured of obtaining the ultimate truth.³³ With the trend towards a freer dissemination of oral history, some thought should be given to whether this element of protection of the interview source is as vital for oral histories in art where the topics and concerns tend to turn inward and may be less fraught with political sensitivities than in other fields. As for other types of interview situations, some may be journalistic in nature, as in the case of authors and critics interviewing for immediate publication in journals. Or autobiographical, as when a single individual "testifies" at length covering a long span of his life for publication in a full-length book. Or biographical and monographic, where an author develops and gathers his own material on an artist or a theme through the question-and-answer method. But though these interviews may not qualify technically as oral

history in the archival sense, they are raw materials and primary sources in their own right, serving as contemporary, first-hand documentation of an artist and a period. As interviews conducted under unrestricted conditions, they should, of course, be subjected to exacting tests and analysis to determine their historical validity and critical integrity.

The value of such publications as *Artists in Their Own Words* and *Dialogue with Photography* is that they alert the scholarly world to the potential significance of this kind of material for art-historical and photo-historical research. To plumb the depths of an artist through his own verbal self-expression and face-to-face disclosures is to explore new terrain. In the process of interpretation of this newly developed source of information, the literature of art will be immeasurably enriched and begin to assume distinctive characteristics and capabilities that will contribute towards fresh and deeper insights into the achievements of the twentieth-century artist.



Notes

¹Lawrence Alloway, "Artists as Writers, Part One: Inside Information," *Artforum*, Vol. XII, No. 7 (March 1974), p. 33.

²See *Phoebus 2*, pp. 88-96.

³See *Matisse on Art*, ed. by Jack D. Flam (New York, 1973), for texts of interviews, with annotations.

⁴A sampling of titles include: Katherine Kuh, *The Artist's Voice: Talks with Seventeen Artists* (New York, 1962); Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, English edition (New York, 1971); James Danziger and Barnaby Conrad III, *Interviews with Master Photographers* (1977); Cindy Nemser, *Art Talk: Conversations with 12 Women Artists* (New York, 1975). Books based on taped interviews but written in narrative form are: Jacques Lipchitz with H. H. Arnason, *My Life in Sculpture* (1972), and Nikos Stangos, ed., *David Hockney* (1976).

⁵There is no explanation as to why the twelve particular artists of Cummings's volume were selected from among the hundreds interviewed for the Archives of American Art.

⁶The deceased are: Rockwell Kent, Thomas Hart Benton, Katherine Schmidt, Walker Evans, Fairfield Porter, Robert Smithson, Paul Strand, Man Ray, W. Eugene Smith, Imogen Cunningham, Wynn Bullock, and Minor White.

⁷Picasso is the best known artist-objector to interviews—or any form of interrogation. In fact, one person wrote of him: "Picasso almost has a nervous breakdown in front of a tape recorder."

(Quoted in Dore Ashton, *Picasso on Art: A Selection of Views*, New York, 1972, Introduction, xix.)

⁸Alloway, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁹This style was criticized by Harold Rosenberg in his *New York Times* review (October 14, 1962) of Katherine Kuh's *The Artist's Voice* as not "stimulating the imagination." Journal interviews by critics do tend to be more complex, aggressive and provocative—qualities also desired by Richard D. McKinzie, author of *The New Deal for Artists* (1973), who wished that Archives of American Art interviewers asked more "positive and provocative" questions than: "Is there anything you want to say about the government art projects?" (p. 195).

¹⁰Paul Cummings, *Artists in Their Own Words* (New York, 1979), p. 37.

¹¹Cummings, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-129.

¹²Cummings, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

¹³Paul Hill and Thomas Cooper, *Dialogue with Photography* (New York, 1979), p. 217.

¹⁴Cummings, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

¹⁵Leslie Katz, "Interview with Walker Evans," *Art in America*, Vol. LIX, no. 2 (March-April 1971), p. 83.

¹⁶Waddy M. Moore, "Critical Perspectives," *The Oral History Review*, 1978, p. 2.

¹⁷Bibliographical access to these files has been made available through the compilation of guides, with a précis of the contents for each artist, which have

been published periodically in the *Archives of American Art Journal* (Vol. VIII, no. 1, Jan. 1968; Vol. IX, no. 1, Jan. 1969; Vol. XI, nos. 1-4, 1971; Vol. XIV, no. 3, 1974). Each quarterly issue of the *Journal* (until Vol. XVIII, no. 2, 1978) has also contained a column on the ongoing interviews. Two issues of *A Checklist of the Collection* (Sept. 1977 and October 1978) also make note of interviews.

¹⁸Biographical information on these two authors can be found in *Camera*, no. 1 (January 1975), pp. 4 and 11, for Cooper; *Camera*, no. 8 (August 1976), pp. 24 and 33, for Hill.

¹⁹Norman Hoyle, "Oral History," *Library Trends*, Vol. 21, no. 1 (July 1972), p. 62.

²⁰Conversation with Arthur Breton, Curator, Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C., February 21, 1980.

²¹Spin-offs of these original interviews have taken two forms: (1) showings of the videotapes at the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York's Soho district, and (2) publication in book form under the title, *Inside New York's Art World* (Rizzoli, 1979).

²²University of California, Los Angeles, University Library. Oral History Program. *Los Angeles Art Community: Group Portrait*. Narrative report to the National Endowment for the Humanities, Division of Education Programs, April 30, 1978.

²³Contrary to expectation, museums have not been involved in oral history. When the Brooklyn Museum started conducting interviews with artists speaking before their works of art in the museum

in 1965 ("Listening to Pictures"), it was believed that this was the first time that artists performed in this capacity, as a "single source" of both art work and interpretation. (See *New York Times*, April 26, 1968, p. 45.)

²⁴Conversation with Arthur Breton, February 21, 1980.

²⁵Nancy E. Miller and Christopher Crosman, "A Cure for Videophobia," *Museum News*, Vol. LV, no. 4 (March/April 1977), p. 39.

²⁶Some annotation of the material is made available for the guidance of users. The tapes at the Center may be consulted, free of charge, or rented for non-profit use, subject to copyright and other restrictions. A list of videotapes completed in 1979 and 1980 is available, and a name index to its Videotape Oral History Library has just been issued (see *Center for Creative Photography*, no. 9, June 1979, pp. 20-22).

²⁷As an example of the strength of this material, there are 1,200 pages of transcript in the Paul Vanderbilt interview at the International Museum of Photography.

²⁸The titles of these works are: Dan Burne Jones, *The Prints of Rockwell Kent: A Catalogue Raisonné* (1975); Kim Levin, *Lucas Samaras* (1975); Diane Waldman, *Kenneth Noland: A Retrospective* (1977); Kenworth Moffett, *Kenneth Noland* (1977); Michael Croydon, *Ivan Albright* (1978); *The Writings of Robert Smithson* (1979); and *Fairfield Porter, Art in Its Own Terms: Selected Criticism, 1935-1975* (1979).

²⁹See bibliography for Wynn Bullock

in *The Photograph Collector's Guide* (Boston, 1979), p. 101, and bibliography for 1977 in *Minor White: Rites and Passages* (New York, 1978), p. 139.

³⁰Leslie Katz's "Interview with Walker Evans" in *Art in America* (March 1971) was referred to in the exhibition catalogue, *Walker Evans at Fortune, 1945-1965* (1977) and listed in Walker Evans (1979), in *Aperture's History of Photography* series.

³¹Paul Cummings, "The Oral History Program," *Archives of American Art Journal*, Vol. XIII, no. 4, 1973, p. 20.

³²Louis M. Starr, "Oral History: Problems and Prospects," *Advances in Librarianship*, Vol. II (New York and London, 1971), p. 296.

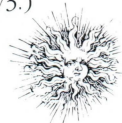
³³*The Oral History Collection of Columbia University*, ed. by Elizabeth B. Mason and Louis M. Starr (New York, 1979), x.

A Note From A Reader

Mr. Dean Walker, 101 West 78th Street, New York City, has written to Anthony Lacy Gully concerning his article published in *Phoebus 2* entitled "An Unpublished Rowlandson Sketchbook". Mr. Walker's letter reads, in part,

... Your Figure 8 caught my eye because the central group, labelled Rape of Proserpine, is after the marble group of that subject at Versailles by Francois Girardon (1628-1715) on whom I am writing a doctoral dissertation. The other figures can also be identified. The ones at the bottom left and right are, I think, two views of the same group of Nessus and Deianira known from bronzes after a model by Giovanni Bologna. The horse and lion piece is based on a Greco-Roman sculpture now in the garden of the Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome. However, both groups of battling animals were treated on a small scale in bronze by Giambologna. The wrestlers at top, again two views of one group, are after the much-admired marble at the Uffizi. What all the drawings have in common is that they show the sculptures in reverse. This raises the question of Rowlandson's source in prints for these pieces. The sculptures were all famous in the 17th and 18th century, and they must appear in many prints. I do know that they all can be found as one sees them here in the series of prints of Girardon's collection which contained ancient sculptures and Renaissance and 17th cen-

tury bronzes in addition to his own works ... (Most of the prints and a number of the details are illustrated in *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, LXXXII, July-August, 1973.)



Contributors

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He received his PhD from Stanford University. His writings have been primarily devoted to British art of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He is at present working on a book on the later works of John Cotman.

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