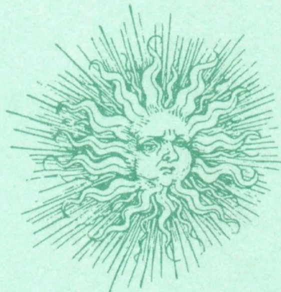
Phøebus 5

A Journal of Art History



Phøebus 5

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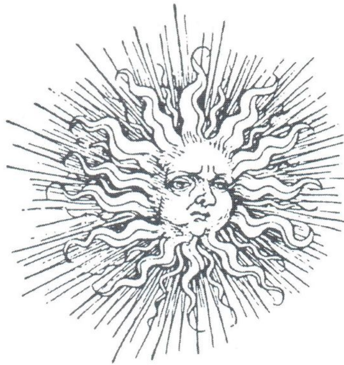
Edited by Anthony Lacy Gully



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Editor's Note

Arizona State University marked its founding one hundred years ago in 1985. To celebrate this event and to foster research and creative work for the future, the University has sponsored a number of Centennial projects. This special issue of *Phoebus*, devoted to the American Art portions of the University Art Museum's collection, is one of the several publishing efforts.

As editor I must acknowledge the unstinting efforts of the Editorial Board composed of graduate students in the Art History program at ASU. These students have worked long hours to make this issue a collection of critical and scholarly essays of which the university can well be proud. Gratitude must also be expressed to Professor Bettie Anne Doebler, Chair of the Centennial Publications Committee, Professor Leonard Lehrer, Director of the School of Art and Professor Karen Hayes-Thumann of the Graphic Design faculty for their support.

Early in 1948 Jackson Pollock in an essay entitled *My Painting* made the following observation:

> The idea of an isolated American painting, so popular in this country during the thirties, seems absurd to me, just as the idea of creating a purely American mathematics or physics would seem absurd. An American is an American and his art would naturally be qualified by that fact, whether he wills it or not. But the basic problems of art are independent of any one country.

Pollock's observations are quite correct. American art, though distinguished from European art by its subject matter at times, and the vicissitudes of the American experience, reflects the tensions and aesthetic concerns with our European neighbors. The American Art portions of the University Art Museum constitute the most wide-ranging collection of American art west of the Mississippi, aside from perhaps the Rockefeller Bequest to the M. H. deYoung Museum in San Francisco. The thirteen essays in this issue but gloss the rich holdings. Space simply did not permit examinations on leading artists such as Homer, the Peales, The Eight, Calder,

or the impressive holdings in American graphic art. The issue does provide, however, an important introduction to this collection which it is hoped will be visited and studied by those intrigued by the last four centuries of American Art.

Anthony Lacy Gully

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Preface

I am very pleased to have been asked to write this preface to the centennial issue of *Phoebus* which has been dedicated to the American art holdings of the University Art Museum. A primary objective of the museum is to provide students, faculty and the general public with the opportunity to appreciate and study original works of art. For this particular project, paintings, graphics and sculpture by ten artists in the collection have been selected for study by nine graduate students and one former faculty member in the School of Art. These selections represent the museum's broad range of material which traces significant trends in American art from the work of the early limners to the present.

The University Art Museum was established officially in the fall of 1965 to insure the protection and professional care of an increasing number of art works on the ASU campus. The origin of the collection, however, actually dates back to 1950 when prominent Phoenix attorney Oliver B. James made the first of his many anonymous gifts to what was then Arizona State College. With the assistance of the chair of the Art Department, Paula Kloster (Wasser), and the support and encouragement of then College President, Dr. Grady Gammage, Oliver James, until his death in 1955, continued to donate items of major significance to the university. The collection grew to include over 140 works in the areas of American and Latin American paintings, American and European sculpture, and an important selection of American and European prints. The impetus, to paraphrase the museum's benefactor, was to build something of great educational and cultural value to the College, the community, the state and to the entire Southwest. To this day, the Collection of American Art founded by Oliver B. James remains the nucleus of the University Art Musuem's American holdings which have been added to significantly by various donors over the years.

Most notable about ASU's collection is the historic breadth of the American holdings. The collection is comprised of works dating from colonial times to the

present, and the range of subject matter includes representative examples of portraiture, landscape and still life painting, as well as modern and contemporary abstractions. Prime examples of work by Gilbert Stuart, Thomas Sully, Albert Pinkham Ryder, Frederic Remington, J. Alden Weir, Childe Hassam, Robert Henri, John Sloan, William Glackens, George Bellows, Marsden Hartley, Charles Sheeler, Winslow Homer, William Gropper, Reginald Marsh, James Abbott, McNeil Whistler, Ives Tanguy, Jacques Lipschitz, Gaston Lachaise, Romare Bearden, Fritz Scholder, and Robert Rauschenberg represent just a sampling of the holdings. Moreover, major movements and styles within the history of American Art are well represented, as well as a full range of media and techniques, making the collection ideal for study and research by both artists and art historians.

Guided by three directors in its 35 year history, Paula Kloster (Wasser) between 1950–1964,* Dr. Hugh Broadley from September 1965–July 1967, and since August 1967, Rudy H. Turk, the collections have expanded by gift and purchase. It currently includes a comprehensive collection of American and European prints; a singular collection of 19th century American crockery; and an extensive collection of American contemporary ceramics, including 28 extraordinary ceramic pots by the Native American potter Maria Martinez.

The Latin American collection is also a formidable one in quality and scope. Diego Rivera, Rufino Tamayo and David Alfaro Siqueiros are represented and their works hang with a sizable collection of *Santos* and *Bultos* stemming from both Spanish and Indian cultures. The European holdings include a study collection of Renaissance paintings, and a small, but impressive collection of African masks and sculpture has been developed.

Although the permanent collection remains predominantly American, the administrative staff is committed to the presentation of all art styles in all media from all periods. Thus an ongoing program of temporary exhibitions, organized by the museum's staff or by sister institutions, attempts to fill in the gap, and meet the needs of ASU students, faculty and the general public.

Not only have the collections expanded significantly over the years, so has the physical facility. Initially the works were hung in the lobby, the public lounge, the corridor on the first floor, and over the stacks in various reading rooms on the second floor of Matthews Library (currently known as Matthews Center). James was pleased with this initial arrangement, as indicated by the

following statement written to Walter R. Bimson, Chairman of the Board of the Valley National Bank, in July of 1950: "As for myself, I am 100% in accord with this attitude that library and museum facilities and collections should be put to the most extensive use; and that there is such close cultural and functional affinity between a library and an art museum or gallery that the two can well and really should be regarded and handled as Siamese twins."

As the collections grew both physically and in value, however, it became obvious to the curators that not only was there an increased need for security, but also for proper lighting, storage and exhibition space. Within Dr. Broadley's tenure, in 1966 the University library was moved to its present facility, Hayden Library, and a special gallery space on the second level of Matthews Center was established for the permanent American Collection. During this time President Durham, as President Gammage before him, was very supportive of the collections which he hoped would develop in an "ASU Louvre." Under Rudy Turk's direction, over the past 20 years, room by room and floor by floor of Matthews were garnered and remodeled for the growing collection. In the near future the University Art Museum will expand into a new space within the Fine Arts Complex scheduled for completion in late 1988. This facility will provide the collection with a home it richly deserves.

Lucinda H. Gedeon
Curator
University Art Museum

*Mrs. Kay Gammage, then Assistant Development Officer, maintained the collection between Ms. Kloster's and Dr. Broadley's appointments.

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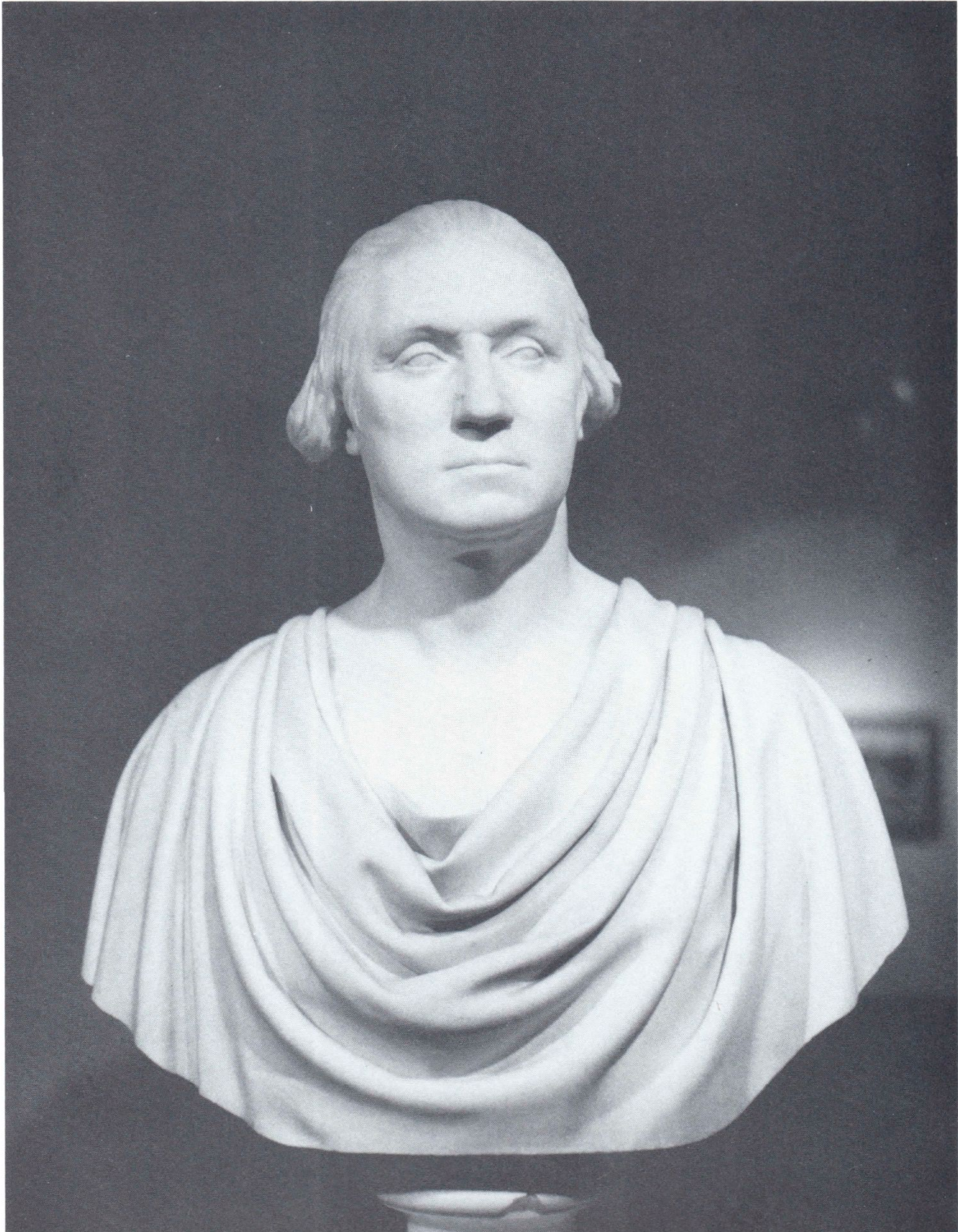


Vivien Green Fryd

Hiram Power's Bust of *George Washington*: The President as an Icon

Hiram Power's bust of *George Washington* in the Arizona State University's art collection (Figure 1, 1846-1848) is a classicizing portrait of the first president as a Roman emperor in apotheosis. Although this type had been popular in American art during the early decades of the nineteenth century, by the 1840s when Powers carved the *Washington* bust, images of statesmen as citizen-orators prevailed instead, especially in public portrait monuments.[1] Indeed, Powers also executed a full-length, standing figure of George Washington for the Louisiana state legislature (1848-1854) which adhered to this more common image of a civic hero. These works by Hiram Powers afford the opportunity to explore the reasons for the change in iconography and to analyze two nineteenth-century images of George Washington – in apotheosis and as a citizen-orator – to demonstrate that American artists, especially sculptors, transformed the man into a national icon.

Prior to his emigration to Italy in 1837, Powers had visited Washington, DC and Boston to capture likenesses of prominent statesmen in anticipation of receiving commissions for marble busts and full-length effigies. Between 1834, when he left his hometown of Cincinnati and his transatlantic voyage of three years later, Powers modeled the images of numerous statesmen, including John Marshall, John C. Calhoun, Daniel Webster, John Quincy Adams, John C. Winthrop, and Andrew Jackson.[2] While in the national capital, he also executed a bust of George Washington from a death mask preserved in the State Department.[3]

Although these images became the basis for his later marble busts and full-length public portrait monuments,[4] when Powers received his first commission in 1846 for an effigy of George Washington, he consulted sources other than his earlier likeness copied from Washington's death mask. In March of that year, William Shepard Wetmore and his wife visited Powers's Florence studio and ordered a marble bust of George Washington and one of Mrs Wetmore.[5] Completed in July of

Figure 1. Hiram Powers, *George Washington,* 1846–1848, marble, Arizona State University Art Museum.

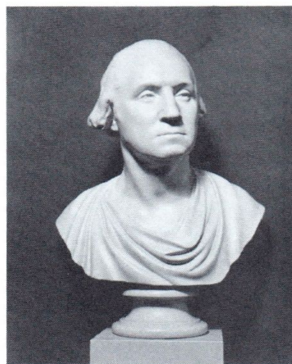


Figure 2. Jean-Antoine Houdon, Bust of *George Washington,* ca. 1786, plaster, Courtesy of the New York Historical Society, New York City.

Figure 3. Jean-Antoine Houdon, *George Washington,* 1784–1796, marble, Virginia State Capitol. Reproduced courtesy of Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia.

1848, the bust of *Washington*, now housed in the art collections of Arizona State University, became the basis for at least twenty-five replicas that Hiram Powers executed for numerous American and European patrons.[6]

Rather than emulate his own copy modeled twelve years earlier from the death mask, Powers instead consulted late antique busts of Roman emperors and Jean-Antoine Houdon's portrait preserved both in plaster (Figure 2) and in a full-length monument executed for the Virginia State Capitol (Figure 3, 1784-1796). Powers derived the likeness, the hairstyle in peruke, the classicizing features, and the slightly turned head from Houdon's portraits; yet, unlike Houdon, Powers clothed the former president in a simplified Roman toga that has deeply carved, cascading folds. Furthermore, Powers assimilated the raised eyebrows, contracted forehead, undrilled eyes, rigidly symmetrical features, and calm, timeless expression of late antique busts to signify the president's transcedent qualities. As a result, Powers created an image of George Washington as a deified ruler in apotheosis.[7]

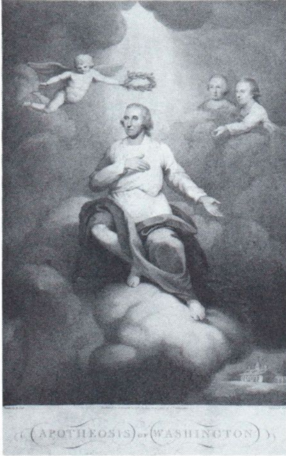


Figure 4. David Edwin, after Rembrandt Peale, *Apotheosis of George Washington,* 1800, engraving, New York Public Library, Prints Division, McAlpin Collection.

Figure 5. John James Barralet, *Apotheosis of George Washington,* 1802, stipple engraving, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Gift of William H. Huntington, 1883. (83.2.159)

During the early decades of the nineteenth century, American artists and writers often commemorated Washington as a transcendent hero.[8] For example, Parson Weems first mythologized the president by way of apotheosis in his 1800 biography of George Washington:

> Swift on angels' wings the brightening saint ascended; while voices were. . .hymning the great procession towards the gates of heaven. His glorious being was seen far off, and myriads of mighty angels hastened forth. . .to welcome. . .a dear loved son, deemed lost, but now found, and raised to kingly honours![9]

Artists subsequently visualized this scene of transfiguration. David Edwin's 1800 engraving after Rembrandt Peale's *Apotheosis of Washington* (Figure 4) and John J. Barralet's popular engraving of 1802 (Figure 5), for instance, portray Washington's immortality by way of Christian iconography; these are secular versions of the Assumption or the Resurrection.[10] Antonio Capellano's

Fame and Peace Crowning Washington (Figure 6, 1827), located directly above the central portal on the east facade of the U.S. Capitol, similarly features Washington in apotheosis. Located in the center of Capellano's composition is a bust of the president, while flanking this portrait are two flying allegorical figures; Fame on the right holds a trumpet and Peace on the left a palm branch. These winged figures hover over Washington's bust and are about to crown him with victory wreaths.

Rather than create an elaborate secular version of the Assumption or the Resurrection, however, Capellano derived his composition and iconography from antiquity. The rectangular format of the relief, the symmetrical composition with centralized bust, the victory wreaths, and the winged figures all derive from ancient Roman sarcophagi such as the *"Season" Sarcophagus* (Figure 7; Elvehjem Museum of Art). Typically these coffins show frontal, static portraits of the deceased within a medallion held aloft by putti. The *"Season" Sarcophagus* also features a laurel wreath beneath the medallion; in ancient Rome, the crown of victory had been placed on a Triumphator and hence became a symbol of the soul's ascension in funerary art.[11] American artists later adopted this attribute to represent transcendence in such works as Peale's engraved *Apotheosis* (Figure 4), the textile, *America Presenting at the Altar of Liberty Medallions of Her Illustrious Sons* (Figure 8; Winterthur Museum, 1785), and the painting, *Liberty and Washington* (Figure 9; New York State Historical Association, 1800-1810).

Figure 6. Antonio Cappellano, *Fame and Peace Crowning George Washington,* 1827, sandstone, U.S. Capitol.

Figure 7. Roman, *Seasons Sarcophagus,* ca. 280 AD, marble, Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Max W. Zabel Fund purchase.

Despite Capellano's compositional and iconographic borrowings from antiquity, however, the Italian sculptor, like Hiram Powers, consulted Jean-Antoine Houdon's portrait. Copying the hairstyle and likeness, Capellano also adopted from the marble statue Houdon's modern dress of open coat, unbuttoned vest, and ruffled shirt. Capellano eliminated Houdon's military reference, however, reflecting a tendency to humanize America's first president while at the same time immortalize his fame by way of apotheosis.

The desire for more humanizing representations of our presidents that developed during the Jacksonian era contributed to the public's rejection of Horatio Greenough's *George Washington* (Figure 10, 1832-1841).[12] When Congress passed a resolution in 1832, naming Horatio Greenough as the sculptor for this portrait, the document furthermore specified the work be "a full length pedestrian statue...the head to be a copy of Houdon's Washington, and the accessories to be left to the judgement of the artist."[13] Secretary of State Edward Livingston sent a copy of the resolution to Greenough along with the dimensions and the elevations of the Rotunda. In his letter, Livingston suggested Greenough make a square pedestal for the portrait and decorate it with bas-reliefs, "representing, first, the surrender of Yorktown; second, the resignation; third, his inauguration as President...fourth, an inscription."[14] Despite Livingston's suggestions and the resolution's specification of a pedestrian statue, Greenough executed a seated figure, thereby eliminating the need for a square pedestal. Edward Everett suggested this composition in July of 1832:

> I would have you...elevate your imagination by reading the great works of the great masters and particularly the greatest master the Jupiter Olympus of Phidias...you have a hall to place it in probably as spacious as the...hypothralral court...of the temple of Jupiter at Elis and on the principle of facing the standard of excellence to which you aspire as high as possible I would have that immortal work ever before your mind. It will deserve your profound consideration whether you will not have your Washington seated like the Jupiter and as near the colossal as modern taste permits...you are acquainted no doubt with the work of M. Quatrèmêre de Quincy on the Jupiter Olympus.[15]

Figure 8. *America Presenting at the Altar of Liberty Medallions of her Illustrious Sons,* 1785, textile, Courtesy of The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum.

By December, 1833 Greenough proposed the following composition:

> I have made him seated – looking straight forward – with a sheathed sword in his left hand and with his right pointing to heaven. He is dressed in a large white mantle whose hem is embroidered with stars. He sits on a massive chair ornamented with fruit flowers and Naval and Military trophies – the large spaces on the back of which are filled by bas-reliefs representing virtues personified. The hind posts of the chair are surmounted on each side by an Eagle. . . .[16]

Figure 9. *Liberty and Washington,* c. 1800–1810, oil on canvas window shade. New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York.

This description and the final composition of the colossal *Washington* indicate that Greenough followed Everett's advice in emulating Quatrèmêre de Quincy's illustration of Phidias's *Jupiter.*[17] However, he probably also consulted Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's imperial portrait of *Napoleon* (Musée de l'Armée, Paris, 1806).[18] Like these precedents, *Washington* is rigidly symmetrical, frontal, colossal, and enthroned. Nevertheless, Greenough replaced the *Jupiter*'s ancient, pagan symbols and the painted *Napoleon*'s French monarchical and classical accessories with American motifs adapted from antiquity; he furthermore substituted *Jupiter*'s spear and statue of Victory, and *Napoleon*'s scepter and hand of justice with a short sword and right arm pointing to heaven.

Like Capellano in his Capitol relief and Hiram Powers in his later bust, Greenough transformed Houdon's prototype into a classicized image of Washington as a deified ruler in apotheosis. Besides depicting raised eyebrows, a creased forehead, unfocused eyes, and rigidly symmetrical features, Greenough furthermore carved a heavy mass of locks in emulation of Hellenistic ruler portraits. Whereas both Capellano and Powers depicted a close-fitting wig with lightly incised wavy lines to suggest texture, Greenough deeply carved Washington's hair into a wreath of wavy locks to indicate divine inspiration.[19]

Despite this deification of George Washington, however, Greenough rendered the former president as presenting with his left hand the sword of the people. This signifies, in the artist's own words, "the entire abnegation of self," "the apotheosis of abnegation."[20] This gesture thereby refers to Washington's resignation, first from the military and later from the presidency.[21] In Greenough's ideal-heroic portrait of George Washington, then, the president is depicted as a divinely inspired ruler who utilized his powers only when necessary to achieve independence and to establish a democratic form of government. As Horatio Greenough himself wrote:

> . . . Washington's face and form are identified with the salvation of our continent. That sword . . . cleared the ground where our political fabric was raised. I would remind our posterity that nothing but that, and that wielded for years with wisdom and strength, rescued our rights, and property, and lives from the most powerful . . . nation of Europe. . . . But the man who overthrew a tyranny, and founded a Republic, was a hero.[22]

Figure 10. *Horatio Greenough, George Washington,* 1832–1841, marble, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Transfer from the U.S. Capitol.

Although Greenough followed established iconography for the divine divine ruler in apotheosis and utilized accepted neoclassical precepts, the American public ridiculed and rejected his colossal portrait of *George Washington*. Pragmatism and prudery resulted in outrage over Washington's nudity. As Philip Hone reasoned in his diary, "Washington was too prudent and careful of his health to expose himself thus in a climate as uncertain as ours, to say nothing of the indecency of such exposure. . .[23] Americans furthermore took exception to Washington's deified status; they could not reconcile Greenough's god-like hero with their perceptions of the former president, an elected official who reluctantly took office to serve his country.

Earlier, from the turn of the century until the 1820s, representations of Washington in apotheosis had proliferated and, in the case of Barralet's engraving, were popular. However, when Rembrandt Lockwood and Constantino Brumidi executed their respective works of the same theme during the mid-century, criticism prevailed.[24] *The Albion*, for instance, labled Lockwood's

compositional drawing, *The Last Judgement* (c. 1854, Newark Museum), as "patriotic folly."[25] Mid-century Americans preferred humanized representations of their elected representatives, one which celebrated their roles as statesmen and military heroes.[26] Few artists made the same mistake again as Horatio Greenough in creating an image of a divine ruler.

More acceptable to the American public and consonant with a republican democracy were sculptured portraits of statesmen as civic heroes. Related to painted historic conversation pieces such as John Trumbull's *Declaration of Independence* (US Capital, 1786-1820), and the "philosopher in his cabinet" type such as John Singleton Copley's *John Adams* (Harvard, 1783) and Gilbert Stuart's Lansdowne *Washington* (Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, 1796), the carved effigies of American statesmen feature single men in formal poses either in meditation or in the act of speaking.[27] Frequently accessory symbols or inscriptions identify the statue's content, further amplified by an address delivered at the monument's unveiling ceremonies.

Although Hiram Powers continued an earlier tradition of representing Washington in apotheosis in his marble bust, he adhered to what would become a more acceptable image of the president as a citizen-orator in his monument executed for the Louisiana State Capitol. No longer extant nor preserved through photographs, Powers's Louisiana *Washington* nevertheless can be reconstructed from the artist's unpublished correspondence. In 1848, the governor of Louisiana wrote Hiram Powers that the legislature had appropriated five-thousand dollars for a full-length statue of Washington to be exeucted in marble for the statehouse in Baton Rouge.[28] When Powers nearly had completed his model, he explained its meaning and composition in a letter to Governor Walker:

> I am representing Washington – nearly as possible – as he appeared in the citizen dress of his time, and I have chosen the period after he had proposed for himself a life of retirement. This retirement from public life was I presume the crowning glory of Washington – who became greatest when as far as was possible with him, he made himself least. I have placed him a meditative and dignified posture, the farewell address is in his left hand, and he leans with this right arm upon a column composed of rods banded together – at the base of which appear the sickle and the pruning hook – emblems of husbandry.[29]

For authenticity, Powers consulted a cast and a daguerreotype of Houdon's Virginia Capitol *Washington* and clothes worn by the former president when he resigned his commission.[30]

Hiram Powers not only utilized Houdon's *Washington* for his likeness, but also apparently emulated its iconography to some degree. Although the Louisiana monument was destroyed in a fire shortly after the Civil War, the sculptor's description provides enough information to detect this association. Houdon had clothed his figure in contemporary garb and had included a sign of agriculture in order to represent Washington's retirement from a military career. Holding a walking stick and leaning on the fasces, Houdon's *Washington* stands before a plowshare, thereby evoking the Roman general Quintius Cincinnatus who, like Washington, left the military to return to farming.[31] Powers similarly modeled contemporary clothing, farm tools (the sickle and the pruning hook), and the fasces;[32] yet as indicated in his proposal, his version represents a different image than that of an American Cincinnatus in referring to the culminating event in George Washington's last years as *patriae patrus*. Rather than representing Washington's retirement from the military *prior* to becoming the first president of the United States, Powers depicted Washington as he announced his retirement from that office.

Moreover, Powers's *Washington* seems to have been a citizen-orator whose basic message was that of unity, the sculptor specifying that the fasces symbolized "Union and Strength."[33] He posed Washington in the act of presenting his famous farewell address devoted to national continuity. According to the artist's description, Washington paused in the midst of his presentation, meditating on his message and the nation's future course.

Edward Everett in the meantime devoted numerous orations to George Washington and his Farewell Address that could have applied to the Baton Rouge monument, at least from a Northern point of view. "The Birthday of Washington" delivered in New York on February 22, 1851, claimed that Washington still lived in his Farewell address which, Everett asserted, everyone has "read... a thousand times," continuing:

> And what is the leading advice of this ever-memorable address? Is it not ADHERENCE TO THE UNION?... He tells us to watch over its preservation with the most jealous anxiety. On the love of liberty... there is but a single sentence, a couple of lines; he just alludes to it as an indwelling sentiment of the American heart.... As for the preservation of State rights... Washington does not so much

> allude to them.... NO... it is Union, Union, Union, the first, the last, the constant strain of this immortal address.[34]

Later Everett devoted himself entirely to the Union and preached the gospel of its maintenance by emphasizing Washington's devotion to national cohesion in his final address. In "The Character of Washington," a speech first delivered on February 22, 1856 and then repeated in every major city in the United States, the renowned statesman and orator concluded with the following appeal:

> Of all the exhortations which it [the Farewell Address] contains, I scarce need to say that none are so emphatically uttered, none so anxiously repeated, as those who enjoin the preservation of the Union of these United States. Of this, under providence, it depends in the judgement of Washington whether the people of America shall follow the Old World example, and be broken up into a group of independent military powers... or whether they shall continue to constitute a confederate republic...[35]

Hiram Powers's full-length statue of *Washington* executed for the state of Louisiana and Edward Everett's orations both illustrate the status accorded George

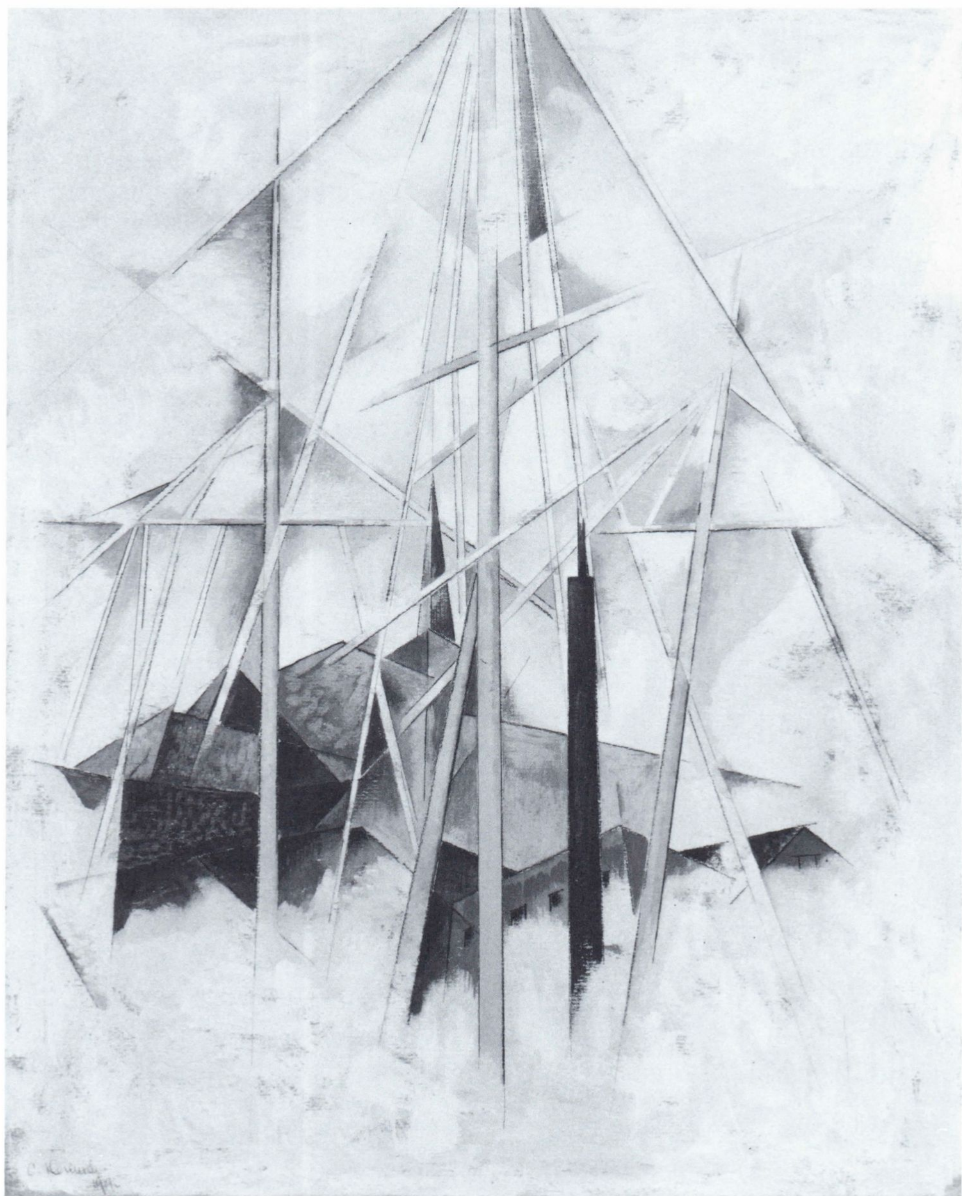
Figure 11. *The Marquis De Lafayette Viewing the Statue of George Washington by Antonio Canova in the Old State House, Raleigh, North Carolina,* 1840, lithograph, from a painting by J. Weisman and Emanuel Leutze. Collection of the North Carolina State Department of Archives and History.

Washington as the Great Unifier prior to the Civil War. However, throughout the century, George Washington was extolled as a hero and moral example, not just a symbol of unity. As Edward Everett stated in a speech delivered in New York in 1851, Washington was "a character to be held up to the imitation of our children, to be pointed out to the admiration of the stranger, to be commended to the fervent applause of all mankind, and to be handed down to the last posterity."[36] Within this context, public portrait monuments and busts of George Washington could morally elevate and educate the American public. For example, a lithograph of 1840 (Figure 11) depicts General Lafayette and a young boy as inspired by Antonio Canova's statue of *George Washington* executed for the North Carolina statehouse (1819-1821). In Francis William Edmond's *The Image Peddler* of 1844 (Figure 12), a father points to Washington's bust for the edification of his child. Finally, an illustration from John Frost's *The Pictorial Life and Washington* published in 1857 shows a boy in reverence of a classical bust of the president clothed in a Roman toga, an image that resembles Powers's marble portrait housed in the Arizona State art collection.[37]

Figure 12. Francis William Edmonds, *The Image Peddler*, ca. 1844, oil on canvas. Courtesy of the New York Historical Society, New York City.

Prior to the Civil War, sculptors emphasized George Washington's heroic status in public portait monuments and in busts, transforming him into a national icon. However, after the North-South conflict, Abraham Lincoln replaced Washington as the premier statesman and civil hero glorified in bronze and in marble. Depicted as a citizen-orator in such works as Augustus St. Gauden's standing *Abraham Lincoln* (Chicago, 1887) and Thomas Ball's *Emancipation Group* (Figure 13; Washington, DC, 1865-1887), Lincoln, identified as the Great Emancipator and Unifier, was immortalized among the pantheon of America's great leaders as the president who "saved the Union and preserved the republic which Washington founded. . ."[38] Thus, as this statement and as Ball's statue demonstrate (in Ball's bronze monument, Washington's bust decorates the podium upon which Lincoln leans), George Washington continued to be extolled even after the Civil War, retaining his status as a national icon, but now as the predecessor to Abraham Lincoln.

Figure 13. Thomas Ball, *Emancipation Group,* 1873, marble, Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin, Madison. Gift of Dr. Warren E. Gilson.



Marie Timberlake

A Sky After El Greco, An Early Homage by Demuth

Inspecting the Jones and Laughlin Steel Mills at Pittsburg in 1922, Precisionist artist Elsie Driggs reflected that she was, "moved by the strange beauty of the place." Her perception was that the "particles of dust in the air seem to catch and refract the light to make a backdrop of luminous pale gray behind the shapes of simple smoke stack and cone. To me it was Greek...a sight Greco would have enjoyed painting."[1] Abraham Davidson comments that for Driggs's viewing the steel mill was, "a modern mystic vision, akin to those the Spanish artist had painted in the sixteenth century."[2] It was a firmly held belief of early twentieth century modernists that El Greco was a kindred spirit; that he had captured their essence centuries previously. Charles Demuth, like his contemporary Elsie Driggs, portayed American industry crisply and precisely in linear, geometric forms. That he shared her view toward El Greco is revealed in *A Sky After El Greco* (Figure 1).[3] This article explores the empathy of Demuth and his contemporaries for El Greco; Demuth's fascination with the unstated; his creation of puzzles for posterity; and his unerring ability to express symbolically the intrinsic nature of his chosen themes.

Figure 1. Charles Demuth, *A Sky After El Greco,* 1919, tempera, Arizona State University Art Museum.

As an artist Charles Demuth (1882-1935) is most famous for architectural and industrial landscapes executed in his meticulous, linear style during the second and third decades of this century. Yet he was multifaceted, painting simultaneously in a variety of styles. His most well-known early works are his florals; however, this group also includes spontaneous, energetic figure paintings of acrobats and nightclub scenes, as well as an important body of literary illustrations after works by Balzac, James, Pater, Poe, Wedekind, and Zola. These literary illustrations painted between 1915 and 1920 were not intended for public display and quickly sold into private collections where they remained relatively unknown to Demuth's general public until first published by Andrew Carnduff Ritchie in 1950.[4]

After a third trip to Paris in 1912-14, and exposure to Cubism, Demuth evolved the precise, linear style which

Milton Brown labeled Cubist-Realist,[5] and frequently is termed Precisionism. Demuth's style blends the clean, faceted geometric forms of Cubism with an underlying realism that remains uniquely his own.

A Sky After El Greco precedes these important late works and provides a transition between his initial experimentation with Cubist form in his Bermuda landscapes and his Precisionist style. Painted in 1919, it is one of Demuth's early departures from his beloved watercolor medium. His shift to oil and tempera coincided with his move from floral and figural works to architectural and industrial landscapes.

The painting is distinguished by a web of ray lines forming diagonal lines of force and creating a decorative screen which overlays the geometric forms. Eiseman has identified these shaft lines as ships masts in *A Box of Tricks,* a work from the same period which demonstrates similar transitional characteristics.[6] In *A Box of Tricks* the juxtaposition of a church steeple upon a meeting house provides the substance of the composition. The vibrant blue, rich russet brown and black of *A Sky After El Greco* are repeated in this work.

These paintings are the fruition of his experiments with Cubism in 1916 in Bermuda. The Bermuda landscapes marked a complete departure for Demuth, who exchanged the lively, fluid line of his sensuous floral pieces and exhuberant figural works for the linear, geometric form which he explored in Bermuda. Emily Farnham in an article on Demuth's Bermuda landscape details the influences of Cezanne and Cubism upon Demuth's new style.[7]

She cites as similarities between Cezanne and Demuth their affinity for watercolor, and for unpainted white space incorporated within the body of the painting and surrounding it, lending an unfinished air to the works. She discusses his use of Cezanne's compositional devices.[8] Combining this influence with Cubist elements Demuth arrived at the basis for his architectural and industrial landscapes.

Farnham divides Demuth landscapes into four categories.[9] *A Sky After El Greco* clearly fits into her third category as a transitional landscape. The inverted V-shape, derived from Cezanne and used extensively in Demuth's Bermuda period,[10] echoes the rise of the thin, dark spire in the center of the painting and establishes the framework of the composition. It was typical of Demuth in this period to set his painting in a diamond shape leaving the white paper bare as accent or framing. A blotting technique, which he perfected in his watercolors, is used effectively in this work to create

interesting texture and increases the air of instability and lack of substance in the flat, two dimensional forms. The influences from his Bermuda experiments abound, yet he has not fully developed the style which will distinguish his later landscapes. His industrial and architectural oils fill the entire surface, the frames of white space disappears, the elements become more sharply defined, more precisely drawn, and hard edges delineate each form.

A Sky After El Greco exemplifies Demuth's light, delicate touch. Here the warm brown of the paper partially overpainted with his uneven brushwork creates an evanescent backdrop which produces the effect of the vaporous, billowing clouds of an El Greco sky. His title further suggests that he has patterned his sky after the tumultuous skies for which El Greco is famous – stormy, turbulent, steelly dark gray clouds accented by stark white, floating across a slate-blue sky. Though his soft, diaphanous brushwork recalls the translucence of an El Greco sky, the color harmony produces a more buoyant effect. The painting appears to contain a number of quotations from El Greco's monumental *View of Toledo* (Figure 2).

El Greco's city of Toledo rests on the crests of a series of verdant green and barren brown hills dominated by the spire of the cathedral. The highly visible building to its right has been identified as the Alcazar. Storm clouds break overhead and cast a somber, mysterious air over the landscape. There are many compositional similarities between the Demuth and the El Greco which suggest Demuth's familiarity with the El Greco work.[11] The strong horizontal movement of the rising, almost triangular-shaped hills on which Toledo sits is reiterated in the pyramidal shapes which create the horizontal base in the Demuth. The rising Toledo cathedral tower is echoed in the elongated spire which dominates the central focus of the Demuth. A rectangular row of windows near the top of the building on the lower right in the Demuth work probably reflects the Alcazar, once a Moslem fortress and later the Spanish royal palace.

In other works, El Greco is noted for his use of elongated figures spanning the frontal plane and forming an apparent bridge between heaven and earth. This strong vertical emphasis is recalled by Demuth's ray lines. By his careful application of color to these shafts of light, Demuth has changed the forms into a suggestion of three crosses, perhaps a subtle reflection of the mystical, religious soul of El Greco.

Figure 2. El Greco, *View of Toledo,* 1541–1614, paintings, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The H.O. Havemeyer Collection.

An examination of Demuth's use of titles suggests that *A Sky After El Greco* was more than a simple exercise in a long tradition of quotation of Old Masters and that he had something more specific in mind. A marked difference of opinion abounds among Demuth scholars as to the profundity and purpose of Demuth's titles. Many regard them as merely witty and humorous adjuncts bestowed flippantly at the last minute, while others see a more serious intent.[12] Milton Brown discusses them as "witty postscripts to an otherwise comparatively prosaic vision."[13] Though Farnham has stated that the titles reveal Demuth's "humorous turn of mind,"[14] she concludes that his total output displays the artist's concern for "penetrating beneath false facades for reality and truth," and his "obsession for all that was 'covered, glazed. . . masked'. . . particularly when those surfaces masked implied profundities."[15]

A look at a few selected works demonstrates how this confusion of meaning can be drawn from his works. *Business* (1921, Art Institute of Chicago), presents flat, opaque windowpanes painted starkly in a grid pattern on the side of a building. The numbers one through nine and the abbreviations for the days of the week appear on the uppermost panes. Davidson views it as "negative comment on American business tinged with humor, the regularity of factory windowpanes is made to resemble a calendar, suggesting that business is run though monotonous repetition of time."[16]

Another work, *End of the Parade, Coatsville, Pa.,* (1920, The Regis Collection, Minneapolis) is a study of black smoke stacks silhouetted against pristine white stylized clouds of smoke and a large industrial complex which marks the place where the Coatsville parade end -ed.[17] Faison comments that the title is "probably whimsical rather than ironic, (and) can be taken at face value: the black stacks march with military precision. . . "[18] Is it merely the place where the parade ended as Davidson and Faison suggest, or could it be looked upon symbolically as the end of the pleasant parade of the past, with the industrial age menacing the enjoyment of simple activities, and the sense of community symbolized by a parade. The endlessly marching smoke stacks, like the blankness of the rows of opaque windowpanes, betraying the barrenness of industry versus the creativity and spontaneity of the parade.

Another work, *Incense of a New Church,* (Figure 3) depicts a series of black smoke stacks against a dark blue sky with serpentine shapes of white to gray smoke interweaving in a symphony of abstract, circular patterns across the front of the oil. Like *Business* and *End of the Parade, Coatsville, Pa.,* the painting reveals a fasci-

nation with pure form and visual appearance, yet the title suggests the possibility of a dual meaning, the beauty of the swirling smoke opposing the implication of a new American religion.

A Box of Tricks demonstrates the same dichotomy of meaning. In discussing the fusion of factory with church steeple, Karal Marling asks, "Is the box factory of today the tricky proposition or the boxy church of yesterday?"[19] It was, she states, the first of Demuth's ironic exercises.[20] In a definitive article on *My Egypt*, (1927, Whitney Musuem of Art, New York) Marling traces Demuth's play with titles to his friendship with Marcel Duchamp and his absorption of Duchampian irony.[21]

Both Fahlman and Marling discuss *My Egypt* as a memorial Demuth created to himself. Marling asserts that as the pyramid is a symbol of immortality, so *My Egypt* assured Demuth of immortality.[22] Fahlman stresses the parallels between the monumental forms of the grain elevators and the magnitude of the Egyptian tombs.[23] Other scholars have suggested that Demuth may have wished to compare these grain storage tanks and their important place in the economy of Lancaster, and America, to Egypt's early status as one of the world's largest producers of grain.[24] The paradox of the imposition of a title such as *My Egypt* upon a painting of grain silos demonstrates Demuth's turn of mind.

The above comparison of conflicting views on his titles as whimsical expressions of his wit versus a deliberate use of irony or implied social criticism of industrial America illustrates his love of confounding, of masking, of providing something for everyone. Creating a puzzle for viewers and scholars to contemplate appealed to his sense of irony.

A close friend of Duchamp and a part of a circle of artists who relished the pun and the witty remark, Demuth was noted for his delightful conversation and quick wit. He absorbed and applied these qualities into his titles, but to deny any deeper profound meaning is to fail to consider their application combined with his rich use of symbolism. The deeply thought out character of the title, together with the symbolic element in each work, precludes a thoughtless appellation of title.

In discussing *The Piano Mover's Holiday* (The Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pennsylvania), on exhibition in Dallas, Texas, Forbes Watson elaborates on Demuth's play with titles and suggests Demuth intended them to be understood by a select few. He describes the anger of an irate piano mover's wife over the fact that this title was bestowed upon an architectural/industrial landscape, and suggests that, "If the piano mover's wife had appreciated the painting Demuth would have

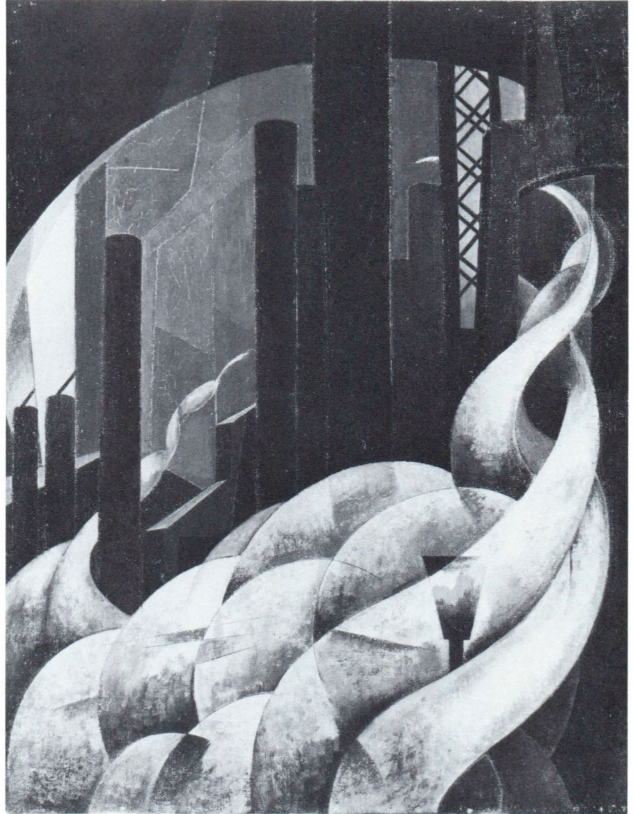


Figure 3. Charles Demuth, *Incense of a New Church,* 1921. Oil on canvas. Courtesy of Columbus Museum of Art. Gift of Ferninand Howald, 1931.

thought it tragic... he liked to choose who would appreciate him."[25]

As a young man Demuth had aspirations to be a writer. *The Azure Adder*, one of his early literary efforts, was a play which focused around the attempt of its protaganist to publish a little art magazine. Discussing his intentions for his new magazine, George states, "The mere reading of it will be made difficult for the uninitiated, people whom it is not meant for anyway."[26] George's statement reflects Demuth's attitude toward his art. His titles are only for the initiated, those who will appreciate them, and meant to fall beyond the comprehension of the average viewer.

Demuth expresses this idea in his article, "Across a Greco is Written." He maintains that, "Color and line can say quite a bit, unaided by words, when used by one for whom they are a means of expression... To me words explain too much and say too little." He expands upon this theme when he comments, "Across the final surface... the touchable bloom, if it were a peach... of any fine painting is written for those who dare to read

that which the painter knew, that which he hoped to find out, or, that which he – whatever."[27]

That Demuth consistently chose titles which created a double edged sword, which provided the kernel of doubt as to his intended meaning, refutes the argument that his titles were pure whimsy, that they were applied frivolously upon completion as a matter of pure wit. His continual use of titles which hinted at an underlying meaning, in fact, demonstrates his love of ambiguity and irony and the careful thought which went into the selection of each. His illustrations for two works of Henry James provide conclusive evidence of the depth of his understanding and interest in symbolism.

Shlomith Rimmon, in his examination of the ambiguity of Henry James, observes that the current use of the term generally means being open to more than one interpretation. He defines ambiguity more narrowly as two concepts which cannot both be true, which are "mutually exclusive," a choice must be made between one meaning or the other. He defines irony, on the other hand, as "Two opposed narratives – the one explicitly told and the other surreptitiously implied. By the fact that we recognize the implied meaning as the 'true' one, it can no longer be considered ambiguous because actual ambiguity defies choice."[28] Demuth invites multiple interpretation, in fact, presents two clear choices, the glorification of industry or the indictment of it. He offers the viewer true ambiguity in the Rimmon sense.

Demuth's illustrations for James and Wedekind have been called his masterpieces by Andrew Carnduff Ritchie, who asserts that, "Demuth encompasses the spirit of both authors to an amazing degree." He contends that, "Rarely, if ever, has the mood and atmosphere of the two stories been more perfectly translated into visual terms."[29] That Demuth was able to capture the essence of James so thoroughly demonstrates his affinity for James's turn of mind.

In his illustrations for James,[30] Demuth selects those scenes where the sense of ambiguity and mystery are most intense. In *The Beast in the Jungle* he depicts the moment of truth when the beast finally appears, when Marcher is confronted with his special "event," when it is revealed to him that the occurrence he has long awaited is, in fact, a non-occurrence, his inward turned soul in its self-centered waiting has left life unlived, has never experienced the joy or sorrow of love. The other two scenes depicted are the boat ride in Sorrento, his moment of revelation to May of the "portent" for which he waited; and her last desperate offering of herself to which he failed to respond. These are the scenes that are the heart of the story, and it is these

scenes that Demuth chooses to illustrate. Demuth thrives on the unspoken in James, the act of May knowing Marcher's fate and offering him release, yet his oblivion to reality until at last the beast confronts him.

Likewise, Demuth in the titles of his works pays homage to the same love of ambiguity, the same sense of mystery. He shows two sides of the coin. He deliberately picks titles and subjects which are the epitome of the illusive. Nowhere does this imply whimsy.

John L. Sweeney exploring the relationship between James's works and Demuth's watercolor illustrations discusses James's reluctance to have his works illustrated lest the illustrations interfere with the reader's own interpretation of the words James is weaving. He states, "James saw the dangers of distraction likely to follow from the presence of illustrations accompanying the text."[31]

Sweeney delves into James's distaste for anything "that relieves prose of the duty of being..."[32] James wished his prose to stand for itself, to capture the reader's imagination without the visual distraction of preconceived ideas. The desire of James for the reader to form his own view corresponds to Demuth's desire for the viewer to draw his own conclusions. He sets up a dichotomy between the painting and the title and asks the viewer to exercise imagination, to question or accept.

Sweeney cites Demuth's "penetrating interpretive vision" in these illustrations and emphasizes that "each composition is a picture in itself which may be assessed on its own terms...,"[33] a pictorial unity which may be viewed independently of any literary content in terms of color, form and composition; while, at the same time, the three paintings interlock symbolically with "constant interplay of formal and iconographic motives throughout."[34] He details Demuth's careful selection and placement of symbols which reflect the deeper meaning of the story, his allusions to time as the central theme of the story. Sweeney discusses his precise placement of the clock in central focus between May and Marcher on the mantlepiece, and his use of purple lilacs as a symbol of April, the month of May's death. He points out Demuth's use of color to depict the passage of time; the faded green of May's scarf in the second scene replacing the vibrant green of the oars and boatman's seat in the first, and becoming a "withered yellowish shade" in the third.[35]

He further describes the use of fire turned to ashes to symbolically depict May's love and his fate. The rising form of Mt. Vesuvius in the background of the Sorrento scene becomes a fireless hearth in the central panel, and ultimately an urn full of ashes in the final scene, the

ashes of that which would have saved him from his fate.[36] Sweeney states that, "Demuth's pictures are not static, isolated representations. Symbol, form, color and rhythm of arrangement carry the observer's eye back and forth from the center of the series in much the same way that James's echo of image and oblique interaction of phrase carry the reader backward and forward through the incidents, transitions and recapitulation of his narrative."[37] This penetrating rendering of the most salient points in James, the care with which he selected each object to further elucidate the text, betrays the profound nature of Demuth's works, and belies any hint of quick, offhand renderings, and whimsically bestowed titles.

His work for the *Turn of the Screw* shows a similar sensitivity to the underlying intent of James. He selects scenes which convey the highest sense of ambiguity, which call on the viewer, as the reader, to make a clear choice. The governess sees the supernatural or she does not, she is good or she is evil.[38]

This duplicity of meaning is amply illustrated by *Incense for a New Church*. It is the America portrayed by Hart Crane and Frank Stella in verbal and visual depictions of the Brooklyn Bridge, the art espoused by Alfred Stieglitz[39] to convey the spirit of America; or it is a reflection of Demuth's concern for worship in America of a new God, commerce, wealth, industry. By providing a clear, pristine vision of American industry Demuth was portraying the good, the progressive, the essence of the dynamic American spirit. With his titles, then, he provided a flip of the coin, a look at the dark side. As James provides both, as the governess can be only good or evil, Demuth illustrates both. He presents the American landscape in terms of the good and leaves his titles to tantalize and tease those who would see the other side.

Between 1924 and 1929, Demuth painted a series of poster portraits in oil. Painted as homages to his close friends, each element within the portrait was meticulously chosen to represent the individual metaphorically. Davidson states that "the objects in the posters are like clues waiting to be deciphered."[40] Demuth's propensity for the puzzle, the masked, received full reign in these works. His use of the mask as a symbol in two of the homages reflects this interest. Eiseman comments on Demuth's use of "symbolic imagery" in his homages and cites the mask which is the central focus of *Love, Love, Love (Homage to Gertrude Stein)*, (1928, Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, Lugano, Switzerland) as an allusion to Stein's mask-like portrait by Picasso, painted in 1906.[41] He also sees the mask as a reference to her theatrical works and interest in psychology.[42] Davidson and

Eiseman both refer to the repetition of the word love and the numbers 1, 2, and 3 as symbolic of her literary style.[43]

Two masks figure prominently in Demuth's *Longhi on Broadway (Homage to Eugene O'Neill)*, (1927, Collection of the William H. Lane Foundation, Leonminster, Massachusetts) Davidson reveals Demuth's use of triple entendre in this painting with the mask equaling Pietro Longhi, the eighteenth century Venetian painter of masked figures; acting as an analogue for the theatre; and, especially, suggesting O'Neill's use of masked figures in his own plays. Davidson also interprets the whiskey bottle as symbolic of O'Neill's drinking, while the vine recalls Dionysus, the Greek divinity of wine and revelry to whom early Greek theatrical performances were dedicated, and alludes to O'Neill's interest in Greek mythology.[44]

A third portrait, of William Carlos Williams, *I Saw the Figure 5 in Gold (Homage to William Carlos Williams)* 1928, (Figure 4), is based upon Williams's poem, *The Great Figure.* Demuth's friendship with Williams dates to his early years as a student at the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts. It is appropriate that he honored this innovative literary figure and old friend with a work that had an acknowledged impact on the New Realist work of Robert Indiana and is believed to have influenced Jasper Johns.[45] The fragmented nature of this painting relates directly to Williams's broken verse. Tashjian suggests this painting of multiple views of a bright red fire engine presents a fitting symbol of Williams's boisterous personality, while the cityscape portrays Williams as an urban poet.[46] Davidson concurs with Tashjian's assessment citing the aptness of a fire engine as an image for the forward and audacious Williams. He draws a further parallel between the fire engine as a vehicle of salvation and Williams's vocation as a medical doctor.[47] Demuth's other homages to Georgia O'Keeffe, John Marin, and Arthur Dove were equally rich in symbolic elements.

Noted for his economy of means, Demuth distilled everything to the core of its being. An examination of his deliberate, scrupulously chosen imagery and consideration of the care exercised by Demuth in his choice of titles implies that the appellation, *A Sky After El Greco,* was not casually chosen.

In the nineteenth century, after centuries of neglect, El Greco was discovered by Theophile Gautier. He was heralded by Manet as a forerunner who had taken liberties with strictly representational art. He was regarded as a kindred sprit, an old master to evoke in their struggle for the supremacy of color over drawing. His reputa-

tion grew, until in the early part of the twentieth century, he was revered as a precursor of Cezanne, one of the patriarchs of modern art. He was regarded as an Expressionist, proto-Cubist, Mannerist, and mystic.[48] Robert Byron states, "There is one spiritual ancestor who sought what the present seeks, and whose attainment the present is still far from having surpassed. This is El Greco."[49] The expressionist quality of his distorted, elongated forms held certain appeal to an art world casting off the remnants of the static, representational world of academic art. The emotional quality of his work led to his general acceptance as a mystic, a spiritual being who painted from the depths of his soul. In 1941, Henry McBride asks, "Was El Greco a soul? I say he was all soul . . . no painter has been so spiritual as he."[50] His connection with the Spanish mystics St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross was accepted as fact. In the mythology surrounding his image it was believed that he painted only what he felt in the depths of his soul with complete indifference to his contemporaries.[51]

His influence on Cezanne was unquestioned. Franz Marc, writing in the *Blaue Reiter Almanac*, states that "Cezanne and El Greco are spiritual brothers despite the centuries that separate them."[52] Roger Fry regards Cezanne's art as a synthesis of El Greco and Poussin. Citing Cezanne's acquisition of works by both El Greco and Poussin, Fry discusses Cezanne's affinity for El Greco and his absorption of El Greco's work as a key element in the development of Cezanne.[53] What artistic elements formed the basis for this interpretation and constituted this link between El Greco and Cezanne? Both artists painted outside the artistic norm of their period. Like Cezanne, El Greco modeled form with color. Both created contour by juxtaposing light against dark without the use of preliminary drawing or outline. Byron asserts that El Greco thought "wholly in color."[54] In drawing a comparison between Cezanne and El Greco, Yvon Taillandier points to a reduced spatial depth as another point in common, citing the bas-relief effect of the work of El Greco.[55]

Landscape forms another bridge. Byron suggests that in El Greco's landscapes, "more nearly than anywhere else, he approaches the impressionist founders of modern art." He cites *View of Toledo* and "its astonishing affinity with the painting of Cezanne."[56] Byron was not alone in this summation. Harry Adsit Bull, in 1929, states that "El Greco is well known as the old master with the greatest appeal to the Post-Impressionists. His mark on Cezanne is unmistakable . . . *View of Toledo* . . . shows particularly well the inspirational relationship between Greco's handling of landscape and

Figure 4. Charles Demuth, *I Saw the Figure Five in Gold,* 1883–1935. Oil on compositional board. Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1949.

that of the moderns."[57] El Greco's status as the precursor of Cezanne, as an inspiration to the father of the Cubist movement, provides a foundation for Demuth's quotation of *View of Toledo*.

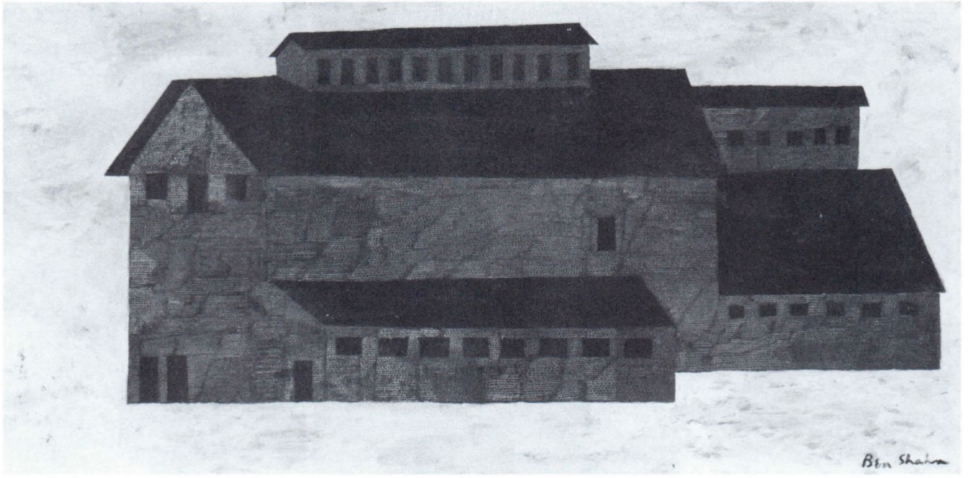
Faison has demonstrated that while Demuth used local architectural and industrial sites as his models, he took great liberties with his likenesses. He arbitrarily dislocated buildings to his compositional taste and frequently used telephone wires or tree branches as the basis for his prisms and ray lines.[58] Therefore, El Greco's arbitrary displacement of two key buildings,[59] the Alcazar and cathedral in *View of Toledo* would appeal to Demuth's aesthetic sense. This displacement of the Alcazar and cathedral is echoed by Demuth's dislocation in *A Sky After El Greco*. Demuth's selection of these two key buildings is another example of the meticulous care with which he extracted the essence of the symbolic meaning of a work.

Demuth's use of Lancaster as a model for his architectural landscapes has been documented by Faison, who speculates that the steeple of the Trinity Lutheran Church which was visible from Demuth's studio window was the model for the Christopher Wren-like steeples frequently depicted by Demuth.[60] Its tall, slender spire undoubtedly formed the mental reference to the spire in *A Sky After El Greco*. Demuth habitually simplified his forms and extracted the most important elements in conceiving his landscapes, therefore this composite of forms, the conflation of the image of Toledo's cathedral with his familiar steeple, created a dual reference, blending El Greco's spiritual relationship with Toledo with Demuth's affection for his own Lancaster.

El Greco was known to enjoy the company of scholars and poets, to be an intellect and quick wit, qualities which Demuth possessed and admired. The few contemporaries who wrote of El Greco, regarded him as a contradiction, an enigma.[61] The appeal of such a man to Demuth, who left a legacy of puns and puzzles, who was himself enigmatic, is apparent.

Brown regards El Greco's theory of art as elitist. Citing El Greco's comments in the margins of copy of Vitruvius to the effect that "Painting, because of its universality, becomes capable of speculation," Brown observes that El Greco equated painting with philosophy and that he "had nothing but scorn for popular taste."[62] This corresponds to Demuth's expressed view that art is only for the initiated, that each viewer should find his own truth.

Demuth was a known admirer of Marcel Proust. Discussing El Greco, in 1930, Pijoan says, "He goes ahead, distorting the forms, expounding them, and coloring them at his own fancy. This is why El Greco is today the demigod of the advanced schools. Four hundred years ago, he lived the life that Proust lived and described. Proust says that everything has at least two realities, if not more. Distortion, interpretation are no longer considered licenses of the art, but the expressions of the truth."[63] This expresses Demuth's sentiment. Everything has two realities. This philosophy, then, provides the basis for Demuth's homage to and quotation of, El Greco. He was Demuth's spiritual partner. This reverence is left for the viewer to discern. Nothing is explicit, the beholder is left to append one's own interpretation on the subtle quotation from *View of Toledo* with its rich symbolism.


Ben Shahn

Carolyn Robbins

Ben Shahn's *Mine Building:* *A Symbol Of Disaster*

Figure 1. Ben Shahn, *Mine Building,* 1948, tempera, Arizona State University Art Museum. Gift of Oliver B. James.

Ben Shahn's painting, *Mine Building* (1948)[1] (Figure 1), is a powerful, complex symbol of the Centralia, Illinois, mine disaster of March 25, 1947. It is one of four paintings and nearly one hundred drawings created by Shahn in response to that catastrophe, which claimed the lives of one hundred and eleven miners and brought devastation to their families. The event, widely reported by the national news media, inspired the artist first to accept the assignment to illustrate a magazine article, "The Blast in Centralia No. 5, a Mine Disaster No One Stopped," written by John Bartlow Martin for *Harper's Magazine* in 1948. The incident then prompted Shahn to execute a series of paintings: *Mine Building* (1948) (Figure 1), *Miners' Wives* (1948) (Figure 2), *Mine Disaster* (1948) (Figure 3), and *Death of a Miner* (1949) (Figure 4). The media avidly reported details of recovery efforts for entombed miners and published photographs of the scene, which were to influence Shahn; it also covered a Senate investigation which ensued.

Shahn's mine disaster paintings have never been analyzed within the context of his earlier sketches, nor have they been discussed in relation to news photographs of the event or the specific circumstances of the disaster. Such an analysis reveals that much of Shahn's imagery emerges from his illustrations and from contemporary news media photographs.[2] Shahn relied on personal experiences with miners, as well as photographs he took of them twelve years earlier while working for the Farm Securities Administration. In examining the paintings and considering the artist's comments about the purpose of his art, it becomes evident that this series of paintings is symbolic of the appalling conditions in our nation's mining industry in the late 1940s and the disaster which occurred because of those conditions.

Mine Building, executed in tempera on masonite, has affinities with Precisionism in subject matter and style. Consisting of a single, large industrial edifice centrally placed within an ambiguous setting, the work has no atmospheric perspective and lacks any sense of

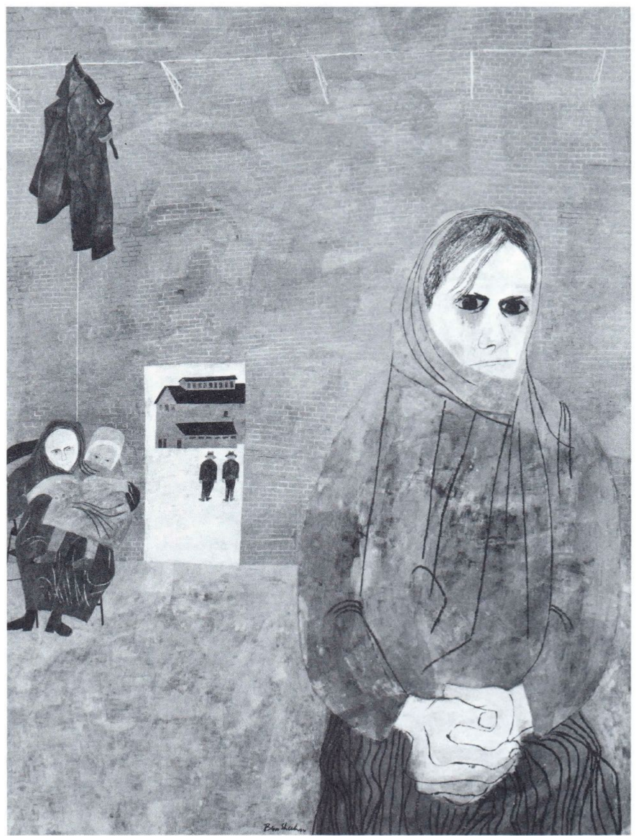


Figure 2. Ben Shahn, *Miner's Wives.* Philadelphia Museum of Art. Given by Wright S. Ludington.

depth. Instead, the emphasis is on its planar forms. It is a simplified, stark composition devoid of any human activity or landscape. Shahn's painting, however, rebukes the aesthetics of Precisionism. The Precisionists, in depicting their pristine subjects with crisp lines, clear colors, elimination of surface detailing, and removal of all evidence of man's physical presence, celebrate America's power and self-sufficiency through its industrialism.[3] Shahn, however, presents the negative effects of industrialization. Shahn's mine building is encrusted with grime and soot, evidence of man's labor. The black-roofed structure with darkened windows and doors stands starkly against a light ground subtly enriched with a variety of hues. The walls have mottled effect of red, red-orange, gold, green and sooty-grey pigment. Closely spaced striations cut into the paint to simulate the appearance of brickwork. As in Precisionism, an overall flattened perspective creates a two-dimensional effect. Instead of addressing purely formal interests, however, Shahn's painting speaks of social concerns. *Mine Building,* with its grimy, textured surface, loudly proclaims human drama and suffering, and urges a symbolic interpretation.

The symbolism in *Mine Building* reveals Shahn's liberal ideology. Shahn's concern for the oppressed and sympathy for the causes of organized labor had been demonstrated previously in the Tom Mooney series

Figure 3. Ben Shahn, *Mine Disaster.* Courtesy of the Chicago Art Institute.

(1932) and in his posters for the Political Action Committee of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (1944 and 1946). The grave circumstances which led to the Centralia disaster stirred Shahn's ideological sensibilities.

Although a State inspector had repeatedly cited violations of mine safety laws at Centralia, those responsible for enforcement and correction of the dangerous conditions did virtually nothing.[4] In March, 1946, four top officers of the local union had written a letter to the governor of Illinois begging for enforcement by the Department of Mines and Minerals. They were terrified of coal-dust explosions such as had occurred in Kentucky and West Virginia. The letter included the phrase, "Please save our lives."[5] One year later, three of those four men died in the Centralia coal-dust disaster.[6]

The inhabitants of Centralia were more than justified in their fear. Mine safety records in this country were dreadful. Statistics from 1977 indicate that for a one hundred year period of record-keeping, over 120,000 coal miners suffered violent deaths. That is an average of one hundred per month for one hundred years.[7] Health and death benefits were terribly inadequate and pension benefits were non-existent. Some measure of relief began in 1947, when the miner's Welfare and Retirement Fund was established, after a two-year battle for its creation by John L. Lewis.[8] It did not, however, make up for past omissions. Josephine Roche, admin-

Figure 4. Ben Shahn, *Death of a Miner.* The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Arthur H. Hearn Fund, 1950.

istrator of the Fund, described "a backlog of human misery" in testimony before a Senate subcommittee in 1949:

> No less shocking than the record of mine killings and deaths resulting from the hardships of mining existence is the record of those who linger on, maimed, broken, disabled, daily tortured by their helplessness, their pain and the constant realization of the burden their dependents carry. A backlog of human misery has been rolled up through the decades by the destruction of human bodies, health, of human values, as well as human life.
>
> Excessively high rates for tuberculosis, silicosis, arthritis and many other chronic diseases prevail among miners. Unbelievably poor medical and hospital facilities – or none at all – have been the lot of the mining population for decades.[9]

Ben Shahn, well aware of such human misery, expressed an intense compassion for mankind long before the creation of his mine disaster paintings. This is evident in his Sacco and Vanzetti series (1932), and much later in his famous war paintings, such as *The Red Stairway* (1944) and *Liberation* (1945). The following statement also reveals his concerns:

> I don't really care that much about art. I'm interested in life, and only in art in so far as it enables me to express what I feel about life. . . . But for me painting had to be a way of arriving at the truth about life – our life here and now.[10]

The Centralia mine disaster enabled the artist to examine the realities of life and to reveal them in his paintings and magazine illustrations.

A year after the mine disaster, Shahn began his project by accepting a *Harper's Magazine* commission to illustrate John Bartlow Martin's article. The editors provided Shahn with a copy of the essay, informing him there was no stipulation as to the number of illustrations. Four days later Shahn presented the editors with sixty-four drawings of the ninety-nine he had executed. Twenty-four of these were chosen for the article.[11] The large number of illustrations Shahn created in a short period of time indicates the profoundness of his response to the event. That Shahn next proceeded to execute four paintings further attests to the artist's intense interest in the subject.[12] This reflects his belief that drawings fail to adequately express what he called "the content of feeling." He explains:

> One cannot, I think, crowd into drawings a really towering content of feeling. Drawings may be small intimate revelations; they may be witty or biting, they may be fragmentary glimpses of great feelings or awesome situations, but I feel that the immense idea asks for a full orchestration of color, depth, texture and form.[13]

Nevertheless, the sketches often formed the bases for Shahn's paintings. Indeed, five of the magazine illustrations (Figure 5a,b,c,d,e) are compositionally incorporated into Shahn's paintings. For example *Death of a Miner* (Figure 4) contains a man in the upper left corner fleeing from a great fiery explosion; although the position of the arms is reversed, the rushing figure illustrating the article (Figure 5a) is nearly identical to that in the painting. In the foreground, two mine officials towering over the inert form of a fallen miner are direct quotations of two illustrations found on separate pages in the essay; the officials with backs turned to the viewer (Figure 5c) and a prostrate worker (Figure 5b). Moreover, the figures in *Miners' Wives* (Figure 2) directly relate to a sketch of women in the mine washhouse seated beneath the suspended clothing of their husbands (Figure 5d). The woman holding a child in her lap, in the painting, is particularly reminiscent of the drawing. A pair of hands clenched in agony created for the *Harper's* article (Figure 5e) reappears on the wife in the foreground. In addition, the same two sketched images of mine officials in business suits and hats found in *Harper's (Figure 5c)* and in *Death of a Miner* Figure 4) recede beyond the door of the washhouse in the painting. *Mine Disaster* (Figure 3) also includes images of women reminiscent of those in the washhouse sketch (Figure 5d). In the painting, however, they stand with heads bowed, mutely waiting. Although Martin's article does not contain a

Figure 5. Ben Shahn, *The Blast in Centralia No. 5,* illustrations from John Bartlow Martin's article, *Harper's Magazine,* March, 1948. Courtesy Bernarda.

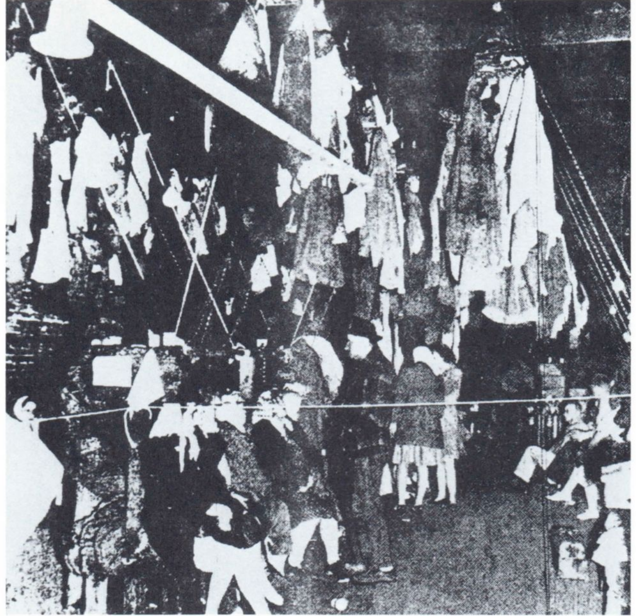


Figure 6. Photograph, *Chicago Daily Tribune,* March 27, 1947.

separate sketch of the mine building, that image repeatedly reappears in the paintings, as do the mine officials. The structure in the Arizona painting is a near replica of that in the background of *Mine Disaster,* as well as the one glimpsed through the door in *Miners' Wives.* Shahn, in all probability, executed an illustration of the building which was not included in Martin's essay. The artist's wife, Bernarda Bryson Shahn, published such a sketch in her 1949 article on Shahn's drawings.[14]

Miners' Wives pierces to the heart of this industrial disaster: the needless waste of lives caused by uncorrected, dangerous conditions; the conflicting interests of wage earners and mine operators; and the helplessness and grief of the women and children. Ashen-faced and wrapped in cloaks and scarves against the freezing weather, the wives await news of their husbands. This depiction relates to Martin's description of the women waiting in the mine washhouse. It also recalls contemporary newspaper and magazine photographs, such as one from the *Chicago Daily Tribune* which graphically illustrates the long vigil of the wives (Figure 6).

Traditionally, the workers came to the company washhouse on their way to the mine, put on their work clothes, hooked their clean, street clothes to a chain and hoisted them up to the ceiling. After a day's work, they returned to the washhouse, showered, then retrieved their clean clothes before going home. So, the women of Centralia kept their vigil in the washhouse, the first

Figure 7. Photograph, *Chicago Daily Tribune,* March 27, 1947.

place a miner would come, if he exited the mine.[15] A comparison of *Miners' Wives* (Figure 2) with the *Tribune* photograph (Figure 6) reveals similarities: women wearing coats and scarves, clothes hanging from the ceiling, a bare floor and a brick wall. Another photograph from the *Chicago Daily Tribune* (Figure 7) pictures three individuals in the washhouse. The woman seated to the right, seemingly in a state of shock, is remarkably close to the widow depicted by Shahn in facial structure, dark eyes, hairdo and clothing. Although Shahn executed the paintings a year after these photographs were taken, it is clear that these or similar photographs inspired the imagery in his paintings and sketches.

The social and political issues of this industrial disaster were not only alluded to in paintings such as Shahn's but were openly and hotly debated publicly. A reporter for *Life* magazine recalled the vociferous reaction of John L. Lewis to the tragedy and simultaneously described the behavior of the women:

> ...while Lewis used their grief to make noisy political capital, the women of Centralia were silent. They were the silent ones when it happened. Through the long night of March 25 they waited in the mine washhouse quietly and dry-eyed. Some of them slowly paced up and down the room. But they did not even sob. When their husbands' bodies were finally brought up and taken away, the widows, without a word, gathered up their men's belongings and left. Then they walked alone down the slushy roads to their homes. They made no sound but the clink-clink of their open galoshes. They have been silent ever since.[16]

In particular, the circumstance of Joe Bryant's widow reported by Martin embodies the kind of tragedy Shahn alludes to in *Miners' Wives.* According to Martin's account, Mrs Bryant, forty-four years old at the time of the explosion, had borne eleven children to Joe Bryant and was pregnant with the twelfth. The family lived in a humble four-room house. While trapped in an air pocket in the mine, Joe Bryant had written a note to his wife, cautioning against signing away compensation money upon his imminent death. He asked that his wife name the baby after him "so she would have a Joe." Three months later a baby girl was born; and Mrs Bryant named her Joey.[17]

In *Miners' Wives* (Figure 2), Shahn captures the sense of cold, silent helplessness that wives such as Mrs Bryant must have experienced in waiting to learn of the fate of their husbands. A comparison of this painting

with a *Life* magazine photograph (Figure 8) picturing a group of vigilant women demonstrates to what extent the artist simplified the composition, restricted the number of figures, and exaggerated their physical aspects for expressive purposes. One widow hovers and dominates the foreground. Her dark-circled eyes and ghostly face, seemingly frozen in anger, together with her enlarged, clenched hands, reveal the woman's distress and agony. Other elements in Shahn's simplified, tight composition invite a more penetrating interpretation. His depiction reveals much more than the stoicism described in *Life* magazine. Shahn formally created a sense of ambiguity and set up tension by utilizing a series of contrasts, such as the play back and forth between large figures and small ones, inside and outside, working class citizens and company officials, and women who face the viewer while the industry representatives do not. The compressed space between the wives inside and the officials outside creates added tension which emphasizes the physical and mental alienation of the two social groups. The Centralia women, stoic and enduring in the midst of disaster, clearly evoke the solidarity of the working class, subject to exploitation by or neglect of the big business interests. The two mine officials, seemingly indifferent to the women, stride toward the mine building, which is a symbol of power.[18] That impersonal structure, which reveals no life through its blackened windows and doors, presents a mysterious air as if concealing something from the viewer. In a sense the building represents the contradiction of a miner as a wage earner because of the income it provides, while at the same time it threatens destruction of the workers. It stands as a visible and psychological barrier between the women and their husbands beneath the ground.

Shahn's creation of an image critical of industrial interests while championing disadvantaged workers is in character with his political ideology. His verbal statements, moreover, clarify this group of paintings as a call for reform:

> (One) rankles at broad injustices, and one ardently hopes for and works toward mass improvements; but that is only because whatever mass there may be is made up of individuals, and each one of them is able to feel and have hopes and dreams.[19]

Shahn's interest in issues of social concern, often clearly translated into his art, has long been acknowledged, even by our government. Frances Pohl has amply demonstrated the extent to which the U.S. govern-

Figure 8. Photograph, *Life,* April 7, 1947, p. 40.

ment used Shahn and his art, during the Cold War, to try to improve America's image throughout the world. The Museum of Modern Art chose Shahn as one of two artists whose paintings would be shown at the 1954 Venice Biennale. Pohl asserts that at the Biennale the United States presented Shahn as "an honest, humanitarian, socially-conscious, liberal American artist."[20]

Mine Disaster (Figure 3) depicts a group of grim-faced individuals juxtaposed against the mine building, now quite large, looming menacingly behind them. Pale faces and somber attitudes reveal the dire situation. Photographs of the scene on the days following the explosion, such as one taken by *Life* magazine (Figure 9), reveal a mine building very similar to that portrayed by Shahn. A tipple stands adjacent to the building; automobiles are clustered in the yard, and activity of rescue crews and crowds of onlookers is evident. Again Shahn eliminated everything but the basic elements – the people and the building – symbols of the victims and the perpetrator of disaster. Three women and two men stand behind a rope barrier, erected by the police to keep them back from the shaft. The rope separates them from the trapped miners and links them physically and psychologically to the mine building. They are inextric-

ably bound. The women are typically dressed in head scarves, dark clothing and galoshes; their pale faces reveal large, sorrowful eyes. One man, clutching his hat, looks purposefully, even painfully, toward the viewer. When this painting was shown in the 1949 Downtown Gallery exhibition, a visitor cited the dour faces as characteristic of Shahn's view of human nature, and the factor which kept him from being really popular with the masses. Shahn quickly responded:

> . . . for the smiling face, doesn't that depend on how you approach people? The coal miner who grins when you tell him a dirty joke or discuss baseball with him isn't grinning when I ask him about living conditions or the recent strike. But the strike and the living conditions are his very life; the other aspects are his escape from life. I'll leave the painting of those to others; to the copy writers, to the slicks, to Hollywood.[21]

The faces in *Mine Disaster* are those of long-frightened men and women whose worst fears have come true.

Shahn knew about miners; he had seen them, talked to them and photographed them twelve years earlier while employed as a photographer for the Farm Securities Administration. One of his photographs from 1935 (Figure 10) depicts a group of Kentucky miners on lunch break, dirty, tired and dejected. Shahn borrowed compositionally from this photograph for another *Harper's Magazine* illustration on Centralia which depicted a group of seated miners with lunch pails.[22] Shahn's interpretation of the individuals in *Mine Disaster* reflects the sober demeanor and unsmiling faces seen in his earlier photograph.

Ben Shahn, undoubtedly aware of the "backlog of human misery" and inspired by the Centralia explosion, unleashed his full expressive powers in these paintings. He could have elected to depict the force of the explosion or horribly mangled bodies. He did not. Rather, his images are subtle and psychologically penetrating. Shahn's comments regarding illustrations which he executed for a later article by Martin based on a Chicago tenement fire clarify his approach:

> The image that I sought to create was not one of a disaster; that somehow doesn't interest me. I wanted instead to create the emotional tone that surrounds disaster; you might call it the inner disaster.[23]

Figure 9. Photograph, *Life,* April 7, 1947, p. 41.

That inner disaster is clearly evident in his haunting images of fearful, suffering, helpless people; and the cause of their distress is symbolically embodied in the image of the mine building.

The appearance of the mine structure in *Mine Disaster* and *Miners' Wives* and its existence as a separate work in *Mine Building* strongly suggest symbolic intent. Shahn clearly set forth his belief in the use of symbols:

> Value is communicated in works of art by means of symbols which may be highly communicative or abstruse... such symbols may be – on the most completely communicative level – only reproductions of existing things, as are photographs. On the next level of obviousness, they may be slightly selective, eliminating some unnecessary details. On a still less obvious level the art symbols may be extreme simplifications, a sort of short-hand, still representing objects but now requiring an advanced ability on the part of the viewer to read or decipher.[24]

In Shahn's work, every element has significance and its placement within the composition is critical. Nadya Aisenberg's interview of Shahn reveals difficulties he had in the creation of *Miners' Wives.* Shahn confessed:

> Now, I change my mind a great deal in working. I remember one painting that I called *Miners' Widows* or *Miners' Wives,* which I started and carried along for several weeks with the idea of having two figures right in the foreground almost next to each other. After two or three weeks of that I realized there was something wrong with it. At first I didn't dare face it, and then I had to face it. One of the figures had to go way back and become a little thing. And that meant that two weeks of work had to be scraped off and abandoned.[25]

Shahn recognized the cryptic nature of his symbolism which began with his war paintings and is reflected in the Centralia paintings.[26] Surely, the stark, soot-stained building void of life speaks to the unsavory aspects of life in a coal mining town. As Bernarda Bryson Shahn has observed, Ben Shahn undoubtedly demonstrated in *Mine Building* an interest in the surprising color effects on industrial buildings encrusted with grime and soot.[27] Her contention that *Mine Building* is divorced from the disaster, however, must be questioned. Shahn's ability to reveal the fortunes of people by his depiction of the structures in which they live and work has been noted by James Soby.[28] Soby specifically refers to a silkscreen and gouache version of the mine building executed in 1956. Clearly, Shahn's painting embodies much deeper, more human concern.

The recurrence of the mine building in the Centralia paintings signals its symbolic importance. In *Miners' Wives* it is seen through the doorway, small yet potent in its implications. In *Mine Disaster* it occupies a much larger area, as it looms behind a forlorn group, bound to it by a rope barrier. Finally, in *Mine Building*, it stands isolated, a subject unto itself, full of impact. Shahn once observed:

> I feel that each work of art – each serious work – has an innate value...The work of art is the created image and symbol of a specific value; it was made to contain permanently something that was felt and thought and believed. It contains that feeling and nothing else. All other things have been excluded.[29]

Figure 10. Ben Shahn, *Coal Miners,* photograph, Williamson, West Virginia, 1935. Harvard University Art Museum, The Fogg Museum. Gift of Bernarda B. Shahn.

On the surface, *Mine Building* may appear to be nothing more than the depiction of an architectural structure. It cannot, however, be divorced from its related paintings nor from the tragedy which inspired it. *Mine Building* contains Shahn's humanistic concerns about the Centralia mine explosion. The structure and its empty surroundings form a sparse, cryptic composition. The blood-red tonalities of the soot-stained walls contrast with the gloom of blackened windows, doors and roof. It stands starkly in a field of snow in the cold of winter. It represents the mining industry and its powerful, controlling officials; it alludes to the social and political issues surrounding preventable, industrial disasters; it suggests separation of grieving women from their husbands trapped in the earth below; and it symbolizes for miners hardship, disease, danger and death. These paintings distinctly recall the conditions of our nation's mining industry in the late 1940s and are clearly symbols of disaster – a disaster which occurred on March 25, 1947 – and impending disaster which hovers, even today, over the lives of miners and their families.

Barbara Spies

Georgia O'Keeffe's *Horse's Skull on Blue:* A Dedicatory Essay

While reaching for a conclusive interpretation of a work of art, it is imperative to consider any influences which may have played a part in the creation of the work and to heed the artist's own interpretation and intent. The artist often connects the emotional and spiritual elements in a subconscious manner. The question at hand concerns the skull paintings of Georgia O'Keeffe. In the following quote she relates her first encounter with the subject:

> Actually I really didn't know where to begin on the skulls, I only knew I was more interested in painting them than sketching them. I remember one of the servant girls at the hotel, where our apartment was located was making a sort of pajama type thing, with little blue feet in it for her small child. She was making it out of a beautiful blue flannel. She had some of the material left over and she knew I liked the color very much; so she gave it to me. I felt this would be a good background for the horse's skull I had brought back from New Mexico. Strangely enough I didn't hang the skull and the fabric on the wall as one would suppose, I laid it on the floor in the kitchen, set up my easel and started to paint. Also, among other things I had brought back from New Mexico were some beautiful large tissue paper flowers made by the Spanish-American people, (they used to make such beautiful flowers years ago); and that first day I was working on the horse's skull, I was holding one of these flowers in my mouth. The door bell rang. I laid down my brushes and started for the door, wondering what I was going to do with the flower. I couldn't answer the door with the flower in my mouth; so I poked it in the eye of the horse's skull. Of course that inspired another painting a year later: *Horses's Skull with Pink Rose*, 1931.[1]

Figure 1. Georgia O'Keeffe, *Horse's Skull on Blue,* 1930, oil on canvas. Arizona State University Art Museum. Gift of Oliver B. James.

Horse's Skull on Blue, (Figure 1) 1930,[2] marked the beginning of a series of twenty works by Georgia O'Keeffe which were probably the most startlingly original images she produced during the 1930s and the

early 1940s. This painting reflects the profound and lasting effect the deserts of New Mexico had on her work. Set against a cerulean blue background, the bleached umber and grey skull nearly fills the medium-sized canvas. The compositional arrangement is starkly simple, with the skull placed in a strictly frontal position. The simplified style and overall smooth texture may be due to the fact that O'Keeffe painted "from" the subject rather than what she saw, thus capturing the essence of the subject and not simply recording an object. L.M. Messinger has observed that, "The subject's essential form is derived from her radical simplification of shape and detail. Although her paintings of landscape, flowers and bones are the result of intense direct observation and familiarity with a particular locale or subject, they do not produce a sense of specificity."[3]

O'Keeffe first experienced the desert during the years 1912-14 and again in 1916-18 when she had a variety of teaching jobs in Texas. She wrote in her studio book:

> Texas had always been a sort of far-away dream. When we were children my mother read to us every evening and on Sunday afternoon. It was particularly for my older brother, whose eyes were not good. I had listened for many hours to boy's stories – Stanley's adventures in Africa, Hannibal crossing the Alps, Julius Caesar, *Pilgrim's Progress*, all the Leatherstocking tales, stories of the Wild West, of Texas, Kit Carson and Billy the Kid. It had always seemed to me that the West must be wonderful – there was no place I knew that I would rather go – so when I had a chance to teach there – off I went to Texas – not knowing much teaching.[4]

O'Keeffe recalled the large herds of cattle being driven slowly across the vast plains into town, where the "lowing of cattle was so loud and sad – particularly haunting at night." This sound continued to haunt her, like "Penitente songs, repeating the same rhythms over and over all through the day and night. It was loud and raw under the stars in that wide empty country." She often took trips into the nearby canyons where the quiet solitude and perilous climbs up the steep and narrow paths gave her a new perspective.

> It was wonderful to me and not like anything I had known before. The fright of the day was still with me in the night and I would often dream that the foot of my bed rose straight up into the air – then just as it was about to fall I would wake up. Many drawings came from days like that and later some oil paintings."[5]

In the softly curving indentations and cavities of the skull and drapery in *Horse's Skull on Blue*, one can sense the rolling, undulating landscape of the Southwest. The brilliant blue of the background suggests the clear sky and the isolated skull reflects the haunting loneliness O'Keeffe felt in her first experience in the West.

During this time, O'Keeffe took a year off from teaching and studied at Columbia University's Teachers' College where she encountered the design concepts of Arthur Wesley Dow. Here she found the incentive for truly creative painting. Dow's design formulas were in large part developed from his knowledge of oriental art, particularly eighteenth and nineteenth century Japanese woodcuts. Harmony and balance were the key words in his theories. In his teaching philosophy, Dow stressed the principals of abstract design using line arrangement, spacing, dark and light pattern and color relationships. Only after these were totally absorbed could the artist experiment in pictorial expression.[6] O'Keeffe's sensitive arrangements of nature resulted in primarily serene images which evoked an emotive power.[7] She applied these concepts and personal motifs to an abstract idiom, unifying, as Messinger and Watson suggest, the "canons of traditional European painting and her conversion to the flat compositional mode of oriental painting and philosophy."[8]

In 1916, her work came to the attention of the famous photographer, Alfred Stieglitz. O'Keeffe had sent some of her drawings to Anita Pollitzer, a friend whom she had studied with at Columbia, and had made Pollitzer promise not to show the work to anyone. Pollitzer had become so excited about the work, she immediately took them to the most avant-garde gallery in New York City, "291," which belonged to Stieglitz. He hung them, and when O'Keeffe heard about this she became very angry and insisted Stieglitz take her work down. He finally convinced her to leave her work on the walls and eight years later convinced her to marry him.

Dividing time between New York and the Stieglitz family estate at Lake George, O'Keeffe worked prolifically and almost exclusively in oil. She associated with artists and photographers who gathered around Stieglitz, such as Arthur Dove, Marsden Hartley, John Marin, Charles Demuth and photographer Paul Strand. These artists shared her commitment to abstraction based on nature. Paul Strand's images were done in such extreme magnification of detail that the objects lost all sense of pictorial reference and became abstractions of pattern, shape and line. His work had great influence on O'Keeffe and the very simplicity with which he handled

the subject was a reinforcement to the lessons she had learned from Dow.

Around 1928, O'Keeffe found her sources of inspiration drying up. The din of the city oppressed her. Requiring long periods of privacy to work, she had never enjoyed having many people around her and the continual crowds of family and friends surrounding Stieglitz were abrasive to her spirit.[9] In April, 1929, at the age of forty-one, O'Keeffe made her first visit to New Mexico, where she spent the summer with friends in Taos. Messinger writes:

> O'Keeffe was taken by the majestic terrain [of New Mexico], with its varied geological formations, wide range of exotic colors, intense clarity of light and unusual vegetation. Mountains and bones – new and powerful themes that were readily adapted to her style of combined representation and abstraction – were added to her repertoire. The sculptural qualities inherent in these subjects led her in a new direction, toward more three-dimensional space and form, which she had begun to explore in some of her earliest abstractions.[10]

O'Keeffe returned to New Mexico in 1930, and every summer after with the exception of two years, 1932-33, when she was torn between her work and the needs of Stieglitz, who was recuperating from an illness. Before leaving in September of 1930, she sent a barrel of bones and fabric flowers east, so that she could continue painting New Mexico themes while in New York and Lake George. O'Keeffe recalled:

> That first summer I spent in New Mexico I was a little surprised that there were so few flowers. There was no rain so the flowers didn't come. Bones were easy to find so I began collecting bones. When I was returning East I was bothered about my work – the country had been so wonderful that by comparison what I had done with it looked very poor to me – although I knew it had been one of my best painting years. I had to go home – what could I take with me of the country to keep working on it? I had collected many bones and finally decided that the best thing I could do was to take a barrel of bones – so I took a barrel of bones. When I arrived at Lake George I painted a horse's skull – then another horse's skull and then another horse's skull. After that came a cow's skull on blue.[11]

Thus *Horse's Skull on Blue*, which evokes not only the accumulated experiences of her studies with Dow, and her association with Strand, but also her spiritual experiences with the Southwestern deserts.

O'Keeffe often states that people try to find hidden meaning in her paintings and to instill some kind of symbolism in the paintings of the skulls. In spite of O'Keeffe's denial of symbolism in her paintings and her insistence that people accept them simply as examples of the way she wanted to paint, she does confess: "I find that I have painted my life – things happening in my life – without knowing,"[12] and "I found that I could say things with shape and color that I couldn't say in any other way. . . things that I had no words for."[13]

In using the phrase, "without knowing," O'Keeffe admits that she is not always aware of the intent of a painting. She is following an inner voice which declares the deep and sensual perceptions of her own experiences through color and shape. The simplified forms of *Horse's Skull on Blue* became abstract symbols which connect the eternity of nature with the continuous cycle of life and death.[15] Ernest W. Watson quoted O'Keeffe in an article for *American Artist* in 1943:

> I have wanted to paint the desert and I haven't known how. I always think that I cannot stay with it long enough. So I brought home the bleached bones as my symbols of the desert. To me they are as beautiful as anything I know. To me they are strangely more living than the animals walking around – hair, eyes, and all with their tails switching. The bones seem to cut sharply to the center of something that is keenly alive on the desert, even though it is vast and empty and untouchable – and knows no kindness with all its beauty.[16]

Whatever the experience of the viewer, O'Keeffe's longing for solitude and communion with nature is evident in this composition which captures the essence of her life and her love for the Southwest.

Joseph Lamb

Eastman Johnson's Cranberry Pickers

Perhaps someone visiting Arizona State University's Art Museum for the first time might overlook Eastman Johnson's "The Cranberry Pickers in Nantucket," c. 1875-1880 (Figure 1). It is a monochromatic oil sketch which appears hastily done. Several indistinct figures are depicted working under the warm early afternoon sun of a Nantucket autumn day. Three foreground figures dominate this scene while to their right are ghost-like outlines of other once contemplated pickers. Several more labor in the background of this wide, unspectacular cranberry bog. The story it tells is not immediately captivating, neither is its color scheme of rather drab earth tones. Because no aspect of this sketch has been completed in detail, it barely hints of the carefully finished final version, "The Cranberry Harvest," Timken Gallery, San Diego, 1880 (Figure 2).

Because Johnson was an especially eclectic artist, the sketch's unfinished state provides interested students with a document which says a great deal about the American art scene of the 1870s and 1880s in terms of working methods, artistic development, subject matter and the cross currents between European and American art.

Figure 1. Eastman Johnson, *The Cranberry Pickers in Nantucket,* ca. 1875–1880, oil, Arizona State University Art Museum. Gift of Oliver B. James.

Eastman Johnson (1824-1906) enjoyed an exceptionally long and financially rewarding career. By the time he painted the sketch for *The Cranberry Pickers in Nantucket* he was one of America's best known genre painters. At his death he was regarded more as a great portraitist. After completing his many Nantucket scenes in the early 1880s he devoted the final two and a half decades of his career to portraying affluent Americans. Only in recent years has he regained his position as a great painter of American life.

Born in Lovell, Maine, Johnson was a self-taught youth who quickly created a reputation with his drawings of such famous politicians and literary figures as John Quincy Adams and Ralph Waldo Emerson. By 1849 he had decided he needed formal training, and like other ambitious American contemporaries including Emmanuel Leutze and George Caleb Bingham, he

sailed for Dusseldorf, Germany where he enrolled in its academy.[1] The academy was renown for its sentimental historical and genre paintings and it taught Johnson meticulous drawing skills and compositional techniques. The Academy placed little emphasis upon oil painting. Frustrated because he could not use a brush Johnson spent much of 1851 in the studio of Leutze. He left Germany for The Hague, complaining "there is nothing to see but the present artists," who he felt were "deficient in some of the chief requisites, as in color. . .[2]

In Holland he began a four year love affair with Dutch art, earning himself the title "the American Rembrandt." There his brushwork, under the influence of Hals especially, loosened considerably and he completed his first genre paintings. While his portraits gained for him the position as Court Painter, it was his genre scenes which gained him his reputation.[3]

In 1855, desiring more formal instruction, he joined several former Dusseldorf companions in Paris at the atelier of the famous painter-instructor Thomas Couture. The French master was very popular with Americans because he stressed method. This new environment excited Johnson so much that he later stated he would have remained in Paris forever had not his mother died just two months after his arrival there, forcing him to return to the United States.[4] Such a brief tenure would seem to exclude the possibility of Johnson being heavily influenced in France. Yet his contemporaries and today's art scholars have acknowledged the heavy debt of Couture. The American artist Carroll Beckwith stated shortly after Johnson's death, "His method of work was one known to our predecessors and esteemed by us, though differing from that which I had myself been taught. . . Thomas Couture was perhaps the best exponent of this method in France during the period preceding my study there. Eastman Johnson practiced this formula of painting with extreme dexterity. . . "[5] Patricia Hills, today's leading Johnson scholar, and Albert Boime are two who have confirmed the impact of Couture.[6] The "Cranberry Pickers" sketch would not exist today without the influence of the French master.

The ASU painting is one of some dozen oil sketches or drawings from the 1870s on this theme. Johnson consistently used sketches for his genre scenes, completing over thirty for his maple sugaring subjects of the 1860s. This reflects the impact of Couture, who emphasized more than any other instructor of his day "the practice of making painted sketches."[7] The loose fluid manner in which the maple sugaring sketches are painted reflects Johnson's knowledge of Rembrandt

Figure 2. Eastman Johnson, *The Cranberry Harvest,* Nantucket Island, 1880, oil on canvas.

and Couture. Despite the many varied studies for both themes, no finished version is known of the sugaring off scenes and just one – the Timken painting – of the cranberry pickers. The cranberry bog scenes can be divided into two groups. The Oliver B. James Collection sketch is clearly a study for the Timken painting. As in the finished work we find the central standing female in the foreground and scattered background pickers within the same unobtrusive landscape. Other sketches differ in composition and in theme, representing the final gathering of this harvest at day's end. Hills suggests Yale University Art Gallery's "Cranberry Pickers," c. 1875-80 (Figure 3) may be the final unfinished version of this scene, because of its degree of completion and dimensions similar to the Timken work, 27″ × 54⅛″ and 27″ × 55″ respectively.[8]

It is difficult to determine when the Matthews Center painting was completed in relation to the other sketches of cranberry pickers. The landscape and the standing foreground woman remain consistent in three of the four related sketches. It clearly illustrates Johnson searching for several solutions. He is determining the final scale of the central standing figure in relation to her companions and the landscape while deciding the compositional problem of how the kneeling workers will surround her. The foreground figures in their stiff poses are closer to the Timken work than the Detroit Institute of Art's "In the Field," c. 1875-80 (Figure 4) and resemble the ideal peasants of Millet or Breton.[9] In this sense the sketch may have been a breakthough for Johnson. Its size, 26½″ × 43½″, is closest to the final version. In the end, however, it offered him few final

Figure 3. Eastman Johnson, *Cranberry Pickers,* ca. 1875–1880, the Detroit Institute of Art. Founders Society Purchase, Dexter M. Ferry Fund.

answers. In the Timken painting the secondary foreground figures were altered, their numbers increased. This is suggested in the ghostlike outlines in the ASU sketch. Such outlines were usually traced by Johnson in charcoal from drawings of individual figures.[10] The landscape was finally extended horizontally, resulting in a more panoramic view. At the same time the scale of the workers was decreased in relation to their setting. The sketch is painted in an all over brown tonality applied thinly and evenly, allowing the canvas to show through in places. This technique, possibly learned from Couture, creates a sense of spontaneity and natural lighting not present in the final painting."[11]

The sketch catches Johnson in the act of creating and contemplating, rejecting certain possible solutions while continuing to experiment. This was part of current academic practice leading to a finished painting suitable for public exhibition. It is important to keep in mind that despite current taste which prefers spontaneous examples of an artist's work, Johnson, like most of his contemporaries, never expected Arizona State's sketch to be exhibited publicly. Not only Homer but such artists as the Barbizon painters, various Hague School artists, Boudin and the Impressionists were seriously addressing the issue of precisely what constituted a finished work versus a sketch. As an older artist Johnson in the end was dominated by the desire for the slick, carefully-composed work. He is an example of the American artist working during a transitional period that offered alternative working methods to consider.

Johnson's genre scenes of the 1870s are often compared with Winslow Homer's visions of country life.

Similarities in pigments, brushwork and subject matter are obvious. Homer, too, portayed berry picking episodes. These similarities are not coincidental since they both maintained studios in the same New York University building during the 1860s and early 1870s. Johnson's carefully painted exhibition works reflect his Dusseldorf training.

The spontaneous quality of the Arizona State sketch combined with its sense of natural lighting seems to suggest that it was completed outdoors. Indeed, Johnson did often work outside.[12] The painter regularly asked to be driven about the island with his wife in search of subject matter. All would remain silent until the artist found an appropriate place to work. Then the carriage would be halted. The driver and Mrs Johnson remained behind the artist as he began to work. At the end of such a session the coachman frequently observed what he thought an odd quirk. If no figures were yet in the sketch, one at least was invariably added by the artist before his departure. While figures could have been included for scale, it demonstrates how Johnson regarded Nantucket – as a source of genre scenes, never as pure landscape material.

To what extent did working directly from nature affect Johnson's work? While scholars agree works like "Berry Picking," Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, c. 1875-80 (pencil and watercolor on paper, 7¾" × 19⅜"), were likely done on the spot, oil sketches and the final work were reserved for the studio, even for seemingly spontaneous work like that at Matthews Center.[13] This puts the artist in line with academic practice of the time. Johnson, in any case, would not have needed to wander out of his studio for the cranberry scenes, because the bog lay directly beneath the cliff upon which his studio was built.[14]

If the "Cranberry Pickers" illustrates how an eclectic artist can react to various technical working options, what does this work tell us in terms of subject matter? From the 1840s artists such as William Sidney Mount and George Caleb Bingham had popularized genre painting. By the time Johnson returned to America in 1855 this branch of art had assumed a nationalistic flavor and widespread acceptance. The aftermath of the Civil War brought about an even greater vogue for sentimental everyday scenes. The sense of depression after civil strife, the rapid growth of cities and the resulting loss of long standing American ways of life combined to create a demand for nostalgic views of uniquely American subject matter. Johnson understood better than most artists what would meet current appeal, feeling "there

Figure 4. Eastman Johnson, *In the Fields,* ca. 1875–1880, the Detroit Institute of Art. Founders Society Purchase, Dexter M. Ferry Fund.

was so much beauty all around him in America that he had no time to paint anything else."[15]

Johnson first discovered Nantucket in 1870, when like most artists based in New York he was looking for a "quiet and incurious locality" in which to have a summer studio.[16] He was soon enchanted and spent summers there during the remainder of his life. By the late 1870s Nantucket and Johnson were thought of synonymously because of the widespread popularity of engravings made after the artist's anecdotal scenes. Even today some of the local populace, including a few of the cranberry pickers, can be identified by name, Lizzie Champney noted for *Century Magazine* in 1885:

> Nantucket (is) one of the rare spots which preserve the flavor and atmosphere of the olden time. The island – with its types of old men and women that are fading out elsewhere, even in other remote nooks of Massachusetts, its queer houses and windmills, its antique furniture and costume – has long been the artistic "property" of Mr Eastman Johnson. The man and the place have a natural sympathy for each other. He is a chronicler of a phase of our national life which is fast passing away, and which cannot be made up with old fashion plates and the lay figure of the studio.[17]

Johnson clearly had a story to tell and what and how he tells it says much about the way people wished to idealize a disappearing America. His visions of the island inhabitants inevitably present us with Americans who bring to mind such adjectives as proud, dignified, honest and hard working.

It comes as a surprise that during the 1870s Nantucket was suffering through a period known as their "Great Depression." The whaling industry, which had used the island as a central port, collapsed in the mid 1850s. The population had fallen from 9000 inhabitants to approximately 2800 by the early 1870s. The tourist industry had not yet begun and the people in the Matthews Center sketch were certainly picking the cranberries to eat, not to sell. The cranberry industry was not established on Nantucket until 1904 or 1905.[18] The slightest hint of these troubles never appears in Johnson's Nantucket scenes, however. This tendency to idealize views of rural America is typical of Johnson and his contemporaries, Johnson's differing from most only in his suppression of blatant sentimentality.

Finally, in examining the questions of authenticity and dating, the title "Cranberry Pickers in Nantucket" was given it by the University Art Museum. In the

correspondence between Oliver James and the previous owner, the M. Knoedler Gallery of New York, it was referred to as simply the "Cranberry Pickers."[19] As for authenticity the sketch is not signed, although typical of his sketches. His hand in this case is not disputed. The topic itself was uniquely Johnson's, it follows closely other sketches and the finished work.

Regarding the sketch's date, because the final version was painted in 1880, the sketch could have been painted any time during the decade. However, both Patricia Hills and Edouard Stackpole believe it should be dated closer to the mid 1970s. Dr. Hills has stated that c. 1875-1880 is a good approximation because of a sketch done on the back of a painting which is similar to works exhibited in 1874 and 1875.[20] Mr. Stackpole notes the bog was adjacent to the property Johnson purchased in 1871 but that for the two summers of 1872 and 1873 the artist was busy painting portraits commissioned in New York. He does not feel Johnson turned his attention to the cranberry pickers until the mid to late 1870s.[21]

The Johnson sketch owned by Arizona State University, while not a major work by the painter, reveals much about the artist's working method and choice of subject matter.

Maria Leone

Dull Knife's Defiance

"I am here on my own ground and I will never go back. You may kill me here, but you cannot make me go back."[1]

Those words were uttered in 1879 by the Indian Chief, Dull Knife. He spoke not only for himself, but on behalf of his people, the northern Cheyenne. This heroic figure, of Native American history, has been immortalized on canvas in *Dull Knife's Defiance* (Figure 1) by Ernest L. Blumenshein.[2]

Ernest L. Blumenshein was born in Pittsburgh in 1874. He studied both music and art on the east coast and in Paris. He began to pursue seriously an education and career in art in 1893 at the Cincinnati Academy of Art, under the instruction of Fernand Lungren. Mr Lungren, an illustrator, painted scenes of the American West when Blumenshein came under his direction. Subsequently, Blumenshein would pursue a career in illustration, eventually to replace the latter as a master in capturing the west on canvas.[3]

Illustration was not only a relatively easy way for an artist to make money, but for Blumenshein a means of independence from a father who desired his son to pursue a career in music.[4] In April of 1896, Blumenshein signed a contract with *Scribners,* beginning his long affiliation with the magazine.[5] Blumenshein's assignments were not limited to *Scribners,* but included works for *McClures Magazine* as well. On December 20, 1897 he was commissioned by *McClures* to illustrate a story on the Pima Reservation of southern Arizona. This was the first experience Blumenshein had with Papago Indians and the first Indian ceremony he witnessed.[6] Following his visit, in early 1898, Blumenshein painted *Dull Knife's Defiance.* The small monochromatic work was intended for an illustration but never used. It holds no relation to the visit to the Pima reservation and the ceremony witnessed there. However, the clarity and sensitivity in depiction of Dull Knife and his accompanying tribesman, can be linked to this first-hand experience with Native American culture.

It is unknown for which article the painting was intended. One possibility is an article entitled, "General Custer's Last Fight as seen by Two Moon" published in *McClures* in September 1898.[7] Another illustration by Blumenshein, *We Circled all around Him*, was used. This work was a full page illustration. In conjunction with hundreds of works done by Blumenshein and intended for magazine reproduction, it is also monochromatic.

Two Moon was a northern Cheyenne Indian chief who took part in Custer's last fight. The incident he describes in the *McClures* article and the depiction of Dull Knife do not coincide; however the article may have been intended to extend its scope to the entire plight of the northern Cheyenne. No other article published at the time comes close to the subject, suggesting that the article for which it was intended remained unpublished.

Dull Knife's Defiance is a depiction of the northern Cheyenne Indian Chief during the tribe's negotiations with the United States Government in 1879. The northern Cheyenne were forcefully being removed from their beloved and sacred homeland and relocated in the south on a reservation with their kinsmen the southern Cheyenne. The Cheyenne had been in constant conflict with the U.S. Government for the past decade. The northern Cheyenne played but a secondary role in these conflicts allying themselves with the Sioux. They joined the Sioux in the Black Hills council of September 20, 1875 in attempts to keep gold seeking prospectors out of the Black Hills portion of the reservation.[8] This led to a battle with General Crook and ultimately the Custer engagement.

The final conflict of the northern Cheyenne was the battle of the "Little Muddy." On November 25, 1876 Colonel R.S. Mackenzie, with nearly two thousand troops, engaged the Cheyenne on Crazy Woman Creek, Wyoming. The attack at daybreak was a complete surprise. The Cheyenne rushed from their beds practically naked. It was so severely cold that several children froze to death. It was the worst defeat suffered by the Cheyenne.[9]

Figure 1. Ernest L. Blumenschein, *Dull Knife's Defiance,* 1898, oil on canvas. Arizona State University Art Museum. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Orme Lewis.

On August 5, 1877 they were taken to the Arapaho-Cheyenne reservation. A few days later the southern Cheyenne invited their northern kinsmen to a welcoming feast. It was quickly evident to the newcomers that something was terribly wrong. All their hosts could offer was a watery soup. There was no wild game, or clear water. The air was filled with mosquitos and flying dust and the humid climate produced disease. The northerners found these conditions unlivable and wished to return to their homeland.

The northern Cheyenne felt they had seen enough.[10] Dull Knife pleaded with the officials to let him and his

people go home. Permission was denied, resulting in a desperate attempt at escape and the ultimate capture of the remaining northern Cheyenne at Fort Robinson in Nebraska. Once again they expressed their desire to stay in the north, but on January 3, 1879 word arrived at Fort Robinson, from the War Department, for Dull Knife's Cheyenne to be sent back.

It is from this period of desperation that *Dull Knife's Defiance* is derived. Centered on the canvas is the strong and noble figure of the defiant Dull Knife. He stands in profile with his arms crossed and his weight shifted to his front foot. The profile is sharp and clear, made even more pronounced by the usage of a thin line of black serving as a contour. It is further heightened by its juxtaposition against a stream of light which illuminates the wall directly behind him. The profile is not only clear, but stalwart. The face, in addition to the stance, aids one in understanding the character of the great Indian Chief.

To the right of the canvas are two seated members of Dull Knife's tribe. These figures rest upon a narrow blanket and appear to watch their leader questioningly. They lean towards each other with a suggestion of conference. Perhaps these tribesmen were not as anxious to risk their lives as Dull Knife. History does indicate that there were members of the northern Cheyenne who relinquished their land with far less of a challenge. In contrast, there were others who did not find Dull Knife's words to be strong enough and proposed to choose another to speak on their behalf.[12]

This division is suggested by the diagonal crack in the wall behind the two native Americans. Although in profile, the eyes of the leader shift over his shoulder and at the seated tribesmen. He was aware that he was not wholeheartedly supported.

The figure farthest in the background and shrouded in deep shadows is a cowboy. He stands to the left of Dull Knife. His stance is relaxed and arrogant. This suggests that he is not a mere spectator, but at the very least, a supporter of the U.S. Government's decision to relocate the northern Cheyenne. As noted, he is cast in deep shadows which does not allow for careful detail or overt attention. Like the U.S. Government in matters concerning the American Indians, this figure, no matter how obscured, stands firmly in the background. The U.S. Government, although vague and unjust in its negotiations and demands, was ever present. The viewer is able to distinguish the figures of Dull Knife and his tribesmen with ease, but this elusive figure demands more concentration. The shadows that surround

him pique one's curiosity. It is not merely a well executed figure of a cowboy, but an image of deceit. The figures represented do not merely comprise a well balanced and pleasing composition, but personify the passions and positions existing during that period of Indian and United States History.

Later in his career Blumenshein became interested in and absorbed Cubism, Expressionism, and Impressionism. He became interested in distorting colors and forms in the efforts to evoke an emotional response from his viewers.[13] Nevertheless, *Dull Knife's Defiance* is a precursor to the abstract sensitivity evoked by Blumenshein in his later depictions of Native Americans. He seemed to truly understand Dull Knife, immortalizing him and his words.[14]

Figure 1. Arthur B. Davies, *Mother of Dawn,* 1909, oil, Arizona State University Art Museum, Gift of Oliver B. James.

Anne Gully

A Designer of Dreams[1]: Arthur B. Davies *Dawn, Mother of Night*

The Arthur B. Davies painting entitled "Mother of Dawn," (Figure 1) dated circa 1909, represents a mid-career work of this very prolific, energetic artist. That he was one of the most popular artists of his day, and is not now, reveals changing American taste. Arthur B. Davies did sculpture in miniature, in wood, glass, enamel, bronze, and terracotta,[2] lithographs, aquatints, woodcuts, etchings, and drawings, numbering "some three thousand,"[3] murals in the International House, New York City, and, for the New York mansion of Lizzie Bliss, the music room tapestries, thirty-six in number, which were woven by Hotel Royal des Goblins,[4] and perhaps six hundred paintings.[5] The president of Ferargil's Galleries in New York which handled many of Davies' works and continued to show and sell his work at least until 1950,[6] Frederick Newlin Price, wrote in 1922, "His workshop gives one the impression of tremendous energy, filled with marble from the Taj Mahal, drawings from France, paintings from Italy...his mind is very much like his studio, stored with no end of lore and ideas."[7] Davies' influence, however, has been as an advisor and collector, not as a painter.

Bought from Ferargil Galleries by Oliver B. James, the unsigned, undated painting was given to Arizona State University in 1950.[8] The oil paint is thinly applied, with the canvas weave clearly visible, varnished, and without flaws or cracks. In a shallow foreground which forms a dark green band kneels a woman in a black, low-necked dress, her profile creating a curved, flat pattern. In front of her stands a nude male youth, leaning laterally towards her. Behind three trees, one at each side of the painting and one framing the figures is a blue band of water upon which a boat sails, silhouetted against a modern city on the far side of the water. The sky is dark. All the colors are cool, except for the yellow of the youth's hair, and the stars and highlight in the trees, and the flesh of the youth.

Though the painting is labelled "Mother of Dawn," the words "Dawn, Mother of Night" are written on the back of the painting. The latter is more likely correct and

more properly identifies the central figure of Dawn. As with other allegorical representations of the times of day or seasons, Dawn is usually personified as a woman. In classical mythology, Dawn, or Eos, rides a two-horse chariot to Olympus and announces the arrival of the Sun.[9] According to allegories Eos seduced young mortals, seen perhaps in this painting as the male youth. The yellow "stars" scattered over the sky, foliage and on the grass may represent the stars of whom Eos is the mother. The motherhood theme is a favorite of Davies. In a so-called "Credo" Davies says, "The mother is the *one* perfect, spontaneous, disinterested motive."[10]

Mythology, too, was a frequent subject of this artist. As early as 1898 Davies did an "Apollo and the Muse."[11] His mythologies are personal interpretations, not literal visualizations. In "Dawn, Mother of Night" a modern sailboat and a city that might be Manhattan are in the right background. In Davies' "Leda and the Dioscuri" the figures are posed incongruously against the Sierra Nevada mountain range; behind " Viper Stricken Eurydice" are cows and an American nineteenth century village;[12] in "Hylas and the Nymphs" there is again a modern sailboat.[13] All are pastiches of the classical and the modern.

Like, "Dawn, Mother of Night," many of Davies' paintings and prints are often tributes to motherhood or childhood, visions of a sylvan or primeval world, evoking mood more than defining subject. As one of his champions wrote, "I wonder if, as he paints. . . , Davies knows himself whither he is drifting, and I take leave to doubt it. Also I feel that it does not in the least matter."[14]

"Dawn, Mother of Night" contains elements found throughout Davies' fairly consistent style; the figures are static, isolated in a tranquil landscape, the quietude enhanced by a body of water in the middle ground, beyond which is more land, a device used by Davies as early as 1890 in "Along the Erie Canal."[15] Always out-of-doors, his large, crisply defined figures are usually nude like the youth in "Dawn." The youth is a relatively rare male in Davies' work, except for some highly structured studies and prints, like choreographed stage positions as in "Twelve Men," (1921) or "Moods of Adam," (1920) both lithographs.[16] Nudes were Davies' principal subject, dispersed in arrested motion, in frieze-like form as early as 1898, especially in his prints. "No important or well-known American painter of the same time used the female nude with such prominence as did Davies."[17] After 1900, Davies shared a model with Robert Henri; she was the future Ziegfeld Follies dancer, Jessica Penn,

whom Davies would have dance, then hold positions long enough to catch them in pastel.[18]

A further explanation of Davies' posing, as in the lateral bend of the youth in "Dawn," is that Davies "...enjoyed enormously the dancing of Isadora Duncan..."[19] F.N. Price writes that Davies attended Isadora Duncan performances "...drawing late into the night hundreds of sketches."[20] According to Allan Ross Macdougall, who worked with Duncan, Davies did superb drawings of the dancer, all destroyed in a fire in the artist's studio.[21] Isadora Duncan danced in New York City as early as 1898, when Davies could have seen her. He could have seen her in nearly any European capital until 1908 when she again danced in New York. At that time she met other members of the "The Eight," George Bellows and Robert Henri, and thus could have met Davies shortly before the presumed date of the painting under consideration.[22] Typically dancing to classical scores, Duncan's August, 1908 concert in New York was to Gluck's *Iphigenia*,[23] a classical theme with which both Duncan and Davies were enchanted. Like Davies, Duncan adored Greek art and borrowed poses from Greek vases for her dancing, poses not unlike those found in Davies' work.

If correctly dated, circa 1909 on the Gallery label, "Dawn" would come at the middle of Davies' career which began with magazine illustration in 1888 for *Saint Nicholas*, a children's magazine, and for *The Century Magazine*,[24] and ended with his death of a heart attack on October 24, 1928 in Florence. "Dawn" shares characteristics with works around 1910, such as "Tiptoeing Youth" and "Crescendo," both in the Whitney Museum in New York. At that time Davies painted rather large, well-defined figures quite close to the picture plane, dispersed before a landscape. Soon, after the Armory Show of 1913, Davies was to experiment with cubism.[25] Before 1909-10 his figures were often set in a very deep space, most notably as in his well-known "Unicorns" of 1906 in the Metropolitan Museum. In the first few years of this century Davies did many images of dancing children, as in "Dancing Children," (1905), "Our River Hudson," (1903), "Hosanna of the Mountains" (ca. 1906), and others in which there are many, active figures, perhaps less fancifully set into the American landscape than in the paintings near 1909. The highlighted foliage in "Dawn, Mother of Night" is like that in "Night Overture – A Tempest," (1907) again more fanciful than the more literal transcriptions of foliage of the early works.

A great many influences can be seen in Davies' work. Of significance to some of his biographers is that

his father was born in Wales and transmitted to his son, the fourth of five children, the Welsh love of fables and tales. Born on September 26, 1862 of an English-born mother, Davies studied drawing before he was fifteen with Dwight Williams, who found him an apt pupil. In 1874 Dwight Williams and Davies attended an exhibition in Utica, where Davies lived, that Williams said stimulated the boy, especially the paintings by George Inness. The family moved to Chicago where Davies did work for the Chicago Board of Trade and studied with Roy Robertson at the Chicago Academy of Design.[26] Two prints of 1884 reflect Davies' early years as a draftsman for engineers in Mexico (1880-82).[27] Of tremendous importance was the first of many trips Davies took to Europe which was financed by Benjamin Altman who had been persuaded by the gallery owner William Macbeth that Davies was promising. Upon Davies' return from a 1894 visit he did a number of canvases of large, clothed figures that reflect the fascination Davies had with Botticelli and Giorgione, such as "The Throne" (1895), "Glade" (1900), "Evensong" (1898) or "Viola Obligato" and "Rose to Rose." The elongated, curve-hipped, long-legged figure style of Botticelli seems to have persisted throughout Davies' career. Among other Europeans, Davies identified with the mystic visions of William Blake; as Royal Cortissoz defines, and Davies would probably not have objected, "Art was with Davies, as it was with Blake, a mode of 'conversing with Paradise.' "[28] In the nostalgia for the past, Davies has affinities, too, with the Pre-Raphaelites, especially evident in a painting like "Parting at Night," (1897), in which two long-haired girls and a woman stand in the twilight of a flower strewn porch.

The eclectic and imaginative Davies is reported to have had dreams in which, for example, Michelangelo whispered advice over the artist's shoulder as he was drawing in the sand near Venice.[29] Davies' friend, F.N. Price, reported in 1922,

> Often Davies tells me that he stands in a gorgeous room, around which are hung great paintings by Inness – sunsets and landscapes with beautiful elms. To dream and make your dreams come true, to live in the lyric realm of Swinburne, Browning, Shakespeare, and then to paint with back of you great masters like Titian, Raphael, Whistler. . .that is art.[30]

Most likely, figures like the two in Davies' "Greater Morn" (1900-05), or the right hand one in "Tiptoeing Youth" (1910) are free quotations from Raphael and Michelangelo, among many such in Davies' works.

More than to the Renaissance and Baroque, Davies claimed an affinity with the ancient Greeks and Romans – Hellenistic illusionism, Pompeiian frescoes, carved reliefs, vases and small terra cottas, the capricious and charming pieces rather than monumental statues and temples.[31] He wrote to Macbeth from Italy in 1910,

> I spent two days in the ruins of Pompeii and saw some recent excavations. . .that show paintings which were perfectly thrilling – the very finest things I have ever seen. . .I. . .do feel capable of far greater expression because of my own *entente cordiale* with Greek painters – so archaic – so great – so modern.[32]

As in classical bas reliefs and vase paintings, Davies' figures do not move into the space of the paintings. Further fascination with the Greeks is reflected in Davies' preoccupation with a theory of "inhalation," a kind of yoga in which the moment of greatest vitality occurs as the breath is drawn in; this moment the artist is to capture, as Davies thought the Greeks had.[33]

Among American painters, Davies shares a visionary approach with Washington Allston, Blythe, Newman, Blakelock, Quidor, Eilshemius, Dove, Ryder who, though isolated and founders of no school, "wove a continuous thread of reverie and melancholy, of fantasy and terror. . ." through more prosaic American painting.[34] Fanciful, too, like Davies are some French artists, especially Gustave Moreau and Puvis de Chavannes. Davies' "Unicorns," a subject fascinating to Moreau, is very like Puvis de Chavannes' quiet, melancholy and classicizing paintings. In spite of the fact that Davies' personal collection contained works by Matisse, Picasso, Braque, Derain, Seurat, Leger, Cezanne, de Chirico, Brancusi, Gris, Signac among the moderns, Davies is a nineteenth century painter.[35] It is revealing that of the works he, with Walt Kuhn, personally chose for The Armory Show, the largest number were by Odilon Redon, numbering forty-two, with fifteen by Puvis de Chavannes. Six of Davies' own paintings were in the show.[36]

In "Dawn, Mother of Night" the flat black patterns of her gown and her black hair, with its escaping curls, reflect the interest in decorative contour and organic patterns of Art Nouveau. Though his admirers claimed that Davies painted what he pleased, to satisfy himself, he happened to capture the very popular style in the early years of this century. Davies was part, too, of the grandiose and romantic landscape tradition in American painting. In his early works he rendered scenes of his native New York; after a trip to Colorado, Nevada,

Utah and California in 1905 he captured the expansive landscapes of, especially, the Sierra Nevada Mountain range of California.

That Davies should turn to the nineteenth century, and at the same time express interest in the twentieth, helps explain his tremendous popularity in his lifetime. A spokesman for a group of imaginative if somewhat old-fashioned dealers, patrons and writers was James Huneker whose essay about Davies in his "Pathos of Distance," 1913, is not unlike much writing about Davies:

> He is the highly sensitized illustrator appointed by the states of his soul to picture forth the pauses through the realm of fancy. It has in it the passion of violet and silver dreaming, the hue of an endless dawn before the day descends upon the world. You expect the lute to regain its jaded tune there. . . It contains the history of all the hushed horizons that can be found over the edge of a world of materiality.[37]

In 1924 Duncan Phillips could say,

> Arthur B. Davies is already recognized, not only in the country but in Europe, as one of the few men of original and authentic genius among the painters of our contemporary world. . . His fundamental qualities of lyric inspiration and linear rhythm qualified him long ago for the Parnassus of painters and the Olympus of designers.[38]

Though the great murals which Davies' admirers envisioned for the future did not materialize, four years after Davies' death forty-eight works were sold from Ferargils in 1932,[39] and prices for his paintings ranged from $450 to $12,000 at least until 1945.[40] Though Davies "smelled of the twenties" by 1950, only one negative review of Davies work can be found and this from one of his contemporaries, in 1918.[41] Today, Davies style is outdated and he is often dismissed as a "decorator," but there was sufficient interest for there to have been a centennial retrospective of his birth in 1962, in Utica, New York.

Davies has been called a taste-maker. This must be qualified in that it is not as a painter that he was so. As an advisor to Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, Mrs Cornelius J. Sullivan, John Quinn, Duncan Phillips, William Macbeth and Lizzie P. Bliss, Davies was instrumental in the creation of American collections, especially that of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, to which Lizzie Bliss bequeathed her collection.[42]

Davies' early enthusiastic champions have made it difficult for us to assess him. In their essays about him,

they provide no references for the assertions; they illustrate their papers with undated paintings and prints. This is especially true in an otherwise interesting book, *Arthur B. Davies: Essays on the Man and His Art*, 1924. F.N. Price, for example, hints about a connection between Davies and Albert Pinkham Ryder but gives no specifics.[43] Davies and Ryder seem to have met but once when the former showed Ryder around the Armory Show.[44]

Though from all accounts Davies was a very hard worker, drawing incessantly, his drawing is not always skillful and his figures are often awkwardly composed. Perhaps for that reason, his large landscapes in which figures are on a small scale, such as "Unicorns" or "At the Chestnut Root,"[45] are more successful paintings than those in which problems in rendering the human body are more apparent. The kind of figural grouping as in "Dawn, Mother of Night" seems to have been suited to Davies' later experiments in a purely decorative media, that of tapestry. But as a Victorian in his painting and modernist in his views, Davies remains a fascinating individual whose paintings are but a part of the whole.

Figure 1. John B. Flannagan, *Monkey,* Arizona State University Art Museum, Gift of Mable Davis James.

Timothy Norris

Death and Mystical Liberation in John B. Flannagan's *Beginning*

John B. Flannagan (1895-1942) is best known for his zoomorphic sculptures. Flannagan chiseled these small images from field stones that he collected because they sparked what he called an "occult attraction."[1] The natural quality of the field stone was undisturbed by his simple but precise direct-carve method, as seen in *Monkey*, (Figure 1).[2] The immediacy of his approach was essential to the creative absorption that enabled him to expend a great energy to produce, during one period of his career, a sculpture a day. Flannagan was so totally absorbed in his work that in 1934 he had to spend seven months in a sanitarium because of the intense strain. His psychiatrists tried to lessen the creative compulsion that isolated Flannagan from the world around him, Flannagan only resented their efforts.[3] He felt that "creation is revelation– to that instrument of the subconscious, the hand of the sculptor, there exists an image in every rock. The creative act of realization merely frees it."[4] 'Truth to material' was the essence of his compulsive obsession to create.

In *Beginning*, (Figure 2), 1941, Flannagan was forced to the less physically exhausting method of clay modeling because of a serious automobile accident he suffered in 1939.[5] As a result of this accident Flannagan suffered extensive damage to his head. A series of four operations on the brain were undertaken which resulted initially in his loss of speech and periods of depression. Flannagan wrote of this, ". . . since my surgical experience, I have some little difficulty speaking – at least, it causes me to speak slower than ever. As a matter of fact for awhile right after the operations, I couldn't speak at all, which for an Irishman, would make it fatal."[6] To continue working he had to resort to power tools and clay modeling to avoid the exhaustive strain that stone carving would have placed on him.

The small bronze *Beginning* was the last work completed by the artist. It is an especially significant work because it typifies the tragic "mystic liberation"[4] Flannagan chose for himself. Flannagan committed suicide

on January 6, 1942, just six weeks after he had completed the clay model for this small bronze.[5] His last letters speak of this work and also of the ultimate end to which he seemed serenely resigned.

It was on November 21, 1941, that Flannagan finished this small work and sat down to write his wife, Margherita:

> It is consummated – *Beginning* is done as an act of gratitude – perhaps not full-bellied, but my kind of feast. I'm glad – another step – next *Pietá* and the figure, they are a stride in this the year of completion.
>
> Who is gloomy? There is nothing about the inexorably ultimate of what I said and do say – anyway I'm speaking of being prepared. There is no tragedy in going when it is felt that it only is the passing of an identity. The spirit survives always and please God the work of that spirit likewise if great lives on wanting no name identity to be a part of the vast reservoir just as the soul is. Jesus and Gautama both whisper to me. Mystic Liberation. After the spring show [Major retrospective, Buchholz Gallery, New York, March 18 – April 11, 1942] I shall never exhibit more – and perhaps it's time to go – and this is forboding when the spirit is tired – sure sign that the work is done. Until then we have tools and stones – and my pipe – these have not betrayed.[8]

In a letter to Curt Valentin Flannagan referred to his "accident" of 1939.

Figure 2. John B. Flannagan, *Beginning,* 1941, cast bronze, Arizona State University Art Museum. Gift of Oliver B. James.

> I'm putting everything I ever had into the work for this forthcoming show. [Retrospective,] All my life has been but a preparation – not for the show, but its works, notably "Pietá." Then and only then I'm finished – perhaps. I wrote you once before that I couldn't die in Boston because I couldn't feel free to go with my work undone – or incomplete and it was sheer "will-to-live" that made me recover even when it was attempted suicide, because I was not yet ready for that mystic liberation – not ready for rest. My forboding is it's time to go when the spirit is tired, that sure sign the work is done – and until then I go on with the companionship of tools and stones and my pipe. These have never betrayed.[9]

Figure 3. John B. Flannagan, *(Mother and Child),* Arizona State University Art Museum, Gift of Mable Davis James.

To Carl Zigrosser he jotted a few lines:

> I've just spent a grateful day by completing in clay that old opus of birth *Beginning.* That card I sent you on my birthday should have read – Sentence "life in Solitary." Even so I have tools and stones and my pipe and want no more.[10]

The Christology that Flannagan evokes with *Beginning* is a theme seen in *Not Yet,* (Figure 3), 1940, and in other earlier works.[11] The title of *Not Yet,* completed about a year before Flannagan's death, discloses a premonition of Flannagan's tragically predestined "heritage," a step toward his ultimate end. In *Beginning* the naked infant lies in its mother lap, an image as universal as it is monumental in spirit, it transcends the boundaries of religious doctrine and is clearly a manifestation of Flannagan's isolated faith. Seen against the tragic suicide that ended Flannagan's life, it assumes a significantly profound prophetic meaning.[12] It recalls the heroic dialogue of Michelangelo's with this theme. Like Michelangelo, there is for Flannagan a universal metaphysical link between this theme and his own spirituality. He wrote of this universality only six months before his death.

> In the austere elimination of the accidental for ordered simplification, there is the quality of the abstract and lifeless...the artistic representation of the organic and living now take on an abstract lifeless order and becomes, instead of the likeness of what is conditioned, the symbol of what is unconditioned and invariable, as though seeking the timeless, changeless finality of death, sculpture like this is inevitable.[13]

In Flannagan's *Beginning* the naked madonna powerfully conveys the psychic power found in her archaic past. Symbolic of life, fertility and vitality she cradles

the universal image of hope, the naked infant, symbolic of the human soul, between her splayed legs. Into these universals Flannagan instilled his own paradoxical meaning. He noted on the edge of a drawing how he felt about this theme:

> The profoundness and pity of a mother [huddling] her dead – so instinctive that impulse to cover – and in making the two – as one. . . we get the perfect symbol of death – return to bring part of the mother principle as we all shall and be covered by *motherearth.*[14]

Flannagan's sense of fate was distorted by his compulsive nature. During the period after his "failed suicide" of 1939, he appears to have drawn an imaginary point in time, that once reached, would hold his "mystical liberation" from the pain of his creative obsession. The works, *Beginning* and *Not Yet,* are not only the apparent culmination of a creative theme that Flannagan had made his own, but are also his spiritual and psychological epitaph.

William Laubach

Architecture that Speaks
Edward Hopper's *Cottage, Cape Cod*

Edward Hopper's paintings examine problems facing man in the twentieth century – alienation and dehumanization. Today, perhaps more so than when they were painted, his works are relevant in the post-industrial age of rapidly advancing technology. Hopper's *Cottage, Cape Cod*, (Figure 1), 1942, is similiar to other paintings throughout his career. The cottage is grey and cold while the environment that surrounds it is full of life and movement. The only movement in the cottage are the billowing curtains in the empty windows. Hopper's ability to communicate a mood of isolation is realized through his concern for geometry and by the role of light.[1]

As a young man Hopper made three sojourns to France between 1906 and 1910. After his final return to America he significantly lightened his palette in response to the work of the Impressionists.[2] After ten or fifteen years Hopper's style changed, taking a direction away from the European tradition. This change is easy to read when comparing works from the twenties such as *House by the Railroad*, (1925), *Early Sunday Morning*, (1930), *Cottage, Cape Cod* (1942) and *High Noon*, (1944). In all these paintings architectural motifs dominate with few or no human images. *House by the Railroad* was painted when the artist was still influenced by Impressionist color and light which he moves away from in a work like *Early Sunday Morning*, where the color is muted. The palette became darker in *Cottage, Cape Cod*, achieved through the dark red-brown underpainting that is visible around the edges of the canvas.

An artist, much admired by Hopper is Charles Meyron, a nineteenth-century etcher, who produced views of Paris emphasizing the play of light on architecture.[3] He also admired the etchings of Rembrandt and Goya for their dramatic use of chiaroscuro. Hopper remarked: "I think I'm not very human maybe. I didn't want just to paint people gesturing and grimacing, what I wanted to do was paint light on the side of a house."[4] This is clearly what he does in *Early Sunday Morning*, perhaps his best known work. The light enters from the right and casts

Figure 1. Edward Hopper, *Cottage, Cape Cod,* 1942, oil, Arizona State University Art Museum. Gift of Oliver B. James.

strong shadows on the street facade. The direct light in *Cottage, Cape Cod*, although partially obscured by clouds, is still an integral part of the composition. It actually obliterates as is done in *House by the Railroad*. There are a few crucial incidental details, (like the tracery under the roof in *Cottage, Cape Cod*), that emphasize the starkness of the scene.

Geometry is used to capture the viewer's attention. Hopper prefers to arrange objects horizontally. He also adds a wedge-like element to draw our eyes to the painting. This is clearly visible in *Cottage, Cape Cod* where the road in the foreground forms a V-shape that extends into the viewer's space breaking the picture plane. The wedge is re-echoed in the oblique angle of the cottage. The ground line of the cottage is obscured by the grassy field making it difficult to ascertain its precise position in space. Are we looking down from a bird's-eye view? This ambiguity of the viewer's position is also evident in *Early Sunday Morning* where the top of the building facade and the bottom are viewed head on simultaneously.[5]

Lack of spatial orientation creates an uneasy sensation. Hopper deliberately manipulates this confusing perspective. Logically, perspective is intended to extend our space into the picture but here just the opposite occurs.[6] The viewer is set apart from the scene, exaggerating the sense of alienation inherent in Hopper's work.

The artist made many sketches on location before synthesizing his ideas on canvas. There are no human figures in *Cottage, Cape Cod*, only the wind blowing through the open windows of a house. These windows are our only access into the house which is otherwise sealed from scrutiny. The stark simplicity, so evident here, is part of Hopper's depiction of an America void of strong cultural traditions.[7] He is showing a culture through the symbolic use of architecture – buildings say more than the human figures in some paintings. In *Cottage, Cape Cod*, a feeling of alienation from humanity and from nature can be distinctly felt by everyone. Beneath the cold architectural images, lay the tragic poignancy of Hopper's vision, sincerely felt and keenly observed.

W.K
1945

Richard Raymond

Behind the Mask: Walt Kuhn's *Young Clown*

The "avant-garde" confronted an unversed America during the 1913 Armory Show. As one of the show's key organizers and compilers, Walt Kuhn was a harbinger of abstraction in American art. But it is ironic that Kuhn's own art never lost the semblance of solid reality. Kuhn was painter of the commonplace, the unadorned, the matter-of-fact. Landscapes and randomly piled apples counted for much among his subjects. The most telling Kuhnian images, however, are his portraits of show girls, acrobats, and clowns where he inevitably sets his subjects before a neutral background in direct eye contact with the viewer. One such portrait is the *Young Clown* (Figure 1) in the Arizona State University Art Museum. In it we see Kuhn's interest in the solid physical form but equally the solid psychological presence of his sitter. He reveals the private face of the lone performer away from the stage; and in so doing, he holds up a mirror to the viewer.

Although remembered for his portraits of clowns and performers, Kuhn was not the innovator of this genre. A survey of artists from Watteau to Picasso who treated the clown theme suggests a varying as much as it does a common expressive interest. Kuhn's own fascination with the clown has its origins in his adolescence. His mother was responsible for instilling in him a love of the theater. He became acquainted with backstage life when he made deliveries of costumes as a youth from the sporting goods store where he worked to the stage doors of theaters.

Shortly thereafter he frequented county fairs as a bicycle racer. It may have been at this time that he began associating with circus people. Several times during his life he helped stage vaudeville revues; his association with the circus never ended. From 1941-48, he maintained a press pass to the Ringling Brothers-Barnum and Bailey Circus when it was in New York. He spent February of 1948 with the circus at its winter quarters in Florida. Kuhn's portraits are of the clowns and show people who were his friends; he often dressed them for

Figure 1. Walt Kuhn, *The Young Clown,* 1945, oil, Arizona State University Art Museum. Gift of Oliver B. James.

their portraits from his own storehouse of costumes kept in his studio.

The performer no doubt appealed to Kuhn on more than one level. His portraits reveal the face of the clown not seen by the audience. In this, however, they become metaphors for Everyman. Each person, no matter from what walk of life, wears an actor's mask in the day to day interactions with others. This human phenomenon was undoubtedly most apparent to Kuhn in the theater and the circus – places he knew well. His portraits are direct and monolithic images of common man with a subtle, unsentimental melancholy. In paintings such as the *Young Clown*, he allows the viewer to glimpse behind the persona of his sitter.

Kuhn the formalist did not dismiss the pure form of abstraction. Rather he believed that the artist's ultimate goal was to go beyond subject matter. To Kuhn, however, this transcendence of the subject had to use clearly-defined reality as a stepping-stone. Vaudeville and the circus provided Kuhn the building blocks for his vision. He never plunged into abstraction to the degree that many of his contemporaries did. He maintained in his art the solid form that Rubens had maintained. Kuhn considered Rubens a fellow formalist, suggested in the statement he made about his own painting *Tricorne:* "A lump of weighted form, the one, the universal substance of art. Trying to get it makes art history. The Greeks had it, lost it; Rubens caught it, then it slipped through Van Dyck's fingers. Cezanne chopped it up to see how it is made; his followers fooled with the pieces. Here it is whole again."[1] If Cezanne was the formalist heir of Rubens, then Kuhn was the heir of Cezanne, the one to give form its substance again after it had been dissected and flattened by Picasso and Matisse. Abstraction was important to Cezanne but solid reality was as well. Throughout his life, Kuhn remained a devoted disciple of Cezanne. In retrospect, he said, "I've tried to get the whole of Cezanne and give it new flavor."[2]

Kuhn had a sound knowledge of art history and an openness to the artistic developments taking place around him. From the years following the Armory Show, elements of Cubism and Fauvism can be detected in his work. His mature works show modelling of weighty form in a painterly shorthand harkening back to Manet. As is the mark of a master, he was able to assimilate the work of other masters and from this forge his personal synthesis.

This synthesis came for Kuhn in *The White Clown* of 1929, which Philip Rhys Adams calls, in his book *Walt Kuhn, Painter: His Life and Work*, Kuhn's "passport to immortality."[3] In the crouching figure of the clown,

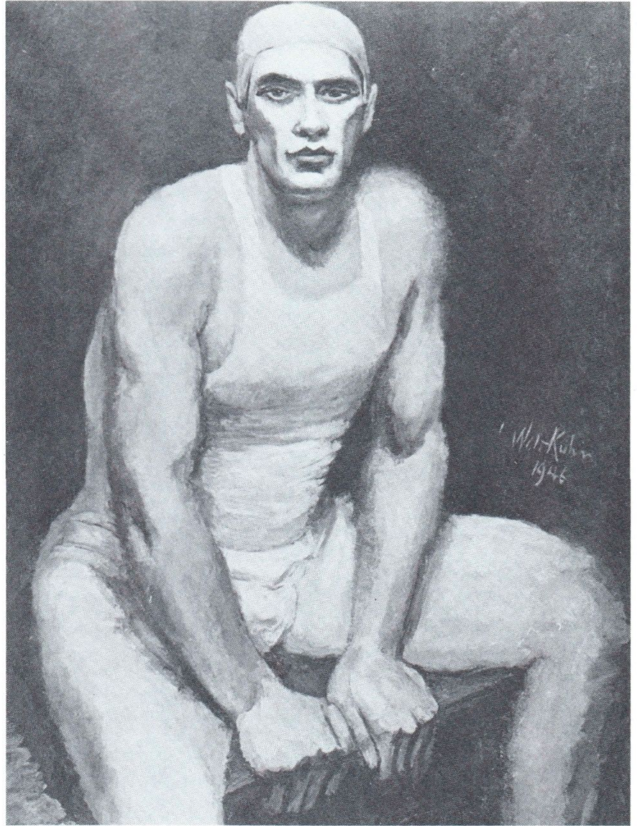


Figure 2. Walt Kuhn, *Roberto,* 1946, Private collection.

Kuhn showed a stark, massive solidity that would remain constant throughout his mature works. The direct glance of his performers to the viewer was developed in works following *The White Clown*, and this gave to his quiet figures, in front of their severe backgrounds, the added dimension of psychological substance which was every bit as weighty as their physcial mass. Key works in this development were *The Blue Clown* of 1931, *Trio* of 1937, and the climax to Kuhn's quest for physical and psychological form, *Roberto* (Figure 2), painted in 1946, just three years before his death.

In *Roberto*, Kuhn painted a male figure in a sitting position similar to that used in *The White Clown*. The figure is dressed in a pink tank top and tights. He wears an ochre-colored skull cap, and his face is covered with white makeup. He straddles a stool with his hands joined betwen his legs and clasping the edge of it. His massive figure is tense and at any moment ready to spring into action; but the bulkiness of his thighs, arms, and shoulders is matched by that of the confronting glance he gives the viewer.

The *Young Clown* dates from 1945, the year before *Roberto*; and although it is a small portrait of only a clown's head, it shows the interest in psychological form that was so important to *Roberto* and the other mature works of Kuhn from the thirties and forties. Kuhn produced little in 1945, and Adams remarks that "it was a strangely unproductive year, a lull before the creative storm of 1946 or a natural period of gestation for the major works to come."[4] This being true, the *Young Clown*, in the Arizona State University Art Museum, and the few other small heads of clowns painted in 1945 can be seen as preparations for *Roberto* and other major works of 1946.

Daniel M. Mendelowitz observes that Kuhn's *Young Clown* "reveals the awkward simplicity and strength of feeling with which he portrayed his monumental figures from the world of vaudeville."[5] This simple monumentality is intensified in the painting by Kuhn. The artist presents a completely frontal view of his sitter tightly cropped to barely include the shoulders. He forces the viewer to confront the young clown in stark, white makeup.[6]

The painting is a visual play between surfaces that are thin and sketchy and surfaces that are highly tactile with impasto; from areas that are flat to areas that are briskly modelled. The colors are for the most part neutral which brings intensity to the few stronger colored accents and the white of the face. This play between surfaces and subtle colors is the means by which Kuhn molds form.

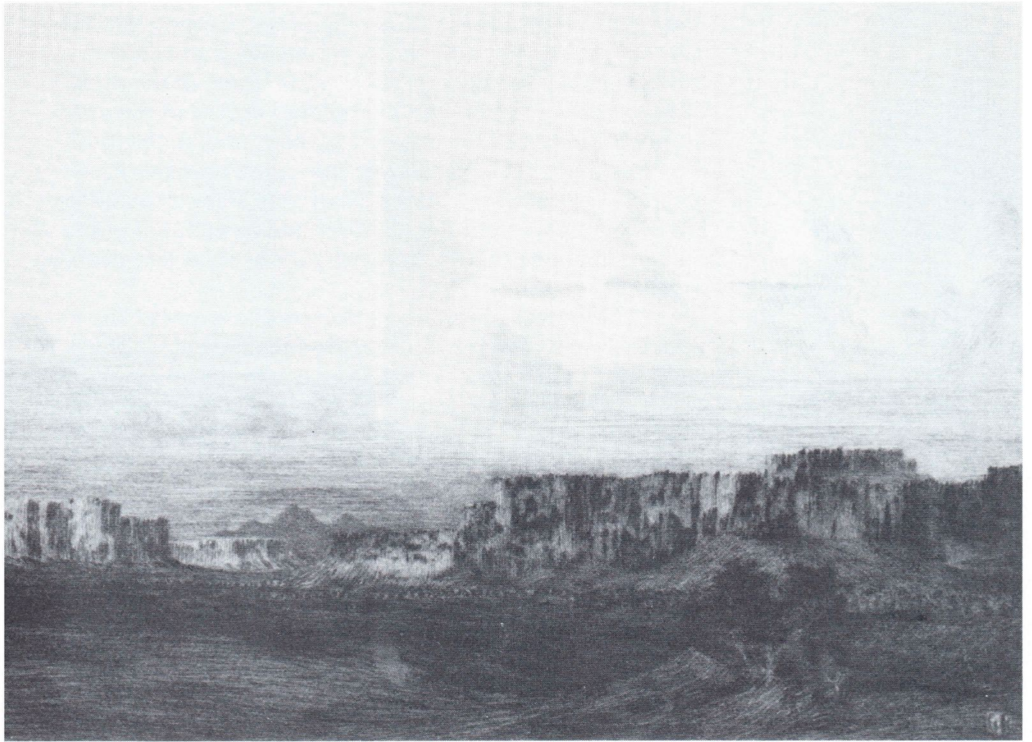
The white-faced clown wears a skull cap which is modelled in tones of yellow ochre. Kuhn's charactersitic black contours are in marked contrast to the thick white almost pastiness of the face. This treatment of black and white firmly establishes the clown's face as the center of interest. The areas around it are handled broadly and with relative flatness. The blouse is dull blue with a green fringe sketched in hurriedly which allows the underpainting to show through. The cool beige background recedes behind the warmer hues of the skull cap and face.

The ears of the figure are handled in the same sketchy manner as the blouse fringe, but from their brown and salmon flesh tones, the viewer is directed to the brown eyes of the clown that stare out from the incisive black lines that delineate their lids and brows. The whites of the clown's eyes are not white at all but of the same salmon and tan hues of the ears and skull cap. Their yellowish cast makes them stand out against the white of the face, and their warm dullness enhances the subtle melancholy of the portrait.

Before Kuhn allows the mask of the performer to be penetrated, he makes sure that the viewer sees it. This is accomplished by contrasting the flesh-colored ears and neck of the clown with the white of his face. The white makeup shows the features of the face with clarity but is in actuality a thin veneer placed over them. It is by way of the eyes that the viewer is able to see behind the mask of the performer.

The longer the viewer studies the young clown the more apparent Kuhn's subtle use of asymmetry becomes. In the left side of the face there is calm serenity, almost the aloofness of an Egyptian pharaoh carved in stone. In the right side, however, there is more heaviness to the face, as seen in the frown of the brow, the drooping eyelid, and the tapered corner of the lips. Here Kuhn allows the viewer a glance beneath the mask of the performer. He shows the contemplative if not slightly regretful side of the clown: the side relegated to a corner apart from the glamour and excitement of the stage, the side that is a private part of each and every person.

The power of Kuhn's performers to express lies in their simple directness. They are lone figures of physical and psychological substance, not merely clowns and show girls but universal symbols of humanity on the stage of life. In portraits such as the *Young Clown*, Kuhn does not paint life's glitter but rather more directly and simply its essence, its pith, its very form. He paints the solid and the solitary in a way that enobles the prosaic.



Thomas van der Meulen

George Elbert Burr: A Sometimes Master

George Elbert Burr is not remembered as a great artist. In fact, with the exception of an article by A. Reynolds Morse in April, 1946,[1] and a catalogue raisonné published in 1971 by his distant cousin, Loise C. Seeber, a search of the standard periodical indexes reveals that Burr has not been remembered in print at all since his death. This is not due, however, to a lack of ability on the artist's part, nor is it for a lack of prolificacy. It is, perhaps, self-indulgent reverie to speculate on how different the life of any particular artist might have been under other circumstances, but the temptation to do so is strong when examining the work of this widely collected printmaker and watercolorist, George E. Burr.[2] If the prints found in Arizona State University's Art Museum collection are truly indicative of the stature of the artist's work in general, then clearly the majority of his work is of a rather pedestrian quality – the type of print one might expect to find in a regionally oriented commercial gallery – while a few others are true masterworks, both as pictorial interpretations and as examples of the printmaker's craft.

Figure 1. George Elbert Burr, *Desert Twilight,* etching, Arizona State University Art Museum.

Within the highly varied collection of prints owned by Arizona State University, is contained a group of one hundred eighty-seven works by Burr. All but a few of these are intaglio prints executed as etchings, drypoints and engravings as well as mixtures of these with aquatint and soft-ground etching techniques. This collection of Burr's work is interesting for its unusually large size, for the range of quality in the prints and for the rare beauty of at least a few examples.

The heights to which Burr's technique and insight into his subject could rise are amply demonstrated in the print, *Desert Twilight*, (Figure 1).[3] Compared to the other prints in the group, this print seems small, measuring only about five by seven inches. In spite of diminutive size, its value-range, its variety of texture, and the subtlety with which he modulates the shadow-values and describes the vegetation on the desert floor suggest more than just a passing interest in this plate on the part of the artist.

It is difficult to say precisely when Burr made this impression, since he did not keep detailed records of shop production,[4] but a version of it seems to have first been released in his famous *Desert Series* as the print titled *Twilight, Laguna, New Mexico.*[5] In this initial version, the plate measured about an inch wider than in *Desert Twilight.* Burr started *Desert Series,* a group of thirty-five plates, between 1916-17 and finished it within five years, having copyrighted the last of the impressions from the set in May of 1921.[6] Since *Twilight, Laguna, New Mexico* appeared about midway through the series, it is reasonable to place the year of its inception at about 1919. This plate resurfaces as *Desert Twilight* among what has been termed Burr's "late work," a body of prints which is comprised primarily of desert subjects.[7] This so-called late work as executed after the artist had moved from Denver, Colorado to Phoenix, Arizona in September of 1924 and this particular print must have been published before 1931. In that year, a later etching, *Superstition Mountain, Apache Trail,* (Figure 2) was exhibited at the Brooklyn Museum.[8]

If it is ironic that Burr would have depicted the vast expanses of the desert regions within a frame measuring only five by seven inches, it nonetheless works. At a close viewing distance and in an intimate environment, *Desert Twilight* is a remarkably effective and memorable image of the desert. The artist describes a fleeting moment when, after the sun has descended below the horizon, casting the ground in deep shadow, a cloud-filled sky captures the last, late light of the swiftly disappearing day. The cumulus clouds, piled high above the earth's surface, seem to glow with a light of their own. Though to urbanites not familiar with the Arizona landscape this seems a bit melodramatic, such moments, in fact, do occur when clouds throw an eerie, reflected light into otherwise deep shadows. In the desert, where an increase in elevation of only a hundred feet can extend a viewer's horizon by miles, one may also obtain the kind of high, strangely floating perspective which is found in this and in other of Burr's prints. Through *Desert Twilight*, the viewer can sense the mystery of this unusual moment and perhaps even some small portion of the awesomeness of the desert's sometime fleeting-fired skies.

Questions about what Burr's pictures might have looked like if the circumstances of his life had been different, arise when viewing prints such as *Evening in the Painted Desert*, (Figure 3).[9] The title of his print and its compositional emphasis on the cloudy sky both suggest that the artist's concept here is closely allied to that of *Desert Twilight.* However, its execution is thoroughly

Figure 2. George Elbert Burr, *Superstition Mountains, Apache Trail,* etching, Arizona State University Art Museum.

pedantic – flat and lifeless to the point of unrecognizability as an "evening" scene. The steep contrast range of this impression of the plate – a result of the artist having filled deeply bitten lines with a stiff, cold-black ink and wiping the reserve areas virtually clean – suggests, if anything, the broad, hot light of mid-day! What reasons could there be for such variation in quality in the artist's work?

An investigation into the provenance of each of the various prints in the Burr holdings might support certain hypotheses which could explain, to some extent, the spotty quality of the prints in this collection. In the case of one image, a direct comparison of two versions of the same state of the same plate is possible. *Summer Cloud, Apache Trail, Arizona*[10] is represented in the Arizona State University collection by two prints (Figures 4 and 5) which appear to be on two different types of paper and with two different inks – one a stiff, cool black, the other a black tinted with the same blue-green ink as that used in *Desert Twilight*. The problem with contrast range found in *Evening in the Painted Desert* arises in the "black" version of this print. In the "blue-green" print, on the other hand, the reserve areas retain some of the ink's hue and the lines are softened by a "shadow" of ink along side of the bitten lines. Ms Lucinda Gedeon, Curator of the collection, speculates that this is due to the mechanical buffing of any finer, drypointed

Figure 3. George Elbert Burr, *Evening in the Painted Desert,* dry point, Arizona State University Art Museum.

lines on plates which occurs during printing and that the "black" print – the contrastier print – is simply a later printing of the plate. It is more likely, however, that the main drawing on this plate was not drypointed to achieve the ink shadow which softens etched lines but was simply not wiped as completely as the perhaps, oilier "blue-green" ink. In this event, the colder, "black" print might actually be a shop print or working proof which was not intended for release to the public, while the other, slightly richer print was one of the published version, or they actually represent two separate "editions" of the same plate, one of a substantially higher quality. Since Burr did not indicate on the prints whether they were part of a particular edition or not (and rarely did he do this) it is difficult to defend Burr and say with certainty that the inferior print was, in fact, a working print that found its way into circulation. Adding to this confusion is the fact that they are signed and titled in a like manner. Why would Burr have knowingly released prints of such a wide range of quality? There are two plausible explanations for this: the nature of his training; and the fact that he took the time and energy to do all of his own printing.

Figure 4. George Elbert Burr, *Summer Cloud, Apache Trail,* dry point, Arizona State University Art Museum.

Burr was an essentially self-taught artist. He noted on a print, *My First Etching*, (not illustrated) in the New York Public Library Collection, how he had made the etching sometime in 1872, at the age of twelve or thirteen, on "tin-shop" scrap copper and had printed it by running the plate and paper through the steel bending rollers in the tin-shop of his father's store.[11] At the time he had already been painting and drawing for at least two years. In spite of his early interest, Burr never pursued formal academic training, with the exception of about three months at the Chicago Academy of Design (now the Art Institute). Nor did Burr apprentice himself to any artist which often stimulates a pupil to develop good technical habits and a sound understanding of the visual effects of particular techniques. His neglect in not keeping detailed publication records and the appearance of what might be considered technical flaws such as failure to carefully finish and wipe the edges of his plates, arise from his having avoided traditional forms of education. The considerable skill he possessed, most evident in but a small number of prints, resulted from practice, observation and through his association with other "amateur" artists.

Another aspect of Burr's life which may have contributed to the unevenness of his prints was the fact that he spent valuable time, which he might have spent developing and refining his prints, printing his many plates. He produced with his own hands, close to twenty-five thousand impressions.[12] This was a tremendous work load to impose upon himself, especially since his attention was not focused exclusively on making prints but also included watercolors and extensive travel. The resulting time-shortage certainly helped to preclude substantial reworking of his plates. It is probable then, that the lack of a commercial publisher who could have reduced the demands on Burr's time, coupled with a narrow background of instruction reduced the opportunities for frequent re-working and prevented him from developing a proper critical attitude about his work.

There were few external pressures on Burr to edit and rework his prints. If anything, the market discouraged long effort on any single plate. Since his dealers were able to sell his prints rapidly at moderate prices Burr needed to keep production high to maintain his modest living.[13] The list of museums which acquired Burr's work during the late twenties and the thirties is impressive both for its length and for the quality of the institutions named, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Fogg Art Museum, Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and the British Museum. Burr seemed, nonetheless, not to be a particularly ambitious artist, who sought fame and greatness, rather he was quite content simply to work hard and be paid for living and traveling. He even referred to his life as an "Alice in Wonderland kind of experience," in a letter written in 1934, perhaps because he and his wife had escaped serious financial difficulty during the depression years.[14]

The unanswerable question, posed implicity earlier, still remains, as it always must: what if Burr's life had been different, how much better could his work have been? In a sense, it is folly to even consider this question, but perhaps students of the printmaker's crafts may look upon Burr's life as an object lesson and avoid the pitfalls of bad business and of complacency. As viewers of Burr's work, it is pointless to consider this question at great length because we can never know the answer, but more importantly, its consideration dulls our appreciation of Burr's accomplishments.

The prints by George Elbert Burr in the University Museum show an undeniable inconsistency of quality in terms of their execution and conception, yet contained within this group of about 185 prints are some exquisite examples of the intaglio printmaker's craft.

Figure 5. George Elbert Burr, *Summer Cloud, Apache Trail,* dry point, Arizona State University Art Museum.

Figure 1. Philip Campbell Curtis, *The Parade,* 1965, Arizona State University Art Museum. Gift of Clare Luce Booth.

Dawne Walczak

Parade In Review, an interview with Philip C. Curtis

Philip Campbell Curtis's *Parade*, 1965, (Figure 1) is a significant example of the artist's early mature work. The painting is representative of a body of works that concerns itself with an obscure communal ritual – the procession or parade.[1] Curtis, a figurative artist, developed his style during the 1950s, reaching artistic maturity around 1960. Since then his *oeuvre* has remained remarkably consistent in both style and iconography. *Parade* introduces both substantive and technical hallmarks of Curtis's work, including his cast of Edwardian characters and his precise, highly-glazed style. These elements form the basis of a personal iconography by which Curtis expresses his views on man's existence.

Curtis was born on May 26, 1907, in Jackson, Michigan. He graduated from the Yale School of Fine Arts in 1935 with a four-year certificate in painting and moved to New York City, where he worked for the Works Project Administration as an Assistant Supervisor of Mural Painting. From early 1936 to 1941 he participated in a federal art project which established art centers around the country; his first assignment was Phoenix, Arizona.

In Fall, 1941, he enrolled at Harvard for further training as a museum curator, a course he abandoned when war broke out in December. For the next several years he served in the Office of Strategic Services, Washington, DC In 1947, at age forty, he began his painting career in earnest when he moved to Scottsdale, Arizona, where he has resided since.

Significantly, *Parade* is the first major painting in an ongoing series treating the subject of an elusive ritual procession symbolic of universal human isolation in an irrational world. While this theme pervades in Curtis's work, his statements about man's helplessness and alienation are especially effective in the ritual processions. The communal rituals emphasize alienation on a universal scale, as opposed to the private rituals such as marriage and courtship, found elsewhere in Curtis's paintings, which render isolation more personally.

In *Parade* a sparse crowd of Edwardian-clad men, women and children watches as a circus parade passes

Figure 2. Philip Campbell Curtis, *The Wanderers,* 1960, oil on board, Phoenix Art Museum. Gift of Virginia Ullman.

in review. An elephant drawing a lion cage leads the parade, followed by several musicians and a chariot. A lone woman hornplayer at far left is the last member of the company to pass through a curiously placed arch. Like a proscenium arch, it establishes a convenient point of entry for the procession. The modulated sky and high horizon line create a flat background with a shallow space, confining the subject close to the surface of the picture like a stage curtain. Bare trees line the parade's route, further constricting the space on either side of the parade. Each figure is isolated and uncommunicative. The circus parade is an eerie temporal suspension.

Parade is the first ritual procession which successfully conveys the idea of communal alienation. In *Wanderers*, 1960, (Figure 2), the earliest example of an obscure ritual, Curtis has scattered the figures along crossed paths; the clearly independent movements of the wandering musicians indicate no intended cooperation among the individuals. Thus, the cacophany of unorchestrated sounds produced by the various musicians is amusing, but harmless. In *Parade*, however, the intentional inversion of the community event is psychologically disquieting. Here, the circus parade, normally associated with stimulating march rhythms inciting the cheering throngs, is met by an uncomfortable silence and stiff spectators. The participants exhibit neither a unified communal spirit or purpose. Instead, the somnambulant participants continue on a course of unexplained origin or destination. The bare trees become ominous, suggesting a cage as real as the lion's.

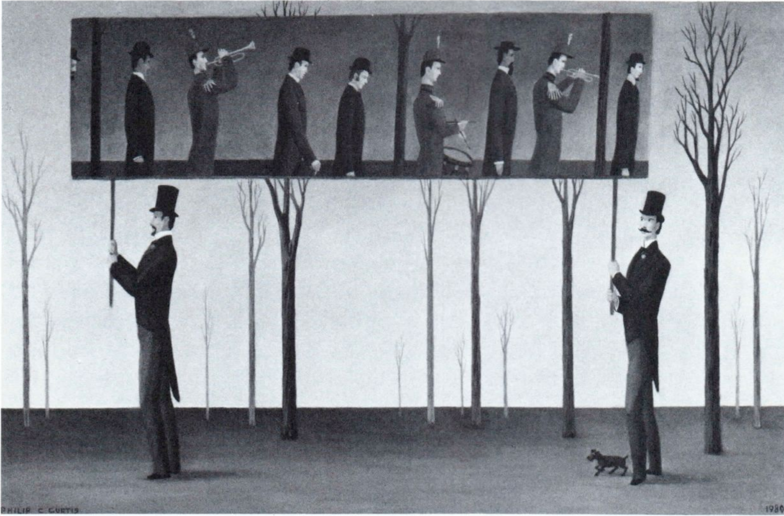


Figure 3. Philip Campbell Curtis, *Two Way Parade,* 1960, oil on board, Phoenix Art Museum. Gift of Philip C. Curtis.

The otherworldliness of *Wanderers* is created by the imaginative style of clothing, irrational scale and distortion of both the figures and their random movements in an anonymous space. In *Parade,* disorientation becomes more acute by employing Edwardian or turn-of-the-century fashions, removing the participants from immediate experience. Again the vast anonymous space punctuated by lifeless trees contributes to the mysterious, dreamlike atmosphere.

A comparison of the two works reveals the progress of the artist's motifs and imagery. In the five years between the paintings, Curtis's ideas mature from an amusing comment on disharmony in 1960's *Wanderers* to a more clear and compelling statement about the displacement of man in 1965's *Parade*.

Though Surrealism and Magic Realism are terms readily applied to Curtis's work, neither label accurately describes it or serves an instructive purpose. Curtis's subjects are not erotic or frighteningly bizarre, like the Surrealism associated with Dali. Curtis paints in a sharply focused manner, but unlike the Magic Realists, his paintings lack the realistic exaggeration of ordinary experience.

Curtis's work bears an affinity to that of such Surrealists as Tanguy, in the use of vast, monotonous landscapes, and Magritte, whose repetitive, bowler-hatted men are anonymities. The frozen characters, confined in a shallow, perspectival space, are redolent of Piero della Francesca, whom Curtis has admired and studied since the early 1930s.

The ambiguous or obscure ritual is a major theme in postwar figurative painting.[2] Curtis, through his exploration of ritual may be linked to a number of contemporary figurative artists who similarly focus on the figure placed in strange situations or performing inexplicable actions to convey human dislocation.[3] These artists have maintained a commitment to comment over form using styles that combine characteristics of Naturalism, Cubism, Expressionism, and Surrealism.[4]

With *Parade*, Curtis summarizes the elements he uses throughout his *oeuvre*, the subtle tension based on peculiar juxtapositions using repetitive characters involved in strange events. Subsequent works treating the theme of a recondite communal ritual are based on the ideas and images synthesized in *Parade*.

In the light of the highly personal iconography and elusive nature of Curtis's work, the following excerpts from an interview, conducted 1 October 1985, both provide primary material for an understanding of the artist's choices of subject matter and document ideas behind several of his paintings. In the first part of the interview Curtis discusses his artistic training and describes his role as an early administrator of the Phoenix Art Museum; his answers to the remaining questions comment on his work.

Q: What was New York in the 1930s, with so many artists in one place?

Curtis: It was a great experience. When I was in Yale I knew very few painters ouside of the damn school. The instructors didn't even talk about contemporary art.[5] Well, they mentioned Cezanne, just as a hapless sort of a guy who didn't fully develop. So when I went to New York within thirty days I knew practically all the painters who where there. Everything was new to me.

Q: You mean after coming from a traditional school?[6]

Curtis: That and Michigan which didn't have much in the cultural way, especially where I lived.

Q: Who were the artists that you found particularly interesting?

Curtis: Stuart Davis and Arshile Gorky were both quite prominent. I knew Gorky. Pollock was there, but nobody knew him then. He was a painter and I was in the administration. I knew a lot of people, but I was in on a different level. We all knew each other because we were all in the pot together. The commercial galleries were not recognizing this breed at that time.[7] We knew them on the projects and saw their work there. We collected all these paintings, we – the program – did. And we made them into exhibits and some of them came out here. They went all over the country. The exhibits at that time were a pretty damn good image of what was going on in the whole country. It was a network.

Q: How did you initially get your job as a supervisor in the mural division with the WPA.?

Curtis: They had a percentage of artists who they could hire who weren't on relief, and these were usually the administration people and that's where I was. I guess I knew somebody and they put my name on a list and I was hired. It was a great program. I stayed only a couple of years with this project in New York. Then a new program was formed to set up art centers all around the country. That appealed to me very much. I joined it and came to Phoenix.

Q: Was there an art center here at the time?

Curtis: No. They had sketching classes for the members and an exhibit once a year at the State Fair. The so-called Fine Arts Society didn't have an administrator, and they requested it. They were the group that is in back of the museum now.

Q: When you arrived, setting up a regular exhibition program was one of your major tasks?

Curtis: Sure. We had twenty and thirty exhibits a year, maybe more. The exhibit program was good. There was a lot of interest in the idea of a center, and classes, too. It was a matter of organizing and getting a board together with regular meetings, and to get some men on the board. There was only one man on the board at the time and it was confined to just a tea party approach. What we needed was a building. In Washington, they told me the best thing to do, or the only thing to do, was to get the busiest businessman in town interested in things, so he'd run it or be present. And that was Walter Bimson.[8] He fit the description. It worked out well, too; he saw to it that the building was financed and built. We had agreed together that Frank Lloyd Wright should do the job. When I left town he said that he'd go out immediately and give him the job. Which he did – and then the war came along. There were some people who didn't like Wright and they formed another committee and hired one of Wright's students. The building that's there now is all right but with Wright, it would have been known.

Q: Being an administrator at that time was rewarding enough to put off your own painting?

Curtis: Yes, I was willing to quit painting for it then. I was young, I thought I'd live forever. I didn't think of anything serious like that. I knew I was going to paint but I didn't know when. It wasn't too bad, it expanded my interests.

Q: Was it the interruption of the war that gave you time to rethink your career choice?

Curtis: Yes it did. I went to Washington to work with the Office of Strategic Services. They hired architects,

painters, movie makers, sculptors and photographers; it was a very high class group of people who were important in their fields. So I met a lot of people I wouldn't have met otherwise. And my interest in Surrealism really started there because one of my friends knew more about Surrealism than Freud. I used to hear about it day in and day out and I became fascinated. I was just forty after the war. Then I remembered how peaceful it was out there. That's why I came here. If I lived in New York, I knew I'd be involved with fifty thousand other artists. And then Abstract Expressionism was developing and I wasn't too interested in that. I tried some. It was fun for an hour or so but I couldn't imagine devoting a career to it.[9]

Q: Do you see any connection between your work and the work of the Abstract Expressionists?

Curtis: Well, I guess there is probably some relationship. The abstract people were just different, it's hard to get any meaning out of their things. It's just a general statement of well-being or confusion. It's an emotional experience.[10] **I'm very design-conscious and was brought up in this Renaissance idea of designing; it's a very complicated matter?**

Q: You have stated that at the start of your painting career you had difficulty amassing enough paintings for a show. Then the Curtis Trust was formed by Lewis Ruskin in 1960.[11] How influential, was the Trust for your career?

Curtis: It was *very* important. Ruskin was very sophisticated and it gave me a group that were friends talking for me and pushing me. I wanted to get into Knoedler's, which was a very good gallery. So they arranged it.[12]

Q: Would it have been much harder for you to gain representation on your own?

Curtis: I would have tried, but I guess it would have been more difficult without their help.

Q: The trust gave you three years of uninterrupted painting. Would you describe the Trust years as your formative period?

Curtis: No. By the time I had entered into this agreement I knew pretty much exactly what I wanted. That was one good thing about not starting until you're forty. You're a little more mature than you would be otherwise. I didn't waste a lot of time.

Q: *The Ball Players* (1950-54) private collection) is one of the earliest examples with the Victorian or Edwardian characters that reappear throughout your paintings.[13] What are your reasons for choosing this era?

Curtis: For one reason, it was really the beginning of the Industrial Age and all our troubles started about that time. Another reason is I liked the costumes, and their houses were interesting to me and their whole way of life. I'm sure I've put my meanings into it because I haven't really been concerned with what they thought instead. A lot of things that I like or use are those things that seem pointless to me.

Q: By pointless, do you mean your perception of their behavior, customs, or dress which then are transformed into your visual absurdities?

Curtis: Yes. I just don't want to do current things. Or put current uniforms on them. I want the images to be removed from the present.

Q: Your grandparents lived in one of those Victorian gingerbread houses, didn't they?

Curtis: Yes, it was fun for a kid. It had a tower you could go up into and all kinds of secret places that were left over and used in some way or another. It was a good show. I think as a child I liked it because it was more of a plaything, you could enjoy it more. When we moved into our final house, it was so plain. I wasn't very pleased about it.[14]

The Victorian period has a different meaning from the young people's ideas now. It's a fascinating period to me.

Q: Are you referring to their societal attitudes compared to ours?

Curtis: Yes, the codes are so solid and in place that there's a little brainwashing going on there.

Q: As an example, in *Fruit Tree* (1968, a private collection) the roots of a live tree imprison a woman's head and shoulders, and her neck is bound by a rigid collar. This

suggests to me that the woman is confined by her societal roles as a woman. Is this correct?

Curtis: Yes, that's the way I felt. She's the Eve of the Adam and Eve story; she's sort of trapped by the myth and giving out the fruit.

Q: Your work presents human relationships most often by depicting recognizable rituals.

Curtis: Yes, that's right. The rituals fill in a lot of blank space.[15]

Q: The observer is obviously an important figure in all your paintings. Am I incorrect in assuming that the observer is more than just a compositional device?

Curtis: No, you're right. The observer is the contact with the viewer. The dogs are also sometimes observers. I don't use them as an animalistic version of myself but I can put myself in their place. I give the dog an intelligence superior to the people he's around.

Q: It's not the dog as an animal but the dog with another spirit who has no control over his situation?

Curtis: That's right. He could leave but he doesn't – he wants to see how it's going to end.

Q: A number of your paintings deal with the rituals of marriage and courtship. In *The Bride's Descent* (1973, Phoenix Art Museum) the bride is completely alone. Her total isolation in a situation which is normally associated with joyous celebration makes this painting extremely unsettling. Should one think that you have a pessimistic view of marriage.?

Curtis: Well, marriage and other things, too, but I don't think I'm bitter about it.

Q: Loneliness and people who never communicate are always present in your work: is this a general statement about the loneliness of humans?

Curtis: Yes. Well, a good deal of us are, sure. We forget about it from time to time but it's still there.

Q: You say that you try to keep your work as simple as possible. Do you believe that the statements you make are obvious, or should be obvious to the viewer?

Curtis: **Well, I've found out that it didn't make to much difference if it's obvious to them in another way. And that's just as important.**

At one time I explained a painting to somebody who had just paid a lot of money for it and the explanation ruined it for him. He was disappointed that he didn't see it that way – it took the glow off of it. I know that there are a hundred interpretations that can be made, so I've given up talking about it. I can't follow a painting around and keep explaining it. There are a lot of interpretations. A psychiatrist once sat down and gave me six in a row. So that's why I don't explain my paintings. I prefer to just paint.

Q: By making your statements elusive, are you creating a visual exercise for the viewer?

Curtis: **Yes, confronting him with a lot of questions.**

Q: Although your paintings do not refer to specific events, I believe they are based on personal experience. Do you abstract personal events and translate them into your cast of characters? For example, in *Wanderers* (1960, Phoenix Art Museum, Illustration 2) an assortment of musicians pass one another at a crossroad. This act, symbolic of a major decision, suggests a very personal meaning since 1960 was the same year the Trust was formed, placing you at a turning point or crossroad in your career. Is my interpretation that *Wanderers* depicts a personal event correct?

Curtis: **It was somewhat of a subconscious thing. It started out as a concert I went to. The event seemed significant to me. Of course I've been to concerts and it never bothered me before, but that night it did. The people were so damn regimented in this act of putting on music, which didn't turn out to be very well done. The painting grew out of that evening.**

Q: That painting displays such marvelous comic touches especially by the contrast between the one enormous figure who strikes a very tiny triangle while two miniscule figures struggle to carry a giant bass drum.[16]

Curtis: **Yes, that tickled me.**

Q: Most of the instruments you use are those which you might find in a band. Is there any reason why you chose those instruments over the orchestral ones?

Curtis: **I like the big band instruments. Some are monstrous, though not very musical – they just make noise.[17] Most of my instruments are not accurate, although some musicians have said that they're amazed by how much I know about instruments. There's no way those things could work. I deliberately go crazy on instruments and nobody seems to notice.**

Q: Some of your paintings include pipe organs.

Curtis: **Yes, when I was a kid I had to stay quiet while Mother was holding rehearsals. Those things are huge. She played one in church. I was impressed by them.**

Q: Do the pipe organs have anything to do with the circus organs?

Curtis: **They look as though they should be in the circus, too. Well, they are in a religious circus.**

Q: You use a lot of circus imagery in your paintings.

Curtis: **Yes. That's another escape people like. It's a whole world of escape. The circus was quite a spectacle and I was looking at it as a kid. I'm sure adults liked them too. The circus was one of the highlights of the year. Our town wasn't very big, but the biggest shows stopped there. The trains are part of the act, too, because they moved by train. They'd come in early in the day and start putting it together right then. By the next morning the tents are all up. Then the parade starts. These were the only parades I got to see. They'd have an afternoon performance, than an evening performance and before the show was over half the tent was down and moving out. That was as good a show as any was. It was wonderful.**

Q: The circus, then, emphasizes the fine line between illusion and reality, since its purpose is to present wonderful illusions.

Curtis: **Yes, and it's more effective, too, when they use the tents and then you've got an environment which is different from anything that you usually live in. So you see things that go on in that tent in a magical way.**

Q: In the parades, such as the 1965 *Parade* in the University Art Museum of Arizona State University, you refer

to illusion and reality by juxtaposing the spectators and the circus performers, making them interchangeable. How is this significant to you?

Curtis: Well, it's just that nothing is ever for sure. That's just the way life is.

Q: It doesn't matter if we wear the uniforms or not?

Curtis: Yes. We're just a part of it.

Q: In *Two Way Parade* (1980, Phoenix Art Museum, figure 3), the parade of two large figures seems to be the real parade while the two-dimensional parade on the banner appears to be an illusion. Is this a reference to the problem of distinguishing between illusion and reality?[18]

Curtis: Yes, sure.

Q: Your frequent depiction of this illusion recalls a statement you made twenty years ago, in 1957:

> I paint in the midst of a world where living is a very strange phenomenon, realities get stacked up one on top of the other. I found myself concerned with this.

Curtis: Yes, that statement still expresses my concerns. I try to create a dream world. That is needed because the everyday world is pretty dull, broken-down, no design, no stimulating color. Everything is accidentally colored, the same way they build cities. They just build them. For a while in those Victorian houses, there was an awful lot of craftsmanship that went into it. And it gave a lift to the dullness of everyday life.

Notes

Hiram Power's Bust of *George Washington*

1. For a more complete analysis of mid-nineteenth-century American public portrait monuments, see my doctoral dissertation, "Sculpture as History: Themes of Liberty, Unity, and Manifest Destiny in American Sculpture, 1825-1865," University of Wisconsin, 1984. Hiram Powers executed a second public portrait monument of George Washington for the Masonic Lodge in Fredericksburg, Virginia (1825-1859). Identified as *George Washington at the Masonic Altar* in a publication of that title (New York, 1859), this full-length, marble statue included Masonic emblems as explained in a letter of April 19, 1855:

> My statue stands upon the right foot, with the left advanced in front. The right arm rests upon a column composed of sticks (the fasces) upon which Washington appears to lean. There is nothing in his hand, but I might place a book or something else in it. The other hand hangs at his side and has a scroll in it. This might be the charter. The fasces are close to the figure indeed, for the right hip touches his support. I might suspend upon this support some appropriate emblems, and I might place a book upon the top of it under the right arm. I could also represent some emblems on the base of the foot of the statue.

(Hiram Powers to John J. Young, April 19, 1855, Hiram Powers Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Hereafter cited as Hiram Powers Papers.) Commissioned to celebrate the centennial anniversary of Washington's initiation into the Masons, John J. Young, chairman of the Executive Monument Committee, had written Powers on February 1, 1954:

> We think your present model [the Louisiana *Washington*] will answer for this work. . . . We wish his right hand to rest on the Holy Bible, square and compass, supported by the Altar (instead of the Fasces). In his left hand the charter of the Lodge (instead of his Farewell Address), with the collar and jewel of the register of the Lodge around his neck and his apron on the pedestal. . . .

(Hiram Powers Papers). To insure accuracy, Young sent samples of the Masonic regalia to Powers (Young to Powers, December 15, 1854, Hiram Powers Papers). Completed by April, 1859 and exhibited at Goupil's Art Gallery in November of that year, the Masonic *Washington* was destroyed during the Civil War in Richmond, Virginia where it had been moved for safekeeping.

2. For a list of those portraits modeled in Washington, DC and Boston and later carved in marble, see Donald Martin Reynolds, *Hiram Powers and His Ideal Sculpture*, Diss. Columbia University, 1975 (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1977), pp. 1053-1055.

3. Clara Louise Dentler, *White Marble: A Biography of Powers* (1967), unpublished manuscript, Archives of American Art, Appendix, p. 1. Dentler states that Powers carved the bust in marble in 1838 for his patron Nicholas Longworth who then presented the work to the Cincinnati Historical and Philosophical Society.

4. Hiram Powers executed seven full-length, life-size public portrait monuments: *John C. Calhoun* for the South Carolina statehouse (1843-1850, destroyed during the Civil War); *George Washington* for the Capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana (1848-1854); *George Washington* for the Masonic Lodge at Fredericksburg, Virginia (1852-1859); *Daniel Webster* for the Boston statehouse grounds (1853-59); *Thomas Jefferson* for the U.S. Capitol (1859-1863); *Benjamin Franklin* for the U.S. Capitol (1859-1863); and *Edward Everett* (1870, unlocated). With the exception of the Everett monument, each of these works were commissioned by either private citizens or state and federal legislatures.

5. See W.S. Wetmore to George Peabody, March 24, 1846, Hiram Powers Papers. By July 30, 1848, Powers completed the bust of Washington, receiving fifty pounds sterling (about two-hundred dollars) as payment. (See Powers to Wetmore, July 30, 1848, Hiram Powers Papers.) Although Wetmore considered donating the *Washington* bust to either the New York Historical Society or the "University" (presumably New York University), he apparently kept the statue for himself since Arizona State University purchased this bust in 1969 at an auction on the premises of Chateau-sur-mer in Newport, Rhode Island, the home of the Wetmore descendants. (See Wetmore to Powers, September 18, 1848, Hiram Powers Papers).

6. See Reynolds, pp. 1065-1066 for a list of the locations, patrons, and dates of each marble bust.

7. For a discussion of apotheosis in ancient and late antique portraiture, see H.P.L. L'Orange, *Apotheosis in Ancient Portraiture* (Oslo: H. Aschehoug and Co., 1947). Charles Thomas Walters discusses Powers's use of physiognomy, specifically "eye-language," and phrenology in his portrait busts in "The Portraiture of Hiram Powers: Practicality, Physiognomy, and the American Ideal," *Journal of American Culture*, I (Spring, 1978, pp. 51-59.

8. George Washington's iconography in mid-century history painting is discussed in Mark Edward Thistlethwaite, *The Image of George Washington: Studies in Mid-Nineteenth Cen-*

tury American History Painting, Diss. University of Pennsylvania, 1977 (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1979).
9. Mason Lock Weems, *The Life of George Washington*, ed. Marcus Cunliffe (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 168-169.
10. For a discussion of the iconography of Barralet's engraving, see Phoebe Lloyd Jacobs, "John James Barralet and the Apotheosis of George Washington," *Winterthur Portfolio*, XII (1977), pp. 115-137.
11. Camille S. Jungman, "A Season's Sarcophagus in the Elvehjem Center, Madison, Wisconsin," *The Classical Journal* (November, 1980), pp. 21-33.
12. Parallel to this transformation of Washington from a divine ruler to a more humanizing statesman is the change that occurs after 1800 from frequent associations made between Washington and Moses to the more secular view of the former president as Cincinnatus. See Gary Wills, *Cincinnatus, George Washington and the Enlightenment Images of Power in Early America* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1984), chapter III.
13. *Congressional Debates*, 22nd Cong., 1st Sess., February 14, 1832, p. 1810.
14. *House Executive Documents* No. 45, 27th Cong., 1st Sess., 1841, p. 2. Livingston derived his ideas for the bas-reliefs and their subjects from a 1783 resolution passed by Congress. This resolution stipulated that a bronze equestrian statue of Washington as a general clothed in Roman dress, holding a truncheon in his right hand, and crowned with a laurel wreath could occupy the future location at Congress. It further designated a marble pedestal with bas-reliefs that would illustrate the evacuation of Boston, the capture of the Hessians in Trenton, and the battles of Princeton, Monmouth, and York. (*House Executive Documents*) No. 301, 21st Cong., 1st Sess., February 22, 1830).
15. Everett to Greenough, July 29, 1832, Edward Everett Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.
16. Greenough to Washington Allston, December 18, 1833, Nathalia Wright, *Letters to Horatio Greenough: American Sculpture* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972, p. 171. Hereafter *Letters*. Greenough altered the accessory figures and motifs in this final composition, omitting the decorations on Washington's robe, the fruits, the flowers, the naval and military trophies, the virtues and the eagles. Instead, surmounting the back of Washington's throne are two subsidiary figures: an Indian and Columbus. In addition, two reliefs decorate either side of the throne: *Apollo in his Chariot* and *Hercules and Iphictus*. See my dissertation for a more complete discussion of the iconography of Greenough's *Washington* and the meaning of the subsidiary figures and reliefs, especially in the work's representation of the president as an agent of civilization.
17. Wayne Craven, "Horatio Greenough's Statue of Washington and Phidias' Olympian Zeus," *Art Quarterly*, XXVI (Winter 1963), pp. 429-440, compares Greenough's Phidian figure to similar representations by John Flaxman

and Ingres, thereby demonstrating the pervasive influence of the Phidian Zeus in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century art.

18. Reynolds, pp. 82-83 argues that Ingres directly influenced Greenough's composition.

19. See L' Orange for a discussion of hairstyles in Hellenistic portraits of inspired rulers, pp. 30-35.

20. Greenough to Lady Rosina Wheeler Bulwer-Lytton, May 8, 1841, and to John Wakefield Francis, date unknown, *Letters*, pp. 309 and 298.

21. This is Gary Wills's interpretation as outlined in *Cincinnatus*. Wills argues that Washington's resignations were carefully orchestrated events intended to unify the nation and to fortify democracy. Wills furthermore discusses other works by American artists which similarly refer to Washington's resignations.

22. Greenough to Samuel F.B. Morse, May 24, 1834, *Letters*, pp. 176-177.

23. Quoted in William H. Gerdts, *The Great American Nude* (New York: Praeger, 1974), p. 82.

24. Rembrandt Lockwood's *The Last Judgement* is housed in the Newark Museum, while Brumidi's better known *Apotheosis of Washington* decorates the dome of the US Capitol building. These works are discussed in Thistlethwaite, pp. 190-192.

25. Quoted in Thistlethwaite, p. 191.

26. At the end of the 1840s and during the next decade, bronze equestrian monuments were commissioned and erected in New York City, Boston, and Washington, DC. Limited in subject matter to George Washington and Andrew Jackson who had first distinguished themselves during the Revolution and the War of 1812, respectively, and it is their military accomplishments that are celebrated in equestrian format. For a more complete discussion of the equestrian monument in American sculpture before the Civil War, see my doctoral dissertation, pp. 198-224.

27. I have adopted the term "philosopher in his cabinet" from Wills who examines this portrait type in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American and European paintings, pp. 167-172.

28. The governor, Isaac Johnson, sent to Hiram Powers a copy of the act, no. 110, approved by the legislature on March 16, 1848, along with a letter dated May 19, 1848, telling the sculptor about the commission (Johnson to Powers, May 19, 1848, Hiram Powers Papers). Powers requested and received five-thousand dollars more than originally appropriated (Powers to Marc Johnson, Governor, October 7, 1848; Powers to Charles Gayarré, Secretary of State, May 23, 1849; Gayarré to Powers, July 13, 1852, Hiram Powers Papers). This statue arrived in Baton Rouge on June 7, 1855 where it was placed outside the statehouse. In 1859, it was moved to its intended location, inside the rotunda. During the Civil War, General Butler, who commanded the Union Forces in Baton Rouge, sent the work to Washington, DC where it was placed in storage. In response to a petition, the government returned the

statue to Louisiana in 1868 where it was destroyed by fire three years later.
29. Powers to Joseph Walker, June 8, 1852, Hiram Powers Papers. An inaccurate publication of this letter and others that pertain to the payment of Hiram Powers can be found in *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, 2 (July, 1919), pp. 272-275.
30. The clothes were preserved in the Patent Office in Washington DC and at the request of Powers studied by Miner Kellogg who made sketches and took measurements. (Powers to Sydney Brooks, January 30, 1850; Powers to John S. Preston, March 17, 1850; Powers to Thomas Worchester, December 11, 1850; Powers to Sydney Brooks, January 1, 1851, Hiram Powers Papers).
31. John S. Hallam, "Houdon's *Washington* in Richmond: Some New Observations," *The American Art Journal*, X (November, 1978), pp. 72-80.
32. Powers rejected the plow in sculpture as too cumbersome and clumsy. Powers to Walker, June 8, 1852, Hiram Powers Papers.
33. Powers to Phillip Slaughter, February 3, 1853, Hiram Powers Papers.
34. Edward Everett, *Orations and Speeches*, III (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1860-1868), pp. 63-64.
35. *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 49-50.
36. *Ibid.*, III, p. 59.
37. This is illustrated in Thistlethwaite, Figure 22.
38. Boston, *Bronze Group Commemorating Emancipation*, City Document 126 (Boston: 1879, p. 75.

A Sky After El Greco: An Early Homage by Demuth

1. A.A. Davidson, *Early American Modernist Painting 1910-1935*, New York, 1981, 218.
2. Davidson, *American Modernist*, 20.
3. *A Sky After El Greco*, 1919, tempera, 20 × 16, Art Collections, Arizona State University, Tempe, Oliver B. James Collection of American Art. (51.29)
4. A.C. Ritchie, *Charles Demuth*, New York, 1950, 12. In this catalog for a retrospective exhibition at the Modern Museum of Art, Ritchie discusses Demuth's literary illustration and alludes to the James watercolors as Demuth's masterpieces. Also see, H. McBride, "Demuth: Phantoms from Literature," *Art News*, XLIX, 1950, 18-21. Reviewing this retrospective exhibition McBride calls Demuth "America's Toulouse-Lautrec."
5. M.W. Brown, "Cubist-Realism: An American Style," *Marsyas* III, 1943-45, 138-60.
6. A.L. Eiseman, *Charles Demuth*, New York, 1982, 60. These same mast-like forms also appear in *Gloucester* of the same date. Redpr. Davidson, *American Modernist*, 194, Figure 98.
7. E.E. Farnham, "Charles Demuth's Bermuda Landscapes," *Art Journal* XXV, 1965/66, 130-137.
8. Farnham, "Bermuda," 132.
9. Farnham's four categories are 1) the early landscapes (1911-15); 2) the Bermuda Cubist-influenced landscapes (1916-17); 3)

the transitional landscape (1918-17 ???); 4) the late architectural-industrial landscapes 1927-33). Farnham, "Bermuda," 134.
10. Farnham, "Bermuda," 133.
11. There can be little doubt that Demuth would have been familiar with El Greco's *View of Toledo*. The work was donated to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1929 as part of the Havemeyer Collection. A 1915 exhibition of the works of El Greco and Goya mounted at the Knoedler Galleries, New York, included *View of Toledo* as Item No. 3 in the catalog. Dividing his time between Lancaster and a New York apartment he maintained on Washington Square South that year, Demuth was intimately involved with the city's artistic community. A member of the Arensberg Circle, he formed a quick bond with Duchamp and Picabia who both arrived in New York in 1915. The year also marked Demuth's second one man show at the Daniel Gallery.
12. An examination of early criticisms of Demuth's use of titles may be found in D. Gebhard and P. Plous, *Charles Demuth: the Mechanical Encrusted on the Living*, Santa Barbara, 1971, II; and B. Fahlman, *Pennsylvania Modern: Charles Demuth of Lancaster*, Philadelphia, 1983, 19, 43.
13. M.W. Brown, *American Painting from the Armory Show to the Depression*, Princeton, 1955, III.
14. E.E. Farnham, *Charles Demuth: Behind a Laughing Mask*, Norman, 1971, 120.
15. Farnham, *Demuth*, 7.
16. Davidson, *American Modernist*, 92.
17. Davidson, *American Modernist*, 92.
18. S.L. Faison, Jr, "Fact and Art in Charles Demuth," *Magazine of Art*, XLIII, 1950, 129.
19. Karal Ann Marling, "My Egypt: The Irony of the American Dream," *Winterthur Portfolio* XV, 1980, 30.
20. Marling, *My Egypt*, 29.
21. Marling, *My Egypt*, 25-39.
22. Marling, *My Egypt*, 33.
23. Fahlam, *Pennsylvania Modern*, 59.
24. Eiseman, *Demuth*, 72, Davidson, *American Modernist*, 91.
25. F. Watson, "Charles Demuth," *The Arts*, III, 77.
26. C. Demuth, "The Azure Adder," *The Glebe*, 1913, 10.
27. C. Demuth, "Across a Greco is Written," *Creative Art*, V, 1929, 629, 634.
28. S. Rimmon, *The Concept of Ambiguity – The Examples of James*, Chicago, 1977, 8.
29. Ritchie, *Demuth*, 12.
30. Demuth's illustrations for Henry James's *Turn of the Screw*, 1918, and *The Beast in the Jungle*, 1919, are reproduced in Ritchie, *Demuth*, 53-61, (The Philadelphia Museum of Art. Given by Frank and Alice Osborn.) *At a House in Harley Street*, illustration No. 1 for *Turn of the Screw*, (The Museum of Modern Art, gift of Mrs John D. Rockefeller, Jr)
31. J.L. Sweeney, "The Demuth Pictures," *il Kenyon Review*, V, 1943, 523.
32. Sweeney, "Demuth Pictures," 522.
33. Sweeney, "Demuth Pictures," 524.
34. Sweeney, "Demuth Pictures," 524-525.
35. Sweeney, "Demuth Pictures," 527-528.

36. Sweeney, "Demuth Pictures," 529.
37. Sweeney, "Demuth Pictures," 530.
38. For a more detailed account of the ambiguity present in these works of James see D. Krook, *The Ordeal of Consciousness in Henry James*, Cambridge, 1962; and S. Rimmon, *The Concept of Ambiguity – The Examples of James*.
39. Dickran Tashjian, *Skyscraper Primitives: Dada and the American Avant-Garde 1910-1925*, Middletown, 1975; and Davidson, *American Modernist*, discuss the Precisionist's quest for a peculiarly American art and the role of Alfred Stieglitz in this search.
40. Davidson, *American Modernist*, 92.
41. Eiseman, *Demuth*, 18.
42. Eiseman, *Demuth*, 72.
43. Davidson, *American Modernist*, 93.
Eiseman, *Demuth*, 72.
44. Davidson, *American Modernist*, 93
45. Farnham, *Demuth*, 177-179.
46. D. Tashjian, *William Carlos Williams and the American Scene, 1920-1940*, New York, 1978, 71.
47. Davidson, *American Modernist*, 93.
48. J. Brown, "El Greco, the Man and the Myths," in J. Brown, W.B. Jordan, R.L. Kagan and A.E. Perez Sanchez, *El Greco of Toledo*, 1982; and J. Brown, "The Redefinition of El Greco in the Twentieth Century," in J. Brown, ed., "Figures of Thought: El Greco as Interpreter of History, Tradition and Ideas," *Studies in the History of Art*, XIII, Washington, DC, 1982. Brown discusses in depth the reappraisal of El Greco in the 19th and 20th centuries.
49. R. Bryon and D.T. Rice, *The Birth of Western Painting: a History of Colour, Form and Iconography Giotto, Duccio, and El Greco*, New York, 1930, reprint ed., 1968, 3.
50. H. McBride, *The Flow of Art: Essays and Criticisms of Henry McBride*, D.C. Rich, ed., New York, 1975, 374.
51. Though these viewpoints prevailed in the early part of this century, and thus influenced Demuth, Brown disputes these myths about El Greco and asserts that there is no evidence to link El Greco with the Spanish mystics of his day. On the contrary, he cites evidence which confirms that El Greco was an integral part of the intellectual community of Toledo and points out that many of his works were commissioned by religious bodies in Toledo and thus were acceptable to at least a segment of the religious community. Brown concludes El Greco's acceptance of the traditional artistic values of his day is validated by a study by Xavier de Salas of El Greco's written comments in the margins of his personal copy of the second edition of Vasari and the recent discovery of his personal notations to Barbaro's edition of Vitruvius.

Brown, "Redefinition," p. 31; also Brown, *El Greco of Toledo*. 110-111.
52. Franz Marc, "Spiritual Treasures," *The Blaue Ritter Almanac*, 1974 edition, New York, K. Lankheit, ed., trans. by H. Falkenstein with assistance of M. Terzian and G. Hinderlie,
53. Roger Fry, *Vision and Design*, New York, 1920, 138-139.
54. Bryon, *Birth*, 199.

55. Yvon Taillandier, *Cezanne*, New York, 1961, 34.
56. Bryon, *Birth*, 194.
57. H.A. Bull, "The Traveler's Notebook," *International Studio*, XCIV, 1929, 69.
58. Faison, "Fact and Art," 123-128.
59. When Toledo was reconquered in 1085 by the Spanish King Alfonso VI, he made it his capital city. The old Moslem fortress, the Alcazar, was converted into the Spanish royal palace. A few years later Alfonso made the Archbishop of Toledo titular head of the Spanish church. Citing the popularity of idealistic, emblematic landscapes in the sixteenth century, Brown concludes that the union of the church and state is symbolized by these two buildings, which epitomized the power and wealth of Toledo. J. Brown and R.L. Kagan, "View of Toledo," *El Greco of Toledo*, 49.
60. Faison, "Fact and Art," 126.
61. Brown, *El Greco of Toledo*, 18.
62. Brown, *El Greco of Toledo*, 111.
63. J. Pijoan, "El Greco – A Spaniard," *The Art Bulletin*, XII, 1930, 17.

Ben Shahn's *Mine Building*: A Symbol of Disaster

1. Tempera on masonite, 10″ × 20″, signed l.r. Ben Shahn, excellent condition, 51.62. Gift of Oliver B. James. Provenance: The Downtown Gallery, New York; Oliver B. James, Phoenix, Arizona.
2. Patricia Hills in her article, " 'American Tragedy': The Poetics of Ugliness, The Politics of Anger," *Art Magazine*, Feb, 1980, 138-142, took a similar approach in demonstrating Philip Evergood's use of journalistic sources for imagery in his painting, *American Tragedy*.
3. Abraham A. Davidson, *Early American Modernist Painting, 1910-1935*, New York, 1981, 184.
4. John Bartlow Martin, "The Blast in Centralia No. 5," *Harper's Magazine*, March, 1948, 198.
5. Joseph E. Finley, *The Corrupt Kingdom*, New York, 1972, 228; John Bartlow Martin, "The Blast in Centralia No. 5," 205.
6. Finley, *The Corrupt Kingdom*, 228; Martin, "The Blast in Centralia No. 5," 205.
7. Finley, *The Corrupt Kingdom*, 206.
8. Ibid., 178.
9. Ibid., 188.
10. Selden Rodman, *Portrait of the Artist as an American*, New York, 1951, 32.
11. Mr. Harper, "After Hours: Ben Shahn," *Harper's Magazine*, December 1957, 79-81.
12. Shahn was "haunted by the circumstances of the disaster." Bernarda Bryson Shahn, *Ben Shahn*, New York, 1972, 169.
13. Ben Shahn, *The Shape of Content*, Cambridge, 1957, 29.
14. Bernarda Bryson, "The Drawings of Ben Shahn," *Image* (London), Autumn 1949, 38.
15. Martin, "The Blast in Centralia No. 5, 195.

16. *Life*, "Lewis Rants but Miners' Widows are Silent," April 14, 1947, 44.
17. Martin, "The Blast in Centralia No. 5." 216, Mrs. Bryant's eldest son was also killed in the explosion which took the life of her husband.
18. In a 1957 interview by Nadya Aisenberg, Shahn revealed his inspiration for an evolution of the two mine officials who are found in the Centralia paintings. Shahn's words curiously sound as though he had nothing to do with their appearance:

> In one instance I had to do a series of illustrations on a mine disaster. I have been quite familiar with mines (my wife comes from mine country and I have been down mines). . . I remember once being at a mine disaster and seeing two rather official-looking gentleman. They looked like mine inspectors or something – sort of dark clothes. They might have been undertakers. Well, they entered the first painting, and they were in the second painting and they were in the third painting. But they got smaller and smaller, and finally in one painting they were just in the doorway, no bigger than three inches. Then they disappeared completely and never appeared again.

John D. Morse, *Ben Shahn*, New York, 1972, 55.
19. Ben Shahn, *The Shape of Content*, 39.
20. Frances K. Pohl, "An American in Venice: Ben Shahn and United States Foreign Policy at the 1954 Venice Biennale or Portrait of the Artist as an American Liberal," *Art History*, Vol. 4, No. 1, March 1981, 80-113.
21. Sheldon Rodman, *Portrait of the Artist as an American*, 52-53.
22. Martin, "The Blast in Centralia No. 5," 194.
23. Ben Shahn, *The Shape of Content*, 32.
24. Ibid., 106.
25. Morse, *Ben Shahn*, 57.
26. "A symbolism which I might once have considered cryptic now became the only means by which I could formulate the sense of emptiness and waste that the war gave me, and the sense of the littleness of people trying to live on through the enormity of the war." Ben Shahn, *The Shape of Content*, 47.
27. Bernarda Bryson Shahn, *Ben Shahn*, 169.
28. James Thrall Soby, *Ben Shahn: His Graphic Art*, 1963, 19, 32.
29. Ben Shahn, *The Shape of Content*, 107.

Georgia O'Keeffe's *Horse's Skull on Blue*: A Dedicatory Tribute

1. R.D. Coffey, *The Skull Painting of Georgia O'Keeffe*, from personal interviews with Miss Georgia O'Keeffe for his Masters Thesis, Arizona State University, 1974, 6-7.

2. *Horses Skull on Blue*, 1930.
Gift of Oliver B. James (deceased) Phoenix, Arizona. Presented to Arizona State Collections, January, 1951. Previous owner, Downtown Galleries, NYC Acc. No. 51.57/30″ × 16″ oil on canvas, unsigned.
3. Lisa Mintz Messinger, Curatorial Assistant. Department of Twentieth Century Art "Georgia O'Keefe," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, XLII, Fall 1984, f. 4.
4. Georgia O'Keeffe, *Georgia O'Keefe*, A Studio Book, Viking Press, New York, 1976.
5. O'Keeffe.
6. E.W. Watson, "Georgia O'Keeffe," *American Artist*, 7:11, June, 1943, f. 8.
7. Messinger, 5.
8. Watson, 29.
9. C.S. Rubinstein, *American Women Artists*, New York, 1982, 184.
10. Messinger, 32.
11. O'Keeffe.
12. C. Schwartz, *Nevelson and O'Keeffe: Independents of the 20th Century*, Nassau County Museum of Fine Art, Roslyn Harbor, New York, 1983, 35.
13. L. Goodrich, D. Bry, *Georgia O'Keeffe*, Exh. Cat., Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1970.
14. Messinger, 49.
15. Schwartz, 35.
16. Watson, 8.

Eastman Johnson's *Cranberry Pickers*

1. Johnson and his friend George Hall were urged by members of the powerful American-Art Union to attend the Dusseldorf Art School. The Dusseldorf Gallery paintings were then the rage in New York.
2. P. Hills, *Eastman Johnson*, 1972, 14.
3. W. Walton, "Eastman Johnson, Painter," *Scribner's Magazine*, XL, 1906, 268.
4. J.T. Flexner, *That Wilder Image*, 1962, 240-41.
5. C. Beckwith, "Eastman Johnson – His Life and Works," *Scribner's Magazine*, XL, 1906, 254.
6. Hills has observed that Johnson's works which most closely reflect Couture's teaching methods were painted during the late 1860s and the 1870s. She suggests this latent surfacing of Couture's influence may be due to the publication of the master's *Conversation on Art Methods* in 1867, a book very popular in the USA (see Hills, *E. Johnson*, 74). Boime argues that Johnson's work of the mid 1850s and early 1860s already reveals Couture's influence (see *Thomas Couture and the Eclectic Vision*, 1980, 595-602.
7. A. Boime, *The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, 1971, 71.
8. P. Hills, *The Genre Painting of Eastman Johnson* (University Microfilms), 1973, 152.
9. Hills, *Genre Painting of E. Johnson*, 150.

10. Hills, *Genre Painting of E. Johnson*, 157.
11. For Couture's remarks on lighting effects and the sketch see A. Boime's *The Academy of French Painting*, 28-29.
12. Telephone conversation between author and Mr Edouard Stackpole, Director of Peter Foulger Museum at Nantucket, on March 27, 1979. Johnson's working methods were told to him by Eastman's coachman. Whether or not the coachman's recollection is precise is less important than the fact it illustrates Johnson's general attitudes and practices.
13. These opinions were expressed during a telephone conversation with E. Stackpole and another with Patricia Hills on April 5, 1979.
14. Telephone conversation between author and Mr Stackpole of March 27, 1979.
15. E. French, "An American Portrait Painter of Three Historical Epochs," *World's Work*, XIII, 1906, 8323.
16. W. Walton, *Scribner's Magazine*, 1906, 272.
17. L. Champney, "The Summer Haunts of American Artists," *Century Magaine*, XXX, 1885, 854.
18. Telephone conversation with Mr. Stackpole on March 27, 1979.
19. See the letter from Lloyd Goodrich of July 29, 1949 at ASU Art Collections and an accompanying note by John Baur; both scholars have authenticated the work.
20. Telephone conversation with P. Hills of April 5, 1979.
21. Second telephone conversation with Mr. Stackpole, April 18, 1979.

Dull Knife's Defiance

1. These words were on a typed note attached to the back of the canvas.
2. *Dull Knife's Defiance* (18⅓" × 14⅛") was a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Orme Lewis of Phoenix, AZ, presented to the University in October 1959. (Acquisition #59.201)
3. Detailed information on the life and works of Ernest L. Blumenshein are courtesy of Ms Sherry Brown of Tucson, AZ. Ms Brown has worked for some five years compiling eight thousand pages on the artist for a catalogue raisonne, scheduled to be released in September 1986. I would like to thank Ms Brown for her cooperation in obtaining information for this article.
4. Blumenshein attended the Cincinnati College of Music in 1891 on a scholarship and supported himself as a symphonic violinist during his student days at the Art Student League in New York in late 1893.
5. Blumenshein also did illustrations for *Harpers Weekly*, *Harpers Monthly*, and *McClure's*, on a wide variety of stories.
6. Sherry Brown, from research for, *The Artist Who Passes This Way*, Utah, 1986.
7. Garland, Hamlin, "General Custer's Last Fight as seen by Two Moon," *McClure's Magazine*, XI No. 5, September 1898, 443-48.

8. M. Gidley, *The Vanishing Race*, selections from Edward S. Curtis' "The North American Indians," Tapinger Publishing Co., Inc., 1977, 51.
9. Gidley, 54.
10. D. Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Heart*, New York, 1970, 318.
11. Brown, 326.
12. Brown, 329. While in the south, Wild Hog was appointed to speak for the northern Cheyenne. He is reported as speaking in greater detail of the poor rations and sickness they were experiencing.
13. Sherry Brown, from research for, *The Artist Who Passes This Way*, Utah, 1986.
14. D. Brown, *Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee*, New York, 1970, 326. "Tell the Great Father that Dull Knife and his people want only to end their days here in the north where they were born. Tell him we want no more war. We cannot live in the south; there is no game. Here, when rations are short, we can hunt. Tell him if he lets us stay here Dull Knife's people will hurt no one. Tell him if he tries to send us back we will butcher each other with our own knives."

A Designer of Dreams: Arthur B. Davies'
Dawn, Mother of the Night

1. F. Watson, in his article "Arthur Bowen Davies," *Magazine of Art* 45, 1952, p. 366 used this provocative term to describe Davies' work.
2. F.N. Price, Kennerly, *The Etchings and Lithographs of Arthur B. Davies*, New York, 1929, p. 13.
3. R. Raoul, "The Strange Case of Arthur B. Davies," *Apollo,* 76, 1962, p. 642.
4. The tapestries are not called official products of the Gobelin factory since the workers did them in their homes.
5. R. Raoul, p. 642.
6. The Ferargil Galleries arranged a show of Davies' estate, reviewed in *Art News*, 49, 1950, p. 49.
7. F.N. Price, "Davies, the Absolute," *International Studio,* 75, 1922, p. 218.
8. Ferargils closed in 1953. The work was illustrated in a small catalog called "Vistas and Visions" for an exhibition from January 22, to February 21, 1966, at Grady Gammage Memorial Auditorium. It was shown at the Tucson Art Center, Utah Museum of Fine Art, University of Utah, and La Jolla Museum of Art in a Davies show in 1967, for which Sheldon Reich wrote the catalog essay. The catalog is entitled *"Arthur B. Davies: Paintings and Graphics,"* 1967. The catalog essay was re-written, with the addition of interesting illustrations, as "The Pardoxes of Arthur B. Davies," *Apollo*, 92, 1970, 366-71. The work, oil on canvas, measures 17½ × 30 inches.
9. R. Graves, *The Greek Myths*, I, Baltimore, 1955, p. 149-150.
10. F.N. Price, *Etchings and Lithographs*, p. 19.
11. Price, *Etchings*, plate 189.
12. Both paintings are illustrated in *Arthur B. Davies: Essays*

on the Man and his Art, Cambridge, Mass., 1924, issued by the Phillips Memorial Art Gallery, Washington DC.
13. *Davies, Essays*, p. 40.
14. Davies, *Essays*, p. 41. Other of Davies' titles are "After Thoughts of Earth," "Balance of the Golden Scale," "Birth of Green," "Children Dancing," "Without Touching, Do Touch," and hundreds of like titles. 170 titles are listed in IS and K.M. Munro, *Index to Reproductions of American Paintings*, New York, 1948.
15. "Along the Erie Canal," illustrated in R. Cortissoz, *Arthur B. Davies*, New York, 1931, is in the Phillips Memorial Gallery in Washington DC, one of the most frequently illustrated of Davies' works.
16. "Twelve Men," plate 84, and "Moods of Adam," plate 62 in Price, *Etchings and Lithographs*. Davies' only male nude model, according to Price, was an Algonquin Indian of whom the artist did several hundred studies. p. 16. Davies did a woodcut of two nude girls as early as 1896, plate 147 in Price, *Etchings and Lithographs*, called "Two Children."
17. S. Reich, "Paradoxes of Arthur B. Davies," *Apollo*, 92, 1970, p. 368. There are few female nudes in American painting; one is John Vanderlyn's 1812 "Ariadne" in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art, Philadelphia.
18. B.B. Perlman, The Immortal Eight; American Painting from Eakins to the Armory Show, 1870-1913, New York, 1962, p. 148.
19. F. Watson, "Arthur Bowen Davies," *Magazine of Art*, 45, 1952, pp. 362-366.
20. F.N. Price, *Etchings and Lithographs*, p. 16.
21. P. Magriel, ed., *Isadora Duncan*, New York, 1947, p. 61.
22. Counted among "The Eight," Davies' style and subjects had little in common with the views of the American scene done by the other seven, though Davies did a painting called, "I Hear America Singing" (illustrated in *International Studio*, 94, 1929, p. 96) after Whitman's poem. Whitman, like "The Eight," celebrated the American scene. Davies joined "The Eight" in their February 3, 1908 show in Macbeth's New York Gallery largely because he knew Macbeth and had other connections useful to them.
23. Magriel, *Isadora Duncan*, p. 72.
24. Illustrated in Price, *Etchings and Lithographs*, plates 150 and 151.
25. Reich believes that Davies' supposed Cubism to be a style approaching the "synchronism" of Macdonald Wright and Morgan Russell, who used repeated, curved, colored panes to create the effect of movement, related to Marcel Duchamp's "Nude Descending the Staircase II" which created such an uproar at the Armory Show. Reich, "Paradoxes of Arthur B. Davies," *Apollo*, p. 370. Davies' "cubism" is seen in "Intermezzo," about 1913. It was in this cubist style that Davies decorated the Music Room for Lizzie P. Bliss in New York.
26. Basic biographical material about Davies can be found in Cortissoz, *Arthur B. Davies*, and in *Essays on the Man and his Art* in which the biography is written by Davies' teacher,

Dwight Williams. Davies was married to one of the first female American doctors, and had two sons, Niles and David. After his death it was discovered that Davies had been leading a second life as "David Owen" with Edna Potter and a daughter, Ronnie. Milton Brown, *The Story of the Armory Show*, New York, 1963, p. 40.
27. See: Herding Toward Noon," plate 174 in Price, *Etchings and Lithographs*, and "Two Burros," plate 177.
28. Cortissoz, *Arthur B. Davies*, p. 10.
29. Price, *Etchings and Lithographs*, p. 14.
30. Price, "Davies the Absolute," *International Studio*, 75, 1922, p. 219.
31. M. Brown, *American Painting from the Armory Show to the Depression*, Princeton, 1955, p. 61.
32. S. Reich, *Arthur B. Davies* exhibition catalog.
33. G.A. Eisen's essay in *Essays on the Man and his Art*. Ronnie Owen, Davies' daughter, claims that her father got the "inhalation" idea from her mother, Reich, *Arthur B. Davies*, exhibition catalog, p. 4.
34. J. Baur, *Revolution and Tradition*, exhibition catalog, Brooklyn Museum, Nov. 15, 1951 to Jan. 6, 1952.
35. L. Campbell, "An Idealist Who Changed History: Arthur B. Davies," *Art News*, 61, 1962, pp. 40-43.
36. Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, *Armory Show, 50th Anniversary Exhibition*, New York, 1963. As President of the Association of American Painters and Sculptors, Davies was largely responsible for the Armory Show. Walt Kuhn called it Davies' party.
37. M. Hartley, "The Poetry of Arthur B. Davies' Art" *Touchstone*, 6, 1920, pp. 283-4.
38. D. Phillips, *Essays on the Man and his Art*, p. 3. I do not know whether Davies was, indeed, highly regarded in Europe or whether any of his paintings are there.
39. *Art Digest*, 6, 1932, p. 8.
40. *Art News*, 44, 1945, p. 6.
41. F.F. Sherman, The Early and Later of ABD," *Art in America*, 6, 1918, p. 295, p. 299.
42. L. Campbell, "An Idealist Who Changed History," p. 41.
43. Price, "Davies the Absolute," p. 214.
44. *American Artist*, 26, 1962, p. 65.
45. A reproduction of "At the Chestnut Root" is in *American Artist*, 26, 1962, p. 32.

Death and Mystical Liberation in John B. Flannagan's *Beginning*

1. John B. Flannagan, "The Image of the Rock," *The Sculpture of John B. Flannagan,* The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1942, 7.
2. *Monkey,* Stone, H. 9 inches, L. 14 inches, D. 5 inches, Gift of Mable Davis James, 1970. #70.058. Arizona State University Art Museum.
3. *The Letters of John B. Flannagan,* intro. by W.R. Valentiner, New York, 1942, 11.
4. Flannagan, "Image," 7.

5. *Beginning,* Cast Bronze, H. 17½ inches, W. 20 inches, D. 7 inches, Gift of Oliver B. James, January, 1951, #51.33
6. *Letters,* Letter #52, 71–72, to Father Andrew J. Kelly, New York, 1940.
7. *Letters,* 11, and see Introduction by Valentiner.
8. *Letters,* #81, 94.
9. *Letters,* #82, 94–95.
10. *Letters,* #83, 95.
11. H. 20½ inches, W. 9 inches, D. 10 inches, Gift of Mable Davis James, 1970, #70.057, Arizona State University Art Museum. A review of Flannagan's work suggests how often this theme reoccurs: *Monkey and Young;* 1932; *Woman and Child;* 1932; and his only design for a larger than life work, *Design for a Skyscraper Court: Mother and Child,* 1934.
12. More than once in Flannagan's letters it can be found that the concept of Prophecy reoccurs in his thoughts. *Letters;* also see his essay "Image of the Rock," noted above.
13. Flannagan, "Image," 8.
14. *Letters,* 93.

Architecture that Speaks: Edward Hopper's *Cottage, Cape Cod*

1. Lloyd Goodrich, "Six who knew Hopper." *Art Journal*, Summer 1981, 125.
2. Gail Levin, "Editor's Statement." *Art Journal*, Summer 1981, 115.
3. Levin, *Edward Hopper: The Complete Prints*. New York, 1977, 27.
4. Lloyd Goodrich, "Six who knew Hopper," 126.
5. Jean Gillies, "The Timeless Space of Edward Hopper." *Art Journal*, Summer 1972, 410.
6. Gillies, "Hopper," 410.
7. Linda Nochlin, "Edward Hopper and the Imagery of Alienation." *Art Journal*, Summer 1981, 136.

Behind the Mask: Walt Kuhn's *Young Clown*

1. P.R. Adams, *Walt Kuhn, Painter: His Life and Work*, Columbus, 1978, 191.
2. P. Boswell, "Walt Kuhn Passes," *Art Digest*, XXIII, August 1949, 3.
3. Adams, *Walt Kuhn*, 117.
4. Adams, *Walk Kuhn*, 214.
5. D.M. Mendelowitz, *A History of American Art*, New York, 1960, 561.
6. On the back of the painting, the name Buddy Haskell appears with the currently used title. Most likely this is the name of the portrait's sitter.

George Elbert Burr, A Sometimes Master

1. A.R. Morse, "George Elbert Burr and the Western Landscape: The case for the Post-Victorian Realists," *Art in America*, xxxiv, 1946, 73-90.
2. Morse places the figure at "... nearly a thousand prints in over two dozen museum...;" *Art in America*, 73.
3. *Desert Twilight*, n.d.; 10.40 × 15.18 cm; etching; museum accession number, 63.406; donated to Matthews Library by Mr and Mrs Orme Lewis of Phoenix, Arizona in December, 1957 and transferred to the museum collection in May 1963. Listed as plate number 318 in the catalogue raisonne by L.C. Seeber, *George Elbert Burr*, Flagstaff, Arizona, 1971, 142.
4. Seeber points out that Burr performed virtually all of his own printing as well as plate making which makes his output of about twenty-five thousand etchings seem all the more remarkable.
5. *Twilight, Laguna, New Mexico*, n.d., 10.96 × 17.43 cm.; etching with aquatint; museum accession number, 63.475; donated to Matthews Library by Mr and Mrs Orme Lewis of Phoenix, Arizona in December 1957 and trasferred to the museum collection in May 1963. Seeber lists this as number 230, 126.
6. Seeber, *George Elbert Burr*, 42.
7. Seeber, *George Elbert Burr*, 46.
8. Superstition Mountains, Apache Trail, Arizona, n.d. (ca. 1930); 17.14 × 24.92 cm.; etching with aquatint; museum accession number 63.447; undated Matthews Library acquisition which was transferred to the museum in May, 1963. The chronology given here is based upon Seeber's listing.
9. *Evening in the Painted Desert*, n.d.; drypoint, 12.39 × 17.47 cm.; museum accession number 63.541; donated to Matthews Library by Mrs Caroline and Carol Ann Smarthwaite in 1957 and transferred to the museum collection in May 1963.
10. *Summer Cloud, Apache Trail, Arizona*, n.d.; 19.84 × 24.92 cm.; etching; signed, lower-left, "George Elbert Burr"; museum accession number, 63.465; a gift to the Matthews Library by Mr and Mrs Orme Lewis and transferred to the museum in May, 1963. The second version of this image, also titled *Summer Cloud, Apache Trail, Arizona* measures 19.84 × 25.08 cm and is signed in the lower-left margin, "George Elbert Burr #265." This was an undated acquisition of the Matthews Library which was transferred to the museum in May, 1963.
11. Seeber, 150.
12. Seeber, I.
13. The etching herein illustrated, *Desert Twilight*, would have sold in 1929 for about $15.00, based on a catalog published privately by the artist which contained, in the main, a reprint of an article by E.L. Allhusen that had appeared originally in *The Studio* in 1928.
14. Seeber, 2.

Parade in Review: An Interview with Phillip C. Curtis

1. Paintings of recondite ritual processions include: *Parade* 1961; *Celestial Forum* 1962; *Broadwalk Procession 1964; Parade* 1965 (Art Museum, Arizona State University, Tempe); *Tree Parade* 1966; *Marching Band* 1967; *Gift Bearers* 1971 (Phoenix Art Museum); (unless otherwise noted, the paintings are housed in private collections.) Public collections which hold paintings by Curtis include the Art Museum, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona; the Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, Arizona; Northern Arizona Art Gallery, Flagstaff, Arizona; Des Moines Art Center, Iowa; the Phillips Collection, Washington, DC. The majority of his work, outside his personal collection, is held in private collections.
2. P. Hills and R.K. Tarbell, *The Figurative Tradition and the Whitney Museum of American Art*, Newark: Whitney Museum, 1980, 114; and G. Berman and J. Wechsler, *Realism and Realities: the Other Side of American Painting: 1940-1960*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University, 1982, 75.
3. Some examples of paintings by American artists of the period which deal with ambiguous rituals, alienation and confusion are *Vanity Fair* 1946 (Whitney Museum of American Art) by Henry Koerner; *The Shore* 1953 (private coll.) by Bernard Perlin; *Dancers by the Clock* 1949 (Whitney Museum of American Art) by Mitchell Siporin; *Two Houses* 1946 (Corcoran Gallery of Art) by Walter Stuempfig; *The Subway* 1950 (Whitney Museum of American Art) by Robert Vickrey. Figurative artists like Curtis who have continued to work through the present have been generally neglected as a result of the critical importance attributed to the gestural abstractionists. Jeffrey Weschler points out that the work of uncounted figurative artists has gone unnoticed because they have led reclusive lives and gained limited, sometimes only local, fame. J. Weschler, *Surrealism and American Art 1931-1947*, New Brunswick; Rutgers University Art Gallery, 1976, 33. While the number of artists comparable to Curtis cited above is small, the list represents only the handful of figurative artists who have achieved national prominence.
4. Hills, 114.
5. The university art schools did not readily embrace contemporary art or become more progressive even after the Armory Show of 1913. It was left entirely to the student to explore modernism. Curtis continued his education by making weekend trips to New York City while still a student at Yale.
6. The instruction Curtis received at Yale was very traditional including life-drawing classes, drawing from plaster casts and yearly competitions entered by submission of drawings. Applying paint to a smooth gesso surface, then covering the painted surface with numerous glazes for a luminous effect, is the technique he learned at Yale.
7. Curtis is referring to the Abstract Expressionists and their most notorious member, Jackson Pollock who was given his

first one-man exhibition at the Art of This Century Gallery in 1943.
8. Walter Bimson (1892-1980) served as President of Valley National Bank from 1933 to 1953. He retired as chairperson of the board in 1970. He received the Governor's Art Award in 1980 in recognition of his contributions to cultural and artistic life; among those accomplishments his role as founder of the Phoenix Art Museum. He was an influential collector and the moving force behind the Valley National Bank's corporate collection.
9. Initially, Curtis worked in a precisionist manner emulating the style of Charles Sheeler, whose work Curtis had seen in New York City in 1935. *Arizona Rose* (1949, priv. coll.), one of the best examples from this period, depicts the Hayden Flour Mill, a local landmark, viewed from a high vantage point. The structures are composed of flat, angular areas of color emphasizing the abstract of cubistic relationships of planes. He also experimented with an abstract style reminiscent of Stuart Davis's abstractions of posters (e.g., *Poster on Barn* 1952, priv. coll.). After 1950, the character of his work changed, the figure becoming his focal point.
10. Although based on traditional technique and recognizable forms, the recondite symbolism used by Curtis parallels the use of personal imagery by the Abstract Expressionists. The latter's message is conveyed through anxious weaving of lines while the figurative artist's message is transmitted through disquieting subject; both are indicative of the artist's state of mind.
11. The Curtis Trust was organized in 1960 by Lewis J. Ruskin, an influential collector; members included many of the first citizens of Phoenix. The Trust paid all of Curtis's expenses for a three-year period, allowing him to devote all of his time to painting. Investors would recoup their investment from a planned show and sale at the end of the period, and each contributor was also allowed to purchase a work for a nominal amount.
12. M. Knoedler & Co., New York, undertook representation of Curtis in 1963. The following year he was given a one-man exhibition.
13. The costumes, though referred to as Victorian and Edwardian, are inventive and were never intended to be historically accurate. Curtis uses the term "Victorian" when referring to the clothing or architectural styles. The clothing styles are characteristic of those worn by fashionable Edwardians; Victorian is a general term which describes the elaborate interior and exterior architectural details.
14. As a young boy, Curtis lived for a year in his grandparent's house while his parents built a new house.
15. One of the great challenges facing the modern artist is overcoming the communication gap between private and public symbols. By using an easily recognizable form, such as a ritual procession, the artist extends a bridge to the viewer, enabling immediate communication of a subject otherwise inaccessible. C. Seeley, "Notes on the Use of Symbols in Contemporary Painting," *Art Quarterly* XI 1948, 324.

16. The use of irrational scale is first evident in *Wanderers*. In this painting, the proportional variation is used for comedic contrast. After 1960, irrational scale is a device frequently used for diminishing or increasing the importance of certain figures.
17. The tuba, one of Curtis's favorite instruments, lends a naturally absurd character to its players. Instruments, in addition to irrational scale, allow the artist to place special emphasis on individual figures.
18. *Two Way Parade* is the most recent variation on the ritual procession. Here Curtis uses the same elements found in *Parade* to address not only his continuing concern with isolation but concentrates on the problem of distinguishing illusion from reality. Both the lower and upper parades, each depicted with equal clarity, allude to the conscious and unconscious aspects of man's nature, ideas which reflect Curtis's admitted interest in the theories of Freud and Jung.