

*SYMBOLIC HISTORY*  
*Through Sight and Sound*

**22. Pascal: Humanist Reversal**

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## *SYMBOLIC HISTORY*

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#### 22. Pascal: Humanist Reversal

- al) Eustache Le Sueur, 1645-48, Death of Raymond Diocre from Life of St. Bruno, Louvre, Paris; video: detail only, preceded by a detail of 1*
- 1) Eustache Le Sueur, 1645-48, Death of St. Bruno, whole, Louvre, Paris*

Music: Carissimi, 1650: Jepthe, from recitative: "Heu, heu, mihi", Arc 3005

Pascal's Pensées were left unfinished at his death in 1662:

Humble yourself, weak reason, be silent, foolish nature; learn that man infinitely transcends man; and learn from your Master your true condition, of which you are ignorant. Hear God!

(skip in Jepthe to near close)

In the religiosities of that mid-century — this Le Sueur Death of St. Bruno from Paris;

- 2) Zurbaran, c. 1645, St. Francis, Fine Arts Museum, Boston*
- 2a) Zurbaran, 1633, Fra' Jeronimo Perez, Academia de San Fernando, Madrid; video: two details only, with a return to 2, St. Francis, detail*

from starker Spain, Zurbaran's St. Francis; in music the oratorio deepened by Carissimi — how the proud art of reason buckles with need.

Humiliez-vous, raison impuissante! Taisez-vous nature imbécille.  
Aprenez que l'homme passe infiniment l'homme, et entendez de vostre  
Maistre votre condition véritable que vous ignorez! Ecoutez Dieu!

(end Carissimi)

- 3) El Greco, c. 1600(?), St. Francis and the Lay Brother, Monforte de Lemos; first, video detail*
- V3a) El Greco, 1603-07, Pentecost, detail: head of a Saint, Prado, Madrid*

- 3b) *El Greco, 1600-1610, Christ on the Cross, Art Gallery, Cleveland (CGB'81)*  
 V3c) *Again, St. Francis and the Lay Brother, detail of 3*

Music: Lassus, 1550-52, Carmina Chromatico, *Prophetiae Sibyllarum*, introduction, Nonesuch H 71053

That was the call of Christ from the start. Fifty years before Zurbaran, El Greco had painted St. Francis — Renaissance skills hurled with Inquisitional frenzy against Renaissance itself.

So the chromatic daring of music (here Lassus); the pentameter force of the anonymous:

No me mueve me Dios para quererte,  
 El cielo que me tienes prometido...  
 Tu me mueves, Señor...

To the love of Christ on the cross our love is given,  
 And not from fear of hell or hope of heaven...  
 If heaven were not, I would love you still,  
 And I would fear you if there were no hell;  
 However hopeless of all hope of favor,  
 As now I love you, I would love forever. (CGB)

(end Carmina Chromatico)

But between El Greco

*For 2nd 2)*

*Zurbaran, St. Francis, upper detail (where the video shows an upper detail of slide 2, the slide show uses the Leon variant of the same subject)*

and Zurbaran (as between Lassus and Carissimi) the focussing of Method has occurred, which in thought is called Cartesian.

*For 2nd 3)*

*Again, El Greco, St. Francis and the Lay Brother; but where video uses a closer detail of slide 3, the slide show goes to the Brera, Milan version*

If we speak of the immolation which threads Christendom — "Humble yourself, proud reason" — El Greco might seem absolute;

- 4) *Ph. de Champaigne, 1662, Ex-voto, Sister Catherine and Mother Agnes, Louvre, Paris*  
 V4a) *Same, right detail*

if of the Pascalian moment, what El Greco lacks is what boldens to spatial relief this Ex-voto painted by Philippe de Champaigne for the Jansenist convent of Port-Royal, where Pascal's sister was a nun and moving spirit, and to which, through her love and spiritual sway, Pascal was converted in 1654. Between El Greco and this voluminous assertion of piety

- 5) *Rubens, 1615-18, Scholar (called von Thulden), Alte Pinakothek, Munich (CGB '59); + V details*

there is a 1600 antecedent: Ruben's manifesto of the compact of flesh and reason — like the Galilean science Pascal mastered in his teens, to proclaim in his 1647 treatise on the pressure of the air:

Let all the disciples of Aristotle gather their strongest arguments... to account if they can for these phenomena through nature's horror of a vacuum; if they cannot, let them acknowledge that experiments are the true masters we must follow in physics; that what has been done on the mountains has overthrown the universal belief that nature abhors a vacuum, and has disclosed a truth which can never perish —

- 6) *Frans Hals, 1639, Portrait of an Officer, National Gallery, Washington, D.C.; + V detail*  
 V6a) *Hals, c. 1615, Shrovetide Merry Makers, Metropolitan Museum, NYC (CGB '74)*

that nature has no horror of a vacuum, that she does nothing to avoid it, and that the weight of the mass of the air is the real cause of all the effects hitherto attributed to that imaginary cause.

We must ask who begins, during Pascal's youth, with a proclamation of reality reared on the physics of Rubens and the Caravaggiesque? One such is Hals. Perhaps his tavern-blustering is remote from the megrims of intellectual Pascal (even in the supposed dissipation of Pascal's youth);

- a7) *Hals, 1664, Women Guardians of the Almshouse, detail of central figure, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem*
- 7) *Same, whole, the five women; with video details*
- V7a) *Same, detail of three women to the left*
- 7b) *Same, detail, four women to the right*

but the portraits Hals painted in age, in the almshouse —

Music M.A. Charpentier, c. 1680, from Third Tenebrae, *Vide, Domino...*; Nonesuch H-1040 or -71040

this, two years after Pascal's death, of the guardian women there — record some kind of encounter with "Pyrrhonian" terror:

Let us imagine a number of men in chains; and all condemned to death, where some are killed each day in the sight of the others, and those who remain see their own fate in that of their fellows, and wait their turn, looking at each other sorrowfully and without hope. It is an image of the condition of men...

...se regardent les uns et les autres avec douleur et sans espérance, attendant à leur tour. C'est l'image de la condition des hommes...

Severe as the lamentations Carissimi's pupil Charpentier wrote for the Reform nuns of Pascal's Port-Royal: "Her people sigh and seek bread... how vile, Lord, I am become."

(fade Charpentier: "...vilis")

- 8) *van Gogh, 1885, The Potato Eaters, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; + V detail*

As the first to penetrate the new universe and fall into the void beyond, Pascal pioneered for the existential modern. And for reasons not dissimilar, late Hals points to 19th-century Van Gogh, who, like Rimbaud, spent his Season in Hell:

I am in the lowest depths and I have forgotten how to pray... the harbor of wretchedness... under a sky stained with fire and mud. Ah! the rotten rags, the rain-soaked bread, the drunkenness, the thousand loves that crucified me... At least I will ask forgiveness for having fed on lies...

- 9) *English, c. 1377, Bronze effigy of Edward III, head, Westminster Abbey, London; + V detail*

The proud lie was harder to cultivate in the Middle Ages; no buildup for Pascalian reversals in the continual gauntness of the fallen fact. Power itself wears such a death-mask as this of Edward III, victor of Crecy, who died deserted by all. "Tragedy," says Chaucer's Monk, "is to tell "

Of hym that stood in greet prosperitee,  
And is yfallen out of heigh degree  
Into myserie, and endeth wrecchedly.

- 10) *Donatello, 1438-43, David, back view, Bargello, Florence*  
V10a) *Same, side view, body to knees*

Music M. Cara, c. 1490(?), *Non è tempo d'aspettare* (instr.) Allegro 72

Only with humanist daring can atonement swell toward Savonarolla. First Donatello, as in this marvellously profane David, herald of the sensuous claim, shaped with Renaissance body, (fade Cara) its shadow:

- 11) *Donatello, 1455-57, Pieta, Victoria and Albert Museum, London; first, video detail*

Music: Josquin des Prez, c. 1490(?), from the *Stabat Mater*, verses 4 and 5, AS 73

a compulsion of penitence for that interruption of creed-light. So Josquin's *Stabat Mater* breaks chordal grandeur on the Cross.

(fade Josquin)

- 12) *Michelangelo, 1526-33, Day, detail of back, Medici Tomb, Florence*  
V12a) *Same, detail of face and shoulder*

From the aged Donatello the buckling of soul passed to his most titanic successor, Michelangelo, in whom the earth-thrust flexes with consciousness of power, longing, imperfectibility. Thus Pascal a century after:

We burn with desire to find a solid ground and an ultimate sure foundation on which to build a tower reaching to the Infinite. But our whole groundwork cracks, and the earth opens to abysses...

And already in Michelangelo, that orogeny yields

- 13) *Michelangelo, 1556-64, Rondanini Pieta, detail, Sforzesco, Milan; + V closer detail*

to a fault and syncline, which holds in personal fragmentation, our whole incapacity and need for grace — Herbert's "Pulley," Pascal's "corruption of nature and redemption by Christ":

Certainly nothing offends us more rudely than this doctrine; and yet without this mystery, the most incomprehensible of all, we are incomprehensible to ourselves. The knot of our condition takes its twists and turns in this abyss, so that man is more inconceivable without this mystery than this mystery is inconceivable to man.

- 14) *Titian, 1557, Annunciation, Church of San Salvatore, Venice*

At the same time in Venice Titian cycloned paint in the dynamics of late Renaissance,

- 1st 15) *Tintoretto, 1583-87, Flight to Egypt, left side, with Mary, Joseph, and Christ, Scuolo di S. Rocco, Venice*

a tumult which, through the whirl and forked lightening of Tintoretto,

- 1st 16) *Jan Müller, 1590, Baptism of Christ, whole, Staatliche Graphische Collection*

spreads to the Mannerist north (this ecstatic Baptism by the nineteen year old Jan Müller); and of course, with El Greco, to Spain.

- Va2nd 15) *Tintoretto, 1579-81, Resurrection, Scuolo di San Rocco, Venice*

- 2nd 15) *Again, Tintoretto, Flight to Egypt, whole: figures (left), landscape (right); [earlier videos had a detail only, V2nd 15, of Mary and background, now revised to the whole]*

What would shift the soul from the Magian euphoria of Bruno for a centerless infinite of innumerable animate worlds, to the vertiginous retreat of Pascal?

We sail a vast sphere, ever drifting in uncertainty. When we think to attach ourselves to any point and fasten to it, it eludes our grasp, slips past us and vanishes forever.

*2nd 14) Again, Annunciation, detail, angels (above); + V detail (below), Gabriel and Mary*

Awash on Gesualdo da Venosa's chromatic sea, do we cry with Burney, 18th-century lover of order: "shocking and disgusting to go from one chord to another... composed of sounds wholly extraneous and foreign to any key to which the first chord belongs?"

Music: Gesualdo, pub.1611, *Moro Lasso* (from 2nd *Moro*), Vanguard BGS-5051

- 3rd 15) Again, Tintoretto, Flight, landscape; video substitutes V3rd15a, Tintoretto 1583-87, St. Mary of Egypt, center detail, Scuola di San Rocco, Venice; and V3rd15b, Tintoretto, 1592-94, The Last Supper, upper left, flambeau, S. Giorgio Maggiore, Venice*
- 2nd 16) Again, Müller, Baptism of Christ, lower section; first video, upper section, heavenly choir*
- V2nd 16a) Jan Brueghel, c. 1604(?), Aeneas in the Underworld, detail, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (CGB '59)*
- 2nd 16b) Jacopo Bassano, 1574, Deposition (Night), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna*
- Va17) El Greco, c. 1610-14, Laocoon, detail, National Gallery, Wash., D.C.*
- 17) El Greco, c. 1607-13, Immaculate Conception, [or, The Assumption of the Virgin?], landscape detail (lower left), Museo de Santa Cruz, Toledo*  
(end Gesualdo)

So far as Pascal's experience is of drifting in a universe of infinite recess:

- V17a) Again, Tintoretto, landscape from the Flight to Egypt, 3rd 15*
- 18) Again, El Greco, 1607-13, from The Immaculate Conception, lower half of the painting; while video turns instead to the Virgin of the upper half (see V18)*

Our reason is always deceived by fickle shadows... what does it matter that man should have a little more knowledge of the universe? Is he



not always infinitely removed from the end?... I hold it equally impossible to know the parts without knowing the whole, and to know the whole without knowing the parts in detail...

All the principles of sceptics, stoics, atheists, etc. are true. But their conclusions are false, because the opposite principles are also true...  
The sceptic Arcesilaus who became a dogmatist...

such giddiness should relate back to El Greco, or to Gesualdo's trans-tonality.

Yet between their exploratory wildness

*Va19) Bernini, c. 1625(?), Narcissus, Schleissheim Gallery, nr. Munich (CGB '59);  
here a detail from a2nd 19, below*

*19) Caravaggio, 1594-96, Narcissus, Borghese Gallery, Rome*

and Pascal, comes the formulated order of Baroque. The faith-leap of the Pensées is by Cartesian calculation:

What shall man do in this state? Shall he doubt whether he is awake, whether he is being pinched, whether he is being burned? Shall he doubt whether he doubts?

Caravaggio had forged the regrouping in art.

*20) Christofano Allori, 1610, Judith with the head of Holofernes, Pitti, Florence (CGB '48)*

But method was ascendent in the Italy of Galileo: the Carracci in Bologna and Rome, in Florence this Allori, heavy with the rhetoric of touch — mistress-model Judith carrying the artist's own deep-shadowed head.

*a2nd 19) Bernini's Narcissus (cf. Va19); here video narrows to a closer detail  
2nd 19) Again, Caravaggio's Narcissus, upper detail; + V lower detail*

In music the shift is from the atonal shorelessness of Gesualdo, to the modulating chromatics of Monteverdi, at every moment on tonal course.

Music: Monteverdi, 1614, *Lasciatemi morire* (from repeat) 5v. madrigal on 1608 Arianna aria, Boulanger, Seraphim 60125

- V2nd 20) *Again, Allori, Judith, two video details, below and above (from 20)*  
 21) *Same, a separate close detail of Holofernes head (CGB '48)*  
 22) *Ribera, 1620-30(?), Death of Adonis, Art Gallery, Cleveland*  
(end Monteverdi)

(The youthful Ribera, Spanish Neapolitan, stretching Caravaggio for this Death of Adonis.)

- 23) *Bernini, 1622-25, Apollo and Daphne, full-length, Borghese Gallery, Rome*  
 V23a) *Same, half-length*  
 V23b) *Same, detail of Daphne*  
 V23c) *Same, upper detail of Apollo and Daphne*  
 23d) *Bernini, 1665, Louis XIV, Versailles*

In sculpture Bernini established the heroic theater of regulated passion — as self-willed and classical, as surging and restrained, as Waller's couplets in "The Story of *Phoebus* and *Daphne* applied," for a century and a half the most admired copy of verses in the English tongue. The poet, too,

...pursues..., the Nymph with his Harmonious Lay,  
 Whom all his Charms cou'd not incline to stay;  
 Yet what he Sung in his immortal Strain,  
 Though unsuccessful, was not Sung in vain;  
 All but the Nymph, that should redress his wrong,  
 Attend his Passion, and approve his song.  
 Like *Phoebus* thus, acquiring unsought Praise,  
 He catcht at Love, and fill'd his arms with Bays.

Yet how fiercely, in that context of courtly wit, finding its European center in the Paris of Louis XIV (whom Bernini would twice portray),

- 24) *French-German Glass, c. 1200, Christ Throned, Dom, Straßburg (CGB '59); first, video details*

the oldest hunger of the West seized on Pascal,

Music: Perotin, Iv. Conductus, *Beata Viscera*, opening, (Tinayre) Lumen 32011

wrenching him from the booming mainstream into the eddy William James would call of the twice-born — though neither the world-calcing stare of 1200 Strasbourg, nor Perotin's angular Byzantine have Pascal's clarity of rational terror:

When I see the blindness and the wretchedness of man... lost in this corner of the universe... incapable of all knowledge, I become terrified... It is the heart which experiences God and not the reason.

(fade Perotin)

25) *Fra Angelico, 1439-45, Transfiguration fresco, San Marco, Florence; + V detail*

Music: Dufay, c.1440(?), *Flos Florum*, close, Archive-2533291

How simple and pure, how grateful, in the Christ of Angelico, in the harmonies of Dufay, the first accommodations of the divine to temporal possibility.

(end Dufay)

26) *Guercino, 1640(?), Christ, Acad., Carrara, Bergamo; + V detail*

26a) *Bernini, 1661-63, St. Jerome, detail, Chigi Chapel, Siena Cathedral*

Music: Monteverdi, 1610, *Duo Seraphim* from the Vespers, SAWT 9501-2

By the century of Pascal, the God-man swells with embodiment: the eternal and infinite become on the stage of Guercino and Monteverdi as tactile as the enfleshed loves of Marino, or that "soft and nectarous bosom" — "*molle tuo nettareo seno*" in which Scipione Errico wished to appease his languid spirits:

Let sight yield to feeling, eye to mouth,  
Gaze and beholding perish with the light;  
The god is blind and finds his way by touch. (CGB)

(fade Monteverdi)

Pascal geometrizes that heightened fever of flesh, Donne's "Batter my heart, three person'd god."

a27) *School of Avignon, c. 1455, Villeneuve Pieta, whole, Louvre, Paris*

V627) *Enguerrand Charonton, 1453-54, Coronation of the Virgin, Hospice of Villeneuve-les-Avignon; + V detail*

27) *Again, Villeneuve Pieta, central detail (cf. a27)*

V27a) *Same, close detail of Christ's head*

Let poems of three centuries plumb the passionate vortex of sacred love. The most sustained English lyric of the 15th century, "*Quia amore langueo*" ("that I languish of love"), is enacted, like this Pieta of Avignon, on the visionary crust between heaven and hell:

In a valey of this restless minde  
I sought in mounteine and in mede,  
Trusting a trewe love for to finde.  
Upon an hill than I took hede;  
A voice I herde, and neer I yede,  
In huge dolour compleininge tho,  
"See, derè soule, how my sidès blede,  
*Quia Amore langueo.*"

Upon this hill I fond a tree,  
Under the tree a man sittinge:  
From heed to foot wounded was he;  
His hertè blood I segh bledinge;  
A semely man to ben a king,  
A gracious face to loken unto.  
I askede why he had peininge.  
He seide "*Quia amore langueo.*"

Va28) *Botticelli, 1495-1500, Pieta, detail: Mary at Christ's Head, Alte Pinakothek, Munich (copy of CGB '59; from Michelangelo 53a)*

628) *Same, whole (copy of CGB '59, from Michelangelo 53)*

28) *Same, the Magdalene at Christ's feet (CGB '59)*

"I am true love that fals was never;  
My sister, mannès soule, I loved her thus;  
Because we wolde in no wise discevere.  
I lefte my kingdom glorious.  
I purveide for her a paleis precious;  
sche fleith, I folowe, I soughte her so;  
I suffrede this peine piteous,  
*Quia amore langueo.*

"I crowned her with bliss, and sche me with thorn;  
I ledde her to chaumber, and, sche me to die;  
I broughte her to worschipe and sche me to scorn;  
I dide her reverence, and sche me vilonie.

To love that loveth is no maistrie.  
 Her hate made nevere my love her fo.  
 Axè me no question why,  
*Quia amore langueo.*

Through Botticelli, passion has that ideality.

*1st 29) Correggio, 1530-34, Jupiter and Io, whole, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna*

But when Correggio brought Io to sexual ecstasy in Jupiter's cloud-arms

*1st 30) Michelangelo, 1537-41, Saved Soul Rising, detail of Last Judgment, Vatican, Rome*

the sacred was bound to follow, as in Michelangelo's detail of the ascent of a woman saved.

*2nd 29) Again, Jupiter and Io, detail; + closer video detail*

Thus when the love songs of Solomon entered the Jewish canon as the dialogues of God and soul, the fusion heightened mystical and profane. With each translation, Vulgate, Luther, King James, the erotic spreads wider immortal wings. In English no love poem can compare with the Song of Songs:

I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys...

*2nd 30) Again, Michelangelo's Saved Soul Rising, detail (video pans from 1st 30)*

Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love.  
 [Quia amore langueo.]... Until the day break, and the shadows flee  
 away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the  
 mountains of Bether...

*31) English, late 15th cent., Madonna, Winchester Cathedral (CGB '74)*

*31a) Massys, c. 1510(?), Madonna Standing with the Child and Angels, Courtauld Inst. Gal., London; video: detail only, with a return to the Winchester Madonna, detail*

Return, return, O Shulamite; that we may look upon thee.

From the English Madonna of Winchester, late fifteenth century (with the quiet Tudor harmony still espoused by Byrd),

Music: Byrd, c. 1580(?), Mass for Three Voices, opening of *Agnus*, ARC-3533-133

(fade)

*1st 32) El Greco c. 1595, Mary from Holy Family with St. Anne, Hospital of John the Baptist, Toledo (video uses V32)*

*32a) El Greco, c. 1585-90, Mater Dolorosa, Thyssen, Lugano*

*V32b) El Greco, c. 1584, detail of the two Marys from Disrobing of Christ, Alte Pinakothek, Munich (CGB '59; cf. Mozart 10); here video returns to a closer detail of 1st 32*

to the tenderest El Greco's (with the swelling flow of Palestrina):

Music: Palestrina, pub. 1590, Mass: *Aeterna Christi Munera*, 2nd *Agnus*, opening, Argo ZRG-5186

(fade)

art perfects the sensuous incarnation of Grace.

At the same time, in the "Ascent of Mount Carmel" by John of the Cross, the climax of that God-swoon possesses a folk stanza

*2nd 31) Again, Winchester Madonna, detail (so video, from 31)*

simple as the Winchester Madonna, or the "*Quia Amore Languet*":

En una noche oscura,  
con ansias en amores inflamada  
oh dichosa ventura!  
salí sin ser notada,  
estando ya mi casa sosegada.

*a2nd 32) J. Gossaert (called Mabuse), c. 1510(?), Night Nativity, old Seemann prints (cf. Now Alpha 91)*

*For 2nd 32) F. Barocci, c. 1590(?), Nativity, Ambrosiana, Milan*

How miraculously the ballad structure fills, setting grammar and all aswim:

A escuras y segura  
por la secreta escala, disfrazada,  
O dichosa ventura!  
a escuras, en celada,  
estando ya mi casa sosegada.

En la noche dichosa,  
en secreto, que nadie me veía,  
ni yo miraba cosa,  
sin otra luz ni guía,  
sino la que en el corazon ardía

*1st 33) El Greco, c. 1600, St. Andrew, Zuloaga Mus., Zumaya (N. Coast of Spain)*

*V33a) El Greco, 1590-95, St. John, detail from The Crucifixion, Prado, Madrid*

Aquesta me guiaba  
mas cierto que la luz de mediodía,  
adonde me esperaba  
quien yo bien me sabía,  
en parte donde nadie parecía.

Oh noche, que guiaste,  
oh noche amable mas que el alborada,  
oh noche, que juntaste  
Amado con amada,  
amada en el Amado trasformada!

*34) El Greco, c. 1608(?), Agony in the Garden, Cathedral, Cuenca; + V detail*

En mi pecho florido,  
que entero para el solo se guardaba,  
allí quedó dormido,  
yo le regalaba,  
y el ventalle de cedros aire daba.

El aire del almena,  
cuando ya sus cabellos esparcía,  
con su mano serena,  
en mi cuello hería  
y todos mis sentidos suspendía.

Quedéme y olvidéme

el rostro recliné sobre el Amado,  
 cesó todo, y dejéme,  
 dejando mi cuidado  
 entre las azucenas olvidado.

In no poem is translation more incommensurate:

*2nd 33) Again, El Greco, St. Andrew, detail*

In the dark of night  
 With love inflamed  
 By luck, by chance  
 I rose unseen  
 From the house hushed in sleep.

Safe in the dark  
 By a secret stair  
 My luck my chance  
 And night for a veil  
 I stole from the house of sleep,

*2nd 33a) Tintoretto, 1583-87, Mary Magdalen, central detail, Scuola di San Rocco, Venice (cf. Giants in the Earth, 2nd76)*

By chance of night  
 By secret ways  
 Unseeing and unseen  
 No light, no guide  
 But the flames that my heart gave —

Led by those rays  
 Surer than day  
 I came where one waits  
 Who is known to me  
 In a place none seemed to be.

*2nd 33b) Michelangelo, 1555-64, Rondanini Pieta, detail of Christ and Mary, Sforzesca, Milan (CGB '80)*

Night that guides  
 Purer than dawn  
 Night that joins  
 Lover and loved  
 And the loved into Lover changed.



In my flowered heart  
 That is only his  
 He lay in sleep  
 Lulled by the breeze  
 The fanning of the cedars gave.

*2nd 34) El Greco, 1585-86, Agony in the Garden, National Gallery, London*

Down turrets that air  
 With hand serene  
 As it stirred in his hair  
 Gave my throat a wound  
 That took all sense away.

I ceased, I was gone  
 My face to his own  
 All passed away  
 Care and all thrown down  
 There among the lilies where I lay. (CGB)

*35) Bernini, 1644-52, Ecstasy of Santa Theresa, Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome; + V detail (from V35)*

It is in Bernini that religion most displays that orgasm — "Cupid in shape of a swain did appear,/ And showed her his arrow." But in the century now of Pascal's wager and of Crashaw's Theresa of the Flaming Heart:

By all thy brim-filled bowls of fierce desire,  
 By thy last morning's draught of liquid fire;  
 By the full kingdom of that final kiss  
 That seized thy parting soul, and sealed thee His...

*36) Caravaggio, 1598-1601, Calling of St. Matthew, S. Luigi dei Francesi, Rome; first, video previews 37, Heads of Matthew and Christ*

*36a) Same, Calling of St. Matthew, left; + V detail*

*V36b) Same, detail of young courtier*

In Caravaggio's epoch-making canvas, a hypnotic Christ calls Matthew from the money-tables — enactment of the 1600 revolt and humbling of earthly power. Herbert caught it in the dialogue of "The Collar":

I struck the board, and cry'd, No more,  
 I will abroad...  
 Sure there was wine  
 Before my sighs did drie it: there was corn  
 Before my tears did drown it.  
 Is the yeare onely lost to me?  
 Have I no bayes to crown it?  
 No flowers, no garlands gay? all blasted?  
 All wasted?  
 Not so, my heart: but there is fruit,  
 And thou hast hands.

37) *Same, Double: heads of Matthew and Christ*

V37a) *Same, detail of Christ*

Call in thy death's-head there: tie up thy fears.  
 He that forbears  
 To suit and serve his need,  
 Deserves his load.  
 But as I rav'd and grew more fierce and wilde  
 At every word,  
 Methought I heard one calling, *Child!*  
 And I reply'd, *My Lord.*

38) *P. Damoustier Sr., c. 1575, Unknown Man, Hermitage, Leningrad*

V38a) *N. Hilliard, c. 1600(?), George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, Nelson Gallery, Kansas City*

V38b) *El Greco, 1586, Burial of Conde de Orgaz, detail of a head, Santo Tomé, Toledo*

38c) *Caravaggio, 1608, Alof de Wignacourt, Louvre, Paris; video, detail only (cf. V38c)*

We have seen Renaissance liberation, with Montaigne, or in the portraits of his time, look, as into a mirror, to find a scar, a cicatrice, those melancholy suspensions of illusion Hamlet-Pascal gleaned from the Essays:

Man is neither angel nor brute, and the unfortunate thing is he who would act the angel acts the brute...

Why do we follow ancient laws and customs? Is it because they are more sacred? No, but because they are unique... as we obey superiors, not because they are just, but because they are they are superior...

We do not sustain ourselves in virtue by our own strength, but by the balancing of two opposed vices, just as we remain upright amidst two contrary gales. Remove one of the vices, and we fall into the other...

- 39) *An. Carracci, 1590-1600, Self-Portrait on an Easel, Hermitage, Leningrad; + V details*

By 1600 the value crisis fans out from the Italy of this haunted Carracci self to the English School of Night: "What Geomantike jaw howles in mine eares,/ The echoised sounds of horrerie?" Marino:

The never-blessed mortal who is born  
 Into this life of misery discovers,  
 Sooner than the sun, sorrow and weeping; his morn  
 Of birth beholds him rage in swaddling covers  
 Bound; a boy then, with pap not pleased  
 Forever, under the whip he leads his days;  
 When with advancing age that lash is eased,  
 Chance and love impel him devious ways,  
 Destroyed, renewed; penury, plague he bears;  
 Tired and lifeless, stooped, a breaking wave,  
 On a prop of wood he leans his antique years  
 And crawls at last into the closing grave,  
 Ravished away; wherefore I moan this message:  
 "From the womb to the tomb is a brief passage." (CGB)

- 40) *Velasquez, 1639, The Court Jester Calabacillas, Prado*  
 V40a) *Velasquez, c. 1648, The Buffoon Don Sebastiano de Mora, Prado, Madrid*  
 V40b) *Velasquez, 1656, from Las Meninas: head of a dwarf, Prado, Madrid*

"Dalla cuna alla tomba è un breve passo."

As Shakespeare's clowns darken to Velasquez's court jester, that Marino ore of "To be or not to be" reduces to Pascal's aphorisms:

Our nature consists in motion; complete rest is death... It is the struggle that pleases us, not the victory... We are falsehood and contradiction; we disguise ourselves from ourselves... Human society is founded on mutual deceit... Human life a perpetual illusion... A dream a little less inconstant...

- a41) *Velasquez, 1622, The Poet Luis de Gongora, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; video defers this portrait, as to V41a, replacing it here with a detail of 41*  
 41) *Morazzone, c. 1610, St. Francis, Brera, Milan; first, video detail*  
 V41b) *Velasquez, 1623(?), Portrait of a Gentleman, Inst. of Arts, Detroit; with video return to another detail and again the whole of the Morazzone, St. Francis*

Music Trabaci, c. 1610-1620(?), *Consonanse Stravaganti*, Music Guild 129

The Marino of Spain was Gongora — *De la brevedad engañosa de la vida* — such violence as the Caravaggiesque (this Morazzone), or in music the Neapolitan Trabaci:

The driven arrow does not seek the mark  
 On which it fiercely bites — nor chariot round  
 In festal course over the voiceless sand  
 A goal predestined — with more secret work

Than our impetuous age, muffled in murk,  
 Lurches toward its end, If any stand  
 In doubt brute as he is, of sense unsound  
 The daily sun is the comet of his dark.

— *Cada sol repetido es un cometa* —

Will Carthage confess it, and you not bow?  
 You are at odds, friend, if you go your ways  
 Coursing for shadows and embracing snares.

The hours will not suffice to pardon you,  
 Those hours that are wearing out the days,  
 The days that gnaw the leavings of our years. (CGB)

- 42) *J. Callot, 1615, Temptation of St. Anthony, drawing, Victoria and Albert Museum, London* (end Trabaci)  
 42a) *Callot, 1633, from "The Miseries of the War," The Oak of Hanged Men, Dover*  
 42b) *Callot, 1634, The Temptation of St. Anthony, etching, British Museum, London; while the video shows details of slide 42; (see V42c, d)*

From Italy to the Gallic wit of Callot (to engrave, after this St. Anthony, the horrors of the Thirty Years War, his famous oak hung with fruit of corpses) we remain in the turbulent eddies that rim the Baroque jet — what turned Donne, brightest talent of 1600 England, into "wits forge and fire-blast, meaning's press and screw," distilling from Shakespeare's "siren's tears" and "limbecks foul as hell within" a denser potion:

The worlds whole sap is sunke:  
 The general balme th'hydroptique earth hath drunk,  
 Whither, as to the beds-feet, life is shrunke,  
 Dead and enterr'd; yet all these seeme to laugh,  
 Compar'd with mee, who am their Epitaph...

Blasted with sighs, and surrounded with teares...  
 ...O, selfe traytor, I do bring  
 The spider love, which transubstantiates all,  
 And can convert Manna to gall,  
 And that this place may thoroughly be thought  
 True Paradise, I have the serpent brought...

Va43) *P. Lorenzetti, 1321-28, Deposition, St. Francis Lower Church, Assisi*  
 43) *Same, detail*

As if, over the harmony Renaissance had dreamed, Gothic pain were flooding back: The twisted stark urgency of Lorenzetti's Deposition, of Machault's *Crucifixus*;

Music: Guillaume de Machault, c. 1364(?) *Crucifixus* from Mass, (Deller)  
 Vanguard HM-1SD

the perennial "Ubi sunt":

O foode of filthy woorme, oh lump of loathsome clay...  
 Why gloryest thou so much...?

but changed, that flat anguish of symbolic relations

Va44) *Rubens, 1612, Descent from the Cross, study for Antwerp Cathedral altar piece, Courtauld Institute of Arts*  
 44) *Rubens, c. 1612-14, Lamentation over the dead Christ, Mus. Berlin-Dahlem; + V detail*  
 44a) *Rubens, c. 1620, storm detail from Philemon landscape, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien; + V closer detail*

Renaissance-impregnated: Frescobaldi now,

Music: Frescobaldi, pub. 1635, *Ricercar dopo il Credo* (Videro), HSL2072

or Rubens: body, robe, torch-lighted thews, the rhetoric and closure of space, no transrational loopholes. In a sonnet by de Gombaul such conglomerate force overvaults us:

The voice that measures earth from pole to pole,  
The hope and terror of the quick and the dead,  
That drew from nothingness both body and soul,  
And made the whole world at a breath, a word;  
The voice that roots up cedars and tall firs,  
But leaves the white thorn and its blossoms whole,  
That spares the shepcot and the lowly shed,  
And lays in ruins the pride of the Capitol;

45) *Zurbaran, c. 1638-39, The Vision of Fra' Pedro de Salamanca, Monastery of Guadalupe; first, video detail*

Great sky-resounding voice of the thunderer,  
To which the rock hills and oak forests roar  
Which guides to their right end all things that are,  
Which heights above and deepest places fear,  
And forms that are not yet, and shades who were —  
That voice calls, my soul, and you do not hear. (CGB)

(fade Ricercar)

As in Donne's "at the round earth's imagined corners...", physical infinity looms through Judgment. How that voice resonates between the first line and the last:

La voix qui retentit de l'un a l'autre Pole...  
Mon ame, elle t'appelle, et tu ne l'entens pas. —

The seen, the heard, overpowering as in Zurbaran's Vision of Brother Pedro of Salamanca.

46) *Zurbaran, c. 1629-30, Vision of San Pedro Nolasco, Prado, Madrid; + V detail [Alternates, V46 and V46a, could be used instead]*

V466) *Zurbaran, 1630, Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of Carmen College, Jadraque (or V466 detail: upper spread)*

Music: Frescobaldi, 1627, *Toccata quinta sopra i pedali*, (Videro) GDB5214

But surely the Baroque disillusion crucial to Pascal was paired with a vindicating confidence in the ways of God and man; thus in the Pedro Nolasco vision, again with Frescobaldi, Zurbaran's lights beckon almost as serenely to the other world as in Vaughan's Silex Scintillans:

I saw Eternity the other night,  
Like a great *Ring* of pure and endless light,  
All calm, as it was bright...

O fools, said I...  
To live in grots and caves, and hate the day...

But as I did their madness so discusse,  
One whisper'd thus,  
*This Ring the Bride-groome did for none provide,*  
*But for his Bride.*

a47) *Gentilleschi, c. 1620, Three Martyrs, whole, Brera, Milan; + V details*  
47) *Same, closer detail of Tiburtius*

In Italy Gentilleschi gives his Vision of Three Martyrs a gleam like that of Vaughan's Ascension Hymn:

They are all gon into the world of light...  
I see them walking in an air of glory...

Resume thy spirit from this world of thrall  
Into true liberty.

— the physical rayed through, the "gilded Cloud" of Vaughan's "Retreate" — "through all this fleshly dresse/ Bright *shootes* of everlastingness."

Happy those early days when I  
Shin'd in my Angell-infancy!...  
O how I long to travell back,  
And tread again that ancient track."

That I might once more reach that plaine,  
 Where first I left my glorious traine;  
 From whence th' inlightened spirit sees  
 That shady City of Palme trees...

- a48) *Rubens, c. 1615, Eldest daughter, Liechtenstein Gallery (CGB '59)*  
 48) *Ch. Beale, 17th cent., Self from Sketchbook, Pierpont Morgan, N.Y.*  
 48a) *Rubens, 1637-40, Landscape by Moonlight, Courtauld Institute, London;*  
*video: detail only*

But if angel infancy is so near, Cartesian introspection must contain in psychic duality, with Pascalian loss, Transcendental blessing: the thirteen-year-old Cowley stealing to the fields to read and dream, and to write the ode that ends "I have lived today"; the pre-romantic self quietly attested in the sketchbook of Charles Beale; the nature rapture of Traherne:

A Magnanimous Soul is always awake. The whole globe of the earth is but a nutshell in comparison of its enjoyments. The sun is its lamp, the sea its fishpond, the stars its jewels, men, angels, its attendants, and God alone its sovereign delight and... complacency...

You never enjoy the world aright till the sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens and crowned with the stars.

- 49) *L. de Jong, Dutch, c. 1670(?), Shooting Party, whole, Gallery, Dublin (CGB '74)*  
 V49a) *Aelbert Cuyp c. 1660(?), A Hilly River Landscape, National Gallery, London*  
 49b) *Vermeer, 1660, Gentleman and Girl with Music, Frick Collection, N.Y.C.*

And as we have seen before with Elsheimer, late Rubens, Claude, so in Jan Both, Cuyp, this de Jong, the landscape of common occurrence will glow as if turned to light.

Traherne, from Centuries of Meditations:

The corn was orient and immortal wheat which never should be reaped nor was ever sown. I thought it had stood from everlasting to everlasting... The green trees when I saw them first through one of the gates transported and ravished me... The Men!... Immortal Cherubims!... and maids strange seraphic pieces of life and beauty!



- a50) *Vermeer, 1658-60, The Little Street, Delft, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam*
- 50) *Same, c. 1658, View of Delft, Mauritshuis, The Hague*
- 50a) *Same, 1665, Vermeer's Studio, detail, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien*
- 50b) *Again, Vermeer, View of Delft, central detail; which video replaces with details from the whole, of city and of sky*
- 50c) *Fabritius, 1652, View of Delft, National Gallery, London*

Boys and girls tumbling in the street were moving jewels; I knew not that they were born or should die... The City seemed to stand in Eden or to be built in Heaven... The skies were mine, and so were the sun and moon and stars, all the world was mine; and I the only spectator and enjoyer of it...

or from "Wonder"

How like an Angel came I down!  
 How bright are all things here...  
 I nothing in the world did know  
 But 'twas divine.

In Vermeer's pictures — as Wordsworth would take up the theme — "The earth, and every common sight... did seem/ Apparelled in celestial light...", flowing with Traherne's "Seas of life, like wine."

(end Toccata sopra i pedali)

Even Bunyan, cramped with fear of earth's Enchanted Ground, still sheds some natural radiance on Christian's human shore.

- 51) *Rembrandt, 1642, Nightwatch, central detail, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (CGB '59)*
- V51a) *Same, left of center, man loading gun and girl richly dressed (from CGB '59; cf. Milton 656)*
- 51b) *Rembrandt 1631, Ascension of Christ, det., Alte Pinak., Munich*
- 51c) *Again, Nightwatch, a wider detail, including the previous ones; while video goes to the whole (from CGB '59; cf. Milton 56)*

Is. not Pascal's century, in and out, sacred and secular, the world's chief age of certitude? Even politics in the Dutch Republic, England, the New World, rode a Biblical wave in which the empires of Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome must yield to the Fifth

Monarchy under the present Kingship of Christ. If that was the lunatic fringe, here is Milton, 1641:

amidst the Hymns and Hallelujahs of Saints some one may perhaps be heard offering... in new and lofty Measures to sing... Thy marvellous Judgements... whereby this great and Warlike Nation... casting far from her the rags of her old vices, may press on... to be found the soberest, wisest, and most Christian People at that day when thou, Eternal and shortly-expected King, shalt open the clouds... (Church Discipline)

And for that great harvest "had we but eyes to lift up, the fields are white already."

History is the interpenetration of gyres in which Pascal challenges such hope — as from the studio of Rembrandt in the 1640's came the great civic "Night Watch"

52) *Rembrandt (or school), c. 1644, Christ at the Column, Wallraf-Richartz, Köln; + V details*

and a cluster of nude sketches, in one of which flesh is stripped again to Michelangelo's final core of martyrdom — against the surge of reason and earth, the old renege of space, air, pride, plume, glory ("*quia absurdum est*")

It is incomprehensible that God should exist, and it is incomprehensible that He should not exist; that the soul should be joined to a body, and that we should have no soul; that the world should be created and that it should not be created...

Who will unravel this tangle? Nature confutes the skeptics and reason confutes the dogmatists... Seeing too much to deny and too little to be sure, I am in a state to be pitied...

Is this Christian faith of neo-Christian denial?

And have we a cognate in music when Schütz puts off polychoral pomp for the Passions of his old age?

53) *Caravaggio, 1596-98, Head of Medusa, Uffizi, Florence*

His earliest compositions come from Gabrielli's 1600 Venice, where Mannerist energy spilled over into the method of Caravaggio,

54) *J. Heintz, 1599, Satyrs and Nymphs, whole, Alte Pinakothek, Munich (CGB '59)*

engendering first strains of Baroque — this Heintz,

*For 2nd 53) Again, Head of Medusa, detail*

Schütz' chromatic madrigal on the vipers of love:

Music: Schütz, pub. 1611, Feritevi, opening, Dover, HCR-ST 7287  
(then skip to close)

*For 2nd 54) Again, Satyrs and Nymphs, detail; + V closer details (copy of CGB '59; darker original in video file)*

(close of Feritevi)

55) *Rembrandt, 1630, Jeremiah foresees the Fall of Jerusalem, detail, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (CGB '59); video takes a wider view from Milton 12 (CGB '59), then a close detail from 55*

55a) *Rembrandt, 1642, David and Absalom, Hermitage, Leningrad; with a final video return to 55, Jeremiah, detail*

By 1629 Schutz' *Absalom* commands as dark and affirming a glory as Rembrandt's 1630 Jeremiah — gold alchemized out of tragic mass:

Music: Schütz ,1629, *Fili mihi Absalon*, from vocal section, Nonesuch H-1600  
(fade)

But when Schütz discards that splendor

56) *Rembrandt, 1661, Risen Christ, Alte Pinakothek, München (CGB '59)*

V56a) *Rembrandt, 1661, Christ with a Pilgrim's Staff, Metropolitan Museum, NYC*

56b) *Rembrandt, 1660(?), Titus in a Monk's Habit, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam*

V56c) *Rembrandt, 1661, An Apostle in Prayer, The Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio*

for the ravaged Germany of the 1664 Passions, he still nobly affirms. Neither in him, nor in late Rembrandt's reduction to mystery, do we encounter the Pascalian crisis of life doubt.

Music: Schütz, 1664, from St. Matthew Passion, Christ and Osterlamm chorus, ARC-3172

57) *Rembrandt, 1654, Three Crosses etching, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; + V detail*

The pity of Schütz and Rembrandt is free of loss and terror. Pain here is as cosmically vindicated as with Milton. As Spinoza said: "The knowledge of evil is inadequate knowledge." Even in the starker immediacy of etching, the anguish of the Cross is curtained in aisles of radiance, by which it is spatially atoned. How far phenomenal dark, lifted on the wave of being, still declares the glory of God —

58) *Goya, 1810-20, Disasters of the War #36, "Tampoco"; + V detail*

a contrast with Goya may suggest — after the experience of a hundred and fifty Pascalian years. The socio-religious revolutions have become secular; Cartesian wonder has become Cartesian bondage. What would Poussin, who gave his life to nature as Universal Reason, make of this space? With Swift and Voltaire reason itself has soured. It seemed bitter enough when Pascal sharpened Montaigne:

Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction.

Here, they do not even claim that sanction. Already, as in Dostoyevski, introspective malice breaks out.

59) *Rembrandt, 1655, The Flayed Ox, Louvre, Paris; + V details*

Rembrandt's Flayed Ox has been belabored as his most tragic self-portrait, his "existentialist illumination of the condition of man"; and perhaps it is his most Pascalian picture, most honed to the paradox of fact:

Must we kill to prevent there being any wicked? This is to make both parties wicked instead of one... What will you say is good?... Not to kill? No; for disorder would be horrible and the evil would kill the

good. To kill? No; for that destroys nature. We have truth and goodness only in part and mixed with falsehood and evil.

Yet the whole carnal realm, against Goya, remains God's burning recess.

In music, the fiercest application of Frescobaldi's keyboard mastery was by the north German Frohberger, famous over Europe for the dissonant fire of his Toccatas and Suites:

Music: Frohberger, c. 1650-60, from Toccata No. 3 in G (close), RCA VICS-14

*A60) Rembrandt, c. 1629-30, Laughing Self, Rijksmus., Amsterdam (CGB '59); here video introduces B of the double (60, to follow)*

*60) Rembrandt, Double: [A] the 1629 Laughing Self, and [B] the 1665 Laughing Self*

*60B) Rembrandt, 1665, Self-portrait laughing, with a bust of Heraclitus(?), Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Köln; then the video once more repeats the two self-portraits, early and late*

(end Frohberger)

In Rembrandt's laughing self portraits from early to late, the Medieval smile of grace (under a Brueghel transformation, as in the field of Montaigne's urbanity and Shakespeare's clown-life) takes the brunt of Baroque disillusion, and comes up in the 1665 Laughing Philosopher, weirdly suspended between Rabelais and Swift. If there is such a category as Pascalian comedy, this indescribable laugh-leer should define it:

*Quelle chimère est-ce donc que l'homme... what monster, chaos, contradiction, quel prodige! Judge of all things, imbecile worm of the earth... pride and refuse of the universe — gloire et rebut de l'univers.*

But Moliere's progress from easy farce through the 1666 Misanthrope of the mocked ideal ("*me laissez enfin/ Dans ce petit coin sombre, avec mon noir chagrin*"), to Le Malade Imaginaire of 1673, in which the dramatist was seized with tubercular hemorrhage as he described such symptoms, himself playing the Imaginary Invalid —

N'y a-t-il point quelque danger a contrefaire le mort?  
Is there no danger in counterfeiting death? —

is a progress of Pascallan kind.

- a61) *Tycho Brahe, pub. 1598, Great Mural Quadrant, in his observatory of Uraniborg*
- 61) *Egyptian (XVIIIth Dynasty), c. 1570 B.C., Relief: Ikhnaton Adores Aton, Museum, Cairo; + V detail*

In our search for Pascal's cognates, we have underplayed what distinguished him most, that his reversal occurred in the context of Cartesian science, that realm newly "won from the void and formless infinite"; that he renders science back to faith.

No doubt, in the Bible, the wonders of the world are invoked in God's praise (so Ikhnaton adores the sun orb):

Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion... that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: the Lord is his name. (Amos)

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth forth his handiwork. (Psalms)

— though already there may be doubt whether God is praised by ignorance or knowledge:

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? (Job)

- Va62) *Dalmation Byzantine, mid-6th cent., Atrium and Baptistry of Euphrasius' Basilica, Porec, Istria, Yugoslavia (CGB '77)*
- b62) *Same, interior of the Basilica (CGB '77)*
- Vc62) *Same, mosaic apse (CGB '77)*
- 62) *Antioch, 6th cent., Rebecca from Vienna Genesis, f. VII, 13, National Library, Vienna*

Music: Byzantine Chant, Mt. Athos, Easter Eve, Distribution of Tapers, ARCHIV 2533 413

In any case, Early Christian Illusionism, after Greece and Rome, reflects, with Byzantine chant, the turn from earth-knowledge as a road to God:

Tertullian:

After knowing Jesus Christ, we need no investigation...

Augustine:

another form of temptation assails me... a certain vain and curious  
itch... of making experiments by help of the flesh, which is masked  
under the title of knowledge and learning...

What ensues is the Dark Age retreat into symbols. (fade Athos chant)

63) *Giovanni di Paolo, c. 1450, John the Baptist in the Desert, Art Institute, Chicago; first, video details (cf. V63 and V663)*

Music: Guillaume de Machault, c.1370(?), from *Ma fin est mon commencement* (instr.) SER SIC-6092

From that earth-alienation, the lean rebirth of Gothic (in music Guillaume de Machault) would spill over 1400, as in Sienese Giovanni di Paolo — where the Renaissance recovery of nature hangs between the alchemical nominalism of the Red Sea above, with the allegorical rock-desert into which John the Baptist walks (without the diminution of distance), and the exploratory pocket of recessive fields.

(end Machault)

a64) *van Eyck, 1428-29(?), Francis receives Stigmata, detail, Sabauda Gallery, Turin (cf. also Johnson Collection, Philadelphia*

V664) *Fouquet, c. 1470, Joshua, The Fall of Jericho (with Loire landscape), Antiq. Jud., Nat. Bibl., Paris*

64) *Fouquet, c. 1470, David hears of the Death of Saul, Antiq. Jud., Nat. Bibl., Paris; + V detail*

Music: Hayne van Ghizeghem, c. 1465(?), from *A la audienche*, second half, Seraphim SIC-6104

But the Van Eycks had already shown the expanse of nature, which Jean Fouquet, by 1470, applies in Biblical scenes, to the noble valley of the Loire. So music (here Hayne van Ghizeghem) harmonized its tonal space. While the humanists restored natural philosophy as pleasing to God. Pico della Mirandola:

And nothing moves a man forward to religion and the worship of God more than the assiduous contemplation of the wonders of God... When we have explored these wonders by means of this natural magic... we shall be inspired more burningly to the worship and love of the Artist.

(end Hayne van Ghizeghem)

- For 2nd 63) Bosch, c. 1507(?), Hell, detail, Alte Pinakothek, München (copy of CGB '59; cf. Michelangelo 55)*
- V2nd 63a) Bosch, 1480-85, Crucifixion, Musées Royaux des Beaux Arts, Brussels (CGB '59); video: detail only*
- V63b) Bosch, 1500-04, Visions of the Hereafter, detail: Tunnel to the Empyrean, Palazzo Ducale, Venice*

When Luther took the opposite tack, calling reason "the Devil's chief whore" (die höchstte Hure die der Teufel hat"), it was as if he would drive back to spaceless surrender:

True Christian divinity... commandeth us not to search out the nature of God; but to know his will as set forth in Christ... When thy conscience standeth in conflict, wrestling against the law, sin and death... there is nothing more dangerous than to wander with curious speculations in heaven and there search out God in his incomprehensible wisdom... how he created the world, and how he governeth it.

- For 2nd 64) Bosch, 1510-16, Temptation of St. Anthony, detail, Museum of Art, Lisbonne*

As always about-face was impossible. Luther's tracts employ the rationality he opposed. Even Bosch's hell-holes would evince spatial command. And the century from Fouquet

- 65) Brueghel, 1557, Landscape with Parable of the Sower, National Gallery, Washington, D.C., (CGB '60); + V foreground detail)*
- 65a) Same, detail of landscape background (CGB '60)*

Music: Palestrina, c. 1560(?), from the 8th Ricercare (Hypomixolydian)  
Nonesuch HC 73014

to Brueghel launches us on the dynamism we have often stressed, insular calm expanded to a world-drop, here for the Parable of the Sower — while Calvin, against Luther, programs science to the glory of God:

His essence is indeed incomprehensible... but on all his works he hath inscribed his glory... Of his wonderful wisdom, both heaven and earth contain innumerable proofs; not only those more abstruse things, which are the subjects of astronomy, medicine, and the whole science



of physics... Adepts, indeed in those liberal arts... are thereby enabled to proceed much further in investigating the secrets of Divine Wisdom...

— A lead from the 16th-century *ricercare* (here Palestrina), with the the visionary soaring of Brueghel's 1557 panorama, (end *Ricercare*)

- a66) *A. Brouwer, c. 1635-37, Landscape by Moonlight, Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin*
- 66) *Seghers, c. 1620, Mountainous Landscape, Uffizi, Florence; + V detail*
- V66a) *Harvey, pub. 1628, Experiment on the veins of a bound arm, from Circulation of the Blood*
- 66b) *Rubens, c. 1638, Cattle Drinking at Sunset, Louvre, Paris*

Music: Francesco Cavalli, 1656, from Sonata for 12 instruments, Musical Heritage Society 860.

to the 17th-century ground-bass antiphonal Sonata (Cavalli), with the brooding cloud physics of the first infinite landscapes of Method: this Seghers, which Rembrandt may have owned and touched a little, from about 1620, when Descartes had glimpsed his "wonderful science," to redound with Newton to "the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being."

At the same time Harvey was conceiving the material flow of the blood from circulatory nature:

The moist earth warmed by the sun gives off vapors, which, rising, are condensed, to fall again, moistening the earth. By this means things grow. So also tempests and meteors originate by a circular approach and recession of the sun. Thus it happens in the body by the movement of the blood... So the heart is the center of life, the sun of the Microcosm, as the sun itself might be called the heart of the world.

(end Cavalli)

- Va67) *Rubens, 1635-40, Landscape with the Chateau de Steen, whole; National Gallery, London; where the video previews 67b, Rubens, 1638, Landscape with Shepherd and Flock, National Gallery, London*
- 67) *Rubens 1635-40, again Chateau de Steen Landscape, vertical detail, National Gallery, London (which video takes in sections, lower and upper)*

- 67a) *Caravaggio, 1609, Resurrection of Lazarus, detail, National Museum, Messina*
- 67b) *Rubens, 1638, Landscape with Shepherd and Flock, National Gallery, London ; which video here narrows to a sunset detail*

In these divine raptures, reason was continually leading itself on, turning Cartesian dream into Substance. When Gassendi wraps a universe of Lucretian atomic reduction in a sort of late-Rubens glow of vitalism:

Whatever is in the fire existed first in the wood, but in a latent state... whatever substance is in the soul... first existed in the food, seed or other matter which produced it... Nature is not accustomed to pass from one extreme to another but by intermediate stages... unconscious matter becomes conscious by an exactly similar gradation...

Pascal's rapier cuts the luminous haze:

Man cannot conceive what a body is, still less what the mind is, and least of all how a body would be united to a mind. This is the consummation of his difficulties, and yet it is his very being...

With the Cartesian fabric always subject to Pascalian doubt, is it only temperament which throws us from "you never enjoy the world aright till the sea itself floweth in your veins..."

- Va68) *Contrasting moonrise videoed from a66, Brouwer's Moonlit Landscape*
- b68) *Rembrandt, c. 1638, Landscape with a Church, Duke of Alba and Berwick, Madrid*
- Vc68) *Ruisdael, c. 1660, The Jewish Cemetery, The Dresden Gallery version of this subject*
- 68) *Ruisdael, c. 1660, The Jewish Cemetery, Institute of Arts, Detroit*
- V68a) *G. de la Tour, c. 1630-35, Mary Magdalen with a Candle, detail only of the skull she holds, Louvre, Paris*
- 68b) *Rembrandt, 1656 (fragment), The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Deyman, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam*

to "The eternal silence of those infinite spaces frightens me"? Or is there a historical drama, like Herbert's "Collar," from "I struck the board" to "Child..." which leads from one to the other?

And what we seek is not simply the 17th-century darkening into prayer, Gryphius'  
 "Der schnelle Tag ist hin —

The swift day now is done. the night with banners blown  
 Leads up a world of stars. Men of earth weary  
 Forsake the fields of toil. Where birds and beasts were known,  
 Dark broods and solitude. How has our time gone by!...  
 Lord, when the labored body sleeps, let soul awake,  
 And when the last come day will my such evening make,  
 Gather me from the valley of shades to thee! (CGB)

Not that, but the gall to stare through the impasto glazes with which Ruisdael irradiated Huyghen's formulable wave-fronts of light, his vector solutions of mass-impact — to see (like the skull of El Greco's Francis or La Tour's Magdalen) the phenomenal foreclosure of soul and God, the causal changelessness that attends all reasonings by symmetry and equation — Leibniz' mill, in which one would never find anything to explain perception. Blake's Urizenic determinism of "the same dull round": such a loss as left no road but a gambler's desperation.

- 69) *Photograph of Eagle Nebulae M 16 and Stars, Kitt Peak, Arizona*  
 V69a) *Box Globules, etc. in Lagoon Nebula, thought to be collapsing into stars; Scientific American, 1977*  
 V69b) *Nebulae, Orion and Horsehead, from Galaxies*

While nature seemed indifferent to which philosophy, of matter or spirit, to which emotion, of joy or fear. If Galileo's telescope had shown him all the stars and nebulae of modern astronomy, it could not have heightened his rapture: "Other stars in myriads. never seen before... The Galaxy or Milky Way... clusters of stars." But we have just quoted Pascal's response: "*Le silence eternal de ces espaces infinis m'effraye.*"

Let man then contemplate the whole of nature in her grand majesty...  
 The whole visible world is only an imperceptible atom in the ample bosom of nature... It is an infinite sphere, the center of which is everywhere, the circumference nowhere... From the little cell in which he finds himself lodged, I mean the universe, let him estimate at their true value the earth, kingdoms, cities, and himself. What is man in the Infinite?

- 70) *Hooke, 1665, Magnified Louse from Micrographia*
- V70a) *Mite photo, from Das Leben unter dem Mikroskop*
- 70b) *Volvox; protozoan colonies, with daughter spheres, Natural History*
- V70c) *Computer-graphics model of DNA, detail, Scientific American, October 1985*
- 70d) *Hairy house mite, from Das Leben unter dem Mikroskop*
- 70e) *Birth of the Universe, Atomic and subatomic particles, Big Bang fireworks, Smithsonian, May 1983*

But to show him another prodigy, equally astonishing, let him examine the most delicate things he knows.

(Robert Hooke then preparing his Micrographia, to be published in 1665 — this louse.)

Let a mite be given him, with its minute body and parts incomparably more minute, limbs with their joints, veins in the limbs, blood in the veins, humors in the blood, drops in the humors, vapors in the drops... Perhaps he will think that here is the smallest point in nature. I will let him see therein a new abyss... In the womb of this abridged atom, let him see an infinity of universes, each of which has its firmaments, its planets, its earth, in the same proportion as in the visible world; in each earth animals, and in the last, mites, in which he will find again all that the first had... without end and without cessation... Our body... imperceptible in the bosom of the whole, is now a colossus, a world, or rather a cosmos, in respect of the nothingness which we cannot reach.

How could this marvellous and prophetic vision have done anything but enrapture the recipient? Its microscopic study would be the delight of Leeuwenhoek through the last fifty of his ninety years,

- 71) *Microscopic Nature, c. 1702, Hydra, Alga spirogyra, and protozoan stentor, The Life of the Pond*
- V71a) *Protozoan Ciliate: Stylonchia, The Lower Animals*
- 71b) *Same, Vorticellas*
- V71c) *Same, Protozoan: Stentor Coeuleus*
- 71d) *Variant detail of 71, the polyp, Hydra*
- V71e) *Spirostomum and Paramecium, The Lower Animals*
- V71f) *Coral Alveopora, with damsel fish, Wonders of Life*
- 71g) *Amoeba and Paramecium, Our Amazing World of Nature*
- V71h) *Coral reef with saber-toothed Blenny, Our Amazing World of Nature*

beginning with his 1674 examination of pond water:

In summer the water becomes whitish... I took up a little in a glass phial, and examining it next day, found green streaks, spirally wound, serpentwise... Among these there were besides many little animalcules... their motion so swift and various, 'twas wonderful to see...

...Two sorts had long tails, wherewith they were linked fast to little roots of duckweed. In structure, these little animals were fashioned like a bell, and at the round opening they made such a stir, that the particles in the water thereabouts were set in motion... Further, I discovered a little animal whose body was at times long, at times drawn up short... its eight horns made in a marvellous manner...

...I saw with wonder quite 1000 living creatures in one drop of water.

The same glissando from all to nothing would stir Leibniz to ecstasy:

Every portion of matter may be conceived as like a garden full of plants and like a pond full of fish. But every branch of a plant, every member of an animal and every drop of the fluids within it, is also such a garden or such a pond... *ad infinitum*...

There is therefore nothing uncultivated or sterile or dead in the universe, no chaos, no confusion...

- 72) *Rubens, c. 1642, lower left detail, corpses from Baucis Flood Landscape, Kunsthistorisches, Wien (CGB '59)*
- 72a) *Same, wider detail of the flooded stream (copy of CGB, 1600: The Tragic Divide 76)*
- V72b) *Same, most of the Flood landscape (from CGB 1600: The Tragic Divide 75; then video returns through a detail of 72a to the late Rubens' Landscape with Shepherd and Flock, from 676, above)*
- V72c) *Rembrandt, 1636, Landscape with a Baptism, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover*

Where Pascal clutches for the handrail:

For in fact what is man in nature? A Nothing in comparison with the Infinite, an All in comparison with the Nothing, a mean between nothing and everything...

Limited as we are in every way, this state which holds the mean between two extremes is present in all our impotence. Our senses

perceive no extreme. Too much sound deafens us; too much light dazzles us; too many concords are annoying in music, too many benefits irritate us... Extremes are for us as though they were not. They escape us and we them.

The word "thrill" is "*thirl*," to pierce. We have seen "the ethereal thrill" of incommensurate nature break over 1600 — from Tintoretto, through El Greco, to the storm-scapes of Rubens — this flood detail from a year after Pascal's birth. But Rubens was advancing toward a testimonial glow. Rembrandt transmutes the dark, like Milton: "there plant eyes, all mists from thence/ Purge and erase."

- Va73) *D. Teniers, c. 1660(?)*, *The Rich Man being led to Hell, detail, National Gallery, London*
- 673) *Bernini, 1645-52*, *Ecstasy of St. Theresa, detail, Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome*
- Vc73) *Salvator Rosa, c. 1670(?)*, *Landscape with Tobias and Angel, National Gallery, London*
- Vd73) *Rosa, c. 1650(?)*, *Witch, Palazzo dei Conservatori, Rome*
- 73) *Rosa, c. 1660(?)*, *The Temptation of St. Anthony, Galleria Palatina (Pitti), Florence (video detail)*

The root-system of Pascal's reversal is widespread. But does any artist so precisely turn reason on itself, superimpose dread on confidence, sacrifice formulation to the existential: "This is our true condition"? As if Bernini had really drowned in Theresa's swoon; as if Calderon had dissolved glory into dream. Salvator Rosa lacks size, though his untamed nature would sway later centuries, and his witch scenes and temptations train Bosch on Goya, conscious as Milton's Sin and Death:

Nor uglier follow the Night-Hag, when call'd  
In secret, riding through the Air she comes  
Lur'd with the smell of infant blood, to dance  
With Lapland Witches, while the labouring Moon  
Eclipses at thir charms...

- a74) *P. Puget, 1670-72*, *Milon de Crotone, Louvre, Paris*
- 74) *Poussin, 1660-64*, *Winter, The Deluge, Louvre, Paris; with video details before and after the whole, including:*
- 74a) *Same, detail to the left, snake below, Ark above; + V detail of the Ark*

We are searching the general form of the Baroque crisis. In tragedy it would require the reappearance of snake-dread within Corneille's structure of heroic *virtu*. But that is to specify Jansenist-trained Racine, with his romantic mutation of pain: Phèdre, study of a damned soul, its sobbing excess only assuaged by what our actors discard, swallowing final *é*'s in prose screams — the great formalities of meter and rhyme:

Une femme mourante et qui cherche à mourir...  
 Tout m'afflige et me nuit, et conspire à me nuire...  
 Objet infortuné des vengeances céleste,  
 Je m'abhorre encore plus que tu ne me detestes.  
 Les Dieux m'en sont temoins, ces dieux qui dans mon flanc  
 Ont allumé le feu fatal à tout mon sang...

— an imagery acoil with labyrinths and monsters; hope itself gliding into Phèdre's bosom-womb like an adder:

Et l'espoir, malgré moi, s'est glissé dans mon coeur.

The snake-attended Deluge from Poussin's last years works such deliberate containment of outrage — a shock like that Voltaire and Enlightened Europe would receive from the earthquake of Lisbon; and, as in Pascal, the church-ark is the only hope.

75) *Poussin, 1660-64, Summer, Ruth and Boaz, Louvre, Paris*  
 V75a) *Poussin, 1644, Extreme Unction, National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh*  
 For V2nd 74) *a central detail from The Deluge (video from 74)*  
 For V2nd 75) *Again 75, Summer, upper left detail (video from 75)*

But Poussin's Flood is the Winter of a seasonal four, of which the Summer Harvest of Ruth and Boaz, from the same time, shows the opposite bounty of nature under the tree of life and in harmony with God.

It is a tribute to Pascal's "Know, proud man, what a paradox you are to yourself," that with the announcement of his paralyzing truth, everybody did not abandon rational science and fall on their knees — "*parce que les principes opposée sont vrays aussy*" — as true as Pascal's own projective geometry or probability. That first alarm of Fear and Trembling was the Janus face of a Cartesian Method which was far from having spent itself. To how many it must have seemed, as with Milton's Adam and Eve, that

The World was all before them, where to choose  
Thir place of rest, and Providence thir guide...

- 76) *Vermeer, 1699(?), Geographer (Mathematician?), Städelches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt; + V detail*  
 76a) *Cuyp, c. 1670(?), River Scene with view of Dordrecht, Wallace Collection; + V detail of the sky*

Thus Newton, pushing the Calvinist program of a God-exalting science, enjoyed his greatest years of invention, as lighted by the earth-window as the variously-named Mathematician by Vermeer:

In the beginning of the year 1665 I found the method of approximating a series and the rule for reducing any dignity of any binomial into such a series. In the same year, in May, I found the method of tangents... and in November had the direct method of fluxions, and the next year in January had the theory of colors, and in May following I had entrance into the inverse method of fluxions. And the same year I began to think of gravity extending to the orb of the moon, and... deduced that the forces which keep the planets in their orbs must be reciprocally as the squares of their distances from the centers about which they revolve... All this was in the two plague years of 1665 and 1666, for in those days I was in the prime of my age for invention, and minded mathematics and philosophy more than at any time since. . .

- a77) *Sir Christopher Wren, 1673-1711, St. Paul's Cathedral, London from the S.E. (CGB '77); which the video takes as two details, above, then below*  
 Vb77) *Same, interior, Nave looking west*  
 Vc77) *Same, again exterior, from the S.E., but near and looking up (CGB '77)*  
 Vd77) *Same, from the S.E.: South Transept and South-West Tower (CGB '77)*  
 77) *Same: Dome; which the video divides into below and above (CGB '77)*

Music: Purcell, 1694, *Te Deum*, opening, RCA VICS-1407

It was then, just after the death of Pascal and the fire of London, that Wren assumed the rebuilding of St. Paul's, as slow in finishing as Newton's Principia, and like that book, or Purcell's "Te Deum," a symbol of reasoned command. What specifies that command? Despite Newton's hatred of the word, he builds on predictive mechanism, a clockwork of equational forces:



The whole burden of philosophy seems to consist in this — from the phenomena of motions to investigate the forces of nature, and then from these forces to demonstrate the other phenomena...

He ends with an assumed demonstration of the Being who "governs all things, not as soul of the world, but as Lord over all..."

We have ideas of his attributes, but what the real substance of anything is we know not... much less... of God. We know him only by his most wise and excellent contrivances of things, and final causes... a god without dominion, providence and final causes... could produce no variety of things... And thus much concerning God; to discourse of whom from the appearances of things, does certainly belong to Natural Philosophy.

How cleanly Pascal would have dispatched that double-talk.

- 78) *Grinling Gibbons, c. 1680(?), Boxwood of Sir Christopher Wren, R.I.B.A. Collection; the video shows the upper half, then a close detail*  
 78a) *Kneller, 1702, Sir Isaac Newton, National Portrait Gallery, London*

In Grinling Gibbons beautiful boxwood, Wren, who kept Newton writing the Principia and "System of the World," exhibits the ascendent rationality and temporal claim of Restoration, Royal Academy, Purcell, Locke and Dryden. Yet in refinement of ironic sensibility, he implies Pascal. Under just such certitude, Berkeley would deny the external: such humanity in Swift would embitter to merely rational horses and odious ape men:

(cut Purcell)

when I behold a lump of deformity and diseases both in body and mind smitten with pride, it... breaks all the measures of my patience.

- a79) *Magnasco, c. 1740, Christ and Peter on the Sea of Galilee, whole, National Gallery, Washington, D.C. (CGB '75); while video defers this, showing here an upper detail of Christ from 796*  
 79) *Same, detail, Christ and Peter on the stormy Sea (CGB '75)*  
 V79a) *Magnasco, c. 1740, matching Baptism of Christ, also National Gallery, detail of dove against rocks and waves (CGB '75); here video adds: storm-tossed ship from a79; the whole of a79; then Peter from 79*  
 796) *Again, the scene of 79, but a detail of Christ only, beckoning (CGB '75)*

Music: Domenico Scarlatti, c. 1740(?) Sonata in F Sharp Minor, old Landowska album

The sharpest art sign after 1700 that Pascal's spatial terror is working underground and must crop out again, is Magnasco's dissolution of landscape into a brushwork frenzy, where for all Christ's impassioned summons, Peter sinks. While Scarlatti and Bach intensify the chromatic bypass of tonal reason.

If Pascal suffered some merely private malaise of womb-sickness and God-need, that flaw — like Kafka's ghetto-neurosis — gave him a vulnerability the future would increasingly share.

(end Scarlatti)

"God is, or He is not." But to which side shall we incline? Reason can do nothing here: there is an infinite chasm between. A game is being played at the extremity of that infinite distance, where heads or tails will turn up: What will you wager? According to reason, you cannot do either; according to reason you cannot leave either undone... let us weigh the gain and loss in believing that God is... If you win, you win all: if you lose, you lose nothing. Wager then, without hesitation, that He is.

- a80) *Zurbaran, 1658, St. Francis in Meditation, Alte Pinakothek, München*
- V680) *Here video previews slide 80: Pascal's Death Mask, whole*
- c80) *Ch. Le Brun, 1689, Small Nativity, Louvre, Paris; + V detail*
- 80) *Pascal's Death Mask, 1662, whole; here video shows a detail (cf. V80)*

Music: M.-A. Charpentier, c. 1670(?). from *Dialogue entre Madeleine et Jesus*, French Columbia (78) DFX 43

We cannot know if that faith-leap was backward or ahead; whether the earth-yea or earth-nay was the deeper motion of mind. But the Christian, since Paul, had to be thrown from the horse to be reborn; though the Baroque-humbling was less to the ground of earth-denial than to the pietistic caress of Charpentier's Dialogue between Christ and the Magdalen.

Thus the talisman of conversion found on Pascal's dead body records: "*renonciation totale et douce*" — "renunciation total and sweet"; and "joy, joy, joy, tears

of joy" — *"joie, joie, joie, pleurs de joie."*  
(end Charpentier)