

SYMBOLIC HISTORY Through Sight and Sound

27. The Larger Declaration

- a1) *Ralph Earl, 1792, Chief Justice Oliver Ellsworth and wife Abigail, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford Connecticut; + V details, left, then right*
- 1) *M.M. Sanford, c. 1830(?), Washington at the Battle of Princeton; N.Y. State Historical Association, Cooperstown.*

Music: American, c. 1760(?), Yankee Doodle, tune played by Dick Stark, organ

Our aim is not to cut history to size, but to share in its deepest unfoldings; and what has been deeper than the Constitutional achievement of the United States of America? So the Federalist:

whether societies of men are really capable of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend, for their political Constitutions, on accident and force.

The fine arts, however, present us with an anomaly. Against the visionaries of England and the Continent — Blake, Goethe, Goya, Mozart, Beethoven — what conventionalized these shores points the irony to which our third century is vulnerable. In a world seeded by tragic complicities of that Europe, what can this "Battle of Princeton" teach us, but to whistle "Yankee Doodle," and hope humor will bring us through?

(end Yankee Doodle)

- 2) *G. Stuart, 1795, Washington, "The Vaughan Portrait," National Gallery, Washington, D.C.; + V detail*

The stiff look of Stuart's Washington has been blamed on false teeth, but Paine's 1796 letter seats the falseness deeper:

I declare myself opposed to almost the whole of your administration; for I know it to have been deceitful if not perfidious... Monopolies of every kind marked [it] almost in the moment of its commencement.

The lands obtained by the revolution were lavished upon partisans: the interest of the disbanded soldier was sold to the speculator; injustice was acted under the pretence of faith; and the chief of the army became the patron of the fraud...

- 3) *Blake, 1793, The Argument Page: Oothoon and the Flower, Vision of the Daughters of Albion, Lord Cunliffe; + V detail*
 V3a) *J.S. Deville, c. 1807, Life Mask of Wm. Blake, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England (detail of a67)*

Could this be the America of which Blake wrote in 1793: "For the soft soul of America, Oothoon wandered in woe..."? Or had that America arisen, an ideal and longing, in the heart of Europe? Yet Blake had thought of emigrating there, as to a geographical place:

Tho' born on the cheating banks of Thames,
 Tho' his waters bathed my infant limbs,
 The Ohio shall wash his stains from me:
 I was born a slave, but I go to be free.

- 2nd 2) *Stuart, Washington, another detail of 2*

Blake's goal, anyway, was not the federal actuality of rich and poor, proprietary law, slavery, and compromise which Tom Paine had lately brought news of — when (as the story goes) he was saved from arrest by Blake's shrewd or prophetic warning.

- 2nd 3) *Blake, c. 1795, Oothoon and the Flower, color print, British Museum, London.*
 2nd 3a) *Anonymous, c. 1790, American Quaker Meeting, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.*

Oothoon's search was for some Land of Heart's Desire — what Western Civilization had always dreamed of, the Kingdom of God made flesh in the love and freedom of here and now.

Was Rousseau's claim for that here and now —

taking men as they are and laws as they might be made... to establish
some just administration of the civil order —

at last, by Hamilton's "great improvements" in "the science of politics": "balances and checks," "Confederacy" and "representation" to be instituted — though in defiance of Rousseau's dictum that "Sovereignty cannot be represented"?

- 4) *Romanesque, Languedoc, c. 1130, Prophet holding a Scroll, detail of portal, Moissac.*
- 4a) *American, Anonymous, c. 1780(?), Appalachian Pass, Corcoran Gallery*

There had been a change, of course over the years, in the whereabouts of the Kingdom of God and how it was to be realized. For Abelard in the 12th century:

Jerusalem est illa civitas...

Jerusalem is the city of everlasting peace...

Now it was over a continental expanse which would have seemed before to defy democratic possibility that "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" were to be secured.

- 5) *Blake, 1793 (1799 copy), Orc in Flames, America, plate 17, Paul Mellon; first, video detail*

Even Blake's Kingdom (which in the continuity of Christendom he called "Jerusalem"), though somehow of the spirit ("all deities reside in the human breast"), had still to be forged, like Faust's, by rebellion against every outward dogma and hierarchy, whether of priest or law — Blake, rearing himself across the page in the flaming delight of Energy: "Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires."

- 6) *American, Anonymous, c. 1800, The Sargent Family, National Gallery, Washington, D.C.*
- V6a) *Rufus Hathaway, M.D., 1790, Lady with her Pets, Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC.*

By the subtlety of historical assimilation something of that revolt has penetrated even the naively conservative America of 1800, quietly shaping an individual good in the

secular and domestic (Blake's "lineaments of satisfied desire"). But it is a likeness in opposites: here an art of limitation, with all the risk of stuffiness and disappointment attendant on such vegetative claims. As Emerson would take it up: "Things are in the saddle, and ride mankind."

- 7) *Blake, 1795, Satan exults over Eve, Tate Gallery (formerly W. Bateson, Esq.); + V detail of Eve*

Thus when Oothoon heads for the new land "over the waves... in wing'd exulting swift delight," Bromion, possessive violence, brands her free desire with the name of whore:

Thy soft American plains are mine, and mine thy north & south:
Stamp'd with my signet are the swarthy children of the sun;
They are obedient, they resist not, they obey the scourge...

- a8) *Gilbert Stuart, 1794, John Jay, National Gallery, Washington, D.C.*
b8) *John Trumbull, 1806, Alexander Hamilton, National Gallery, Washington, D.C.*
8) *G. Stuart, 1824, John Adams as an Old Man, Adams Collection, Waltham, Massachusetts*

Strange that the actual American achievement of a republic of compromise should have seemed to the spiritual revolutionary not a triumph but a sell-out. Strange the Founding Fathers should give no hint of any such dark awareness, though the radical dreamers of Europe were always exhibiting themselves in a Faustian bond. Stranger that skeptical Hamilton ("every man ought to be supposed a knave" and "the people is a great beast") and John Adams, here shown in age ("whoever would found a state must presume that all men are bad by nature"), should have helped to shape a tolerable republic.

- a9) *Greek (Phidian), c. 440 B.C., Riace Bronzes, Young Warrior, rear view, Mus. Reggio-Calabria, Italy; video: first, Va9, a varied rear detail; then, a detail of a9*
9) *Same, Young Warrior, right side, full-length; video: half-length only*
9a) *Same, Young Warrior, front torso; which video replaces with head and shoulders, from 9*
V9b) *Same, Double: half lengths of Young and Old Warriors*
V9c) *Again, Young Warrior, detail of head*

Yet why call it strange? Blake could repudiate the "silly Greek and Roman slaves of the sword." But politics from Machiavelli to the Federalists had focussed, with searing ambivalence, on the troubled freedom of those city-states — as charged with radiance and danger as this Riace warrior lately recovered from the sea. Hobbes: "there was never anything so dearly bought as these Western parts have bought the learning of the Greek and Latin tongues."

Still, Doric and Ionic columns were on the rise. The book Washington kept by him was not the Bible, but Plutarch's Lives of Famous Greeks and Romans, Machiavelli's cycle of governments, each, by its own corruption, sliding to the next — degenerate Royalty to Aristocracy, Aristocracy through Oligarchy to Democracy, Democracy through mob-rule back to Tyranny — was Greek, clarified by Polybius from Plato. And it was Polybius' dictum that the best state is "a composite of the three, as with Sparta and Rome," which would provide so many Constitutions with Monarchic Executive, Aristocratic Senate, and Democratic House — though all those ancient lessons sprang from the Athens of this warrior, from Plato's dire celebration of Democracy, that "fair and spangled state... the glorious beginning out of which tyranny springs."

10) *Jacques-Louis David, 1784, Oath of the Horatii, Louvre (CGB '80); + V detail*

10a) *Same, Oath of the Horatii, detail; video: closer detail only*

So the caution of the Founding Fathers may have been less strange than the neglect of such Classical and Tory doubts by Robespierre: "Every institution that does not suppose the people good and the magistrate corruptible, is vicious" — while he played midwife to a Reign of Terror. So in art, David's Horatii conspire ("breathe together") like Rousseau's General Will. Gone is the caution of Madison:

The accumulation of all powers, Legislative, Executive, and Judiciary, in the same hands... may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny.

11) *C.W. Peale, c. 1787, Benjamin Franklin, Historical Society, Philadelphia; + V detail*

Was it luck or craft, the openness of a new land, or what, that enabled Americans to stretch the limits of old Europe in so dangerous an enterprise as Revolution without feeling its blasting effects, without even, as it were, taking off their 18th-century dress? As Franklin, that always fortunate Poor Richard, drew lightning from the clouds — where if the hemp cord had been more wet by the rain before he touched the ring, the new Prometheus would have been consumed (like the less favored Russian who repeated the experiment) by electrical fire.

- a12) Houdon, 1784, George Washington, Boston Athenaeum*
- b12) Houdon, 1783, Winter, Musée Fabre, Montpellier; the video takes the whole figure from Vb12 (a wider view), then a detail from this b12*
- 12) Houdon, 1785, Another Bust of Washington, Mt. Vernon; + V detail*

As if the political climate which could nurture a Washington were as incompatible with the art that could model his image, as in Jefferson's pragmatic notes for American travellers abroad. Study Agriculture, he advises, useful mechanics, gardens, architecture, "since we must double our houses"; but as for painting and statuary "it would be useless and preposterous for us to make ourselves connoisseurs of those". Only a visiting Frenchman, Houdon, has stamped the first president with the idealism of Jefferson's other words:

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness... for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

- 13) J.H. Dannecker, 1797, Self-Portrait, full face, Landesmuseum, Stuttgart*
- 13a) Again, Dannecker Self, profile of bust; here, video shows in turn details of 13 and 13a*

By the turn of the century, what Houdon's Washington and Jefferson's prose had held in stately measure, receives more flagrant assertion over Europe, especially from Germany, where world-hope, self-reliance, brotherhood and "*Gefühl ist alles*," cast such a revolutionary person, as one might have assumed Jefferson to be. The sculptor Dannecker presents himself as a glowing Schiller, herald of that Hymn of Joy ultimately

set by Beethoven, 1823, in the finale of the Ninth: "All men brothers, ...millions embraced... the kiss of the world..."

Music: Beethoven, 1817-23, 9th Symphony, Finale, Choral fugue (Toscanini), V-LM 6901

a14) Blake, engraved 1790 (colored 1794-96), Glad Day (or The Dance of Albion), from the knees up, British Museum, London

14) Blake, 1790 (dated 1780), Glad Day (Orc-Albion) Engraving, British Museum, London; + V details

V14a) Again, colored Glad Day, whole; + V upper detail

14b) Blake, 1793 (1825-27 copy), from Marriage of Heaven and Hell, p. 27, from "A Song of Liberty," Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Of Americans, only British-born Tom Paine, firebrand kindler of the Revolution, anticipated that fervor. And perhaps one could have predicted his later trouble with the "Power Circle" by trying to sort their competent faces with his passionate words — though Blake can match him, and more: the so-called Glad Day, signed 1780, though here in a print of about 1790, Albion as rebel Orc. So Tom Paine, from Common Sense, 1776:

0 Ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose not only tyranny but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the Old World is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia and Africa have long expelled her. Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart. O receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind...

Yet Blake might better speak for himself, since he adds dimensions of boldness Paine never dreamed of, defiance of whatever limits and binds — marriage, rational science, and law:

Where the son of fire in his eastern cloud, while the morning plumes her golden breast,

Spurning the clouds written with curses, stamps the stony law to dust, loosing the eternal horses from the dens of night, crying

Empire is no more! and now the lion and wolf shall cease.

- 15) *Blake, 1793, Vision of the Daughters of Albion, frontispiece, Lord Cunliffe, Blake Trust; + V detail*

Chorus:

Let the Priests of the Raven of dawn, no longer in deadly black, with
hoarse note curse the sons of joy. Nor his accepted brethren whom,
tyrant, he calls free, lay the bound or build the roof. Nor pale religious
lechery call that virginity that wishes but acts not!

For everything that lives is holy.

As always, visionary hope sharpens the specter of what is: our shackled, fallen convention (like dogs): "Bound back to back in Bromion's caves, terror and meekness dwell."

- 16) *Savage, 1796, The Washington Family, National Gallery, Washington, D.C.; + V detail*
 16a) *Meissen (design by Kändler), c. 1750, Monkey Musicians; + V detail*
 16b) *Again, Savage's Washington Family, detail of Washington*

Music: Duport, 1792, Minuet danced for George Washington, Col. (78): 17072-D(a)

How far from the intensity of Blake and Beethoven is the father of our country as Savage paints him with his family. Call for an accompanying music, and what sounds but the Duport minuets, danced in 1792 for George and Martha in the prevailing artifice of hair and dress. (Jefferson, 1778, having written an unknown Italian about importing a band of sober and industrious persons: gardener, cabinet maker, etc., who could also play French horn, clarinet, etc., and so provide music without enlarging one's domestic expense: "the favorite passion of my soul, though fortune has cast my lot in a country where it is in a state of deplorable barbarism." Duport, however, seems no more barbaric than this painter is Savage.

- 17) *Double: [A] J. Trumbull, 1792, Alexander Hamilton, National Gallery, Washington, D.C., and [B] Gainsborough, 1785, George IV as Prince of Wales, National Gallery, Washington, D.C.*
 17a) *Left of Double, Trumbull's Hamilton; first, video detail*
 17b) *Right of Double, Gainsborough's George IV*

From the same year as the music, Alexander Hamilton (left), whom Jefferson called "not only a monarchist, but for a monarchy bottomed on corruption."

And by a fortuity of likeness, from a few years earlier, Gainsborough's George IV as Prince of Wales (right) — the scion of tyranny against an author of the Constitution (until he left in a pet); yet style says with Lear: "Handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief?"
(close Duport Minuet)

Though it was Hamilton whose intellect (perfecting Rousseau), incomparably stated the antinomies of rule:

If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government, which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: You must first enable the Government to control the governed; and in the next place, oblige it to control itself.

It seems history requires an *esprit de finesse* to plot the variance of like from like.

Music: Again, Duport, 1792, Minuet

- A18) B. Otis, c. 1816-20, Dolley Madison, N.Y. Historical Society, NYC*
- B18) Goya, 1800, Whore Queen, from the Family of Charles IV, Prado, Madrid (video, detail only)*
- 18) Double: A18 and B18; + V close detail of A*
- 18a) B. West, 1802, Hope Family Group, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*
- V186) W. Williams, 1766, Deborah Hall, Brooklyn Museum, NY*

Suppose we go forward a few years and take in Dolley Madison, hostess wife of the fourth President. We have known her since childhood and hesitated to accuse her by name, though Blake would have had no trouble in recognizing "the system of moral virtue called Rahab... Whore of Babylon" — in the White House.

And again a chance resemblance pairs her with Goya's ironically handled Whore-Queen. As if the difference between corrupt Europe and Federal American had been one of awareness: the satanic complicity there fiercely faced, wreathed here in a simper of good. And yet, as we are aware, a shift of a few degrees in the average temperature makes the difference between an ice age and a temperate clime.

If we ask, is Duport's the music of a revolutionary America? — the answer it returns is unmistakable: that the revolution Blake, and even Paine envisaged, did not occur; that the Fathers never wanted it to occur; that the so-called American Revolution, as everybody has long said, was in the deepest sense not a revolution at all.

As for the Washington minuets, we hear what they are and what they represent.

(close George and Martha Minuet)

- 19) *Watteau, c. 1717, Fêtes Vénitiennes, National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh; video: details only*
- 19a) *Watteau, 1718, Love in the French Theatre, Staatliche Museen, Berlin-Dahlem*

Only by timidity are they distinguished from the whole 18th-century horizon of courtly rococo and poignant style of sentiment, which from Couperin to Mozart (and in painting from this Watteau to Goya) elaborated telling refinements.

On the coda of Mozart's Clarinet Quintet, where rococo and neoclassic stir with far deeper content, let us thread mannered couples from 1717 to 1791 and from various parts of Europe: France, Italy, Austria, Spain.

Music: Mozart, 1789, Clarinet Quintet, Coda of last movement., London CM9379

- 20) *Guardi, c. 1780-90(?), Conversation before the Stair of a Palace, Pinacoteca dell' Accademia Carrara, Bergamo*
- 21) *Viennese Porcelain (Grassi), c. 1780(?), Portrait Painter, Museum für Kunst-handwerk, Frankfurt*
- 22) *Goya, 1791, Blind Man's Bluff, detail, Prado, Madrid*

(close Mozart)

In that ferment of Europe, what depths underlie Goya's surface of elegant play.

- a23) *Fuseli, 1781, Nightmare, Institute of Arts, Detroit*
- 23) *Fuseli, 1790 version, Nightmare, Private Collection, Switzerland; first, video detail*

Music: Mozart, 1789, Adagio in C Minor, K 546, (Busch) HMV (78) DB 3391

The same Mozart who in the same years, on the eve of the French Revolution, when the Duport minuet was being danced for Washington, wrote his Adagio and Fugue in C Minor, a kind of suicide piece; the same Goya who, taking a cue from this 1790 Nightmare by Füssli, (the Fuseli of England) — as from the general cult of violence and Gothic terror cresting under what Paine called "The Age of Reason" —

24) *Goya, 1799, The Sleep of Reason, Caprichios, etching, Prado, Madrid; first, video details*

would give the picture and motto for that incursion: "*El sueño de la Razon produce monstruos*" — "The Sleep of Reason produces monsters." Goya's comment paraphrases Paine: "Imagination deserted by reason creates impossible, useless thoughts. United with reason, imagination is the mother of all art and the source of all its beauty." The language of Enlightenment. But what the etching suggests is darker and more borne out by the age;

25) *Blake, 1795, Nebuchadnezzar, Tate Gallery, London; first, video detail*

it is the insight of Blake, that rationality itself is a bondage, a dessication and sleep, which stirs antithetical terrors, which becomes itself a terror, as the Storm and Stress gripping Europe after 1770 is a counterpole of Enlightened progress — both Albion's Prince and repressed Orc (like this imbruted Nebuchadnezzar) sprouting dragon scales (America).

(fade Mozart Adagio)

a26) *Blake, 1794, "The Howling Terrors..." (Slavery), Europe: A Prophecy, plate 2*

26) *Goya, 1793(?), The Madhouse, Academy of San Fernando, Madrid; first, video detail*

Music: Mozart, 1789, Fugue from Adagio and Fugue in C Minor, HMV (78) 3391

When Mozart goes from the Adagio into the Fugue, the tempo and life increase, but not the cheer. Since the celebrations of the great Baroque ended in Bach, the fugue has shifted from deterministic glory to the terror of deterministic bondage. So with the ratios of vaulted space from Rembrandt to this Goya Madhouse; so with the formulation of the phenomenal from Descartes to Kant.

- 27) *Blake, 1794 ff., The Ancient of Days, Frontispiece to Europe, Keynes Collection; + V detail*

With Blake, Creation itself has become a fall into the compassed limits of the equational.

- 28) *Goya, 1815-24, Disperates (Proverbs) 4, Big Booby, Prado, etc.; first, video detail*

Finally, when the old Goya lets the Big Booby dance, who will take up the jollity?

(fade Mozart Fugue)

- 29) *Tischbein, c. 1787, Goethe on the Campagna (c. 1787), State Museum, Frankfurt*
 29a) *Same, Tischbein's Goethe, detail, head and shoulders*

How did that European revolution, which should have exhibited the calm command of this Goethe on the Campagna, come, like Goethe's own Faust, to be so violently cloven?

Faust in the fable is a Renaissance man, issuing from the crypt of the Middle Ages. But he is also a romantic revolutionary; and in that phase, against what closure does he rebel? The anomalous convergence of 1500 and 1800 poses a vast question: how the conscious assertion of liberty, mastery, and right has fared in the Christian West.

- 30) *School of Reichenauer, c. 1000, St. Matthew, Hillinus' Evangelair, Cathedral Library, Cologne, ; with video details*

Music: 11th cent.(?), *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, History of Italian Music RCA Ital. LM 40000, Rec 1

Consider its opposite eight centuries before, the Dark Age ground of 1000: Earth a symbolic battlefield for angelic and demonic powers, Man reduced to a spaceless energy, crouched before expected Judgment in somber resignation of the phenomenal realm with all those dignities later so grandly claimed — their very promise a temptation to satanic pride: "To practice more than heavenly power permits."

(fade *Veni Sancte Spiritus*)

In diametrical stand against that self-surrender,

- 31) *Dürer, 1498, Self Portrait, Prado, Madrid; + V detail (use V31)*
- 31a) *Dürer, 1506, Christ Among the Doctors, Thyssen Collection, Lugano*
- 31b) *Dürer, c. 1500, The Lamentation, detail, Alte Pinakothek, München*
- V31c) *Dürer, 1490-94, Young Couple, detail, Kunsthalle, Hamburg*
- 31d) *Dürer, c. 1495(?), View of Nuremberg from the West, formerly Kunsthalle, Bremen, missing since 1945; wider variant, V31d*
- V31e) *Dürer, 1508, Praying Hands, sketch, Albertina, Vienna*

by 1500, the Renaissance — here Dürer — had given programmatic expression to the new man, operating in a universe of ordered space, time, and cause, to which his reasoning humanity is affined. We sense in all the arts Pico's discovered Dignity:

...O great and wonderful happiness of man! It is given to him to be that which he wills...if he cultivates vegetable seed, he will become a plant; if the seeds of sensation, he will grow into a brute. If rational, he will come out a heavenly animal. If intellectual, he will be an angel and a son of God. If he... takes himself up into the center of his own unity, then, made one spirit with God... he will stand ahead of all things. Who does not wonder at the chameleon which we are...?

The poignance of this insular vision is its dawn hopefulness, as if it could not foresee the length and stormy turbulence of the ensuing day, as if it assumed that the Christian Middle Ages could be magically transformed into free humanistic enlightenment, with a new art, a new philosophy, new values of life, science, democratic free cities, an individually reformed religion...

- 32) *Leonardo, c. 1513, Drawing: Girl Pointing, Windsor; first, video detail*
- 32a) *Leonardo, 1504-06, Leda and the Swan, Chatsworth Collection, Devonshire*

Music: Rossinus Mantuanus, c. 1495, *Un Sonar* (Lirum Bililirim), Decca DL-79435

As in Leonardo's "Girl by a Stream," it is a smiling invitation to a promised land, a land already present in the richness of the art. And in music, too, as suddenly present: a 1500 Frottole imitating winds and waters in a harmony of nature and love. (fade frottole)

That Theleme beckons above,

- 33) *Bosch, 1500-04, Visions of the Hereafter: Hell, detail, Palazzo Ducale, Venice; + V closer detail*

while beneath lay the almost unaltered hell-message of the Middle Ages — Bosch painting in the same years — the very techniques of Renaissance substantiating the nightmare of damnation. Luther: "Faith must trample under foot all reason, sense and understanding... and wish to know nothing but the word of God."

- a34) *P. Breughel, 1562, The Triumph of Death, detail (top right), Prado, Madrid*

- 34) *Same, whole; video: details only*

Music: Sweelinck, c. 1600, from Echo Fantasy, (Weinrich) Musicraft Alb. 9 (3)

The pity lay in this, that the floating humanist hope had to work itself out against those demonic possessions — as in Breughel's documentary Triumph of Death. It could not be actualized without the cleavage and cross-breeding struggle of new on old, the Lutheran and Calvinist broils, Inquisition, Thirty Years War, the destruction of the most progressive parts of Europe, with a harvest reaching across the Rhine to the madresses of our own age.

- a35) *Rubens, c. 1618, Battle of the Amazons, whole, Alte Pinakothek, München (CGB '59); + V detail (V635, CGB '59)*

- 35) *Same, Battle of the Amazons, closer detail (CGB '59); + V detail from a35, right*

In Rubens, in Sweelinck's Echo Fantasies, the enormous energies of the Baroque form in a tumult that also sweeps the English stage, from Lear's: "we cry that we are come to this great stage of fools"; through Webster's: "In what a shadow or deep pit of darkness/ Doth womanish and fearful mankind live"; to Beaumont and Fletcher's Maid: "And the trees about me,/ Let them be bare and leafless; let the rocks/ Groan with continual surges; and behind me,/ Make all a desolation."

(end

Sweelinck)

- 36) *Rembrandt, 1630-31, Old Man Reading, drawing, Weimar Museum; first, video detail*
 36a) *English, Anonymous, c. 1670, John Clark, Fortune, July 1942; + V detail*

Music: S. Scheidt, 1624, from organ Credo, AS 10 (next to last pedal entrance)

When the great volitional grandeur speaks again, as in Rembrandt or the composer Scheidt, it is with the Miltonic organ tones formed at the heart of a century of religious wars: "Who knows not that truth is strong next to the Almighty?" In those organ tones, what Thoreau would call the last important news from Europe, had been divulged — which was essentially why the Revolution could be so slight in American in 1776. Its homogeneous religious vanguard had been transplanted a century and a half before, from the old world to the new — as if Cromwell, Milton, Rembrandt, Schütz, and Huyghens had come with the Pilgrims, forgotten their intenser callings and become breeding stock.

(end Scheidt)

- 37) *Thomas Smith, c. 1690, Self-Portrait, Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts; + V detail*
 37a) *American, Anonymous, 1640's, John Winthrop*

New England branched off from that stem, and it preserved, in stiff colonial form, the dark religious claim, through a century of preachers debating out of the Bible rights and sovereignty: tolerant Thomas Hooker:

The foundation of authority is laid, firstly, in the free consent of the people... And whereas it hath been charged that through their ignorance and unskilfulnesse, they are not able to wield such privileges... the Lord hath promised to take away the veil from all faces...

Against Winthrop, "Stewart of Theocracy":

We see not that any should have authority to set up any other exercise beside what authority hath already set up.

- Va38) *Bernini, 1669-70, detail of 38, Constantine,*
 38) *Bernini, 1654-70, Conversion of Constantine, St. Peter's, Rome*

Meanwhile, in Europe, as the humanist and rational forces of the Renaissance slowly assert themselves, they do so in the great formal frames of Church and State: Bernini in Italy, the Conversion of Constantine;

- 39) *Le Brun, 1663-75, Louis XIV at Dunquerque, tapestry, detail, Versailles, CGB '59; + V closer detail*

in France Le Brun: the thrust of Renaissance usurped and appropriated by such pompous formulations as the Monarch of the Sun — mounted on the same Bernini horse — campaigning against the Protestant Lowlands. It is the deflection of humanist energy through Baroque religiosity and the dangerously overblown heroics of courtly grandeur that saddles the 18th century with a deeply cloven loyalty and aim. Hear the royal march of Louis XIV:

Music: Lully, 1686, from *Marche Royale*, Turnabout TV 34232

- 40) *French, c. 1680, Louis XIV as Roman Emperor, MS Fr. 7892, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; first, video detail*

(fade Lully)

The heroic style is here so close to mock heroic that one might question what the art means. The overstretched assertion that all is for the best in this best of all possible kingdoms, pumped up through the Wars of the Spanish Succession and the virtual bankruptcy of France, would break with the King's death to the Regency —

- 41) *Watteau, 1716, L'Indifferent detail, Louvre, Paris*
 41a) *Watteau 1718(?), The Music Party, detail, The Wallace Collection, London*
 V41b) *Again, The Music Party, whole*

the delicious mockery and Rococo sentiment of Watteau. While music, with Couperin's miniatures, breaks at the same time:

Music: Couperin le Grand, *Folies Françaises*, opening, HMV D 8 4945 (78)
 (fade)

Which brings us back to the century and style of the George Washington minuet. Between the great assertive thrusts of Baroque and Revolutionary, the 18th century hangs, in all its richness, a catenary of question and regrouping.

- 42) *Houdon, c. 1770(?), Voltaire, National Gallery, Washington, D.C.*
 42a) *Again, Tischbein c. 1787, Goethe on the Campagna, detail, State Museum, Frankfurt (see #29)*
 42b) *Houdon, c. 1778, Bust of Rousseau, Mus., Orleans; then a video return to 42, Bust of Voltaire*

Like the Hegelian word *aufheben*, the 18th century plays a triple role: it terminates in mockery the heroic vaunts of the great Baroque; it continues that basic assurance under the ironically smiling mask of Voltaire; it raises up (Goethe on the Campagna) in transcending form the human and utopian claim, shifting it from its old center in reason toward a new center in the passion of creative will. As Werther says: "*Was ich weiss, kann jeder wissen — mein Herz habe ich allein.*" "What I know each can know; only the heart is mine." How the Revolution will relate to this transition will vary from place to place with the slightest shiftings in the social complex.

- 43) *Gainsborough, c. 1755(?), Talk in a Park, Louvre, Paris; + V detail*

It is a subtle but telling shift from the novels of Marivaux to those of Richardson, Fielding and Sterne; so too from the courtly airs Watteau disarmingly parodies, to the mid-century English elegance Gainsborough and the rest partly mock and partly celebrate on the parks and estates of England.

- a44) *American Colonial, 1730 ff., Westover (built by Wm. Byrd), lower James River, Virginia*
 44) *Jefferson, 1769-84, remodelled 1796-1809, Monticello, near Charlottesville, VA (CGB '62)*

An even smaller, but still significant migration takes us from the English house to those Georgian imitations along the shores of the Chesapeake and James, or (most original and natural) to Palladian Monticello.

Immediately two levels of revolution become possible:

- 45) *Ralph Earl, c. 1790(?), Daniel Boardman, National Gallery, Washington, D.C.; + V detail*

a kind of minimal level, which could only occur where the blend of middle class and landed gentry was sufficiently benign and law-abiding to offer its own rather wiggled and robed convention of freehold elegance and Lockean law as the human base a constitutional republic required. Against this milder possibility, a more deeply cutting maximal likelihood was hardly to be avoided

Va46) Fragonard, 1766, The Swing, detail of the woman, Wallace Collection, London

46) Same, The Swing, whole

46a) Same, The Swing, central detail

where, as in absentee France, an eroded aristocracy seemed the parasitic artifice to be uprooted before the natural man could expatiate in Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood.

Beside the liberal mean of the Colonies, this Europe was a complex of tensile stirrings, convergent opposites: here the surfeit of rococo play, marriage *à la mode*, this Fragonard husband[?] pulling a swing while the wife kicks a slipper to the underpeering lover. Thus Jefferson (1785) opposed the education of American youth in Europe: "He acquires a fondness for European luxury and dissipation

47) Copley, 1771, Mrs. Humphrey Devereux, National Gallery, New Zealand

"and a contempt for the simplicity of his own country" — though forthright Englishmen, Fielding and the rest, had written similarly about the dangers of going from England to France. Surely there was a fine directness to the Copley Boston portraits of before the Revolution;

48) Chardin, 1771, Self-portrait in a nightcap, Louvre, Paris; + V detail

but plain humanity breathing republican spirit was cropping out everywhere, as here with Chardin in France — like the enlightened couple in Joseph Andrews, Joseph's parents it turns out — part of the natural and human Eden to be progressively reclaimed ("*il faut cultiver notre jardin*").

Va49) J.S. Copley, 1771, Ezekiel Goldthwait, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; video: detail only

49) Piranesi c. 1743-45, sketch for one of the Carceri, Kunsthalle, Hamburg

- V49a) *Piranesi, 1743-45, Carcere X, 1st State, detail of Captives, National Gallery, Washington, D.C.*
- 49b) *Piranesi, 1743-61, Carceri XV, 2nd State*

What distinguished America was the consistency of the simple, its lack of antinomies. While under courtly Europe and under the Enlightenment, from early in the century, as in Swift's Yahoos and Piranesi's prison scenes, there had yawned a splenetic dark cellar (*saeva indignatio*). Was it the madhouse of avoidable corruption and cruelty, or the doomed reversal of Renaissance reason and hope, the heroic fretted vault become the dungeon of man irremediably flawed?

50) *Tischbein, c. 1786, Goethe at a Roman window, Goethe Museum, Frankfurt; with video details*

Music: Mozart, 1787, "*Deh, vieni alla finestra*" from Don Giovanni, Angel 3605 DL

In that Europe, one morning of 1786, in the pre-romantic dawn of free humanity, Goethe, child of courtliness and defiance, of Enlightenment and Gothic terror, leaned out of a Roman window on his Italian Journey, and was sketched by Tischbein. It is like an aria from Mozart's Don Giovanni. "*Deh, vieni alla finestra*"; Goethe might almost have been singing it to a passing flower girl — or the girl who became his mistress, and he wrote the poem of waking in the morning, his arm around her, his fingers strumming the long hexameters on her back. (fade Aria)

51) *Goethe, 1787-88, Eruption of Vesuvius, sketch, Goethe Museum, Weimar; first, video detail*

V51a) *J. Wright, c. 1775, sketch of the annual Fireworks, at the Castle of San Angelo, Rome; Art Gallery, Birmingham, England (CGB '74)*

Music: Mozart, 1787, Don Giovanni, Stone-guest passage, Angel 3605 DL

But in the opera, seduction yields to the chromatics of Damnation. And Goethe, in classical Rome, was writing of the rejuvenation of Faust in a Gothic Witches' Kitchen. He practiced sketching also on that trip: here a guache of Vesuvius in eruption. Faust's ambivalent cry was for Goethe himself, as for Revolutionary Europe: "Two souls, alas, dwell in my breast" — "*Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach! in meiner Brust.*"

(fade Stone-guest)

2nd 50) *Again, Goethe at a Roman window, detail of 50*

V2nd 50a) *Dürer, 1524, Portrait of a Gentleman, Prado, Madrid*

V2nd 506) *Rigaud, 1730, Louis XV of France at age 20, Versailles; video: detail only*

Goethe, in fact, at that Classical window and with his Gothic soul, was perhaps the only man in the world who saw clearly and creatively what we now realize about the divided relation of Revolution to the larger motion of the West: that there was a daytime, conscious phase in which both he and Faust had to take up the fresh and liberating humanism of the Renaissance — the 1500-promise of reason glimpsed only to be lost in religious wars and hardening Method, courtly artifice and kingly foppery — had to act as if those three hundred years had never intervened.

Va2nd 51) *M. Falbe, c. 1760, Portrait of J.M. Lüttichau, Gal., Dresden; + V return to 496, Piranesi, Carcere XV, detail*

For 2nd 51) *J. Wright, 1774, Eruption of Vesuvius, Art Gallery, Derby*

But of course they had — unalterably. It was not only the old dark and superstition to be put aside by Jeffersonian light, but the false pomp of state, the wit and wigs of misguided enlightenment, the web of analytic and mocking reason, the noble vault turned prison. Here revolution explodes against all limitation and sane order, within and without; it erupts

52) *Delacroix, 1828, Mephistopheles, Private Collection, Geneva; video, center spread only (from V52)*

52a) *Goethe (by J.G. Schadow), 1816, Life Mask, at age 67*

526) *Blake, 1793, Frontispiece, Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Library of Congress*

in Storm and Stress, titan rebellion, romantic hunger, and the Gothic novel, Delacroix's dream-haunted revival of the Middle Ages of faith and mystery, which the other daylight Faust would have planned to dispel. That Goethe could hold and use all that was the greatness of which Napoleon remarked: "*Voilà un homme.*" Thus the *Wald und Höhle* (Wood and Cave) scene of Faust, with its cleavage (already anticipated in Werther's love and suicide) between calm possession of nature and mind and a destructive satanism raging like a cataract into the abyss.

That Europe, striving within and without against hereditary bondage, was already driven "Beyond Good and Evil," into Satanic compact, or as Blake put it, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell.

- 53) *Goya, c. 1815, The Giant, etching, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; video: detail only*
- 53a) *Blake, 1794 (1815/18 copy), Urizen, pl. 5, Rosenwald Collection, Library of Congress; here the video returns to 53: Goya's Giant, whole*
- 53b) *Fuseli, c. 1785(?), Prometheus, drawing, Kunstmuseum, Basel*
- 53c) *Again, Goya's Giant, closer detail*

Goya, about 1815, made Prometheus the symbol. Had not Goethe more than forty years before written the poem that gave "Promethean" its new and ultimately Nietzschean meaning? Jefferson would say: "I have sworn, upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man." But what of the tyranny of that altar? Paine, the only American to assault it publicly, was reviled and ostracised. But Goethe had long before spoken the words of Prometheus: "*Bedecke deinen Himmel, Zeus,/ Mit Wolkendunst...*"

Darken your heaven, Zeus,
 With dusk of clouds
 And like a boy who lops off
 Thistles, spend yourself
 On oaks and mountain crags;
 But this my earth
 Look you let stand,
 My house too that you did not build,
 And this my hearth
 Whose glowing fire
 Incites your jealousy.

I know nothing under the sun
 More wretched than you are, gods.
 On tithes of sacrifice
 And breath of prayers
 You feed penurious
 Shreds of majesty,
 And you would starve
 If children and beggars
 Were not hopeful fools.

When I was a child
 I could not tell truth from lie;
 I turned bewildered eyes
 To the sun, as if an ear were there
 Inclined to my complaining,
 A heart like mine,
 To pity and relieve.

54) *Goya, c. 1811, The Colossus (Mars), Prado, Madrid*

54a) *Fuseli, 1802, Satan Calls Beelzebub from the Flames, Kunsthau, Zurich*

Who shielded me
 Against the pride of titans,
 Rescued me from death
 And slavery?
 You, sacred glowing heart,
 Have we not worked these things?
 And then deceived,
 In youth and goodness
 Poured out thanks and praise
 To the sleeping fraud of heaven?

I honor you? Wherefore?
 Have you once eased
 the torments of the afflicted,
 Once appeased
 The tears of the disquieted?
 Was I not wrought to manhood
 By time the almighty
 And fate eternal,
 Your masters, as they are mine?

- 55) *Goya (or Eugenio Lucas), c. 1811, A City on a Rock, Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC, (CGB '74); with video details, the last: foreground (cf. unused CGB '74, V55a)*

Did you assume perhaps
 I would disdain life
 And fly to the wilderness
 Because not all
 My flowering dreams ripened?
 No! Here I sit and fashion mortals
 After my image,
 A race of men to be as I am,
 To suffer and to weep,
 To relish, to enjoy,
 And to despise as I do
 You and yours. (CGB)

(Ein Geschlecht, das mir gleich sei,
 Zu leiden, zu weinen,
 Zu geniessen und zu freuen sich,
 Und dein nicht zu achten;
 Wie ich!)

The musical climax parallelling these haunting Goya symbols of about 1811 (this "City on a Rock," its winged defenders hovering over the fire-assault of dark swarms) is no doubt in Beethoven; but it was the Mozart of the courtly style and of the style of frenzy

2nd 54) Again, Goya, The Colossus, upper detail

who also in the Jupiter Symphony (1788-89) had forged the affirming spearhead of revolution.

Music: Mozart, Jupiter Symphony, close of finale, Col D 3 L 291

2nd 55) Again, Goya, City on a Rock, right side (after CGB '74)

- 56) *Baron A.J. Gros, 1796, Napoleon at Arcola, detail, Louvre, Paris*
 56a) *Gros, 1807, Napoleon at d'Eylan, Paris Louvre; video: upper detail only*
 V56b) *Same, Napoleon at Eylan, central detail*
 56c) *Cogniet, 1836, Volunteer National Guard leaving Paris, 1792; Versailles*
(end Jupiter)

We have cheated on Mozart by accompanying the last bars of the Jupiter with Gros's rather windy Napoleon, but was it to be avoided where history cheated on the spirit of Revolution, setting Rousseau's "General Will" at war with itself? As Shelley put it later in Prometheus Unbound:

Names there are, Nature's sacred watchwords...
The nations thronged around and cried aloud,
 ...Truth liberty and love!
Suddenly fierce confusion fell...
Tyrants rushed in and did divide the spoil."

Wordsworth was in France, and described the first ecstasy:

...triumphant looks
Were then the common language of all eyes:
As if awak'd from sleep, the Nations hail'd
Their great expectancy: the fife of War
Was then a spirit-stirring sound indeed,
A Blackbird's whistle in a vernal grove.

a57) *Klauer, c. 1790(?), Bust of Goethe, Goethehaus*

57) *Dannecker, 1794-1805, large Schiller bust, Schiller House, Weimar*

Goethe was on the border and told in Hermann und Dorothea how the soldiers came like liberators: "they planted the glad tree of freedom, promising that each should be his own ruler."

Coleridge summed it up in his poem to Wordsworth — the fiery spirit Dannecker aimed at in his busts of Schiller:

Amid the tremor of a realm aglow,
Amid a mighty nation jubilant,
When from the general heart of human kind
Hope sprang forth like a full born Deity!

Va58) Dannecker 1794, colossal plaster bust of Schiller, Weimar

58) *Goya, 1799, Self from the Caprichos, Etching, Prado, Madrid; video: detail only*

Coleridge added: "Of that dear Hope afflicted and struck down..." And Wordsworth: "It was a lamentable time for man." Goya, who would witness the guerilla

terrors of the Peninsular War, already lours from the page of his *Capriccios*, as if to answer with a fierce Bronx cheer the rapt Schiller zeal which would miscarry so disastrously over Europe: "A plague on both your houses."

- a59) Goya, esp. 1810-20 (pub. 1863), Disasters of War # 37, etching*
V659) Goya, 1814, Riot of May 2nd, 1808 at the Peurta del Sol, Prado, Madrid
59) Goya, 1814, The Execution of May 3rd, 1808, Prado, Madrid; + V detail

A generation lived through the shock of revolutionary reversal, driven back to the dark wisdom of Milton: "Licence they mean when they cry liberty;/ For who loves that must first be wise and good." So Coleridge: "The Sensual and Dark rebel in vain,/ Slaves by their own compulsion." And Goethe, after telling how the early rapture soured into the atrocities of the Rhine invasion, returned to the same ground: "May I never again in such contemptuous madness/ Look upon man! Better the beast in his rage/. Never let him speak of freedom, as if he could rule his own passions." But Goya shaped the most searing indictment of all, to show man once and forever the beast he is.

So the radiant opening of Beethoven's Third turns in the Fifth to the grim hammering of fate.

- 60) Ingres, 1810, the architect Desdeban, Musée des Arts Decoratifs, Besançon*
60a) Ingres, 1806, Mademoiselle Rivière, Louvre, Paris

(Against the Goya, an Ingres of 1810 liberation.)

Music: Beethoven, 1804 (pub. 1806), Third Symphony, opening, Deutsche Grammophon LPM 18 802 (fade)

- a61 Again, Goya, The Execution, detail of the victims*
61) Same, larger central detail (which video follows with a still closer detail of a61)

Music: Beethoven, 1805 (pub. 1809), Fifth Symphony, 1st Movement, opening, Deutsche Grammophon LPM 18 804 (fade)

— though Beethoven brought the Fifth to transcendental victory.

Against that cloven Europe, torn by a violence as fierce as its vision is radically soaring —

62) *Copley, 1771, Mrs. Goldthwaite (with fruit), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*

how plain our American aspirations seemed, how wholesomely pursued and fruitfully realized. Boston had produced a Revolutionary composer too, Billings, working in the time of Copley and Charles Wilson Peale. Blamed by connoisseurs for using no dissonance in his Fuging tunes, he wrote a short cacaphony, "Jargon," only two lines long, ending:

2nd 61) *Goya, Execution, detail of the next to be Executed, Prado*

Music: Billings, esp. 1786-94, last bars of "Jargon," Col. MS 7277

Is it a joke, or an Ives' potentiality?

2nd 62) *Copley, Mrs. Goldthwaite, upper half*

2nd 62a) *Copley, Mrs. Goldthwaite, detail of hand and fruit*

What represents Billings is rather "Be Glad then America" — a gladness of the consonant earth.

Music: Billings, esp. 1786-94, from "Be Glad then America," Col. MS 7277
(through the "Satisfied" phrase)

63) *Ch. Wilson Peale, 1773-1809, the Peale Family, NY Historical Society;
+ V detail*

(Same Billings: "Be Glad" phrase, then fade)

The closest America came to radical unrest was in Shay's Rebellion, a populist uprising in Western Massachusetts in 1786.

64) *John Trumbull, 1786-94, The Declaration of Independence, Yale University*

64a) *Same, Trumbull, The Declaration of Independence, central detail; then the video returns to the right half of the whole, from 64*

It sprang from post-Revolutionary manipulation of money and land, and was often referred to in arguments for a stronger government and Constitution. What we hear of it comes mostly from the outraged "men of property and station". Thus General Knox to George Washington:

...Their creed is, that the property of the United States has been protected from the confiscation of Britain by the joint exertions of all, and therefore ought to be the common property of all... we find we are men — actual men — possessing all the turbulent passions belonging to that animal, and that we must have a government proper and adequate for him...

- 65) *Houdon, 1785, Thomas Jefferson, NY Historical Society; + V detail*
 65a) *Mather Brown, 1786, English portrait of Thomas Jefferson, American Historical Art Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma; first, video detail*

Jefferson wrote back from Paris, 1787, about the same "late rebellion in Massachusetts":

...I hold that a little rebellion, now and then is a good thing and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical... It is a medicine necessary for the sound health of government...

To have said that, and been named just after Secretary of State and later elected President, speaks not only to the temper of Jefferson but to the breadth of that America. But it does not clarify the naiveté of the optimism — to betray no sign of the European cleavage; to make Revolution and practical Enlightenment one motion of the mind.

Yet if any American could have participated in the deeper moral shakeup of the wider Revolution, it should have been Jeffer-son. He saw the beginning of the Terror in France, and wrote after his return (1793): "My own affections have been deeply wounded by some of the martyrs to this cause" (Condorcet would die the year after), "but rather than it should have failed, I would have seen half the earth desolated."

- a66) *Jefferson, finished 1824, The University of Virginia, Rotunda, side view (CGB '83)*
 Vb66) *Same, Lawn and Rotunda (CGB '86); video picks up Rotunda only*
 66) *Same, Lawn, Rotunda, and West Range*

Evil and disaster struck in his own family: not only that his cousin Lewis of the Lewis and Clark expedition killed himself under the accusation of corruption in the Louisiana Territory, but that his Kentucky nephews butchered a slave for a trivial offence before their household and servants. Yet it remained for the poet Warren in our time to ask how

Jefferson's dream was consonant with such satanic ties. Jefferson saw Hamilton's bank corrupting the rural simplicity he depended on to save us "from eating one another as they do in Europe." His sufficient answer was education, the University, his last and noblest architectural vision, completed in 1824.

- a67) *J.S. Deville, c. 1807, Life Mask of William Blake, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England*
 667) *Goya 1815, Self-Portrait, Prado, Madrid*
 67) *Beethoven Death Mask, 1827 (the video then circles through 65, Jefferson, 52a, Goethe, back to this 67, Beethoven); + V detail*

By that time in Europe, Goya, Beethoven and Blake were all closing their lives. They had experienced idealism, revolution, terror, and repudiation; the creative hope had been driven far down and under to reshape inner revolt out of desperate negation. In those depths of confrontation one could hardly tell the cry of "Yes" from the cry of "No". One would only know afterwards that the spiritual crisis of later civilization, even down to our own day, had been unbelievably stared in the face.

If the mortal imprint could not itself reveal the trial and transcendence of spirit, there would hardly be an art of portrait representation. Let the death mask of Beethoven (against the unflawed smile of Jefferson) hint what price, through revolutionary hope and agony, Europe had to pay for those geniuses of violence and inward turning: octogenerian Goya and Goethe, Blake past 70, this titan of music dead at 56 —

Music: Beethoven, c. 1824-26, Große Fuge, first bars (Busch) Col. M-X-221 (78's) (fade opening)

still shaking the fist of the last Great Fugue at a thundering sky.

Such the theme, and now the fugal entrance,

- 68) *Blake, c. 1805-10, The Great Red Dragon and the Woman, National Gallery, Washington, D.C.*

with two Blakes, two Goyas.

Music: Beethoven, Große Fuge, fugal passage, Col. MX-221

- 69) *Blake c. 1820, The Ghost of a Flea, Tate, London*
- a70) *Goya, 1820, The Fates, Prado, Madrid*
- 70) *Again, Goya, The Fates, detail; + V closer detail (V70a)*
- 71) *Goya, 1820-23, Saturn Devouring his Children, upper half, Prado, Madrid*

This last Goya, of Saturn devouring his children, though it decorated the artist's own dining room, is not a painted myth but an image of the universe,

- 72) *Same, Goya, Saturn, whole; + V close detail*
- 72a) *Another Houdon Jefferson, 1789, differently lighted, Fine Arts Museum, Boston; + V detail*

flung in creative defiance in the face of God. Jefferson was in a position to have looked at it and said "I see what you mean." But would he have looked? "I will not believe," he wrote to Adams, Sept. 12, 1821, "that our labors are lost."

As Sam Johnson said, "Nature sets her gifts on the right hand and on the left... no man can at the same time fill his cup from the source and from the mouth of the Nile." (*Rasselas* XXIX) The liberal hope and future of Spain was plowed into the peninsular campaign and the making of Goya. "Useless and preposterous," Jefferson would have said, "to buy art at such a cost."

Was not his the immunity for which Goethe would congratulate the New World (1827): "*Amerika du hast es besser...*" "You have it better than our exhausted Continent... no Medieval castles, no Gothic horror-trappings." As if regretting that Faust could not have been, like Jefferson, of one soul.

- a73) *Thomas Cole, 1825, Landscape with Dead Trees, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, OH*
- 73) *Cole, 1833, The Titan's Goblet, Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC*
- 73a) *Same, Cole's Titan's Goblet, upper detail; + V lower detail (from 73)*
- 736) *A.P. Ryder, 1875-91, Siegfried and the Rhine Maidens, National Gallery, Washington, D.C.*

Music: Gottschalk, 1846, Ossian Ballade, No. 2 (Piano), MHS 3135

But already Rip van Winkle, waked from his long sleep to Federal politics and the "Almighty Dollar," felt a nostalgia for the dreamy past. As outward confidence waned, our art too would shape inner realms (even New Orleans Gottschalk to compose Ossian Ballades): so Cole's 1833 Titan Goblet, with cities above on the Platonic brim, and darker ones on the rock bays below. Who knows what it can mean, but the longing beyond what is — such a haunted mood as in Hawthorne's story of "Doctor Heidegger's Experiment" with its other goblets and vase brimming with water from the fountain of youth, which rejuvenates the faded widow and her three ancient rivals: "her warm breath fanning each of their faces by turns... yet... the tall mirror is said to have reflected the figures of the three old, gray, withered grandsires, ridiculously contending for the skinny ugliness of a shrivelled grandam." For all Goethe's advice, we had still to face our demons within and without.

- Va74) *Ryder, 1890-1908, Macbeth and the Witches, Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.*
 74) *Ryder, c. 1887, The Flying Dutchman, Smithsonian, Wash., D.C.*
 74a) *Ryder, 1890, Jonah detail, Smithsonian, Washington, D.C.*

Maybe Charles Brockdon Brown had given a hint just before 1800 in the Wieland. That fanatical father's death in the agony of putrefaction after the flaming visit of his god is not just Gothic fashion; it means something, and what it means is hardly Enlightenment. Not even Poe is an isolated caprice. Melville was preordained to set himself where Goya had stood. And Ryder's "Flying Dutchman," another of those "hideous and intolerable allegories," might have been informed by Moby Dick.

"This whole act's immutably decreed. 'Twas rehearsed by thee and me
 a billion years before this ocean rolled.

- 75) *Raphael, 1510-11, School of Athens, Vatican*
 75a) *Same, School of Athens, Groups to Aristotle's left*
 75b) *Thomas Nast, 1871, Let Us Prey*

Our great triumph, the political structure, framed by the counterpoise of checks and balances, for a citizenry of worth and with the fortune of an expanding frontier, was a vault of minimal law, irrespective of economics, health, the media, Platonic wholeness, or Utopian plan — some 1500 noble School of Athens, where all sorts and conditions of men could live in abstract legal equality, poor and rich, slave, even, and free, unspecified. Though Rousseau had warned (and Paine and Jefferson echoed him) that in states of economic disparity, "legal right... only serves to keep the poor in misery, and support the rich in their usurpations."

- a76) *Currier and Ives 1860, The Catskill Mountains, Roy. King Col., NY*
 76) *American Federal, etc., Chestnut St., Salem, Massachusetts*
 76a) *Francis Costigan, 1840-44, James F.D. Lanier House, Madison, Indiana (CGB '82); the video then adds V76b, same, nearer, from the side (CGB '82)*

All actual states are polyvalent suspensions in whose dynamic wished absolutes are embodied and consumed. From the radiance of an America spreading over a continent and through four centuries, what blessings shall we affirm, what threatened values crown? The constitutional documents, with the court cases that almost made them

real, have no art sign more compelling than the shaded lawns of an American avenue, where brick and clapboard dwellings claim the equality of the commonwealth. Yet from the merchant port of Salem (Hawthorne under the eaves, searching darker symbols), through Philadelphia (along the Delaware), Annapolis, Georgetown, Charleston, to Natchez, and north with the first frontier to Madison — "if ever the tree of time bore richer fruit" — comes the backlash of our opulence:

To float a dream
Of lawns and houses down the Main Line,
We slag earth's ocean to a dying pool... (CGB)

a77) *Antebellum, Natchez, unfinished 1861, Longwood, (CGB '62)*

77) *R.B. Hughes, 1834, John Trumbull, bust, Yale U.; + V detail*

Like the rest of the world, we were bound to come to grips with the specter of our fate. Though our fate is not yet clear. Hear the worst evidence:

After 1830, American busts, even of artists (this the painter Trumbull), too often have that Roman look of self-righteous corruption which Lyndon Johnson exemplified in our time.

D. H. Lawrence, in 1924, purported to find the "real American" hidden in the books of Cooper, Hawthorne and the rest. He says of Deerslayer:

All the other stuff, the love, the democracy, the floundering into lust, is a sort of by-play. The essential American soul is hard, isolate, stoic, and a killer. It has never yet melted... And when this man breaks from his static isolation, makes a new move, then look out, something will be happening...

78) *O. Mueller, 1919, Self, Neue Staatsgalerie, München; first, video detail*

And of Moby Dick:

Melville knew. He knew his race was doomed. His white soul, doomed. His great white epoch, doomed. Himself, doomed. The idealist, doomed. The spirit, doomed... "Not so much bound to any haven ahead, as rushing from all havens astern."

I have searched American portraits and found none to fit the suicidal killer described by Lawrence — only a German, Otto Müller, from the pre-Nazi bitterness after the First World War. Maybe Lawrence as so often was projecting the European pain of the years in which he wrote.

- 79) *Edward Hicks, c. 1848, The Peaceable Kingdom, Museum of Art, Philadelphia*
- 79a) *Hicks, c. 1845, Separate version of Penn's Treaty with the Indians (background detail in the above), Museum, Philadelphia*
- 79b) *Chinese-American, after 1799, George Washington Ascending, Painting on glass, Winterthur Museen; + V detail*

While the United States, pursuing its manifest destiny in the Indian West, went on toying with Hick's Peacable Kingdom...

Music: Yankee Doodle again

Did the simplicity of American art reflect some naive flaw of the democratic mind? — To escape the antinomies of the organic field (as the fire-release of freedom against the leaf-bonding of the long-term good); even now, with movie hacks, to amputate a patient (nation, world) disposed, at the least dumb incision, to fibrillate.

If that is the instinct of the herd, hostile to the keenness of the Riace bronzes — De Toqueville: "in democratic republics... the body is left free, and the soul is enslaved" — then D.H. Lawrence could claim the crystal ball; even Rousseau might have his say: "*On peut acquérir la liberté, mais on ne la recouvre jamais.*" — "Liberty may be acquired, but recovered, never." (end Yankee Doodle)

- a80) *E.S. Field, c. 1860, Garden of Eden, Webb Gallery of American Art, Shelburne Museum, Vermont*
- 80) *W.S. Mount, c. 1855, Banjo Player in Barn, Institute of Arts, Detroit; first, video detail*
- 80a) *Charlie Chaplin, 1936, from "Modern Times": Chaplin oiling the machine*
- 80b) *Chaplin, 1936, "Modern Times," closing shot: Chaplin and Paulette Goddard¹*

Two hundred years of incarnate vision, earth quickened toward entropic ruin, this is the America that wrings our hearts.

Music: Stacey Samuels and Charlotte Bell, banjo etc., playing Jesse James (taped by CGB)

But the pied piping, as of barefoot volunteers at Valley Forge, homespun cue for Beethoven's Hymn to Joy, Yankee Doodle yields to the outlaw, Jesse James, by the youth bums of Bowery and the Street, plucking like Mount's solitary Black smiler in a barn. Has another humanity been at work under the march of America? And even at this ninth hour can the humor of Franklin, Melville and Twain, the wry humor of Chaplin, come to our aid?

As Galway Kinnell closes the Book of Nightmares:

On the body
on the blued flesh, when it is
laid out, see if you can find
the one flea which is laughing.

^lThe closing shot is both a comic solution and the bleakest irony of the show — resuming the fatal error of Adam Smith and Marx, that "Nature is inexhaustible and works gratuitously."