

*SYMBOLIC HISTORY*  
*Through Sight and Sound*

**17. Michelangelo: Storm Center**

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## SYMBOLIC HISTORY Through Sight and Sound

### 17. Michelangelo: Storm Center

- 1) *Michelangelo, 1513-16, Moses, San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome*  
1a) *Same, Michelangelo Moses, detail*

If history appears as an evolving field of force, its most charged sequence has been in the culture of the Christian West, and insofar as that power records itself in the arts, Michelangelo stands at its peak, an incarnation of dynamic will.

Any of his works, here the Moses, of 1513 to '16, is not simply an art-object, but an energy-organizer at all levels of the creative stair. It is in some way a self-portrait, personal to its maker; as specific to its generation, it exemplifies also a period style, say Florentine Renaissance; third, it is an image of Western man, protagonist of our culture from its Medieval beginnings to today; last, an embodiment of world force, it actualizes something divine — the shaping thrust of nature, as Michelangelo put it, of God.

Music: Josquin des Pres, 1515-20, close of Absalon, Nonesuch H 71216

- 2) *Sistine Chapel, 1475, with Michelangelo ceiling (1508-12), and Judgment (1536-41), Vatican, Rome*  
2a) *Same, detail of Michelangelo ceiling*

(Josquin des Pres — compared by their contemporaries with Michelangelo — David's lament for Absalon.) (end Josquin) So history sounds the resonances of art as symbolic form: person, period style, culture, world soul.

If we ask of the person, Michelangelo, it is the Sistine Chapel which gives most immediate answer. Under the vault of the Creation (1508 to '12) all tales of this daemonically driven man become

credible: the titanic bent of his person, his pride in dealing with Pope Julius, himself a violent man; it no longer surprises us that he could shut himself up in the chapel and paint for years, hardly admitting his patron, the Vicar of Christ.

- 3) *Michelangelo, 1508-12, Sistine Ceiling, The Prophet Jeremiah, whole, Vatican, Rome; + V detail*  
 3a) *Same, Jeremiah, detail of head*

These tensile forces build with Michelangelo's own words and the things reported of him to a single surge. To feel it we may focus on any of the represented Prophets, Jeremiah say, and at the same time rehearse one of Vasari's typical stories:

Late in Michelangelo's life the consuls responsible for rebuilding St. Peter's wrote: "As regards the progress and designs and prospects of the new basilica, the deputies know nothing whatever, Michelangelo despising them worse than if they were outsiders." When he was brought before the Cardinals he revealed that three windows of travertine were to light the vault. "You never told us anything about that," said the cardinal. "I am not obliged to tell your lordships or anyone else what I intend to do," replied Michelangelo; "your business is to take charge of the expenses and to see that no one steals. The building is my affair."

- Va4) *Sistine Ceiling, 1st bay, two Nude figures*  
 4) *Same, left figure [Note video variant, V4]*

Or we may consider the Dialogues of Francisco de Hollanda, where Michelangelo says of his mission (and he is the first to speak in these terms):

A man cannot attain to excellence... if he be not singular or distant, or whatever you like to call him. As for those other meek and commonplace spirits, they may be found without the need of a candle in all the highways of the world...

- 5) *Same figure, detail of head [Note video variant, V5]*

In the same dialogue he says of his art:

Good art is nothing but a replica of the perfections of God and a reflection of His art; it is a harmony and a melody which only the intellect can understand, and that with great difficulty...

6) *Sistine Ceiling, whole 1st Bay, Light from Dark*

If these were Michelangelo's sentiments, is it any wonder that this Messiah of Art, in the first scene of the Sistine Creation, the Separation of Light from Darkness, hit on a new and implicitly heretical conception?

7) *French, mid-13th cent. MS, Cod 2554, f50v, God Creating, National Library, Vienna*

In contrast to a 13th-century God, who creates with the effortless calm of spirit,

2nd 6) *Again, Sistine Ceiling, Light from Dark, detail of Jehovah; + V detail*

the Sistine Jehovah initiates the world in the brute involvement of body. In Goethe's words: "In the beginning was the deed." Curious that another Renaissance revolutionary, toward the end of the century, the Englishman Marlowe, should describe Hero's first experience of physical love by a simile of creation, conceived in the spirit of Michelangelo:

...She strove;  
This strife of hers, like that which made the world,  
Another world begot of unknown joys...

For 2nd 7) *French Illumination, c. 1250(?), God Creating, Genesis, title page, St. Louis Bible, Cathedral, Toledo*

How far from the 13th-century Genesis is the divine strife by which the Sistine vault proclaims dynamic primacy.

Va8) *Sistine Ceiling, whole (though the video crops to about five scenes)*

8) *Same, detail of three central scenes*

Its very space is folded in perspectival battle. Look how any of the alternating small scenes (as here at the center), with its border figures seated as on sculptural supports — how each shapes, above and below, its own recess, of which the mouldings define a fit meeting point. But the adjacent large scenes are spilled over from each side by those cornices, so that they exist in a sort of negative space.

9) *Whole of Sistine Ceiling, seen from the entrance*

Against the Baroque formulation of an entire ceiling from one point of view, Michelangelo's summoning of space from the old spacelessness, buckles the vault in corrugations of generative strain.

10) *Sistine Ceiling, Head of God Creating the Sun and Moon*

10a) *Same, the arm-spread figure of God*

The head of God making the sun and moon is one of the most concentratedly violent. Like the Moses, it fuses something of Pope Julius and of Michelangelo himself in a fury of the embodied divine. We may relate it to a letter the artist wrote his brother about the same time, displeased with some mishandling of family affairs:

I wish to tell you that for the last twelve years I have wandered miserably through Italy; I have supported every shame, suffered every hardship, worn out my body with every toil, and risked my life itself a thousand times for the single purpose of advancing my family. Now that I have begun to raise it up a little, it is you, and you alone, who desire in a single hour to destroy and pull down all I have spent so many years and such labour building up. By the Body of Christ, but this shall not be! I am ready to wipe away ten thousand such men as you are whenever it is necessary. And now, be wise, and do not vex to wrath one who has other causes for anxiety.

a11) *Sistine Ceiling, Nude figures from Separation of Land from Waters, 3rd bay*

11) *Same, of these, the agitated nude to the right; video: detail only*

Michelangelo was renowned for that "terribilità." It permeates not only his art but his life. His first biographer, Condivi, writes of his daily habits:

He has always been extremely temperate in living, using food more because it was necessary than for any pleasure he took in it; especially when he was engaged upon some great work; for then he usually confined himself to a piece of bread, which he ate in the middle of his labour...

While he was in full vigour, he generally went to bed with his clothes on, even to the tall boots, which he has always worn, because of a chronic tendency to cramp... At certain seasons he has kept these boots on for such a length of time, that when he drew them off the skin came away together with the leather, like that of a sloughing snake...

- a12) *Sistine Ceiling, Deluge, detail, right*  
 12) *Same, detail, left*

Turning away all the artists summoned from Florence to assist him in the technique of fresco, packing them off home, Michelangelo tackled the ceiling alone, with only a boy to help him mix paint. Vasari tells how he got so used to looking up that if he was given anything to read he would automatically raise it and hold it over his head. And Michelangelo says as much in a satiric poem (Symonds):

My beard turns up to heaven; my nape falls in,  
 Fixed on my spine: my breast-bone visibly  
 Grows like a harp; a rich embroidery  
 Bedews my face from brush-drops thick and thin...  
 So foul I fare, and painting is my shame.

For he never forgot that he was a sculptor driven to painting as to an art he despised.

- 13) *Sistine Ceiling, Adam from the Creation*  
 13a) *Same, Adam, upper detail*

Such is the man of violence and sorrows who saw himself and was already seen by his contemporaries, as in some way justifying his archangelic name, a type of the creating divine. Vasari gives it the theistic expression of the time: "The great Ruler of Heaven... resolved... to send to earth a genius universal in each art... that the world should marvel at the singular eminence of his life and works and all his actions, seeming rather divine than earthly."

Music: Ganassi, pub. 1543, Ricercare for Viol, Seraphim SIC 6052

- 14) *From the same fresco, the hands of God and Adam*

He was the symbolic life-giver, born in an age already aware of itself as a time of rebirth, aware too that the generative energy it felt centered somehow in the visual arts, in the representational conquest of bodies in space, artistic herald of the Western science of power — music too first reaching toward instrumental and fugal pomp (Ganassi).

(close Ganassi)

- 15) *Michelangelo, 1501-03, David, whole, from his left, Accademia, Florence (CGB '86)*
- 15a) *Same, David, whole, from his right (CGB '86)*

Music: Cabezon, c. 1540(?), Diferencias on El Cavallero AS-40

It was this Michelangelo who in his youth (forty years before Spanish Cabezon's variations on El Caballero) could take the great block of flawed marble hacked and spoiled by his predecessors and liberate the David (1501-3). Again it is Vasari who says: "This revival of a dead thing was a veritable miracle" (end Cabezon) a theme Pater would treat more pantheistically, in relating the Sistine Creation of Adam to the David

- 16) *Michelangelo, 1530-33, Fourth Captive, for Julius' Tomb, "Young Giant Awakening," Accademia, Florence (CGB '86); + V detail (while the slide show substitutes a double, 16a: two views of the same captive; so digital*

and the unfinished Slaves:

This creation of life — life coming always as relief or recovery, and always in strong contrast with the rough hewn mass in which it is kindled, is in various ways the motive of all his work... And as his persons have something of the unwrought stone about them, so... with him the very rocks seem to have life.

Surely, in the organ Ricercare, from the first Cavazzoni, through Cabezon, to the Gabrielli, giant forms struggle for release. Cavazzoni:

Music: Marco Antonio Cavazzoni, 1527, Ricercada, SVBX 5322: 1-2

Thus, long before Pater and the 19th century, Michelangelo's own metaphor of the creative artist informing stone suggests a more than Platonic mystery,

- 17) *Same, Captive III (Bearded Giant), upper portion, Accademia, Florence*

by which both artist and stone become agents and collaborators, realizing the impulsion of a deeper will. This is the Michelangelo Emerson would make part of the universal striving of spirit to realized form:

The passive master lent his hand  
To the vast soul that o'er him planned.

(fade Cavazzoni)

- a18) *Same, Captive III, detail of head*

- 18) *Same, Captive II (Atlas), Accademia, Florence (CGB '86)*

Andrea Gabrielli:

Music: Andrea Gabrielli, c. 1550(?), Canzona, near close, Period TE 1133, Side 5

He builded better than he knew;  
The conscious stone to beauty grew.

And we should not forget that this last line is suggested by the technique Michelangelo followed in his carving, and which he has touched on in various sonnets:

Non ha l'ottimo artista alcun concetto  
Ch' un marmo solo in sè non circonscriva:

Where is the shape of the best artist's dream?  
It is sleeping somewhere in the uncut stone;  
And the task of the hand that serves the brain  
Is to strike off the excess and free the form. (CGB)

(end Gabrielli)

The attempt to reveal, in the first of our modes, Michelangelo as person has veered to the fourth, Michelangelo as agent of world-spirit —

19) *Michelangelo, c. 1524-26, Vestibule of Biblioteca Laurenziana, Florence*

what even in architecture buckled the articulations of Renaissance, turning this vestibule of the Laurentian Library — its curved and balustraded stairs spilling into a vertical space of thrustback columns, pilasters, blind windows, and broken pediments ("the limbs of architecture," Michelangelo wrote, "are derived from the limbs of man") — into as radical a point of departure,

20) *Michelangelo, 1526-33, Double: Tombs of [A] right: Lorenzo and [B] left: Giuliano, Medici Chapel, S. Lorenzo, Florence*

as in sculpture the archetypal polarity of the Medici Tombs: Lorenzo, pensive thinker (right), with twilight Morning and Evening; against active Giuliano (left), with the extremes of Night and Day.

In recorded music, the first fruit of such tensile ingathering is in Ortiz's Ricercada Quinta, published in Rome, 1553, as performed on Anthologie Sonore by Boomkamp and Bodky.

Music: Ortiz, pub.1553, Ricercada Quinta, Anthologie Sonore 40

- 20a) *Same, Tomb of Lorenzo, A of 20*  
 20b) *Same, Tomb of Giuliano, B of 20*  
 For 2nd 19) *Michelangelo, Double: [A] Lorenzo and [B] Giuliano dei Medici*  
*(video doubles full-length figures; slide show, half-length)*  
 2nd 19a) *Same, Double: details of heads (order reversed)*  
 a2nd 20) *Same, Dawn, from Lorenzo Tomb (slide show, colored; video, B&W)*  
 For 2nd 20) *Same, Double: Twilight and Dawn, from Lorenzo Tomb*  
 21) *Same, Night, from Giuliano Tomb*  
 22) *Same, Day from Giuliano Tomb*  
 23) *Same, detail, shoulder and head of Day* (end Ortiz)

Though even in this tortional Day, the conjuring of Michelangelo as world-spirit must assume historical modes for its operation: the tragic embodiment of Renaissance, within the God-projective daring of the Christian West.

That the West has a character is as easy to feel as it is hard to formulate.

- 24) *Triple: [A] Greek (Ægina), 480 B.C., Bronze warrior's head, Acropolis Museum, Athens; [B] Greek, c. 350 B.C., the so-called Mausolus from Halicarnasus, detail, British Museum, London; and [C] Roman 1st cent. A.D., Male Portrait, Palazzo Capitolino, Rome*

When we look at the human image as it records itself in art, it is clear that Greek sculpture in its early phases (left) was essentially free of introspective personality; and that when, in the Alexandrian period, introspection appears (center, c. 350 B.C. "Mausolus") it is as a weakness, a sensuous yearning and nostalgia — darkening, after the crisis of Republican Rome (right) to a weighty obligation, a stoical cause of gloom.

- 25) *Double: [A] Attic, c. 600 B.C., Dipylon Head, National Museum, Athens; and [B] German, c. 1060, Bronze Crucifix, Head of Christ, Abbey Church, Essen-Werden*

In Western civilization on the other hand (right), some kind of subjective personality is present from the first, and manifests itself throughout as a phenomenon of power

(Werden Christ, 11th century). Whereas an Archaic Greek Kouros (left), similar in stylized abstraction, is clean of any such inwardness.

26) *French Gothic, c. 1210, Head of Samuel, from N. Portal, Chartres; + V detail*

This sense of the private soul as a creative energy, as something positive and divine, runs from the Romanesque origins to our own day. Every style-study must unite and differentiate. Within the West as a whole, we move from the sacerdotal Gothic (Chartres about 1210, Samuel — in music, Perotin);

Music: Perotin, c. 1200, from Beata Viscera, "O mira novitas," (Tinayre) Lumen 32011 (fade)

27) *Leonardo da Vinci, c. 1512, Self-Portrait, red chalk, Biblioteca Reale, Turin; + V detail*

through the humanistic Renaissance (1512, Leonardo, Self — in music, Festa);

Music: C. Festa, 1514, from Lament for Anne of Brittany (adapted for Maximilian, 1519, by Senfl) ARCHIV 3223 (close)

28) *Rembrandt, 1660, Self at Easel, Louvre, Paris; + V detail*

the darker introspection of the Great Baroque (c. 1660, Rembrandt, Self — in music, Schütz);

Music: H. Schütz, c. 1645, from the Symphonia, from the Seven Words ARCHIV 198408 (close)

29) *P.O. Runge, 1804-05, Crayon Self Portrait, Kunsthalle, Hamburg; + V detail*

the Romantic liberation of intuitive ego (1804, Runge, Self — in music, Beethoven);

Music: Beethoven, 1808, Pastoral Symphony, opening of 2nd Movement, (Walter) Odyssey Y33924 (fade)

30) *Van Gogh, 1888, Self, Fogg Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts; + V detail*

to the Modern immolation of that ego in an act of triumphant despair (about 1890, Van Gogh — with Debussy in music).

Music: Debussy, 1893, String Quartet, from the 2nd Movement, Nonesuch M-1007 (fade)

31) *Attic, c. 480 B.C., The Blond Boy, Acropolis Museum, Athens*

Yet beside the Greek idealized art-man (Athens, about 480 BC), so far from celebrating the confessions of soul-in-flesh, these shadings grow indistinct —

32) *Albrecht Dürer, c. 1500, Self in fur-collared robe, Alte Pinakothek, München; + V detail*

32a) *Dürer, c. 1510, Nude. Self as study for Christ at the Column, Schloss Museum, Weimar*

the Western man blends into one dynamic image: focus of the human paradox — from Abelard and Dante through Villon, Quixote, and Hamlet to Faust — of the tragic waste and glory of personality. This image (Dürer, Self) is in some suggestive way also a Christ-image and, painful as the recognition may be, an image of Lucifer as well. It has the stamp of the incarnate god upon it, of a god who has immersed himself in body and time, and not so much to his Platonic loss as to his dæmonic gain. For that seems to be the archetype to which it is related, and without which it could hardly have converted the pagan weakness, Augustine's "abyss of conscious personality," into such a well of self-affirming power.

33) *Michelangelo, c. 1513, The Dying Captive, Louvre, Paris (CGB '80)*

33a) *Same, from his right (CGB '80)*

33b) *Same, upper detail*

33c) *Same, detail of face*

Music: Juan Vasquez, pub. 1560, *Lagrimas de mi consuelo*, 1st version, MMG-1103

For Michelangelo, he portrays such secret depths by every curve of shaped stone — here from the Julius tomb, one of the two captives actually finished, about 1513. So too the music of expressive passion, which Josquin called *Musica reservata*, spread from his Absalon, through the always more chromatic daring of Willaert and de Rore, to all parts of Europe — as, around midcentury, to the Spain of this Vasquez "*Lagrimas*." Here sound and image voice what Santayana has translated from Michelangelo — in four lines the romantic flaw and glory of the Incarnate West:

Ravished by all that to the eyes is fair,  
 Yet hungry for the joys that truly bless,  
 My soul can find no stair  
 To mount to heaven, save earth's loveliness.

Gli occhi mie', vaghi delle cose belle,  
 E l'alma insieme della suo salute  
 Non anno altra virtute  
 C'ascende al ciel che mirar tutte quelle...

(close Vasquez)

34) *Roman Christian, c. 325 ff., Rotunda of Santa Costanza, Rome (CGB '86 variant, so far not used)*

Music: Gregorian (Apostolic?), Mass XII, close of Gloria, (Solesmes) London 5633

In architecture, the round-arched Roman-Christian temple (here Santa Costanza, 325 and after), which retained — with Gregorian — a certain classical measure and harmonious ease, (end Gloria)

35) *French Gothic, 1212-41, South Aisle of Rheims (CGB '59)*

Music: Perotin, c. 1210, from 3-voice *Diffusa est gratia: "benedixit te Deus,"* (Cape) AS 65 b (78)

gives way to the skyward reachings of Gothic (Aisle of Rheims) — the bare chords, driving triple rhythm, and, lilted through that sternness, the mystery of Perotin's organum. So Aristotle's ethic of the mean opens to an ethic of charity, which does not aim at the reasonable, but at the infinite extreme.

36) *French Gothic, 1195-1218 ff., Choir buttressing of Bourges Cathedral (CGB '84); so video, from V36; while slide show uses a wider Sam Adams' view*

Already in the Medieval town and under the tutelage of self- and-world-denial, the Western giant is stirring. Yet how lean and stripped the timeless aspiration of Gothic buttressing, this Bourges — severe as the *Dies Irae*:

Tuba mirum spargens sonum...

The great horn thundering doom

Through the shires of the tomb  
Gathers all before the throne. (CGB)

37) *Same, Bourges, interior, windows (CGB '84)*

How spaceless the vision of liturgical lights in dark, inner silence in the functional shell  
— mystical as the *Dies Irae*:

Fount of pity, be saviour to me...

Salva me, fons pietatis.

(close Perotin)

38) *Michelangelo and others, 1550-64 ff., St. Peter's, from the Janicula, Rome (CGB '86)*

Music: Victoria, c. 1590(?), Salve Regina, close, (2 choirs, etc.) Tel. AWT  
6 3537

In contrast, the apse of St. Peter's, which Michelangelo finished late in life, with the crossing and projected dome, encloses, in a nobly reasoned display of outward mass,

39) *Same, St. Peter's interior, Nave to Choir, especially vault, Rome*

a tragic solemnity of space — let the mind strip off the incrustations of Bernini's Baroque.

From Gothic to this, from Perotin to Papal polyphony (here Victoria), advances —  
as from Dante to Milton — Michelangelo's Donation to the sacred, the physics of  
volitional power. (close Victoria)

So as Gothic ripens to Renaissance and Renaissance flexes to Baroque,

40) *Double: [A] Græco-Roman (Pompeii) 1st cent. A.D., Idyllic Landscape, National Museum, Naples; and [B] Rubens, c. 1624, Het Onwaer (The Storm), Franz Konig, Haarlem*

40a) *Again, Pompeiiian Landscape, A of 40*

40b) *Again, Rubens' Storm, B of 40*

that surf breaks always more wildly on the shore of the world. Even mathematics begins its progress from the Apollonian forms of Euclid to the Dionysiac frenzy of the infinite and infinitesimal, the calculus of motion.

For all this, the landscape (though Michelangelo neglected it), gives a visual sign, densening through centuries of withdrawal and return from the Pompeiian soft dreamworld — Virgilian and Ausonian realm of the shades, "sola sub nocte per umbram... et... silva in magna" — to Ruben's vortex (which is equally that of the burned heretic Bruno) of god-irradiated matter in illimitable space. From the first heaving up of the spires in the 12th-century towns, to the blasting off of moon rockets today, a perilous chemistry unfolds in the crucible of the Western world.

41) *N.E. France, early 10th cent., St Matthew, from MS 4, Walters Gallery, Baltimore*

It is kindled in Celtic and Germanic Christendom. In this Saint Matthew from the darkest century, the 10th, mystical force, denying the earth fabric it would increasingly transform, burns in the hieratic containment of creed.

But with every tick of the style-clock,

- 42) *Rhine-German, end of 13th cent., Prophet left of Main Portal, Strassburger Minster*

that power, entering the world, assumes more spatial and human validity. Consider the type of bearded and prophetic age: 1300, Strasbourg — a lean Gothic energy, bearing still the enigmatic stamp of timelessness;

- 43) *Double: [A] Donatello, 1412-15, St. John the Evangelist, detail of head, Duomo Museo, Florence; and [B] Michelangelo, 1513-16, Moses, detail of head, St. Pietro in Vincoli, Rome*

1412 (left): Donatello's Evangelist: a calm filling-out of human command; 1515 (right): Michelangelo's Moses: giant assertion controlled by incredible will.

In this pair, the maturation of Western spirit peaks in the harmonious assertion of Renaissance and Florence.

- a44) *Benci di Cione, etc., 1376-82, Loggia dei Signori (dei Lanzi), Florence*  
 44) *Same, Loggia dei Lanzi, another view (CGB '86)*

Music: Gherardello, c.1340(?), from a Gloria (from 3rd *Qui Tollis*, without Amen) MHS 3634

Let this 14th-century Loggia, later named for Cosimo's Lancers, guide us, in that peerless city, to the Piazza of the Signoria, where Michelangelo's David would take its place. Exiled from the Tuscan center, Dante (whom Michelangelo would memorize) had brought Aquinas' Medieval synthesis to a Gothic peak, at the same time seeding it with the radical individuality of Renaissance — thereby initiating the bold transitions of Petrarch and Boccaccio, of Ars Nova music (here Gherardellus), as of this columned hall.

- 45) *Double: [A] Michelangelo, 1489, sketch, after Giotto's Assumption of St. John, Louvre, Paris; and [B] Giotto, 1325-30, same detail from that*

*Assumption, Santa Croce, Florence [video then separates the sketch and a larger section of the Giotto fresco]*

45a) *Giotto, Assumption of St. John, whole of B of 45*

In Florence art had been spearheaded for two hundred years, through Vasari's three periods: the first, "a new beginning." Among Michelangelo's earliest sketches is a copy of the great-robed figures on the left in this Ascent of John the Evangelist, from Giotto's last phase, 1325 to '30, that Dante-time, when music also advanced from the Old art to the New.

(end Gherardello)

46) *Double: [A] Masaccio, 1425-26, The Tribute Money, detail, Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence; and [B] Michelangelo, c. 1493. sketch from same, Graph. Samml., München*

46a) *Again, Masaccio, The Tribute Money, whole*

Music: Dufay, 1453-4, Lament for Constantinople, last third, (Munrow)  
Seraphim Sic 6092

In another sketch the 15-year-old Michelangelo studies this fresco by Masaccio, formative genius of Vasari's second period — his massive 1425 figures accompanied by the full humanity of Dufay's triadic chords.

47) *Masaccio, 1426, Crucifixion, Museo di Capodimonte, Naples*

47a) *Simone Martini, 1340-50, Double: two Magdalens [A] from Deposition, Museum, Antwerp; and [B] from Entombment, Berlin-Dahlem Galerie, Berlin*

Yet Masaccio himself reveals why Vasari, tracing the techniques of representation, would call the 15th century transitional. His Crucifixion projects on the gold ground of Byzantine an exploratory Renaissance nude, a voluminous mourning Mary, and a leaner Fra Angelico John, with a Magdalen whose red-robed Gothic cry roots in the symbolic space of Simone Martini, Duccio, and beyond.

(close Dufay)

48) *Caravaggio, 1602-04, Deposition, Vatican, Rome*

Music: P.F. Cavalli, 1656, Messa Concertata, from Crucifixus, SAWT 641931

If the 1600 goal was the formulated rhetoric and muscled volition of embodied Baroque (Caravaggio and Cavalli), (close Cavalli)

a49) *Michelangelo, 1504, Tondo, Holy Family, Uffizi, Florence (CGB '59)*

49) *Same, Holy Family, upper half only (CGB '59)*

49a) *Same, Holy Family, closer detail*

we recognize, as by touch, the importance of Michelangelo's 1504 fulfillment of Vasari's Third Style: "art has achieved everything possible in the imitation of nature." In this Florentine tondo, the Patriarchs who wait behind the time-wall of Redemption become nude athletic Greeks. Here the creative energies of the West, sacred or profane, determinedly shift their locus from the timeless into time. So Josquin des Pres' "*Et Incarnatus est*" — "and was made flesh."

Music: Josquin des Pres, 1515-20(?), Missa Pange Lingua, from the Credo: "*Et Incarnatus est*," Decca DL 9410 (close Josquin)

50) *Strasbourg, c. 1300, Prince of this World and Foolish Virgin, full length, W. Portal of Cathedral; + V half length*

50a) *Same, detail of Prince*

50b) *Same, double: faces of [A] Prince and [B] Foolish Virgin*

Music: English, 13th cent., from Estampie, (Binkley) SAWT 9432

No doubt the joy of earth is ubiquitous, but in medieval dance, as in the Strassburg portal, where the Tempter Prince offers the smiling foolish Virgins a worm-eaten apple, joy floats, an irresponsible vanity, in the ascetic containment of creed. So Aucassin in the 13th-century romance, when the priest tells him to give up Nicolette and be saved, says it is only the old priests and the poor and crippled who grovel at the altars and in the old crypts, who go into Paradise.

But into hell will I go, for into Hell go the fair clerks and knights killed in the tourneys and in the great wars... and the gentle ladies who have two or three lovers along with their noble lords. And there go the gold and silver, the furs and cloth of vair, and the harpers and rulers of this world. With these let me go, if only I have Nicolette, my sweet friend whom I love so well.

(end Estampie)

- a51) *Botticelli, 1478, Spring, detail of three Graces, Uffizi, Florence; video, upper detail only*  
 51) *Same, Spring, whole*  
 51a) *Same, Spring, right detail*

Music: Isaac, c. 1485(?), *Fortuna Desperata*, 3 viols, opening, Allegro 14

If the early Renaissance, under classical example, witnesses a blossoming of such joy in life, it remains — as in the Ballades of Isaac — suspended in the old faith, where the loves of earth hardly claim validity. Botticelli's poignant realm of *The Spring* (1478) lures from that Gothic tapestry of line, as ideal, as frail, as Poliziano:

Love to the kingdom of his mother came,  
 Where light battalions of his brothers wing,  
 There the smiling Graces hold their reign,  
 And beauty weaves flower-garlands for her crown;  
 There lusty Zephyrus, pursuing Flora,  
 Wheels and sets green fronds and herbs aflower.

(La Giostra, 67):

(CGB)

(fade Isaac)

- 52) *Michelangelo, 1497, Bacchus, full length, Bargello, Florence (video works from variant V52); + V detail, half length*  
 52a) *Same, Bacchus, detail of Faun*

Music: Dalza, c. 1500, from *Piva*, lute duet, (Rooley and Tyler),  
 L'Oiseau-Lyre SOL 325

even Michelangelo's *Bacchus* (1497), the paganly drunken work of his youth (like all the clear acumen of Machiavelli's politics or the voluptuous diversions of the Papal or other courts — Dalza's lute dances), exists under a cleavage of values, as the great heroes and lovers burn in Dante's Hell. This ambivalence has its purest expres-

sion in the circle of Lorenzo de' Medici (died 1492), where Michelangelo was trained. One pole is asserted by Lorenzo's carnival poems:

The beauty of youth is a brief flower  
That is always fading away;  
Love and be happy while you may,  
For tomorrow is not sure. (CGB)

Chi vuol esser lieto sia:  
Di doman non c'è certezza.

(end Dalza)

- 53) *Botticelli, 1500-10, Pieta, Pinakothek, München (CGB '59); + V detail*  
53a) *Same, Pieta, lower right detail (CGB '59)*

Music: Josquin des Pres, c. 1490(?), from the Stabat Mater: "Eia mater," AS 73

The counter-pole is announced by the reformer, Savonarola. It was his call to penitence (sharp as Josquin's Stabat Mater) that broke Botticelli, wrenching him from the orange groves of Venus to the anguish of the late Pietas and then, it appears, out of art altogether. For already in the Florence of Michelangelo's youth, the opposition that would dominate the following centuries — Renaissance and Reformation; Cavalier, Puritan — had come to its sharpest focus. Inflamed by the carnival processions and songs, Savonarola invented a sacred inversion of that frenzy, a religious carnival with bonfires of pagan art and vanities and the chanting of popular tunes transformed to pious hymns. It was a movement of heretical reform, anticipating the Calvinist reversal of Renaissance and, like the Calvinist,

- 54) *Same, Pieta, lower left detail, feet (copy of CGB '59; see Pascal 28)*

inevitably democratic: it is in the rough measures of the common crowd that Savonarola's exhortations come to us:

O anima cecata — che non trovi riposo,  
tu se' da Dio odiata — pel tuo viver vitioso:

Blind soul of man — you have lost your peace,  
 Under curse and ban — for your godless ways;  
 From Christ your spouse — your soul has strayed,

- 55) *H. Bosch, 1504, Hell fragment detail, Pinakothek, München (CGB '59)*  
 55a) *Schongauer, c. 1480-90, engraving, The Temptation of St. Anthony, Public Library, New York City*

Not asked his aid — let mercy go.  
                   Woe, woe, woe,  
 God's fear you do not know. (CGB)

There are parallel stirrings all over Europe, as in the hell-fury of the visions of Bosch.

As for Michelangelo, he was twenty-three when Savonarola was burned; his first painting, Vasari says, had been a copy of Schongauer's Gothic Temptation of St. Anthony; and he was so possessed by the penitential voice, that it echoed through his later life, sounding again and again in his art and poetry. (end Stabat Mater)

- 56) *Michelangelo, 1536-41, Charon, detail, Last Judgment, Sistine Chapel, Vatican; + V detail*  
 56a) *Same, Double: [A] Death and [B] Hell details*

It was the basic polarity, not only of the sixteenth century, but of the Christian West, each pole, as always, penetrating and empowering the other — Promethean energy and pride, and the self-abasing surrender to holy love and fear. Certainly it was the cross of Michelangelo; his personality and works are strung in that tension.

Music: Morales, c. 1540(?), from Emendemus in melius: "Attende,"  
 (Turner) ARCHIV S-2533 321

So in his age and the dark beginning of the Counter Reformation, (when the implorations of Josquin had densened to Morales), Michelangelo returned to the Sistine Chapel to paint his Last Judgment, reviving with more personal violence the old powers of Death and Hell. The ambivalence under which this painting

- 57) *Same, Judgment, whole*  
 57a) *Same, The Saved, rising, far left*  
 57b) *Same, upper spread of the whole Judgment; + V detail of nude figures*

was conceived is illustrated by the problem of the nude figures. Aretino, inventor of the newspaper and a writer of malign sway, sometimes called "the scourge of princes" and later "the poison flower of the Renaissance," had written Michelangelo an open letter of fawning praise (1537, telling him how to paint the picture, and asking for a sketch. Michelangelo never replied. After a series of such affronts, Aretino began a campaign against the painting (letter of November 1545) as lewd and heretical, belonging in a *bagnio* or stew rather than in the Papal Chapel. This from a man who boasted of living in a Venetian stew which his own sister managed, and whose bawdy dialogues satirize the stews of the Renaissance Church. For Aretino exhibited the worst Catholic cleavage of the time, an opportunistic hovering between pagan voluptuousness and hypocritical religiosity. It was as if he had formed himself in the Borgia image.

58) *Same, detail of Christ and Mary; first, video return to upper spread*

While Michelangelo, like the Protestant he was accused of being, followed the more dangerous path, determinedly unifying the poles of Renaissance and Medieval, body and spirit. (end Morales)

59) *Same, Judgment, details of britches, front and back*

59a) *Same, closer detail, front (video adds the lower section of 59)*

The result of Aretino's campaign was that Michelangelo's painting was saved from destruction only by being "purified". A painter thereafter called the "britches tailor" was hired to daub in robes here and there, concealing certain portions of the figures, one might say in the nick of time. But the conflict which led to this result was not initiated by Aretino. It had begun before in Michelangelo himself; it had its roots in his art and soul. He had been in his youth an admirer both of Lorenzo il Magnifico and of Savonarola.

60) *Same, Hell, detail with Minos; + V detail of V60a*

When he first came to Rome he had written an attack on papal corruption under Julius II — as he would paint, in the Judgment, Pope Paul III's master of ceremonies as Minos, Hell-Guardian, wrapped in his own snake-tail.

Here helms and swords are made of chalices:  
The blood of Christ is sold so much a quart:  
His cross and thorns are spears and shields; and short

Will be the time before his patience cease...  
 Who wears the robe is my Medusa still...  
 The holy banner only leads to ill. (after Symonds)

- 61) *Michelangelo, 1530 (copy), Leda and the Swan, National Gallery, London*  
 61a) *Daniele da Volterra, 1565, Bronze bust of Michelangelo, detail, Bargello, Florence*

Music: Willaert, pub. 1545, from *Dulces Exuviae*: Dido's Lament, Odyssey 32 16 0202

At that time Michelangelo was celebrating Pope Julius in the projected Tomb, as he was to celebrate the Medici in Florence. The very man moved to the religious passion of the late poems, painted the destroyed Leda and the Swan (1530), preserved in copies — one of the most erotic works of the age; though all his works (with Willaert's setting of Dido's love-death), hymn the Eros of touch (end Willaert): "No stair to heaven but earth's loveliness".

So Michelangelo had known the moral cleavage, had subsumed it and laboured to unite the severed realms. When hypocrisy in the guise of virtue accused him of Lutheran obscenities, he was impelled forward,

- 62) *Michelangelo, Judgment, Flayed skin, detail, Sistine Chapel, Vatican*

as if leaping the centuries, toward some Blakean reversal of values. On the skin which is held by the flayed Saint Bartholomew, Michelangelo has painted what is evidently a weirdly tormented portrait of himself.

- 63) *Same, detail of St. Bartholomew holding flayed skin (with video variant, V63)*  
 63a) *Titian, 1545, Portrait of Aretino, detail, Pitti Palace, Florence*  
 63b) *Again 62, Flayed Skin*

At the same time the gross and somehow sinister figure of the saint, crouched on the hell side of Christ, vindictively raising the knife — like one who has stolen into these circles of religion and judgment, or, more terribly, belongs there — has been given the sensual and violent features, the gross lips and beard (recognizable from Titian's portrait), of Michelangelo's own metaphorical flayer, Aretino. As an early critic of the painting said: (M. Pitti, 1545) "There are a thousand heresies, signally St. Bartholomew's beardless skin."

Thus the artist breaks with the embodied institutions of the faith on which, in his old age, he increasingly depends.

*a64) Donatello, double: [A] 1427-35, Jeremiah, detail, (CGB '86); and [B] 1455, Magdalen, detail (CGB 86); both: Duomo Museo, Florence (video uses two single slides)*

*For 1st 64) Michelangelo, c. 1550-56, Pieta, Duomo Museo, Firenze; (CGB '86; or V64, old black & white)*

The sequence of pride and humility not only characterizes the historical movement of Renaissance and Counter-reformation. It had been the central experience of the Middle Ages: the lusty defiance of Aucassin, who would no doubt before his death come grovelling in rags to those very crypts he had despised. That was the life-cycle of the Archpoet, Abelard, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Chaucer, Donatello, Botticelli, perhaps even of Leonardo. But in Michelangelo it becomes increasingly evident that the old return to faith is in fact a new departure, springing from the titanic will. In him it is not so much a change of direction as a fulfillment of the individual and creative quest. He had always been dissatisfied with the realized. Now he presses beyond the embodiments of art (Florentine Pieta, 1550-56) —

*a65) Double: [A] G. Pisano, 1301, Mystical Christ, from Pulpit, Pistoia; and [B] Giotto, 1325-30, St. John's Ascension, detail, Santa Croce, Florence*

*1st 65) Michelangelo, c. 1550-56, Florentine Pieta, upper half: Nicodemus, Christ, and Mary (CGB '86) [the slide show having inserted b65, another view of the whole]*

embodiments advanced about 1300 by Giovanni Pisano and Giotto, when Dante, looking down from the sphere of stars, had seen the earth "such that he smiled at its vile semblance."

e vidi questo globo  
Tal, ch'io sorrisi del suo vil sembiante...

Chaucer had followed in the death of Troilus:

And down from thennes faste he gan avyse  
This litel spot of erthe, that with the se  
Embraced is, and fully gan despise

This wrecched world, and held al vanite  
 To respect of the pleyn felicite  
 That is in hevene above.

Such is the Gothic ground of acceptance. But when Michelangelo makes it the theme of his last poems: "Teach me to hate this world so little worth," the pulse has changed. Some Renaissance imperative of conscious person and ennobled flesh has deepened the struggle. Like the fall to humility of Lear, so mighty, so passionately arched against its own surrender, Michelangelo's Christian yielding becomes the immolation of heightened pride. This is written in the late poems, as in the last self-portrait, Michelangelo as Nicodemus, brooding over the dead Christ.

*For 1st 66) Same, Nicodemus, detail of face, as Self-portrait (CGB '86)*

Io parto, a mano a mano  
 Crescemi ognor più l'ombra, e'l sol vien manco,  
 En son presso al cadere, infermo e stanco.  
 I pass now, day to day,  
 Each day augment to dark, and the sun grows cold;  
 I hover on to the fall, infirm and old. (CGB)

*For 2nd 65) Florentine Pieta, looking up, from the statue's left side (CGB '84)*

In this tensile darkening so personally his own, Michelangelo was the profoundest resonator of Counter-Reformation experience — his the shade and burden of that tragic mid-century.

*For 2nd 64) Same, upper two thirds, black & white*

Music: Gombert, pub. 1539, from *Confitemini Domino*, (Tinayre) Lumen 32021

Did God born and crucified point into the world or out of it? Would our mortal flesh, by that Incarnate archetype for the West, be consumed or glorified? Was the Kingdom of God within us or beyond? If that was always the stretch of Christianity — how heightened after 1200 by Joachim's Coming of the Spirit in time; how magnified after 1500 by a groundswell of world and body, at once affirmed and denied.

*3rd 65) Same, heads of Christ and Nicodemus, black & white*

In Michelangelo, against the sensuous mastery of represented passion, comes a violence of soul breaking with all representations of sense. In recorded music, nothing so affirms the tensile mastery as Tinayre's rendition of the *Confitemini* by Gombert, most exalted of post-Josquin polyphonists.

*2nd 66) Same, Nicodemus as Michelangelo, black & white detail (video: V2nd 66)*  
(end Gombert)

But is Gombert's weaving too smooth for the old Michelangelo?

*a67) Michelangelo, c. 1556, Palestrina Pieta, whole; video, see Va67 (CGB '48)*

*67) Same, upper half (CGB '48)*

*67a) Michelangelo c. 1499, Pieta, St. Peter's, Vatican (or V67a), whole*

*67b) Michelangelo, 1526-33, Tomb of Lorenzo dei Medici, head of Evening, San Lorenzo, Florence (or V67b, horizontal)*

Music: Vicentino, 1567(?), from *Heu mihi*: "Miserere," Bach Guild  
HM 34 SD

On the other side is the tonal defiance of the Chromaticists, of whom Vicentino by 1555 had composed motets and Lamentations entirely in the half-tone scale (not to mention his theoretical quarter tones). Here the expressive element itself becomes a gulf where the old Modes go down, while the major and minor keys "remain, despairing of the port." Who but Michelangelo could so have fused the antinomies?

(end Vicentino)

For him it was the time of the late unfinished Pietas: this, about 1556, formerly from Palestrina. As Vasari says:

his judgment was so exacting that nothing satisfied him. He finished few statues in his manhood, the completed ones having been done in his youth.

Of course Michelangelo's reasons for leaving works unfinished varied from case to case. But the larger significance remains — as with all vital drifts, emergent from the particular and accidental.

*68) Michelangelo, 1545-50, Crucifixion drawing, British Museum, London*

- 68a) *Same, 1550-55, another Crucifixion drawing, with Mary and John, Louvre, Paris; while video takes an upper detail of 68*
- 68b) *Again, Florentine Pieta, detail of Nicodemus, Christ, and Mary (B&W)*

The late drawings, perhaps, give the clearest sign of his break with the determinate. Here is no question of a recalcitrant material, forced abandonment, lack of funds. The artist might have rendered his vision with whatever finish it required. Yet even in so swift a medium, he preferred to hint by cloudy blurrings, at solemnities beyond expression.

Through the account of a French traveler, Blaise de Vigenere, we can visualize the old sculptor in the penurious drabness of his room, standing sleepless nights before the marble, a cardboard hat with a candle in it for light, using no models, measurements, or pointings, but breaking into the stone

- 69) *Michelangelo, c. 1556, Palestrina Pieta, whole (CGB '86)*
- 69a) *Michelangelo, 1550-56, Florentine Pieta, another view (CGB '84); while video repeats Palestrina Pieta, upper half (CGB '48) from slide 67*

from the front and sides, as if to reach for the enshrouded form. De Vigenere wrote:

I saw Michelangelo at work. He had passed his sixtieth year [he was actually seventy-five] and although he was not very strong, yet in a quarter of an hour he caused more splinters to fall from a very hard block of marble than three young masons in three or four times as long. No one can believe it who has not seen it with his own eyes. And he attacked the work with such energy and fire that I thought it would fly into pieces. With one blow he brought down fragments three or four fingers in breadth, and so exactly at the point, that if only a little more marble had fallen, he would have risked spoiling the whole.

And spoil it he frequently did, at least to his own judgment, chipping too deep or striking a flaw; then the work would be abandoned, one of many pregnant becomings, stone ruins testifying to a search for the ungraspable, more poignantly expressive than all the completed works others were so facile in.

- a70) *Michelangelo, 1550-56, close detail of Florentine Pieta, with chipped arm; while video shows such a detail from 670*
- 670) *Same, upper half, with same cracked arm (CGB '86); while video varies 686*

70) *Same, Florentine Pieta, whole, 1900 photograph*

Sometimes, more terribly, the sculptor would become the enraged Saturn devouring his children, as with the Florentine Pieta on which De Vigenere had probably seen him working, and which Michelangelo intended for his own tomb. It is Vasari who lets us reconstruct the scene of the violent old man, having come to hate this ripest but imperfectible work of his hand, raging over it in the dark room, breaking it with the mallet — the brooding face of Nicodemus sorrowing over the Christ, the artist's image of himself and his sorrow — yet stranger still, hinting at God the Father suffering over his world ("for it repenteth me that I have made them"), or as Lear would take it from Jehovah: "crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once that makes ingrateful man" — so the sculptor stands, the work in fragments before him, and as Vasari says, "would have smashed it to atoms, had not Antonio his servant asked for it." Thus it was turned over to a clever botcher, Tiberio Calcagni, who as a price for cementing it together tried to "finish" it, spoiled the figure of the Magdalen with polishing, and would have ruined it all except by good luck he caught the plague and died.

a71) *Again, Florentine Pieta, horizontal detail of a70, showing the damaged arm*

b71) *Same, Head of Nicodemus, side view*

71) *Michelangelo, 1555-64, Rondanini Pieta, Sforzesca, Milan; while video uses V71, from a B&W photograph*

71a) *Same, upper half of the statue, seen from the side; while video details the upper half of V71, just above*

V71b) *Same, side view, upper part, from whole side view (CGB '80; cf. NOW: The Rooted Future 128)*

71c) *Same, Rondanini Pieta, front view of the two heads*

Indeed, the universal process, of which we have made Michelangelo and his art paradigms, is not merely a building, but a destroying; the Promethean daring goes hand in hand with the Phætonian fall. And this returns us to the Western history of which Michelangelo was a part. For the concept of artist as protagonist of creative spirit is a product of the way of thought Michelangelo and his age initiated, of the Renaissance assertion of human power in an articulated world of time, space, and causality, and this assertion was to run its course through sundry debacles and somber spiritual returns, of which none is more deeply moving than the tragedy and transcendence of the late Michelangelo, in whom the youthful pride of the Renaissance David grows to the

brooding but noble mask of Nicodemus, and then abandons outward form in the dimensionless grief of the Rondanini Pieta (1550-64), this unfinished marble sabotaged and remade six days before the artist's death.

Against that twice-quoted line: "soul can only mount by the beauty of earth," comes the break of a final sonnet:

Not any mastery of paint or stone  
 Can ease the heart that sees how love divine  
 Spreads on the cross to gather us his arms. (CGB)

Nè pinger nè scolpir fia più che quieti  
 L' anima volta a quell' amor divino  
 Ch'aperse, a prender noi, 'n croce le braccia.

In music the chromatic shorelessness of Vicentino would climax in Gesualdo's Responsories, 1611.

Music: Gesualdo, 1611, "*Tristis est anima*," opening, (Craft) Columbia ML 5234

72) *El Greco, c. 1575-77, Pieta, Johnson Collection, Museum of Art, Philadelphia; + V detail*  
 (fade Gesualdo)

*For 2nd 71) Double: [A] Michelangelo, 1555-64, Rondanini Pieta, Milan; and [B] Cimabue, c. 1283, Crucifixion, Refectory, Santa Croce, Florence*

Here pride is so broken on the wheel of fate, that we are simultaneously thrown back to the Byzantine and Medieval spaceless image and forward to the post-Renaissance surrender

*For 2nd 72) Double: [A] Again 72, El Greco Pieta; and [B] Rembrandt or school, c. 1644, Christ at the Column, Walraf-Richartz Museum, Köln; slide show adds 2nd 72a, single of this B, Rembrandt's Christ at the Column*

and return — to this El Greco, or philosophically to Pascal — that whole current which, down to our own day, penetrates humanism and comes out on the other side. For the world's proudest civilization has perpetually humbled itself before the lean figure of self-sacrifice and earthly negation, the stripped Christ at the Column, for whom Rembrandt too would fall out with form and color.

73) *Michelangelo and others, c. 1550-90, St. Peter's Dome, interior*

And yet it is strange, the work to which Michelangelo turned with most intensity at the close of his life was most assertive — the construction of the dome of St. Peter's. Despite the opposition of enemies (or perhaps on that account) he would not give it up. As he said: "many people believe, as I do myself, that I have been placed at this post by God. I will not leave it..." Did the impersonality of the dome, which needed for its realization only to be engineered, lead the artist beyond that frustrating involvement in the image of man?

74) *Roman (Hadrian), 118-128 A.D., Pantheon, interior, Rome (CGB '86)*

He was obviously aware of the series of mystically directed domes, from the Pantheon, formed as Christianity opened its inner space in the soul of Rome,

75) *Byzantine (Justinian), 502-62, Hagia Sophia, interior with dome, Constantinople (CGB '77)*

through Hagia Sophia in 6th-century Constantinople,

76) *Brunelleschi, especially 1420-36, Santa Maria del Fiore, Dome and Chapels, Florence (CGB '84); slide show uses another view, showing the whole Dome*

to the proud Brunelleschi dome of the Florence of his youth. It is as if he sensed the symbolic values Yeats has expressed in his poem "Byzantium":

77) *Michelangelo, etc., c. 1550-90, St. Peter's Dome, as by moonlight, Vatican*

A starlit or a moonlit dome disdains  
All that man is,  
All mere complexities,  
The fury and the mire of human veins.

Was the demand of spirit which drew him to the dome, that ultimate vaunt and abstract music to the divine,

- a78) Michelangelo, 1555-64, Rondanini Pieta, Sforza Castle, Milan (CGB '80)*  
*V678) Same, from the side, upper half (CGB '80; detail of NOW: The Rooted Future 128)*  
*c78) Same, another view of the two faces; while video details from Vc78, an underexposed slide of the two figures (CGB '80)*  
*78) Same, side view, detail of heads (CGB '80)*

also fulfilled in the last broken carving of his age? The Rondanini Pieta leaps past art, sending up an incredible flash in its surrender. Here is the denial that reverses itself in human value, as when Lear's pride is crushed: "Come, let's away to prison. We two alone will sing like birds in the cage." This pity and transcendence has gone beyond the Medieval breaking of pride and its somber return to faith, just as Shakespeare was to go beyond that and beyond Renaissance tragedy. Did Michelangelo also win through into a new realm of reconciling tenderness? It is hard to know. Certainly he did not live in quite the time or place to make of that emergence a utopian romance. Shakespeare was the first to come far enough out of the Renaissance vortex to sing the brave new world of human love, wisdom, and power beyond. But Michelangelo has hinted at something in these fragments shored against his ruin.

*For 1st 79) Michelangelo, 1501-04, David, from his left, Accademia, Florence (CGB '86)*

Conversely, in the youthful David, from the time of his own pride and the last free pride of his city, Florence, he inevitably suggested the tension and debacle to follow, which was already laboring in his soul. That is what makes the David more than a well-wrought image of civic power. The whole Michelangelo is there, in that *tour de force* of his youth, just as the whole man is in the last fragmented work of his age.

*1st 80) Same, David, head, full face*

It is the strangely troubled face of the David that foreshadows the future, as the poignance of Botticelli invited Savonarola. If this is the Promethean giant, he bears with him the old Augustinian flaw and ground of reversal: "Even this testimony, that God humbles the proud."

*2nd 79) Same, David, front, knees to head (CGB '86)*

Humbles, and yet, to add heresy to Augustine — by that humbling translates them into gods. "Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia, the gods themselves throw incense." Yet why call it heresy? Had not Paul said: "Because the creature itself shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God"? And was not this the fire through which the classical Prometheus walked, and emerged: Dante, Michelangelo, Beethoven, Blake — avatars of Messianic flesh.

*2nd 80) Same, David, head and shoulders (CGB '86); to which slide show adds a closer detail of 1st 80, the David, full face; also digital*

Or, from the time of the David itself, Josquin's Hercules Mass:

Music: Josquin des Pres, c. 1499(?), close of Kyrie, Hercules Mass, AS 73