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Due to severe funding cuts, the *Rutgers Art Review* editors were forced to eliminate one article from this issue. Andrew S. Arbury's "Spanish Catafalques in the Golden Age" will appear in the next issue of the journal, Volume 12, 1991.

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Contents
Volume 11, 1990

ARTICLES

INTERVIEW

CONFERENCE PAPERS

Originally presented at the College Art Association Annual Conference, 1990

The Road to Thebes, A Consideration of Ingres's *Antiochus and Stratonice*[1]

Nora M. Heimann

In his artistic production, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres was passionately, almost obsessively, engaged with a small repertoire of given motifs.[2] One such favored theme in his oeuvre was *Antiochus and Stratonice*, a rather strange story from antiquity with a long pedigree in the arts. In his exhaustive source study, "'The Love of Antiochus with Faire Stratonica' in Art," Wolfgang Stechow described this subject as "one of the most excellent moral tales of world literature...a classical tale *par excellence*."[3] Yet, as the art historian H. Lemonnier wrote:

> It is necessary to acknowledge that this anecdote, repeated to repletion as edifying, is not. This young man, in love with his stepmother who had already born a child, this succession from son to father in the same bed...is something disagreeable, when one considers it.[4]

And indeed, the history of Antiochus and Stratonice (for apparently it was history and not legend) *is* rather disagreeable, when one pauses to actually consider the matter.

The story begins in ca. 300 B.C., when Seleucus Nicator I, King of Syria and formerly one of Alexander the Great's most successful generals, married Stratonice, the daughter of his enemy, Demetrius Poliorcetes. According to Plutarch (whose later, somewhat altered version of Valerius Maximus's original *recit* was copied by Ingres into his ninth *cahier*), Antiochus, Seleucus' son by a former wife, fell desperately in love with his stepmother, Stratonice. "Condemning himself for his inordinate desires;...[Antiochus] determined to seek a way of escape from his life and to destroy himself gradually by neglecting his person and abstaining from food, under the pretense of being ill."[5] The king, concerned for his son, called in the court physician,

[1]This paper was first presented in an abbreviated form at the Symposium on the History of Art, Frick Museum of Art, New York, Spring, 1989. My thanks go to Linda Nochlin, Norman Bryson, and Patricia Mainardi for their sound advice and unfailing assistance.

[2]In explanation of this thematic reiteration in his oeuvre, Ingres wrote of his proprietary commitment to his images: "Most of these subjects, which I love *because* of their subjects, seem to me to be worth the trouble to make them better, in repeating or retouching them," as quoted in John L. Connolly, "Ingres Studies: *Antiochus and Stratonice*, the Bather and Odalisque Themes" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1974), 28.

[3]Wolfgang Stechow, "'The Love of Antiochus with Faire Stratonica' in Art," *Art Bulletin* 27 (December 1945): 221.

[4]"Il faut bien reconnaître que cette anecdote, répétée à satiété comme édifiante, ne l'est guère. Ce jeune homme, amoureux d'une belle-mère qui a déjà mis au monde un enfant, cette succession du fils au père dans le même lit...a quelque chose de désagréable, lorsqu'on s'y arrête;" H. Lemonnier, "A propos de la 'Stratonice' d'Ingres," *La revue de l'art* 35 (January-June 1914): 82. (Author's translation from the French.)

[5]E.H. Warmington, gen. ed., *The Loeb Classical Library*, vol. 9: *Plutarch's Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 93.

Erasistratus, who observed the young man at his bedside. There he discerned that Antiochus's countenance appeared altered whenever Stratonice entered his patient's chambers. Reasoning that love was Antiochus's illness, Erasistratus convinced the king, through a clever ruse, to surrender his royal spouse, Stratonice, to the prince in order to save his life. In the end, Seleucus declared "Antiochus king of all Upper Asia, and Stratonice queen, the two being husband and wife."[6]

This ancient tale, of course, shares most of the same disquieting domestic elements of Sophocles's Theban drama; here, the role of Oedipus Rex is played by Antiochus who, without patricide (the crucial plot difference), succeeded his father both on his throne and in his marriage bed. Plutarch's romance—a tame version, without the murder and self-mutilation of Sophocles's tragedy—was a recurrent motif in Ingres's production in pencil and paint throughout his career. His extant drawings of the subject date from as early as 1801, the year of his Prix de Rome, to as late as 1860. On canvas, Ingres rendered the subject in 1825 (now lost), ca. 1834, 1840, 1860 (fig. 1), and 1866 (fig. 2), the year before his death. Attendant to these works, Ingres also made literally hundreds of related drawings and studies. In preparation for his 1840 version (now in Chantilly), for example, the artist made over three hundred studies, including fifty-five of Antiochus's arms alone.[7] Raymond Balze, Ingres's student and workshop assistant at the Académie de France in Rome, described his master's obsessive, impassioned work on the Chantilly *Stratonice* from 1834 to 1840:

> The emotion of Ingres was extreme. He wept from it. He recounted the subject many times while we worked on it, my brother and I....[8]

Ingres's affection for this particular (and peculiar) subject was evidenced as well in his devotion to the popular opera, *Stratonice, comédie héroique en un act et en vers*, which had opened in 1792 at the Opéra-comique in Nîce, where it remained in repertoire for over twenty-five years. Ingres owned a copy of the opera's score, composed by Etienne Mehul, and libretto, by François Hoffmann, which he took with him to Rome in 1806, when he embarked on his sojourn as a *pensionnaire* at the Académie. He kept this copy of the *Stratonice comédie* all his life and was often heard singing from it.[9] Ingres's fondness for the opera was shared by no less an illustrious figure than Napoleon I, who twice attended its performance in Nîce.[10] If Ingres was influenced by the Imperial sanction given to Mehul's operatic rendering of the theme, he may also have noticed that the subject was chosen by the Ecole des Beaux-Arts as the theme for the Prix de Rome in 1774 and 1807. Ingres's master, Jacques-Louis David, won this most prestigious competition in 1774; and his Prix de Rome canvas, according to

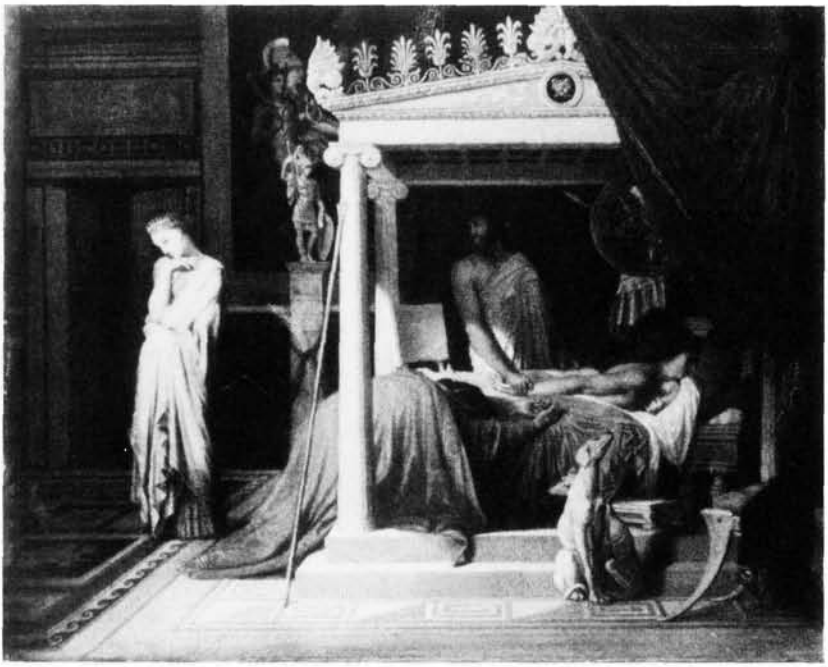
[6]Plutarch, 97.

[7]Henry Lapauze, *Ingres, sa vie & son oeuvre (1780-1867)* (Paris: Georges Petit, 1911), 356.

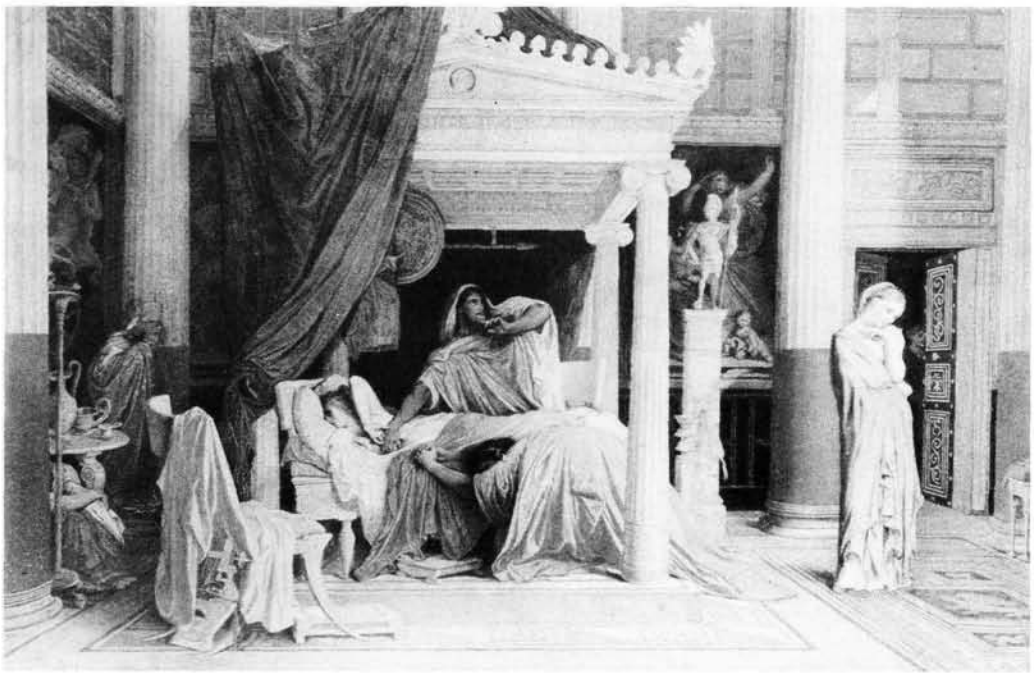
[8]As quoted in the exhibition catalogue, J.B. Speed Art Museum, *Ingres: In Pursuit of Perfection; The Art of J.-A.-D. Ingres* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 30.

[9]Norman Schlenoff, *Ingres: ses sources littéraires* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Frances, 1956), 244.

[10]Schlenoff has suggested that Ingres may have been at the Opéra-comique on the same evening as the Emperor in January 1806, when: "Napoleon 'exige des acteurs que *Stratonice*, dont plusiers scènes étaient jouées, soit recommencée, et il saisit avec avidité toutes les allusions que peut fournir cette pièce;'" Schlenoff, 243.



1. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Antiochus and Stratonice*, 1860, oil on paper affixed to canvas. Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art (photo: Philadelphia Museum of Art)



2. Ingres, *Antiochus and Stratonice*, 1886, oil, graphite, and watercolor on paper affixed to canvas, reworked in oil. Montpellier, Musée Fabre (photo: Musée Fabre)

Stechow, enjoyed "great success and engendered a considerable number of treatments of the subject."[11] During his long tenure in David's atelier from 1797 to 1806, Ingres may have seen his celebrated tableau of *Erasistratus Discovering the Cause of Antiochus's Disease* (fig. 3), for the painting remained in the possession of David until sometime before 1860, rather than entering the collection of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts immediately, as was standard procedure.[12]

In comparing David's *Antiochus* of 1774 with Ingres's many variants on the theme, it is the outstanding differences between the inaugural canvas of the master and the later works of his student which seem most striking. Any reference back to the precursor seems remarkably, almost wholly absent in Ingres's series. If David's early work had been made to suit "an eighteenth-century taste," as Friedlaender wrote, Ingres's was emphatically created for that of the nineteenth century in its handling, and above all in its use of accurate, antique detail based on excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii. Yet, however unlike David's *Antiochus* in composition and facture, in rendering his own version, Ingres may have derived a certain competitive inspiration from his predecessor. Indeed, there seems to be a strong element of one-upmanship at work in all of Ingres's overtly modern renditions of the story.

While David's palette retains the delicate, pastel blush of the soon-to-be-*retardataire* rococo of the 1770s—soft pink, creamy white, beige, and steel blue predominate, Ingres's successive works of the 1830s to the 1860s employ the brilliant, and then-contentious, colors of pompeiian red, forest green, and lustrous gold. Ingres's palette was controversial here, for it utilized the very hues which Jacques Hittorff and Quatremère de Quincy were propounding (in the face of initially vigorous official resistance in France) as the colors of ancient polychromy in classical temple interiors.

Published in France during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, the vividly colored temple reconstructions of Hittorff and Quatremère de Quincy were vehemently opposed by Visconti and others of the Institute, who staunchly insisted on the "purity" and pristine whiteness of marble walls in Antiquity. While the vigor with which this battle over the embellishment of classical architecture was fought in the early nineteenth century can hardly be imagined today, the vivacity (and cheek) of Ingres's use of color on the walls in *Antiochus and Stratonice* would have been regarded as bold and, in an oddly inverse sense, even modern.

Finally, in the brush work as well, Ingres availed himself of a "modern" mode of painting by administering a smooth, precise, enamel-like handling, referring at once to the pervasive, contemporary style of Neoclassicism (a style, in fact, developed and employed by David in his mature work) and the finesse of the eminently revered paintings of Raphael, while his master's fledgling effort had been rendered in a loose, painterly stroke, reminiscent of the rococo masters, such as Fragonard.

In his sources as well as his facture, Ingres's *Antiochus and Stratonice* was wholly *à la mode*. Although knowledge of antique sources was a fashionable erudition in the early nineteenth century, Ingres's command of the antique far exceeded that of his

[11]Stechow, 232.
[12]Schlenoff, 238.

3. Jacques-Louis David, *Erasistratus Discovering the Cause of Antiochus's Disease*, 1774, oil on canvas. Paris, Ecole Nationale Supérior des Beaux-Arts (photo: Ecole Nationale Supérior des Beaux-Arts)

master, David, in his *Antiochus and Stratonice*. As Lemonnier wrote, "The decor [of Ingres] is infinitely more varied, more archaeological;"[13] and at times, Ingres's work seems to flaunt this. Each of his versions displays one more ancient fresco (such as the Theseus motif in the background of his 1834 canvas), one additional reference to classical sculpture, furniture, or stelae (such as the inclusion of a canopied bed modeled after an original from the fourth century B.C.),[14] or one further adroit borrowing from Flaxman, Hamilton, or Hittorff.

From the mosaics on the floor and the frescoes on the wall to the baldacchino over the bed and lyre leaning against the chair, to the stance of Stratonice herself, in the pose of a vestal virgin or *Venus pudica*,[15] and the contorted figure of Antiochus, which recalls the "Sleeping Youth" of a Roman Arrentine pottery shard known to Ingres[16]—each object testifies to the artist's mastery of the antique. It is as if Ingres,

[13]"Le décore [d'Ingres] est infiniment plus varié, plus archéologique;" Lemonnier, 88. (Author's translation from the French.)

[14]The fourth-century original was discovered in the Media Crater and brought back to Rome in 1813; see Ilse Blum, "Ingres, Classicist, and Antiquarian," *Art in America* 24 (January 1936): 4.

[15]See Dorothy C. Shorr, "Mourning Virgin and St. John," *Art Bulletin* 22 (June 1940), 60-69.

[16]See Connolly, 8.

in confronting the authority of his predecessor, went behind David to claim for himself the very authority of Western tradition at its source.

By bowing not to his master but to antiquity itself, Ingres sought to establish his independence from *vital* paternal authority; whereas David was still very much alive, antiquity (despite Ingres's own words on the immortality of the ancients) had long since passed away and been buried, and was only just being exhumed. Ingres himself often admonished his students to appropriate judiciously from the past, in order to establish their own independence and authority. Thus, for example, he said:

> It is in rendering familiar the inventions of others that one learns to invent for one's self.... Our task is not to invent but to continue, and we have enough to do in using, with the example of the ancients, those innumerable types which nature constantly offers us, and in interpreting them in all sincerity of our heart and ennobling them with that firm and pure style without which no work has beauty.[17]

It was for himself, apparently, that Ingres completed his first drawings and sketches of *Antiochus and Stratonice* around 1801 and 1807, the year in which Guillemot, another of David's pupils, won the Prix de Rome with the subject, *La maladie d'Antiochus*. In 1834, however, Ingres's own interest in the story coincided with a commission for a painting of the same subject by Prince Ferdinand-Philippe, duc d'Orléans, as a pendant to the painting *The Assassination of the Duc de Guise*, already completed by Paul Delaroche. As Christopher Riopelle has convincingly stated, Ingres's painting of *Antiochus and Stratonice* (completed in 1840; now in Chantilly) was probably commissioned by the prince as a plea to his father, the citizen-king Louis-Philippe, for the succession of royal authority.[18]

As the eldest son of the constitutional monarch of France, Prince Ferdinand had no guarantee in the succession to the crown. In fact, according to Riopelle, the prince was barred from royal cabinet meetings, relegated to largely ceremonial functions, and often sent away from Paris on military maneuvers. Such were his father's effort to downplay the role of his possible heir at a moment when the issue of royal primogeniture was hotly contested in France. The duc d'Orléans's disgruntlement became so evidently ill-concealed that Daumier caricatured the prince, in April of 1834, as a sulking little tin soldier, who complains: "My father won't let me have any more glory."[19]

The history of Antiochus and Stratonice, a tale of passion in which the father, a monarch, assuages the deepest desires of his heir by transferring ownership of his wife and authority in the dominion of all the provinces of Upper Asia to his son, was well-suited to the petition for succession by the duc d'Orléans. In portraying this incident for the royal commission, Ingres carefully tailored the decorative accoutrement in his setting of Antiochus's bedchamber to make specific reference to the royal house of France, to further bolster the position of Prince Ferdinand.

On the rear wall of Antiochus's room, Ingres reproduced an ancient fresco from Herculaneum of *The Infant Herakles Strangling the Serpents*. Herakles, the mythological

[17]As quoted in Edward S. King, "Ingres as Classicist," *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* (1942): 92-93.
[18]Christopher Riopelle, "Antiochus and Stratonice," paper presented at the Symposium on the History of Art, Frick Museum of Art, New York, Spring, 1980.
[19]Riopelle.

son of Jupiter and the mortal Alcmena, was long associated with the kings of France; indeed, the French monarch was often called "the Gallic Herakles."[20] The *Infant* fresco illustrated the mythological hero's first great deed: while yet in his cradle, he strangled the two serpents sent to kill him by Juno, the jealous wife of Jupiter. This metaphor of precocious strength emphasized the power and ability of the French heir to overcome all obstacles in his assent to the throne.

On the side wall, to the right in his canvas, Ingres also replicated the Herculaneum wall painting, *The Apotheosis of Herakles*, in which the demi-mortal was carried to the heavens in a four-horse chariot after his tragic and premature death. In this vignette, Herakles was granted immortality and welcomed among the gods through the intercession of his father, the supreme deity of classical antiquity, with the concurrence of all the gods. The fresco's allusion to the condition of Ingres's patron is clear—the prince, like Herakles, would be heir to the crown only through the intercession of his father, the supreme ruler of France, with the assent of the parliament.

Before the central *Herakles* fresco, Ingres also placed a statue of Alexander the Great, elevated on a plinth, which is inscribed in Greek: "Alexander Son of Philippe of Macaedon." This inscription, as Connolly has observed, was "still another way the father-son relationship was emphasized" in the painting.[21] Tied to the base of the stand can be seen a palm frond, a great token of homage, and a tribute to Alexander the Great's deification within his own lifetime. This mark of godhood further symbolized a son's ability to surpass even the glories of his own father, King Philip of Macaedon (read King Louis-Philippe of France). Thus, in the fresco cycle and statuary of the 1840 *Antiochus and Stratonice*, Ingres interwove symbols of youthful heroism, deific conferment, and royal succession for his patron, creating a coherent statement, which propounded the beneficence of Prince Ferdinand's claim to the throne.

Eighteen years after the tragic, precipitous death of the duc d'Orléans, following a carriage accident in Neuilly in 1842, Ingres painted a second complete version of *Antiochus and Stratonice*, which was purchased after the painting's resolution by the comte Duchatel (Philadelphia Museum of Art). In this canvas of 1860, Ingres rearranged his fresco cycle, moving *The Apotheosis of Herakles* to a central station behind the statue of Alexander, and eliminating the secondary fresco. By emphasizing the scene of apotheosis, Ingres made a memorial allusion to the death of his most prominent patron. This reference was further expressed by the inclusion of two mournful greyhounds in the foreground. Ingres's prototypes for these (until now unidentified) funereal figures were two-fold. The mourning hound is a traditional figure of death in classical Greek and Roman stelae; and the greyhound, specifically, is an attribute of St. Ferdinand of Castile, the patron saint of Prince Ferdinand-Philippe. Around 1838, Ingres painted the deceased Prince as St. Ferdinand, in full gothic armor, for a commission by the royal family for the windows of their family chapel at Neuilly.[22]

Finally, Ingres's last painting of *Antiochus and Stratonice*, completed in 1866 (now in Montpellier; fig. 2), offered simply a reverse of his 1840 canvas (executed in water-

[20]Schlenoff, 30.

[21]Connolly, 18.

[22]The commission was never completed. In one of the renowned stained glass windows of Chartres Cathedral, St. Ferdinand of Castile was portrayed in full armor with his greyhound attribute. This gothic window may have inspired Ingres in his cartoon for the Neuilly chapel windows, and in his association between his former patron and these hounds.

color on paper, then mounted on canvas and reworked in oil).[23] In this perorate version, and in all its antecedents, Ingres included a mosaic floor design of a sphinx. Why did Ingres place this mythological beast, regarded by the ancient Greeks as a symbol of lust, a repository of arcane wisdom, or a guardian of destiny, on the floor at the feet of Stratonice?

The Queen, portrayed in the traditional stance of a classical vestal virgin, seems far too demure and withdrawn for the sphinx to be indicating lust or wisdom alone, on her part. (While Stratonice is undeniably the object of Antiochus's lust, her own feelings in the matter seem fully elided or repressed.) There is, however, precedent in Ingres's oeuvre for the sphinx's possible role as a guardian figure.[24] In a canvas of 1808, *Oedipus and the Sphinx* (Paris, Musée du Louvre), Ingres portrayed this mythological beast guarding the road to Thebes. Purchased by the duc d'Orléans in 1839, *Oedipus and the Sphinx* was Prince Ferdinand's first Ingres acquisition. Yet, if the sphinx was intended as a custodial figure, what kind of future was it symbolically guarding for this silent queen, who would soon be bartered between her husband and her son? Presaged, here, is Stratonice's ultimately "Oedipal" fate, to be twice-wed as stepmother and wife to Antiochus.

This Oedipal allusion, evoked by the seemingly quiescent figure of the sphinx, represents not only the destiny of the Queen, but also that of Oedipus Rex himself, whose youthful quest for truth and tragic, patricidal ascent to the throne began with his meeting the sphinx on the road to Thebes. Thus, Ingres's persistent inclusion of the sphinx in every version of *Antiochus and Stratonice* from 1808 to 1866 reiterates and emphasizes the inextricable relationship between the Oedipal drama and the tale of Antiochus the Prince.

Having established that Ingres interlaced the Oedipus myth with the tale of Antiochus and Stratonice, two questions almost inevitably arise: what did this theme signify to the artist, and why did he find it so compelling? Eric Fromm's discussion of the "Oedipus complex," which critically reinterprets Freud's original insights regarding this phenomenon, may shed some light on the matter. Assessing the complex as an issue of authority and not sexuality, Fromm wrote:

> It has to be understood not as a symbol of the incestuous tie between mother and son, but as a rebellion of the son against the authority of the father in the patriarchal family. An analysis of the whole Oedipus trilogy will show that the struggle against paternal authority is its main theme.[25]

[23]The artist, in fact, called this canvas his "second painting of Stratonice," ignoring three of his prior versions.

[24]For the image of the sphinx as a "guardian figure," which was popular in furniture design during the early nineteenth century, when the motif was often employed on the feet or finials of Empire-style furniture, especially canopied beds, see Connolly, 32.

[25]Fromm's analysis appears in Patrick Mullahy, *Oedipus Myth and Complex* (New York: Hermitage Press, Inc., 1948), 270-71. Jacques Lacan has also asserted that Freud's "Oedipus complex" was founded on the authority of paternal law. His discussions, however, focus more on the relationship between the "*masculine* Oedipal complex," with its attendant privileging of the phallus (arguably the symbol of power in Western phallocentric society) and castration anxiety, versus the "*feminine* Oedipus complex," which he calls simply "non-resolved" and "problematic." While Lacan's concept of the Oedipus complex is perhaps not wholly satisfactory (especially with regard to the psychodynamics of women), his theories are illuminating in regard to the fetishism of the p/Phallus, which is useful in examining the reification of masculine power structures in Ingres's work. For his argument, see "The Phallic Phase and the Subjective Import of the

With an understanding of the Oedipal tale as a metaphor for the ownership and transference of paternal authority, Ingres's reiterative engagement with the "Oedipal" narrative of *Antiochus and Stratonice* and, indeed, his own relationship with his precursors of aesthetic authority may be examined in a new light. Let us consider, again, the figure of Alexander the Great, which appears in all of Ingres's versions of *Antiochus and Stratonice*. Ingres originally composed a scene of the *Battle of Arbela* on the back wall, "before the columns now evident" were painted in his canvas of 1840.[26] This scene, derived from the Pompeiian mosaic of the same subject (uncovered in October 1833), depicted the battle of 331 B.C., in which Alexander the Great enjoyed one of his first great military victories by defeating Darius's Persian army.[27] Although this battle motif was ultimately removed from Ingres's first definitive canvas of *Antiochus and Stratonice*, its preliminary inclusion indicates that from the very genesis of his image, Ingres intended to link the figure of Alexander with this event in Syrian history.

In place of the *Arbela* fresco, Ingres substituted the sculptural figure of Alexander, set atop an ionic column in his canvas of ca. 1834 (now in Cleveland), and on an inscribed plinth with a memorial palm frond in all of his ensuing variants. As has been noted above, Ingres's inscription on the statuary plinth regarding the patrimony of Alexander (who far surpassed the military exploits of his father, a mighty general in his own right, in his conquest of Greece, the Persian Empire, and Egypt), served to celebrate one of the most spectacular successions of progeny over parent in history.

The theme of the succession of authority and ownership in relation to Alexander the Great was taken up first by Ingres around 1807 to 1808, when he executed a series of drawings on the theme of Alexander, Apelles, and Campaspe. According to Pliny, Apelles was the court painter to Alexander the Great during the second half of the fourth century, B.C. When commissioned to paint Alexander's mistress, Campaspe, Apelles fell so in love with his subject that Alexander beneficently gave him Campaspe in marriage.

This legendary bestowal of mistress from man to man, which replicates the exchange of spouse between Seleucus and Antiochus, was also taken up by Ingres's master, David, around 1814 to 1816 in his *Apelles Painting in the Presence of Alexander* (now in the Musée de Lille). This oil on panel was painted in the aftermath of the Emperor Napoleon's abdication in 1814. Having lived through seventeen months in prison after the fall of Robespierre in Thermidor of 1794, David understood clearly the precariousness of being on the losing side in a political battle; so he knew well his own peril after the downfall of Napoleon, for whom he had served as *premier peintre* since December of 1804.[28] For a time immediately after the abdication, David found refuge in Switzerland. He returned to Paris, however, in 1815, where he remained and worked on his *Apelles Painting* until the spring of 1816, when he was forced to flee his home again, never to return to France.

Completed during his final, dangerous months in Paris, David's image of Apelles painting the nude Campaspe under the watchful, though ultimately forgiving, gaze

Castration Complex," in Jacques Lacan and the *école freudienne*, *Feminine Sexuality*, ed. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, trans. Jacqueline Rose (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1982), 99-122.

[26]Lapauze, 356-57.

[27]Lapauze, 357.

[28]Anita Brookner, *Jacques-Louis David* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1980), 148.

of her lover (ruler of most of the known world) may have been intended as a plea by the artist for a political pardon from the new government in France. This metaphorical solicitation for forgiveness deployed the image of a great ruler forgiving his court painter's indiscretion, in falling in love with the wrong woman, as a precedent for the pardon of David's own "incorrect" political alliances in the past, as the preeminent court painter of the nineteenth century.

Thus, hidden within an erotic tale of antiquity was, perhaps, David's request for amnesty and renewed authority. In this manner, the figure of a woman bartered between men was called to function as a symbol of desire, not sexual desire alone but, more emphatically, the desire to possess authority. This is not to say that David's *Apelles* was devoid of sexual tension and display—there is a gendered body offered as the subject of our gaze and that of the two men within the painting; but it is the relationship between these men, as they both face the coyly acquiescent model, that seems most powerfully considered. Notice Alexander's hand on Apelles's neck, for example. This gesture oddly combines the quality of a parent/child reprimand (as if grabbing his miscreant painter by the scruff of the neck) and an intimate touch of fondness. Notice, as well, Alexander's upright stance and near-nude virility, in contrast to the limp, slump-shouldered posture of the swathed and seated artist. Their separable differences are as great as their united *différence* from the woman they will soon be exchanging.

Within the eroticism of the male gaze in *Apelles Painting in the Presence of Alexander* (even the title establishes the painting's masculine domain), it is the Phallus (the symbol of power in a male-dominated structure of authority, in Lacanian terms), which is being exchanged between Alexander and Apelles, not the phallus-less Other. Campaspe is only the manifest evidence of their exchange. She is, if you will, the signifier of the phallic succession between Alexander and Apelles, as Stratonice is between Seleucus and Antiochus (and as Jocasta is between Laius and Oedipus).

The association of the Oedipal myth and the legend of Apelles with the artist's own desire for a succession of authority assumes a similar, although more subtle and attenuated, pattern in Ingres's work than in David's *Apelles*. If the confluence of the symbol and its reference to desire appears more sublimated in Ingres's oeuvre, it is because this artist often embedded the meaning of one painting within that of another work, as Norman Bryson has noted.[29] By thus displacing the "meaning" of his work, Ingres created a chain of signification that must be "deconstructed" in order to be understood. To attain the significance of Ingres's drawings of the Apelles subject, let us follow Ingres's displacement of signification and consider the images of a wholly different subject, which ensued from these works on paper.

According to Marjorie Cohen, "Ingres's drawings of 1807-1808 of the Apelles subject directly inspired his preliminary studies for *Raphael and the Fornarina*," another of the the themes treated repeatedly by the artist.[30] This connection made by Ingres between the legends of Apelles and Campaspe, and Raphael and the Fornarina, actually has a long tradition in the arts. According to Konrad Oberhuber and David Alan Brown, the scholar Tetius noticed as early as 1643 the debt to Apelles's

[29]Norman Bryson, *Tradition and Desire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), chap. 5.

[30]Marjorie Cohen and Susan Siegfried, *Works by J.-A.-D. Ingres in the Collection of the Fogg Museum* (Cambridge, MA: Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, 1980), 54. Ingres painted this subject at least four times between 1813 and 1865; and he completed six full sketches on paper between 1813 and 1825.

"antique mistress portrait" in Raphael's own portrait of "his beloved model," now known as *La Fornarina* (fig. 4).[31] Because few historical facts have survived concerning the private life of Raphael, the limited details of his legendary love for his mistress, "the Fornarina," which circulated in the nineteenth century, were based more on myth and imagination than on verifiable sources. Vasari's biography of the Renaissance masters, a copy of which Ingres owned, provided the basis for the scant historical references to Raphael's amorous adventures employed by the artist. Vasari's delicately titillating anecdotes, however, tender no name for Raphael's lover. In her regard, the appellation, "Margarita," surfaced in the second half of the sixteenth century; while the name, "la Fornarina," was not mentioned until the eighteenth century.[32]

Its first appearance was in 1772, when it served as the title for an engraving by Domenico Cunego after a Palazzo Barberini nude, which tradition had established as an autograph Raphael portrait of his mistress.[33] This Barberini *donna* (now attributed to Raphael's pupil, Giulio Romano) appears in Ingres's paintings of *Raphael and the Fornarina* as a work-in-progress in the Urbanese artist's studio (fig. 5). According to tradition, Raphael's mistress was called "la Fornarina" because she was believed to be a baker's daughter, *forno* meaning "oven" in Italian.[34] However, the vulgar, sexual connotation of the name, which was clear, may have been implied as well.[35] While Vasari's account delicately preserved the anonymity of the artist's lover, it also adopted a moralizing tone and high color that was perhaps significant in Ingres's later treatments of Raphael's affairs. As Vasari wrote:

> Raphael painted portraits of Beatrice of Ferrara and very many other courtesans, including his own mistress. He was indeed a very amorous man with great fondness for women whom he was always anxious to serve. He was always indulging his sexual appetites; and in this matter his friends were probably more tolerant than they should have been. When his close friend Agostino Chigi commissioned him to decorate the first loggia of his palace, Raphael could not give his mind to the work because of his infatuation for his mistress. Agostino was almost in despair when with great difficulty he managed with the help of others to arrange for a woman to live with Raphael in the part of the house where he was working; and that was how the painting was finished.[36]

Vasari concluded his "Life of Raphael of Urbino" by saying that the artist continued his "secret affairs" and "pursuit of pleasure with no sense of moderation," even after

[31]Konrad Oberhuber and David Alan Brown, "*Mona Vanna* and *Fornarina*: Leonardo and Raphael in Rome," in *Essays Presented to Myron P. Gilmore*, ed. Sergio Bertelli and Gloria Ramakus, vol. 2: *History of Art, History of Music* (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1978), 48.

[32]Eugène Müntz, *Raphael: His Life, Works, and Times*, ed. and trans. Walter Armstrong (London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd., 1882), 606.

[33]Oberhuber and Brown, 50.

[34]Oberhuber and Brown, 50.

[35]Oberhuber and Brown, 48.

[36]Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, ed. and trans. George Bull (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1965), 312.

4. Attributed to Giulio Romano, *La Fornarina*. Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Anticha (photo: Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Anticha)

5. Ingres, *Raphael and the Fornarina*, 1814, oil on canvas. Cambridge, MA, Fogg Art Museum (photo: Fogg Art Museum)

his engagement to Maria Bibbiena, and that his youthful death was caused by no less than his "sexual excess."[37]

From Vasari, presumably, Ingres derived the motif of Raphael's amorously inspired inattention to his work, which is the theme of his *Raphael and the Fornarina* canvases of 1814, 1840, and 1850-65. In his early, definitive version of 1814 (fig. 5), Raphael is seated beside an unfinished portrait on an easel with his arms around a young woman, who appears to be his mistress.[38] Her identity and exact relationship to Raphael is secured by a turban which she is wearing; it is identical in pattern, and similar in its knotted configuration on her head, to that worn by Raphael's Barbarini *donna* that Ingres has included on the easel. This simple association of dress establishes her as Raphael's model and mistress in one.

The precise location of Raphael's studio is specified by a view out the window in the far wall, through which can be glimpsed the rooftops of the Vatican and Old St. Peter's. On the same wall to the right is hanging a Madonna and Child tondo by Raphael, known as the *Madonna della Sedia* (fig. 6). Remarkably, the face and turban of the Virgin in this roundel replicate, with even more exactitude than the Barberini portrait on the easel, that of the model who is seated in Raphael's lap. Ingres clearly implies that Raphael's own mistress was the model for "this well-known masterpiece," as it was described by Müntz, one of the nineteenth century's most prominent Raphael biographers. Müntz further noted that the *Madonna della Sedia* was considered then to represent "the highest and, at the same time, the most popular type of maternal affection."[39]

In each of Ingres's successive renditions of *Raphael and the Fornarina*, the Fornarina's dress is progressively, ever more provocatively, lowered off her shoulders, until in the last version of 1850-65 her breasts are laid bare. In addition, her head is progressively drawn towards Raphael's in an ever closer replication of the figures' poses in the *Madonna della Sedia*. Thus, the more erotic Ingres's image of the Fornarina becomes, paradoxically, the more she recalls Raphael's Virgin, a famous example of one of the elemental images of feminine chastity in Western culture.

This odd conflation of the maternal Virgin and the erotic mistress was reiterated in many of Ingres's most compelling images of women, such as his *Valpinçon Bather* (1808), *Grand Odalisque* (1813), and *Turkish Bath* (1834), through the device of the turban worn by these bathers and courtesans, which had been worn by the Madonna and Fornarina.[40] Of the *Valpinçon Bather* Bryson has written:

[37]Vasari, 319-20.

[38]Ingres's first version of *Raphael and the Fornarina* from 1813 disappeared from the Riga Museum in the U.S.S.R. in 1941.

[39]Müntz, 513.

[40]It should be noted that the predominant legend in the nineteenth century (and there were several) concerning the identity of Raphael's model for the *Madonna della Sedia* attributed her not to the Fornarina, as Ingres proposed in his *Raphael and the Fornarina*, but rather to an anonymous young Roman wife, whose stunning beauty so captivated the artist when he happened upon her in the street, that he was inspired to paint her portrait immediately, *sur le coup*. Raphael did so (as the story goes); but having no proper supplies on hand, he was forced to use the bottom of a barrel as his support, hence the tondo shape of the work. This scene of Raphael painting the *Madonna della Sedia* was taken up by many nineteenth-century genre painters, such as Achille Devéria, whose *Raphaël dessinant la Vierge à la chaise* was exhibited at the Salon of 1838; Paris, Grand Palais, *Raphaël et l'art français*, exh. cat. (1984), cat. no. 274, ill. 436.

6. Raphael, *Madonna della Sedia*, 1514-15, oil on canvas. Florence, Palazzo Pitti (photo: Palazzo Pitti)

By linking the bather to two different works of Raphael, given equal privilege, Ingres ensures that neither can stake a definitive claim: the quotations neutralize each other and instead open on to the spaces between them.[41]

[41]Bryson, 133.

7. Ingres, *Apotheosis of Homer*, 1827, oil on canvas. Paris, Musée du Louvre (photo: Musée du Louvre)

According to Bryson, these "spaces"—the uncertain and contradictory territories of referential meaning—between the seemingly divergent prototypes of the Madonna and the Fornarina in Ingres's oeuvre form the "central [erotic] absence that constitutes [Ingres's] own bodily desire, tradition and desire joining in the single term, the Muse."[42] In this sense, Ingres has fused the aesthetic authority of "tradition" with "desire." Both bodily desire and the desire to possess authority (where desire is the signifier of a phallic presence and of the virility of authority) are fused in order to establish Ingres's own Muse. Thus, he sought his coveted aesthetic authority within both the tradition *and* the desire of his predecessors, here personified by Raphael.

The synecdochic role assigned to Raphael as Ingres's predecessor is well evidenced in Ingres's *Apotheosis of Homer* (first painted in 1827; fig. 7), which bestows

[42]Bryson, 133.

semi-divine status on just three artists from Western culture: Phidias, the ancient sculptor, Raphael, the consummate painter of the Renaissance in nineteenth-century estimation, and Apelles. The latter is shown leading Raphael by the hand towards Homer, who represents the apogee of culture.[43] Thus, Apelles and Raphael function as Ingres's foremost precursors, who must be surpassed in order for Ingres to establish himself as the greatest painter of his own age, and of all time. Of these two precursors, however, only Raphael posed a real "threat" to Ingres in his ploy for succession, for although Apelles's reputation survived into the nineteenth century, all of his works had been lost. Raphael's art, therefore, uniquely exerted "the pressure of the past" upon Ingres. His obsessive quotations of Raphael from his *Vow of Louis XIII* to his *Age of Gold*, and his innumerable copies after this Renaissance master from his *Mercury* to his copy of Raphael's *Self-Portrait* (Florence, Uffizi), all illustrate Ingres's "anxiety of influence," to borrow Harold Bloom's phrase.[44] Ingres's replications, distortions, and refutations of Raphael's work represent the nodes of his discomfort as a "latecomer" and his bruises from this "pressure" from the past.

By appropriating both Raphael's mistress and his Madonna (read: Raphael's tradition and desire), Ingres sought to appropriate the Muse of his precursor, either consciously or unconsciously. To state it in reductive, Freudian terms, Ingres sought, like Oedipus and Antiochus, to inherit Raphael's aesthetic kingdom by conjoining with the mistress of his master. Bryson acknowledged this ultimately Oedipal move to possess the authority of Raphael through the ownership of *his* desire, when he wrote:

> In part, this merging [of tradition and individual talent] follows in Ingres the course of simple antagonism against the past: the *Valpinçon baigneuse* is *La Fornarina*, but in another guise, she has been seized from Raphael...and has been turned away from the picture plane where Raphael had captured her: her rotation marks her passage from tradition into the private ownership of Ingres.[45]

Baudelaire may also have perceived this desire within desire in Ingres's work, when he described Ingres's relationship to Raphael as "*un adultère agaçant*."[46]

Ingres's effort to attain exclusive possession of Raphael's mistress seems even more palpable in his *Raphael and the Fornarina* than in the *Valpinçon Bather*. In this canvas of 1814, although Raphael has his arms around the waist of his mistress as she is seated in his lap, his face is turned directly away from her. He has eyes only for his image of her, not for the woman herself; while the Fornarina's gaze is towards the viewer, or rather to the artist, Ingres. Her address outward is joined by the intense regard of the Virgin in the *Madonna della Sedia* and of the Fornarina in the easel portrait. All look to Ingres and to the audience, rather than to Raphael who, though originally their artistic master, has been displaced by his follower. It is Ingres, here,

[43]Cohen and Siegfried, 54.
[44]Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).
[45]Bryson, 133.
[46]Paris, 24.

who is the brush-wielding recreator of the Madonna and the mistress, while Raphael is frozen in his gaze backwards into the past.

While Ingres's longing to possess Raphael's Muse seems highly tenable, his "simple antagonism towards the past," as Bryson writes, does not. While antagonism is not absent in Ingres's engagement with the past, a certain anxious but also slavish devotion to Raphael marks Ingres's alliance with his precursor.[47] In Ingres's obituary in the *Magasin Pittoresque* in 1867, the artist was quoted as having said during his lifetime: "[When] Raphael was revealed to me...at twelve years...my impression affected my vocation and filled my life!"[48] Similarly, to his first master, M. Roque, Ingres wrote in 1844:

> It is through you that I came to know the divine Raphael, through your studies of Rome, and through this beautiful copy of the *Madonna della Sedia*, which appeared to me as a star in the sky.[49]

Throughout Ingres's oeuvre, the guiding star of Raphael's *Madonna della Sedia* became a kind of talisman in such varied paintings as his *Portrait of Philibert Rivière* (1804-05), *Napoleon I on the Imperial Throne* (1806), *Henri IV Playing with his Children* (1817), as well as his 1814 version of the *Raphael and the Fornarina*. Although he included a complete miniature replica of the *Madonna della Sedia* in his *Rivière* portrait and his *Henri IV* painting, it is interesting to note that he removed the figure of the infant St. John the Baptist at the Virgin's knee in Raphael's tondo from his appropriation of the motif in *Raphael and the Fornarina* and *Napoleon Enthroned*. In the latter instance, Ingres modeled the roundel containing the birthsign of Virgo, his own zodiacal sign, after Raphael's Madonna tondo. It is located on the dais of the Imperial throne, just above the artist's signature. As Bryson has noted, this "Raphaelesque Virgo," which in its pride of place is shown out of order and opposite Pisces, functions as Ingres's personal "imprimatur."[50] Wendy Leeks has asserted more emphatically: "The *Madonna della Sedia* stands for Ingres himself; it is the place where Ingres projects himself into the painting."[51]

By contrast, in Ingres's *Raphael and the Fornarina*, the exclusivity of the mother-son embrace, minus the infant St. John in his replication of the *Madonna della Sedia*, served to emphasize the embrace of Raphael and his mistress within the larger image. Leeks has suggested that, while Ingres identified with the Christ child represented in his zodiac roundel in the *Napoleon* canvas, he "projected himself" into the role of "artist/lover/son in the *Raphael and the Fornarina* series," thus returning "to a

[47]Bryson, 133.

[48]Adrian Rifkin, "Ingres and the Academic Dictionary," *Art History* 6 (June 1983): 153-70.

[49]"C'est par vous que j'ai connu le divin Raphaël, par vos études de Rome, et par cette belle copie de la *Madone della Sedia* qui m'apparut, comme un astre du ciel;" as quoted in Paris, 122. (Author's translation from the French.) Ingres studied with Roque from 1791 to 1797 (ages 11 to 16) at the Académie de Toulouse.

[50]Bryson, 113.

[51]Wendy Leeks, "Ingres Other-Wise," *Oxford Art Journal* 9 (1986): 33.

moment of dual-unity," in which his lover and mother were made one. According to Leeks, the artist's sexual desire and his "longing to be complete and desire-less" are satisfied at once.[52]

If Ingres's "unconscious wish," as Leeks would have it, "is to be one with the mother figure" of the Madonna/Fornarina/turbaned bathers, "...to share her experience and to see through her eyes,"[53] it was even more to emulate and supplant his ultimate authority figure, "the divine Raphael."[54] Ingres himself once said:

> I will spare nothing in order to render what is *raphaelesque* and make it mine...[by] drawing from nature.... Raphael is what he is only because he knew nature.... And that is all the secret.... I do not believe that the exclusive love which I have for this artist makes me his ape.[55]

Obsession and anxiety are intertwined in Ingres's revealing words. While acknowledging the empowerment available to his own work through appropriating the authority of Raphael, Ingres has felt the dangers of attempting too close an emulation—his play for power and supersession could backfire and turn him into a faceless clone of his predecessor. And at times, the line between being "*raphaelesque*" or an "ape" of Raphael was indeed dangerously close in Ingres's work and personal life. For example, the critic Gautier, who praised Ingres for "bearing the torch of the antiquity" with the inspiration of his "spiritual masters Phidias and Raphael," also noted that this French torch-bearer kept his hair parted down the middle, throughout his maturity, in honor of Raphael.[56] Benjamin's cartoon of Ingres in the full-Renaissance dress of Raphael in *Le Charivari* (27 May 1842), titled "Ingres ou Raphaël II," evidences the same cult of Raphael, which one recent Ingriste described well:

> He could approach fanaticism, or naiveté; this is because the Italian painter represents, for him, the truth, the good, and the beautiful all at once; at the same time a lesson of painting and a rule of life.[57]

[52]Leeks, 33-34. Leeks derives this theory from Lacan's principle, "To desire involves a defensive phase that makes it identical with not wanting to desire;" see Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1973), 235.

[53]Leeks, 34.

[54]While Ingres's recurrent use of the *Madonna della Sedia* image was derived in part, perhaps, from the artist's specific devotion to this emphatic symbol for exclusive, all-enveloping maternal love, his interest may also have derived directly from the great public recognition then accorded to this work in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. During this time, artists as varied as Vigée-Le Brun in 1787, Jean Honoré Fragonard in 1761, François-Xavier Fabre in 1798, Etienne-Charles Leguay in ca. 1804, all drew or painted images that either directly reproduced Raphael's motif or that were obviously inspired by his image of the *Madonna della Sedia*; see Paris, 289-91. Of the *Madonna della Sedia*'s marked aggrandizement in public opinion at that time, Gombrich wrote: "Its true fame only begins with Raphael's complete ascendancy at the time of Winckelmann and Mengs and the attendant cult of beauty;" Ernst H. Gombrich, *Raphael's Madonna della Sedia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 5.

[55]As quoted in King, 78.

[56]Robert Snell, *Théophile Gautier: A Romantic Critic of the Visual Arts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 97.

[57]"[Il] peut toucher au fanatisme, ou à la naïveté; c'est que le peintre italien représente pour lui le vrai, le bien et le beau tout à la fois; en même temps une leçon de peintre et une règle de vie;" as quoted in Paris, 54, 123. (Author's translation from the French.)

When Ingres painted Raphael and the Fornarina in 1814, as Marjorie Cohen and Susan Siegfried observed, the canvas was created specifically as an integral component of a larger enterprise, "concocted" by the artist in the summer of 1813, to establish once and for all his own ascendance as a versatile and consummate history painter.[58] Ingres's strategy (intended to counter his critically disastrous Salon "debacle" of 1806) was to enter a careful selection of paintings in the Salon of 1814, consisting of two monumental history paintings, two historical genre paintings, and two portraits. By including genre scenes in this line-up, a subject-type that had only just opened up to history painters since the Revolution, Ingres was intending, once again, "to move into an even more modern position than David and his first generations of students."[59] Ingres said of this project:

> I want to create a stir...at the Salon...to prove to "*Messieurs les genristes*" that supremacy in all the genres belongs to history painters alone.[60]

However, Ingres was unable to realize his grand scheme of succession by the opening of the Salon of 1814. There he exhibited only genre paintings, which were ill-received by the critics. Between 1813 and 1814, Ingres was able to complete two paintings on the life of Raphael, as a part of a projected series on the artist's life. Of these, his *Raphael and the Fornarina* was delivered to the 1814 Salon in the final months of the exhibition, while its related subject, *The Betrothal of Raphael* (now in the Walters Art Gallery), was sold to Queen Caroline Murat of Naples.[61] Ingres's studies for an earlier, related canvas, *The Birth of Raphael* (ca. 1807-10), were never brought to completion; and this project, like its related Salon scheme of 1813-14, was left unrealized.

While Ingres was not alone in his interest in painting the life of Raphael, for in the mid-nineteenth century the "hagiography" of artists' lives became increasingly popular, his intention in rendering this series was, perhaps, singularly ambitious.[62] Ingres allied his representations of the artist Raphael with his project to attain the consummation of his own ultimate authority as a history painter, the professional apex for nineteenth-century artists.

However, by depicting Raphael engaged in romantic endeavors—in dalliance with the Fornarina or betrothed to Maria Bibbiena—rather than showing the actual artistic practice or profound achievements of this renowned artist, Ingres emphasized the mortal, even base elements of Raphael's life. As Bryson wrote:

[58]Cohen and Siegfried, 54.
[59]Cohen and Siegfried, 54.
[60]As quoted in Cohen and Siegfried, 54.
[61]Cohen and Siegfried, 54.
[62]The current interest in artists' lives manifested itself in such paintings as Alexandre Evariste Fragonard's *Raphaël et son modèle* of 1820, Hippolyte Flandrin's *Prix de Rome* of 1832, the latter's *Raphaël apercevant la Fornarina*, and Pierre Bergeret's *La mort de Raphaël*, exhibited at the Salon of 1806; see Paris, 436-45.

> The prime instrument for overcoming the fate of belatedness is sexual desire.... The temporality of eros is always the present, or rather the imminent: eros can never possess its object, but only approach it again and again, on the endless track of desire...in as much as the precursors enjoyed their own day of sensuality, they exited from history, into desire's always postponed future.[63]

Ingres's images of Raphael as a lover not only served to displace his subject "from history" into an "always postponed future," but they also struck a mortal blow at the Renaissance master. After all, Vasari wrote that Raphael died of "amorous embraces." By thus portraying his "divine Raphael" in his moments of greatest mortal weakness, Ingres was finally able to over-power his greatest and most threatening precursor.

Thus, the chain of signification is made complete in Ingres's paintings, each image leading you back, and further back to another image—from Antiochus to Oedipus to Apelles to Raphael. In this manner, authority is transferred from precursor to progeny; and succession is bestowed in the name of Desire.

The Graduate School
and University Center
of the City University
of New York
New York, New York

[63]Bryson, 147, 154-55.

Fray Bartolomé de las Casas and the Liberal *Reforma* in Mexico

Blair Paltridge

Indígenismo *is a strong current running through Mexican history. From that fateful day when Moctezuma's emissaries approached the Spanish ships that had just arrived and presented Hernán Cortés with a helmet filled with gold, Mexico's rulers have had to decide how to assimilate the Indians who occupied the land at the time of the Conquest and have continued to inhabit it to the present-day. The current has been channeled by them through religion, social science, commerce, politics, art, and literature. In the process,* indígenismo *has undergone transformations in the centuries since the Conquest as different individuals and groups used it to gain or maintain control of the Mexican people.*

Fray Bartolomé de las Casas

The brief reign of Maximilian as Emperor of Mexico (1864-1867) interrupted the program of Liberal reform which sought to restructure and stabilize Mexican society after the many years of civil war since independence had been won from Spain. *Indígenismo* once again became a main current in social conscience, social policy, and also art. At the 1865 biennial exhibition of the San Carlos Academy in Mexico City, then called La Academia Imperial, the sculptor Miguel Noreña exhibited a plaster cast entitled *The Virtuous Fray Bartolomé de las Casas Converting an Aztec Family*. The image illustrates well the use Liberals made of *indígenismo* and of one portion of Mexican history to justify their policies. It represents their attitude toward the Indians, the Catholic Church, and their own policy of reform. Noreña's image opens a window on the conflicts and concerns of mid-nineteenth-century Mexico.

The catalogue for the biennial exhibition reproduced a drawing of the image (fig. 1), with the following text written by Noreña:

> In a place outside Mexico City, the padre Las Casas discovers an Indian family, that hides in a thicket, paying tribute to their god Huitzilopochtli; moved by truly apostolic zeal, the pious priest interposes himself between the Indians and their idol, object of their culture, and delivers a tender and eloquent discourse, with which he converts them.[1]

Noreña placed Las Casas directly in the center of the composition. His robes cover his entire body except for the face and hands. With his left arm, he is raising his robe to cover a statue of the Aztec deity and to block the Indians' sight of it. In his upraised right hand, he holds the Christian cross above the heads of the Indians. Before him, the Indian family is docile, thoughtful, submissive, and respectful of all that the

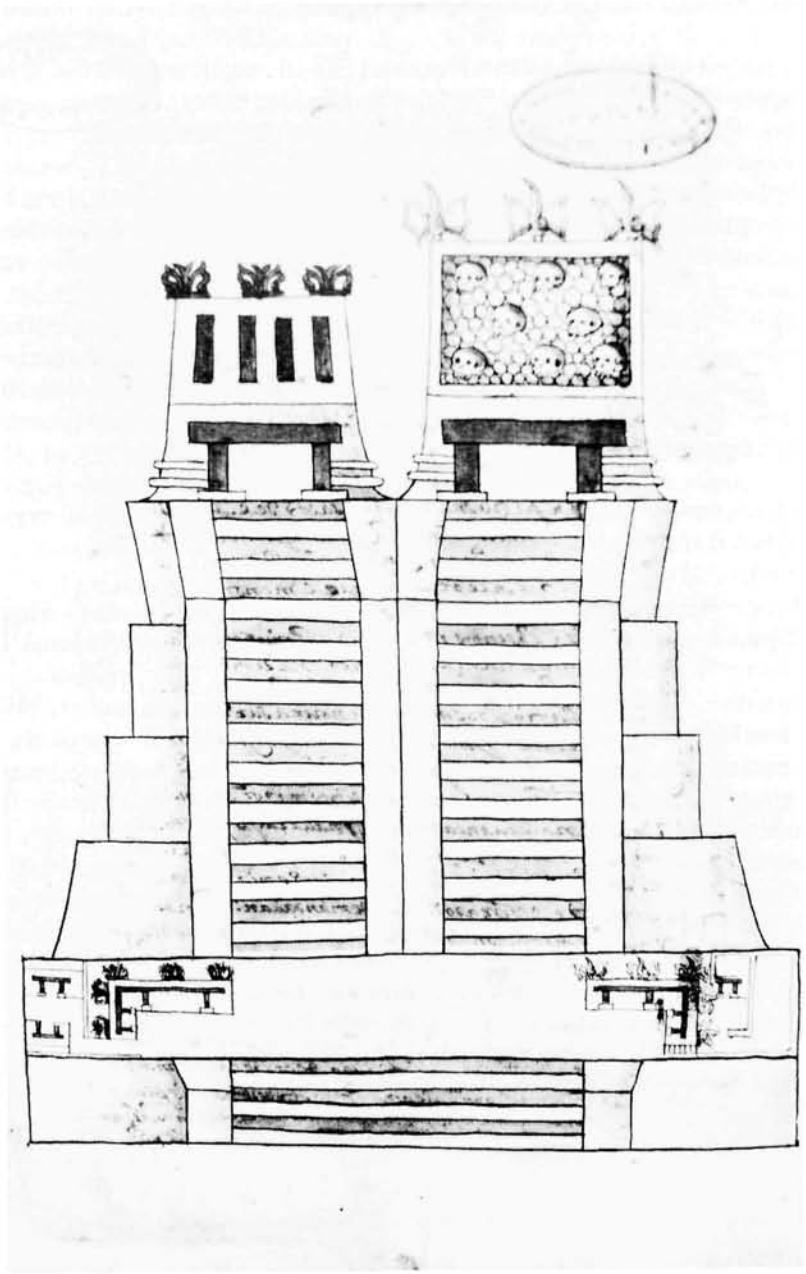
[1]As quoted in Manuel Romero de Terreros, *Catalogos de las exposiciones de la Antigua Academia de San Carlos, 1850-1898*, trans. Stacie Graham Widdifield (Mexico: U.N.A.M., 1963), 375.

1. Miguel Noreña, *The Virtuous Fray Bartolomé de las Casas Converting an Aztec Family*, 1865, drawing after a plaster relief. Mexico City, Museo Nacional de Arte (photo: Jorge Alberto Manrique, ed., *Historia del Arte Mexicano*, vol. 71 [Mexico: Consejo Nacional de Fomento Educativo, 1982], 20)

white man offers. On the far left, a naked boy, presumably representing innocence, grasps his father's loin cloth for support as the adult man contemplates the white man's action in covering the "object of their culture," the Aztec sculpture. The wife, and mother, is already suppliant, kneeling before Las Casas with her hands clasped in reverence. Later generations of Mexicans would call her a "María," because so many Indian women took or were given the names of Catholic saints. Noreña depicts Las Casas introducing the Indians to a new religion and a new culture by means of education. He is convincing them as well as converting them.

That Noreña chose Huitzilopochtli from among the pantheon of Aztec deities to represent the pre-Conquest religious beliefs of the Indians was a significant choice. When the conquistadors arrived in Tenochtitlán in 1519, they found atop the Templo Mayor one shrine dedicated to Huitzilopochtli, the war god, and one dedicated to Tlaloc, the god of rain (fig. 2). The Spaniards were horrified by the sacrifices of humans offered to this deity. A ceremony honoring Huitzilopochtli prompted Pedro de Alvarado to attack and slaughter many Aztecs, while Cortés was in the Gulf Coast region defeating the army of Narvaez.[2] As will be discussed in my second section,

[2]See Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *The Discovery and Conquest of Mexico, 1517-1521*, trans. A.P. Maudslay, intro. Irving A. Leonard (Kingsport, TN: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1956), 297.



2. The Aztec Templo Mayor in Tenochtitlán, drawing from the Codex Ixtlixochitl. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale (photo: Manrique, vol. 15, 211)

reverence for Huitzilopochtli by the Indians continued into the nineteenth century, and the deity's reputation was described in 1880 by Antonio García Cubas:

> Huitzilopochtli, as god of war, was naturally among those bellicose people a Supreme, much venerated Being, who presided over their warriors, and before whose altars a great number of victims were sacrificed.[3]

The Catholic missionary priests and friars who worked in Mexico after the Conquest in the sixteenth century found that the Indians saw parallels between the imagery and symbolism of Christianity and that of Huitzilopochtli. Torquemada wrote:

> They [the Indians] also had images of their principal deity Huitzilopochtli and thus easily believed the image of the Crucifixion and the memorial of the Crucified, those that they saw painted. They also believed that Huitzilopochtli had a mother, and thus it was very easy to persuade them that Christ our lord had one on earth.[4]

The accommodation of prehispanic religious beliefs into Catholic doctrine by the missionaries led nineteenth-century critics to attack the Church for having failed to convert the Indians to "true" Christianity.

Although Huitzilopochtli was well known to nineteenth-century Mexicans by means of post-Conquest literature,[5] the ancient imagery of him obviously was not, because Noreña's representation of the deity is inaccurate. Ignorance of Aztec art is the only possible explanation for Noreña having dressed the statue of Huitzilopochtli with the headdress and staff of Tlaloc, the deity with whom he shared the Templo Mayor.[6] Scholarly study of the prehispanic deities and their symbolism in art was only just beginning in the 1860s. Whatever image Noreña used as a source for his figure was probably mistakenly identified for him as one of Huitzilopochtli.

However Noreña chose to represent prehispanic religion, he obviously thought that Las Casas represented the best agent of Catholicism in converting the Indians to the new faith. Las Casas is the central figure of his composition and holds the commanding position. The Indians are reacting to his message, not that of the statue. Las Casas was recognized by nineteenth-century Mexicans as an advocate for protecting the Mexican Indians against the depredations of the conquistadors. He had arrived in Mexico in the late 1520s with the first group of Dominican friars. He had corresponded frequently with the Council of the Indies as well as the Spanish Crown,

[3]Antonio García Cubas, *Discurso acerca de la Decadencia de la Raza Indígena* (Mexico: Tipografía Literaria de Filomeno Mata, 1880), 4. Translations of all Spanish quotations in this study are by the author unless otherwise noted.

[4]As quoted in Francisco D. Pimentel, "Memoria sobre las Causas que Han Originado la Situación Actual de la Raza Indígena de México y Medios de Remediarla," in *Obras Completas de Francisco Pimentel*, vol. 3 (Mexico: Tipografía Económica, 1903), 89.

[5]See Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, *A History of Ancient Mexico* (Nashville: Fisk University Press, 1932); and Fray Diego Dúran, *Historia de las Indias y Nueva Espana y Islas de Tierra Firme*, ed. José Fernando Ramírez (Mexico: Editora Nacional, 1951).

[6]The paper, fanlike headdress was an attribute of Tlaloc that appeared repeatedly; see the line drawings of stone Tlaloc statues from Castillo de Teayo in Eduard Seler, "Die Altertümer von Castillo de Teayo," in *Versammelte Abhandlungen*, vol. 3 (Berlin: 1902-23), 433.

condemning the ill treatment and suppression of the Indians by his contemporaries. He was made the Bishop of Chiapis in 1547, but resigned in 1550. He returned to Spain and published in 1552 his *Brief History of the Destruction of the Indies*, a caustic attack against the Spanish practices in New Spain. That same year, he began writing *The History of the Indies*, which he finished in 1561, but which remained unedited until published in 1875. In 1557, he wrote a communication to Charles V, the King of Spain, entitled "The Only Way of Attracting All People to the True Religion," which remained unpublished but was often cited in literature. This treatise is much more calmly and methodically written and clearly explains his position on the proper method to convert the Indians to Christianity.

For the first decade of the Spanish occupation of Mexico, conversion had primarily been conducted by conquest. Las Casas argued, however, that war against the unfaithful, especially those who knew nothing of the faith and had never offended it, was "reckless, unjust, wicked and tyrannical."[7] Such a war, he said, "is clearly against natural law, divine law and human law."[8] Las Casas mimicked St. Augustine by citing Aristotle, arguing that the only way to influence rational beings was through "the persuasion of their understanding."[9] Like St. Augustine, he thought that faith depended on belief and that belief presupposed understanding. Therefore, he wrote:

> The way of teaching, commending or attracting Christian faith and religion to the heart of men outside of it, ought to be a way that persuades understanding and that smoothly moves, exhorts or attracts them voluntarily.[10]

That is exactly how Noreña depicted Las Casas in his relief: exhorting the Indians to convert to Christianity, not by force, but rather by persuasion, reason, and personal example.

In his treatise "The Only Way...," Las Casas made three judgments on the conduct of his fellow Spaniards: 1) all who fought or contributed to wars against the Indians committed mortal sin (and he detailed gradations of such sins); 2) all who caused such wars were obliged, for their eventual salvation, to make restitution to the Indians for all losses suffered (e.g., to support the wives and children of Indians killed by Spaniards); and 3) all priests who punished Indians for sins committed either before or after conversion by whipping or imprisonment were sinners. These three judgments were made at a time when most, or probably all, of the Spanish inhabitants of Mexico had at one time or another fought against the Indians. Many of the original conquistadors who had fought with Cortés still lived on and profited by territories granted to them by the Crown. Las Casas attempted to become the conscience of the Spanish colonists, but that brought upon him the derision and open

[7]As quoted in Lewis Hanke, *Estudios sobre Fray Bartolomé de las Casas y sobre la Lucha por la Justicia en la Conquista Espanola de America* (Caracas: Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1968), 115.
[8]Hanke, 115.
[9]Hanke, 111.
[10]As quoted in Hanke, 111.

opposition of those same colonists. Depredations against the Indians continued in colonial Mexico, but Las Casas also continued to be the conscience of the policy-makers. By his writings, as well as by the history of his personal conduct, he remained an example to all who attempted to educate the Indians in Mexico and convert them to Christianity.

The Indians, the Church, and the *Reforma*

Since the beginning of the Neoclassical movement of history painting and sculpture in Europe, and especially in France, artists had often chosen subjects which illustrated exemplary leadership, morality, or politics that related directly to contemporary events. Jacques-Louis David's 1789 painting of *The Lictors Returning to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons*, to mention only one example, had a profound effect in rallying Republican spirits during the French Revolution by recalling the heroism and sacrifice of the founder of the Roman Republic.[11] Similarly, Miguel Noreña's 1865 plaster cast of *The Virtuous Fray Bartolomé de las Casas...* depicted a historical subject which had special relevance to Mexicans in the mid-nineteenth century. Ever since wresting independence from Spain in 1820, popular sentiment among the Mexicans had criticized the Spanish institutions that administered the former colony and reviled the conduct of the Spanish conquistadors in destroying the prehispanic civilizations of Mexico. The new Creole rulers wanted to justify Mexican independence by honoring the ancient cultures in public speeches.[12] Noreña, himself, would later receive a commission to cast a bronze statue of Cuauhtémoc, the last Aztec ruler (fig. 4).

After the Liberals rose to power in 1855, Benito Juárez ascended to the presidency two years later and became the first Indian ruler of Mexico since the Conquest. The Liberals found that most government funds came from taxes on lands in the Valley of Mexico. In the rural areas outside the Valley the income and public funds of the villages were spent largely within the Church parishes on religious ceremonies and property. The large grants of land given to the Church and the villages by the Spanish Crown during the colonial era were exempt from taxation. The Liberals attempted to dislodge the Church from its prominent position in the rural communities by changing its legal control of property. Ironically, by abandoning the colonial property rights that had been designed to protect Indian communities, Juárez, the first Indian president, inevitably hurt the Indians. Among the Indians, the Liberals gained reputations for being anti-clerical and anti-religious. By exemplifying the conduct of Las Casas, however, Noreña reminded Mexicans of how this famous cleric could serve the Liberal cause as a contrast to the contemporary Church.

The Liberal attack on the Church was spearheaded by three famous laws. The first of these was the *Ley Juárez*, drafted in 1855 while Juárez was the Secretary of Justice under President Juan Alvarez. It abolished the military and ecclesiastical *fueros*, the special dispensations that exempted soldiers and clerics from having to stand

[11]See Robert L. Herbert, *David, Voltaire, Brutus and the French Revolution: An Essay in Art and Politics* (London: Allen Lane, Penguin Press, 1972).

[12]In Mexico, *creole* signifies a person born in Mexico of Spanish parents.

trial in civil courts. It greatly restricted the jurisdiction of the military and ecclesiastical courts. The controversy that arose over the *Ley Juárez* forced Alvarez to resign, leaving General Ignacio Comonfort as President.

In June, 1856, Comonfort's Secretary of the Treasury, Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, drafted the *Ley Lerdo*, which prohibited church and civil institutions from owning or administering real property not directly used in day-to-day operations. The Spanish colonial administration had recognized the individual Indian villages as corporations, and the Spanish Crown gave to them land which was to be maintained by communal effort for the benefit of all persons in the village. This territory included the town plazas, communal farm lands, lands for personal income, and lands that provided income to cover basic expenses and taxes of the community. Although these lands nominally fell under the jurisdiction of civil authorities, in practice they were administered by the local parish church, because it was the one enduring institution in the small communities. Over the years, the Church had also been given, often through wills, large tracts of land which were a source of income for the parish churches. Many Indian communities rented property to outsiders and used the rent income to cover communal expenses, such as church festivals and ceremonies.

The Catholic religion, with its rites and ceremonies, had tremendous importance in the rural farm villages and provided the principal cohesive force within the communities. According to the historian, T.G. Powell:

> Despite the immorality, dishonesty and indifference of many parish priests, the Catholic clergy enjoyed positions of great power and prestige in the farm country.[13]

The *Ley Lerdo* attempted to break this power by forcing the sale at auction of all the "excess" property of the church, as well as the communal properties of the civil corporations. As the Liberal writer, Francisco D. Pimentel, said of the clerics: "They are not capable of having communal lands and rental property. They can get by well enough on alms from the people."[14]

The third law of the *Reforma*, the *Ley Iglesias*, prohibited the Church from charging high fees for administering the sacraments. The poor could receive them free of charge, and those with sufficient money were to pay a modest fee. President Comonfort signed another law taking away the registry of births, deaths, marriages, and adoptions from the Church and turning it over to civil functionaries. Cemeteries were taken from the Church's jurisdiction and placed under the control of a department of hygiene. In February, 1857, Comonfort established a new federal constitution that did not recognize Catholicism as the state religion and gave the federal government complete power over religious affairs. The Church responded by excommunicating all officials who supported the new constitution.

The Liberals were by no means revolutionaries. The disputed land was not taken away and distributed, free of charge, to the poor, but instead put up for auction and sold to those with either money or credit. The federal government collected a five-

[13]T.G. Powell, "Los Liberales, el Campesinado Indígena y los Problemas Agrarios Durante la Reforma," *Historia Mexicana* 84 (April-June 1972): 657.
[14]Pimentel, 142.

percent tax on all sales of land and increased the amount of land available for various property taxes. Those who were already renters of land had priority in buying it, but if they did not have the means to do this, then the land was auctioned. The *Ley Lerdo* left the procedures for the sales to the renters and the local authorities, who were usually on the side of the local private landowners. In order to save their communal property, some villages had to buy their own land. The lawyers who handled these transactions, however, often charged so much for their services that the villages became impoverished.[15] The loss of their lands often took away the villages' only source of firewood and pasture land. T.G. Powell summarized the situation: "The *Ley Lerdo* produced harmful effects in the Indian communities, even when applied without fraud."[16] The Indians had no recourse. During the Fall of 1856 and into 1857, rioting broke out in the rural villages throughout Mexico and especially in the states of México, Morelos, Tlaxcala, and Guanajuato. The Liberal government eventually had to send in armed troops to protect "property rights." Military force was necessary as an immediate response, but the Liberals realized that education was the only long-term solution to converting the rural communities to a market economy. For such a conversion, the way of Fray Bartolomé de las Casas "that persuades understanding and that smoothly moves, exhorts or attracts them voluntarily" was an apt example.

In 1864, one year before Noreña exhibited his plaster cast of Las Casas, Francisco Pimentel published a treatise, "An Account of the Causes that Originated the Current Situation of the Mexican Indian Race and the Means of Remedying It," which is especially relevant to this study because it reveals the Liberal attitudes about the Church, the Indians, and prehispanic culture. In mid-nineteenth-century Mexico, the social and economic structure of the country—with rural communities dominated by either the Church or the haciendas of large landowners—was still almost feudal in character. The Liberals sought to bring Mexico into the modern capitalist system and ensure its continued prosperity by establishing a mobile class of laborers for both urban and rural development. Pimentel thought that one of the greatest problems for the Indians since the Conquest had been their isolation from the rest of Mexican society and that this isolation had been caused by the Church. He accused it of having failed in its task of converting the Indians to "true" Christianity, because the Indians, he claimed, were still idolatrous:

> It seems that the Indians still remember those idols of their ancient past overloaded with symbols and figures! How strange it is when we see in some Indian villages that they still adore any idol, whether pure or with the attributes of Catholic saints. We have had in our hands a species [sculpture] of Huitzilopochtli on horseback, something similar to Santiago, which they used to worship three leagues from the capital.[17]

Apparently, Pimentel knew of contemporary figures of Huitzilopochtli made by Aztecs in the Valley of Mexico, and this suggests the power of Noreña's image as a contemporary commentary, rather than only a historical one. Indian culture, according

[15]Powell, 660.
[16]Powell, 661.
[17]Pimentel, 121.

to Pimentel, was degenerate and the Indians themselves had to be transformed in order to bring them into the life of the newly independent nation. He proposed this solution:

> We must manage...that the Indians forget their customs and even their own language, if possible. Only in this way will they lose their preoccupations and form with the whites a homogeneous mass, a true nation.[18]

In other words, there was no solution for the Indian other than that he stop being an Indian. "Fortunately, there is a way by which a race does not destroy itself, but instead only modifies itself, and this way is the transformation," he wrote.[19] This transformation could be brought about by the radical conversion of the Indians, as much material as ideological, to the ideas and systems of the social group above them: the *mestizo* working class and petty bourgeoisie. Pimentel advocated that the system of communal lands be abandoned so that the Indians could either become small landholders or join the working class in the urban centers. In the writings of Pimentel, we see the rationale of the Liberal *Reforma*.

Pimentel argued that the primary obstacle to progress in Mexico was the character of the Indians, but that this character could be transformed in future generations by mating between Indians and the other social classes:

> The mixed race...would be a race of transition; after a short while all of them would become white. Moreover, the Europeans would, of course, mix with not only the Indians, but also with the *mestizos* who already exist, and form the largest part of the population; thus this would result at once in a generation of whites superior in number. Furthermore, it is not certain that the *mestizos* inherit the vices of both races as when they are badly educated; but when they have a good education the opposite happens, that is, they inherit the virtues of the two races.[20]

Moreover, Pimentel argued, the *mestizo* simply made a better worker:

> While the Indian is weak, the *mestizo* is truly strong, and thus we see him fit into the hardest jobs: in the fields he breaks the bulls and horses, in the crafts he is a blacksmith, carpenter or quarryman; in the mines he is the one who bears the labor of the shafts....[21]

Although Pimentel did not mention Charles Darwin and his *Evolution of the Species* in his treatise, his argument that interbreeding among the races would not only produce better workers, but also larger numbers of white people, reeks of Darwinism misapplied. Because he considered white-skinned people superior, evolution would, he thought, naturally select their superior traits in the succeeding generations. This idea

[18]Pimentel, 139-40.
[19]Pimentel, 144.
[20]Emphasis is in the original; Pimentel, 144-45.
[21]Emphasis is in the original; Pimentel, 145.

is graphically represented in Noreña's image of Las Casas. He exhibited it cast in plaster, which is white, and intended it to be carved in marble, which is often white (although it was apparently never executed in marble). The Indian family, by accepting conversion, is represented as white and without the color of skin that would readily identify it as Indian.[22] For the Liberals, transformation of racial characteristics and good education would complete the conversion to Capitalism that conversion to Christianity in the sixteenth century had begun.

The Liberals were themselves Catholics and most, including Juárez and Pimentel, had been educated in Catholic schools. They believed that conversion to "true" Christianity held out the promise of assimilating the Indian into white society. In his speech, "Discourse About the Decadence of the Indian Race," printed in 1880, the Liberal scholar Antonio García Cubas said of the Conquest:

> It is verified that it would have been impossible to sustain without the throng of priests who, behind the soldiers of Cortés, arrived in the New World, inundating it with the splendid light of Christianity. The sweetness, the practice of virtue, the assurance and the paternal refuge that they gave to the Indians, rich or poor, contrary to the acts of the conquistadors, and the heroic struggle they sustained against the infamous system of *repartimientos* and *encomiendas*, supported by the unbridled ambition of the conquistadors, did more for the Crown of Castile than all the arquebuses of the soldiers.[23]

García Cubas obviously spoke, here, of the mendicants, like Las Casas, who actively opposed the use of arms in converting the Indians. Noreña had also used Las Casas as a symbol of peaceful conversion, as did his contemporary Pimentel in 1864:

> If the conquest was a good act, that good is owed to the missionaries, to their kind words, to their wise counsel, to their generous principals, much more than to the homicidal swords of the warrior or the ferocious daring of the soldier.[24]

Nonetheless, Pimentel attacked the Catholic clergy of his day as being licentious and indolent.[25] He believed that the first thing that should have been done to transform the Indian was to reform the clergy.

The *Ley Iglesias* and other Liberal laws were attempts to correct the gross abuses of the clergy in charging excessive amounts for services and controlling the income and economy of rural Mexico. The need for reform was also evident to Emperor Maximilian during his many excursions through Mexico after his arrival in May, 1864. In a letter to his wife, Empress Carlota, he wrote: "...the clergy are lacking in

[22]The question of skin color in many nationalistic Mexican paintings of this period is discussed by Stacie Graham Widdifield, "National Art and Identity in Mexico, 1869-1881: Images of Indians and Heroes" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1986), 223-28.

[23]Cubas, 8.

[24]Pimentel, 75.

[25]Pimentel, 140-41.

Christian charity and morality."[26] His description contrasts sharply with the characteristics Las Casas thought desirable in clerics who would convert the Indians: that they be "sweet, humble, affable, gentle, kind and benevolent" and that they must lead lives so exemplary that it be clear to all that their teaching was holy and just.[27] Las Casas had worked in his own day for a reform of evangelical practices in Mexico and, as the conscience of policy-makers, was therefore the best example the Liberals had for reforming the Church in the nineteenth century.

Because there had been rancor in the relations between the Catholic Church and Napoleon III of France, after Napoleon arranged for Austrian Archduke Maximilian to become Emperor of Mexico, the Vatican had only grudgingly sanctioned his crown shortly before Maximilian's departure from Europe. Notwithstanding, after the arrival of the papal nuncio in Mexico on December 7, 1864, the Church had hoped that Maximilian would respect that sanction and restore the privileges and properties of the Church in Mexico. Both Maximilian and Carlota, however, were offended by the conduct and demands of the papal nuncio, Monseñor Meglia. On December 27th, Maximilian issued his famous program of "*Nueve Puntos*" ("Nine Points") for settlement of ecclesiastical affairs. He granted freedom of worship to all creeds. Although he named Catholicism as the State religion, he stipulated that Church officials would be paid by the state on the same (low) scale as civil officials and that priests had to administer the sacraments at no charge. He left the registry of births, marriages, and deaths under civil jurisdiction as well as the administration of cemeteries.[28] Meglia was outraged. The Liberals were jubilant, because the *Reforma* had been upheld. Instead of simply placating the Liberals, Maximilian bolstered their position. Conservatives drew further away from the throne, and with the clergy Maximilian maintained, at best, an armed truce, at worst, unrelenting hostility and intrigue. Lacking the support of the Church, Maximilian lost support in the rural countryside. The issue of the Church festered on the monarchy until the day Maximilian was executed by order of Juárez at Querétaro on June 19, 1867. Miguel Noreña must have created his image of Las Casas in the first months of 1865, following Maximilian's declaration of the "*Nueve Puntos*." The Liberal example of Las Casas as a reformer of the Church was appropriate for the biennial exhibition at La Academia Imperial.

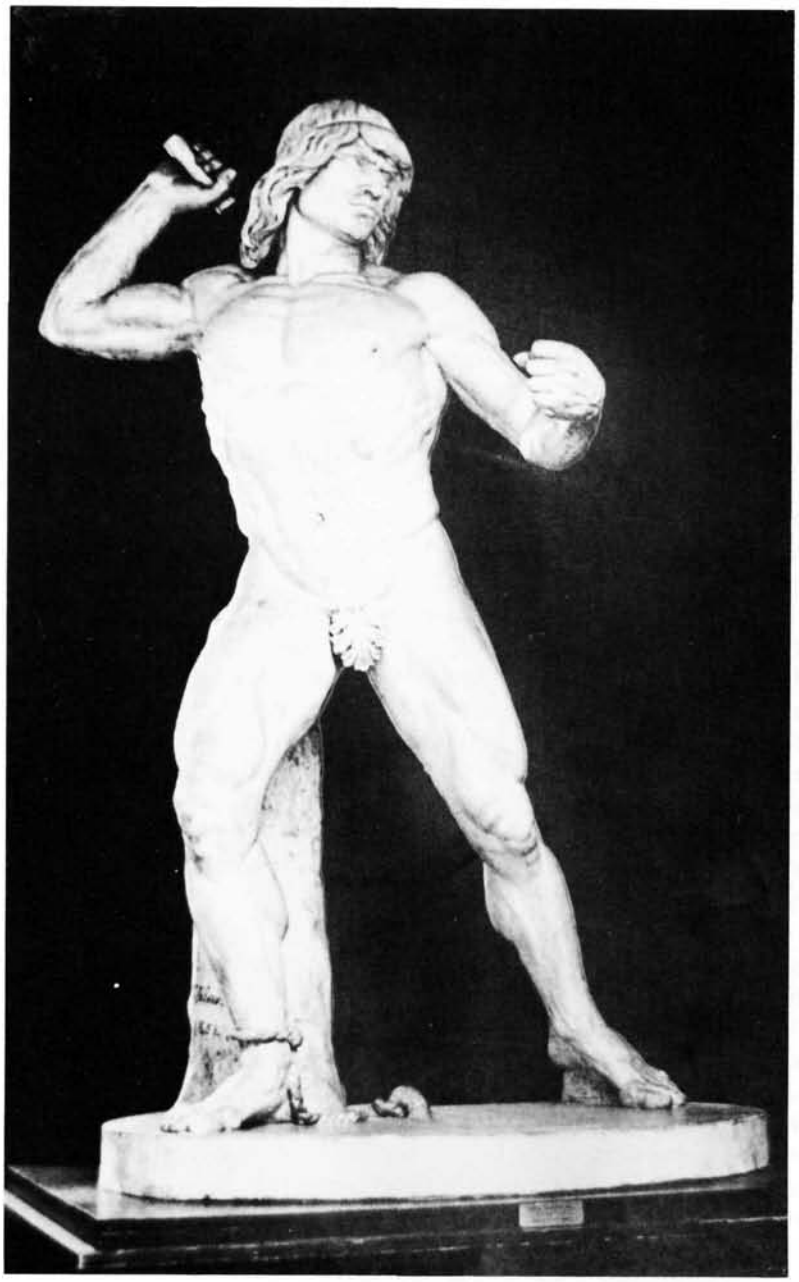
Sculpture and Painting in the San Carlos Academy

One obvious source for Miguel Noreña's image of *The Virtuous Fray Bartolomé de las Casas...* is Roman bas-relief carvings, such as those on the Arch of Constantine in Rome, which were among those used frequently by Italian Renaissance artists as a source. Noreña's plaster cast was a survival of the Renaissance in Mexico, just as the Renaissance survived in the colonial architecture of Mexico. During the late 1840s and early '50s, Noreña had been a student of Manuel Vilar, the Director of Sculpture

[26]As quoted in Alfred Jackson Hanna and Kathryn Abbey Hanna, *Napoleon III and Mexico* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1971), 164.

[27]As quoted in Hanke, 113.

[28]For a complete text of the "*Nueve Puntos*," see P. Mariano Cuevas S.J., *Historia de la Iglesia en México*, vol. 5 (Mexico: Editorial Patria, 1946), 381.



3. Manuel Vilar, *Tlahuicole, the Tlaxcalan General, Fighting on the Gladiator's Stone of Sacrifice*, 1851, marble. Mexico City, Museo Nacional de Arte (photo: Manrique, vol. 74, 63)

at the San Carlos Academy. From him, Noreña received training in "the severe rules of Classicism," as the Mexican art historian, Justino Fernandez, described it.[29]

Vilar was a Catalan, born in Barcelona, Spain, who had studied sculpture first in Campeny and then in Rome. He and Pelegrin Clavé, another Catalan and the Director of the Academy, were hired in Rome on July 4, 1845, by Don José María Montoya and arrived in Mexico in January, 1846. Vilar's predecessor at the Academy had been Francisco Terrazas, a student of Patino Ixtolinque, who carved and polychromed wooden statues for the National Cathedral. Vilar rejuvenated the instruction of sculpture at the Academy, but despaired of the lack of support for him and his students. He resigned in 1852 and returned to Europe, where he died in 1860. The two sculptures that he completed in Mexico show his strong Classical training: *The Emperor Moctezuma II* resembles a Roman portrait; and *Tlahuicole, Tlaxcalan General* (fig. 3) calls to mind a Greek Zeus. The six years that Vilar taught at the Academy influenced Mexican sculpture for the rest of the nineteenth century.

Pelegrin Clavé held his post as Director of the Academy until 1862 and was a dominant and conservative figure in Mexico City's small circle of artists and intellectuals. Under his direction, all students in painting followed a prescribed sequence of courses and had to receive faculty approval to advance from one course to the next: drawing, drawing from models (plaster and live), composition, theory, practical geometry, and linear perspective. The use of pigments followed mastery of drawing.[30] Vilar established classes for the sculpture students in anatomy with live models, plaster casting, work in marble, sketches of classic statuary, and composition.[31] Clavé trained students in academic painting and insisted that religious inspiration was the only source appropriate to good painting. In an address to prize-winning students at the Academy on December 20, 1863, Clavé said:

> Always retain the sublime traditions of Christian art that the great spiritualist masters deeded to you.... Rise as did they toward the unending fount of Beauty and, someday, you too will deserve a laurel to match the one that gleams on their brow. To be judged worthy, never slide toward the petty lowlands of human passion.[32]

He obviously held a low opinion of nineteenth-century Romanticism. His insistence upon Christian art and Vilar's interest in heroicizing prehispanic historical figures seem to have combined as an influence upon Noreña's choice of subject in his *Las Casas* image, and it continued to work strongly on Mexican artists after the withdrawal from Mexico by the French and the execution of Maximilian.

Noreña's image was a precursor of the art of the Liberal era. In 1869, critics, whose work appeared in the newspaper, *Siglo XIX* and other publications, began to call for the creation of a nationalist art in Mexico. Because the San Carlos students

[29]Justino Fernandez, *El Arte Moderno en México: Breve Historia—Siglos XIX y XX* (Mexico: Instituto Investigaciones Estéticas de la Universidad Nacional de México, 1937), 132.

[30]Thomas A. Brown, *La Academia de San Carlos de la Nueva España*, trans. María Emilia Martínez Negrete Deffis (Mexico: SepSetentas, 1976), 49-52.

[31]Fernandez, 132.

[32]As quoted and translated by Jean Charlot, *Mexican Art and the Academy of San Carlos, 1785-1915* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962), 107.

had been trained by Clavé in the history and techniques of European art, they responded to the call by adapting Mexican and prehispanic subjects to European traditions, just as Noreña had. And Noreña was by no means the only Mexican to use Las Casas as a symbol or use his writings as a source. Felix Parra (later a teacher of Diego Rivera at the Academy) returned to the subject of Las Casas with his 1875 image of the priest aiding Indians wounded by the conquistadors. That painting may well have been a Liberal reminder that the Church should aid those injured by the recent French invasion. The catalogue of the 1877 exhibition at the Academy stated that Parra also used Las Casas's *History of the Indies* (first published in 1875) as a source for his large painting of the *Massacre of Cholula*.

Other painters also used events in the Spanish Conquest as examples of the Liberal resistance to the French attempt at Conquest: *The Deliberation of the Senate of Tlaxcala*, 1875, by Rodrigo Gutiérrez; *The Imprisonment of Cuauhtémoc*, 1875, by Santiago Rebull; *The Capture of Cortés*, 1880, by José Ibarrarán; and *The Princess Papantzin*, 1881, by Juan Urruchi. This epoch culminated in Noreña's famous 1886 sculpture of *Cuauhtémoc* (fig. 4) that now stands on the Avenida de la Reforma at the intersection with Insurgentes along the showcase thoroughfare, which was originally constructed to give Emperor Maximilian a magnificent route for commuting daily from Chapultepec Castle to the National Palace. Cuauhtémoc was the last Aztec emperor, who organized the final resistance to Cortés. Many of Cuauhtémoc's relatives, the rulers of city-states in the Aztec's triple alliance, betrayed him and allied themselves with Cortés. Cuauhtémoc's position was somewhat similar to that of Brutus in David's painting mentioned above; although Brutus, of course, succeeded in saving his Republic and eventually the empire, whereas Cuauhtémoc lost his. Noreña also created a bronze statue of Benito Juárez, the leader of the Liberals and the first Indian president, that still stands in the patio of the Department of the Treasury in the National Palace.

In his 1865 image of Las Casas converting the Indians, Noreña conformed to a part of the Liberal ideology that Maximilian had found politic to accept, which Pelegrin Clavé failed to do. In 1862, President Juárez had dissolved the Governing Board of the Academy and demoted Clavé to Director of Painting. He disliked having the Academy run by Europeans and appointed the Mexican artist Santiago Rebull as Director in Clavé's place.[33] When the French army landed in Veracruz in September, 1862, and began advancing on the capital, Juárez ordered all government employees, including the Academy's faculty, to sign a protest against the invasion. In March, 1863, Clavé and others refused to sign it and were dismissed. In May, when the French captured Puebla, Juárez and the Liberals fled the capital. In June, with the conservatives in power, the faculty was made to swear allegiance to the Regency of the Empire and the school's name was changed to the Imperial Academy. Although Clavé was reinstated on the faculty, he never gained favor with Maximilian, who knew European art and culture, so could not be impressed by Clavé's provincialism. The Emperor instead commissioned Rebull to paint a portrait of himself with the Empress as well as murals in Chapultepec Castle. When Juárez returned to the presidency in 1867, he changed the Academy's name to the National School of Fine Arts and dismissed Clavé again. In this reorganization of the Academy, Noreña was appointed Director of Sculpture. Las Casas served him well.

[33]Charlot, 125.

4. Miguel Noreña, Monument to Cuauhtémoc, 1886, bronze. Mexico City (photo: Manrique, vol. 80, 192)

During the Liberal era, the Mexican writers who published historical novels also depended on Las Casas and his contemporaries for their material. As the historian Concha Meléndez observed:

> Nearly all the factors that were to constitute the Indianist novel are already in the literature of the conquistadors and the colonial era: romantic idealization of the Indian and social protestation in his favor in Las Casas and Garcilaso, the Inca; the Indian warrior and the passionate heroine in Ercilla;[34] the missionary and the conquistador in the works of the chroniclers; the picturesque costumes, myths and superstitions in those same chronicles.[35]

[34]Meléndez is referring, here, to Alonso de Ercilla y Zuniga (1533-94), author of *La Araucana.*
[35]Concha Meléndez, *La Novela Indianista en Hispanoamérica, 1832-1889* (Madrid: La Librería y Casa Editorial Hernando, 1934), 16.

The Liberal *Reforma* spurred the publication of many novels based on historical accounts of pre-Conquest Indians, including: *The Martyrs of Anáhuac*, 1870, by Eligio Ancona; *Love and Entreaty*, 1873, by Ireneo Paz; *Nezahualpilli and Catholicism in Mexico*, 1875; *Azcaxóchitl and the Golden Arrow*, 1878, by J.R. Hernández; *Doña Marina*, 1883, by Ireneo Paz; and *The Daughter of Tutl-Xiu*, 1884, by Eulogio Palma y Palma. European Romanticism, especially the writings of François René de Chateaubriand and Jean Jacques Rousseau, had an effect upon the Mexican novelists, but they could find similar inspiration in Las Casas, who, Meléndez noted, "is the predecessor of Rousseau in looking upon primitive man as the incarnation of the good and the innocent."[36] In general, the Mexican novelists attempted to heroize the Indian history of Mexico in order to deprecate the Spanish colonization. They sought to establish a "classic" past for Mexico to replace the Greek and Roman heritage of Europeans.

The mid-nineteenth-century novelists were working with an essentially European art form and inevitably had to rely upon European language and forms of expression. They were caught, therefore, in the same confines as the painters. As Stacie Widdifield asserted in her dissertation:

> Europeans faced with narrating non-European history and recreating images of non-European practices and peoples had recreated the prehispanic Indian and his/her cultures in their own image and visual vocabulary.[37]

Twentieth-century writers have criticized the tendency of nineteenth-century painters to turn prehispanic Indians into "vestal virgins" and "athletes." Speaking of paintings by Parra, Rebull, Gutiérrez, and Ibarrarán, Justino Fernandez wrote:

> Nothing can give a better idea of the outlook of one epoch about the past as these and other paintings interpreting the ancient Indian world of Mexico, because the academic classicism of the nineteenth century was a bad mold for that world so distant from sugared classicism.[38]

As has already been noted, the San Carlos Academy and Pelegrin Clavé had a predominant position in determining the taste of Mexican artists in the last half of the nineteenth century, but others also reinforced the predilection for classicism. By raising the elite leaders of prehispanic culture—Cuauhtémoc, Moctezuma, Ixtlili, and Nezahualcoyotl—to classical stature, the Liberals were able to contrast them to the "degraded" condition of contemporary Indians and demonstrate how the education of the Catholic schools had so degraded them. Fray Bartolomé de las Casas served the Liberals as a prime example of how proper education could separate Mexican Indians from the rural confines of the Catholic Church and transform Indians into a working class.

University of California, Los Angeles
Los Angeles, California

[36]Meléndez, 13.
[37]Widdifield, 86.
[38]Justino Fernandez, *Arte Moderno y Contempráneo de México* (Mexico: U.N.A.M., 1952), 88.

Gauguin's Uncanny Nude: *Manao tupapau*

John Beall

Of the canvases Paul Gauguin completed during his first trip to Tahiti (1891-93), many portray women alone or in groups. In these portraits, Gauguin repeatedly depicted women musing, brooding, sleeping, dreaming. These images are difficult to decipher. As indicated by the titles of some paintings, the woman reflects the viewer's gaze by posing challenging questions: *Nafea faaipoipo?* ("When Will You Marry?") and *Aha oe feii?* ("What! Are You Jealous?").[1] In seeking ways to translate such questions into visual images, Gauguin represented Tahitian women in states of meditation more complex than those of the Parisian bathers and dancers painted by Degas, who often blotted or smudged the woman's face, so that one cannot imagine what (or if) she is thinking.[2] Whereas Degas focused on contorted physical poses, Gauguin evoked images of women whose consciousness seems mysterious and unnerving.

When choosing the eight works from his stock of Tahitian paintings to display for sale at an 1883 exhibition in Copenhagen, Gauguin assigned *Manao tupapau* ("The Spectre Watches Over Her") a much higher price than any of the other paintings. It was also one of three paintings that he included in his many self-portraits, a

[1]Georges Wildenstein, *Gauguin*, ed. Raymond Cogniat and Daniel Wildenstein, vol. 1 (Paris, 1964). *Nafea faaipoipo* and *Aha oe feii?* are catalogue nos. 454 and 461, respectively. Hereafter all paintings by Gauguin will be cited by "W" and his catalogue number. Most can be more conveniently located in the 1988-89 exhibition catalogue, Richard Brettell et al., *The Art of Paul Gauguin* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1988). Crucial to the composition of this essay has been the generous advice of Dr. Karen Pope and Dr. Judith Whitbeck. A faculty development grant from the St. Mark's School of Texas enabled me to study *Manao* at the Gauguin retrospective in Chicago. As a result of the positive outside evaluation of this essay by Mary Mathews Gedo for the *Rutgers Art Review*, this article will appear in an expanded form in Mary Mathews Gedo, ed., *The Inner World of Paul Gauguin* (Providence, RI: Richard Price, Inc.), forthcoming.

[2]Although Degas painted many portraits of women in the 1860s and '70s that evocatively represent facial expressions, I think his suite of nudes and bathers from the 1880s best illustrates my point and provides a way of contrasting Degas's with Gauguin's nudes. For instance, see Jean Sutherland Boggs et al., *Degas*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1988), cat. nos. 245-55, 269-75, and 284-89. Degas continued to occlude one's view of the woman's face in the 1890s pastels of bathers. For Gauguin's conscious effort to free himself of Degas's influence, see Frèches-Thory's essay in Brettell et al., 82-85, 99-10, and 146-47. In his commentary on his 1888 paintings of nude Breton boys, Gauguin writes to Emile Schuffenecker: "Also I have just done some *nudes* which you will be happy with; no Degas about them whatsoever" (Brettell et al., 99). Throughout his first years in Tahiti, Gauguin continued to reflect and resist Degas's influence. Compare, for example, Degas's *Naked Woman on her Knees* (one of those pastels sketched by Gauguin) with *Otahi* (W 502). The latter is less conventionally feminine, not merely because Gauguin used the *pareu* as a lushly red counterpoint to the abstractly rendered bands of sand, but also because he lavished attention on the woman's musculature, from the nearly clenched fist near the left border to the splayed, deeply modeled foot pushing almost beyond the frame at the right.

fact that signals the painting's special value for him.[3] Having as its subject one of European art's most traditional images—the idealized female body, Gauguin's *Manao* transforms the genre of the recumbent nude in ways that have not been fully appreciated. Only recently have curators and scholars begun to recognize that Gauguin's nudes lead *from* the art of Manet and Degas to those of twentieth-century artists, like Picasso and Matisse. Both the 1984-85 "'Primitivism' in 20th-Century Art" exhibition and the stupendous 1988-89 Gauguin retrospective presented powerful images that have been central to the renewed study of Gauguin's nudes.[4] The purpose of this essay is to contribute to this renewed study by focusing on *Manao tupapau*—a painting that attempts the difficult task of evoking the dream-life of a naked, sleeping female figure.

Without considering how he used *Manao* to challenge traditional images of the nude, both Gauguin's critics and his commenders have assumed that the artist portrayed women restrictively as sexual objects. Though not specifically mentioning *Manao*, Carol Duncan criticizes "the dreamy looks of Gauguin's girls."[5] Likewise, Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock generalize: "For Gauguin woman was Madonna and Venus, primitive, nourishing, and sexual...."[6] In his psychologically-oriented biography of Gauguin, Wayne Andersen describes the spectre in the background of *Manao tupapau* as "a sexual watchwoman haunting the night-dreams of a pubescent girl."[7] More recently, Kirk Varnedoe, who discusses *Manao* in relation to Manet's *Olympia*, has argued that Gauguin altered the pose of Manet's figure to present the girl as "alluringly acquiescent."[8] Against such a seeming consensus that *Manao* presents a passive sexual image, I will argue that Gauguin's *Manao tupapau*, a depiction of his mistress Tehamana, radically subverts the tradition of the recumbent nude. Even

[3]Bengt Danielsson, *Gauguin in the South Seas* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 133. In *Paul Gauguin: The Paintings of the First Trip to Tahiti* (New York: Garland, 1977), 110, Richard Field notes that Gauguin "specifically instructed Mette not to sell this work [*Manao*] for less than 1500 francs, or three times the highest bid made at his 1891 auction!" The self-portrait with *Manao* is W 506. The other two self-portraits with Gauguin's paintings in the background are *Self-Portrait with Yellow Christ* (W 324) and *Les Misèrables* (W 239), which includes Gauguin's portrait of Emile Bernard. For the evolution of Gauguin's self-portraits, see Cachin's introduction in Brettell et al., xv-xxvi.

[4]Before the catalogue of the Gauguin retrospective, attention to Gauguin's nudes has not been impressive. In advance of its appearance in the *Yale Journal of Criticism* (Spring 1990), I was able to read a draft of Peter Brooks's splendid essay, "Gauguin's Tahitian Body." See also Ziva Amishai-Maisels, "Gauguin's Philosophical Eve," *Burlington Magazine* 115, no. 843 (June 1973): 373-82; Field; Richard Goldwater, *Gauguin* (New York: Henry N. Abrams, 1957); Michel Hoog, *Paul Gauguin: Life and Work*, trans. Constance Devanthery-Lewis (New York: Rizzoli, 1987); Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Going Native," *Art in America* 77 (July 1989); and Jehanne Teilhet-Fisk, *Paradise Reviewed: An Interpretation of Gauguin's Polynesian Symbolism*, (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983).

[5]Carol Duncan, "Virility and Domination," in Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, *Feminism and Art History* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 303.

[6]Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art, and Ideology* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 121.

[7]Wayne Andersen, *Gauguin's Paradise Lost* (New York: Viking Press, 1971), 182.

[8]Kirk Varnedoe, "Gauguin," in *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art*, exh. cat., ed. William Rubin, vol. 1 (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1984), 199. I also disagree with Richard Brettell (Brettell et al., 309), who argues that the figure in *Manao* "projects her sexual identity more strongly" than his drawing of the relaxed, lithe sleeper (see n. 20 below) reprinted in Brettell et al., cat nos. 141-42. The very traits that Brettell notes in the drawing—"thin," "gentle evocation of sleep," "gentle swelling of the chest," "utterly vulnerable"—are feminine qualities in such traditional poses as taken by Millet's and Courbet's recumbent nude models.

more than Degas or Manet, Gauguin represents the nude form as a source of ambiguity and terror.

When commenting on this painting, Gauguin placed it within the European tradition of Susannahs watched by hidden, leering men whose eyes lead the viewer's towards the naked body. Writing in *Cahier pour Aline*, he contrasted *Tupapau* with its predecessors: "Certainly not the fear of a Susannah surprised by the elders."[9] By insisting on the difference between the fear evinced in his naked sleeper and that of Susannah surprised by the elders, Gauguin expressed his intention not to portray her terror as sexual. Likewise, in his first recorded statement about *Manao*, he wrote: "I did a young nude. The slightest thing is enough to make her indecent."[10] That is, the relation of nude and viewer is fragile. Scorning the conventional *Venuses* in the Salon as "indecent and disgracefully nude," Gauguin regarded *Manao* as "a chaste painting."[11]

In its general arrangement, *Manao* (fig. 1) is one of Gauguin's simplest paintings, more spare than others such as *Ia orana Maria* or *Te nave nave fenua* produced during his first Tahitian stay. The very center of the painting at first seems bound to the depictive tradition of the nude. With rhythmic, fine brush strokes resembling those of Degas's pastels,[12] Gauguin modeled the girl's buttocks sensuously, rose tints lambently covering a brown layer of paint. At the near center of each buttock is a slight verdant patch hinting at the play of darkness off the body's curve. Like Cézanne, Gauguin used such shifts of color to create an illusion of curved surfaces. Despite such innovative modelling, at first glance Gauguin seems to have followed convention by placing the erotic focus of the painting (the girl's buttocks) in the center. Gauguin's prone nude could *seem* "indecent" in the manner of Boucher's *Miss O'Murphy*. Yet, there are features that do not convey a sensuous image. For instance, as suggested by the stiffened fingers of the left hand, the sleeper seems frozen with fear in reaction to the spectre in the background. But, she is not a Susannah whose terror arises from

[9]Gauguin's remark on *Manao* and Susannah is in *Cahier pour Aline*, reprinted in Marla Prather and Charles Stuckey, eds., *Gauguin: A Retrospective* (New York: Hugh Lauter Levin, 1987), 199-200. Even more often than Gauguin, Degas commented about the Susannah tradition. See Carol Armstrong, "Degas and the Representation of the Female Body," in Susan Suleiman, *The Female Body in Western Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 230-34; and see also Richard Thomson, *Degas: The Nudes* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1988), 150, 205.

[10]There are several different translations of Gauguin's letter to Mette about *Manao*. I have used Linda Nochlin's in her *Impressionism and Post-Impressionism: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966), 168-9. See also Daniel Guérin, ed., *The Writings of a Savage: Paul Gauguin*, trans. Eleanor Levieux (New York: Viking Press, 1978), 63-64, and John Rewald, *Post-Impressionism* (New York: Museum of Modern Art 1956), 526-527. For a lucid discussion of Gauguin's various texts about *Manao*, see Field, 110-120, and 264-65, n. 10 and n. 19.

[11]Gauguin is quoted in an interview with Eugène Tardieu, *Echo de Paris*, 13 May 1895, reprinted in Bengt Danielsson, *Gauguin in the South Seas* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 183-84.

[12]For Degas's change to a different pastel technique, see Ronald Pickvance, "Some Aspects of Degas' Nudes," *Apollo* 83 (January 1966): 19. Gauguin copied six of Degas's pastel nudes shown in 1888 at the gallery managed by Theo Van Gogh. See Thomson, 132.

1. Paul Gauguin, *Manao tupapau*, oil on canvas. Buffalo, NY, Albright-Knox Art Gallery (photo: Albright-Knox Art Gallery)

being discovered while bathing in private, and we are not allowed to be voyeuristic old men reacting to a simple, erotic image. The stark simplicity of *Manao* is deceptive.

Its genealogy is fairly clear and helps us appreciate its radical departure from the genre of reclining nudes. There is a "direct line" from Titian's *Venus of Urbino* to Manet's *Olympia* to Gauguin's *Manao tupapau*. Manet copied Titian's *Venus* before he painted his *Olympia*; Gauguin copied Manet's *Olympia* the year before he painted *Manao*.[13] Conventionally, there is a clear hierarchy of power between the male patron, the artist, the subservient female model, and her attendant. That a servant accompanies the model makes the model no less a possession, particularly since she often was or became the property of the artist's patron. As Parker and Pollock argue, paintings such as Boucher's *Miss O'Murphy* represent the female model as "passive, avail-

[13]For Manet's copies after Titian's *Venus of Urbino*, see Anne Coffin Hanson, *Manet and the Modern Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 92 and pl. 39. Gauguin's copy of *Olympia* (W 413) is dated by Wildenstein to 1890-91, before his first trip to Tahiti. In Gauguin's *Noa Noa*, ed. Nicholas Wadley and trans. Jonathan Griffin (Salem: Salem House, 1985), 21, he wrote of having in Tahiti "a photograph of Manet's *Olympia*." When a native girl (not Tehamana), who modeled for Gauguin, saw the photo, she thought it was his wife. Gauguin told her it was: "'Yes,' I lied. Me, the *tane* of Olympia!"

able, possessable, powerless."[14] Moreover, the common pose of a woman asleep intensifies such a conventional hierarchy of watchful patron and unconscious model. As Ingres's paintings of odalisques and Courbet's *Woman Resting* illustrate, nineteenth-century painters did little to make this motif threatening to viewers. Rather, the artists explored ways to suggest a woman's sensual pleasure in posing nude for the painter, whose presence seemed to enhance her repose and reverie. The patron/viewer was encouraged to enjoy her calm or euphoria. During the past twenty years many scholars such as Theodore Reff and Eunice Lipton have ably and amply discussed how Manet and Degas challenged such traditional icons of passive, nude female models.[15] That is far less true of Gauguin's contributions to the tradition.

During his first months in Tahiti, Gauguin usually represented nude or semi-nude figures (such as the two women dressed in *pareus* in *Ia orana Maria*) standing upright in a lush, Edenic landscape. By 1892, however, clearly Gauguin had begun to concentrate on drawing and carving the nude. In particular, the reclining female nude attracted his attention. From virtually every angle, Gauguin sketched Tahitian women in this pose; in one case, he even paired two figures as alter egos—one lying asleep on her side, the other upright and calmly aware of her role as a model. As Charles Stuckey suggests, these sketches "should probably be understood as a harbinger of his goal to express the Tahitians' experience of their dream world."[16] Four intriguing sketches, *Little Tahitian Trinkets*, represent the sleeper's head viewed from the right profile, from underneath, from overhead, and from the back. Increasingly interested in evoking his figures' internal moods, Gauguin experimented with ways of depicting a sleeper's dream-life.

How does Gauguin's *Manao tupapau* transform the type —inherited from Titian, Ingres, and Manet—of the "courtesan-with-servant" or the "odalisque-with-slave"? In the letter to Mette that comments on the painting, Gauguin wrote that he used "the least possible literary means, as it used to be done."[17] By "literary" he meant the allegorical, narrative, or anecdotal signs that would elucidate the painting's meaning via contextual cues denoting whether a scene was contemporary, foreign, or mythological. Such cues are present in Gauguin's most important antecedents: the servants

[14]Parker and Pollock, 116. For the hierarchical relationship in nineteenth-century painting between patron, painter, and model, see Duncan, 312; the essays in Thomas Hess and Linda Nochlin, *Woman as Sex Object: Studies in Erotic Art* (New York: Newsweek, 1972); and Hanson, 91.

[15]For the critical attention to Manet's *Olympia*, aside from Hanson, see especially T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life* (New York: Knopf, 1985); Michael Fried, "Manet's Sources: Aspects of his Art, 1859-1865," *Artforum* 7 (March 1969): 28-82; Peter Gay, *Art and Act* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976); Linda Nochlin, *Realism* (New York: Penguin, 1971); Theodore Reff, "The Meaning of Manet's *Olympia*," *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 63 (February 1964): 111-22; and Reff, "'Manet's Sources,' A Critical Evaluation," *Artforum* 8 (September 1969): 40-48. For the critical attention to Degas's nudes, see sources listed above (notes 2, 9, and 12); and Eunice Lipton, *Looking into Degas: Uneasy Images of Women and Modern Life* (Berkeley: University of California, 1986).

[16]See Brettell et al., cat. nos. 141-42; and Stuckey's essay in Brettell et al., 256-58.

[17]Nochlin, *Impressionism*, 16. For a valuable discussion of Gauguin's distinction between "literary" and "musical" devices, of Gauguin's debt to Delacroix and Baudelaire in thinking of painting as music, and of the "literary" and "musical" as two levels of symbolism, see Field, 113-116 and 265-67, n. 22. To this Richard Brettell makes an important contribution in his essay, "The Final Years," in Brettell et al., 393.

gathering clothes in the background of Titian's *Venus*, the black attendant watching the musician in Ingres' *Odalisque and Slave*, the "putti" flying in Cabanel's *Birth of Venus*, the maid holding a bouquet of flowers wrapped with newspaper in Manet's *Olympia*. The elements in *Olympia* that shocked its audience, in ways by now so fully discussed by art historians, nonetheless frame the nude model within a recognizable world "whose realism was based on the representation of contemporary Parisian types."[18]

Gauguin kept anecdotal, "literary" cues to a minimum in *Manao*; the canvas represents a nude body on a bed and the profile view of a spectre's head and trunk. Even the title offers an indefinite narrative clue. As Gauguin later explained, he thought "Manao tupapau" meant: "She thinks of the Ghost" or "The Ghost watches over her."[19] The relation between spectre and woman is as equivocal as that between spectator and painting. Who watches whom is ambiguous. While recognizing Gauguin's debt to Manet, we should also note his originality in representing the reclining nude as an unsettling enigma for the viewer.

Gauguin dramatically revised Manet's composition by substituting the figure of the *tupapau* or "ghost" for the black servant. In representing visually what he imagined the sleeper to be dreaming, Gauguin boldly claimed new ground for the genre of the female nude, which traditionally focused one's attention on the body, not the mind. The servants depicted by Titian and Manet do not threaten the status of the nude as the center of attention; nor do they suggest, I think, much about the model's inner life. In contrast, Gauguin found ways to dramatize more tensely and ambiguously the relationship between the observer, the dreaming nude, and the dreamed spirit. Whereas, in paintings like *Parau na te varua ino*, Gauguin had portrayed a spectre as possessing feminine qualities, in *Manao* he presented it as a sexless figure, as if a flat, cut-out icon pasted onto a collage-like composition.[20] Rendered less naturalistically in *Manao*, the spectre's face is like a primitive mask. The spectre cannot easily be read as human, subservient, or in a fixed relationship with the nude model.

Likewise, Gauguin sought to implicate the viewer with the threatening manner in which the spectre and the nude figure seem to eye one another. Near the right border of the canvas, the sleeper's head is turned so that the open right eye looks askance at the viewer standing before the painting. Similarly, the spectre's bright, slivered eye mirrors the glances of both the sleeper and the putative viewer. One is trans-

[18]Reff, "'Manet's Sources'," 119.

[19]Danielsson, 122; and Teilhet-Fisk, 71. Even if, as Danielsson argues, Gauguin misunderstood the Tahitian words *Manao tupapau*, his error reveals something of his own intentions. In that light see Varnedoe, 200: "Primitive language reveals not rock-bottom certainty but essential, original uncertainty—the words can mean two different things, indicate two opposed realities." It is interesting that one of Gauguin's last paintings (W 616)—one with perhaps his most strikingly androgynous figure—also may have been titled *The Spirit Watches Over* (see Brettell et al., 480).

[20]*Parau na te varua ino* (W 458). No scholar seems to have established an incontrovertible order to Gauguin's painting of *Parau* and *Manao* (W 457). On *Parau*, see especially Amishai-Maisels; Stuckey in Brettell et al., 266-68, and Andersen, 185-86. Also worth considering is a charcoal sketch (Brettell et al., cat. no. 161) dated differently by Rewald (527) and Brettell (Brettell et al., 308-309). It is beyond the scope of this essay to address the issue of a sequence to *Parau, Manao*, and this charcoal sketch.

fixed by eyes whose direction and expression are hard to determine. Unlike, *Parau*, where the spectre's larger pupils focus downward, this *tupapau* forces the viewer to hover uneasily in the space between the dreamed and the haunted. It is as if the spirit, as well as the sleeper, has been startled into consciousness. Their eyes converging on the viewer, the two figures in *Manao*—spectre and nude—obliterate the detachment permitted the spectator in *Parau*.

Gauguin also placed the *tupapau* in a more ambiguous, less linear, perspective. Not only are "hinges" between floor and wall barely discernible, but no intermediate overlapping forms exist between the nude, spectre, and setting to give a viewer cues of pictorial or spatial depth. Lacking the stability of any obvious perspectival order, the entire composition operates in a state of extreme compression, which is unnerving. Titian's *Venus*, Ingres' *Odalisque*, and Manet's *Olympia* all feature an attendant occupying a subservient space in the background of the painting. But Tehamana's "spirit" is no mortal servant. If its smaller head seems to conform to naturalistic perspective, its bulky shoulder and torso do not. Gauguin has placed the *tupapau* just above the nude in the apparently shallow plane between bed and wall, underscoring the weightless, ethereal quality of the spectre's form.[21]

In this very compressed pictorial space, the sleeper and the bed are crowded into the shallow foreground space at the bottom half of the canvas. As a result, the nude figure seems closer to the viewer than do her predecessors: the women depicted in Titian's Venus and Manet's Olympia. Few clear signs of distance separate Gauguin's sleeper and the viewer. Even the strange, yellow arabesque patterns forming a parallel plane below the nude body do not give fixed cues for envisioning the composition three-dimensionally. Since Tehamana's feet, at lower left, cross over one flowery pattern of the bed cover, her entire form is difficult to perceive as further away from the viewer than the bed. Over a mattress that seems to be tilted, her crossed feet extend as if she were about to fall out of the bed and the painting. The wakened sleeper appears to float unanchored in her shallow space. The luminous sparks, which form a diamond shape veering downward between the spectre and sleeper, add to this unearthly atmosphere. The total effect is unsteadying.[22]

Gauguin achieves a similar effect through repetitions of color in different spatial planes, a technique that seems to shrink the space that separates them. The girl's hair is the same dark blue as the spectre's. The patterned drapery just to the left of the spectre is painted with rose tints similar to the pillow that draws the viewer's eye towards Tehamana's lower back, and the abstract brown shapes at the top right of the

[21]Teilhet-Fisk (73) describes the spectre's hand as placed "ambiguously" and "ominously" on the edge of Tehamana's bed, but I do not see an "illusion of arrested movement"—at least not in the sense that the *tupapau* is depicted as caught in its approach towards the girl. I see her as an evocation of a dream-image, as Gauguin is trying to show what Tehamana saw in her mind's eye the moment she was startled into consciousness.

[22]For Degas's provision of a "vertiginous view" by suppressing perspectival cues and by tilting the plane of the painting downward, see Pickvance, 19. For her argument that Degas's disruptions of perspective undermined the traditional male/female hierarchy in the nude pose, see Carol Armstrong, 239-40. Her remarks are apropos of *Manao*; as are Brooks's (27).

canvas echo the earth tones of her body. Moreover, the white smudges on her hair link her head to the bright colors in both the background sparks and the foreground sheet on which she lies, thus further flattening the overall composition.

Among others, Maurice Denis paid homage to Gauguin's legacy of coloration: "Remember that a painting, before being a battlefield, a nude woman or a story of any sort, is a flat surface covered with colors assembled in a specific way."[23] The power of Gauguin's palette has been widely recognized and discussed in the accounts of his place among the Post-Impressionist artists. Surprisingly, then, little attention has been paid to Gauguin's use of color in *Manao*. The most complete remarks have been furnished by the artist himself in a letter describing *Manao* to his wife. In that letter Gauguin insisted on the painting's "harmony." Writing about painterly order in musical terms, Gauguin implied a different unity than that provided by the compositional cues he called "literary." Through his use of color he wished to convey a harmony "dark, sad, frightening, and resounding in the eye like a funeral bell."[24] In *Cahier pour Aline* he referred more specifically to "harmonies of orange and blue, linked together with yellows and violets—their derivatives—lit up with greenish sparks."[25] Not only does such language suggest an iconography based on color, it also makes plain the unsettling reaction Gauguin intended to arouse.

It is not merely through tilting one's sense of perspective that his color combinations achieve their effect. Through his patterning of color, Gauguin imbues color with iconographic meaning, which calls into question, as Kirk Varnedoe has suggested, the validity of dichotomies such as physical/spiritual, past/present, and life/death.[26] For example, the spectre's eye glows with the same lemon yellow as the blanket on which Tehamana sleeps, and it wears a cowl of the same dark blue hue as the sleeper's hair and mattress, beneath the yellow blanket. A slightly broken, curving line in the center of the spectre's shoulder is not merely decorative but, like the *tupapau*'s face in profile, repeats the brown hue of the sleeper's body. At the same time, the dark green flecks near the center of each of the nude's buttocks suggest that, precisely where Tehamana displays her earthly eroticism, she is linked to the color of the spectre's cloak. Each color association links dreamer and spirit more closely, as they eye the beholder. Thus, Gauguin represents a nude whose body, rather than merely stripped of clothing, is colored with the spirit that haunts her.

Even more unsettling is the fact that there is not simply one spirit. Filling much of the lateral space between spectre and sleeper, brightly colored sparks complement the spectre's glowing eye. In both his letter to Mette and in *Noa Noa*, Gauguin related these *phosphorescentes* to the Tahitian beliefs about *tupapau*: "There are a few flowers

[23]Most scholars tend to reprint or paraphrase Gauguin's own remarks on the coloration of *Manao tupapau*. Maurice Denis is quoted in Hoog, 294.

[24]Nochlin, *Impressionism*, 168.

[25]Prather and Stuckey, 199.

[26]Varnedoe, 187: "Tahiti represents the basic certainties Gauguin continually sought, and the irreducible ambiguities he inevitably confronted."

in the background but they must not be real since they are imagined; I make them look like sparks. For the Kanaka, the night phosphorescences are connected with the spirit of the dead; they believe this and are frightened by it."[27] Thus, the largest and darkest of the sparks, directly above the sleeper's head, takes on the spectre's own deep blue coloration. At the spectre's eye-level the brightest phosphorescence, directly above Tehamana's buttocks, is daubed with the same brown pigments used to model the nude body. At the same time, this spark's luminous glow complements that of the spectre's eye. In both color and position, then, the most prominent spark connects spirit and body, spectre and nude. Reinforcing this idea is the manner in which the sparks are rendered. As one can tell from close examination of the canvas, the sparks were not drawn distinctly, but rather were smudged onto the canvas, as if shown in the process of taking or losing shape. The artist's finger smudge, a "primitive" painterly act itself, seems connected with the sleeper's inchoate dream-image of the *tupapau*. The purple and violet background, dotted with dark, feathery shapes, seems a terrain of transmutations, of dynamic forms that counter the more lyrically contoured, golden decorations of the blanket beneath Tehamana's body. Gauguin uses the *phosphorescentes* to baffle the viewer, who looks in vain for a naturalistic, intelligible, "literary" order, like that given by the fresh flowers held by Titian's *Venus*, or offered to Manet's *Olympia* by a servant.

The journey, during which Gauguin met and engaged to marry Tehamana, also marked his first encounter with the Tahitian beliefs concerning "spirits of the dead." In *Noa Noa*, he reported that, despite the Tahitians' warnings about *tupapau*, he walked to the plateau of Tamanou for a panoramic look at the island. During his first night in the pitch-dark forest, Gauguin saw sparkles of phosphorescent powder and bemusedly thought of "those good Maoris who had earlier told me those *tupapau* stories." Later in *Noa Noa*, while discussing his daily domestic life with Tehamana, he again mentioned the *tupapau*: "She was never willing to accept the notion that shooting stars, which are frequently seen in this country and cross the sky slowly and full of melancholy, are not tupapaus."[28] For Tehamana the *tupapaus* were ancestors returning in recognizable, yet terrifying form. Despite his interest in primitive relig-

[27]Nochlin, *Impressionism*, 169.

[28]Gauguin was probably not exposed to the tupapau legend until his first stay in Tahiti. According to Teilhet-Fisk (71), he would not have read about tupapau in Moerenhout's books, as he "instead referred to ghosts as *aromatuas*." Gauguin recounted the strange way he became engaged to Tehamana in *Noa Noa*; the incident is included in Wadley, 33-35. Unfortunately, Eleanor Levieux's (D. Guérin) and Jonathan Griffin's (Wadley) translations of Gauguin's French contradict one another. Whereas Levieux's translation (D. Guérin, 94) records that Tehamana could never be shaken of her belief that shooting stars were *tupapaus*, Griffin's version (Wadley, 37) presents her as never admitting the stars might be *tupapaus*. It seems to me much more consistent, given Gauguin's narrative about the night he left her in total darkness and returned to see *Manao tupapau*, that Tehamana would be the believer in *tupapau* and Gauguin the skeptic; therefore, I use the Levieux translation.

ions, Gauguin portrayed himself in *Noa Noa* as skeptical of Tehamana's belief in the *tupapau* legend before the episode that generated *Manao*.

In an essay about the anxiety evoked by an "evil eye," Sigmund Freud suggested that an uncanny sensation often comes when "something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality, or when a symbol takes over the full functions and significance of the thing it symbolizes...."[29] Perhaps such a renewed encounter with previously dismissed fables about the dead inspired Gauguin when he saw the *tupapau* gaze at Tehamana's face. He had voyaged to Tahiti on a quest for self-renewal to exhume the artistic spirit buried within him,[30] but Tehamana's dream of an ancestral ghost might have reminded the artist of human mortality, even in paradise.[31] In this painting Gauguin transmitted the sudden shock of seeing a *tupapau* in the form Tehamana might have dreamed it. He also represented the spectre as suggestive of what it might signify to a Tahitian—the return of a dead ancestor, the nearness of the dead.

Not long after painting *Manao*, Gauguin wrote Mette: "I am hard at work, now I know the soil, its odor, and although I portray the Tahitians in a very enigmatic way, they are Maoris nonetheless and not Orientals from the Batignolles. It took me nearly a year before I managed to understand that...."[32] Thus, he depicted her at a moment when he shared her native state of terror, a state transcending differences of gender between artist and model.

Like most painters of the reclining female nude before him, Manet (for all his modernity) still showed the model face up—her breasts, thighs, and abdomen visible to the viewer. Gauguin, by contrast, showed Tehamana lying face-down. Moreover, he turned the second figure (the spectre) sideways, perhaps in part to give its stare an eerie obliqueness. However, the spectre's flattened, textureless body and the compressed space in which it exists suggest more than that it merely eyes the viewer. With his spectre turned in profile and his nude sleeper prone, Gauguin creates a certain ambiguity concerning the gender of the depicted nude figure. In *Manao* the identifying marks of gender have been turned over, covered. In his prose accounts of the

[29]Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," in *Creativity and the Unconscious*, trans. under the supervision of Joan Rivière (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), 152.

[30]See Andersen, 202-211. In addition, one might note Gauguin's explanation for leaving France in an interview with Jules Huret (D. Guérin, 48) and his comment on Odilon Redon's drawing of a snake swallowing its tail (D. Guérin, 42): "In Europe depicting death with a snake's tail is plausible, but in Tahiti it must be shown with roots growing back bearing flowers."

[31]Freud (as cited in n. 29) connected the "civilized" doubt in ghosts with a desire to avoid "primitive" thoughts of death: "...the primitive fear of the dead is still so strong within us and always ready to come to the surface at any opportunity. Most likely our fear still contains the old belief that the deceased becomes the enemy of his survivor and wants to carry him off to share his new life with him...." (150). Freud's remark is suggestive as a sub-text of Gauguin's own incredulity about the *tupapau* before his nocturnal encounter with Tehamana.

[32]D. Guérin, 57.

picture Gauguin described a feminine "jeune fille," a masculine spectre —"Le *Tupapau*."[33] Yet the painting gains part of its powerful ambiguity by neutering human forms. Even about matters of gender one is left unsure, lacking the certitude or delight in the model's sexuality that traditionally governed paintings of the male or female nude. Gauguin rendered the nude as more haunting than sensual, as much eye as body.

Biographers and art historians have frequently discussed Gauguin's predilection for androgynous forms, and recently several scholars have suggested the possibility of homoerotic elements in his art. Most have turned to the story about the woodcutter in *Noa Noa*, which has attracted attention from Wayne Andersen's book in 1971, to John Gedo's suggestion of a homoerotic relationship between Van Gogh and Gauguin, to Bradley Collins's report about a symposium in 1989 on "The Psychology of the Artist," to Peter Brooks's enlightening essay on "Gauguin's Tahitian Body."[34] Aside from Gauguin's often-discussed story about the woodcutter, there is a curious passage in *Avant et Après* where Gauguin places himself in the position of the wakened sleeper and describes Van Gogh in the role of the intruder: "On several nights I surprised him in the act of getting up and coming over to my bed. To what can I attribute my awakening just at that moment? At all events, it was enough for me to say to him, quite sternly, 'What's the matter with you, Vincent,' for him to go back to bed without a word and fall into a heavy sleep."[35] From such an anecdote, reported over a decade later, one might infer Gauguin's increasing involvement with the idea of homoeroticism the longer he remained in Tahiti.

Indeed, about *Manao* scholars have suggested a variety of masculine or androgynous images as sources for the sleeping figure. Discussing Humbert de Superville's neoclassical etching of a naked male prone beneath a huge skull, Robert Rosenblum described the youth cringing "with an elemental fear that lies halfway between Fuseli's *Nightmare* and Gauguin's *Spirit of the Dead Watching*."[36] Although admitting that he cannot prove either that Gauguin owned a reproduction of de Superville's etching or that the painter ever saw the image, Marcel Giry argued that Gauguin might well

[33]See the excerpt in French from *Cahier pour Aline* quoted in Field, 112. The masculine "le" refers to the Tahitian word, *tupapau*—the ghost who is represented in this scene. Teilhet-Fisk (73) points out that the Tahitians perceive the *tupapau* as either masculine or feminine and notes that Gauguin did not draw the figure in a way that specifies the gender.

[34]For the most illuminating commentary on the woodcutter narrative in *Noa Noa*, see Brooks. Neither Wayne Andersen (202-211) nor Nicholas Wadley (74, n. 42) mentions *Manao tupapau* in their extensive discussions of the woodcutter narrative as related to Gauguin's interest in androgyny. For a psychological interpretation of that interest, see John Gedo, *Portrait of the Artist: Psychoanalysis of Creativity and its Vicissitudes* (New York: Guilford Press, 1983), 139-157; and Bradley Collins, "Van Gogh and Gauguin on the Couch," *Art in America* 77 (December 1989): 61-63.

[35]Paul Gauguin, *Avant et Après*, in Van Wyck Brooks, trans., *Paul Gauguin's Intimate Journals* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1936), 33.

[36]Robert Rosenblum, *Transformations in Late Eighteenth Century Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967) 176.

have known it through his friendship with Meyer de Haan.[37] Moreover, Giry reprinted a woodcut by the Japanese artist, Hokusai, that might bear resemblance to the recumbent figure in *Manao*. More persuasively, Richard Brettell has suggested the *Hermaphrodite* in the Louvre as a likely source for Gauguin's figure; if so, its sensuality (as evoked by buttocks sculpted as if swiveling towards the viewer positioned at the back) is far different from the nude in *Manao*.[38]

To my knowledge, no one has discussed how the indeterminacy of sexual role and identity in *Manao* heightens the viewer's anxiety in looking at the picture. Since the depiction of androgynous figures became gradually more prominent in Gauguin's art during the following decade, *Manao* represents a crucial stage in his evolving image of the nude.[39] He departed dramatically from what Valery chauvinistically called the artist's "perfect pretext," a "supreme act of self-mastery and mastery of his medium...a masterful possession of the beauty herself, in every sense."[40] Such language is irrelevant to Gauguin's *Manao*, whose nude evokes not only beauty, but terror and hallucination. The "masterful" beholder of this sleeper possesses only blank stares.

After painting *Manao*, Gauguin frequently rehandled and reworked the composition. From the *tupapau* woodcuts and lithographs to a painting of a nativity scene, *Te tamari no atua* (1896), the artist continued to pair the young nude and the aged spectre.[41] He did so in ways that enclosed the sleeper, even more completely than *Manao*, within a dream world. In one reprise of the pose, the woodcut of *Manao* for *Noa Noa* (fig. 2), Gauguin encased the sleeper in a kind of womb, compressing her form into a fetal position so strained as to suggest a wrenching dream. Within a pool of iridescent brown ink, the fetal figure is surrounded by a menacing blackness. Except for the title of the work and the initials of the artist, the only forms glowing in the blackness are the eerie eye of the *tupapau*, the *phosphorescentes*, and a perplexing wavy line running from her ankle to the top center of the print. Perhaps an abstract rendering of an umbilical cord, that brown line is reflected at the bottom left in a broken black line extending from the back of the sleeper's head to the rim of the oval. Left hauntingly irresolute by such indecipherable couplings of abstract lines, one wonders about the relationship between the fetal nude and the spectre. Bent stiffly

[37]Marcel Giry, "Une source inédite d'un tableau de Gauguin," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français* (1970): 181-87. Charles Stuckey notes, but does not discuss, this essay (Brettell et al., 215, 281). He also reviews evidence that *Papa Moe* (W 498) portrays a woman but is based on a photograph of a man (Brettell et al., 286).

[38]Richard Brettell, letter to author, 7 February 1989.

[39]For Brettell's analysis of the androgynous figures in Gauguin's work from 1894 to 1902, see Brettell et al., 309, 480-84, 488.

[40]Paul Valéry, "The Triumph of Manet," in *Degas, Manet, Morisot*, trans. David Paul (New York, 1960), 48.

[41]See Marcel Guérin, *L'oeuvre gravé de Gauguin* (Paris, 1927), rev. ed. (San Francisco: Alan Wofsy Fine Arts, 1980), cat. nos. 18-20, 36-40, 50, and 57. (Hereafter all of Gauguin's prints will be referred to as "Guérin" and his catalogue number. Although the *Manao* print discussed in this essay (Guérin 19 and Brettell et al., cat. no. 176) is tinted brown, perhaps the most striking is one that Gauguin printed in bright yellow; see Elizabeth Mongan, Eberhard W. Kornfeld, and Harold Joachim, eds., *Paul Gauguin: Catalogue Raisonné of his Prints* (Bern: Galerie Kornfeld, 1988). Gauguin's *Te Tamari* is W 541.

2. Paul Gauguin, *Manao tupapau*, woodcut. Chicago, The Art Institute (photo: The Art Institute of Chicago)

back from the ankle, the sleeper's feet project into the space of the *tupapau*. It remains unclear whether such a disjunction in the otherwise unbroken brown pool signals a stirring from, or a shrinking within, the womb-like oval. Richard Brettell regards a later, watercolor version of this woodcut (Guérin 36) as showing "an adult woman [who] awaits her own birth," but one might as safely say that in her fantasized womb she recoils from feared death.[42]

More eloquently than any other scholar, Brettell has argued that, after returning to Paris in Autumn 1893, Gauguin preserved the uncanny, shadowy aura of *Manao*, while repeating the composition in various media and in different poses. Brettell attests to the concentrated tension achieved by another reproduction of the image, in which Gauguin truncated the naked body and repositioned the *tupapau* immediately over the dreamer's head. "Needless to say, Gauguin included beautiful nude females," he writes about the woodcuts, "but they lack the easy sensuality that emanates from the paintings."[43] Only with his generalization about the "easy sensuality of the paintings" would I disagree. At their best, the woodcuts renew the eeriness that Gauguin captured in *Manao tupapau*.

Within the genre of the nude "woman at rest" Gauguin explored ways of rendering Tahitian beauties sensuously. However, in much of his most powerful art after *Manao*—for instance, in paintings like *Aha oe feii* (1892), *Te arii vahine* (1896), *Nevermore* (1897), and *D'où venons-nous?* (1897), Gauguin made a starting point of his line, "Otherwise, it's just a nude."[44] In Tahiti Gauguin captured aspects of the unclothed body that he had never painted before so powerfully. In arranging the painting so that the female nude is not positioned in a well-defined plane, Gauguin exerted an

[42]Brettell's essay in Brettell et al., 345.
[43]Brettell, as above, 318.
[44]Prather and Stuckey, 199.

3. Paul Gauguin, *Self-Portrait with Hat*, oil on canvas. Paris, Musée d'Orsay (photo: Art Resource)

important influence on the next generation of artists who represented the nude, such as Matisse and Picasso.[45]

Not long after Gauguin painted *Manao*, he reintroduced the image, cropped and inverted, in a self-portrait (fig. 3). In *Self-Portrait with Hat* (1893-94) the artist depicted not only his own mirror-image, but also that of this canvas. In Manet's *Portrait of Zola* (1868), a possible source for this self-portrait, the artist had included a copy of *Olympia* behind his sitter, the novelist-art critic who had championed it. If Gauguin conceived his self-portrait as a response to Manet's *Portrait of Zola*, then he represented himself alone as the best critic of his art, its sole chronicler.[46] Further, Gauguin's eyes—colored the dark green of Tehamana's, his left eye half-shielded, just as hers appears in *Manao*—seem to glare back at the nude and their shared *tupapau*. As if to place himself within their world, the artist painted his European shirt the same dark blue as the spectre's cloak, his face and hat the same blend of browns, greens, and yellows given Tehamana. Thus, Gauguin put himself between two mirrors—one of glass, one on canvas. In a lasting homage to *Manao tupapau*, he created a self-portrait of an artist staring at a reflection of his art.

Department of English
The Collegiate School
New York, New York

[45]The question of Gauguin's influence on the Fauvists, Cubists, and Expressionists is discussed by Charles Estienne, *Gauguin* (Geneva: Skira, 1953), 103-04; more recently by Hoog, 293-304, and Varnedoe, 201-03; but most effectively by Brettell et al. For the indications of Gauguin's influence on Matisse's sculpted *Backs*, see Brettell et al., 191; on Rousseau's *Sleeping Gypsy* (195); and on nudes by Vallotton (307), Munch (317), and Picasso (396, 413, 423, and 450). The full extent of Gauguin's influence, particularly on Matisse and Picasso, remains to be assessed.

[46]W 506. For the inclusion of a mirror image of *Manao* in this self-portrait, see Françoise Cachin's essay in Brettell et al., 311-12.

An Interview with Rosalind Krauss

Gregory Gilbert and *Richard Paley*

This interview took place on April 24, 1990 in the home of Rosalind Krauss in New York City. Professor Krauss completed her undergraduate education at Wellesley College and her doctoral degree at Harvard University, where she wrote her dissertation on the sculpture of David Smith. Her research on Smith was published in 1971 as Terminal Iron Works: The Sculpture of David Smith. *From 1971 to 1976 she was an associate editor for* Artforum *magazine, and in 1971 she received the Frank Jewett Mather Award for distinction in art criticism from the College Art Association. Her next book,* Passages in Modern Sculpture, *1977, is regarded as an outstanding survey of the field and reflects her advocacy of Minimal sculpture. Her 1984 study,* The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths, *is a collection of essays reflecting her theoretical interests of the 1970s and 1980s. In 1976 Professor Krauss, along with Annette Michelson, founded the influential critical journal,* October, *which she continues to co-edit. She has taught at MIT, Princeton University, and since 1975 has been on the faculty of Hunter College and the City University of New York Graduate School. In the fall of 1992 she will join the faculty of the Department of Art History and Archaeology at Columbia University. She is currently working on a book, titled at present* The Optical Unconscious, *in which she continues her research on the issues of vision and "visuality" in early twentieth-century modernism.*

INTERVIEWER: Professor Krauss, could you tell us about your educational background in art history and whether you had any training in philosophy or aesthetics?
ROSALIND KRAUSS: I was an undergraduate history-of-art major at Wellesley College, which at the time was, methodologically speaking, an outpost of Harvard University. And then, I went to Harvard, where I got my Ph.D. in 1969. I have had no formal training in philosophy or aesthetics. The closest I've ever come to philosophy within an institutional context was as an auditor in Rogers Albritton's famous course on Wittgenstein.[1]
INT: Some of the more influential art critics of the 1960s, such as yourself, Michael Fried, Kenworth Moffet, Kermit Champa, and Jane Harrison-Cone, all came from the Fine Arts Graduate Program at Harvard.[2] It has been noted that the "formalist bent" of this group's criticism was conditioned by the program's stress on formalist art history and evaluative connoisseurship. Is this a fair assessment of your educational experience at Harvard?

[1]The course with Albritton focused on Wittgenstein's later works: *Philosophical Investigations* and *Blue and Brown Books*. The most common editions of these texts are G.E.M. Anscombe, Rush Rees, and G.H. von Wright, eds., *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953); and *Blue and Brown Books: Preliminary Studies for the Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958).
[2]See Megan Fox, "The New Criticism: Prescriptive or Responsive?" in *Definitive Statements - American Art: 1964-66* (Providence, RI: Brown University, Department of Art, 1986), 38.

RK: Sydney Freedberg, who was a major figure at Harvard during my time there, focussed on questions of style. Thus, our training involved something like New Criticism's "close reading." The emphasis on stylistic analysis implied an extremely precise connection to the work of art in an attempt to understand its formal dynamic. This may have been one of the reasons Michael Fried was attracted to Harvard. Those of us who evolved as critics—Ken Moffet, Jane Harrison-Cone, and myself—did so in relation to Michael, who was far more developed as a critic, having begun to publish long before he came to Harvard. Indeed, it was through Michael that I began to write, first for *Art International* and then for *Artforum*.[3] But I would like to stress that we all had our own very nuanced notions of what you are calling our "formalist bent." I know that in 1967, when I first met Leo Steinberg, I had already understood the importance of his work for my own ideas about art criticism, because I saw in it a marriage between close reading and a particular way of deploying ideas about content.

INT: Recently, at Harvard, there was a great deal of conflict between professors and students who maintained different methodological positions. I am referring specifically to the dispute between Sydney Freedberg and T.J. Clark.[4] We were wondering if you, Fried, and the others encountered any tension at Harvard over your strong interest in contemporary art and theory?

RK: I don't really think so, no. And I have to say that the type of theoretical conflict that arose between Freedberg and Clark is quite different from the one you are asking about. I think our art-historical training and our interest in contemporary art and criticism were working in tandem. We were still in thrall to a notion of "tradition" as the gradual unfolding of certain root principles throughout art's history. When Greenberg says in "Modernist Painting" that a certain formal preoccupation starts with Giotto and continues without interruption, we thought, "Sure, why not? Yes, it does;" it still involves the same kinds of problems about virtual space, etc.[5] So, no, there wasn't any tension at the time.

INT: Since you mentioned Clement Greenberg, I wanted to ask you about a reference you made to Greenberg in the introduction to your book, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*. You remarked that Greenberg's critical method has been "inexactly referred to as formalist."[6] I thought that was a very intriguing statement; what exactly did you mean by it?

[3]The early articles for *Artforum* include: Rosalind E. Krauss, "New York," *Artforum* 7 (January 1969):53-55; "Essential David Smith," *Artforum* 7 (February 1969): 43-49; "Essential David Smith," *Artforum* 7 (April 1969): 34-41; "Robert Motherwell's New Paintings," *Artforum* 7 (May 1969): 26-28.

[4]For a discussion of this dispute, see Sara Day, "Art History's New Warrior Breed," *Art International* ns. no. 6 (Spring 1989): 78-89. This article also discusses Krauss's post-structuralist approach in relation to new methodological trends in art history, see 81-82.

[5]See Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," *Art and Literature* no. 4 (Spring 1965): 193-201.

[6]Krauss, "Introduction," *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 1. For critical analyses of Krauss's book, see the following articles and reviews: Yve-Alain Bois, review in *Art Journal* 45 (Winter, 1985): 369-73; Craig Owens, "Analysis Logical and Ideological," *Art in America* 73 (May, 1985): 25-31; Paul Wood, "Howl of Minerva," *Art History* 9 (March, 1986): 119-31; David Carrier, "Philosophical Art Criticism," *Leonardo* 19 (1986): 170-74; Donald Kuspit, "Conflicting Logics: Twentieth-Century Studies at the Crossroads," *Art Bulletin* 69 (March, 1987): 125-28; Diane E. Karp, review in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 46 (Spring, 1988): 426-28.

RK: Formalism is a complicated, multi-faceted phenomenon. Any project that makes a mathematical model for what it wants to describe is, for example, involved in formalism; but that's certainly not Greenberg's type of formalism. Many analytical projects, having very little to do with Greenberg, could be described as formalist. You could say that all structuralisms are types of formalism. And from this point of view the historical connection between Russian Formalism and structuralism—a link forged by Roman Jakobson—clarifies the considerable differences between Russian attitudes and Greenberg's. I think Greenberg's project is a very specific and limited one, while formalism's various guises are complicated, historically embedded, and multiple. That is why I think it is intellectually vulgar to reduce formalism to "Greenberg," or equally to label the complexity of Greenberg's thought with this term. Greenberg's thought, in fact, works towards a marriage between phenomenology and formalism. His notion of opticality is involved in understanding the complex problem of either asserting or experiencing materiality of the pictorial object's surface due to the projective mechanisms of vision, which requires a phenomenological loop. And it is in the orbit of that loop, in that very complexity, that I think Greenberg projects art as a symbolic form. Now, to speak of symbolic forms as "formalism" is, again, very reductive. I think it only serves a certain kind of art-critical cant to use the term "Greenbergian formalism."

I didn't go into any of this—the differences between Greenberg, Cassirer, Shklovsky, and so forth—in the introduction to my book, because there I was much more intent on discussing my own work's relation to structuralism than on launching into an analysis of the various "formalisms," particularly as they are understood through the lens of Greenberg.

INT: How would you characterize the notion of symbolic form in Greenberg's writing?

RK: The notion of symbolic form is an important aspect of Greenberg's project, one that's been effaced in the current reception of his work. The degree to which he is serious about content arising from the formal possibilities of art hasn't been either understood or acknowledged by many people. Greenberg understands these possibilities as not simply residing in the materiality of the art object, but also in the mechanisms of visualizing it, and thus stemming from the nature of our perceptual/cognitive systems.

INT: What led you to write your dissertation on the sculpture of David Smith?[7] As you noted in your book, *Terminal Iron Works*, Smith's sculpture was only supported by a small group of artists and critics at the time you undertook your studies in the mid-1960s.[8]

RK: Since the small group of artists and critics who supported Smith's work were, precisely, the only group that counted for me at the time, I had no doubts about Smith's place within an historical "mainstream." As I said earlier, I was trained at Harvard and embraced certain notions of history. But what I gradually came to understand in Smith's work acted against the grain of those very notions and constituted, I guess, the first stage in my own questioning of the art-historical paradigms I had received. Because what I saw in Smith's sculpture was that his "development"

[7]Krauss, "The Sculpture of David Smith" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1969).
[8]Krauss, *Terminal Iron Works: The Sculpture of David Smith* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), 85f.

challenged the very idea of development, an idea central to various concepts about the history of style, about the shape of individual careers, about the evolution of certain formal problems. What I saw in Smith's work instead, in his continued fixation (over thirty years) on a limited range of concerns: the same canon, the same rape, the same totem figures, and so on, was the enactment of repetition compulsion. I found this other shape—not a parabolic curve, we could say, but a flat line—very intriguing; and I came back to a consideration of this issue in my essay "Grids," with the observation that modernism itself has been involved, without acknowledging it, in this very repetition compulsion, the same grid over and over.[9]

INT: In *Terminal Iron Works*, you acknowledged the influence of Greenberg's and Fried's critical ideas on your study.[10] However, certain aspects of your analysis, such as your discussion of psychoanalytic issues and of Smith's resistance to artistic tradition, are quite opposed to their precepts. Given your later break with their position, I think it is interesting that, though under their influence, you already seem to have been forming your own views.

RK: It's interesting you should say that, because one of the last conversations I had with Clement Greenberg occurred after I had sent him a manuscript of my dissertation on Smith. In my study, I combined a formal analysis with a somewhat primitive psychoanalytic reading of Smith's themes of violence and destruction. I wanted to use a set of characterological strategies to try to imbricate problems of content with decisions made about form. Greenberg told me this was a text he wished he had written. Although *he* didn't want to talk specifically about content or meaning, he admired it when other people did so in a way that wasn't stupid. The disagreements I had with Greenberg and Fried did not arise over my work on Smith.

INT: What was it, then, that prompted your break with Greenberg's and Fried's theoretical position, and when exactly did this occur?

RK: The break between Greenberg and myself resulted from two things: one was the war in Vietnam; the other was Greenberg's contempt for Minimalist sculpture, particularly the work of Richard Serra. In the late sixties, I had experienced a kind of revelation in front of the work of Serra. It seemed to me sculpture of an unquestionable level of achievement. I was fully aware of the distaste Greenberg and Fried had for Minimalism, and I felt a distance from them about this, but I hadn't really pushed to articulate why I couldn't accept their position. Initially, I didn't really have a language or any aesthetic criteria through which to grasp that work, since I had been formed by a modernist position linked to Greenberg and Fried. It was the experience of Serra's work, and subsequently that of Smithson and Morris (which I could then look back at from a very different vantage), that pushed me to develop my own analysis of Minimalism.[11]

INT: I think it is interesting that in the late 1960s and early 1970s both yours and Michael Fried's theoretical positions were coming out of phenomenology and the late work of Wittgenstein, yet you took such divergent positions.

[9]Krauss, "Grids," *October*, no. 8 (Spring 1979): 31-44; reprinted in *Originality and the Avant-Garde*, 8-22.

[10]Krauss, "Preface," *Terminal Iron Works*, np.

[11]Krauss discussed her views on Minimalism with regard to Greenberg's and Fried's critical practice in an earlier interview, see James and Caryn Faure Walker, "Activity of Criticism," *Studio International* 189 (March/April 1975): 85f.

RK: I would like to stress that the positions I have taken have come from my observations of art and feelings I've had about certain kinds of work. What I see happening among younger art historians and critics is that, independently of specific work or a development in art that seems to require an explanation, they simply adopt a philosophical or theoretical position, a move that can often lead to saying preposterous things about various works. What accounts for the divergence between Fried's position and my own with regard to our "phenomenologies," is that he was committed to creating an explanatory model for one kind of art—to which we could give the shorthand term "optical"—and I was doing the same thing, but for another.[12] In phenomenology he found an analysis of the beholder and of beholding—one that essentializes the act of beholding in an experience of necessary distance from the object. From this he developed a kind of foundational condition for all great art, which he later came to call its "supreme fiction"—that is, that the work of art, since it is by definition (or so he would argue) made to be beheld, must create the illusion that the viewer somehow exists before it only as a function of his or her vision, but not as a corporeal being, a body. In contradistinction to this, I was pursuing the idea of a "lived *bodily* perspective" and of the body's own coordinates—the fact that it has a front and a back, a left side very different from its right, etc.—as the place of convergence of what Merleau-Ponty calls a "preobjective experience," at once abstract and signifying.[13] Needles to say, it was Minimalism that oriented me here.

INT: Before we move beyond discussing your education and early work, I had one other question. It has been said that the post-structuralist ideas of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault grew out of the radical politics and student activism in France in the late 1960s. Since you received your educational training in the late '60s, did a similar spirit of political unrest in this country have an impact on your critical views?

RK: First of all, I don't agree that the philosophical views of Derrida and Foucault grew out of student activism and politics. Instead, they both paralleled and predated these things. Foucault's *Madness and Civilization*, for instance, was published in 1961 and Derrida's *Speech and Phenomena* in 1967, but stemming from earlier dissertation work.[14] What was important for formulating much of the sixties thinking was Gilles Deleuze's book on Nietzsche, with its meditation on the holder of power, which also appeared in the early 1960s.[15] And, in a sense, much of this French thinking derives from a complex set of circumstances that goes back to the 1930s and '40s relating to the reception of Nietzsche and Hegel in France and the way this affected various writers who were important to work of the 1960s. I'm thinking here of Georges Bataille as a formative figure for Foucault. As for this country, I don't see how 1968 had much

[12]For additional discussion of the divergence between Krauss's and Fried's critical practices, see Krauss, "Theories of Art after Minimalism and Pop," in *Discussions in Contemporary Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1987), 55-87.

[13]See, for example, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith, (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962).

[14]Current editions of these texts are available. See Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena: And Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. David Allison (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), and Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity and the Age of Reason* (New York: Random House, 1988).

[15]For a current edition, see Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

to do with the logic of structuralism and its post-structuralist radicalization. If you really want to know how I got involved with the kind of theory that interests me, it was through my work as a critic. And I undertook that work specifically in 1968 understanding that it probably wasn't political at all. In the late '60s there was a movement on various campuses called the Open University, through which some professors tried to make a connection between their political convictions and their academic roles. When I was teaching at MIT, I was part of their chapter of the Open University, and I remember one gathering in particular in which David Baltimore, later to get a Nobel Prize in biology, let out a kind of cry of pain saying, "You know, if I really worked in terms of my politics, I would be a nutritionist." His anguish was in direct relation to how little interest he could muster for nutrition. So, countering a kind of politics of the intellect there is an erotics of the intellect, in which you do what you love. I think this was a decisive moment for me in which I looked unblinkingly at my own feeling for art history and theory and criticism and, even though I could not rationalize it as a form of political activism, I decided to embrace it. And it was through continuing my practice as a critic that I developed the beginnings of my own version of what would later come to be called, more generally, institutional critique, in which what comes to focus—not as the neutral vehicle for the presentation and circulation of objects, but as an object in its own right—is the gallery, the museum, and even the "landscape."

INT: Do you think that at present there is a connection between your work and a political position?

RK: Not only has my own work tried to refine a critique of institutions—particularly within art history, questioning for example the politics of its newest branch: the history of photography—but *October* magazine has specifically fostered an analysis of representation, one that has a political dimension.

INT: What was the editorial or critical stance of *Artforum* when you first became an editor in the early 1970s, and did this change during your affiliation with the magazine? Also, did your interaction with the other writers, like Lawrence Alloway, Barbara Rose, or Max Kozloff, influence your development as a critic?

RK: I first started writing for *Artforum* under Phil Leider's editorship. It wasn't until John Coplans became editor, which coincided with my moving to New York, that I joined the Editorial Board. While Phil's allegiances seemed to be split between Post-Painterly Abstraction and Minimalism—although the latter increasingly engaged him to the detriment of the former, Coplans really distanced the magazine from art associated with Fried or Greenberg. In addition, Coplans seemed to want to open the magazine to a wide range of tastes. He therefore ran *Artforum* as a pluralistic enterprise: a group of us who agreed to disagree. There were tremendous fights on the Board: Lawrence Alloway hated me and Annette Michelson; Max Kozloff liked Annette, hated me, and so forth. The splits were really awful, and we would have tremendous rows. I remember one painful dinner at Coplans's house with Lawrence sneering at me for daring to talk about something called an "aesthetic experience." But whatever our division we were all equal. In 1974, however, Coplans decided to make Max Kozloff a member of the staff, and suddenly as a *paid* editor he became more equal than the others. The rapidity with which Kozloff put his *politique* in place was amazing. This grew out of his convictions about photography and the role of realism in opening art up to social issues. He was determined to rid the magazine of its earlier "formalism." From this time forward, Annette Michelson and I realized we

had to leave the magazine, which we did within six months of Kozloff's having assumed power. Upon our departure, when we also announced that we were starting *October*, John Coplans explained to *The Village Voice* that he had had to "purge the formalists." His remark, which he had enunciated many times earlier, gives you some insight into the elaborate ironies that were behind the name of our own journal. Kozloff ran *Artforum* for the next two years—until Coplans and he were both fired—as a brand of social-realist criticism.[16]

INT: In the late 1960s and early '70s, when Greenberg's and Fried's critical positions were being challenged, critics were searching for new theoretical paradigms. Your 1972 article in *Artforum*, "A View of Modernism," is a personal testimony to this period of conceptual change.[17] What theoretical ideas did you find significant at that time?

RK: In the late '60s I was becoming increasingly interested in the non-site's and the earthwork's relation to documentation. It was in that context that I encountered Walter Benjamin's writings, which had just been translated. It struck me that "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" offered an important alternative to the way I had been thinking about contemporary art, one which related to changes that were occurring in the mode of artistic production.[18] Through this I refocused my work on the documentary aspects of body and performance art, as well as on video and conceptual art, acknowledging the proliferation of phenomena going on in the early 1970s, which many people chose to interpret through notions like pluralism, individuality, and the burgeoning of possibilities of expression. I, instead, perceived this range of artistic activity as, in fact, moving in lock-step, determined by a kind of photographic logic—the logic of documentation. I then worked my way to a consideration of issues of the sign—the semiology of the photographic support. At that point, Roland Barthes's writings on photography became crucial, and I began trying to teach myself basic principles in theoretical fields in which I had not the slightest training. I pursued this line of thinking, convinced that something important had happened in contemporary production that couldn't be explained by the happy notions of artistic pluralism or individual freedom—notions that ultimately were only greasing the wheels of the galleries. The semiologic of photography and its connection to art ranging from site-specific abstraction to hyper-realism was something I began working on in about 1974. As a result, a million questions opened up all at once, for example, the relation of video art to the condition of the mirror and the mirror's connection to feedback. In formulating these ideas Benjamin's work was crucial as a weapon against the kind of arguments Greenberg and Fried had advanced—arguments predicated on notions of history and how artistic practice could be rationalized. In addition to Benjamin, Wittgenstein was important for me in holding out a model of thinking that dealt with the productiveness of doubt, of being able to cast doubt on one model of explanation even if you didn't have another. Since at

[16]Krauss also related her experiences writing for *Artforum* in a profile on Ingrid Sischy by Janet Malcolm, "Girl of the Zeitgeist," *The New Yorker* 62 (20 October 1986): 49-51.

[17]Krauss, "A View of Modernism," *Artforum* 11 (September 1972): 48-51.

[18]Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" first appeared in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 5, no. 1 (1936), republished in H. Arendt, ed., *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Harcourt Brace & Jovanovich, Inc., 1968).

that time I didn't really have a model, I wanted to experience the fact that I didn't. I don't think I felt I had an alternative model until my essay, "Notes on the Index."[19] It was at that point that I suddenly had a theoretical position that generated an explanatory model that I could apply to enough different situations to make it seem really coherent and powerful. That was around 1975.

INT: In your writings on the documentary nature of painting in the early 1970s, in particular your 1971 article, "Pictorial Space and the Question of Documentary," you took issue with Michael Fried's notion of presentness in the work of Noland and Stella.[20] You argued that there can't be presentness if the work's whole justification and meaning is based on an historical matrix or a past tradition (you described this as being like an extended narrative that was located outside the work). Moving to your later writings on the indexical nature of art, you discussed certain types of art as empty forms or substances that have to look beyond themselves for explication.[21] I thought it was interesting that there seemed to be a connection between these issues: the documentary and the indexical. They seem to be analogous aesthetic conditions. Was there a conscious evolution in your analysis, and was there, in fact, a link between these ideas?

RK: At the beginning, with "The Question of Documentary," I was sort of flailing around, using whatever theoretical tools I could put together. I was searching for a theoretical position that would not simply be a refutation of Greenberg's and Fried's. I didn't want just to pick apart the little strands of their argument and say, "Well, how can there be presentness if, according to you, the work is always embedded in tradition and there's an 'always already' that you have to keep referring to?" That's not a very satisfying way of conducting an argument. It is much more rewarding if you can build another model that allows you to say, "Look, I don't care about your model, because it doesn't explain very much, and I've fashioned a much more powerful one that explains what I want to investigate." What I thought needed explaining at that time was the way of working held out, for example, by Smithson's practice in which an elsewhere was always packed into the work, and radically so in something like his "Mirror Travels in the Yucatan." So, if you didn't have a model that could address that type of issue, you didn't have a model. This was my case until I could confront photography.

INT: In recent years there has been a great deal of revisionist writing on Cubist collage. For example, Patricia Leighten, David Cottington, Christine Poggi, and Wendy Holmes have offered new political, formal, and linguistic interpretations. Your work on Cubist collage has often been at the center of their discussions, but many have taken issue with your structuralist approach.[22] How do you see your work in relation

[19]Krauss, "Notes on the Index," in *Originality of the Avant-Garde*, 196-219.

[20]Krauss, "Pictorial Space and the Question of Documentary," *Artforum* 10 (November 1971): 69.

[21]See, for example, Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," *October* no. 8 (Spring 1989), reprinted in Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays in Post-Modern Culture* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), 31-42, and in Krauss, *Originality of the Avant-Garde*, 276-90; and Krauss, "Notes on the Index," *October* nos. 3 & 4 (Spring & Fall 1977), reprinted in *Originality of the Avant-Garde*, 196-219.

[22]For Krauss's analysis of Cubist collage, see "Re-Presenting Picasso," *Art in America* 68 (December 1980): 91-96. Also note the following discussions of Cubist collage that have cited Krauss's writings on the subject: Patricia Leighten, "Editors Statement," *Art Journal* 74 (Winter 1988): 273; Christine Poggi, "Frames of Reference: 'Table' and 'Tableau' in Picasso's Collages and Constructions," *Art Journal* 74 (Winter 1988): 322; Wendy Holmes, "Decoding Collage: Signs and Surface," in *Collage: Critical Views*, ed. Katherine Hoffman (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989): 201-10.

to the earlier views of Greenberg, Rosenblum, and Daix and the new scholarship?

RK: In the presentation I made to the symposium held at MOMA in conjunction with the Picasso/Braque exhibition, I asked what it would mean to hold onto the structural-linguistic analysis that Yve-Alain Bois and I have both been making of Cubist collage, in which we show the way collage elements are constituted as signs and therefore as fully "relative, oppositive, and negative," but nonetheless to respond to the challenge Tom Crow posed in his essay, "Modernism and Mass Culture," whereby we would open that analysis up to the social context within which collage was invented.[23] Which is to say, how do we prevent our analysis from collapsing back into the same kind of unmediated realism, that same kind of naiveté about representation—and about Cubist collage of all things!—that plagues most social history of art? My analysis of Rosenblum's work has been that it suffers from this realism; and I would certainly say the same thing about Leighten's. My answer to this was to go back to Bakhtin's own weaning of linguistics away from what he saw as its abstractness in order, instead, to embed any given utterance within its context of emission and reception, or what he called its discursive horizon. The discursive horizon acknowledges the historical and social or interpersonal specificity of a given speech act, of which the making of a work of art is certainly an example, but it also holds onto the fact that this is discourse and thus a matter of signs, of language, of something that is never simply transparent to reality. So I asked what it would mean to conduct a Bakhtinian analysis of the onset of collage, specifically Picasso's very early and important decision to use newspaper columns. What I came up with by means of this analysis is different, certainly, from Leighten's realism. I agree with Poggi that Mallarmé and his attitudes toward the newspaper are important, but my conclusions are rather far from hers. In any event, my "discursive horizon" is constructed by the role of the newspaper played in the thinking of those poets surrounding Picasso. It consists of an axis separating Mallarmé, on the one hand, from Apollinaire and Blaise Cendrars, on the other.

INT: As one of the major art critics of the 1960s and '70s, how do you perceive the quality and function of criticism today?

RK: Criticism involves advocacy. It isn't just reading or analyzing art, because that is an academic exercise. Yes, it's true that the academy with its art-historical canon is also advocacy; there is no such thing as a value-neutral reading. But criticism involves a more active advocacy than one finds in the academy. Therefore, the work by critics that I would deem important is involved in advocacy, as in Benjamin Buchloh's writing on Gerhard Richter or the work of Marcel Broodthaers. With this kind of criticism you have a desire to make the leap with the artist, so just as the artist has risked something in the creative enterprise, the critic takes a risk in saying, "OK, with my work I'm also going to put my reputation here, I'm going to be in this with you: the artist." Thus, criticism is no different today than it was when I started writing; and just as there were very few critics worth reading then, there are very few today. Benjamin Buchloh is, along with one or two others, in that tiny group. But, now I think

[23]Symposium held in conjunction with the exhibition, "Picasso and Braque: Pioneering Cubism," at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, November 10-13, 1989; and Thomas Crow, "Modernism in Mass Culture," in *Modernism and Modernity: The Vancouver Conference Papers*, ed. B. Buchloh, S. Guilbaut, and D. Solkin (Halifax, Nova Scotia: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Arts Design, 1983), 215-64.

there is another genre, which is less a form of critical advocacy than a special kind of cultural analysis, an almost perverse kind of analysis. That particular form of writing, which I find very interesting, is something Fred Jameson does, in which the object of his analysis is cultural revolution. And what he means by this is the way art makes an imaginative space for the next form of capital.

INT: What were your goals in founding *October* magazine, and how do you perceive its function in relation to other journals like *Representations*, *Art History*, *Critical Inquiry*, and *Art Criticism*?

RK: Since, when we started *October* there wasn't any *Representations* or *Art Criticism*, we didn't conceive of it as having any relation to those publications. For us, *Critical Inquiry* was a very conservative project coming out of the Chicago School, and we didn't want to have any connection to it. *Partisan Review* was something we thought about as a model, but only as it had been a long time ago, as a center of intellectual and cultural analysis carried on outside the university. In the early 1970s there were very few models in this country, although, while this may sound pretentious, there was a more important one abroad in *Tel Quel* (which is obvious from the design of *October*). As far as something like *Art History* is concerned, we didn't want *October* to be an academic journal.

INT: Even though it comes out of MIT Press?

RK: MIT Press pays only for our production costs, not our editorial ones, which are considerable; these we raise independently. We couldn't produce the magazine without MIT's support. So, because of that, I suppose we are technically an academic journal, although we struggle to keep the content of *October* from being academic. The origins of *October* can be traced to some of the problems that Annette Michelson and I encountered working for *Artforum*. For instance, during the period when things were quite bad between John Coplans, Max Kozloff, and Annette and myself, Annette proposed to Coplans to do a translation of Foucault's *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*.[24] This essay had played a role in my own work for the catalogue of the exhibition, "Joan Miró: Magnetic Fields," which Margit Rowell and I had organized for the Guggenheim Museum.[25] So, I felt this was a very important text and was enthusiastic about the idea of publishing it. It was at this time that I was becoming knowledgeable about this theoretical material, and it seemed important for *Artforum* to be addressing it. But Coplans absolutely refused. What then became important for Annette and myself was the idea of another kind of magazine altogether through which we could make this world of theory available. We wanted to create a publication that would make a conjunction between theory and contemporary practice possible, and I think *October* has succeeded in this. Another moment in our discovery of the real limits of a magazine like *Artforum* came when Annette proposed a special issue on performance art, and this was refused. We felt that there were non-commercial aspects of art practice that *Artforum*, tied as it was to a commercial system, wasn't going to support. Annette and I had really suffered under the conditions of producing a magazine hostage to the gallery system. For example, if you didn't review a particular artist's show, the gallery would pull its advertising. And we were appalled by the commercial con-

[24]Michel Foucault, *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* (Montpellier: Edition Pata Margana, 1973), republished as *This Is Not a Pipe*, trans. James Harkness (Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley Press, 1983).

[25]Krauss and Margit Rowell, *Joan Miró: Magnetic Fields*, exh. cat. (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1972).

ception of the magazine-as-a-whole as simply a cumbersome form of advertising, so that articles by critics were treated by the galleries as long captions under photographic reproductions of art they sold. They didn't care what you wrote, as long as there was a picture or many pictures. Practically speaking, this meant that the editorial space of the magazine was, in fact, shrinking in comparison with advertisements and space committed to reproductions. One of the most hideous moments in this whole trend was the Linda Benglis business, in which Robert Pincus-Witten wanted her dildo photograph to be printed as a centerfold within the essay he was writing on her. When Coplans refused—I guess even he had trouble with the idea of the transformation of the putative art object into a "centerfold," with its particular connotations—Benglis demanded that it be reproduced in her gallery's ad. But in whatever form, we felt that we were being cast as procurers for artists. When we started *October*, we were adamant that there would be no advertising from galleries and that we would exercise restraint in the use of reproductions. This, of course, meant no color. When we did the special issue devoted to Leo Steinberg's essay on "The Sexuality of Christ," friends of Steinberg offered to pay for color reproductions, but we said, "No."[26] We explained to Leo that we were sorry, but this was our policy, and he accepted it. Also, it is important for me to state one of the major reasons we decided to call the journal *October*. It had to do with Kozloff's position with *Artforum*. He was claiming realism as the only vehicle for politically committed art and condemning everything else as formalism. We felt this was a replay of the kind of repressive, Stalinist aesthetics Eisenstein had suffered from, beginning with his film, *October*. We decided to embrace this name as a banner of the history of the complex relations between politics and artistic form and practice.

INT: This seems an appropriate moment to ask what response you have to Roger Kimball's attacks against *October* in his book, *Tenured Radicals: How Politics Has Corrupted Our Higher Education*?[27]

RK: You know that chapter originally appeared as an article in *The New Criterion*, which is where I read it.[28] What I remember about the piece was Kimball's accusation of intellectual obscurantism—of *October*'s being rife with writing that was overly difficult. Yet, Kimball also strongly attacked a political message that he somehow found came through loud and clear, despite the putative difficulty of the prose.

INT: One reason I brought this up is that it seems Kimball's platform can be related to a growing conservatism in this country that is beginning to have a concrete impact on the arts. I think this conservative force has had some rather ominous results, like the dismantling of Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc*, the Robert Mapplethorpe controversy, the current pressures on the NEA. In fact, the inaugural issue of *October* in 1976 stated that the journal was founded during a period when traditional artistic and critical tendencies were being revived. And the editors saw the magazine as a necessary response to these reactionary tendencies.

[26]Leo Steinberg, "The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and Modern Oblivion," *October*, no. 25 (Summer, 1983).

[27]Roger Kimball, *Tenured Radicals: How Politics Has Corrupted Our Higher Education* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990).

[28]Kimball, "The Trouble with 'October'," *The New Criterion* 7 (October 1988): 5-15.

RK: The question for us, when confronted with this kind of scurrilous and dangerous, middlebrow, mid-cult assault that claimed a certain intellectual respectability for itself, was how to deal with it. Should we answer it in the pages of *October*, therefore somehow dignifying it? Or should it more properly be rebutted by a third party who could analyze, from the outside, the kind of scare tactics *The New Criterion* is involved in? We hoped the latter would happen. It didn't.

INT: In your writing, especially your pieces on Picasso, you have spoken out against the use of psychobiography in art-historical analysis.[29] Yet, in your own work you have referred to the ideas of Freud and Lacan. What exactly is your position on the role of psychoanalytic theory in art history?

RK: I can best answer with regard to the book I am now writing, which has the working title, *The Optical Unconscious*. Clearly this name identifies with the fundamental concept of psychoanalysis, but just as clearly, in my own mind, it in no way commits me to psychobiography, or to a kind of psychoanalysis conducted on individual artists. It is not Picasso's or Pollock's unconscious I want to track, but something I'm identifying as the "optical" unconscious. This project grew out of specific work I was doing on Giacometti for the "Primitivism" exhibition at MOMA and the work I had done for the Surrealist photography exhibition, "L'Amour Fou," the theoretical underpinnings of which were provided by a kind of theoretical triplet—Georges Bataille, Roger Caillois, and Jacques Lacan—whose importance for Surrealism in general and for these artists in particular I had come to understand.[30] I began to see in this artistic and theoretical work a resistance to what we could locate as the mainstream modernist position with regard to vision—its model of visuality—which modernism had evolved as a way of rationalizing its project, particularly that of abstraction, but also ideas about the role of color. It is a very idealized, transcendental notion that supports a concept of the autonomy of vision in early twentieth-century modernism.[31] As I said, I began to see a contestation of this model in certain types of art. It seemed to me that a starting point for this development was the ironic optical project of Duchamp's called *Precision Optics*—his rotoreliefs. But then I perceived another beginning in what Max Ernst called "over-painting," as well as his interest in the optical device of the zootrope, a motif that appears in his 1930 collage novel, *A Little Girl Dreams of Taking the Veil*. My first working title for this project was "anti-vision." But what I didn't like about it was that it seemed merely to invoke the old Lessing binary between vision and language (as in his *Laocoon*). This didn't seem applicable to Giacometti's problem. Giacometti wasn't developing a notion of the labyrinth and the Minotaur, or darkness and blindness in his work as a way of embracing "text." It seemed to me that it was more clearly a refusal of vision, or of this privileged modernist notion of the visual. Out of this came an idea that there was an alternative model to the highly rational one of modernism. The modernist model was formalist—a kind of algorithm of the visual. But I began to see another model forming that

[29]See in particular Krauss, "In the Name of Picasso," in *Originality of the Avant-Garde*, 23-40.

[30]Krauss, "Giacometti," in *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art*, exh. cat. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1984), 503-33; Krauss and Jane Livingston, *L'amour fou: Photography and Surrealism*, exh. cat. (Washington, DC: Corchoran Gallery of Art; New York: Abbeville Press, 1985).

[31]For Krauss's initial writing on this subject, see "The Im/pulse to See," in *Vision and Visuality*, ed. Hal Foster (Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 1988), 51-78.

was more anti-cerebral, that tapped into other areas like the body and desire, and that's why I started to use the term, "optical unconscious." What I found in works like Duchamp's *Precision Optics* and Giacometti's *Suspended Ball* was the projection of a throbbing beat or pulse that acted like a destructive rhythm against the order, the structure, of a modernist vision. An important analytical model for my work was Jean-François Lyotard's notion of the *matrix*, which he develops in his book, *Discours, figure*.[32] As Lyotard characterizes it, the matrix is the unconscious's wholly contradictory condition of "form"—form at the level of the repressed and therefore only perceivable through the relay of symptoms or parapraxis or dreams. While Lyotard analyzes the matrix itself as figural and notes that it has structural features (namely invisibility and synchrony), he argues that it is also, paradoxically, non-formal and cannot really be understood in terms of structure. In other words, the matrix does order and regulate difference, but it also transforms everything into its opposite, undermining structure. His example is drawn from Freud's analysis of the fantasy known as "a child is being beaten," an analysis that links the contents of the fantasy (which are available to consciousness) to their (previous) unconscious transformation. It is this transformative activity, which involves a constant fluctuation, a continual transmutation from active to passive—as beating turns to being beaten; spectator turns into victim, etc.—that is seen to be setting up an unconscious rhythm (a figure), which is itself figured forth in the rhythm or beat of the spanking. But what is important to grasp about this beat is that it is something that simultaneously erodes form. Here, you obviously encounter psychoanalytic work on issues like form, visibility, the nature of the Gestalt, that have nothing whatever to do with the project of psychoanalyzing artists.

INT: Your essay, "The Originality of the Avant-Garde," is a post-modern critique of the modernist notions of originality and authorship.[33] Yet, were you also interested in the relationship between the modernist stress on originality and the commodification of art? I ask this because the essay reminded me of Fredric Jameson's observations on how modernism's emphasis on originality and radical novelty can be related to the commodification of art in late capitalism.

RK: Yes. At the time I wrote the essay, the issue of commodification was certainly part of what I thought I was addressing. That is why the piece ends with Sherrie Levine, in whose works there is an explicit and parodic link between high modernism and commodification. But since I wrote the essay for a conference on the theory of the avant-garde, my focus was slightly more historical and was more centered on notions of authorship.

INT: A good deal of your recent work has centered on photography, in particular Surrealist photography. What prompted you to investigate Surrealism from the standpoint of photography?[34]

RK: Within standard art-historical accounts of twentieth-century production Surrealism is totally marginalized, as is photography. And therefore photography's undeniably major role within Surrealism—in the books, journals, etc.—has simply been

[32]Jean-François Lyotard, *Discours, figure* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971).

[33]Krauss, "Originality of the Avant-Garde," in *Originality of the Avant-Garde*, 151-70.

[34]See Krauss, "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," in *Originality of the Avant-Garde*, 87-188; and *L'amour fou*.

ignored in the histories of the movement that have been produced over the past forty years. I thought it was important to ask about this marginalization, because it has the quality of repression.

INT: In your essay, "Corpus Delicti" in the *L'amour fou* catalogue, you argued a kind of proto-feminist content for many of the Surrealist photographs of women. You saw a positive element in the fetishistic, phallic approach to the female nude and the blurring of sexual difference. In contrast, other writers, such as Hal Foster and Robert J. Belton, have argued an anti-feminist content in the Surrealist denial of sexual difference, in which images of women are masculinized, defamiliarized.[35]

RK: While I certainly wouldn't say the Surrealists were feminists (at least in the way we now use the term), I think it is interesting that there were large numbers of women who were very active and productive within the Surrealist movement. But beyond that, I tried to reveal a certain element within Surrealism that challenged all types of essentialism (including sexuality and gender). It was this challenge that, I suggested, could be aligned with that aspect of the feminist project that is also hostile to essentialism. Within feminist thought there is a split of course, and there is another camp that welcomes essentialism. To answer your question very quickly, I think feminists who have attacked Surrealism have come from this essentializing camp.

INT: Professor Krauss, we wanted to devote the last part of the interview to questions that deal with current issues in critical theory and art history. Since your work has figured in debates on some of these issues, we wondered if you would define your position further? For example, in the 1970s and '80s there was a rise of a strong biographical and expressionistic art, even though critical theory had discredited notions of authenticity and proclaimed the death of the artist/author. How would you account for this disparity between artistic practice and critical concerns?

RK: Neo-expressionism seems to me to be an attempt to will the possibility of escaping the conditions of history. But what's interesting are the contradictions one finds in Neo-expressionism. For example, someone like Francesco Clemente is entirely involved with processes of copying that actually reveal the loss of expressive autonomy. Much of his imagery is derived from highly particularized traditions like the Indian miniature and Italian fresco painting. The transavant-garde thus represents a simulated expressionism. Its rationale might be that of expressionism, but this doesn't seem to fit the case. But, then again, a lot of people might want to say: "OK, so it's simulation-expressionism," which means they would want to use post-structuralist theory to show how great it is that these artists are actually involved in a sophisticated project of deconstructing the myth of the author. This is the argument some people have put forward for David Salle—that he is really a cagey deconstructor. Well, I don't think he is a cagey deconstructor, I think he is actually a very sad imitator of Robert Rauschenberg.

INT: Much of your recent work has been predicated on the notions of a post-modern art and theory.[36] Yet, there has been a very active debate over whether there is really

[35]Robert J. Belton, "Edgar Allan Poe and the Surrealists' Image of Woman," *Woman's Art Journal* 8 (Spring/Summer 1987): 10; and Hal Foster, "L'amour faux," *Art in America* 74 (January 1986): 126-27.

[36]For an analysis of Krauss's deconstructive methods, see Matthew Biro, "Art Criticism and Deconstruction: Rosalind Krauss and Jacques Derrida," *Art Criticism* 6 (1990): 33-47.

a rupture or distinction between the values of modernism and those of post-modernism. What is your view of this issue?

RK: It seems to me that modernism's project grew out of its great commitment to the role of abstract art in forging the Utopian possibility of a universal language. This was a valiant effort; when you think of someone like Mondrian devoting his life to such a project, it's kind of awe-inspiring. But today, it's very hard for us even to conceive of why he might undertake it, and the only way certain contemporary scholars can explain it is through feeble notions like theosophy. We can barely imagine what conducting such a project might be like, which means we are no longer part of what Wittgenstein would call that "form of life." We no longer occupy a place in which that type of goal seems possible for ourselves. We could, of course, discuss other endeavors besides abstraction, but I think it is a rather symptomatic one for modernism. So, yes, I would say that there has been a break. A lot of people would argue this as well, but from other standpoints. There has, for example, been a break in the history of capitalism, in which industrial production has been replaced by commodity production, issuing in the era of the consumer society or the information society or the media society. It is against this perceived break that post-modernism, as a term of periodization, takes on more resonance.

INT: There has been considerable disagreement over the use of analytical methods devised in linguistic and literary theory (semiotics, deconstruction, etc.) being applied to the visual arts. Many art historians have argued the inherent problems and limitations of doing so. In your use of these tools, do you feel you have had to modify or reformulate them for art-historical discourse?

RK: I really think it would depend on the specific analysis. You would have to go model by model.

INT: I'm asking this because someone like Norman Bryson has said that he has to submit these methods to a kind of intra-theoretical critique before he can adapt them to the visual arts.

RK: Isn't it a historical accident that an analysis of the sign should have found its place, in this country, exclusively in literature departments? Structural linguistics proclaimed itself from the beginning as only one branch of semiology: a broad study of all forms of cultural production. Thus when Roland Barthes, in *Mythologies*, undertakes a cultural analysis, much of what he is focused on has to do not with literature but with visual phenomena.[37] His work there concerns photographic aspects of mass culture, like news photos, advertisements, and films. Or, to take the example of Derrida's *Speech and Phenomena*, when the issue of the sign as always necessarily mediating "presence" is developed against Husserl's phenomenology, this seems to me to have direct implications for notions of visual representation.

INT: In recent years, there has been a sense that art history is in a state of crisis, with the field becoming split into such different methods as post-structuralism, feminism, Marxism, etc. Some see this as a healthy pluralism; others feel it will factionalize the discipline. What is your position on this issue? Do you think we need to have one critical approach?

RK: I certainly woudn't want the field reduced to one single method....

[37]A standard translation is Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill & Wang, 1972).

INT: Perhaps another way of phrasing the question is that as beginning art historians, what type of theoretical training do you think we should have? Should we have more exposure to some of the new critical theories—should we sit down, for example, and read certain writers like Derrida and Foucault?

RK: That would be a very deadly thing to do. I think one has to be engaged with a certain problem: why did such and such an historical event occur, or what effect did art have at a particular time? In other words, you need to choose a specific body of work or art-historical problem that needs an explanation, and the theory, I think, has to come out of that. If there has been one consistent drive behind all my answers to your questions, it's been to point to how my own work arises from a connection to specific historical moments and objects and then from a sense of how the reigning explanatory paradigms fail to meet the demands of those specific facts. I encounter many students now who know a great deal about theory, but have nothing to apply it to. There is a connection to the art-historical archive that is simply missing, and if this is the case, theory is spinning away alone, working on nothing. I would have thought that the example of Michel Foucault would have been very instructive here.

INT: One of the reasons we asked this question is that if you see the current job listings in art history, departments are often looking for people who specialize in critical theory. They won't say, "We want a modernist who does critical theory, or a Renaissance scholar who does critical theory." They are just looking for someone who does critical theory. There really seems to be a move in the discipline to push people exclusively into that area.

RK: That seems a destructive thing. I certainly understand that students would want to be taught the ideas of figures like Lacan, Derrida, Foucault, Deleuze, etc., and to have this happen in the context of art history and art-historical problems, rather than through the focus of a comparative literature department. What I am saying is that students have to see that "theory" is not an end in itself. What departments are now calling "theory" is a tool—a wonderfully critical tool—but only a tool.

Written in Stone: Maya Records of Fact or Fabrication?

Sandy Bardsley

This paper was presented at the College Art Association Annual Conference held in New York in February of 1990.

Do Maya monuments record fact or fabrication? The sculptural legacy of the Maya is political art, commissioned by elite patrons as a means of documenting history and securing continued prestige. However, Maya sculptures were not merely commemorative: certain historical records were selected to reshape public opinion, and others fabricated to rewrite history.

Maya conventions of monumental art involve two complementary systems of communication; pictorial and hieroglyphic.[1] Both images and texts celebrate rituals associated with specific dates and individuals, while simultaneously expressing more generalized themes of religion, politics, and dynasty. Although the unified ideological system of the Maya allows us to assume a similar range of meaning for similar symbols, meaning can be modified by context. Interpretation requires investigation of the intended interrelationship of textual and figural elements.

At individual sites, particular juxtapositions of the figural images and the hieroglyphic inscriptions evolved into standardized forms. Monuments which departed significantly from the norm were designed for exceptional impact.[2] The inaugural monuments of Bird Jaguar IV, late eighth-century ruler of Yaxchilan, illustrate such propaganda.

For example, stelae at Yaxchilan normally celebrated temporal period-endings, recorded in the text, accompanied by images of prisoner display and ritual scattering of liquid. By contrast, to memorialize his inauguration, Bird Jaguar erected a triad of unusual stelae. Instead of the standard themes typically carved on the two faces of stelae, Bird Jaguar's Stela 11 represents an innovative program of texts and images. Furthermore, while stelae of most rulers document period-ending ceremonies during their reigns, Stela 11 focuses instead on a series of pre-inaugural rituals. Such peculiar breaks from tradition command inquiry.

If we look at Yaxchilan's dynastic record we find that, in contrast to usual succession, a gap of ten years intervened between the death of his father, Shield Jaguar, and the inauguration in A.D.752 of Bird Jaguar. At the death of his predecessor, Bird Jaguar was already thirty-three years old, mature enough to rule, yet he did not take

[1]Dorie Reents-Budet, "Narrative in Classic Maya Art," in *Word and Image in Maya Culture*, ed. William F. Hanks and Don S. Rice (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1989), 189.

[2]Marvin Cohodas, "Rules are Made to be Broken: Non-Normative Imagery on Late Classic Maya Stela Sculpture," submitted for publication in *Proceedings of the Septima Mesa Redonda de Palenque*, ed. Virginia Fields and Merle Greene.

the throne until he was aged forty-three. This decade of unprecedented interregnum suggests that Bird Jaguar did not have an undisputed claim to leadership.

There is also an apparent genealogical problem. Bird Jaguar's inaugural monument, Stela 11, claims that he is the child of Shield Jaguar and the elite Lady Evening Star of a distant, prestigious Maya city. However, the only royal lady represented in art commissioned by Shield Jaguar was Lady Shark, and none of Shield Jaguar's known monuments mention Lady Evening Star. Shield Jaguar's lack of acknowledgement for this woman suggests that Bird Jaguar was not the direct heir, as he was not the son of the official consort.[3] By analyzing the texts and images of Bird Jaguar's inaugural stela we can infer that, in order to compensate for his insufficient genealogical claim, his artists fabricated a series of ritual events and symbolic dates which would establish Bird Jaguar's status as the rightful successor.[4]

On Stela 11 (figs. 1 and 2), although the inauguration rite mentioned three times is the hieroglyphic focus of the monument, that event is not illustrated. Instead, two pre-inaugural ceremonies are featured, and must therefore be central to the validation of Bird Jaguar's royal status.

In the scene of Staff-Exchange, Bird Jaguar's artists introduced a rare ritual of successor-designation, dated to the Summer Solstice of A.D.741.[5] The act of exchange between Shield Jaguar, the predecessor, and Bird Jaguar, the successor, is complemented by astronomical associations. Mesoamerican rulers identified themselves with the sun. In turn, Summer Solstice marks the sun's reversal in direction, interpreted by the Maya as a transformation analogous to midnight, when the dying, old sun is succeeded by his offspring: the new sun.[6] The deliberate alignment of the associated Structure 40 and this stela with Summer Solstice sunrise served to underscore this metaphoric legitimization of Bird Jaguar's dynastic succession. In view of the ten-year interregnum, it is highly unlikely that this solstitial heir designation ever occurred, yet Bird Jaguar's monuments incorporated a series of cosmic circumstances to instill a public belief that he had experienced such an event.[7]

This particular Summer Solstice date also coincided with a bifurcation of the

[3]While it is not within the workable scope of this paper to discuss the foundations of Bird Jaguar's political power, there is mounting evidence that the Skull lineage was responsible for the eventual placement of Bird Jaguar as ruler of Yaxchilan; see Sandra Bardsley, "Inaugural Art of Bird Jaguar IV: Rewriting History at Yaxchilan" (M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1987). Though the status of Bird Jaguar's parents afforded him some measure of prestige, it appears that Bird Jaguar's claim as successor was met with a decade of opposition from Lady Shark and/or any of her descendants with stronger and more legitimate lineage claims to rulership. With the deaths of Shield Jaguar and Lady Shark, the Skull line could then have employed their military power, promoting Bird Jaguar beyond his rightful position.

[4]Bardsley, 92-103.

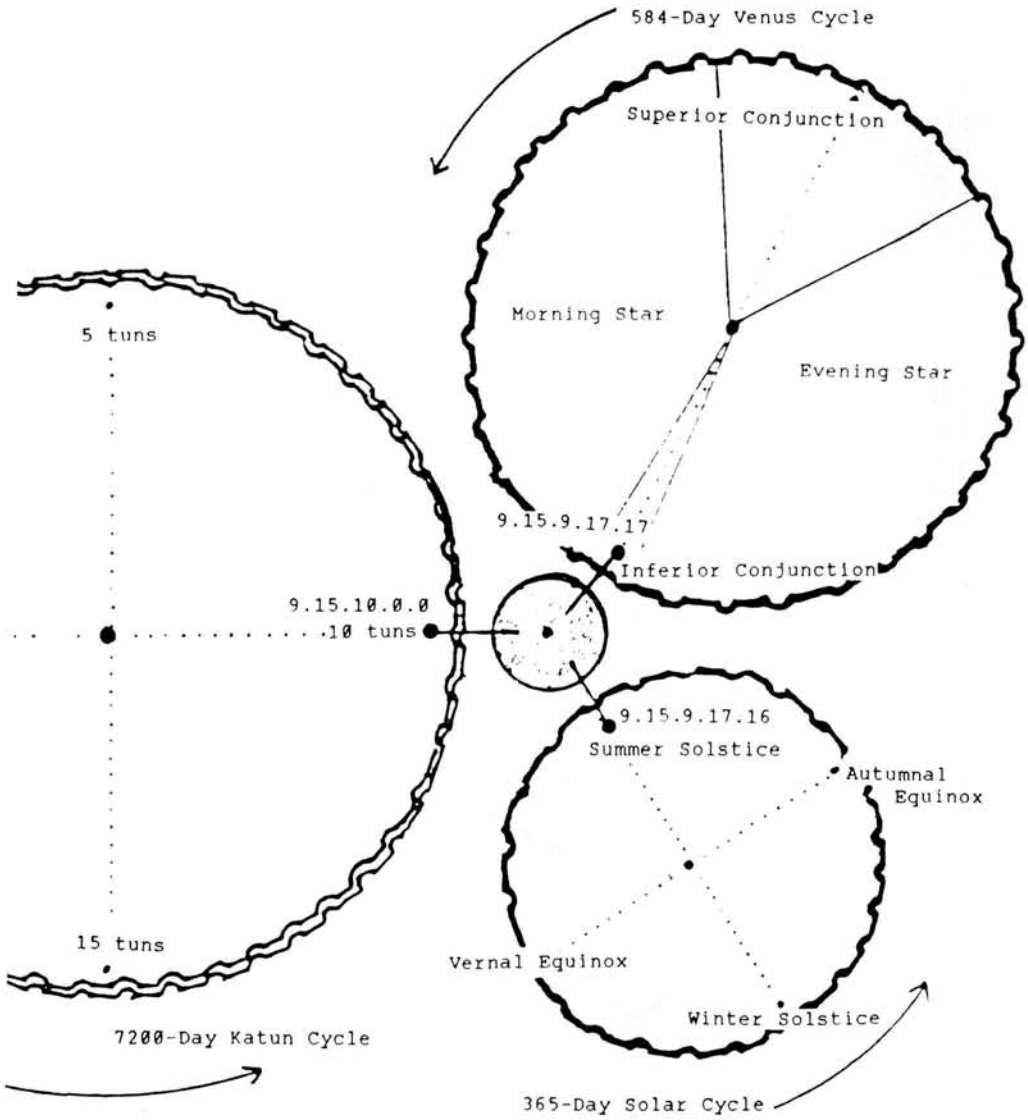
[5]Carolyn Tate, "The Language of Symbols in the Ritual Environment of Yaxchilan, Chiapas, Mexico" (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1986), 130.

[6]Marvin Cohodas, "The Iconography of the Panels of the Sun, Cross, and the Foliated Cross at Palenque, Part III," in *Proceedings of the Segunda Mesa Redonda de Palenque* (Pebble Beach: The Robert Louis Stevenson School, 1976), 155-76.

[7]Bird Jaguar was claiming that his dynastic succession was as inevitable as the solar succession at Summer Solstice, but it appears that a ruler of the nearby site of Palenque should be credited with the specific linking of solar and dynastic rites of passage. At Palenque, the intended parallels of dynastic and solar transition are clarified in a text stating that on the solstice, the ruler "became the sun;" see Linda Schele, "Notebook for Maya Hieroglyphic Workshop at Texas," (Austin, 1987). That Bird Jaguar was replicating Palenque's connections of solar and royal succession is suggested by Bird Jaguar's calendric choice of June 22, A.D.741, precisely one hundred solar years after the similar event at Palenque.

1. Left: Yaxchilan, Stela 11, north face: scene of Solar-associated Staff-Exchange. (figural drawing: Tim Maraun, textual drawing: Linda Schele; photo: author)

2. Right: Yaxchilan, Stela 11, south face: scene of Venus-associated Arraignment. (drawing: Linda Schele; photo: author)



3. Convergence of three cyclic midpoints. (photo: author)

Venus cycle during its period of Inferior Conjunction. Furthermore, the same date marked the midpoint of the *Katun*, or twenty-year cycle (fig. 3). Each of these midpoints may be associated with transformation and succession. This unique concurrence of three temporal bifurcations held enormous propaganda potential for the Maya whose political and religious concepts were founded on *parallel* cyclic transformations.[8]

A second text in the Staff-Exchange Scene appears to say that Shield Jaguar enacted a period-ending ceremony in A.D.746, "in the realm of" Bird Jaguar—despite the facts that Shield Jaguar had been dead for four years, and Bird Jaguar was not yet inaugurated! Though the truth of the long interregnum hints at political *chaos*, Bird Jaguar's fiction of this ritual cooperation served to precipitate political *order*. Certain costume elements associated with such period-ending rites are worn in this scene by both males, thereby reinforcing the textual "record" of the shared participation in the scattering ceremony.

The reverse of the stela depicts a later ritual of successor appointment which incorporates more familiar elements. Whereas in the inscriptions of other sites, the Shark God (or GI of the Palenque Triad) legitimizes the appointment of successors, this unique figural scene is distinguished by the dramatic portrayal of Bird Jaguar as both the royal heir and this supernatural patron of rulership.[9] That is, artists were ensuring the viewer's recognition that events of the supposed heir were sanctioned by the supernatural patron.

The three captives kneeling before Bird Jaguar indicate a military raid followed by prisoner sacrifice. But, the accompanying text records a different event: "entering into the line of kings."[10] Here, the powerful relationship between text and image is found in the Venus symbolism of the lineage-entering date, which occurred near the first appearance of Venus as an evening star. This astronomical phase was sanctioned throughout the Maya area for military raids to capture sacrificial victims, especially in celebration of such heir designations.[11]

The inauguration of Bird Jaguar in A.D.752, the event which is recorded three times but not specifically illustrated, is a historical probability. The Arraignment Scene may or may not refer to the day when Bird Jaguar was finally accepted and elected as Yaxchilan's next ruler. However, the Summer Solstice successor-appointment (staff-exchange) of A.D.741, and the shared participation in the temporal period-ending of A.D.746 were seemingly fabricated in order to promote Bird Jaguar

[8]Five-Day Ritual Sequence:

Summer Solstice,	Solar Cycle,	21/06/741	9.15.9.17.16
Inferior Conjunction,	Venus Cycle,	24/06/741	9.15.9.17.17
Lahuntun,	Katun Cycle,	25/06/741	9.15.10.0.0

[9]The Shark God is named for the shark barbels usually depicted on his cheek. The Shark God is also referred to as GI (God # 1) because of its context at Palenque; see Heinrich Berlin, "The Palenque Triad," *Journal de la Société des Americanistes* (1963).

[10]Bardsley, 83.

[11]Linda Schele and Mary Miller, *The Blood of Kings: Dynastic Ritual in Maya Art*, exh. cat. (Fort Worth: Kimbell Art Museum, 1986), 217.

as the legitimate heir to an established lineage, when in reality, he may have been only one of several contenders for the throne.

Stela 11 thus provides clear evidence that monumental documentation could be a matter of political manipulation rather than historical record. The interdependent nature of its texts and images demonstrate how information conveyed via one mode of communication, could serve to illuminate ideas carried by the complementary mode. By analyzing figural and textual components as an integrated system, we are able to discern much more about the social, political, and ritual environments of the Maya.

Yaxchilan's Stela 11 is not unique. Similarly tempered histories are identifiable at other sites. Clearly the Maya were not constrained by our definitions of history. For them, political events which could be meshed with cyclic phenomena would achieve the greatest degree of reality; necessary manipulations could range from assigning a more significant date to the event, to the complete fabrication of an event. We should remain attuned to the possibility that other Maya rulers, through their artists, may also have manipulated past, current, and future events in order to legitimate their power.

University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Science versus Passion: The Polemic over Drawing in France, 1814 to 1834[1]

Lucy MacClintock

This paper was presented at the College Art Association Annual Conference held in New York in February of 1990.

The emergence of Romantic painting in France in the years 1814 to 1834 generated a theoretical and critical controversy about the very nature of painting. What was a painting? What should it be as a physical object? The work of artists like Eugène Delacroix, Ary Scheffer, and Eugène Dévéria provoked an intense debate about issues of execution in Salon paintings. Much of this debate raged around the quality of drawing or *dessin*—not drawing in the sense of sketches on paper but drawing as an element within the painting. The critical partisans of Neoclassicism battled with those sympathetic to the *nouvelle école* over the definition of the term *dessin*. Each group used it as a codeword for a larger structure of ideas about the relation of an artist's intellectual concept for a painting to his or her physical execution of it. Since it framed the way in which artists, patrons, and public looked at and understood Salon paintings, this critical discourse was not an arid war of words but a very real determinant of the success or failure of the Romantic movement. Partisans of the new school attempted to seize control of the critical vocabulary just as artists tried to seize control of the French painting tradition.

The primary importance of *le grand dessin* in painting was a basic tenet of Davidian theory. Around 1820 certain writers began to attack the vagueness of this term, calling it a catch-all phrase used to cover a cold, servile imitation of the antique, a banal choice of subjects, and a debased execution. These writers attempted to devalue neoclassical drawing, denying that purity and elevation were necessarily achieved by what they saw as mere rotework. The explosion of Romantic painting at the Salon of 1824 prompted Stendhal to parody Davidian *dessin* in an article in the *Journal de Paris*:

> Throw in prison *the most ordinary man*, the least familiar with all ideas of art and literature—in a word, one of those *ignorant lazybones* who meet in such large numbers in a vast metropolis—and as soon as he recovers from his first terror, declare to him that he will gain his freedom when he can exhibit at the Salon *a nude figure, perfectly drawn* after the system of David. You will be astonished to see the prisoner reappear in the outside world after two or three years. This is because what the school of David understands as *correct, learned drawing, imitated from the antique*, is an *exact science*,

[1]This paper is abbreviated from a chapter of my Ph.D. dissertation, "Painting as Object/The Object of Painting: Eugène Delacroix and Issues of Execution in French Romanticism" (Harvard University, 1990). Henri Zerner has been generous in discussing with me over a number of years the questions addressed here.

> of the same nature as arithmetic, geometry, or trigonometry. With infinite patience and a *Barometric genius* for measurement, anyone may in two or three years come to know and be able to reproduce the conformation and exact position of the hundred muscles that cover the human body. During the thirty years of David's tyranny, the public has been obliged to believe—under threat of having *bad taste*—that to have the necessary patience to acquire the *exact science* of drawing, was to have genius [emphasis in the original in all quotations].[2]

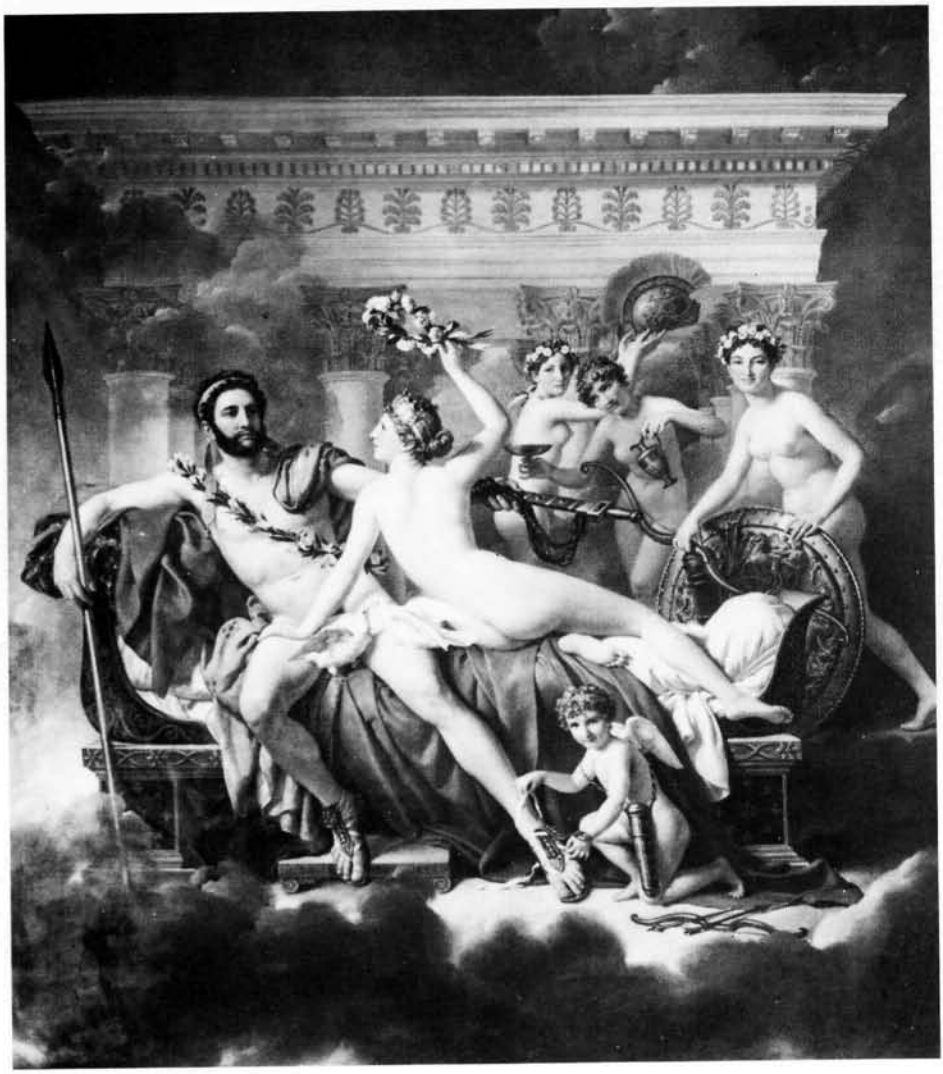
P.A. Coupin, the champion and future biographer of Anne-Louis Girodet-Trioson, responded hotly to Stendhal's satire in the *Revue encyclopédique*: "Artists may abandon the *beau idéal* out of impotence, but to try to make a merit of it recalls the fable of the fox who lost his tail."[3] For Neoclassical critics like Coupin, the term *dessin* signified not merely the use of line within a painting, but rather the whole process of the idealization of nature. It implied certain qualities seen in David's *Oath of the Horatii* (Paris, Louvre) and *Death of Socrates* (New York, Metropolitan Museum), including purity of outline, simplicity of detail, harmony of proportions, grandeur and elegance of forms.

Certain writers argued that the system of the *beau idéal* implied in the Neoclassicists' concept of drawing had once been a useful corrective to the excesses of the Rococo but was now outdated. The journalist and politician Adolphe Thiers, later prime minister under Louis-Philippe and later still president of the Third Republic, took this view in the *Revue européenne*:

> Since David gave us an ideal and perfect type of drawing, history painting has become, we must admit, as academic and stultified as has tragedy since the time of Racine and Corneille.... It seems as if a single statue has served as model for all our painters; the figure's pantomime, attitudes, expressions, everything has been fixed. A sort of general convention in drawing and composition has imprisoned the genius of our artists within an immutable limit. With the word style—no doubt a respectable word—all originality and truth have been killed; art has sought only a certain perfection of forms and harmony of lines.... We must no longer exalt

[2] "Jetez en prison *l'homme le plus ordinaire*, le moins familiarisé avec toutes les idées d'art et de littérature, en un mot, un de ces *oisifs ignorans* qui se rencontrent en si grand nombre dans une vaste capitale, et, dès qu'il sera revenu de sa première peur, déclarez lui qu'il aura sa liberté, s'il est en état d'exposer au salon *une figure nue, parfaitement dessinée* d'après le système de David. Vous serez tout étonné de voir le prisonnier à l'épreuve, reparaître dans le monde au bout de deux ou trois ans. C'est que *le dessin correct, savant, imité de l'antique*, comme l'entend l'école de David, est *une science exacte*, de même nature que l'arithmétique, la géometrie, la trigonométrie; c'est-à-dire qu'avec une patience infinie et *le brillant génie de Barême* l'on parvient en deux ou trois ans à connaître et à pouvoir reproduire, avec le pinceau, la conformation et la position exacte des cent muscles qui couvrent le corps de l'homme. Pendant les trente années qu'a duré le gouvernement tyrannique de David, le public a été obligé de croire, sous peine de *mauvais goût*, qu'avoir eu la patience nécessaire pour acquérir *la science exacte* du dessin, c'était avoir du génie." A. Henri Beyle [called Stendahl], "Salon de 1824," *Journal de Paris et des départments*, 20 September 1824, n.p.

[3] "Que, par impuissance, on abandonne le beau idéal, cela se conçoit; mais que l'on veuille s'en faire un mérite, c'est rappeler la fable du rénard qui a perdu sa queue." Anon. [P.A. Coupin], "Exposition des tableaux en 1824," *Revue encyclopédique* 14 (1824): 35.



1. David, *Mars Disarmed by Venus and the Graces*, 1824, oil on canvas. Brussels, Musées Royaux (photo: Musées Royaux)

> only the grand style, the grand taste, but instead find new rallying cries: life, truth, and naturalness.[4]

[4]"Depuis que David nous a proposé un type idéal et parfait du dessin, la peinture d'histoire est devenue, il faut en convenir, aussi académique et aussi arrêtée que la tragédie, depuis Racine et Corneille.... Il semble qu'une seule statue ait servie de modèle à tous nos peintres: la pantomime, les attitudes, les expressions, tout a été fixé, et une espèce de convention générale, en fait de dessin et de composition, a semblé enfermer le génie de nos artistes dans une immuable limite. Avec le mot *style*, mot très respectable sans doute, on a tué toute originalité et toute vérité; l'art n'a cherché qu'une certaine perfection de formes, une certain harmonie des lignes.... Il faut se faire d'autres mots d'ordre, et ne plus vanter exclusivement *le grand style, le grand goût*, mais *la vie, la vérité, le naturel*." Adolphe Thiers, "Direction des arts et particulièrement de la peinture en France," *Revue européenne*, 1 (1824): 36-37, 337, 339.

2. David, *Leonidas at Thermopylae*, 1814, oil on canvas. Paris, Musée du Louvre (photo: author)

Critics like Thiers and Auguste Jal argued that the young Romantic painters were the true heirs to the Davidian revolution against the artificiality of the Rococo. Jal went so far as to claim in 1824 that if David were to return to Paris from exile in Brussels, he would place himself at the head of the new school.[5] In many ways the emergence of Romantic painting in the years 1814 to 1834 reestablished the work of David at the center of critical controversy. Paradoxically, it was writers sympathetic to the new school who most generously evaluated the painter's late work, while those like Coupin and Étienne Delécluze who upheld Neoclassical doctrines grappled only reluctantly with the complexities of David's style after 1814. When the *Mars Disarmed by Venus and the Graces* (Brussels, Musées royaux; fig. 1) was exhibited in Paris in 1824, it was Thiers who most strongly praised it. He qualified his analysis by denying the "eternality" of David's style, but then said of the painting, "The drawing is very pure and beautiful. M. David is here as elsewhere the greatest draughtsman known."[6]

This was finding in the work more than did David's traditional partisans, and one suspects an element of sly pleasure in Thiers's championing of the *Mars and Venus*. Those writers who upheld the *beau idéal* found the exaggerated outlines and musculature, jarring color, and lascivious theme of the painting unsuited to their po-

[5]Auguste Jal, *L'Artiste et le Philosophe, Entretiens critiques sur le Salon de 1824* (Paris, 1824), 11.

[6]"...le correctif apporté au mauvais goût qui règnait en France en 1780.... Le dessin est fort pur, fort beau, et M. David est là comme ailleurs le plus grand dessinateur connu." Thiers, 35.

lemical stance; it lacked the noble, pure style and elevated moral tone of David's earlier *Oath of the Horatii* or *Death of Socrates*. Already in 1814 the *Leonidas at Thermopylae* (Paris, Louvre; fig. 2) had occasioned outspoken dismay in the Davidian ranks at David's new drawing style. Baron Boutard, Delécluze's predecessor at the *Journal des débats*, called the painting academic, mannered, and Michelangelesque—the latter a forceful insult in Davidian circles.[7] What Boutard disliked in the drawing of the Leonidas was its new realistic detail, an emphasis on anatomical definition which led to an overly sculptural appearance. The exaggerated modelling and sharp contours created a heightened separation of parts of the body, an emphasis on joints of thorax, abdomen, and knees. Thus the figure was no longer the smoothly generalized whole which the great Neoclassical theorist Quatremère de Quincy advocated in his *Essai sur l'idéal dans ses applications pratiques aux oeuvres de l'imitation propre des arts du dessin*, largely written in 1806 but published in 1823. In it Quatremère asks,

> What do we see in the work of the Greek sculptors? Something so simple, purified in the contours, purged of minute details...[with] a grandeur of style which goes beyond nature...and a unity of form and proportions which method alone can give. And always that absence of accidental parts which can destroy the general form.[8]

It was precisely the "minute details" and "accidental parts which destroy the general form" which some viewers found too apparent in the *Leonidas*. The closely observed and obsessively rendered detail created a hyperrealism which threatened at any moment to break the picture into its component parts. This fragmentation was even more pronounced in the *Mars and Venus*, with its abrupt jumps from parts with naturalistic detail and an emphatic execution, such as the head and torso of Mars, to parts painted with a conventional, almost vague abstraction, such as the three graces behind Venus.

In their analyses of the *Leonidas* and the *Mars and Venus*, Neoclassical critics unconsciously echoed the paintings' disjointedness, isolating only parts of each work as worthy of praise. For instance, most critics made no mention of anything in the *Leonidas* aside from the central figure; Boutard called it overly sculptural but nonetheless of an elevated and striking conception.[9] Indeed, Neoclassical writers tended to abandon any attempt at treating David's late paintings as physical objects, rather discussing solely the artist's conceptualization of themes. Elevation of thought was what these critics sought in David's work. Coupin disposed of the *Mars and Venus* itself in a single sentence, but wrote a long passage including the work in a pantheon of Neoclassical paintings which strove to "achieve perfection...[by] adding more truth with-

[7]Baron Boutard, "Salon de 1814," *Journal des débats*, 11 December 1814, n.p.

[8]"Que remarque-t-on dans les oeuvres du ciseau des Grecs? Quelque chose de si simple, de si épuré dans les contours, de si purgé des détails minutieux...une grandeur de style qui parait aller au-delà de la nature...et un ensemble de rapports et de proportions que la méthode seule peut donner, et toujours cette absence de parties accidentelles qui détruisent la forme générale." J.A.C. Quatremère de Quincy, *Essai sur l'idéal dans ses applications pratiques aux oeuvres de l'imitation propre des arts du dessin* (Paris: Treuttel et Wurtz, 1823), 87.

[9]Boutard, n.p.

out giving up the ideal of beauty."[10] Coupin's pantheon included David's *Horatii*, *Socrates*, and *Sabine Women* (1799; Paris, Louvre); Girodet's *Sleep of Endymion* (1791; Louvre), *Deluge* (1806; Louvre), and *Entombment of Atala* (1808; Louvre); and François Gérard's *Belisarius* (1795) and *Psyche Receiving Cupid's First Kiss* (1798; Louvre).[11]

Two things are striking in this roster of Neoclassical greats. One is the extreme disparity in style amongst the cited pictures—compare, for instance, David's *Horatii* with Girodet's *Deluge*. Though the members of David's school constantly asserted their solidarity in the years 1800 to 1830, it was a solidarity of principle rather than practice. This was one reason why the question of drawing became so important in this period, as the Davidians, under siege by the new Romantic school, searched for unifying issues. Qualities of execution were one area in which the varying styles of David's followers converged, and such qualities were also relatively easily defined and understood.

The second striking point about Coupin's pantheon of great Neoclassical paintings is that none of them were executed after 1808. In the teens and twenties, critics like Coupin and Delécluze seemed caught in a time warp; faced with works like David's *Mars and Venus* of 1824 or Girodet's *Pygmalion and Galatea* (Dampierre, Château; fig. 3) of 1819, they obsessively returned to those standard images painted from 1787 to 1808. This gap between stated principles and current artistic production was so pronounced that Neoclassical partisans often seemed to engage in a critical discourse with no reference to exhibited paintings—to actual objects—at all. It was this baffling abstraction that led Romantic artists and critics to stress what they called the *actualité* of the new school's images, in both theme and form. The paintings of Delacroix, Ary Scheffer, and Eugène Dévéria had an insistent physicality, in their thick, sensuous pigment and rough stroke, which echoed the insistent contemporaneity of their themes.

The increasing separation of theory from practice and idea from object in Neoclassical painting is clear in Girodet's *Pygmalion and Galatea* of 1819 (fig. 3). This work was painted partly in response to attacks on the earlier *Deluge* as harsh and taut in form and expression. Upon the exhibition of the *Pygmalion and Galatea* at the Salon of 1819, Delécluze triumphantly welcomed the wandering artist back into the fold of Neoclassicism,

> This is a happy event for art and particularly for our French school.... M. Girodet, in following the old traditions, has spiritualized [this fable] as much as Rousseau...one might almost say that his painting is a *complete system* in itself.... I have rarely seen a work of art in which ideal beauty was so superbly drawn, or the science of the brush so complete.[12]

Here the gap between the critic's analysis and the exhibited painting becomes

[10]"On pouvait donc atteindre à la perfection; il fallait s'attacher à mettre plus de vérité, sans quitter le sentiment du beau." Coupin, 32.

[11]Coupin, 32.

[12]"C'est un évènement heureux pour l'art, et particulièrement pour notre école française.... M. Girodet, en suivant à quelques égards les traditions anciennes, a spiritualisé son sujet tout autant que J.J. Rousseau...on pourrait presque dire que son tableau est *tout un système*.... Pour moi, j'ai rarement vu un ouvrage de l'art où *la beauté* ait reçu des formes plus habilement dessinées, où la science du pinceau fût plus complète." E. J. Delécluze, "Lettres au rédacteur du *Lycée français* sur l'exposition des artistes vivants," *Le Lycée français* 1 (1819): 321.

3. Girodet, *Pygmalion and Galatea*, 1819, oil on canvas. Dampierre, Château (photo: Dampierre)

4. Eugène Delacroix, *The Jewish Family*, 1833, watercolor on paper. Location unknown (photo: Gruber, pl. 34)

almost farcical, as the work is a textbook example of that debasement of the *beau idéal* which Romantics like Stendhal satirized. The cottony forms of *Pygmalion and Galatea* are so, to use Delécluze's word, "spiritualized" that they nearly drift away. The figure of Galatea, in particular, is so tritely conceived and vaguely executed that she seems less a glorious exemplar of classical *dessin* than an embarrassing denial of it. Delécluze's praise of the painting as "superbly drawn" thus clearly refers not to technical

but rather to intellectual facility, to drawing not as a physical act in making a painting but as a mental one in constructing it. In late Neoclassical theory and criticism, the intellectual process of generalization and idealization becomes more important than the supposed culmination of this process: the work of art. Delécluze's passage refers not so much to the painting *Pygmalion and Galatea*, exhibited by Girodet at the Salon of 1819, as to the system of ideas which he deduces from it.

It was precisely this subjugation, even abandonment, of object to idea that led Romantic artists and critics to react by insisting on the physicality of the new school's images. After 1824 there were spirited attempts to attach to the term *dessin* a new set of meanings which would justify the drawing styles of Delacroix, Scheffer, and Dévéria. Writers talked about *vie, vérité*, and *actualité* in the execution of these artists' works, all terms which stressed an indissoluble unity of concept, expression, and form. One of the most thoughtful and eloquent such attempts to redefine *dessin* was Auguste Jal's analysis of four watercolors shown by Delacroix at the Salon of 1833. These finished exhibition watercolors were based on sketches done by the artist during his trip to Morocco with the Comte de Mornay in 1832. The watercolor which Jal discusses most extensively, *The Jewish Family* (location unknown; fig. 4), relates to a quick drawing now in the Louvre.[13] Delacroix painted a number of these finished watercolors while in quarantine in Toulon after returning from Morocco; such exhibition watercolors were considered at this period to be paintings rather than drawings.

While less abbreviated than the sketches done on the site, the Salon watercolors nonetheless appeared startlingly simple to Delacroix's contemporaries. Jal, in his *Les Causeries du Louvre*, created a fictional conversation between two viewers of these works. It begins with a naive, but slightly hostile Salon-goer saying, "I don't like the manner of drawing of this painter. I don't understand it." His companion, obviously Jal's alter ego, replies,

> —It's not a usual style; it doesn't resemble that of Ingres or David, nor that of Rubens or Velasquez.... But one can't deny that his line is full of movement, life, passion, and vigor. The figures of Delacroix move; they express completely the idea of the artist.
>
> —Yes, but couldn't...[they] be less ugly?
>
> —Delacroix adopts a type very removed from our general ideas of the beautiful, or more accurately the pretty.... What I always find in him is

[13]The finished watercolor (fig. 4) was published in 1929 by Hans Gruber, *Eugène Delacroix: Zeichnungen, Aquarelle und Pastelle* (Basel: Benno Schwabe), pl. 34, as being Robaut no. 491 (Alfred Robaut, *L'Oeuvre complet d'Eugène Delacroix* [Paris, 1885])—that is, as being the *Famille juive, costumes de Maroc* exhibited at the Salon of 1833 as no. 637. I am unable to verify that fig. 4 was indeed the work shown at the Salon, since I have not as yet traced its present location. As illustrated by Gruber, it seems to have elements in common with two sketches from Delacroix's Moroccan journey: one usually identified as the *Famille Bouzaglia (la famille juive)* (Paris, Louvre, R.F.1534; ill. Maurice Sérullaz, *Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins: Inventaire général, Ecole française: Dessins d'Eugène Delacroix* [Paris: Musées Nationaux, 1984], no. 1534) and the other sometimes called *Groupe de musiciens juifs à Meknès* (Zurich, private collection, illustrated in Hélène Lassalle, *Ingres et Delacroix, dessins et aquarelles*, exh. cat., Société des Expositions du Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, 1986), no. 115.

> the energetic expression of thought. He has in a high degree one of the qualities of the great colorists: action and...*actualité*. The figures of almost all master draughtsmen pose before you on the canvas; they seem petrified. There is something stiff and tautly corded in their joints which results when the scrupulous fineness of the drawing degenerates into dryness. But [Delacroix's]...figures are more supple, capable of life, with an appearance of wholeness which is lacking in the precious silhouettes of [David's school].[14]

Jal defends Delacroix's manner of drawing as passionate, vigorous, full of life, energy, thought, and action. Most interestingly, he frames the issue in the same way as the Neoclassicists: the central problem which drawing addresses is the physical expression of the artist's thought. Here one can see that late Neoclassical and Romantic ideas about execution were, in certain ambiguous ways, interconnected; the seed of Romantic thought existed already in Davidian theory. Both the Neoclassicists and the new school were obsessed with the process of making a painting. But for David's followers, this process was primarily an intellectual one; the idealization of nature into a generalized and elevated concept was more important than the mere remnant of this process: the work of art.

Romantic painters and critics, on the other hand, saw the process of expressing the artist's idea as a supremely physical one. The key word in Jal's defense of Delacroix's drawing in the Moroccan watercolors is *actualité*. For the Romantics *actualité* signified not only contemporaneity but a sort of "thereness," a complete unity of thought with gesture. In the new school's paintings, idea and object were to be indissolubly merged. *Actualité* also signified *vérité*, a physical and felt truth as well as an

[14] "—Je n'aime pas la manière de dessiner de ce peintre, je ne la comprends pas.

—Ce n'est pas un style commun; cela ne ressemble ni à Ingres, ni à David, ni à Rubens, ni à Velasquez.... On ne peut nier que son trait soit plein de mouvement, de vie, de passion, et de vigueur. Les personnages de Delacroix se meuvent; ils expriment complètement l'idée de l'artiste.

—Oui, mais ces bons acteurs ne pourraient-ils pas être moins laids?

—Delacroix a adopté un type si éloigné des idées que nous avons du beau, ou plutôt du joli.... Ce que je m'attends à trouver en lui, c'est l'expression énergique de la pensée; et toujours je l'y rencontre. Il a, à un haut degré, une des qualités qu'ont possedée les grands peintres coloristes: l'action, et j'ose le dire, l'actualité. Les figures de presque tous les maîtres dessinateurs posent devant vous, elles sont comme pétrifiées; il y a je ne sais quoi de roide, d'arrêté, de chenillé dans leurs jointures, qui tient à la scrupuleuse finesse du dessin, dégénérant en sécheresse. Chez [Delacroix]...les personnages du drame sont plus souples, plus capables de la vie; ils ont une apparence d'organisation complète qui manque aux silhouettes précieuses des autres." Jal, *Salon de 1833: Les Causeries du Louvre* (Paris, 1833), 72-74.

intellectual one. And here Auguste Jal should have the last word. His two Salon visitors are still arguing over Delacroix's watercolor of *The Jewish Family*; the second has just praised the life and vigor of the artist's drawing. The first onlooker objects plaintively,

> —But he always seems to be possessed by some phantasm—and to be searching for his models in Hell.
>
> —Certainly not in this drawing, where the beauty of the Jews of the Orient is faithfully portrayed.... Here the ardent harmony of a brilliant color scheme describes *all the truth of real existence*.[15]

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[15]"—Il a toujours l'air d'être possédé de quelque idée fantastique, et d'aller chercher ses modèles en enfer.
—Non pas au moins dans ce dessin, où la beauté des juifs de l'Orient est bien fidèlement traduite.... Ici l'harmonie ardente d'un brillant coloris décrit *tout le positif de la vie réelle*." Jal, 74.