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Rutgers Art Review
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Department of Art History, Voorhees Hall
71 Hamilton Street
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Articles

Expanding Antiquity: Andrea Navagero, Renaissance Gardens, and the Islamic Landscape

Christopher Pastore

The increased investment of monetary and intellectual capital during the Cinquecento in gardens and villas has been connected up to now only with the resurgence of Italian interest in ancient Roman paradigms.[1] The Roman taste for the *villa suburbana's* charms, presented most clearly in Pliny's letters and Cicero's dialogues, also permeated pastoral poetry and farming manuals.[2] The appearance of numerous garden and agricultural treatises in the second half of the sixteenth century anchors an explicit correlation between villa use in the Cinquecento and the activity and patterns set down by classical authors.[3] However, of significant concern to Renaissance scholars and designers was the lack of illustrations of the Roman garden.[4] Just as early modern scientists and physicians demanded visual aids in their study of classical science and medicine, so did landscape design warrant help with concepts only verbalized in the classical material.[5] The problem was where to look.

Other Renaissance disciplines illustrate parallel examples of Cinquecento flexibility in looking hopefully to the past for direction. There was scant support for the correct revival of dance movement, musical melodies, or instrumentation. Without well-documented ancient prototypes creators of Renaissance music, dance and theater fashioned plausible offspring that obscured the missing direct line of descent. Composers such as Vincenzo Galilei reinforced their belief in the superiority of monophonic compositions with assertions that a single voice would have been most logical for the chorus of the classical theater. Although it was unclear if the sound of spoken ancient Greek was similar to the modern tongue and the type of musical accompaniment for classical theater was unknown, Galilei assumed that the serious high-mindedness of the single voice must have been favored by Greek tragedians and should replace the lingering polyphony of post-Medieval Italian music.

Similarly, efforts to choreograph spectacles and performances led designers to recreate the poses and movements of the classical chorus. For want of concrete examples, early modern Italians usually engineered an innovative merger of classical texts with more observable practices. When Renaissance performers began to offer audiences plays developed from ancient models, they must have been confounded by their sources' silence on the movements of the chorus. With no evidence forthcoming from the usual texts, Renaissance designers looked elsewhere for a derivative or surviving form of dance. The discovery of contemporary group dance movements on Crete provided a palatable and available model as long as scholars and patrons could overlook the poor or missing documentation for the connection of modern Cretan dance to ancient Greek choreography.[6]

Another interesting conjunction of recent ethnography and classical archaeology surfaced with the costumes for the *Intermezzi* created for the wedding of Ferdinando I de' Medici and Christine of Lorraine (Fig. 1). Precursors to modern opera, the *Intermezzi* entertained wedding guests between staged combats and other spectacular performances staged throughout the multi-day celebration of the nuptials of the Grand Duke. The operatic segments of the spectacle featured highlights from classical mythology that were intended to reinforce Ferdinando's legitimate claim to sovereignty. Among

Fig. 1 Bernardo Buontalenti, *Costume design for Delphic couple*, 1588. Pen and ink, watercolor, 46.8 x 37.3 cm. Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Palatina C.B.3.53, Vol. 2, c.13r, Florence. Reproduced from Saslow, *Florentine Festival as Theatrum Mundi: The Medici Wedding of 1859*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996, pl. 12.

the dazzling throng of performers were actors identified as the citizens of ancient Delphi. These men and women served as eyewitnesses to the active role played by the gods of Olympus, but they were dressed as contemporary Easterners complete with full beards, curling moustaches, balloon pants, and turbans. The recognition of geographical and social distance suggested by these "Oriental" trappings was comfortably elided with temporal and physical distance. Material attributes of exotic life were thus made suitable for the charming narration of life in the mythological past.[7]

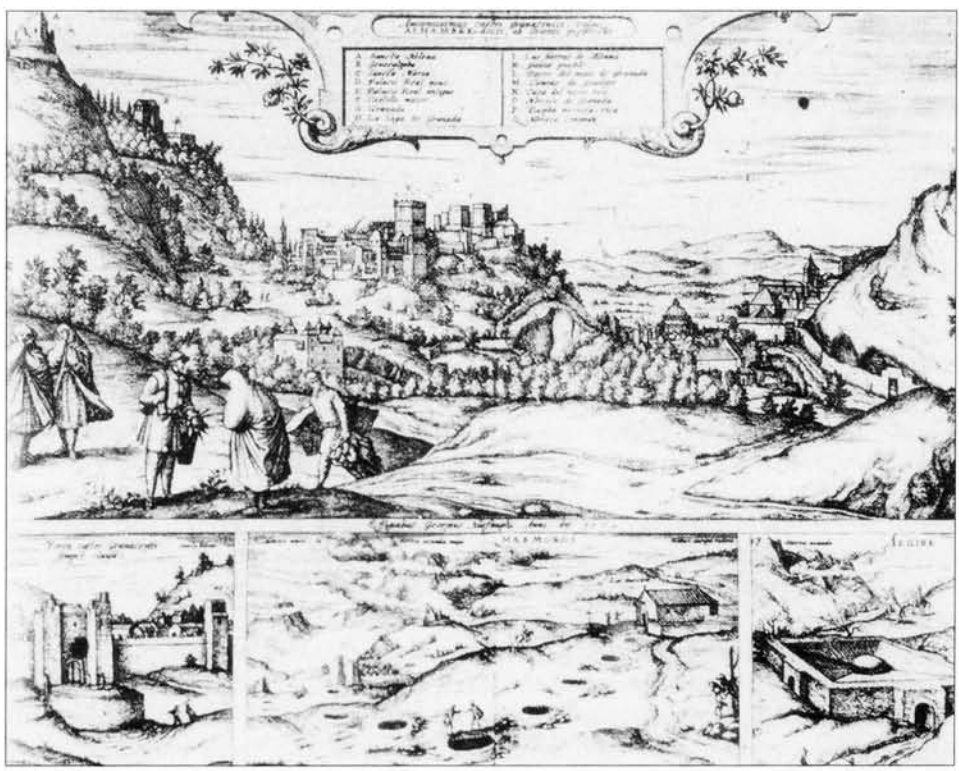
It is a combination of such imaginative rapprochements with un-illustrated ancient arts that provides a jumping off point for this paper. The surviving texts inspired Renaissance patrons to create an *all'antica* villa appropriate for the heirs of ancient Rome. However, the lack of illustrations and the dearth of archaeological evidence for the planted zones surrounding their villas forced Renaissance garden designers to leave the library behind and look elsewhere for information about the visual impact of the ancient landscape and the classical garden. This paper contends that other sources were discovered that could serve as stand-ins for the lost Roman landscape. Paramount among these were the surviving, and also ancient, gardens of the Islamic Mediterranean; in particular those associated with Moors or Saracens in direct contradistinction to their conquerors and successors, Christian and Turk alike.[8]

As Venetian Ambassador to France and Spain in the years 1525 and 1526, Andrea Navagero, a classicist, translator and agrophile, visited the one-time Nasrid capital city of Granada, Spain shortly after Charles I Holy Roman Emperor had appropriated the collection of Hispano-Muslim palaces on the Granadine acropolis for his own use.[9] Charles I's massive palace block, which obliterated a number of pre-existing structures, dominates a reconfigured building and garden program.[10] However, Navagero's description, recorded in 1526 and 1527 as part of the account of his extensive travels in Spain and France and published posthumously in Venice in 1563 as *Il viaggio fatto in Spagna et in Francia* (The voyage made in Spain and France), indicates that the current state of affairs—the large Renaissance palace and adjacent but segregated garden zones—was still in its genesis during Navagero's tour.[11] Hoefnagle's 1563 engraving from *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* (Fig. 2) hints at the lengthy process of Granada's transformation, showing a crane thrusting skyward over the Palacio Real visible just to the left of the largest tower in his skyline. Navagero's treatment of the gardens, which includes the identification of at least two discrete palace and garden units, has been primarily considered as a description of the Alhambra (Fig. 3) during this transitional period. However, a closer look at *Il viaggio*, particularly in light of a contemporary history of Italy written by Leandro Alberti, *A Description of the Whole of Italy and its Islands*,[12] warrants the reevaluation of both Navagero and the Moorish garden as direct influences on landscape design in Italy during the Cinquecento.[13]

In Girolamo Fracastoro's *Naugerius sive de poetica* (Navagero: A dialogue on poetry), Navagero, the protagonist assigned the task of defining poetry for his companions, makes a number of remarks regarding the creative process. After one particularly pregnant pause, Navagero attempts to explain beauty to his befuddled interlocutor, Bardulone. Beauty, according to the famous poet, is a collection of experiences mined for the "ornaments" most "appropriate" to the subject in question. When Bardulone remains confused, Navagero continues, telling him that beauty "sometimes means what is beautiful universally, absolutely, and sometimes what is beautiful in each kind." The trick, it turned out, was to know which standard of beauty to apply. The good poet learned this from experience. He also never stopped learning. Taking a page from Quintilian, Navagero concluded "knowledge is necessary to [the poet]; otherwise he will never be able to select the greatest and the most beautiful."[14] The selection process Navagero outlined for poets governed the other arts including garden design. It followed, thus, that landscape designers must look at every example of their art if they wished to create the "most beautiful" garden.

Navagero's collection of beautiful ideas required constant observation and, in *Il viaggio*, had the side effect of folding the delightful gardens of Islamic Spain into the history of landscape. In his travels Navagero began a process that would result in a merger of the classical and the Islamic past into an expanded antiquity. Navagero's narrative bracketed his discussion of the Alhambra gardens with remarks on the omnipresent Roman ruins, the original Latin place names, and the current conditions under Spain's Christian nobility.[15] The focus on the Roman presence in the Iberian countryside indicated a passionate belief in the classical underpinnings of the Mediterranean world. More to the point, the ease with which his text segues from archaeological reference to character study forces the reader to consider the dynamic nature of Iberian history and the changing face of the peninsula's population. Navagero's sense that a Roman agricultural infrastructure crouched beneath the bountiful Moorish terraces decorating the Sierra Nevadas initiated the development of parallel portraits of these two extinct Mediterranean societies.[16] The distance visible in ruined conditions and garbled pronunciations applies to both *i mori* and the Romans. Thus, to Navagero—perhaps expressing Venetian or Italian sentiments—the *mori* could be collapsed into the larger category of ancient, a population clearly not a physical threat on the order of the Turkish Muslims or *turchi*; but instead a source for modern taste and behavior along the lines spelled out in the wildly popular ancient literature.[17]

Fig. 2 Jerome Hoefnagle, "Amoenissimus castri Granatensis, vulgo ALHAMBRE dieti, ab Oriente prospectus," *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*, 1563.



The primary Renaissance sources for classical agriculture or landscape formulas were the literary remains of the Roman world. Foremost among those authors consulted on the subject of man and nature were Cicero, Lucretius, and Pliny—although even biographical accounts such as Suetonius's life of Augustus Caesar pressed the Cinquecento reader to recognize the moral high ground occupied by the Republican citizen farmer whose respect for nature elevated subsistence farming toward agricultural harmony. As described in Suetonius's *Lives*, Augustus's strolls through the terraces and groves of his suburban home are meant to invoke the admirably conservative tastes in villa architecture and landscape design so remarkable of the *pater patriae*.[18] His love for the outdoors, particularly such a managed green extension of the built into the natural, expressed, at least for his biographer, Augustus's reaffirmation of a Roman peace and order rooted in the rich Italian soil. Cicero, the standard-bearer for classical Latin in Cinquecento Italy, expressed a similar attachment to the land in many of his letters. In Cicero's dichotomy of *otium* and *negotium*, the *villa rustica* both addressed the Roman agronomic roots and provided an escape from the tensions

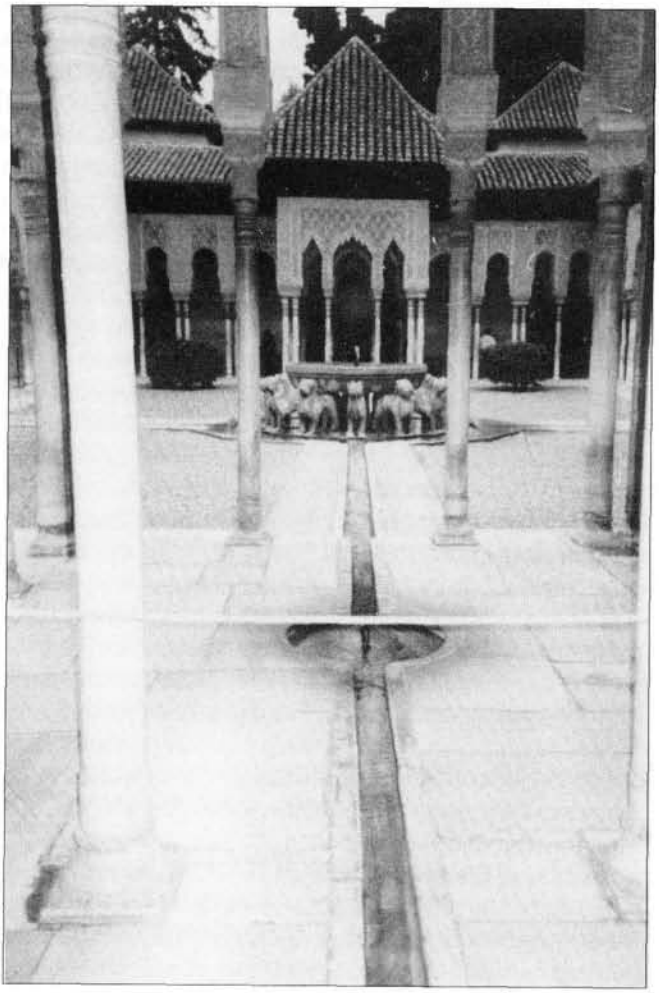


Fig. 3 Patio de los leones, Alhambra, Granada. (Author's photo).

inherent in urban society. However, the famous litigator did not simply respect agriculture and enjoy the ex-urban greenery; rather, he pressed for a personal involvement of the Republican Roman, the descendant of sturdy, agronomist stock, with his horticultural pursuits.[19] In sixteenth-century Italy, perhaps because of the Imperial overtones resonant in his role in the establishment of a ruthless autocracy, Augustus was overshadowed by Cicero. In other words, Cicero's antagonistic position as a spokesman of old Republican virtue appealed to his modern audience not only for the beautiful clarity of his language, but also because his political sentiment spoke to the heart of Humanists and Republicans fifteen hundred years later.

The literary conceit began to take form during the sixteenth century as formal gardens—previously contained within the architectonic embrace of buildings like the Palazzo Medici—opened prospects from the garden over the agricultural hinterland. Cardinal Gambara's Villa Lante, for instance, constructed during the third quarter of the Cinquecento, embraces the dramatic and sweeping vista of the surrounding countryside now possible from both the villa proper and its highly manicured terraces.[20] This new formal relationship could take only limited visual clues from nearby Roman antecedents. Did Italian designers and patrons create villas brimming with the spirit of Cicero's *villa rustica* with almost no specific knowledge of the planted form and atmosphere of the classical models presented in the texts? The concurrent appearance of architectonic features such as the belvedere, design motifs like connective waterways, and programmed vistas indicate that the Cinquecento gardener had identified visual aids and, in turn, reached beyond the literary sources as he attempted to create a garden equal or superior to the ancient Roman example.[21]

If one's view was restricted to the Italian peninsula, visual proof of this particular formulation of the Roman villa and the Republican landscape would have been all but nonexistent. Two prime suspects in the formation of a Renaissance garden iconography are Pliny the Younger's letters and Hadrian's complex at Tivoli. However, Pliny's marvelous and numerous villas—favorite targets for draftsman since the Renaissance—have yet to be located;[22] while Hadrian's Villa was seen more as a collection of ruined architectural fantasies.[23] In 1516, Raphael toured the one-time Imperial villa complex with Navagero, Pietro Bembo, and Baldassare Castiglione at the invitation of Bembo and the request of Navagero who wanted to see the "old and new" before returning to Venice.[24] The remains stimulated the humanists and inspired the artist to continue the search for accurate information about the architecture and environment of ancient Rome.[25] Raphael's plan for the Medici Villa on Monte Mario, known today as the Villa Madama, was an attempt in part to recreate Pliny's Tuscan Villa that incorporated high profile ruins including the barrel vaulting of the Basilica of Constantine into the architectonic vocabulary of the villa and proposed a series of terrace gardens modeled after the hippodromes and topiary gardens mentioned in Pliny's letter.[26] Visits to the innumerable sites in Lazio provided an encyclopedia of inventive masonry, yet nowhere in Italy would one see the Roman *villa rustica* in living color or full bloom. Instead, the remains of Muslim gardens and palaces in Sicily and Spain stood in admirably for the absent archaeological record of the Roman garden.

In the sixteenth century, numerous accounts of the fantastic places discovered by Europeans arrived on Italian shores. In at least two instances, Navagero and Leandro Alberti, recording their visits to Islamic ruins in the Mediterranean, infused what were catalogue-like narratives with significant doses of critical analysis. Alberti, for

example, suggests that the *mori* followed the Roman lead, still visible in ruined form in Sicily, and produced subtle yet original combinations of classical forms in their architecture.[27] Moreover, both Navagero and Alberti insist that the incorporation of ingenious water management and planted zones in the built environment, apparent in Granada and Palermo, bespoke a sensitivity and virtue which could be, perhaps much as their architecture appeared, the result of their encounter with and respect for the classical past.[28]

When the larger theme of Islamic agricultural harmony that permeates *Il viaggio* is balanced against both contemporary accounts of the archaeological Muslim landscape and Navagero's dream to resurrect Roman ideology, the Italian discussion of Islamic garden design and agricultural sensitivity expresses the absorption of Mediterranean Islam into the Roman sphere. The Alhambra, with its murmuring water and its coexisting formal and agricultural plantings,[29] bears a remarkable resemblence to the Villa Lante's integration of the palace, formal garden, and agricultural surround in the Cinquecento landscape. This formal connection is completely contained within the larger influence of classical antiquity, a consideration suggested by the careful attention Navagero paid to Roman remains and persistent features during his Iberian tour. Furthermore, Navagero's Hispano-Muslim garden does not here typologically extend to include the sixteenth-century Ottoman stewards of the Dar al-Islam. The *turchi* competed with the Venetian oligarchy for control of the eastern Mediterranean. Their decidedly eastern character—certainly Other to the Renaissance Italian—permitted the segregation of their forbears into discrete populations, some of which had cultural connections to the antique world of the Mediterranean. Navagero identifies the ruins of Granadine palaces and gardens as the hallmark of *i mori*: Muslims who respected the special arrangement man must make with nature. Navagero claims *mori* princes, heirs of the Roman organization of the Iberian landscape, trusted the peasantry to carry out the details of making this arrangement practical. In fact, Navagero places the Nasrid kings in direct contrast to the Spanish nobles who punished their subjects, bleeding their land with little or no vision of the long-term negative ramifications.[30] The favorable presentation of the *mori* perhaps reflects increasing political tension between the Holy Roman Empire, Spain, and Venice during Navagero's lifetime. However, similar sentiment appears in the more or less contemporary travelogue of Alberti, indicating that Navagero's recovery of a Roman-like *mori* reflected his interest in locating physical evidence or visual examples of the Republican *vita rustica*.

Leandro Alberti's *Isole Appartenenti* suggests that by 1580 the history of the Italian islands was inextricably linked to the peninsula. Alberti indicates that what he saw in February of 1526 during a visit to Sicily was unusual in the Italian landscape and thereby worthy of inclusion in a travelogue; however, he emphasizes that the building complexes, among them La Zisa in Palermo, which he visited and described, are typical of the palaces built during Islamic rule. It is important to note that Alberti does not connect La Zisa with the Hauteville princes who conquered Sicily in 1061 and ended over a century of benign Islamic occupation. For Alberti, the Norman presence on the island has been subsumed into a mythic Moorish occupation that produced the spectacular polychromatic architecture and luxurious gardens.[31] The complete erasure of the Normans from the foundation history of La Zisa occurs when Alberti, adding romantic distance with the introduction of folk legend to the historic time supplied by the ruins themselves, describes an *atrio* or courtyard with three adjacent apartment units that is not readily visible in plans and which was the work of an unnamed *rex mori*

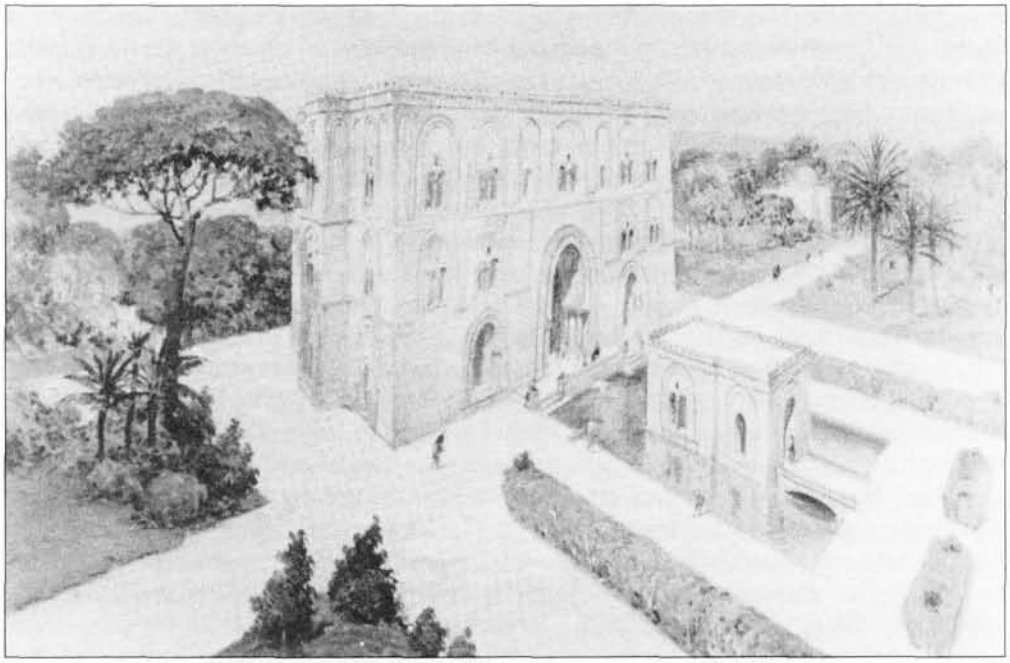


Fig. 4 Rocco Lentini, *Projected reconstruction of La Zisa, Palermo,* 1935. Reproduced from Giuseppe Caronia, *La Zisa di Palermo: Storia e restauro,* 1982, fig. 143, courtesy of Laterza & Figli.

who hoped to satisfy three disgruntled sons in an equitable property arrangement.[32] His lengthy reconstruction of the palace and its gardens and waterways declares it paradigmatically Moorish and at no time honors or recognizes any Norman presence in the form of the building, its ingenious accoutrements, or its marvelous gardens.[33]

A brief excursion into Alberti's vivid reconstruction of both the architecture and the spirit of La Zisa (Fig. 4) certainly supports placing *i mori* beside his Roman forebears. The arcuated fenestration of the elevations with its polychromatic pilasters and attached columns imposes regularity on the surface of the palace and hints at classical antecedents, even as Alberti ascribes every detail to a Moorish flair for extravagant artifice. It is Alberti's inspired recreation of the Moorish spirit pervading this ruined palace that brings us again to the crux of the matter. As Alberti extends his discussion of artifice beyond the purely architectural features visible in the elevation, he returns his attention to the clear, rushing water which flows through the central court linking the cubic spaces that make up the palace while introducing both soothing rhythms and scented atmosphere to his reader's experience of the site.[34] Curiously, Alberti suggests that this same water channel—which recent reconstruction has set into the floor of the palace—flowed from a splendid artificial spring and across a raised platform or dining table, carrying bottles of wine to those dining in the cool atrium (Fig. 5).[35] His Renaissance reader must have had images in his head of Pliny's Tuscan villa, replete with airy tablinum and bowls of delicacies wafting across the wind-tossed swells of his own watercourse *cum* waiter.[36] It is true that contemporary recreations of Pliny's garden could have enticed Alberti to elaborate his atmospheric description of La Zisa with a memorable tale of Moorish life. But for our purposes, let us accept that the classical

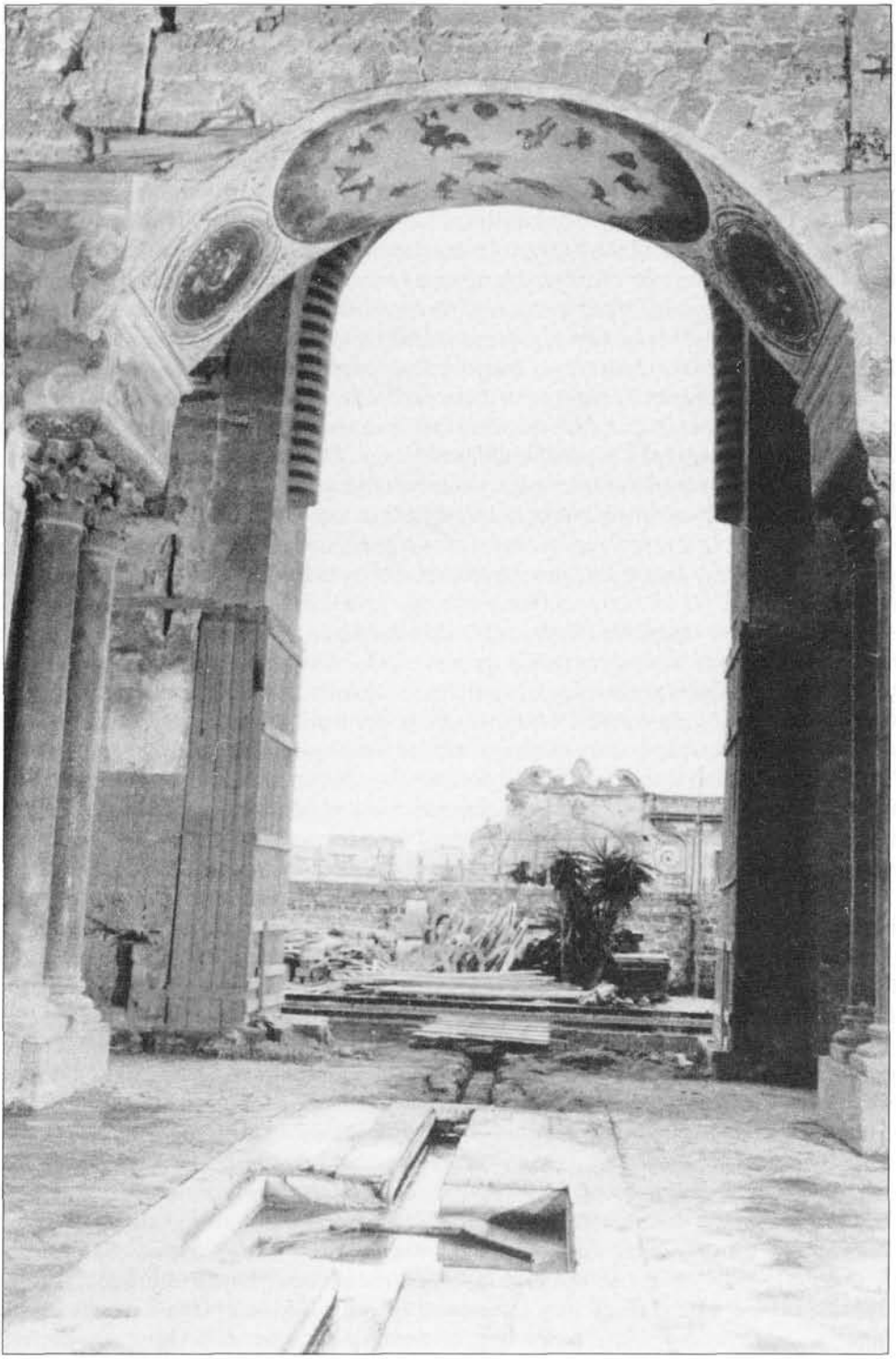


Fig. 5 Fountain court of La Zisa. Reproduced from Giuseppe Caronia, *La Zisa di Palermo: Storia e restauro*, 1982, fig. 136, courtesy of Laterza & Figli.

author defined for the Cinquecento audience one of the benefits of water in the villa, and the appearance of water channels in the gardens of *i mori* presented a parallel worth noting.

Classical sources and Renaissance self-indulgence aside, Alberti saw the comforting presence of this *acqua* weave discrete views and moments into the fabric of the surrounding environment. The carefully-explicated architectural space becomes subservient to the artifice which has introduced nature into the built environment. As Alberti conflates the solid forms of the palace with the murmuring water, he begins to expose the openness of the design. The result is a perforation of the barriers which had marked the atrium or courtyard house as a refuge from the natural world outside its walls. Alberti suggests that La Zisa complements this introduction of nature into the house by permitting views out of the central block via the aforementioned windows and arches into the surrounding countryside. Moreover, as the water circulated through the building, its flowing path directed the senses. We are presented with first the sound of the water, then the smell of the flora, and now the sight of the floating carafes as they journeyed from the table, through the palace, and into the gardens beyond. Sadly, Alberti brings us back to earth, telling us that only rustic countryfolk dwell in the ruined complex and only *pesci* swim in the *navicela*.[37] But, his regret at the passing of so noble a place and so wondrous a garden suggests that his reader could take up his urging and again produce such a magical marriage of man-made and natural.

Alberti's focus upon the Hispano-Muslim garden in his travel accounts supports the reevaluation of Navagero's description of the Alhambra palaces and gardens. When he describes the archaeological remains of Normanno-Muslim Palermo, Alberti echoes Navagero's discussion of the Iberian peninsula, emphasizing the Moor's admirable sensitivity to nature during a tour of the physical remains of Islamic Sicily. Furthermore, when considered as a foil to the classicist Navagero, the historian Alberti's explicit treatment of the Moorish garden and Islamic agricultural sensitivity suggests that by the mid-to-late Cinquecento, the educated Italian accepted the Moors as heirs to a common Roman agricultural past.[38]

The attention paid by Italian observers and historians to the harmonious relationship between Islam and agriculture visible in the Islamic Mediterranean's surviving gardens and structures also indicates a pervasive interest in the Moor as a living figuration of the desirable marriage of man and nature. Navagero's active role in a classicizing *Sacra Agricoltura* movement led by Cardinal Pietro Bembo and Alvise Cornaro indicates an ideological association between the design of the villa and a proper Roman relationship between man and the manipulated landscape.[39] The tone and message of his account of conditions in recently reconquered Iberia reflect a burgeoning dialogue between Cinquecento Italy and the Muslim example. Navagero's ties to the *Sacra Agricoltura* movement may have prompted him to extend description to analysis. A stumbling block in his revitalization of the Italian connection to nature must have been the lack of visual evidence for the implementation of the agricultural Roman ethos. However, his discussion of Islamic Spain and the Alhambra continually turns on the close and visible bond between nature and her masters. Navagero's writings shifted from travelogue to manual as he consciously synthesized Roman ideology with Muslim example, opening the door for a transfer of design concepts from the Moorish garden into the Italian landscape.

Navagero's ideas about garden design outlived the Venetian ambassador, poet and historian. His connection of the formal garden to scientific experimentation inspired some patrons and architects to rethink the purpose of the villa and make their country houses the center of agricultural enterprises. Similarly, his positive impression of the Moorish landscape appealed to readers and helped pave the way for the dramatic waterworks of late-sixteenth-century Italian gardens. Domenico Farri's preface to his 1563 Venice edition of *Il viaggio* offers some proof that Navagero's letters from Spain had an impact on Renaissance landscape architecture. The publisher praised "*il sacro giardino del Navagiero* (sic)," noted the author's interest in the Hispano-Muslim garden, and stated that Navagero was a wonderful model for Farri's patron the Marchese Lepido di Malaspina.[40] Farri commended Navagero's work as a paradigm of an appropriate landscape. Navagero's document, speaking to his Italian audience concerning gardens of a foreign land, presented images of an approach to landscape design and use that would have been understood in the sixteenth century as a foil to or the offspring of those gardens featured in their classical favorites. However, in light of Farri's high praise of the garden issues pervading *Il viaggio*, Navagero's account must be respected as a vehicle for new solutions, including the introduction of water as an integral connective element, that were clearly applied by the designers of Italian gardens in the second half of the Cinquecento.[41]

After the ascension of Ferdinando I de' Medici to the throne of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany following the death of his childless brother Francesco in 1588, the palaces and villas used by the Grand Duke and his family received a new burst of capital investment in preparation for the arrival of the one-time Cardinal's new bride, Christine de Lorraine. James Saslow's *Medici Wedding of 1589* covers in minute detail the energized atmosphere of Ferdinando's Florence in the six months leading up to the appearance of his distant cousin and her ascension to the throne waiting by his side. In his careful dissection of the route planned for the Duchess Christine, Saslow dallies briefly in the Florentine hinterland, describing Christine's short stays at several Medici villas in the last days before her triumphant progress through the city toward the climactic dramatic performances and wedding feast at the recently refurbished Uffizi and Palazzo Vecchio. The Medici villas of Pratolino and Castello, as well as the Oltrarno Palazzo Pitti, received a thorough face-lift as Ferdinando employed painters, sculptors, architects, and gardeners to involve every Medici possession in a comprehensive narrative that removed any possible questions about the legitimacy of the Medici hegemony from the minds of his audience.[42]

Why was Ferdinando driven to such an expensive and extravagant gesture when his bride was in fact the granddaughter of Catherine de'Medici, Queen Mother of France and high profile Tuscan? Foremost would have been his awareness of the troubled reign of the high-handed Francesco that left Ferdinando a state surrounded by enemies and troubled by republican sentiment. On one hand, Ferdinando's celebration in the union of the Grand Duchy and the French Royal Family expressed his gratitude for the enormous dowry of 600,000 scudi paid by the French crown. On the other, his program focused on the vigorous presentation of the legitimate, if enlightened, autocracy of the Medici Duke to his court, the Tuscan nobility and bourgeoisie, foreign ambassadors, and the lower classes in the series of public and private performances. The increasing use of theatrical devices in the interests of the autocrat drew Saslow to the spectacle of the Summer of 1589. However, I would prefer to take this event as a point of departure for an exploration of the big picture painted by Ferdinando during

his lifetime, both as Cardinal and Grand Duke, which has left an image of a prince, statesman, patron of the arts, and intellectual. Thanks to Ferdinando's costume designer, Bernardo Buontalenti, one sees the delightful and intriguing conflation of the classical with the Mohammedan in a watercolor rendering of several figures for the *Intermezzi* performed during the week-long wedding celebration. Buontalenti's male half of his *Delphic Couple* sports the full beard, flowing pantaloons, and turban of an exotic individual. Their strange and foreign appearance delighted the refined guests at the *festa* and conveyed a distance in time and space between the amazed audience and the performers in the spectacle.[43] Ferdinando's fascination with Islamic culture extended beyond the incorporation of exotic costumes in ceremonial performances. His stewardship of several Medici villas reflects a receptivity toward the conventional wisdom expressed in the works of Navagero and Alberti, which designated Islamic gardens in the Mediterranean as conduits of the atmosphere and forms of the antique landscape. However, it is his activities during his short but important career as a cleric that open the door to a study of Ferdinando and the Islamic world.

In 1584, a few years before his return to Florence, Cardinal Ferdinando announced the inauguration of the first Arabic press in Europe (Fig. 6). He put his family money behind the Italian Arabist Giovanni Battista Raimondi, in support of his argument that the Papacy would be well served with the establishment of a press capable of carrying the Christian message to the Arab world.[44] Ferdinando's comments on the occasion of the opening of the press concede the point that the prescribed mission of the press would be evangelical. However, the first publication of the Medici Press, unlike several others to come in the rather short thirty years of its existence, seems ill-suited to make inroads into a heathen Arab world. This unusual volume, *Hortus rerum mirabilium terrae*

Fig. 6 *Marche* of the *Typografia Orientale Medicea*, c. 1585. Courtesy of Van Pelt Special Collections, University of Pennsylvania.

et regionum[45] or *Kitab al-bustan fi aga' ib al-ard wa al-buldan* of Salamis ibn Kundugdi al-Salihi, featured the talents of Domenico Bassa, a printer previously in the employ of Paulus Manutius during his operation of a Vatican press in the 1560's; Robert Granjon, a French typographer who carved various alphabets but would become well-known for his beautiful Arabic letters; and Raimondi, who is probably responsible for the interlinear Italian translation and the translation of the title into Latin.[46]

In reality this "Book of Gardens" provides almost no insight into actual garden features or agricultural practice in the Islamic world. However, the monumental effort to typeset, print, and translate an Arabic text suggests that Raimondi, and more importantly Ferdinando, hoped to uncover truths about the landscape of the Islamic world. This work could never have been meant to be the opening salvo in a Medici assault on Islam. It is more probably a determined effort by Raimondi to provide immediate return on the investment of his noble patron with his translation of a quasi-geography hopefully bursting with ideas for Ferdinando's villa expansion underway on the Pincian hill in Rome. Ferdinando's personal responsibility for the new architectural features and gardens under construction at his Roman retreat seems certain.[47] Among the notable developments are the sculpture gallery constructed as an embracing loggia suitable for the housing of a growing collection of antiques and a walled *giardino segreto* that included topiary, citrus trees, and fountains.[48] With the sudden death of Francesco in 1587, Ferdinando left Rome, renounced his cardinalate, assumed the title of Grand Duke, and jumped headlong into the management of Florence and Tuscany. He left his beloved villa in Rome behind, eventually bequeathing it to a colleague as Ferdinando expressed little hope of ever seeing his exquisite property again.[49]

The Medici press did publish Arabic versions of the Gospels, a confession of faith for eastern Christians, and two Arabic grammars in the service of the transmission of Catholic dogma to the non-European contingent on the further shores of the Mediterranean.[50] But several other interesting choices mark the limited production of Raimondi's enterprise. In addition to the aforementioned 'Book of Gardens' the Medici Press printed Idrisi's *Geography*, Apollonius' *Conics*, Avicenna's *Canon*, and Euclid's *Elements*.[51] The mission statement of the Stamperia Orientale that appeared in the legal document of March 6, 1584 founding the press stressed the universal benefit to Christendom alongside the monetary and scientific advantages of the investment. Raimondi echoed Ferdinando's elevation of missionary purpose over academic interest on another occasion stating that the value of the press rested in the potential to correct the errors of "Mohammedans" by virtue of the truth of faithful Christian example. But even as Raimondi recapitulated the religious agenda he expanded the reach of the press to include all permissible scientific texts in Arabic.[52] This attention to Arabic science was a profoundly different exercise in publishing which suggests that Raimondi and Ferdinando intended to gather valuable information that was currently circulating in the Arabic-speaking world and distribute it to a European audience. Although the sale records of the press's publications indicate that they were not successful in either making money or converting Muslims or educating Europeans, with almost 80 percent of some publications resting unsold in Medici warehouses for decades, the printing of a new Latin version of Apollonius of Perga, a text only partially available in Latin and Greek prior to Raimondi's edition, and a later bilingual version of 'Izz al-Din al-Zanjani's *Kitab al-Tasrif* suggest that Raimondi intended to provide European intellectuals with knowledge about and from the Arab world.[53]

Fig. 7 Anonymous, "Labyrinth," from *Hortus rerum mirabilium terrae et regionum*, Salamis ibn Kundugdi al-Salihi (Rome: Typografia Orientale Medicea, 1585). Courtesy of the Biblioteca Marciana, Venice.

Ferdinando was not an Arabist himself and in fact had little to do with Raimondi and the press after leaving Rome for Florence in 1587.[54] However, he did bring with him one early return on his as yet depressingly bad investment, Salamis ibn Kundugdi's

Libro del giardino della cose meravigliose della terra ed della vita. The Stamperia Orientale's edition of Kundugdi's text survives in both the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice and the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana of the monastery of San Lorenzo, the family church of the Medici.[55] The fascinating confusion of the binder with the right to left Arabic script has left us with a book that reads from front to back but requires the patient reader to look at the verso first to follow the Arabic and after completing each face skipping to the subsequent folio. More fascinating is the interlinear translation which infiltrates the text in full left to right sentences and phrases only loosely connected to the actual wording of the Arabic. This is in marked contrast to the Marciana copy which is bound correctly and has each word translated with cribbed Italian that itself then must be read right to left! And finally, the single illustration (Fig. 7), a black and white drawing of a labyrinth, introduces an image of a sign for the location of treasure.[56]

The *Kitab* image suggests that the insertion of a labyrinth in some Medici gardens did not simply parrot other pleasure gardens that included labyrinths. At both the Boboli gardens and Pratolino (Fig. 8), Ferdinando completed work begun by Francesco with the installation of statuary, watercourses, citrus trees, and herbaceous labyrinths.[57] There is little doubt that Francesco had instigated the hiring of Buontalenti for the design of the new villa at Pratolino and had continued to pay for work on the gardens

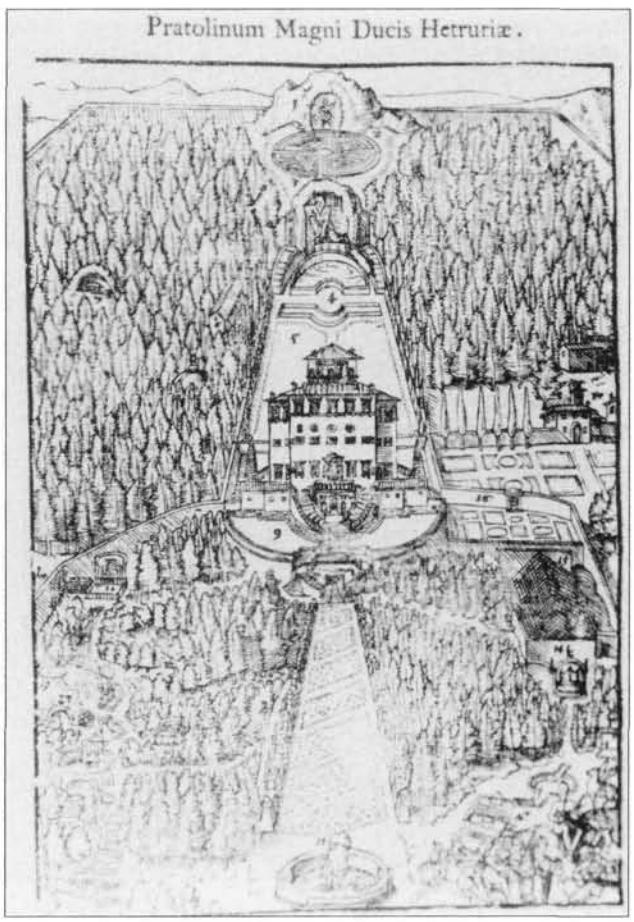


Fig. 8 S. Vitale, "Pratolinum Magni Ducis Hetruriae," from *Ad Annales Sardinae,* Florence, 1639. Reproduced from Luigi Zanghieri, *Pratolino: il giardino delle meraviglie,* Florence, Museo Topografico, inv. 1890, n. 6314.

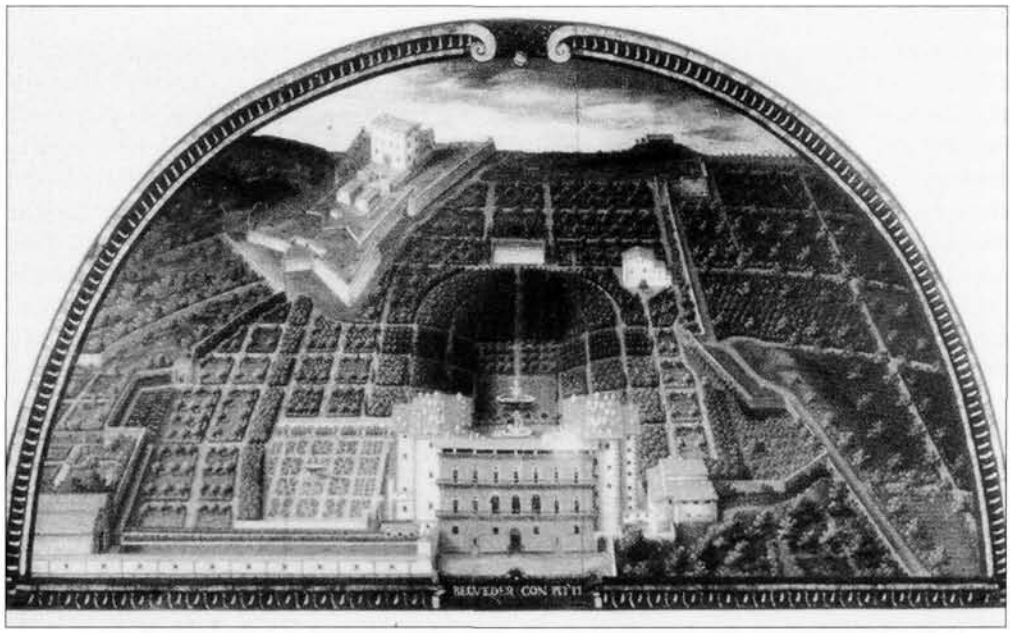


Fig. 9 Giusto Utens, *Belveder Con Pitti*, c. 1599. Tempera on canvas, 143 x 285 cm, Florence, Museo Topografico, inv. 1890 n. 6314.

of the Pitti Palace up almost to his death. As the typically careful documentation of payments never discusses the planting of either of these two labyrinths or of the orangery set at the juncture of the old and new axes of the Boboli gardens, historians have routinely ignored this transitional zone in favor of Tribolo's early concept and the larger baroque garden of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The coincidental planting of two circular labyrinths and the arrival of the illustrated magical symbol of ibn Kundugdi throws into question the chronology of the extension of the Medici gardens stretching eastward toward the Porta Romana.

Immediately after 1587, Ferdinando exploited the increasing stability of the Medici regime and leapt headfirst into the completion of Francesco's projects. Furthermore, with this new taste of a powerful form lionized by an Islamic author, Ferdinando began to experiment with water and plantings. In doing so he composed a landscape in which Islamic ideas found their deserved place in the Italian garden as equal partners with elements of the classical gardens discussed, oftentimes in maddeningly elliptical passages, by Latin authors such as Pliny the Younger and Varro. The unorthodox combination of garden features begun in the early years of Ferdinando's assumption of the position of Grand Duke supports a new date for the first major work beyond the earliest perimeter of the Boboli Gardens in the 1590's as Ferdinando, in what might be the earliest and only major instance, installed Arabo-Roman features in a Tuscan garden.

The Boboli Gardens behind the Pitti Palace were designed by Niccolo Tribolo in the 1540's for Cosimo I. Giusto Utens's famous lunette of 1599 (Fig. 9) indicates that the natural theater planned by Tribolo for the slope running south from the rear of the Palace toward the city walls and their terminus at the Forte Belvedere had been fully implemented by Cosimo's successor, Francesco and his architects: Giorgio Vasari and

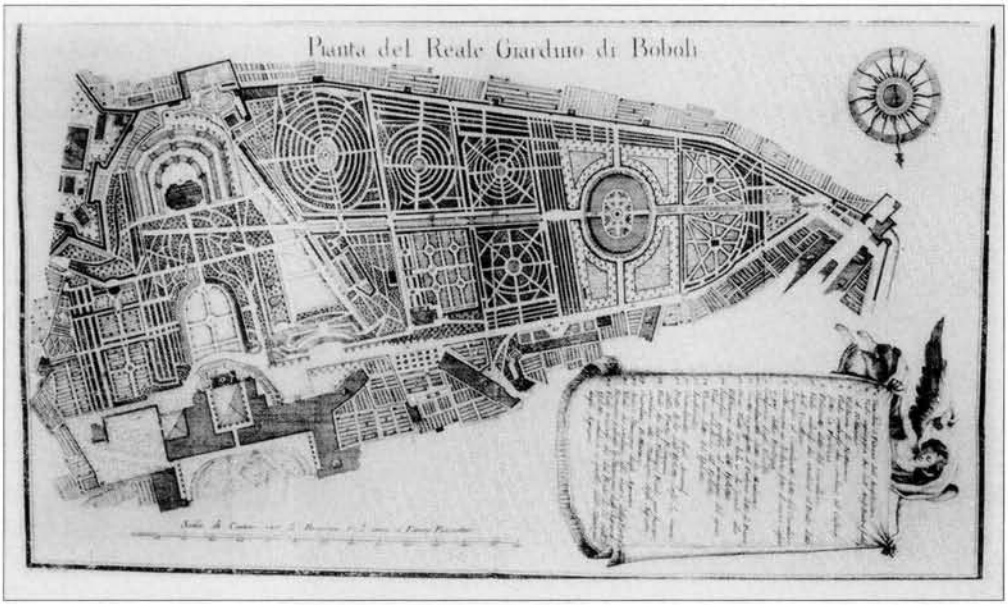


Fig. 10 Francesca Maria Soldini, "Plan of the Boboli Gardens." Reproduced from *Il Reale Giardini Di Boboli: Nella sua pianta e nelle sue statue*, Rome: Multigrafica Editrice, 1976.

Bartolomeo Ammanati.[58] However, with the demolition of parts of the walls of Cosimo I that enclosed the garden to the west in 1571, the landscape could and did push down the hill on land owned by the Medici. By the mid-seventeenth century, Giambologna's *Ocean* fountain graced the base of a new axis running from the top of Tribolo's garden down almost to the Porta Romana (Fig. 10).[59] With Francesco's energy directed toward the completion of Buontalenti's Grotto and other formal areas directly adjacent to the Palace, his focus does not appear to have been on the expansion. Ferdinando, however, took charge of the Boboli gardens much as he is supposed to have done at Pratolino and Castello. It is likely that in the 1590s Ferdinando planted a spalliered citrus orchard (Fig. 11) and an evergreen labyrinth directly beyond the now perforated walls. These two features mirror a duality in the ideological foundation of intensive landscape intervention and agricultural experimentation that justified what might be otherwise the straightforward aesthetic appeal of the manipulated landscape for the educated autocrat. The orchard involved the cultivation of fruit-bearing trees in a microclimate created by the southwestern exposure and the wind-break of the massive wall at their back.[60] The lord was not simply owner but a participatory gentleman farmer following the example of both the classical villa steward well-known to the Renaissance audience and his Islamic counterpart only recently identified as a successful student of the Roman example. Connected with the meticulously manicured orange trees by their imposed regular geometry and a mutual dependence on the water flowing from the fountain installed at the highest point of this new extension of the Boboli grounds, Ferdinando's herbaceous version of ibn Kundugdi's labyrinth summoned the spirit of a different but related gardener, the farmer or natural magus who studied and harnessed the natural environment with his superior knowledge of the power of the plant world.

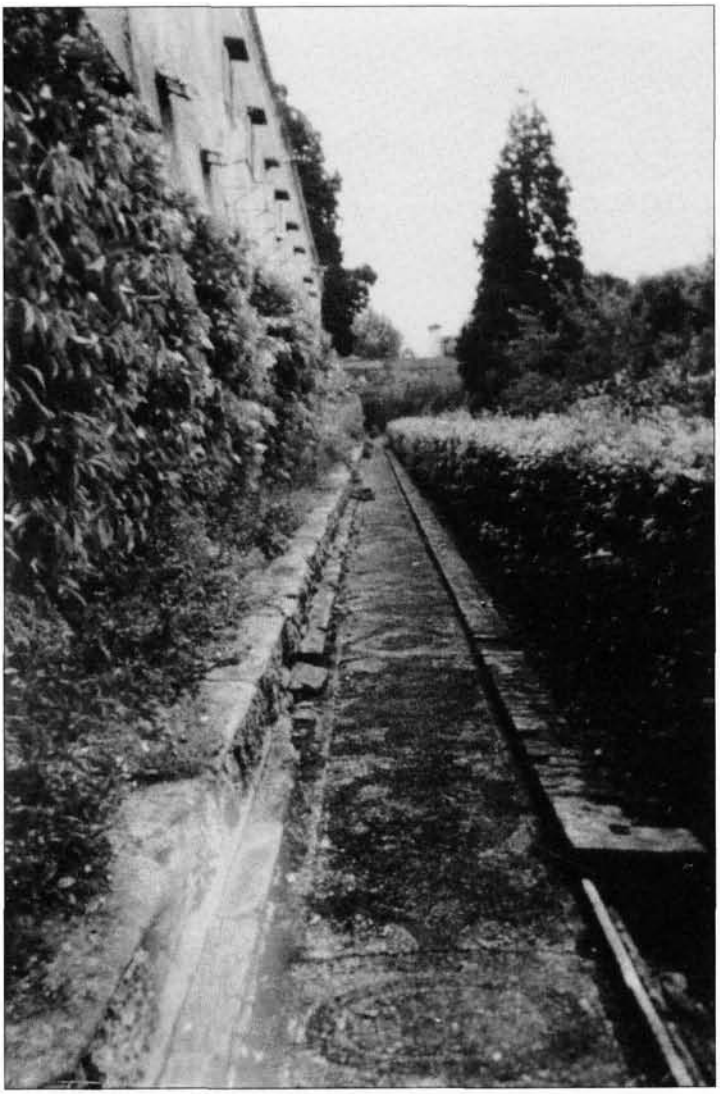


Fig. 11 Spalliered orangery constructed on the exterior of the walls of Cosimo I. Note the raised beds and the irrigation channels and basins that run along the top of the thigh-high retaining wall. (Author's photo)

It is the crossing over of these two ideological gardeners that supports a previously unrecognized connection between Ferdinando's garden and Islamic agronomy and landscape design. As isolated elements, neither the labyrinth nor the spalliered orange trees prove my argument that Ferdinando has here, for the first time in Tuscany, reached back to a different ancient world than the classical antiquity that entranced his countrymen. However, their contiguous arrangement in the newly planted part of the Boboli indicates that Ferdinando, carrying with him a persistent interest in the gardens of the Islamic Mediterranean, had carefully but deliberately repositioned himself as a student of an Islamic gardener that had been similarly a student of and successor to the usual suspects such as Varro and Columella. Following in the footsteps of Navagero, Ferdinando accepted the Islamic agronomer as a viable source for information about classical agriculture. Navagero's delightful description of the Generalife and his

commentary on the history of Spain legitimized the metamorphosis of the Islamic landscape into an echo of the faded Roman landscape. *Il viaggio* must have struck a chord after it was published in 1563 and percolated among garden aficionados. The book may have reached Rome and the Cardinals most involved in building and ornamenting palatial villas via Bernardo Navagero following his appointment as Venetian ambassador to the Pope, while his subsequent elevation to the purple as Cardinal of Verona in 1565 would have enhanced the appeal of his well-known uncle's travelogue in Rome. Bernardo mentioned meeting the Cardinal de' Medici in Rome. Although it is unclear if he meant the very young Ferdinando, it seems likely that Andrea's description of Islamic Spain was available to Ferdinando and, as a contemporary discussion of Islamic culture, would have interested the Medici sponsor of an Arab press. As we have seen from the publication of ibn Kundugdi's garden book, Ferdinando's embrace of "licit" Arab knowledge clearly extended to natural philosophy and landscape design. With Navagero's *Il viaggio* as a guide, Ferdinando could transform the garden of his suburban villa into a masterwork replete with references to the historical landscape. The classical past and the recent past, the pagan authority and the heathen practitioner, the Roman and the Moor could be and would become co-sponsors of a now balanced textbook for garden design complete with detailed technical passages, categorical description, and—most important of all—visual, aural, and olfactory examplars.

University of Pennsylvania

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1. James Ackerman, *The Villa: Form and Ideology of Country Houses*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); David Coffin, *The Villa in the Life of Renaissance Rome*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); and Coffin, *Gardens and Gardening in Papal Rome*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). Coffin's two major contributions to the study of Italian Renaissance gardens provide scholars with a rich texture of documentation and analysis of types and practices in the Roman Cinquecento. Ackerman focuses on the typology of the Renaissance villa and deduces from formal similarities a subliminal kinship between Cinquecento structures and ancient Roman prototypes, 29, 67-68, and 91. Similarly, Glenn M. Andres, *The Villa Medici in Rome*, (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1976) says, "the twin wings in villa design... appear to have developed from antique prototypes preserved via Byzantium and Venice," 332. William L. MacDonald and John A. Pinto in *Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), present a comprehensive study of the Imperial property and its impact on later generations of visitors and students. Pages 269 to 279 focus particularly on the Renaissance response to the archaeological remains. MacDonald and Pinto suggest, however, that Italian "villas, in their extent and rich collections of sculptures formed to adorn them, recall Hadrian's Villa, but the relation is generic, not specific." 278.

2. Ancient sources about the form, function, and features of the Roman villa and garden included the letters of Pliny the Younger describing his Laurentine (II.xvii.1-29) and Tuscan (V.vi.1-46) villas, passages from Suetonius's biography of Augustus Caesar in *Lives of the Caesars*, Book II.lxxii, Cato's *De agri cultura*, XIV.iv, and Varro's *Rerum rusticarum*, I.xiii.1ff.

3. Bartolomeo Taegio, *La villa, dialogo...* (Milan: 1559) and Agostino Gallo, *Le vinti giornate dell'agricoltura, e de'piaceri della villa* (Turin: 1569). Ackerman, *The Villa*, Chapter 5: "The Image of Country Life in Sixteenth-

Century Villa Books," 108-123, includes the most extensive analysis of these treatises and several contemporary works.

4. In a discussion of the relative merit of the elder Pliny's *Natural History*, Federico Borromeo identified the inadequacy of ancient texts for scientific research: "Moreover how much light would we glean from interpreting the passages of writers, principally Pliny, if we had in sight those things which he told only in words." Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 67-68, and Arlene Quint, *Cardinal Federico Borromeo as a Patron and Critic of the Arts and His Museum of 1625*, (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1986), 233.

5. In a letter to Baldassare Castiglione of 1514-15, Raphael alluded to the difficulty he continued to have in matching up sources and descriptions from ancient authors such as Vitruvius with the archaeological remains in Rome: "I hope to find the beautiful forms of ancient buildings, but I don't know if my flight will be like that of Icarus. Vitruvius sheds a great light for me, but not enough." Stefano Ray, *Raffaello architetto: linguaggio artistico e ideologia nel Rinascimento romano*, (Rome: Laterza, 1974), 357.

6. Eric Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries 1527-1800: A History of Florence and the Florentines in the Age of the Grand Dukes*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 156-158.

7. Costume studies reproduced in James Saslow, *Florentine Festival as Theatrum Mundi: The Medici Wedding of 1589*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996). Saslow's discussion of these characters does not address their wonderfully anachronistic wardrobe. Fortunately, other similar conflations which appeared in Florentine festivals including the appearance of all-but nude Native American warriors in the vanguard of the East Indian army have not escaped notice. See Arthur M. Blumenthal, *Theater Art of the Medici* exh. cat. (Hanover, New Hampshire, and London: Dartmouth College Museum in association with University Press of New England, 1980). In the catalogue entry for Giulio Parigi's *"The War of Love": Sketch for an Indian Soldier Escorting the Chariot of the Queen of India*, pen and ink and watercolor, 11 x 6 7/8, Biblioteca Marucelliana, Florence (vol. B, no. 33), Blumenthal says: "It is interesting that Parigi has drawn a native North American rather than a native from India." 101-102.

8. Attilio Petruccioli, ed. *Il giardino Islamico: Architettura, natura, paesaggio*, (Milan: Electa, 1974), provides a comprehensive bibliography for research into the Islamic garden. One of the essays in this volume, Paola Caselli, "La Conca d'oro e il giardino della Zisa a Palermo," 185ff, discussed the visible impact of Islamic agriculture on the territory of Sicily. For additional information on the staying power of arabo-islamic culture and the concomitant survival of landscape interventions see Umberto Rizzitano, "La Conquista Musulmana," in Rosario Romeo, ed., *Storia della Sicilia: Volume terzo*, (Naples: Società editrice Storia di Napoli e della Sicilia, 1980), 99-176.

9. On the gardens and general features of the Granadine acropolis see Oleg Grabar, *The Alhambra*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978); Henri and Anne Stierlin, *Alhambra*, (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1991), 169-182.

10. Earl E. Rosenthal, *The Palace of Charles V in Granada*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985). Rosenthal's study begins with a careful chronology of the Spanish occupation of the Alhambra site and the plans of the emperor for a new "Italian" palace, 3-6.

11. Andrea Navagero, *Il viaggio fatto in Spagna et in Francia dal magnifico M. Andrea Navagiero*, (Venice: Domenico Farri, 1563). Navagero's letters to Giovanni Battista Ramusio first appeared in a collection in 1556 before their posthumous publication. Page numbers in the following notes refer to the 1563 edition.

12. Leandro Alberti, *Descrittione della tutta italia ed isole appartenente*, (Venice, 1560).

13. A number of garden historians have intimated that Navagero's correspondence sparked interest in the waterworks, among other things, which he described. For brief analyses see Marie Luise Gothein, *A History of Garden Art From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1926), v. I, 154-159; Georgina Masson, *Italian Gardens*, (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 203-204; and Claudia Lazzaro, *The Italian Renaissance Garden: From the Conventions of Planting, Design, and Ornament to the Grand Gardens of Sixteenth-Century Central Italy*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 90.

14. Girolamo Fracastoro, *Naugerius, Sive de poetica dialogus*, trans. Ruth Kelso, (Champaign: The University of Illinois Press, 1924), 65-66. Navagero had previously edited Quintilian's *De institutione oratione* for Aldus. The Roman rhetor claimed that orators "must have knowledge" and "must know history," *M. FABII QVINTILIANI DE INSTITVTIONE ORATORIA AD MARCELLVM VICTORIVM LIBER PRIMVS...*,

(Venice: Aldus Manutius and Andrea Soceri, 1514), 218-219.

15. Navagero, *Il viaggio*, 8r: "vede vestigii per antiqui di un acquedutto di acqua," 11: "certi veftigii di therme...il nome di Gn. Pomp." 25r: "...in every part around Granada, you see...many small Moorish houses here and there which...have their water and roses, and muscat grapes and myrtles, and everything pleasing, demonstrating that the country was much more beautiful in the time it was in the hands of the Moors than it is now."

16. Navagero, *Il viaggio*, 14v. Navagero supports the veracity of his glowing description of Seville and its territory when he reminds his reader that "I am certain there was a city, but I am not sure it was Seville, but much earlier Pliny spoke of Seville..."

17. James C. Davis, *Pursuit of Power: Venetian Ambassadors' Reports on Spain, Turkey, and France in the Age of Philip II, 1560-1600*, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970). Davis's analysis of selected reports to the Venetian government confirms the suspicion that Venetians did not treat all Muslims as members of a monolithic community. Eric Cochrane's assessment of the career of the Genoese historian Pietro Bizzari (b. 1525) in *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), mentions Bizzari's positive portrayal of Suleiman and identifies the remarkable effort to associate the modern Persians, sometime allies of the Venetians against the Turks, with the Persians of Herodotus, 355-356.

18. Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, Book II.lxxii.

19. Cicero, *De senectute*, XVI.56. Similar sentiments appear in Pliny the Elder, *Nat.Hist.* XVIII.vii.35 and XVIII.iii.13 and in Varro, *Rerum rusticarum.* I.xiii.6.

20. Claudia Lazzaro-Bruno, "The Villa Lante at Bagnaia: An Allegory of Art and Nature," *Art Bulletin* 59 (1977): 553-560.

21. MacDonald and Pinto, *Hadrian's Villa*, "Before the mid-sixteenth century water had played a relatively modest role in Italian Renaissance gardens; waterworks on the scale of those at Hadrian's Villa had not been attempted." Noting Ligorio's excavation of the Villa and subsequent construction of the nearby Villa D'Este, MacDonald and Pinto claim that "one looks in vain for one-to-one correspondences between the two designs, finding instead... the use of allusion and allegory to evoke the spirit of antiquity." 272-273.

22. The most comprehensive study of the history of Pliny's Villas is Pierre de la Ruffinière Du Prey, *The Villas of Pliny from Antiquity to Posterity*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

23. MacDonald and Pinto, *Hadrian's Villa.* Richard J. Betts, "Archaeology and Architecture," *Raphael and the Ruins of Rome: The Poetic Dimension*, exh. cat. (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaigne, 1983), 21.

24. Pietro Bembo, *Lettere*, Vol. II, Ernesto Travi, ed., (Bologna, 1992). No. 368 [**D** 80-84 to Cardinal di S. Maria in Portico (Bernardo Bibbiena), 3 Apr 1516, Rome] discusses Bembo's trip to Tivoli with Navagero, Beazzano, Castiglione and Raphael. "Io, col Navagiero e col Beazzano e con M. Baldassar Castiglione e con Rafaello, domani anderòa riverder Tivoli, che io vidi già un'altra volta XXVII anni sono. Vederemo il vecchio e il nuovo, e ciò che di bello fia in quella contrada. Vovvi per dar piacere a M. Andrea il quale, fatto il dì di Pasquino, si partirà per Vinegio."

25. Cammy Brothers, "The Renaissance Reception of the Alhambra: The Letters of Andrea Navagero and the Palace of Charles V," *Muqarnas* 11 (1994), 80.

26. Raphael's concept for the Villa Madama survives in a letter written by Raphael to Baldassare Castiglione in 1519. The full text and an annotated translation appears in Guy Dewez, *Villa Madama: A Memoir Relating to Raphael's Project*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993): 21-31. Raphael's use of ancient architectonic forms is also discussed by Betts, "Archaeology," 15-23; and Roger Jones and Nicholas Penny, *Raphael*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983): 199 ff.

27. Alberti, *Descrittione*, 47v-48r. Alberti claimed to have seen La Zisa in Palermo in February 1526, 49v.

28. Navagero, *Il viaggio*, 13r on the Alcazar; Alberti, *Descrittione*, 49r.

29. Navagero, *Il viaggio*, 18v: "The court is completely tiled with the finest and whitest marble... In the center there is a channel full of lively water, running from a fountain that begins in the palace and then conducts the water to every room. On one and the other side of this canal there are beautiful spalliered myrtles and some orange trees."

30. Navagero, *Il viaggio*, 25r: Navagero contrasts the agricultural enterprise of the Moors with the Spanish "in Granada and in all the rest of Spain" who do not plant or work but "gladly go to war."

31. Alberti, *Descrittione*, 47v: "About one mile from Palermo are the ruins of two illustrious palaces...in bad condition that are now inhabited by animals. They are renowned as the work of the Moors during their rule over the island."

32. Alberti, *Descrittione*,"they add that these things were made by one of their kings, who had three sons but he could not deliver it to one..."

33. Alberti, *Descrittione*, in the margin Alberti entices his reader with the heading: "A palace made by the Saracens most artfully"

34. Alberti, *Descrittione*, 48v. Alberti's description of the features of the palace, courtyard and garden closes with his assertion that "In truth, as I have written, this is the most superb and artful building." 49r.

35. Alberti, *Descrittione*, 47r: "And another beautiful thing that I saw.. in the middle of one of these gardens... was a swimming pool that poured water in abundance that ran through another pool while people sat at table eating, carrying to them vases full of wine as they liked..."

36. Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, Book V.vi.37: "The preliminaries and main dishes for dinner are placed on the edge of the basin, while the lighter ones float about in vessels shaped like birds or little boats."

37. Alberti, *Descrittione*, 49r: "but today nobody cares what happens in the ruins and it is inhabited by villains."

38. Cammy Brothers, "Renaissance Reception," introduced the conceptual layering of Islamic and classical in her analysis of Navagero's description of the Alhambra and architectural exchanges between Spain and Italy, 80.

39. In the prologue to a Spanish edition of *Il viaggio*: *Viaje Por España (1524-26)*, (Madrid: Ediciones Turner, 1983), Angel Gonzalez Garcia connects Navagero's friendship with Pietro Bembo and Alvise Cornaro with the ideology of "*Santa Agricoltura*" and the "*vita rustica*" of Cicero, 8. There has been no exhaustive monograph on the *Sacra Agricoltura* movement. Ruggiero Rugolo, "Agricoltura e alchimia nel rinascimento: Un'introduzione allo studio della villa veneta," *Studi Veneziani* 27 (1994): 127-164, does consider the ideological underpinnings of the Venetian villa within the realm of philosophy and science that starts to examine the elevation of a 'sacred' nature as a source of economic, social and psychological stability.

40. Navagero, *Il viaggio*, Preface to 1563 ed., iii-iv.

41. In a letter to Ramusio (Bembo, Lettere, 535. **VM**3 59r) from 6 June 1525, Pietro Bembo declares his excitement about the seeds Navagero has collected in Spain. Navagero, indeed, brought Spanish varieties and North American examples back to Venice which he planted in his garden on Murano. Mario Cermenati, *Un diplomatico naturalista del Rinascimento: Andrea Navagero*, (Venice: Carlo Ferrari, 1912), 6.

42. Saslow, *Medici Wedding*, 133-138.

43. The concept of the Other in Florentine festival design seems to have been remarkably catholic regarding the conflation of people, costumes, flora and fauna from the West Indies, India, Africa and the Orient. Blumenthal, *Theater Art*, concerning the rhinoceros on the shores of the New World in Cantagallini's *The Ship of Amerigo Vespucci on the Shores of the Indies*, c. 1620, 49-50. Also see n. 7 above.

44. Alberto Tinto, *La Tipografia Medicea Orientale*, (Lucca: Maria Pacini Fazzi, 1987), includes the most comprehensive account of the formation and activity of the Stamperia Orientale. His Appendix I transcribes the founding announcement. Robert Jones, "The Medici Oriental Press (Rome 1584-1614) and the Impact of Its Arabic Publications on Northern Europe," in G. A. Russell, ed., *The 'Arabick' Interest of the Natural Philosophers in Seventeenth-Century England*, (New York, E.J. Brill, 1994), 88-108. Jones gives a detailed chronology of the press and the circulation of its publications in Europe.

45. *The garden of marvelous things of the world.*

46. Karl H. Dannenfeldt, "The Renaissance Humanists and the Knowledge of Arabic," *Studies in the Renaissance* 2 (1955): 116: "The first good Arabic type was founded for the Medici press in Rome established by Cardinal Ferdinand de' Medici in the Eighties with the assistance of Giovanni Battista Raimondi." Tinto, *Tipografia*. Olga Pinto, "Una Rarissima Opera Araba Stampata a Roma nel 1585," *Studi*

Bibliografici 7-8 (October 1965): 47-51.

47. Andres, *Villa Medici.* considered Cardinal Ferdinando an active participant in the hiring and direction of the architects, engineers, craftsmen and artists collaborating on his expensive expansion of the Ricci property. See also Coffin's *Villa,* Chapter 7: "The Hill of Gardens," 215-33.

48. Andres, *Villa Medici.* The arrangement of several private and public rooms in the Villa Medici support the interest in and oversight of the Cardinal regarding the new Press: "If the *salone* was the symbolic center of the building, this apartment was its nerve center. From here were means of communication with the entire rest of the building. Here opened the gallery, the access to the *giardino segreto,* and the way to the private stairs. Down these last were the storeroom which housed the production of the oriental press and below that the carriage room." 320.

49. Coffin, *Villa,* 232-33 cites a 28 November 1587 *avviso* concerning the fate of the Villa Medici on the Pincio: "The Grand Duke of Tuscany has finally given orders to his ministers here that they should continue the building of his palace and garden on the hill of the Trinità of which he has given free use to the Cardinal Montalto with all the furnishings that are there, since His Highness does not expect to come any more to dwell in Rome." (J.A.F. Orbaan, "La Roma di Sisto V negli avvisi," ASRSP, XXXIII, 1910, 302).

50. The religious titles published by the Stamperia included two versions of the *Gospels* (1590 in Arabic and 1591 with Interlinear Latin), *I'tiqad al-amanah al-urtuduksiyyah* or "Confession of faith for eastern Christians" (1595), and a Syriac Missal (1592-4), Jones, "Medici Oriental Press," 88-89.

51. The secular offerings of the Stamperia included two Arabic Grammar treatises: Ibn al'Hajib's *al-Kafiya* and Ibn Ajurrum's *al-Muqaddima al-ajurrumiyya* (1592), an abridgement of al-Idrisi's *Geography* (1592), Ibn Sina's *al-Qanun fi al-tibb* (1593), and Euclid's *Elements* (1594), Jones, "Medici Oriental Press."

52. "And he ordered the printing of all available Arabic books on permissible human sciences which had no religious content in order to introduce the art of printing to the Mahomedan community so that by the same means knowledge of the Mahomedans' errors and of the truth of the Christian faith could gradually get through to them." Jones, "Medici Oriental Press," 97 (translation from ASF, *Stamperia Orientale,* Filza 3, doc. 30).

53. Jones, "Medici Oriental Press," 107-108, no. 71 lists the sales of the Medici Press editions and suggests that the almost 30% remainder filled a Medici warehouse for years after the demise of the enterprise. Andres, *Villa Medici,* II, 272, n.705. An inventory of the Villa Medici from 1598 records the contents of the abovementioned storeroom. (Boyer, "Un Inventaire inédit des antiques de la Villa Médicis (1598)," *Revue Archeologique* serie 5, 30 (1929), 256-270). The increasing acceptance of Arabic source material for European scholars was considered by Dannenfeldt, "Renaissance Humanists." As confirmation of the pervasive interest in expanding the research agenda Jones cited Bedwell's *D. Iohannis apostoli et euangelistae Epistolae Catholicae omnes, Arabicae* (Leyden, 1612, p. 4 of preface): "There is no other language (Greek and Latin excepted), my reader, which contains more sound learning and encyclopaedic monuments." (117) and Johann Wessel's effort in the 1530s to "win Pope Clement VII to his plan to introduce Arabic and Syriac studies into Christian schools," (108-109).

54. In fact, in 1596, Ferdinando had a contract drawn up selling the press to Raimondi under which the Arabist would be permitted to publish. Although Raimondi thus had total control, he remained financially unable to complete any projects for fourteen years until renewed Medici support appeared in 1610 in the person of Cosimo III. Jones, "Medici Oriental Press," 101.

55. Salamis ibn Kundugdi al-Salihi, *Kitab al-bustan fi aga' ib al-ard al-buldan* or *Hortus rerum mirabilium terrae et regionum,* Rome: 1585. The possible correct transliteration of the author's name as *Kunduzi* indicates the Afghani ancestry of the author. The *Kitab's* Arabic text indicates an earlier date than the Timurid agricultural treatise composition explored by Maria Subtelny in a recent essay: "Agriculture and the Timurid Chaharbagh: The Evidence from a Medieval Persian Agriculture Manual," published in *Gardens in the Time of the Great Muslim Empires,* Attilio Petruccioli Ed., (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997). In *Renaissance Philosophy,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) Brian Copenhaver and Charles Schmitt introduce a flexible attitude to intellectual pursuits among the *novatores* in the Renaissance which resulted in an investigation of the occult, alchemy, mysticism, and astrology under the umbrella of philosophy. Such interdisciplinary activity, and the identification of Islamic authorities in these fields, suggests that classical philosophy benefited from alternative interpretations and new approaches.

56. Illustration is on a separate sheet pasted into the codex and appears in essentially the same location (despite the reverse pagination) in both surviving copies.

57. Luigi Zangheri, "The Gardens of Buontalenti," in Monique Mosser and Georges Teyssot, Eds., *The Architecture of Western Gardens: A Design History from the Renaissance to the Present Day*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991), 96-99. "At the highest point of the garden, on the axis with the villa itself, stood a figure of Jupiter by Bandinelli, which overlooked a circular labyrinth and, below that, a colossal statue of Apennine by Giambologna and the Field of the Ancients, which contained twenty-six sculptures of antique heroes." 99; Zangheri, *Pratolino: il giardino delle meraviglie*, (Florence: Edizioni Gonnelli, 1987). In his notes to fig. 310, Vol. II, 154-155, Zangheri describes a xilograph that he has dated to 1588 "*Pratolinum Magni Ducis Hetruriae.*" At the top of the image and at the highest point of the enclosed garden, Zangheri identifies the "Fountain of Giove" overlooking the "great Labyrinth or the great iron pergola with Corsican sponge." Cristina Acidini Luchinat and Elvira Garbero Zorzi, eds, *Boboli 90: Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi per la salvaguardia e la valorizzazione del Giardino*, (Florence: Edizioni Firenze, 1991); includes the most comprehensive assessment of activity at the Medici property. However, despite the astounding wealth of archival information made available by the collected essays, the volume does not directly address the first treatment of the zone directly beyond the walls opened by Francesco in 1571.

58. Daniela Mignani, *Le Ville Medicee di Giusto Utens*, (Florence: Arnaud, 1993), 36-37 and 74-76.

59. The most recent study of this expansion of the Boboli property is by Malcolm Campbell, "Hard times in baroque Florence: the Boboli Garden and the grand ducal public works administration," in John Dixon Hunt, ed., *The Italian Garden: Art, Design and Culture*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 160-201. Campbell's research focused primarily on the projects of the 1630s under Ferdinand II. Based on a comparison of the Utens' view of the "Belvedere con Pitti" and a 1713 Ruggieri plan which shows the greatly expanded landscape, Campbell proposed that Cosimo II initiated the intervention outside the old wall in the first decades of the Seventeenth Century, 163.

60. Sofia Varoli Piazza, "Siepi, Spalliere e Boschetti sempreverdi la Struttura vegetale del Giardino di Boboli," in Luchinat and Zorzi, *Boboli 90*, 265-276, Piazza's essay focuses on the manicured evergreens used to create garden rooms and microclimates for new cultivars.

Aubrey Beardsley's Salomé: The Daughter of Too Many Mothers' Sons

Tirza True Latimer

The fin de siècle, apex of masculinist authority in European culture, paradoxically gave rise to the cult of the *femme fatale*. Terrifying feminine icons like Medusa, Medea, Delilah, Judith, and Salomé dominated the male-produced symbolic realm. These women inspired works of art, literature, drama, dance, and music. In addition, Sigmund Freud drew on these symbolic resources to frame his contemporaneous psychoanalytic theories. "In the symbol," as the mid-Victorian literary laureate Thomas Carlyle had observed, "there is a concealment and yet a revelation."[1] At the fin de siècle, this paradox continued to bear upon both representation and theory. For instance, Aubrey Beardsley's illustrations for the English edition of Oscar Wilde's *Salomé*, published in 1894, and Freud's theory of the fetish pivot on this very point.[2] Such strategic and symbolic commonalities suggest psychoanalytic theory as a framework within which to consider Beardsley's art, most specifically five key figures from his series of fifteen drawings for *Salomé*.[3]

The discontinuities, contradictions, and ambiguities that characterize Beardsley's *Salomé* plates signal psychic as well as cultural flashpoints. These troubling and troubled images seem to mediate between the artist's internal *malaise* and the *mal de siècle* from which his generation suffered.[4] Both ill-born and born ill, Beardsley was the issue of a misalliance between an uncultured, underemployed father and an educated, bread-winning mother. His father suffered from consumption. Beardsley was diagnosed with the disease himself at the age of seven, eventually succumbing to it at the age of twenty-five. Beardsley's mother—who worked as a governess, a French teacher, and a piano teacher when and where she could—periodically entrusted him and his older sister to the care of relatives or friends. The family did not maintain a stable address. Beardsley's letters from school, where he boarded from the ages of six to fifteen, addressed his mother with extravagant affection and hardly mentioned his father.[5]

As an adult, Beardsley's role models were invariably dandy-aesthetes. With the notable exception of James McNeill Whistler, these father figures were homosexual; they included Oscar Wilde, the poet André Raffalovitch, whom Beardsley addressed as "Mentor," and the poet John Gray.[6] Although Beardsley himself was "vulnerable to advances from both sexes,"[7] his primary erotic attachment was apparently to his look-alike older sister Mabel, with whom he set up housekeeping as an adult.[8] As an actress, Mabel shared with her brother a penchant for dressing up and cross-dressing. Indeed, brother and sister shared each other's wardrobe.

Not surprisingly, Beardsley's illustrations for the English edition of Wilde's play *Salomé* celebrate themes of masquerade and travesty.[9] The hard-edged, black and white modernism of the drawings aestheticizes the dualities born in the artist's psyche. These correspond with the dualities that structure Wilde's text. Although Beardsley's plates do not always explicitly illustrate Wilde's dialogue, *John and Salomé* (Fig. 1) clearly corresponds with a specific scene in the play. *John and Salomé* pictures Salomé confronting the impervious prophet.

Fig. 1 Aubrey Beardsley, *John and Salomé*. Reproduced from Oscar Wilde, *Salomé: A Tragedy in One Act* (London: Elkin Mathews & John Lane, 1894). Photographed by the author.

"Jokanaan," Salomé confesses, "I am amorous of thy body!"

"Back! Daughter of Babylon!" the prophet answers.

"Thy body is hideous," she retrenches, "It is like the body of a leper.... It is of thy hair that I am enamoured, Jokanaan...."

"Back, daughter of Sodom!" he retorts.

"Thy hair is horrible.... It is thy mouth that I desire," she counters. [10]

Beardsley's illustration reinscribes psychologically resonant polarities of love and hate, attraction and repulsion, like those written into Salomé's dialogue with Jokanaan.[11] Beardsley's composition dramatically opposes protagonist with antagonist, male with female, desired object with desiring subject, left profile with right profile, front with back, and black with white.

Although such stark contrasts predominate pictorially, *Salomé*'s metaphorical grey areas correspond with the artist's subjective reality. Beardsley's representation of gender here, for instance, is not at all black and white. Salomé's masculine desiring gaze effectively feminizes Jokanaan. Jokanaan, both chaste and chased, glances back over his shoulder at his aggressive suitor with the look of a tragic diva. Salomé's horned headdress and projectile breasts further compromise her femininity, while Jokanaan's robes and flowing hair, like his defensive virtue, emasculate him. The faces of Salomé and Jokanaan are virtually indistinguishable. They could be sister and brother. The androgyny of their faces and the eye-to-eye parity of their stances redress the asymmetry of conventional male/female power relations.

In *Enter Herodias* (Fig. 2), Salomé's mother emerges like an enormous drag queen from behind a curtain with her naked page in attendance. The curtain that sets the stage for Herodias both frames and conceals—just as the fetish, linchpin of Freud's psychoanalytic theories, both "veils" and "memorializes" the "fact of castration."[12] The fool—a mainstay of Beardsley's iconography—here introduces this phallic mother to the viewer/spectator with a theatrical flourish.[13] Her excessive wig-like hair and pushed-up breasts parody the femininity that her face, her stature, and her bearing belie. A fetus-headed grotesque upholding a veiled erection peers fixedly under her skirts. The Oedipal Moment represented here shares particular complexities with both Wilde's play and Beardsley's biography.

Wilde's *Salomé* establishes—through the current of illicit desire that welds Herodias and Salomé into a dyad—an equivalence between mother and daughter that resonates with Beardsley's own domestic history. Beardsley's intimacy with his androgynous sister—while, on the one hand, narcissistic—may have effected, on the other hand, a sort of Oedipal compromise that linked mother and daughter in a comparable continuum. Beardsley's auto-erotic and homoerotic proclivities offered some relief from this all-encompassing, yet equivocal, maternal embrace.

As a child, Beardsley undoubtedly experienced the ministrations of his mother as suffocating, since she ministered to him when he was *literally* suffocating, due to his tubercular condition. The infirmity would have heightened the ambivalence he felt towards an inconstant mother.[14] This displaced ambivalence configured Beardsley's adult drawings. The pictorial dissimulation of sexual difference that marks the *Salomé* illustrations, for instance, fosters the illusion of pre-Oedipal unity with the mother while, at the same time, dramatizes—through mockery—a profound disillusionment

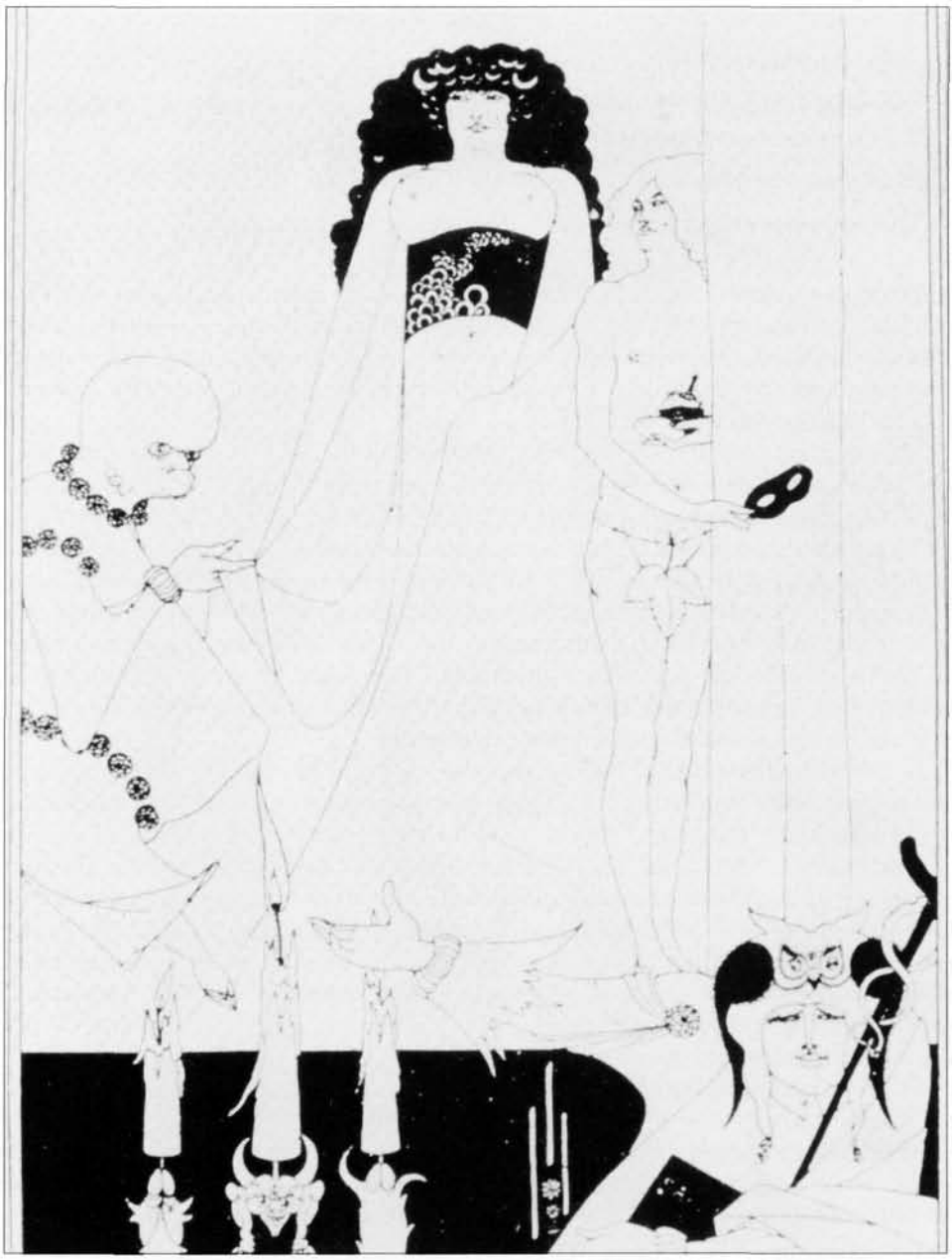


Fig. 2 Aubrey Beardsley, *Enter Herodias*. Reproduced from Oscar Wilde, *Salomé: A Tragedy in One Act* (London: Elkin Mathews & John Lane, 1894). Photographed by the author.

with the institution of motherhood itself. Tension between two contradictory desires—to be one and the same as the mother, and, yet, to escape her authority—underlies the homoeroticism of these drawings.

In *Enter Herodias*, the maternal role virtually eclipses the mother. The "staged" look of the composition, the carnivalesque characters, the emphasis on make-up and

Fig. 3 Aubrey Beardsley, *The Toilette of Salomé.* Reproduced from Oscar Wilde, *Salomé: A Tragedy in One Act* (London: Elkin Mathews & John Lane, 1894). Photographed by the author.

costume, all highlight the mother-as-construct: She is a "made up" character. Beardsley's insertion of himself in the text through the inclusion of "extra" characters further emphasizes the theatricality of his creative act. By featuring the mother in a controllable *mise-en-scène* and by casting himself in the controlling role of *metteur en scène*, the artist simultaneously disempowers the mother and empowers himself.

By means of specific surrogate characters, Beardsley frequently wrote himself into the narratives he illustrated.[15] In *Salomé*, the artist painted himself into the picture as a Pierrot in an illustration entitled *The Toilette of Salomé* (Fig. 3).[16] Here, a white-faced Pierrot[17] dresses Salomé's hair. Daintily displaying his skill with a powder-puff, Pierrot is making up—in both the sense of "inventing" and "disguising"—this flawed and, for the moment, passive *femme fatale*. The hairdresser, surely a homosexual conceit,[18] brandishes a pair of scissors in the pocket of his apron: an apotropaic token of the impending decapitation. This counterphobic strategy enables Pierrot/Beardsley to *make up for* his powerlessness and to *make himself up* as whole and in control, while, at the same time, hiding himself protectively behind a mask.

Beardsley's monographer Brigid Brophey suggests, with respect to the iconographic prominence of masks in Beardsley's work, that their "carnival invitation to anonymous sexual encounter always hints at the statistical possibility of unknowingly committing incest."[19] This may be stretching the point, but certainly the figure of the jester here, and other recurrent carnival motifs, encode transgressive sexuality. The explicit anonymity and implicit travesty associations of these masquerade motifs correspond, more specifically, with stereotypes of homosexual encounters. The homosexual milieu of Beardsley's period recognized the mask as emblematic of the "double life" that gay men were obliged to lead. Gay men frequently described "negotiating their presence in an often hostile world as living a double life, or wearing a mask and taking it off."[20]

The mask plays an emphatic as well as a symbolic role in the *Salomé* illustrations. It frames the gaze as the locus of sexual politics and as the focus of Wilde's play. Salomé falls in love at first sight with a "seer" who will not return her look because he only has eyes for God, whom he can only see if he averts his eyes from Salomé.[21] Locking the viewer/reader's focus on sight and the eye, the seer repeatedly demands, "Who is this woman who is looking at me? I will not have her look at me. Wherefore doth she look at me with her golden eyes, under her gilded eyelids? I know not who she is."[22]

The play's pivotal scene, Jokanaan's decapitation, is neither performed nor pictured. The unseen beheading transpires off the page and off-stage. In *The Dancer's Reward* (Fig. 4), when Salomé at last takes possession of Jokanaan's unsightly head, she gazes bitterly into his unseeing eyes. "Well, thou hast seen thy God, Jokanaan," she says, "but me, me, thou didst never see. If thou hadst seen me thou wouldst have loved me."[23] Wilde invests the gaze, which is turned back but never returned, with catalytic potency; the gaze marks and transforms its subjects as well as its objects.

Focusing on an equally oculocentric narrative, the story of Perseus and Medusa, Freud drew an equation that clarifies the latent content of *The Dancer's Reward*. In his 1922 essay "Medusa's Head," Freud tersely states "to decapitate = to castrate."[24] In *The Dancer's Reward*, the executioner's phallic arm thrusts Jokanaan's severed head up out of the depths of a cistern prison in which Herodias's first husband (i.e. Salomé's father, Herod's brother) had also been held captive and had also perished. To decapitate = to castrate = death.

The Dancer's Reward and its sequel *The Climax* (Fig. 5) picture Salomé—who had already consumed Jokanaan's body piece at a time with her eyes—taking possession of her ultimate trophy. These two illustrations elaborate Wilde's fetishistic handling of Jokanaan's problematic corporeality. Wilde, giving voice to Salomé, represents Jokanaan's body part by part in a litany of similes. In the play, Salomé compares Jokanaan's hair to "clusters of black grapes," his mouth to "a pomegranate cut with a

Fig. 4 Aubrey Beardsley, *The Dancer's Reward*. Reproduced from Oscar Wilde, *Salomé: A Tragedy in One Act* (London: Elkin Mathews & John Lane, 1894). Photographed by the author.

Fig. 5 Aubrey Beardsley, *The Climax*. Reproduced from Oscar Wilde, *Salomé: A Tragedy in One Act* (London: Elkin Mathews & John Lane, 1894). Photographed by the author.

knife of ivory."[25] In Beardsley's *The Climax*, Salomé lifts Jokanaan's head to her lips as she lifts herself to the heights of ecstasy. The Medusa-like tendrils of Salomé's hair writhe with pleasure as she floats free of the earth—as free as Jokanaan's head is now from his earthly body. The faces of this mismatched couple seem to mirror each other—reflecting, perhaps, Beardsley's image of his own weak father vis-à-vis a powerful

mother. Jokanaan's locks have the same snake-like vitality as Salomé's. This double allusion to Medusa intensifies the *rapprochement* between the Salomé and Jokanaan.

In this drawing of protagonist and antagonist as interchangeable mirror images of one another, Elliot Gilbert observes, "Salomé's fierce Medusa-like glare, depicted as a kind of passionate self-regard, is simultaneously murderous and suicidal."[26] Themes of androgyny and self-reflexiveness appear to intertwine. The decapitated head, in its Medusa guise, collapses culturally prevalent metaphors (employed so convincingly by Freud) for the politics of gender and desire.

In the classical myth that furnished the fin de siècle with so many re-presentations, Perseus turns Medusa's fatal gaze back on itself by confronting her with her own image reflected in his shield.[27] At this moment, Medusa becomes both the seer and the seen. Her power, as Craig Owens observes, "turns out to be her vulnerability." Owens describes Medusa's capture by Perseus as "an imaginary capture." Medusa is, quite literally, transformed (and transfixed) into an image.[28] That Beardsley, in *The Climax*, represents Medusa's head as male and the subject gaze as female[29] complicates the logic of the closed but infinitely refracting representational system of the mirror.

In addition to his pictorial preoccupation with mirrors and mirror images, Beardsley's real-life dandyism and his proclivity for fancy-dress and transvestism invoke another reflexive trope that figures prominently in Freudian sexual theory: the myth of Narcissus. This myth came to allegorize the dominant culture's critique of same-sex desire. In "On Narcissism: An Introduction," Freud theorized:

> We have discovered, especially clearly in people whose libidinal development has suffered some disturbance, such as perverts and homosexuals, that in their later choice of love objects they have taken as a model not their mother but their own selves.[30]

Richard Dyer speculates about the origins of the underlying stereotype linking narcissism with homosexual relations, a stereotype that predates Freudian theory. He reconstructs the logic of this association in two ways. First, gay men desire "people like themselves (men) rather than unlike (women), therefore their sexuality must be an extension of their love for themselves;" and second, "Women are naturally more narcissistic than men, and gay men are more feminine than straight men, therefore gay men are narcissistic...."[31] Beardsley's fetishistic repetition of signature motifs like the mirror and the masquerade (both so redolent of pose and imposture) reiterates these very stereotypes. At the same time, Beardsley's emphasis on such clichés encodes them as subcultural discourse.

Coincidentally, a similar ambivalence structures Wilde's play and its reception. Critics dismissed *Salomé* as "the daughter of too many fathers."[32] As one critic wrote, "If Flaubert had not written *Salammbô*, if Flaubert had not written... 'Hérodias,' Salomé might boast an originality to which she cannot now claim."[33]

Salomé's lineage marked the author of this belated re-presentation as "unoriginal." Fin-de-siècle scientific and social theory identified an incapacity for individual invention as a characteristic of femininity[34]—and, by extension, effeminacy. The critics' accusation of unoriginality effectively collapses misogyny and homophobia into each other. The repetitious language of Wilde's play further begs the question of originality. One reviewer complained, "He borrows from Maeterlink his trick of repeating stupid phrases until a glimpse of meaning seems almost a flash of genius."[35] This characterization condemns Wilde's work as both externally and internally derivative: first he imitates Maeterlink and then he repeats/imitates himself.

Initiated audiences undoubtedly appreciated what these mainstream critics missed: the self-consciousness of Wilde's reiteration. In *Salomé*, the highly stylized reproduction of an already fetishized icon fetishized the fetish itself. When Wilde inscribed Beardsley's copy of *Salomé* "for the only artist who, besides myself, knows what the dance of the seven veils is,"[36] he implied that Beardsley's distinction, like his own, lay in his acute sensitivity to oppositional strategies of representation. In the case of *Salomé*, the metafetishistic ploys of both the illustrator and the author made possible the representation of that which could not be represented: a subjectivity "that dare not speak its name."[37] Beardsley and Wilde negotiated the figuration of *l'amour impossible* (female desire, same-sex desire, auto-eroticism, incestuous desire...) by foregrounding not the symbol, nor that which the symbol conceals, but that which the concealment reveals. Salomé's dance derived its power from, in the words of Mallarmé, "the ultimate veil that always remains."[38] This veil—and Wilde likened art to a veil[39]—defended *Salomé* against interpretive closure. As a result, both Wilde's play and Beardsley's illustrations continue to provoke readers to find new meanings in old metaphors.

Stanford University

1. Thomas Carlyle, cited by Arthur Symons in *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (New York: Dutton, 1958), 4.
2. Beardsley executed the illustrations for the English edition of Oscar Wilde's play *Salomé*, which was published in 1894.
3. Charles Bernheimer, for one, uses Freudian theory as an interpretative tool in his work on *Salomé*; see Bernheimer, "Fetishism and Decadence: Salomé's Severed Heads," *Fetishism as Cultural Discourse*, Emily Apter and William Pietz, eds. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).
4. D.W. Winnicott's notion of cultural production as a negotiation that transpires in an unchallenged, intermediate space (the realm of experience) between internal and external reality underwrites my analysis of Beardsley's creative process. See D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1971).
5. Aubrey Beardsley, *The Letters of Aubrey Beardsley*, Henry Maas, J.L. Duncan, and W.G. Good, eds. (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1970), 6-13.
6. Chris Snodgrass, *Aubrey Beardsley, Dandy of the Grotesque* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 108. According to Ian Fletcher, Gray (allegedly the prototype for Wilde's character Dorian Gray) whom Raffalovitch had wooed away from Wilde, later became a priest and converted Raffalovitch and Beardsley to Catholicism. Ian Fletcher, *Aubrey Beardsley* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987), 15.
7. Fletcher, *Aubrey Beardsley*, 10.
8. Brian Reade, *Aubrey Beardsley* (New York: Viking, 1967), 20.
9. The number of illustrations published, including cover, title page, contents page and tailpiece totals fifteen; Beardsley revised a number of the drawings for publication, however, creating less provocative versions of the title page, *The Toilette of Salome*, and *Enter Herodias* at the publisher's request.
10. Oscar Wilde, *Salomé, The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 558-559.
11. Beardsley's formal and thematic contrasts graphically illustrate the ambivalence that characterizes the Kleinian paranoid-schizoid position (i.e. "splitting"). See Melanie Klein, "A Study of Envy and Gratitude," [1956] *The Selected Melanie Klein*, Juliet Mitchell, ed. (New York: Free Press/Macmillan, 1986).
12. Sigmund Freud, "Fetishism" (1927), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* 21, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1957), 64. Freud first describes fetishism in "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality" of 1905. The mechanism described here provides a key to

understanding Freud's views on sexual difference, male sexual development, female anatomical "lack", and normative heterosexuality. Naomi Schor describes the fetish as "a substitute for the mother's missing penis; it commemorates the scene where the little boy sees the mother's genitals and simultaneously denies his perception of her castration, lest the same fate befall him. It is a scene of radical and redemptive disidentification between the male child and his mother....The fetish is a curious and fascinating compromise formation between the horrified recognition of female castration and its vehement denial, or disavowal. More precisely, the fetish commemorates the last percept prior to the little boy's traumatic loss of illusions regarding maternal anatomy, power and identity." [Naomi Schor, "Fetishism," *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary*. Wright Elizabeth, ed. (Oxford, UK and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992), 113-114.]

13. Arthur Symons identifies this fool as a caricature of Wilde. *The Collected Drawings of Aubrey Beardsley*, 1905, (New York: Crown, 1967), 206-207.

14. According to Melanie Klein, "even a happy feeding situation cannot altogether replace the prenatal unity with the mother....the infant's longing for an inexhaustible and always present breast...cannot ever be fully satisfied. These unavoidable grievances, together with happy experiences, reinforce the innate conflict between love and hatred, at bottom between life and death instincts, and result in the feeling that a good and bad breast [or mother] exists." [Klein "A Study of Envy and Gratitude," *Selected Melanie Klein*, 212.]

15. See Milly Heyd, *Aubrey Beardsley* (New York: Peter Lang, 1986), 33-55, for the significance of the Pierrot in Beardsley oeuvre.

16. The toilet genre, a Beardsley hallmark, has several nuances. The implicit reference to cosmetics, artificiality, and the primacy of appearances reflects the biases of Aestheticism as well as stereotypes of "narcissistic" and "effeminate" homosexuality. Beardsley's colleague Max Beerbohm, for the first issue of the Decadent journal *The Yellow Book* (April 1894) wrote a tongue-in-cheek essay entitled "A Defense of Cosmetics," in which cosmetics allude metaphorically to both Aestheticism, i.e. the rejection of nature as an ideal for beauty, and social decadence.

17. Consumption was known as "the White Death" owing to the characteristic pallor of its victims.

18. In Beardsley's contemporary poem "The Ballad of the Barber," the Princess's hairdresser—whom nobody had known to show a "preference for either sex"—"snatched a bottle of Cologne, / And broke the neck between his hands; / He felt as if he was alone, / And mighty as a king's commands." The barber proceeds to slit his pretty client's throat. The poem is reprinted in Heyd, *Aubrey Beardsley*, 129-131.

19. Brigid Brophy, *Black and White: A Portrait of Aubrey Beardsley* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1968), 54.

20. The gay-cultural historian George Chauncey noted that the mask was a recurrent image employed by gay men writing, in memoirs and letters, about their lives in the first half of the twentieth century. Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books / Harper Collins, 1994), 6.

21. Elliot L. Gilbert, "'Tumult of Images': Wilde, Beardsley, and *Salomé*," *Victorian Studies* 26:2 (Winter 1983): 156.

22. Oscar Wilde, *Salomé, Complete Works*, 558.

23. Wilde, *Salomé, Complete Works*, 574.

24. Sigmund Freud, "Medusa's Head" (1922), *Standard Edition* 18, 273.

25. Wilde, *Salomé, Complete Works*, 559.

26. Gilbert, "'Tumult of Images': Wilde, Beardsley, and *Salomé*," 159.

27. Perhaps Wilde had this myth in mind when he has Salomé crushed to death by the shields of Harod's soldiers at the end of his play.

28. In Medusa's act of seeing, Owens writes, in this "instantaneous identification, what we recognize is the duality, the specularity, the symmetry and immediacy that characterize Lacan's Imaginary order." [Craig Owens, *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power, and Culture*, Scott Bryson, Barbara Kruger, Lynne Tillman, and Jane Weinstock, eds. (Berkeley, LA, and Oxford: University of California Press, 1992), 197.] Jacques Lacan "defines the essence of the imaginary as a dual relationship, a reduplication in the mirror,

an immediate opposition between consciousness and its other in which each term becomes its opposite and is lost in the play of the reflection." [Anika Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan* (London: Routledge / Kegan Paul, 1977), 60, cited by Owens, 197.]

29. Richard Dellamora, "Traversing the Feminine in Oscar Wilde's *Salomé*" in *Victorian Sages and Cultural Discourse: Renegotiating Gender and Power*, Thaïs E. Morgan, ed. (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 252.

30. Sigmund Freud, "On Narcissism, an Introduction" (1914), *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* 14, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1957), 89.

31. Richard Dyer, *Now You See It: Studies on Lesbian and Gay Film* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 67.

32. Anonymous critic in *Pal Mall Gazette*, cited by Christa Satzinger, *The French Influences on Oscar Wilde's* The Picture of Dorian Gray *and* Salomé (Lewiston, New York and Salzburg, Austria: Salzburg University Studies, 1994), 238.

33. Anonymous critic in *Pal Mall Gazette*, cited by Satzinger, *The French Influences*, 238.

34. Harry Campbell, in *Differences in the Nervous Organization of Man and Woman*, for instance, concluded that "in imitativeness and lack of originality [woman] stands conspicuously first...." [cited in Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity; Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 207.]

35. Anonymous Critic in *Critic* (12 May 1894), cited by Satzinger, *The French Influences*, 237.

36. Oscar Wilde cited by Snodgrass, *Aubrey Beardsley*, 114.

37. Oscar Wilde defended same-sex desire, the "love that dare not speak its name," in a courtroom statement cited by Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (New York: Vintage / Random House, 1987), 463.

38. Stephane Mallarmé, "Symphonie litteraire," cited by Marjorie Garber, "The Chic of Araby," *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), n.16, 246.

39. Wilde: "Art finds her own perfection within...she is a veil, rather than a mirror." "The Decay of Lying," *Complete Works*, 982.

Identity and Anonymity in Henry Ossawa Tanner's *Portrait of the Artist's Mother*

M. Rachael Arauz

In the wake of several recent studies of the American painter Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859-1937) that drew on the artist's African-American heritage for their contextual interpretation, art historian Dewey Mosby, in a 1995 exhibition and catalogue essay, directly addressed the primacy of race as an analytical framework for Tanner's career. Mosby pointed to Tanner's strong ties to the African Methodist Episcopal Church, his multi-ethnic heritage, his deeply-felt racial pride, and his conflicted relationship with his American homeland to convincingly demonstrate the ways in which Tanner himself foregrounded racial experience not only as a force behind his choice of subject matter, but also as that aspect of his biography which had motivated, and constrained, the entire shape of his life and career. Mosby argued that while race is not the only lens through which we might understand Tanner's work, the artist's African-American heritage is nevertheless relevant to interpretations of both individual paintings and biographical incidents. Mosby writes, "Tanner did not deny his ancestry, but involved himself in racial matters. . . . Henry Ossawa Tanner never turned his back on his race, and so the story of his life and art must reflect his relationship with his heritage." [1] It may be the case that, in our efforts to recuperate non-White artists for the American canon, art historians have explored primarily only those aspects of Tanner's life and work that feature racial experience as a dominant theme, and that future investigations may begin to reveal the deeper complexities of a career informed equally, perhaps, by economic forces or an ambivalent expatriate status.

Mindful of this caution against reducing Tanner to only one element of his identity, this paper, however, takes Mosby's claims for the importance of race as its cue, and turns our attention to a work that might best embody Tanner's artistic response to his racial identity. Two main themes informed Tanner's mature work—his morally and intellectually spiritual genre scenes of the early 1890s, and the biblical subjects that dominated the last three decades of his career. Scholarship on Tanner has focused almost exclusively on these major works as the site of his racially-inflected artistic statements. Art historian Judith Wilson has described Tanner's *The Thankful Poor* and *The Banjo Lesson* as "an unprecedented act of black cultural assertion."[2] As Tanner made the transition from these genre scenes to his biblical subjects in the late 1890s he created a more private work embedded with an equally powerful cultural statement in the form of a portrait of his mother. Tanner painted only a handful of portraits of family and close friends during his career, and none were ever exhibited during his lifetime.[3] One of his best-known works, however, is the enigmatic *Portrait of the Artist's Mother* painted in 1897 (Fig. 1) and now held by the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Despite, or in fact due to its exceptional nature in Tanner's career, *Portrait of the Artist's Mother* powerfully manifests the theme of racial identity arguably expressed in his better-known genre and biblical scenes.

Strikingly distinct from Tanner's small output of otherwise conventional formal portraits, *Portrait of the Artist's Mother* compositionally and iconographically recalls James McNeill Whistler's visual paradigm of motherhood, *Arrangement in Grey and*

Fig. 1 Henry Ossawa Tanner, *Portrait of the Artist's Mother*, 1897. Oil on canvas. Philadelphia Museum Art, Philadelphia, PA.

Black, No. 1: Portrait of the Artist's Mother, 1871 (Fig. 2). No precedent for such appropriation exists in Tanner's career, and the reference to Tanner's notorious, outspoken, expatriate colleague in Paris seems even further at odds with Tanner's modest sensibility than does the formal quote. In light of Tanner's aspirations to a race-blind artistic career, however, his appropriation of Whistler's composition carried with it a critique of the older artist's ideological goals. *Portrait of the Artist's Mother*, painted for the parents who had reared him with racial pride, and meant to remain in the private realm of his family, was a rare moment in which Tanner made a pointed, yet characteristically subtle statement about his struggle as an American artist of African-American descent by ironically alluding to the aesthetic ideals behind Whistler's famous painting.[4] Far from simply a formal quotation of a well-known work, Tanner's portrait of his mother contains an ideological message of social and personal significance for the artist.

Born in Pittsburgh in 1859 to Sarah and Reverend Benjamin Tucker Tanner, Henry Ossawa Tanner was the oldest of nine children.[5] His father, a third-generation native of Pittsburgh, was a highly educated minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.). Reverend Tanner was active on issues of education and racial equality. He founded schools for freedmen in Washington, D. C. and Maryland, served as the editor of both the *Christian Recorder* and the *A.M.E. Church Review*, and spoke publicly throughout his life on both religious and political topics.[6] Sarah Tanner was

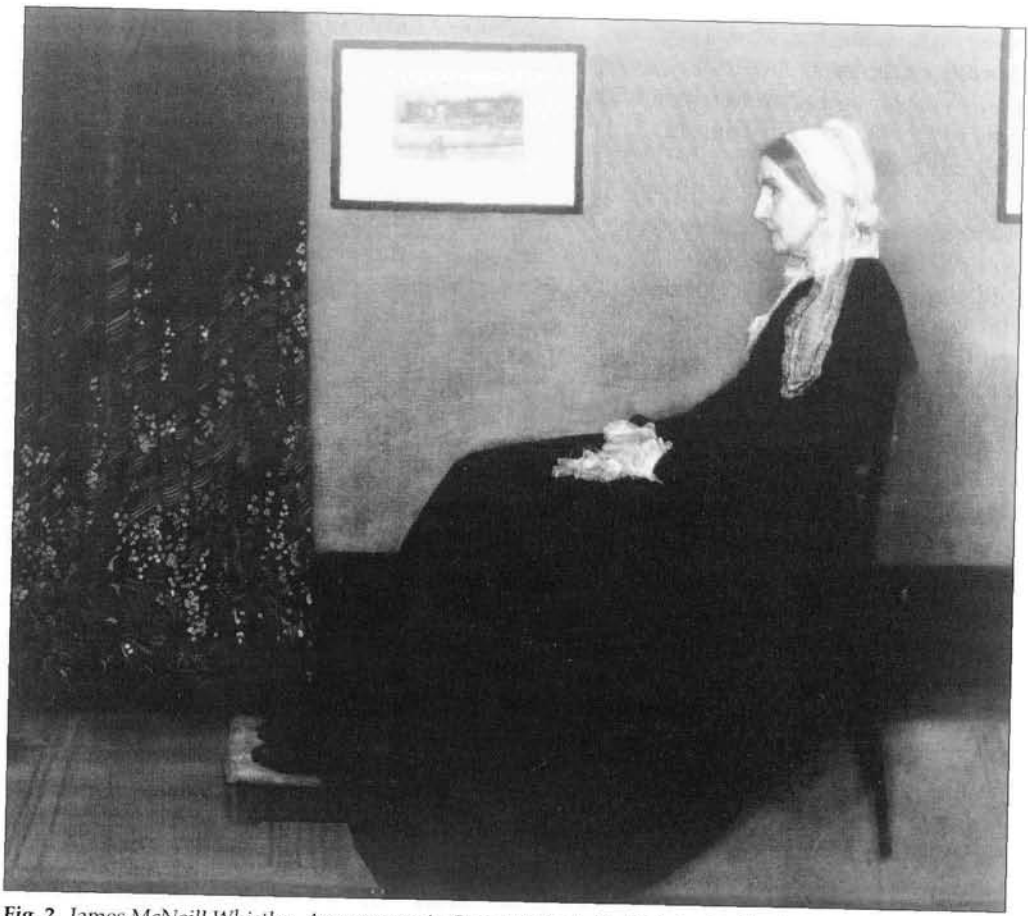


Fig. 2 James McNeill Whistler, *Arrangement in Grey and Black, No. 1: Portrait of the Artist's Mother*, 1871. Oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Photograph taken from Richard Dorment and Margaret F. MacDonald, *James McNeill Whistler*, 142.

born into slavery to parents of both African and Caucasian descent, and as a child journeyed on the Underground Railroad out of Virginia and into Pittsburgh. She may have met Benjamin Tanner when both were enrolled at Avery College. With her husband, Sarah Tanner was also very socially active in her community, running a school in her home and sometimes writing for the *A.M.E. Church Review* on subjects like Thoreau and Longfellow.[7] From the age of nine, Tanner lived with his family in Philadelphia in a home that his grandniece described as the "center of the black intellectual community of Philadelphia."[8] At an early age Tanner was instilled with a sense of dignity and heightened social consciousness regarding his race. Named for Osawatomie, Kansas, the location of abolitionist John Brown's 1856 antislavery uprising, Henry Ossawa Tanner was reared in a household of community activism, religious piety, and racial awareness. Despite the fact that he was of no more than one-quarter African descent, and also of English and Indian heritage, his identity as a "Negro" in the United States remained formative to his self-consciousness.

As a boy Tanner became interested in painting and by the age of seventeen he had convinced his parents that, due to his fragile health, a career in the local flour business

was unsuitable for him; they generously resigned themselves to supporting his pursuits as an artist. Beginning in 1879 and continuing through the early 1880s, Tanner studied with both Thomas Eakins and Thomas Hovendon at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, garnering early acclaim from these legendary masters of American art.[9]

As one of the few African-American students first admitted to the Academy, Tanner's brief studies there were not without incident. Fellow Academy student Joseph Pennell recalled in later years an episode involving an African-American colleague who historians assume to have been Tanner.

> One night we were walking down Broad Street, he with us, when from a crowd of people of his color who were walking up the street, came a greeting, "Hullo, George Washington, howse yer gettin' on wid yer White fren's?" Then he began to assert himself and, to cut a long story short, one night his easel was carried out into the middle of Broad Street and, though not painfully crucified, he was firmly tied to it and left there. And this is my only experience of my colored brothers in a White school; but it was enough. Curiously, there never has been a great Negro or Jew artist in the history of the world.[10]

Tanner must have felt tremendous humiliation and great anger over such incidents. In his 1909 autobiographical essay, Tanner made oblique reference to what may likely have been this exact occasion: " . . . to be made to feel that I was not wanted, although in a place where I had every right to be, even months afterward caused me sometimes weeks of pain. Every time any one of these disagreeable incidents came into my mind, my heart sank, and I was anew tortured by the thought of what I had endured, almost as much by the incident itself."[11] Pennell's racist remarks reflected the professional barriers that the educated, politically sensitive Tanner—who appeared physically as Caucasian as most of his student colleagues—would have to overcome if he chose to develop his artistic career in the United States.

Despite the supportive mentoring of Eakins and Hovendon, Tanner left the Academy after only a few years of study there. Following a brief attempt to establish a photography studio in Atlanta, Tanner decided that his next step as an artist would be to study in Europe, standard protocol for any aspiring American painter in the late nineteenth century. Through the generosity of Bishop and Mrs. Hartzell, friends he had made in Atlanta, Tanner was able to raise the money for a trip to Italy, with stops in London and Paris. He set sail in January 1891.

Arriving in Paris, Tanner became enraptured by the artistic community and within a week abandoned his plans to continue on to Rome. He took up study at the Académie Julian with Jean-Joseph Benjamin Constant and Jean-Paul Laurens who both soon recognized his potential talent and encouraged the young American. Most essential for this aspiring painter was the lack of overt racial prejudice in the Parisian art community. Tanner had at last found an environment in which he could work hard at being an artist, rather than having to work first at "overcoming" his identification as a "Negro." In a lengthy statement by Tanner, quoted in a 1908 article, the artist spoke with almost unbridled enthusiasm for the idyllic pluralism of his adopted home.

> In Paris no one regards me curiously. I am simply "M. Tanner, an American artist." Nobody knows nor cares what was the complexion of my forebears. I live and work there on terms of absolute racial equality. Questions of race or color are not considered—a man's professional skill and social qualities are fairly and ungrudgingly recognized.

> No one who had not carefully observed the art world of Paris could have any clear idea of its broad and deep race admixture. When I began to study under Constant I found in the studios men of all nations and races under the sun—Muscovites and Tartars; Arabs and Japanese; Hindoos and Mongolians; Africans and South Sea islanders—all working earnestly and harmoniously with students of the Caucasian race.
>
> It is so now, in greater degree and on even broader lines. In the European art world there is perfect race democracy.[12]

Many years later, Tanner's son Jesse recalled his father's social motivation for developing his career in France. "In Europe my father was taken for what he was, a talented artist whose 'colour' did not add or detract from his talent. Not only did he not feel any racial prejudice, but in Europe other Americans acted as though racial prejudice did not exist in their own country."[13] Recent scholars, however, have remarked that Tanner may have also gained a small measure of comfort from the realization that people of African descent were not the only people of the world subject to occasional small-minded prejudices even in the cosmopolitan environment of Paris.[14]

Although Tanner was apolitical in his art, his sensitivity to the subject of his racial identity and issues of prejudice were not topics about which he remained silent, especially as he grew older. His upbringing in a family environment of racial activism laid the foundation for emotions and personal opinions that informed his daily life and his career as a painter. Tanner's stylistic move away from the affirmative portrayals of African Americans in earlier works such as *The Thankful Poor* and *The Banjo Lesson*, and the lack of overt political content in Tanner's subsequent biblical imagery may be attributed partly to his overriding will to build a successful career as a painter in a cultural realm that had little or no patronage for positive images of blacks.[15] In 1931, critic Alain Locke wrote of this phenomenon as manifested in Tanner and several other nineteenth-century American artists of African-American descent.

> Instead of being the challenging influence and special interest that it is for the Negro artist of today, race, by reason of circumstances beyond their control, was for them a ghetto of isolation and neglect from which they must escape if they were to gain artistic freedom and recognition. And so, except for occasional sentimental gestures of loyalty, they avoided it as a motive or theme in their art.[16]

In order to acquire and maintain patrons for his work, Tanner could not paint socially conscious images of African-American life, and found in religious paintings both personally relevant subject matter as well as a universal spirituality marketable to a broad public.[17]

As Tanner gained greater recognition in the European art community, his reputation grew in the United States, as well, and African-American leaders, including Alain Locke and Booker T. Washington, sought out the artist as a spokesperson for the race. Displaying a heightened consciousness about his racial identification and its bearing on his acclaim as a painter or individual, Tanner avoided attempts by members of the national black community to label him as an ideal of his race.[18] Just as he had not wished to be dismissed as a painter on the basis of his ethnic background, so too he refused accolades based on his racial identity.

Tanner's ongoing struggle with patronizing dismissals or acknowledgments of his work due to his racial identity are intensely evident in a draft of a letter he wrote to an American art critic, Eunice Tietjens, in 1914. The author sent to Tanner an advance copy of an article about his work, requesting the artist's comments before submitting it for

publication. Tanner's passionate words in response demonstrate his frustration with the persistent identification of his work as that of a "Negro artist," and offer powerful insight into his emotions on this subject. The oft-cited passage bears quoting at length:

> You say "in his personal life, Mr. T. has had many things to contend with. Ill-health, poverty, race prejudice, always strong against a Negro." Now am I a Negro? Does not the 3/4 of English blood in my veins, which when it flowed in "pure" Anglo-Saxon veins and which has done in the past effective and distinguished work in the U. S.—does this not count for anything? Does the 1/4 or 1/8 of "pure" Negro blood in my veins count for all? I believe it, the Negro blood counts and counts to my advantage—though it has caused me at times a life of great humiliation and sorrow—unlimited "kicks" and "cuffs"—but that it is the source of all my talents (if I have any) I do not believe, any more than I believe it all comes from my English ancestors. I suppose according to the distorted way things are seen in the states my blond curly-headed little boy would also be "Negro."—True, this condition has driven me out of the country, but still the best friends I have are "white" Americans and while I cannot sing our National Hymne [sic], "Land of Liberty," etc., etc., still deep down in my heart I love it and am sometimes sad that I cannot live where my heart is.[19]

The blend of patriotism, racial identification, and professional concerns put forth in this statement foreground with great poignancy Tanner's heightened sensitivity to racial essentialism and the labeling of ethnic identity. Far from insulated against such prejudices in his idealized, race-blind Parisian arts community, Tanner's growing foreign success during the 1890s would elicit a variety of "well-intentioned"—and less so—forms of prejudice in the domestic press.

By the mid-1890s, Tanner had made his permanent home in France, while slowly gaining critical recognition in Paris and the United States for genre paintings such as *The Banjo Lesson* of 1893, and *The Young Sabot Maker* of 1895. In 1896 his painting *Daniel in the Lions' Den* received an honorable mention at the Paris Salon. In 1897, his *Raising of Lazarus* (Fig. 3) was awarded a third-class medal and the French government made an offer to purchase the painting for the Musée du Luxembourg.

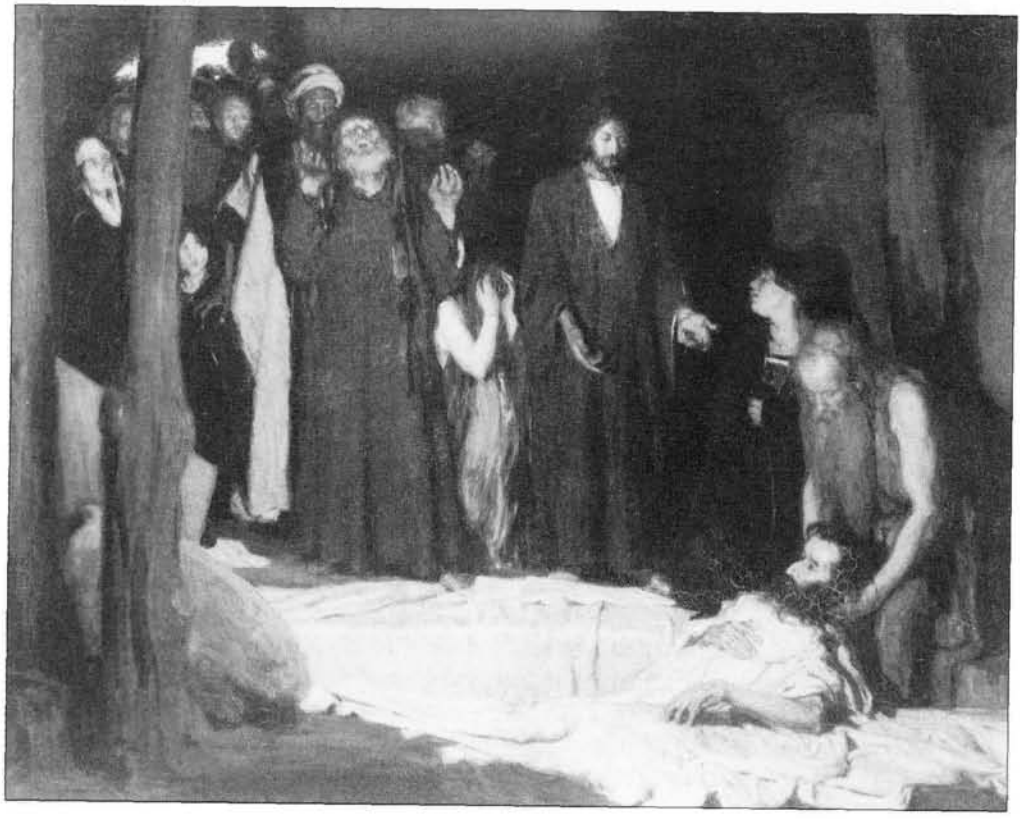
A brief survey of critical reviews from Tanner's early career demonstrates the focus placed on Tanner's race in the United States. In an 1884 review of an animal scene by Tanner the *Philadelphia Press* stated, "The painting is attracting attention, not only for its real merit, but for the fact that it was painted by a young colored man . . .."[20] An 1890 Cincinnati review described the artist as a "young colored man on his way to Rome,"[21] and in 1900 a Philadelphia writer cited Tanner as "that poetic painter of African blood."[22] Moreover, in 1895, Tanner submitted several paintings to the art exhibit held in conjunction with the Cotton States Exposition in Atlanta, yet his work was exhibited in the "Negro Building," rather than in the general exhibition space with his American colleagues Eakins, Mary Cassatt, and Winslow Homer.[23] In 1900, a reporter for *The Cosmopolitan* wrote, "There is no American artist in Paris more talked about than Mr. H. O. Tanner. Perhaps this is because he is a mulatto and . . . we are still a trifle surprised when the artist reveals himself under a dark skin."[24] In a 1908 article on Tanner one reporter commented on the repeated racial identification forced on the, by then, well-established American painter. "In America public recognition of Tanner's genius has been somewhat retarded by the fact that he is a negro, and our publications have persistently spoken of him as the greatest negro painter. It has pleased them to slight his art in the exploitation of his race."[25] Despite his attempt to avoid the same racial classifications his colleagues relied upon, this author then went on to characterize

Tanner's work as exhibiting "that full-blooded sense of rhythm and color which gives a peculiar charm to the art productions of his race."[26] In the United States the press's insistent preoccupation with Tanner's racial heritage typically served as a means of exclaiming over the artist's "unexpected" talent.

In Paris, however, an 1896 review of *Daniel in the Lion's Den* described Tanner simply as "M. Henri Tanner,"[27] and in 1897, Tanner's *Resurrection of Lazarus* was called "the remarkable work of a young American."[28] One French author likened Tanner's talent to "the genius of Rembrandt" and concluded by attributing Tanner's "poetic" nature to his nationality, rather than his race: "there is a strong personality in this American painter, whose works reveal a profound thoughtfulness."[29] French reporters seemed to favor Tanner's "Americanness" over his racial identity, and his status as a "Negro" rarely, if ever, made an appearance in their reviews.

A few American reporters commented on this difference between U. S. and foreign descriptions of Tanner in the press. In a 1908 biographical article on Tanner, William Lester remarked that "Racial prejudice is unknown in France: so Mr. Tanner went to Paris, and stayed there." Reluctant to omit the topic of race from his assessment of Tanner's success, however, Lester went on to describe the "singularly mixed strain of blood that flows in the artist's veins" and to explain the apparent lack of "African ancestry" as a result of Tanner's "Aryan...Roman...Parisian...and Latin" appearance

Fig. 3 Henry Ossawa Tanner, *The Raising of Lazarus*, 1897. Oil on canvas. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Reproduced from Mosby, *Henry Ossawa Tanner*, 137.



and personality.[30] A Paris-based critic for the *Boston Herald*, reviewing the great success of the *Lazarus* at the Salon, commented on the discrepancy between domestic and foreign coverage of Tanner's racial heritage.

> His skin is as fair as the average descendant of the Latin race, and it is only a second scrutiny that hints of his African descent.
>
> This fact has really nothing to do with his work. Among the charming notices that have been written in the French journals concerning the success of this last picture not one has alighted on this, to Americans, rather picturesque fact, partly because the artist has kept himself so secluded in his studio that few know him personally, and perhaps, too, because in France we are more accustomed to clever men of African descent.[31]

Attention to the "picturesque fact" of Tanner's racial identity in other American reviews of the 1897 *Lazarus* success would make Tanner all too painfully aware of the prejudice he and his family suffered in the postbellum States, and would have a powerful impact on his motivation to articulate his own sense of identity beneath the surface of his mother's portrait.

It was in 1897 that Tanner returned to the United States to visit his parents, then living in Kansas, and painted two small, conventionally arranged bust-length portraits of his mother and father (Figs. 4 & 5), as well as *Portrait of the Artist's Mother*. A purely formal analysis of *Portrait of the Artist's Mother* clearly indicates Tanner's reference to Whistler's *Arrangement in Grey and Black, No. 1: Portrait of the Artist's Mother*. In their analyses of Tanner's career, Albert Boime, Dewey Mosby, and others have remarked on the likeness of the two works; in his catalogue entry for Tanner's *Portrait*, curator Darrel Sewell refers to the framed work in the upper left corner as the "explicit clue" that secures its reference to Whistler.[32] Early in his 1995 essay, Mosby makes the point that Tanner avoided copying old master works at the Louvre as a means of learning his craft. In addition to this rejection of traditional artistic pedagogy, the formal elegance of Tanner's *Portrait of the Artist's Mother* distinguishes it from a mere academic study of a familiar master work. In his discussion of the *Portrait*, Mosby suggests that in referring to Whistler's famous painting, Tanner may have sought to challenge the senior American artist, based on an artistic tradition that encouraged young artists to "surpass recognized works." Boosted by his success with the *Lazarus*, Tanner engaged in a kind of competition with Whistler both to prove the achievement of his race and to demonstrate the originality of his own "imaginative powers."[33] Tanner's use of Whistler's *Mother* as a compositional model for a female sitter was not unique—American artists including Eakins and Cecilia Beaux had quoted the famous profile in their own paintings of women. However, Tanner's application of this well-known painting to the portrait of his own mother extended far beyond a formal quote to carry unique ideological weight.

Both Sarah Tanner and Anna Whistler sit in profile facing to the left of a horizontal composition. Tanner's dark reds and browns and creamy light effects are warmer in his painting than Whistler's frosty air of greys and blacks, but both subjects wear a dark dress with white cuffs. Both artists vertically divide the back plane against which their sitters rest in profile through the use of a heavy drape to create a contrast of dark and light. In both paintings, the darker plane is on the left side of the composition. Tanner, however, has reversed Whistler's areas of depth and relief. On the left side of Whistler's work, a dark drape of patterned fabric hangs in front of the smooth plane of grey wall

Fig. 4 Henry Ossawa Tanner, *Bishop Benjamin Tucker Tanner*, 1897. Oil on canvas. Collection of Dr. Rae Alexander-Minter, New York.

that stretches across the composition to feature Anna Whistler's stark profile. In Tanner's work, a dark wall on the left, on which hangs the fragment of a framed print, recedes behind a warm, reddish drape that dominates the back of the compositional space. In another "explicit clue" that secures the reference, Sarah Tanner's black dress,

Fig. 5 Henry Ossawa Tanner, *Mother of Henry O. Tanner*, 1897. Oil on plywood. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Dr. Nicholas Zervas.

speckled with white, recalls the flecked pattern of the dark curtain in Whistler's composition.

Beyond a preliminary visual analysis, comparison of the two images begins to suggest Tanner's transformation of Whistler's formal concerns to his own ends. Unlike

the shallow, geometricized spatial organization of Whistler's modern composition, Tanner's construction of deeper, open space symbolically enables Sarah Tanner to release a sense of self in her environment. Sarah Tanner's emotional narrative begins to fill and activate the darkened recesses of Tanner's painted room; Anna Whistler's narrative is one of restraint. Mrs. Tanner sits in a rocking chair, a form that connotes both gentle maternal nurturing as well as a sense of movement. The glint of light off of a black shoe that peeks from beneath her dress suggests that Mrs. Tanner crosses her ankles in a relaxed posture intended to activate the rocking chair. Anna Whistler rests in a straight-backed chair; the chair's legs, along with Mrs. Whistler's two stiffly placed feet, constitute the base of a solid triangle. Frozen in her flat, abstracted, and geometricized environment, Anna Whistler is both compositionally and emotionally constrained by the structures of her son's representational strategies. Sitting against the smooth, flat plane of the pale grey wall, Anna Whistler's severe, clenched features suggest her effort to remain almost sculpturally immobile during the sitting for her portrait. Seated before the soft folds of the reddish-brown drape, Sarah Tanner, on the other hand, makes full use of the rocker's arm rests and one senses her gentle, easy movement as she poses for her son. Each woman's gaze further elaborates this contrast of expressive quality. Sarah Tanner rests her chin in her left hand and gazes towards the distance. In her right hand, she holds a palm leaf fan.[34] Sarah Tanner's large, mellow eyes and weary countenance convey a mood of introspection, resignation, and even sorrow, while Anna Whistler stares forward, apparently rigid and unemotional.

The muted palette of Tanner's *Portrait of the Artist's Mother* recalls Whistler's similar use of still, atmospheric colors. Whistler's *Nocturnes* and *Arrangements* have always associated him with the late nineteenth-century group of American painters sometimes referred to as "tonalists." "Tonalism" in American painting was distinguished by the unified application throughout a canvas of a single dominant color such as blue, green, brown, or grey in an effort to infuse the composition with an expressive atmosphere. Most often depicting landscapes or still figures, these paintings typically glowed with a soft luminosity.[35] Tanner's work, like Whistler's, was often described in tonalist terms by the turn-of-the-century press. One American critic characterized the *Resurrection of Lazarus* as "dramatic and tonally sustained,"[36] and commentators on Tanner's later religious images used phrases such as "grave in tone," "shadowy greenish tone," and "renders his impressions in blue and blue-green tones" to articulate the moody effects of the paintings.[37]

While both portraits draw on a palette dominated by a limited range of tones, Tanner's overwhelming use of brownish reds set his *Portrait* in marked contrast to the icy hues of Whistler's work. Tanner's decision to adopt a palette of somber, brown tones, relieved only by the warm light that illuminates his mother's face, enfolds Sarah Tanner in the shades of her racial identity. The smaller, bust-length portraits of his mother and father, completed during this same visit to his parents' home, feature a similar range of colors with greatest emphasis on warm, reddish browns, golden browns, and deep blacks. While this palette recalls the Rembrandtesque tones of his *Lazarus*, neither his prior genre scenes nor the biblical subjects he would soon undertake ever featured such an emphasis on this chromatic range of browns. The possibility that Tanner may have sought to embed racial identity in his use of medium is a tempting one. Certainly, his choice of palette for his mother's portrait shaped the work's ability to carry racial meaning, even as it visually distinguished Tanner's "original" interpretation of Whistler's model.

Quiet, contemplative figure studies, almost invariably of female subjects, also typified tonalist subject matter. According to art historian Wanda Corn, a common visual theme featured a seated woman who

> stares into space, unconscious of the spectator and obviously possessed by her own thoughts. The woman's passiveness, gravity and quiet meditation kindle a parallel mood in the spectator, the sort of vicarious transference which so much of the period's art strove to achieve.
>
> If one were to characterize in a word the feeling created by viewing such works, it might be "loss"—a pervasive though understated melancholy which these artists felt as their familiar world succumbed to alien and mechanical forces.[38]

Both Tanner's and Whistler's portraits of their mothers—seated figures "staring into space"—reveal the tonalist inclination to create images of still, contemplative women, and both, whether or not intentionally, encourage the viewer to identify with the introspective ambiance. Iconographically, however, Tanner's portrait better conveys the air of loss and melancholy so manifest in tonalist imagery. Sarah Tanner's relaxed posture and activated hands communicate a thoughtful emotional engagement in her world effectively opposite the puritanical emotional restraint evident in Anna Whistler's demeanor.[39] Unlike Whistler's more even light effects, Tanner's dramatic highlighting of his mother's distant forward gaze and the white fringed shawl trailing behind her serve to illuminate Sarah Tanner's associations with a past, present and future dimmed by the oppression of a stigmatizing racial identity. Nevertheless she emerges from her dark surroundings, like her austere counterpart, as a distinct and powerful presence.

In her gesture of pensive melancholia, Sarah Tanner might also be compared to the subject of a similarly composed image by Tanner's Philadelphia mentor Thomas Eakins, his 1891 portrait of *Amelia Van Buren* (Fig. 6). Both women rest their cheek against their left hand, supporting their elbow on the arm of a chair, and both women hold a fan, a common tonalist prop, in their right hand. Like Sarah Tanner, Amelia Van Buren gazes toward a light source, although she is rendered frontally to the viewer, rather than the profile pose offered by Tanner. Miss Van Buren's environment is similarly dark and enveloping, often interpreted as such by scholars because of the enlarged chair that overwhelms the young sitter.[40]

Describing the pair of conventional, bust-length portraits of his parents that Tanner also produced in 1897, historian James Porter aligned the artist's work with that of his mentor Eakins. Porter writes, "The portraits remind one of Eakins' [*sic*] painting at its most humanly penetrating and richly psychological moments."[41] According to one Eakins scholar, the artist rendered strong psychological personae and the complex personalities of the era; in his work as a portraitist, "he sought the person who in his full intellectual, aesthetic, and athletic power was definitive of the best of his times."[42] Eakins's portrait of *Amelia Van Buren* was one of only three portraits he produced of his students (one of the others is a 1902 painting of Tanner) and, as did Tanner's *Portrait of the Artist's Mother*, it perceptively captured a complex psychological presence.

While not necessarily tonalist in formal technique, many of Eakins's works, particularly his portraits, have been interpreted by some scholars as powerfully tonalist in their ability to capture the nostalgic mood of the turn of the century.[43] Miss Van Buren's distant gaze and slumped posture express a sense of weariness with her environment, an emotional exhaustion also captured in the dramatic grey streaks of her hair, despite her young age.[44] Interpreting this private atmosphere of psychological fatigue as emblematic of a more universal distress with the modern age, one scholar

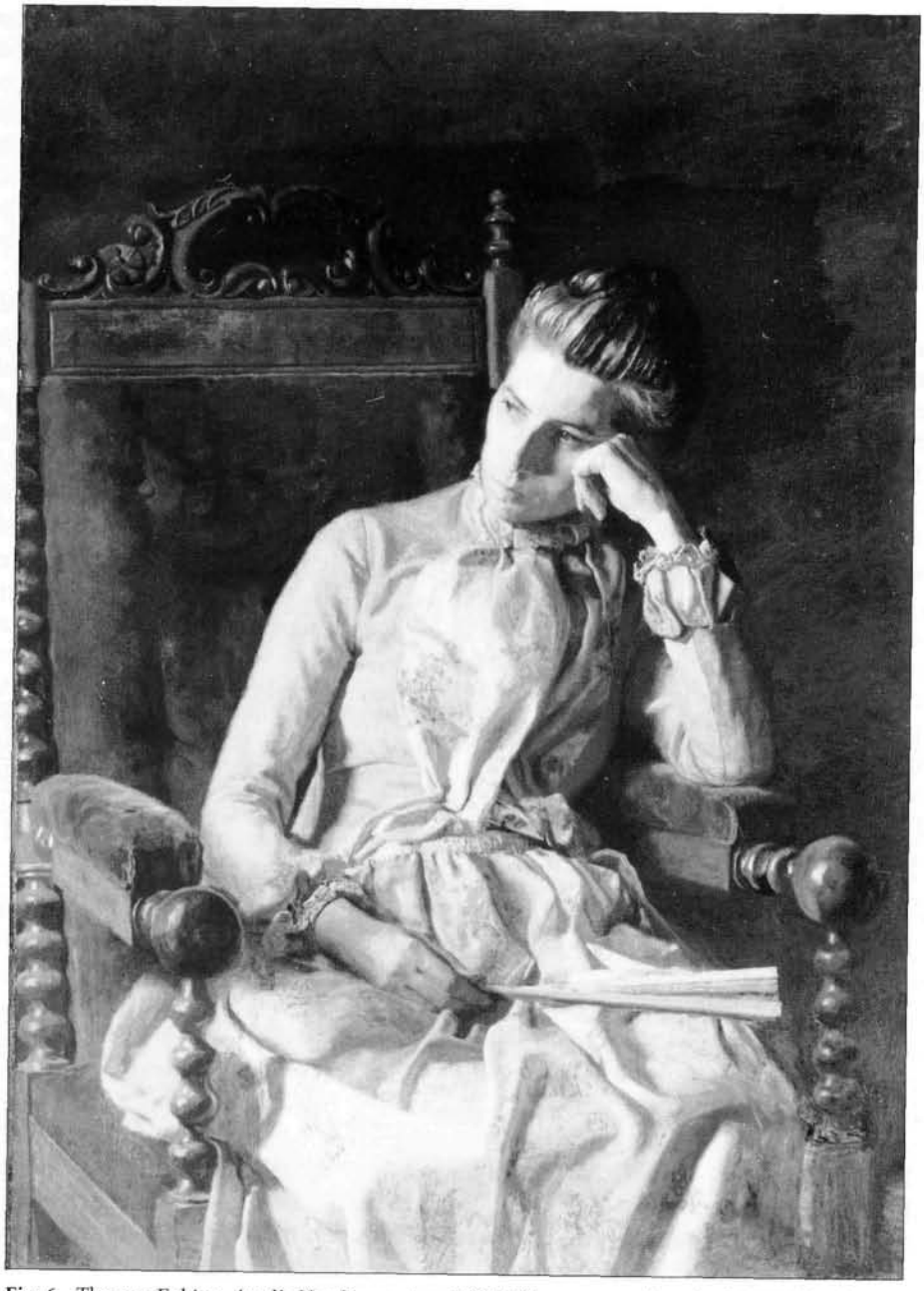


Fig. 6 Thomas Eakins, *Amelia Van Buren*, circa 1891. Oil on canvas. Acquired 1927. The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

reads in Amelia Van Buren's countenance "a deep awareness, one only achieved in an advanced state of maturity . . . one of resigned acceptance of unhappy realities."[45] Although Miss Van Buren may have been theatrically aged in her portrait beyond her young years, Sarah Tanner, the progeny of slavery, was fifty-seven years old when her

son painted her portrait. As did Eakins' portrait of his student Amelia, Tanner's *Portrait of the Artist's Mother* sought to capture a sense of weariness with the era, yet Tanner also expressed an intensely private exhaustion with racial experience. While Tanner's work visually participated in the compositional vocabulary of turn-of-the-century *ennui*, the specificity of its subject set it apart from tonalist themes found in the work of Eakins and Whistler. Tanner's *Portrait* foregrounded racial and personal concerns more complex than simply a universal weariness with the era or a modernist aesthetic of formal abstraction.

Stylistically and iconographically, then, Tanner's *Portrait of the Artist's Mother* may be comfortably aligned with the influence of Whistler. However, the ideological premise behind such an overt appropriation has remained elusive. Tanner was a quiet, modest, and self-effacing man, active in the Parisian art circles, but not an earnest rebel among the avant-garde culture flourishing in Paris at this time around such groups as the Impressionists or the Nabis.[46] The artist maintained close ties to his family and his Christian upbringing continued to inform his work. Fully participant in his family's pride in national achievement and racial equality, Tanner never considered himself an expatriate, maintaining loyal associations with the United States and actively supporting the N.A.A.C.P. into his final years. Writing in *The Crisis* in 1924, Jessie Faucet described Tanner as "of all the great men who have achieved, undoubtedly the least affected and the least conscious of personal glory."[47] Whistler, on the other hand, was an outspoken expatriate, notorious for his arrogance and bohemian lifestyle. Why Tanner would choose to refer so consciously to this painter, a fellow American artist seemingly at odds with Tanner's personality and sense of morality, can be explained by an investigation into the ideological tenets behind Whistler's painting of his mother, and their translation by Tanner into a metaphor for his own struggle as an artist of African-American descent.

Tanner almost certainly saw *Arrangement in Grey and Black, No. 1*, in September 1881, when Whistler selected the painting for an exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and it became the first work by the artist to be shown publicly in the United States.[48] Tanner was living in Philadelphia at this time and still may have been enrolled as a student at the Academy. General publicity concerning Whistler in the United States, especially by the 1880s, was curiously affirmative despite the expatriate's famously decadent lifestyle. Art historian Sarah Burns attributes the enthusiastic endorsements of Whistler's work in the domestic press to the artist's impeccable Yankee lineage, which inherently absolved him from any rumored improprieties.[49] In 1881 the *Independent* stated that *Arrangement in Grey and Black, No. 1* "vindicates Whistler's right to be eccentric"[50] and by the turn of the century, the image was widely circulated in the press and through printed reproductions. With his increasing artistic success Whistler had become an established master and had gained a professional credibility that overshadowed any personal idiosyncrasies. Burns writes, "as an American, and as an 'insider,' Whistler could hardly be anything but a symbol of cultural progress. . .. His 'genius' was co-opted to stand for civilization—particularly Anglo-American civilization—and not degeneration."[51] Thus, the American press's own construction of Whistler's highly cultivated identity enabled, by the late 1890s, an easy accommodation of the artist's aesthetic priorities to the work of the quiet, pious Tanner. In 1897 Tanner's family would certainly have been familiar with the well-known image of Whistler's *Mother* and moreover, would not likely have had any

reservations about their son's compositional appropriation of a work by the widely acclaimed artist.

In the fall of 1891, the year Tanner arrived in Paris, the French government purchased Whistler's *Arrangement in Grey and Black, No. 1: Portrait of the Artist's Mother* for the Musée du Luxembourg.[52] Amidst great fanfare by the French, Whistler gained tremendous critical acclaim and professional credibility with this honor. The Americans and British, who both claimed Whistler as their native son, grumbled at the opportunities they had missed to purchase the image.[53]

The publicity surrounding the acquisition of Whistler's painting in 1891 was substantial, especially because the artist was quite outspoken about how the painting should be aesthetically received and critically evaluated. Whistler had published the celebrated indictment of his critics *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies* in 1890, and within two years the volume was reprinted. In a statement frequently quoted in conjunction with any discussion of the purchase, Whistler claimed that the image should be recognized on the merits of its formal qualities, without regard for the identity of the subject. Referring to an 1872 London exhibition of *Arrangement in Grey and Black, No. 1*, Whistler wrote,

> There . . . is the picture of my mother, exhibited at the Royal Academy as an *Arrangement in Grey and Black*. Now that is what it is. To me it is interesting as a picture of my mother; but what can or ought the public to care about the identity of the portrait? It must stand or fall on its merits as an 'arrangement;' and it very nearly fell—that's a fact.[54]

Despite Whistler's insistence on this matter, critics delighted in the fact that this "arrangement" of colors was, in fact, a painting of Whistler's mother, and extolled the maternal virtue the artist had evoked with such charmingly sentimental filial devotion. Whistler, in fact, broke his friendship with the poet Algernon Swinburne over Swinburne's published remark that "It would be quite useless for Mr. Whistler to protest . . . that he never meant to put . . . intense pathos of significance and tender depth of expression into the portrait of his own venerable mother."[55] Whistler's directive that the painting be received as an arrangement of colors, rather than a sentimental portrait is, of course, most manifest in the work's abstract title.

Six years later in 1897, the year Tanner painted his *Portrait of the Artist's Mother*, the French government bestowed similar honor upon Tanner with a request to purchase his Salon painting *The Raising of Lazarus* for the Musée du Luxembourg. This distinction was a major mark of professional credibility for Tanner, much as it had helped to critically establish Whistler, and the young artist's reputation grew immensely. One critic effused over Tanner's great success and wrote,

> the artist from whom the minister des beaux arts buys a picture for a government collection need have no fears for the future. His fortune is made; his work has the authoritative cachet and seal of official approbation. There is an instant market, at high prices, for whatever he may choose to paint.[56]

Tanner's visit to his parents' home late in the summer of 1897 may have been to celebrate this honor. When Tanner began to paint the portrait of his mother, he had been recently reminded of Whistler's famous portrait by the acquisition of his own *Lazarus* to hang with *Arrangement in Grey and Black, No. 1* in the galleries at the Musée du Luxembourg.[57]

While Tanner may have balked at Whistler's flamboyant self-promotion, he surely identified with Whistler's desire to be recognized for one's ability to paint, rather than

analyzed through the identity of one's subject matter. In *Portrait of the Artist's Mother*, Tanner seized upon Whistler's *inability* to control his work's reception, and translated Whistler's formalist ideology into a commentary on his own struggles with art and identity.

We may return now to an additional passage from Tanner's 1914 draft of a reply to reporter Eunice Tietjens, in which he refers to an incident regarding a Baltimore notice of *The Raising of Lazarus'* 1897 acquisition by the French government.

> It might be like what happened when my "Lazarus" was bought by the French government. It was telegraphed to the States "A Negro sells picture to the French government."—Now a paper in Baltimore wanted a photo of this "Negro." Of course they had none. So out they go and photograph the first dock hand they come across, and it looked like may be some of my distant ancestors when they once came from Africa.[58]

Tanner's painful memory features a specific sensitivity to the visual representation of racial identity. This grotesque bit of journalism may have triggered Tanner's sudden impulse to claim agency in the act of self-representation and to produce a small group of family portraits. The incident had clearly remained sharp in Tanner's mind more than a decade after its occurrence.

Tanner's remarks to Eunice Tietjens about this crisis in his own visual representation situate the portrait of his mother within the realm of "visual resistance" recently articulated by critic bell hooks. In a deeply personal essay on the power of self-representation in black culture, hooks writes that the camera enabled African Americans to claim agency in the public and private realms of identity construction. Although hooks refers specifically to photographic portraiture, her observations bear importantly on the larger realm of image making—both the offending photograph in the Baltimore paper and the tradition of American painted portraits—that informed Tanner's *Portrait of the Artist's Mother*. hooks writes, "I think about the place of art in black life, connections between the social construction of black identity, the impact of race and class, and the presence in black life of an inarticulate but ever-present visual aesthetic governing our relationship to images, to the process of image making. I return to the snapshot as a starting point. . . . Before racial integration there was a constant struggle on the part of black folks to create a counterhegemonic world of images that would stand as visual resistance."[59] Tanner's 1897 *Portrait* is certainly a long way from the "inarticulateness" of hooks's basic snapshot. His innate talent, formal training, and participation in the Parisian art communities set his artistic production apart from the untrained eyes of Kodak "button-pushers" in the 1890s who helped to redefine access to image making for both the Caucasian and African-American communities. Through this painting of his mother, however, he actively claimed agency in the construction of upper-middle class black identity.

hooks makes an additional point about the circulation of these snapshots and the places in which African Americans gained access to these empowering self-images. Citing the lack of public spaces for the display of positive, unstereotyped representations of blacks, she describes the private spaces of her family's home, and others like it, where an abundance of portrait photographs and family snapshots were exhibited on mantles, walls, and bookshelves.

> To enter black homes in my childhood was to enter a world that valued the visual, that asserted our collective will to participate in a noninstitutionalized curatorial process.

> For black folks constructing our identities within the culture of apartheid, these walls were essential to the process of decolonization. In opposition to colonizing socialization, internalized racism, these walls announced our visual complexity.[60]

Tanner's *Portrait of the Artist's Mother* was created within, and remained in, this private, domestic space of self-definition. The work was never intended for public exhibition and remained in the artist's personal collection throughout his life. Functioning exclusively within this protected arena of familial intimacy, *Portrait of the Artist's Mother* could assert a level of racial and artistic identity, as well as an ideological critique, not possible in the public realm of the Parisian Salon. Tanner's *Portrait*, both within the composition and in its existence as an object, featured the "noninstitutionalized curatorial" space of his parents' home as a forum for larger cultural commentary.

The incident involving a photograph of "the first dock hand they come across" may have been fresh in Tanner's mind when he visited his parents in Kansas in August 1897; the artist may have become aware of the clipping as friends and family around the country sent their congratulations on the recent French honor. If snapshots could empower blacks with opportunities for self-representation, they could just as certainly be used by a white press to misrepresent and generalize the specificity of black identity. The flurry of domestic reviews that must have accompanied the artist's success in Paris were likely infused with references to Tanner's racial identity, albeit in gentler, less offensive forms than the Baltimore notice, and several, one hopes, carried an accurate photograph of the artist. One of the most widely read American periodicals at the turn of the century, *Harper's Weekly*, ran a small notice on Tanner's achievement. Their short statement concluded, "Not the least interesting fact in connection with the picture is that Mr. Tanner is a colored citizen of the United States...."[61] In later years, Tanner's favorite niece Sadie recalled that her uncle always responded emotionally to incidents of racism, and that he "normally chose either to deal with this problem obliquely or not to discuss it at all."[62] As Tanner decided to paint an additional portrait of his mother, his choice of the appropriated icon in Whistler's famous composition provided him with an oblique means of passionate response to the chronic presence of racial identity in his life.

Tanner's appropriation and manipulation of Whistler's portrait commented not only on Tanner's own complicated identity in the art world, but also on Whistler's privileged role in the construction of *his* identity and the interpretation of his work. With *Portrait of the Artist's Mother*, Tanner conveyed a subversive message about his struggle as an American painter of African-American heritage, "exiled for art's sake"[63] in Paris, by referring to his critical success with the *Lazarus*, then hanging with Whistler's *Mother* at the Musée du Luxembourg. Tanner's *Portrait* rejected the austerity of Whistler's abstract title and formally reversed many of the famous work's angular, aestheticizing features and cool palette, in favor of warmer tones, a softer space, and a melancholic atmosphere that foregrounded Sarah Tanner's active engagement with her son's racial and artistic identity.

Tanner's reference to the image Whistler had demanded be read only through formal elements spoke to Tanner's own desire to be critically received on the basis of his formal talents as a painter, without regard for his ethnicity. Ironically, by painting Sarah Tanner—a strong, educated, African-American woman, a devout Christian, and a product of America's slave past—Tanner identified the very source of his ethnicity. He painted the heritage which both socially restricted him from the racial anonymity he desired, as well as intellectually inspired him to overcome such restrictions. As an

artist celebrated for the invention of his own identity, Whistler was privileged with an authority over the interpretation of his work denied to Tanner because of his race. By virtue of his racial status, Whistler *could* argue that the public should have no regard for the identity of his sitter; Tanner subverted Whistler's aestheticism and Anglo-American authority, proudly featuring, instead, the maternal source of his own identity in order to transform a formal reference into an act of racial self-assertion.

Tanner sought an environment in which there was "no nationality or race in art,"[64]—a public with no regard for the "identity" of the sitter *or* the artist. Through this appropriated portrayal of his mother, Tanner illustrated the irony, and perhaps slight futility, of his quest for racial anonymity with an image that could not remain anonymous. Mrs. Tanner's sad, melancholic gaze, in marked contrast to Mrs. Whistler's rigid pose, communicates her weariness, and most definitely Tanner's, with the social and intellectual struggle for equality sought by African Americans in the United States. Tanner's success as a painter of biblical themes may have made him appear disengaged from racial politics, yet his letters and autobiographical writings reveal him to have been acutely self-aware of his status as an African American. He was sensitive to, and critical of, the bigotry and racist attitudes that he observed his parents seeking to overcome, and which he himself continued to confront in his own life. Unrestrained by a concern for the public reception of this image, Tanner was able to paint a personal message into his mother's portrait, for a private audience who could, better than any other, recognize its subversive meaning.

University of Pennsylvania

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1. Dewey Mosby, *Across Continents and Cultures: The Art and Life of Henry Ossawa Tanner* (Kansas City, Missouri: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 1995), 9.

2. Judith Wilson, "Lifting the 'Veil': Henry O. Tanner's *The Banjo Lesson* and *The Thankful Poor*," *Critical Issues in American Art*, ed. Mary Ann Calo (New York: Westview Press, 1998), 203-204. Originally published in *Contributions in Black Studies* 9/10 (1990-1992).

3. Tanner undertook a number of small portrait projects throughout his career; his subjects were primarily family and close friends. In addition to *Portrait of the Artist's Mother*, the best-known of these portraits include two small portraits of his parents also painted in 1897, and a 1917 portrait of Booker T. Washington. For a rough inventory of Tanner's portraits see Darrel Sewell, "Bishop Benjamin Tucker Tanner [cat. #40]," in *Henry Ossawa Tanner*, Dewey F. Mosby (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1991), 140.

4. Almost all of Tanner's portraits were intended for private enjoyment and few, if any, found their way to public exhibition during the artist's lifetime. See Sewell, "Bishop Benjamin Tucker Tanner [cat. #40]," in Mosby, *Henry Ossawa Tanner*, 140. Mosby says *Portrait of the Artist's Mother* remained in Tanner's personal collection. Mosby, *Across Continents and Cultures*, 42.

5. General biographical information about Tanner and his family in this paper is based on Tanner's autobiographical statement, "The Story of an Artist's Life," *The World's Work* 28, nos. 2, 3 (June and July 1909), 11661-11666, 11769-11775, as well as two important secondary sources: Marcia M. Mathews, *Henry Ossawa Tanner, American Artist* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), and Mosby, *Henry Ossawa Tanner*.

6. For further details on Reverend Tanner, see especially Wilson, "Lifting the 'Veil'," 200-204, and Albert Boime, "Henry Ossawa Tanner's Subversion of Genre," *The Art Bulletin* LXXV, no. 3 (September 1993): 415-417.

7. Boime, "Henry Ossawa Tanner's Subversion of Genre," 426, n. 5; see also Mosby, *Across Continents and Cultures*, 41 for further information on Sarah Tanner's intellectual activities.
8. Rae Alexander Minter, "The Tanner Family: A Grandniece's Chronicle," in Mosby, *Henry Ossawa Tanner*, 27.
9. The exact span of Tanner's student years at the Academy remain undetermined. Tanner disappears from the records after 1884. Hovendon did not become an instructor until Eakins' dismissal from the faculty in 1886, yet he is known to have been an influential presence in Tanner's early student career. See Mosby, *Henry Ossawa Tanner*, 59-60.
10. Joseph Pennell, *The Adventures of An Illustrator* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1925), 54. Ironically, Pennell also sought professional success in Europe where he became the admiring friend and eventual biographer of Whistler.
11. H. O. Tanner, "The Story of an Artist's Life," *The World's Work* XVIII, no. 2 (June 1909): 11664-11665.
12. William R. Lester, "Henry O. Tanner, Exile for Art's Sake," *Alexander's Magazine* 7, no. 2 (December 15, 1908): 73.
13. Jesse Ossawa Tanner, "Introduction," in Mathews, *Henry Ossawa Tanner, American Artist*, xii.
14. Romare Bearden and Harry Henderson, *A History of African-American Artists from 1792 to the Present* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 86.
15. Boime, "Henry Ossawa Tanner's Subversion of Genre," and Mosby, *Across Continents and Cultures*, rightly offer more complicated reasons for the shift in Tanner's subject matter. See also Jennifer Harper, "The Early Religious Paintings of Henry Ossawa Tanner: A Study of the Influences of Church, Family, and Era," *American Art* 6, no. 4 (Fall 1992): 68-85.
16. Alain Locke, "The American Negro as Artist," *The American Magazine of Art* 23, no. 3 (September 1931): 212.
17. See especially Boime, "Henry Ossawa Tanner's Subversion of Genre," and Harper, "The Early Religious Paintings of Henry Ossawa Tanner" for recent scholarship on Tanner that reads his religious imagery as racially charged.
18. Lynda Roscoe Hartigan makes this point nicely: "Tanner never disclaimed or discredited his heritage, yet he perceived attempts to elevate him to the role of exemplar as variations on the separatism he had so consciously tried to avoid." Lynda Roscoe Hartigan, "Henry Ossawa Tanner," in *Sharing Traditions: Five Black Artists in Nineteenth Century America* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985), 114.
19. Henry Ossawa Tanner Papers, Roll D 306, Frames 113-119, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.
20. *Philadelphia Press*, cited in Mosby, *Henry Ossawa Tanner*, 61.
21. Cited in Mosby, *Henry Ossawa Tanner*, 63.
22. Philadelphia newspaper clipping (1900), cited in Mathews, *Henry Ossawa Tanner, American Artist*, 105.
23. Mosby, *Across Continents and Cultures*, 38.
24. Vance Thompson, "American Artists in Paris," *The Cosmopolitan* XXIX, no. 1 (May 1900): 18-19.
25. "An Afro-American Painter Who Has Become Famous In Paris," *Current Literature* 45 (October 1908): 405.
26. "An Afro-American Painter Who Has Become Famous In Paris," 405.
27. *Journal des Artistes* (1896), quoted in James Porter, *Modern Negro Art* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1992), 60.
28. Albert Maignan, "Le Salon de 1897," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (May 1897): 53.
29. Quoted in "An Afro-American Painter Who Has Become Famous In Paris," 407.
30. Lester, "Henry O. Tanner, Exile for Art's Sake," 70.
31. *Boston Herald* (June 13, 1897) cited in Mathews, *Henry Ossawa Tanner, American Artist*, 88.

32. Boime, "Henry Ossawa Tanner's Subversion of Genre," 426; Mosby, *Across Continents and Cultures*, 42, 44; Sewell, "Portrait of the Artist's Mother [cat. #41]," in Mosby, *Henry Ossawa Tanner*, 142. See also Robert Pincus-Witten, "Henry Tanner," *Artforum* (October 1969): 13; Brooks Adams, "Tanner's Odyssey," *Art in America* (June 1991): 111.

33. Mosby, *Across Continents and Cultures*, 44.

34. Sewell has identified this object as a "palm leaf fan." Sewell, "Portrait of the Artist's Mother [cat. #41]," in Mosby, *Henry Ossawa Tanner*, 142. The shape of the fan is curiously evocative of the butterfly emblem Whistler often used as his signature, and I would like to thank Katie Bourguignon for suggesting this possibility.

35. Wanda Corn, *The Color of Mood: American Tonalism 1880-1910* (San Francisco: M. H. DeYoung Museum, 1972), 1-4. According to Corn, the word "tone" characterized for the period's criticism ". . . both a single hue and a certain translucence. . . The subtle gradation of color, the predominance of one or two hues, and the diffused light were often so interrelated in these works that the overall effect was described simply as 'tonal,' 'tonalistic,' or even 'tony.' The term 'tonalism,' however, appears not to have been used. Although it further swells the lexicon of art-historical 'isms,' it best expresses the work and attitudes of a significant number of late nineteenth-century artists." (3).

36. *Paris Figaro* (1897), quoted in Lester, "Henry O. Tanner, Exile for Art's Sake," 71.

37. Quoted in Mosby, *Henry Ossawa Tanner*, 182, 204, 207.

38. Corn, *The Color of Mood*, 2.

39. Anna Whistler's presence in the portrait has often been described as "puritanical." Mrs. Whistler was born in North Carolina and her lineage was Scottish; her religion was Episcopalian. One Whistler biographer describes her as "disagreeably, suspiciously devout . . . a not altogether unusual blend of Calvinist bigot, tender wife and mother, and Southern antebellum dame." Her associations with an aura of puritanism appear to have more to do with her restrained pious presence in the famous portrait, rather than any formal religious affiliation with the old New England faith. She did live for some time in Massachusetts, during which her son James was born. As early as 1872, critics commented on the Protestant character of the image; future interpretations of the image seem to have taken liberties with the extent of the sitter's ties to New England and her religious faith, and "puritanical" has emerged as a common descriptive term in the portrait literature. See Roy McMullen, *Victorian Outsider: A Biography of J. A. M. Whistler* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1973), 17-18; Margaret F. MacDonald, "Whistler: The Painting of the 'Mother'," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* LXXXV (February 1975): 84; Sarah Walden, "Reviving Whistler's Mother," *Times Literary Supplement* (October 14, 1994): 20.

40. William Patterson Hong, "Amelia Van Buren [cat. #27]," in *Thomas Eakins and the Heart of American Life*, ed. John Wilmerding (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1993), 121; William J. Clark, "The Iconography of Gender in Thomas Eakins Portraiture," *American Studies* 32, no. 2 (Fall 1991): 19. This chair was used as a prop for other sitters in Eakins' portraits (*Portrait of Benjamin Howard Rand*, 1874; *Katharine*, 1872) and is known to have been significantly smaller than its dramatically threatening size in Miss Van Buren's portrait.

41. Porter, *Modern Negro Art*, 56.

42. Elizabeth Johns, *Thomas Eakins: The Heroism of Modern Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 3.

43. Corn, *The Color of Mood*, 22, fn. 3.

44. Photographs of Miss Van Buren taken at the same time reveal a young woman with blond hair and a healthy complexion. She was probably in her thirties at the time Eakins painted her portrait—Eakins apparently "aged" many of his female sitters. See Clark, "The Iconography of Gender," 19-23.

45. Hong, "Amelia Van Buren [cat. #27]," in Wilmerding, *Thomas Eakins and the Heart of American Life*, 121.

46. In the 1890s, Tanner spent several summers in Brittany with the Pont-Aven colony of painters around Paul Gauguin. See Judy Le Paul, *Gauguin and the Impressionists at Pont-Aven* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1987), 98, 99 fn. 53; Mosby, *Across Continents and Cultures*, 30, 35.

47. Jessie Faucet, "Henry Ossawa Tanner," *The Crisis* 27, no. 6 (April 1924): 256.

48. Stanley Weintraub, *Whistler: A Biography* (New York: Weybright and Talley, 1974), 264.

49. Sarah Burns, "Old Maverick to Old Master: Whistler in the Public Eye in Turn-of-the-Century America," *The American Art Journal* XXII, no. 1 (1990): 46-47. James Abbott McNeill Whistler was born in Lowell, Massachusetts and baptized Episcopalian. Anna Whistler brought her son up in a strict, religious, upper-class New England household until the family moved to St. Petersburg, Russia when James was nine. He later returned to the United States to attend West Point Academy, but was soon expelled and in October 1855 left for Europe never to return to the United States again. Whistler's own loyalties tended to be toward the South—he frequently claimed to have been born in Baltimore. The self-invented ambiguities in Whistler's biography apparently served the press well in their own effort to idealize the artist as American. See also McMullen, *Victorian Outsider*, 15-49 and Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr. with Charles Brock, "Whistler and America," in *James McNeill Whistler*, ed. Richard Dorment and Margaret F. MacDonald (London: Tate Gallery Publications), 29-38.

50. "The Philadelphia Exhibitions," *Independent* 24 (November 1881): 6, quoted in Cikovsky, "Whistler and America," 34.

51. Burns, "Old Maverick to Old Master," 47.

52. The Louvre was prohibited from acquiring the work of living artists. The Luxembourg served as a "holding gallery" for works by living artists that the French government sought for purchase. After an artist's death, the work could be transferred to the Louvre. See Pincus-Witten, "Henry Tanner," 11.

53. Weintraub, *Whistler: A Biography*, 354.

54. James McNeill Whistler, "The Red Rag (1878)" *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies* (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1994), 128.

55. Algernon Charles Swinburne, "Mr. Whistler's Lecture on Art," *Fortnightly Review* (June 1888), quoted in Whistler, *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*, 252.

56. Lester, "Henry O. Tanner, Exile for Art's Sake," 71.

57. According to Lucy Smith in 1927, a room in the Luxembourg Museum was "rather grudgingly set aside for the work of notable foreigners." Lucy Smith, "Some Americans in Paris," *The American Magazine of Art* XVIII, no. 3 (March 1927): 135. We do not know how close to one another Whistler's *Mother* and Tanner's *Lazarus* may have been hung.

58. Henry Ossawa Tanner Papers, Roll D 306, Frames 113-119, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. The Baltimore newspaper clipping to which Tanner refers has long evaded this author, but Dewey Mosby explains that Tanner misremembered the date, confusing his 1897 success with the *Lazarus* with his 1908 Salon success with *The Wise and Foolish Virgins*. Mosby thus identifies this clipping as an article by Sterling Heilig, "Henry Tanner, An American Negro, May Win This Year's Medal of Honor at the Great Paris Salon," that appeared in the *Baltimore Sun* on June 14, 1908. While it is possible that Tanner misremembered the date, the passion and anger of Tanner's words to Tietjens in 1914 might equally suggest that the mistake lies in the location of the newspaper, rather than in its dating. The identification of a 1908 Baltimore clipping does not preclude the existence of a similar 1897 clipping from a newspaper in a different city. Tanner's success at the Paris Salon in 1897 likely precipitated a tremendous number of reviews, any one of which might have featured an accompanying photograph such as Tanner describes. Mosby, *Across Continents and Cultures*, 85, fn. 254.

59. bell hooks, "In Our Glory: Photography and Black Life," *Art On My Mind: visual politics* (New York: The New Press, 1995), 57.

60. hooks, "In Our Glory," 61.

61. "Mr. H. O. Tanner's Picture, *The Raising of Lazarus*," *Harper's Weekly* (August 7, 1897): 780.

62. Bearden, *A History of African-American Artists*, 93.

63. Lester, "Henry O. Tanner, Exile for Art's Sake," title.

64. Lester, "Henry O. Tanner, Exile for Art's Sake," 73.

Machines sans but? Eva Hesse's Machine Drawings in the Dada Tradition, 1964–1965

Kirsten Swenson

Eva Hesse left New York for Germany in the fall of 1964 a painter, and returned a year later a sculptor, never to paint again. The intervening year was spent in a small industrial town, Kettwig-am-Ruhr, executing machine drawings; at the end of this year Hesse constructed her first sculptural series, known as the German reliefs. The machine drawings are clean, diagrammatic renditions of what I propose is a fictional interior space (Figs. 1 & 2). These drawings outline systems that malfunction, self-destruct, and refuse: they are organs, coupled and connected, but cannot give birth, digest or have sex—except according to a fictive logic. Hesse's posthumous reputation (she died in 1970 at the age of 34 from brain cancer) as a key figure in Post-Minimalism or Process Art has been forged on the basis of her later sculptural pieces constructed between 1966 and 1970. The drawings completed over the course of this year bridge Hesse's crucial transition from painting to sculpture, and, as such, can be seen as articulating notions embodied in Hesse's later abstract sculpture that critics have struggled to characterize: its impermanence, its tendency to auto-destruct, and its relationship to the artist's own body and mortality.[1]

Though she is not usually thought of as participating in Dada or "Neo-Dada" circles, Hesse was deeply interested in the themes, motives, and individuals associated with these movements. During her year in Germany, she pursued the acquaintance of Jean Tinguely and Meret Oppenheim, and according to her friend Mel Bochner, while in Germany Hesse developed "a kind of hard, organic abstraction which one would associate with [Francis] Picabia. There's a great deal of Picabia's sexual machinery in Hesse's early work." Upon her return to New York, Bochner reports, Hesse approached the work of Jasper Johns, whom she greatly admired, "with a mental attitude prepared by this Dadaist orientation."[2] In addition to Johns, Hesse looked to Claes Oldenberg and Andy Warhol whom she described respectively as "an artist...that I really believe in" and "the most artist that you could be."[3] The influence of Pop Art is revealed in her machine drawings which utilize a textbook-like format and evoke popular medical renderings of female anatomy, appearing to waver between machine or medical diagrams and cartoons. Though Hesse typically exhibited with Minimalists and other abstractionists for whom form and materials were primary, this paper will reinstate the significance of Hesse's self-identification with the ironic, anti-rational ethos of the Dada and "Neo-Dada" movements and Pop Art.[4] The machine drawings are refined, highly articulate assertions of "difference," and reveal a complicated negotiation between art historical and popular visual discourses about the female body.

Trained as a painter at Yale under Josef Albers, whose color-field abstractions coldly juxtaposed flat planes of color according to a theory of optics, Hesse studied color theory and her education focused emphatically on the surface of the canvas. She left Yale in 1959 "determined to *fight* to be a painter,"[5] an endeavor which she pursued doggedly for the next five years. But Hesse was unable to realize her artistic intentions through painting, and frustrated, at last allowed herself to cease trying to paint, writing in her journal on February 5, 1965, "If painting is too much for you now, fuck it. Quit."

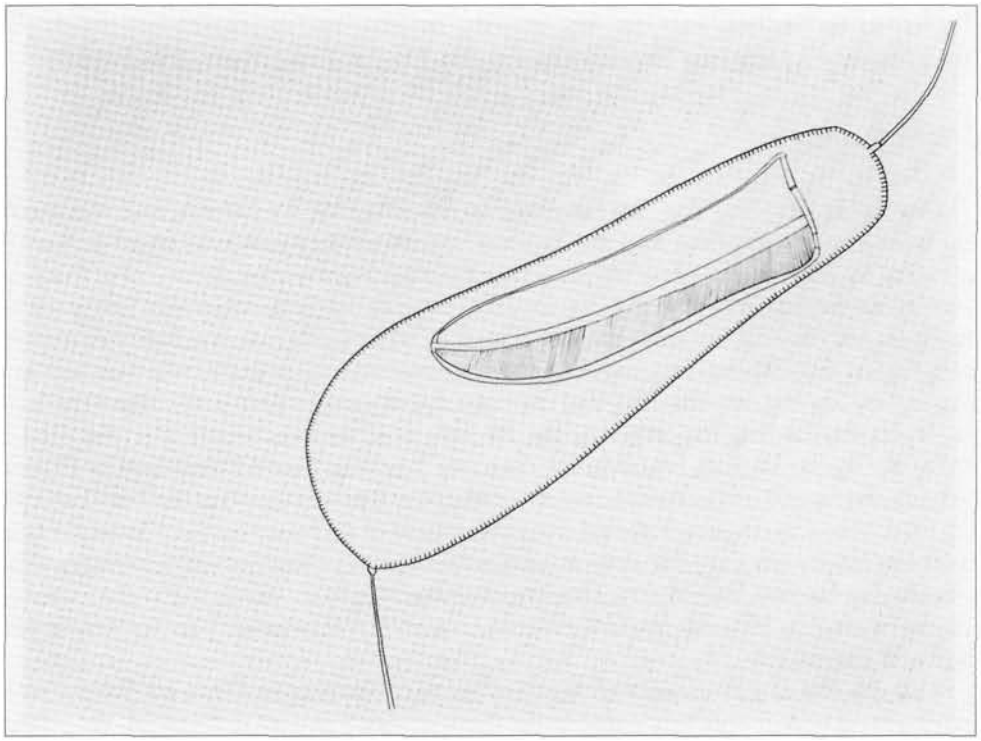


Fig. 1 Untitled machine drawing, ink on paper, 1965.

This was a key moment in her career, and although Hesse had always been a gifted draftsman often taking refuge in drawing, she now began to draw earnestly and exclusively. The next journal entry—later the same day—describes her satisfaction with a machine drawing she had executed. Hesse wrote, "I will continue drawing, push the individuality of them [the drawings] even though they go against the every 'major trend'...So did everyone I admire."[6] Not only did the new drawings allow her to abandon concerns about color that had plagued her since her days with Albers, but the series of machine drawings also corresponded with the emergence of a new optimistic and exuberant attitude toward her art. In February of 1965, Hesse was drawing "crazy forms, outright, strong, clear. No more haze."[7] They were "crazy like machines...real nonsense,"[8] she wrote to Sol LeWitt. A frenzied tone characterizes her descriptions of these "impossible machines,"[9] which had a freeing and empowering effect on her expression.

Hesse completed dozens of machine drawings in pen and ink, which follow the same method of execution: very clean black outlines emphasize volume, describing cylindrical, ovoid shapes, often "bags" or "tubes" with folds or creases, suggestive of how one might imagine organ tissues or intestines.[10] The bold black outline imitates an illustrator's pen, and there is very little shading. The "parts" are rendered with precision, as if to say, "there is no confusion here." In this way, they evoke medical diagrams that depict and outline internal systems. The matter-of-factness of these unambiguous surfaces and shapes achieves a didactic clarity, resulting in an authoritative presentation.

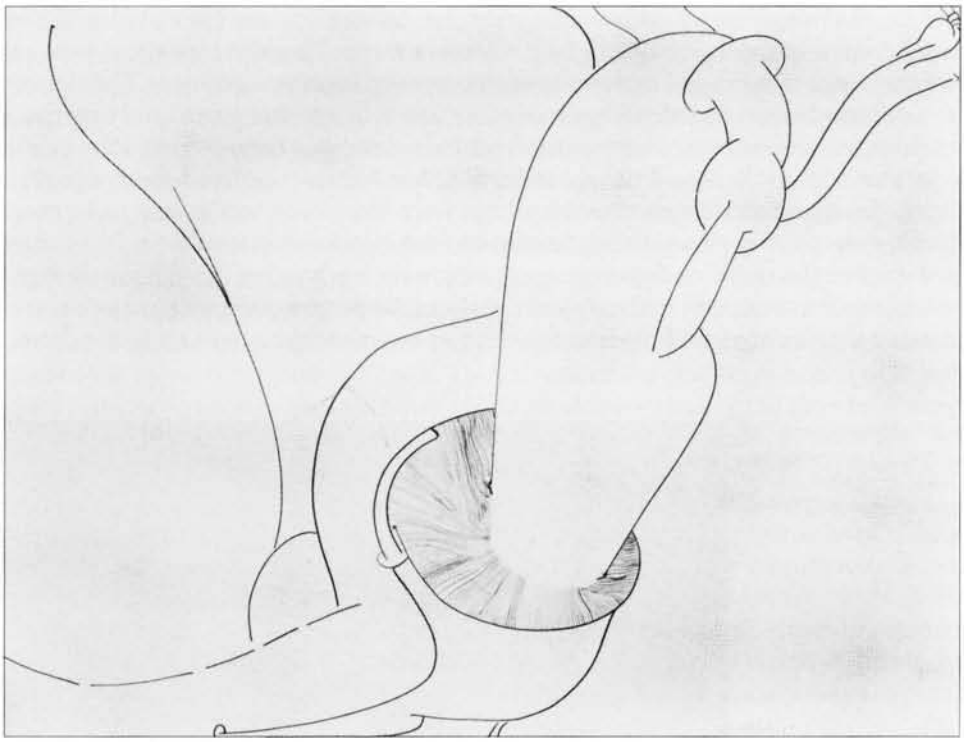


Fig. 2 Untitled machine drawing, ink on paper, 1965.

Hesse's machine drawings were based loosely on random remains of mechanical looms strewn throughout her studio, located in an abandoned textile factory. Though based on mechanical devices, the elements of the machine drawings unmistakably resemble reproductive systems and organs, usually female but sometimes male, and also feature intestines, stomachs, and other more vague biomorphs. They depict the bizarre coupling of surreal organs that blur the distinction between biological and mechanical systems. Shortly after she began to execute this new style, Hesse described her drawings as "very HARD...they are forms I have always used but enlarged and very clearly defined. Thus they look like *machines*, however they are not functional and are nonsense."[11] In their graceful fluidity and associative character, the machine drawings resemble automatic drawings from Surrealism—e.g. those by Roberto Matta and Arshile Gorky—yet in their systematic, hard-edged precision, they resemble the machine drawings of Duchamp and Picabia. Hesse depicts the hard-edged machine parts with soaring, lyrical lines that are almost expressionistic in their swooping motion which spans the breadth of the compositional space.[12] The drawings are characterized by a great tension between these free-flowing lines and their implied structure, that of "systems" of organs or coupled machine parts. Thus Hesse's machine drawings are at the same time mechanistic and organic, their technique more reminiscent of the ease and fluidity of the painted stroke than the drawn line.

After settling on the machine form as an exclusive motif in her drawing, Hesse began to cut out parts of drawings, treating them as separable organs. In a practice that clearly presaged her turn to sculpture, these parts would migrate and couple with other

parts in an endless series of mutable machine collages. Some cut-outs have many pinholes at the corners, indicating their transient status. She also traced cut-outs onto other drawings to develop a system loosely composed of several cut-outs. The elements of the drawings thus functioned as moveable, interchangeable parts implying the act of building or constructing a system from parts. In this sense the machine drawings did not just anticipate their sculptural realization, but Hesse conceived them equally as constructions and drawings: their elements were transitory, not meant to be frozen within a static picture plane but contingent on their relationship to other machine parts. Hesse created the machine drawings to interact with one another interchangeably, and in this sense they function in the manner of exquisite corpses: seemingly disconnected entities, parts, are matched to come together as an improbable, nonsensical whole.

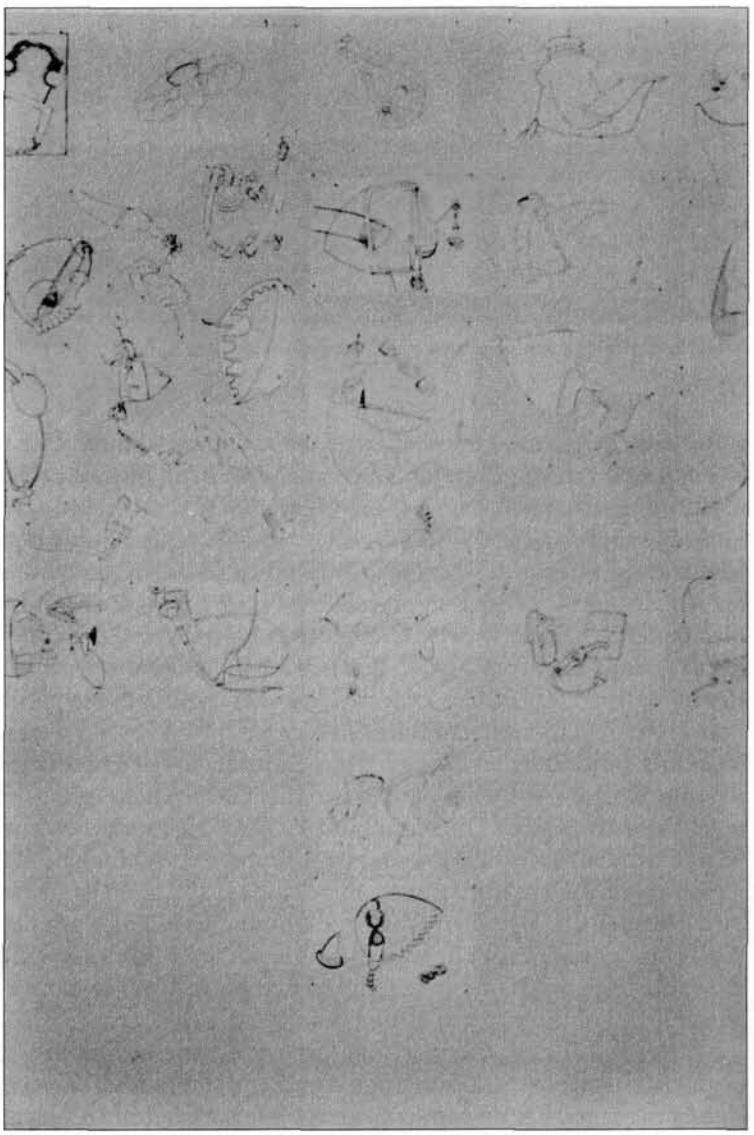
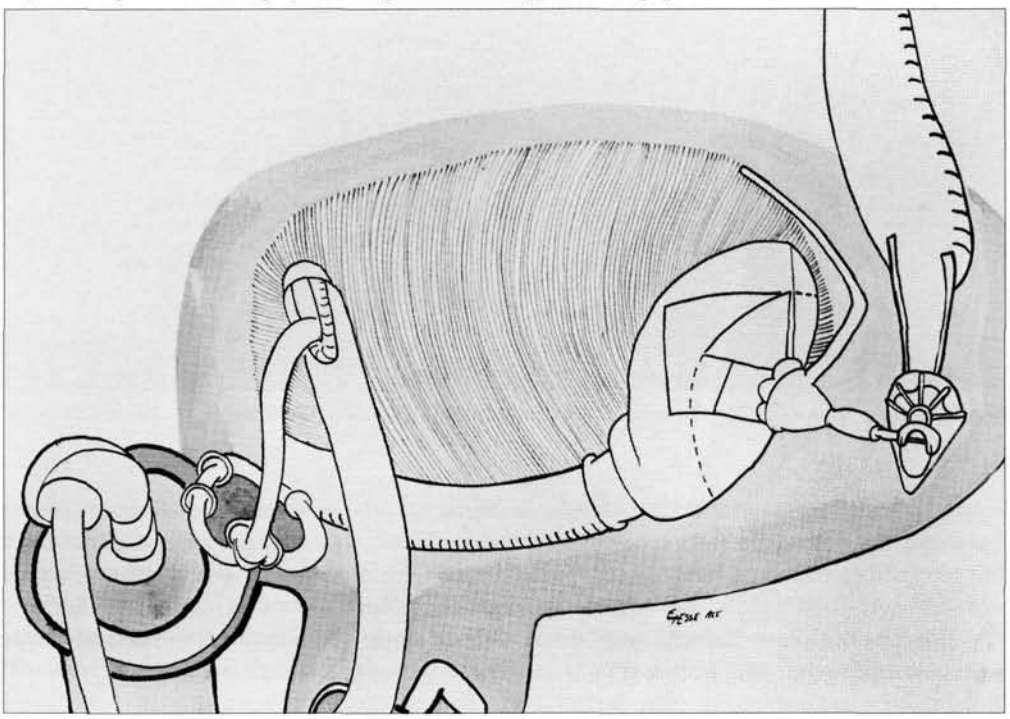


Fig. 3 Photograph of machine drawing display in the greenhouse of Arnhard Scheidt, Kettwig-am-Ruhr, Germany, 1965.

Hesse exhibited the machine drawings in May of 1965, in the greenhouse of Herr Scheidt, her husband's patron. A view of this display (Fig. 3) reveals that the drawings had by this time disintegrated into disparate "organs" that the artist paired and juxtaposed on the space of a large panel. The drawings were executed originally as ends in themselves, but several would serve ultimately as "plans" for Hesse's first sculptural series, the German reliefs. A machine drawing study for the relief *Legs of a Walking Ball* (Fig. 4) integrates a series of parts that can be found independently on the panel of drawings from the greenhouse exhibition: the stomach-type form with an orifice that exudes several mechanical connections leading to a tubular "intestine" is found near the upper-left corner of the greenhouse panel; in the study, this element is paired with a system of tubes that evoke intestines and plumbing pipes, found on the greenhouse panel to the right of the stomach form. Thus the machine drawings began to function as a cross between anatomical sketches and blueprints—transitional objects leading to the construction and painting of raised, topographical surfaces. In addition, color returned to Hesse's work in the German reliefs, as if she had developed a new version of painting in which the canvases were not flat but had documented, bizarre, yet mechanistically organized and precise, interiors.

In a series of photographs taken for a brochure to accompany her first solo museum show at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf in August 1965 (Figs. 5 & 6), the artist situates herself amid several of the German reliefs, including *Legs of a Walking Ball*, which hangs on the wall to Hesse's right in each picture. Hesse thus reveals her association of the machine drawings and the subsequent reliefs with her own body. Of the many ways to present her work—including the traditional *absence* of the artist—Hesse chose to pose among

Fig. 4 Study for or after *Legs of a Walking Ball*. Ink and gouache on paper, 1965.



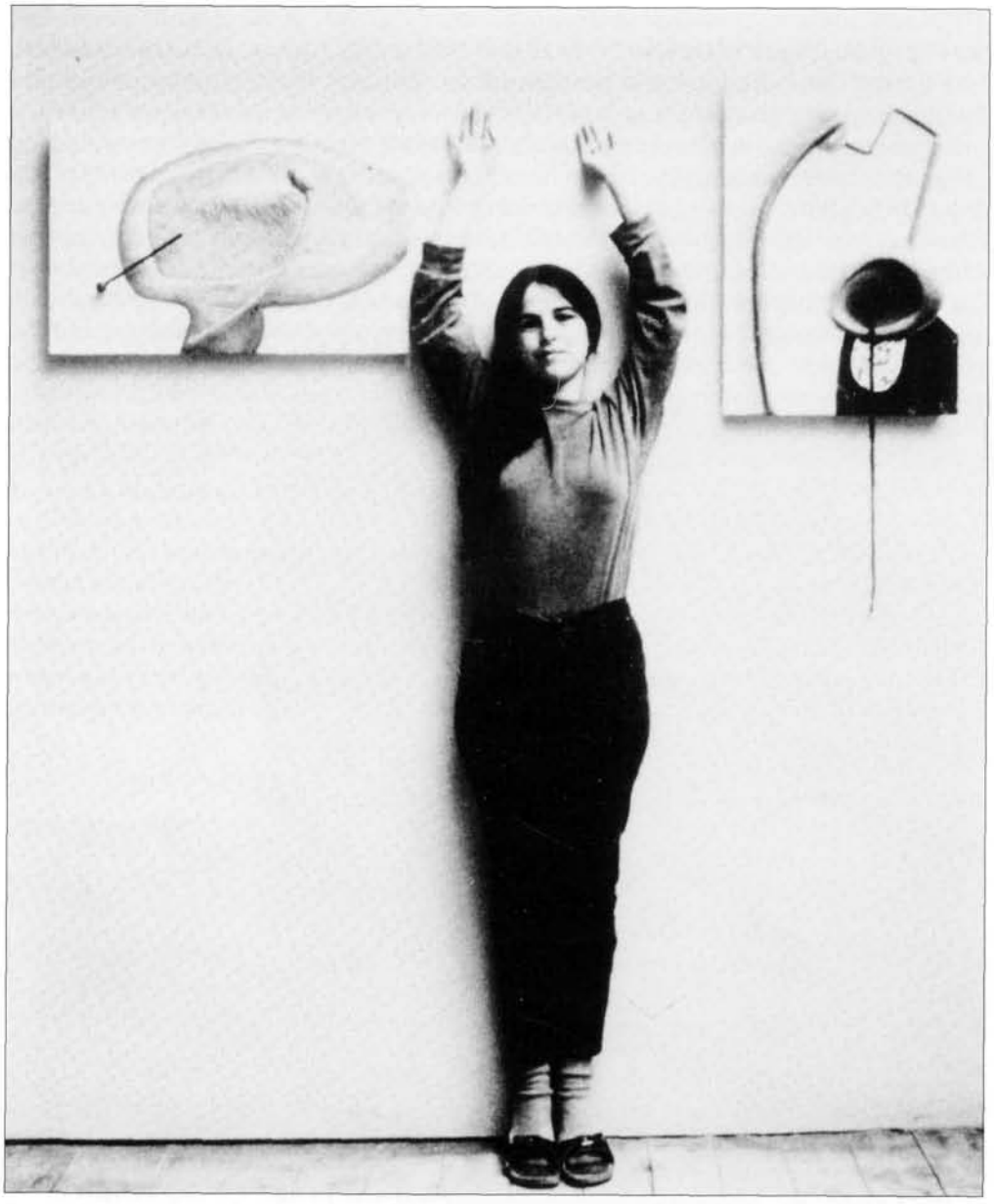


Fig. 5 Hesse posing with German reliefs, 1965. Photograph by Manfred Tischer.

her reliefs in a series of *tableaux vivants*, in a way which presents the correspondences between the abstract reliefs and her own body. In one photograph (Fig. 5), the artist stands with arms raised next to *Legs of a Walking Ball*, whose "legs" and swelling surface echo the artist's female body. In another (Fig. 6), she places between her legs a relief that she described as resembling both "a breast and penis."[13] Hesse's presentation of the German reliefs defines them as displaced fragments of the artist's body. In this context the machine drawings, which were critical to the conceptual development of the reliefs,

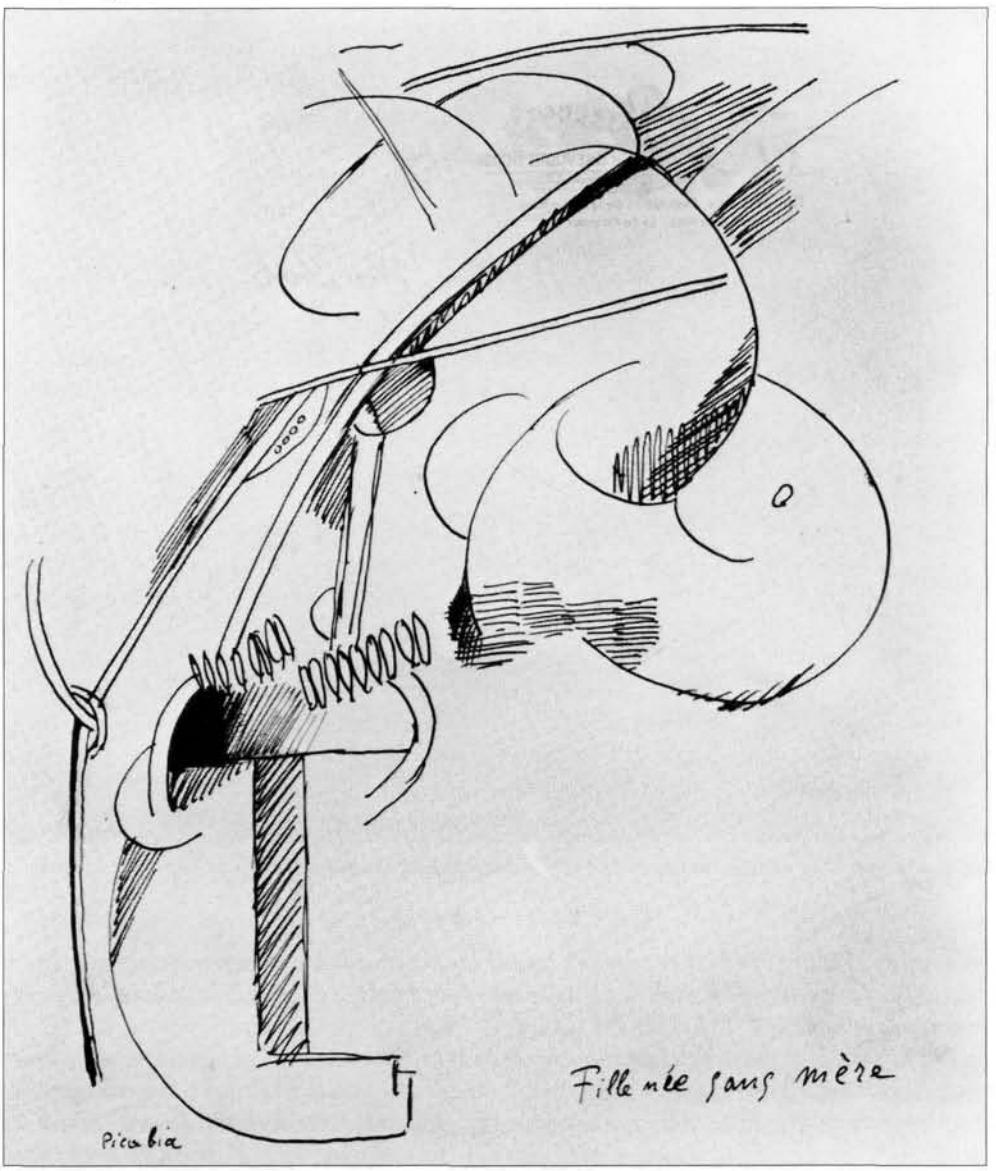
Fig. 6 Hesse posing with German reliefs, 1965. Photograph by Manfred Tischer.

are confused interiors that convey an ambivalence about the status and functioning of the body, particularly with regard to its digestive and reproductive organs.

Many themes central to the Dada ethos come to mind when evaluating Hesse's machine drawings—in particular, the "woman as machine" motif developed by Duchamp and Picabia, and more generally, the interest in absurd, self-defeating, illogical structures among those affiliated with the movement. In Europe, Hesse had the

chance to become involved in an art world in which Dada still prevailed, unruptured by Abstract Expressionism which, at least insofar as its critical rhetoric, had obviated the European tradition in America. She made the acquaintance of Tinguely and Oppenheim, for example, both of whom had established notoriety and even cult-like status for Dadaist feats—Oppenheim for her *Fur-Covered Cup, Saucer, and Spoon* (1936) and Tinguely for his auto-destructive machine *Homage to New York* (1960). After meeting in Bern in the fall of 1964, Oppenheim mailed Hesse a collage.[14] Hesse was an unknown artist at this time, and her interest in establishing contact and friendship with

Fig. 7 Francis Picabia, *Fille nee sans mere*, pen and ink on paper, 1915. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1949.



these artists who were at the very center of the Duchamp-driven world of Dada, reflects her identification with, and interest in, the movement.

By depicting absurd, malfunctioning machine imagery, Hesse's drawings evoke works by many artists in the Dada tradition—notably Tinguely, Duchamp and Picabia—who also sought to imitate and sabotage the concept of the productive machine.[15] Using the Dadaist critique of systemeticity as a point of departure, Hesse shares with these artists the anti-esthetic aim of formulating irrational systems of logic—the quest to "Destroy the hoaxes of reason and to discover an unreasoned order."[16] At the end of her life, Hesse listed Duchamp among a handful of artists whom she felt "very close to" — not because she had studied his work or writings, but because of "this total *absurdity*" that his work represented.[17] This intangible "absurdity," unconnected to explicit formal traits, is emblematized in Duchamp's *Large Glass* project (1915-23) in which a "Bride" famously secretes "love gasoline" into the "malic cylinders" of the "Bachelor Machine," to be ignited by the "electric sparks of the undressing."[18]

The machine-form had been used by Duchamp and Picabia to "describe" female reproductive systems, and indeed was a trope that surfaced across the Dadaist landscape, from Hans Bellmer to Max Ernst to Konrad Klapheck—a German painter whose austere, abstract machines have titles like *Intriguing Woman* (1964) and *The Mother* (1959).[19] This Dadaist fascination with depicting the absurd and non-functioning woman-machine was a fascination with the machine whose product is ambiguous or antithetical to the real goals of the functioning system, i.e. the commodity or child. The fantasy of the machine-parent as a product of industrialization and the breakdown of the nuclear/oedipal family was crystallized originally by the Futurists, and remained irrepressible throughout Dada.[20] However, within Dada, the eroticized machines were "bachelor machines," to use Duchamp's term, and comprised a specific genre that evolved from Duchamp and his friend the writer Raymond Roussel prior to World War I, to become, by the 1950s, an existential myth that referred to an automatic, autoerotic, hybrid apparatus fueled by desire but for which the normal biology of reproduction is denied.[21]

Picabia's drawings, such as *Fille née sans mère* of 1915 (Fig. 7), have striking formal similarities to Hesse's machine drawings in terms of their style of execution.[22] The parts and system they depict are free of context or pictorial background, and the machines stretch isolated across the page. In Picabia's drawing, rods and springs combine with organs and appear to form a system. Like Hesse's machine drawings, those of Picabia illustrate the coupling of organic and mechanistic parts which, though abstract, are each decisive for the next, like cog-wheels in a machine, implying movement and exchange. At the core of both Picabia's and Hesse's drawings lies the punning play between the ambiguous identity of the shapes and the aggressive clarity of their rendering—better exemplified by Picabia's *Portrait of Marie Laurencin, Four in Hand* from around1917, an abstract portrait for which a propellor or fan blades serve as the basis. The human identification given in the titles of Picabia's mechanical drawings—daughter, mother, prostitute, Marie, etc.—is almost always female, and the pointless "work"of his machines relates to sex and reproduction.

Given the historical framework of the female-sexed *machines sans but* (the subtitle for one of Picabia's *Dessins de la fille née sans mère*), what did it mean for Hesse to conflate machine and body in 1965? Analyzing Hesse's machine drawings in the context of Dada paradigms of "erotic machine systems" or "mechanized reproductive systems," raises the question of how Hesse's drawings investigate or make claims about female

subjectivity. Given this tradition of men portraying women's bodies as machines, how is it different to portray oneself, a woman, as machine? What is the ideological distinction between the Duchampian / Picabian "woman as machine" motif and Hesse's externalization and stylization of feminine interiors?

To begin, there are formal distinctions to be noted when comparing Hesse's machine drawings to their Dada precedents. In contrast to the fluidity and movement implied in Hesse's machine drawings, the machines of Picabia, as well as those of Duchamp, possess a phallic stiffness and rigidity, and are typically solid, stable forms. This is evident if one compares the propellor-type forms of Picabia's *Portrait of Marie Laurencin* and Hesse's machine drawing "for or after" the relief *Two Handled Orangekeyed Utensil* (notice the corresponding propellor-shaped relief to Hesse's left in Fig. 6). Hesse's machines convey a sense of mutable, fluctuating identity. Her vocabulary of forms—ranging from pipe fittings to paramecia—is broader than that employed by her predecessors which typically adhered to recognizable machine hardware. The random and associative character of Hesse's machine-conglomerates suggests the technique of automatic drawing as the specificity of mechanical parts in Hesse's drawing dissolves into organic forms. In contrast, the literalness of the recorded details (such as screws and gears) of Picabia's and Duchamp's machines imply that they are copies, traced or drawn from their sources—real or not—with mathematical precision. Like Picabia's textbook-like "anti-drawings" which "gave him free rein to express his rancor against men and events, an inexhaustible vein of plastic and poetic sarcasm,"[23] Hesse executed her machine drawings in a way that suggests the regulative and austere visual discourse that is shared by biology and mechanical design. Both Hesse and Picabia were positing the body as machine—though with very different social and historical import—and both imply an analogy between the discourses of biology and mechanical design.

Several factors allow for an interpretation of Hesse's machine drawings, and the subsequent German reliefs, as intimately related to the artist's complex and ambivalent reaction to pressing issues of womanhood and biology. During her stay in Germany, Hesse suffered from severe menstrual cramps, which Lucy Lippard suggests led to the punning title of the German relief *C-Clamp Blues* (1965) (*not* present in Fig. 5 or 6);[24] and the relief *Ringaround Arosie* (between Hesse's legs in Fig. 6) was made in homage to a pregnant friend. In Germany Hesse also suffered from leg cramps related to anemia which she at first believed to be a psychosomatic symptom blocking her ability to work.[25] The "problem" of being a woman and being an artist surfaced obsessively in her thinking, reflected in diary entries like, "I cannot be something for everyone...Woman, beautiful, artist, wife, housekeeper, cook..."[26] While in Germany Hesse was seriously concerned with how to define her femininity, particularly in terms of social and personal expectations to be a mother and good wife. Furthermore, her poses with the German reliefs, the internal structures of which are revealed by the machine drawings, show the reliefs' correspondence with her body—specifically, as mentioned, her breasts in the case of *Legs of a Walking Ball*, and the sexual implications of *Ringaround Arosie* when placed between Hesse's legs. The constellation formed by Hesse's words, demonstrative poses, and depictions of absurd reproductive organs shows the artist's renegotiation and complication of the terms of womanhood. The reliefs and drawings produced as part of this performative process appear to have had, for the artist, an autobiographical or surrogate identity.

As opposed to Duchamp or Picabia, her machine drawings allow Hesse to recuperate a subjective body, one that is depicted as experienced from the inside, rather than objectified externally in terms of female function—as childbearer or bride—and appearance, as Duchamp and Picabia cast their mother, wife, daughter, or prostitute machines. The mechanical style of Hesse's machine drawings alludes to medical renderings of a uniform, universal interior to which we should all relate, as if individual differentiations and distinctions could be bypassed without harm. This institutional format represents bodies with systems of organs that function cleanly like machines, without blood and mystery—that is, without the overflowing, uncontainable, dark and messy character of lived bodies (Fig. 8). Missing in Hesse's renderings, as in medical diagrams, is the grotesque. Hesse's sterile, rational delineations of the reproductive organs portray a scripted, if malfunctioning and absurd, sexuality. Juxtaposing Hesse's machine drawings with a contemporary textbook rendering of a female reproductive system, we see cut-outs of organs floating against a sterile backdrop with chutes, tubes and receptacles presented as a logically interconnected system. The textbook drawing presents the uterus as a pregnancy machine, eerily similar to Duchamp's "Bachelor Apparatus" and "Bachelor Machine." With its arrows indicating the travel of sperm and eggs, this textbook image interprets for us the logic of machine drawings such as Picabia's, whose textbook-style "anti-drawings" could be said to symbolize a permeation of the most private realm of experience—one's sexuality—by a Nietzschean "logic of the same." The body, stripped of its specificity, is regarded as a machine, which exists in a world of standard parts, consistent function, and reliable productivity.

By representing the body as machine, Hesse draws upon what could be called an aesthetics of empiricism: a style that designates itself "styleless" and "objective," the recordings of a cold eye cast upon the subject. Her appropriation of this style reveals "scientific objectivity" and its claim of "stylelessness" to be in fact an aesthetic project: the body's interior is aestheticized by textbook diagrams which offer a very distinct visual interpretation of the interior. Hesse's machine drawings, therefore, are like the Dada wolf in sheep's clothing: they adopt the style of objective illustration—the biological or machine discourse—and invert its claims of clarity and universality by using it to depict "crazy forms," "real non-sense." Thus by using this technique to externalize images of her interior, Hesse can be understood as rejecting the possibility

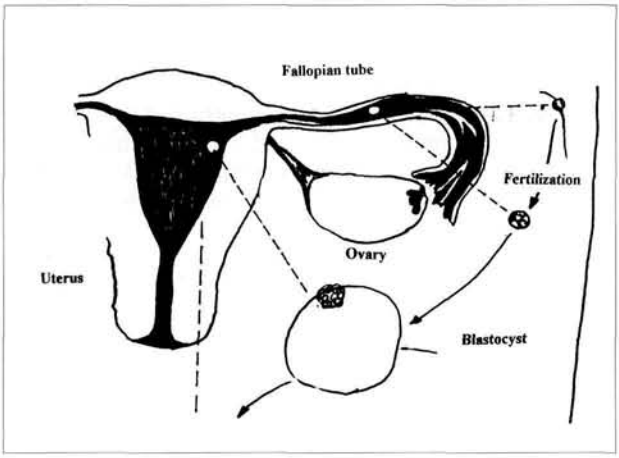


Fig. 8 Author's drawing "Implantation," after Laurence Crawley, *Reproduction, Sex, and Preparation for Marriage* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1964).

of a universalized, "ahistorical" interpretation of highly personal and specific bodily space. Hesse recasts the space of this body in terms of a lived ambivalence and confusion with regard to the roles of the reproductive and digestive organs. Taking over the textbook's aesthetic strategy and transforming shapes of organs such as the uterus and intestines into personally associative, symbolic constructions, Hesse's machine drawings disrupt the normalizing sameness of this "empirical" image-structure, turning this aesthetic toward interpretations that are either bizarre (Hesse's organs would be *malfunctioning* ones) or a set of personal symbols.

The machine drawings suggest musings on the female interior, and re-present this interior as an interpreted, discursive exteriority according to a new set of terms. Through rendering a sense of the invisible interior in visible form, Hesse performs a discursive breaking-down of the body's silent, sacrosanct, and opaque functional domains. She blurs familiar distinctions between inner and outer, art and functionality, artificial and biological. Hesse opens the body's interior, using artistic interpretation as a point of access rather than the formal discourse of biology. The visual model for the latter is that of the machine blueprint: in biology, the body's processes are presented as universal models and norms. The machine drawings give the body's silent interior over to the public domain, but in a way that is guided by Hesse's interpretation. The artist's interpretation is radically different from the usual public forums that claim women's interior spaces, subjecting them to law enforcement (the ultimate universalizing logic of the same) in debates about abortion, for example.

The process of self-objectification resulting from objectifying images and discourse imposed upon women by men and by women is the focus of Simone de Beauvoir's book *The Second Sex*. While in Germany, Hesse took this text extremely, reading it from cover to cover and proclaiming that she had found a "spokesman" in de Beauvoir. For several months in late 1964, Hesse's journals and letters intermingle descriptions of her machine drawings with the philosophy of de Beauvoir. Musings such as, "If crazy forms do them outright. Strong, clear. No more haze...Without trying I'll never know. Simone D.B. writes woman is object..."[27] indicate the intertwined significance of the drawings and ideas about objectification and female consciousness. At exactly the time she began making machine drawings and on the same day she finished *The Second Sex*, Hesse wrote to her friend, the artist Ethelyn Honig:

> I wonder if we are unique, I mean the minority we exemplify. The female struggle, not in generalities, but our specific struggles. To me [it is] insurmountable to achieve an ultimate expression, requires the complete dedication seemingly only man can attain. A singleness of purpose no obstructions allowed seems a man's prerogative, his domain. A woman is sidetracked by all her feminine roles from menstrual periods to cleaning house to remaining pretty and "young" and having babies.... She's at disadvantage from the beginning.... She also lacks conviction that she has the "right" to achievement ... that her achievements are worthy.... There are handfuls that succeeded, but less when one separates the women from the women that assumed the masculine role.[28]

I include this passage to show that Hesse took seriously the idea that her experience was unique as *women's* experience at the level of "specific struggles," and that she attached these struggles to sexual difference as it is manifested in three zones: having a body that menstruates and can have babies; the responsibility of domestic labor such as cleaning house; and the pressure to look "pretty and 'young'." Each of these three arenas is characterized by infinite repetition and the demand of continual attention

towards goals that have no "product" but find their ends in their process and in their constant undoing. The menstrual period recurs; the body must be made-up and dressed continually in the same way that the house perpetually slips into disorder. Significantly, Hesse's aim is not to retreat from these roles or deny sexual difference and "assume the masculine role," but to create her art from within this feminine sphere of experience, affirming difference and the contingent impositions of her sex rather than ascribing to a fiction of the universal masculine.

In conclusion, I would like to suggest that in their emphasis on breakdown and instability, Hesse's machine drawings articulate narratives that run through much of her later sculpture: a story of ambivalence and anxiety relating to the status and functioning of the body, and an ethos of undoing as an end or a goal in art rather than apotheosis or memorial. Hesse often used toxic or fragile materials to construct many of her sculptures in the late 1960s, making a great investment in impermanent materials. Her use of these materials, especially an unstable latex, was conscious and unresolved: "Art doesn't last; life doesn't last. It doesn't matter," Hesse said when asked in an interview shortly before her death about her "concern with the idea of lasting" in relation to her sculpture's fragility.[29]

There is a pattern of deterioration and mortality in Hesse's œuvre, much of which is today either destroyed or too fragile for museum exhibition. Her sculpture can be classified in distinct categories of instability. Her early sculpture, such as the German reliefs, in several cases involved homemade mechanical devices, and the surfaces were built of fragile quotidian materials that were not adequately supported and have not stood up well to decades of exposure. Other sculpture was destroyed at her request upon her premature death in 1970 (which can be seen as the act of editing her œuvre), but much sculpture had built-in weakness. The sculpture Hesse produced from 1968 to 1970 often inverted the industrial materials and methods of Minimalism through employing its formal motif of seriality in media that evoke flesh and viscous fluids. Some of these sculptures, in contradiction to their formal strength, were cast in an unstable latex and are not able to be displayed today. The most important thing was that this latex was the right material: thin, semi-opaque, and fleshlike, which Hesse believed was more important than the longevity of the work—that was "superfluous," in her words.[30] In the case of *Accession* (1967), viewers were invited to climb inside a perforated sheet-metal box threaded by the artist with 30,000 pieces of tubing, damaging it beyond repair. The pattern of breakdown and deterioration in Hesse's work was never discussed by the artist as conceptually important, but her investment in impermanent materials implies that she did not conceive the works as permanent, but rather as lasting according to a roughly human time-scale.

The theme of the relationship of art and life was prevalent in Hesse's work and writings while in Germany, and remained a prominent part of her rhetoric until her death. This relationship is a central concept with regard to her investment in the question of womanhood and the (conflicting) roles of "woman" and "artist." It is also central when considering the social identity of her works, which, as I have shown, the artist presented as having autobiographical significance. Ann Wagner points out that the idea of the unity of art and life was a familiar one, promoted by Warhol, and stated by Robert Rauschenberg who resolved to work "in the gap between art and life" and proposed by Oldenberg with his notion of art that "grows up not knowing it is art at all."[31] Hesse identified with these artists, who wanted to freshly embody the spirit of

Duchamp and the ethos of Dada in the 1950s and 1960s, rather than the Minimalists and post-Minimalists who were more correctly her peers according to chronology, contact, and formal concerns. The question of "art and life" for Hesse was perhaps first enacted as an autobiographical inversion of the "woman as machine" developed by Duchamp and Picabia—an act of exchanging an old cultural artifact for a new one, and preparing a useful canvas for the exploration of female subjectivity.

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1. I refer here to discussions on how Hesse's mature sculpture can be read in terms of conveying bodily (specifically "feminine") identity. See, for example, Anna C. Chave, "A Girl Being a Sculpture," essay in Helen Cooper, *Eva Hesse: A Retrospective*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 99-117.
2. Interview with Mel Bochner, *In the Lineage of Eva Hesse* (Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, 1994), 11.
3. Cindy Nemser, *Art Talk* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1975), 224.
4. According to Lucy Lippard, "Hesse's involvement with materials and their attributes has been overemphasized because of her public association with other artists," among them Serra, Sonnier, Andre, Smithson, and Ryman. Lucy Lippard, *Eva Hesse* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1992), 132-133.
5. Lippard, *Eva Hesse*,13.
6. Lippard, *Eva Hesse*, 32.
7. Lippard, *Eva Hesse*, 33.
8. Lippard, *Eva Hesse*, 34.
9. Lippard, *Eva Hesse*, 24.
10. There are a few drawings for which the artist used primary colors to outline forms, which gives the effect of a color-coded diagram.
11. Lippard, *Eva Hesse*, 35, 38.
12. The machine drawings were typically 19" x 25".
13. Lippard, *Eva Hesse*, 38.
14. Lippard, *Eva Hesse*, 46.
15. Jean Tinguely's *Homage to New York*, in which he constructed an auto-destructive machine (which ironically broke down before it could destroy itself properly), literalizes this Dadaist project in an extreme manner.
16. Jean Arp, *On my Way: Poetry and Essays , 1912-1947* (New York, 1948), 47-48.
17. Nemser, *Art Talk*, 208.
18. See William Rubin, *Dada, Surrealism and Their Heritage* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1968), 19-21, for an explication of the *Large Glass*, as well as a list of references to earlier analyses.
19. In the exhibition catalogue accompanying "Eva Hesse: A Retrospective of the Drawings," Ellen Johnson compares Hesse's machine drawings to Klapheck's painted forms, but does not mention that his machines are women. Johnson also compares Hesse's paintings to the drawings of Arshile Gorky: "Like Gorky's plows, Hesse's machines become body parts." Ellen Johnson, *Eva Hesse: A Retrospective of the Drawings* (Oberlin College, 1982) 17-18.
20. Marinetti wrote in the prelude to "Futurist Manifesto" (1909): "Fair factory drain! I gulped down your nourishing sludge; and I remembered the blessed black breast of my Sudanese nurse...." Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, eds. *Art in Theory: 1900-1990* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 146. The body as a circuit of machines incorporated in the matrix of production is developed in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, ch. 1 "The Desiring Machines," (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).

21. The work of Michel Carrouges, *Les machines Célibataires* (Paris: Arcanes, 1954) established the trope of the bachelor machine as a genre in literature and art, with examples ranging from Duchamp to Edgar Allan Poe. See Caroline Jones' discussion of Carrouges in Caroline Jones, *Painting Machines: Industrial Image and Process in Contemporary Art* (Boston: Boston University Art Gallery, 1997), 9-10; see also Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of Carrouges in *Anti-Oedipus*, 18.
22. This is one of Picabia's more abstract and loosely-sketched drawings, but was seminal for him, published first in Alfred Stieglitz's journal *291*(no. 4, June 1915) and lending its title to a project of poetry and drawing, *Poèms et dessins de la fille née sans mère* (Lausanne, 1918).
23. Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia quoted in William Rubin, *Dada and Surrealist Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, n.d.), 16.
24. Lippard, *Eva Hesse*, 44.
25. Lippard, *Eva Hesse*, 25.
26. Lippard, *Eva Hesse*, 24.
27. Quoted in Brigitte Reinhardt et al., *Eva Hesse: Drawings and Reliefs* (Ostfildern: Cantz Verlag, 1992), 111.
28. Lippard, *Eva Hesse*, 205.
29. Nemser, *Art Talk*, 218.
30. Nemser, *Art Talk*, 218.
31. Ann Middleton Wagner, "Another Hesse," in *Three Artists (Three Women): Modernism and the Art of Hesse, Krasner, and O'Keefe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 201.

Visible Roots and Visual Routes: Art, Africanisms, and the Sea Islands

Lisa Gail Collins

The search for the site of one's cultural origins or "roots" like the one documented by Alex Haley in his 1976 bestseller *Roots* has come under sharp criticism from contemporary thinkers who argue that the search for a fixed site of origin is, at best, romantic.[1] Cultural studies scholars such as Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, and Kobena Mercer insist that the inherently limiting search for "roots" must shift to a more enabling search for "routes," a search that can accommodate and reveal multiple origins, movement, change, and exchange.[2] Similarly in *Routes*, James Clifford calls for a more dynamic understanding of culture, one that sees culture as enmeshed in relations of transit and where "roots and routes" are understood as always already intertwined. "If we rethink culture and its science, anthropology, in terms of travel," he suggests, "then the organic, naturalizing bias of the term 'culture'—seen as a rooted body that grows, lives, dies, and so on—is questioned. Constructed and disputed *historicities*, sites of displacement, interference, and interaction, come more sharply into view."[3] Although the specific details of these scholars' insights are somewhat in conflict with each other, these theorists are aligned in both their skepticism of projects that seek *a* cultural past and their wariness of static conceptions of culture.[4]

Recognizing that much work by twentieth-century visual artists reflects, prefigures, and converses with these linked critical dialogues about the search for a past and the translation of culture, I want to examine how these dialogues are prodded and engaged in various artistic strategies and undertakings. My focus is site specific. I am concerned with twentieth-century visual endeavors that approach the people, land, and culture of the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands. By examining the work of photographers, illustrators, painters, and installation and mixed media artists that confronts life in the low country—the prime site for the study of African retentions in the United States for over a century—I hope to uncover predicaments of, and possibilities for, artistic strategies that visually theorize relationships between the African past, the present, and the future of Sea Islands life.

Due to the site and the interests of the artists, this essay uncovers links between art, anthropology, and history. Drawing from James Clifford's observation that "modern ethnographic histories" oscillate between two metanarratives, "one of loss, the other of invention," the bulk of this essay examines how these narratives are stressed and visually represented.[5] As I am also invested in exposing how female cultural workers are participating in this seemingly "manly" conversation about the search for cultural origins, I close with a discussion of three recent projects by contemporary African-American women artists that go looking for a useable past along the southern coast. Extending much of the previous published dialogue, their art proposes that the search for roots can also be a search for routes; that is, that journeys for knowledge of a cultural past can simultaneously expose the complexity of the past, illuminate the present, and provide valuable resources for the future.

The Sea Islands

Artists, historians, anthropologists, writers, linguists, and folklorists have long been fascinated with the Sea Islands. Due to their unique history, location, and topography, they are often understood as the place where Africa is most present and Africanisms most evident in the United States. Consisting of hundreds of barrier islands that hug the mainlands of South Carolina and Georgia, these islands range from the small and uninhabitable to Johns Island near Charleston which, at 100 square miles, is one of the largest islands in the country. Slavery began *en masse* on the islands when West Indian planters migrated with enslaved African people to the Carolina colony in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[6] Here a system of slavery was created to cultivate rice, indigo, and long-staple cotton. The system of slavery developed on the Sea Islands involved large plantations and huge amounts of human labor. This arrangement, coupled with the fact that white Carolinians often avoided the disease-riddled islands, meant that black people outnumbered whites in South Carolina by the early 1700s.[7]

Another key aspect of the region's history is that because of their isolation, enslaved Africans were illegally smuggled onto the Sea Islands as late as 1858. This illicit traffic meant that some people who had been born in Africa and forced here as children were still alive and able to share their memories in the 1930s, when members of the Georgia Writers' Project (WPA) sought out these survivors.

Continuity in working the land, navigating the water and, since the Civil War, owning the land also distinguishes life for African-Americans in the southern low country. Geographically vulnerable on the islands and frequently outnumbered by African people and their descendants, many white planters fled the invading Union Army and retreated to the interior of the coastal states during the Civil War. Seizing the opportunity provided by this moment of transition, black people began cultivating the land to serve their own interests. Although many white planters and their families returned after the war, a sizable number of black residents were able to retain ownership of the land.

All of these factors—the consistent presence of a black majority, the continual and extended importation of slaves directly from Africa, and the geographic isolation of the Sea Islands—enabled the creation of a distinct "Gullah" language and culture that contains, to use the language of anthropologist Melville Herskovits, many African "retentions," "reinterpretations," and "syncretisms." The word "Gullah" itself illustrates a central tension in the work of the many scholars of the region. Following in the tradition of Herskovits, some scholars have cited West African heritages for Sea Islands culture and thus have explained the word "Gullah" to be a derivation of the Gola People of the Windward Coast (which includes present day Sierra Leone). Other scholars have emphasized Central African influences for the culture and have argued that the word is an abbreviated form of Angola.[8] Most contemporary researchers, however, stress both West and Central African ties while also understanding this unique language and culture to be creolized, resulting from the intermixing of various African peoples, Native Americans, and Europeans during the long centuries of the Atlantic slave trade.

Visualizing Material Culture

Leigh Richmond Miner, a white Hampton Institute art instructor, was one of the first to attempt to visually document life on the Sea Islands. At the beginning of the

Fig. 1 Leigh Richmond Miner, *Alfred Graham*, 1909. Print made from original glass negative. Penn School Collection. Penn Center, Inc., St. Helena Island, S.C.

twentieth century, he witnessed the lives of St. Helena residents and students at the Penn School.[9] Founded on the South Carolina coast during the Civil War to prepare newly freed people for citizenship, Penn School shifted its emphasis from formal to vocational education around 1900 and graduates of Hampton Institute became the teaching base for the school. Curious about the place where his former students were teaching, Miner visited the campus in the early 1900s and again in the early 1920s with his camera in tow. His photographs from these trips focus on both the beauty of the island and the industriousness of its residents. As if responding to the continual

"concern" of skeptics that formerly enslaved African-Americans and their families might not be capable of sustained productive labor, Miner's photographs emphasize both the toil and dignity of agricultural and coastal laborers as well as the excitement and discipline of those who were acquiring a formal education.

Unequivocally portraying island residents and Penn students as capable and worthy of full citizenship and its benefits, the elegantly composed photographs also respectfully record an important African retention in material culture. In so doing, Miner's images reveal St. Helena's ties to Africa. At least five of his photographs depict aspects of basketmaking which, at the time of their taking, was commonly recognized as a carryover from the African coast.[10] As a wide and shallow basket known as a "fanner" was a necessary part of rice cultivation and common in rice producing regions of Africa, the creation of these baskets was a skill that had been encouraged in rice growing regions of the United States.[11] Introduced in the Carolina colony in the late seventeenth century, this craft had been passed on for over two centuries largely through men in the slave quarters. Although rice production had declined in the decades preceding the Civil War, the creation of sea-grass baskets had not only continued for domestic purposes but also expanded to include non-utilitarian or "show baskets."[12]

Recognizing the craft's African roots, functionality, beauty, and commercial potential, basketmaking was formally added to the Penn curriculum in 1904.[13] Miner's photograph of the first basketry instructor directly commemorates the craft and its survival as well as the artist and his student (Fig. 1). This 1909 picture of Alfred Graham, who was known to have learned his skill from an African born relative, teaching his trade to a young family member while his wife works behind them on their porch is emblematic of Miner's pictorial approach: the simultaneous depiction of cultural continuity and cultural change. Here a master craftsman both extends a cultural tradition and passes on a way of supplementing one's cash income, a necessity in the growing cash based economy. In his engaged photographs of people at work, Sea Islanders are shown as connected to a valuable African heritage and in part due to this rootedness, are capable of succeeding in rural but increasingly industrialized America.

Types and Loss

Rossa B. Cooley, the principal of the newly configured Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School, repeatedly used Miner's photograph of Alfred Graham in school literature, particularly in annual reports and brochures to sell baskets.[14] Savvy about the power of images to make certain appeals, she also invited an acclaimed German painter and graphic artist to visit the campus. Winold Reiss, principal illustrator of the 1925 special Harlem issue of *Survey Graphic* as well as the work that grew out of it, Alain Locke's *The New Negro*, arrived on St. Helena Island in October 1927 and stayed for ten days.[15] During his brief visit he worked on at least fourteen pastel portraits of students and other islanders. As Reiss was aware that his employer was interested in using his art to promote the school and gain "financial support from the northern social-reform audience," his colorful drawings can be interpreted as efforts to merge Principal Cooley's motives with his own artistic training and ideas.[16]

Although Reiss had most recently been involved with visual projects to render the mood and members of the New Negro Movement, his prior work had also consisted of attempts to document distinct rural peoples. Before landing in the U.S. in 1913, he had

spent time painting various European "folk groups," and upon crossing the Atlantic he had continued in this manner by creating portraits of indigenous people throughout the Americas.[17] Believing that ethnic traditions were eroding in Europe and America, the mobile artist had set out to record representative examples of what he considered to be vanishing folkways. This desire to visually affirm cultural bearers or types before what he saw as the impending loss of their culture characterizes his images from St. Helena.[18]

Approaching similar subject matter to Miner's photograph of Alfred Graham, one of Reiss's crayon portraits portrays a young boy starting a coiled sea-grass basket (Fig. 2). Like the majority of works in this series, which was titled *Sea Island Types* upon its 1928 publication in *Survey Graphic*, this portrait simultaneously honors cultural continuity and—departing from Miner's pictorial approach—hints at its future demise. While the boy is represented as actively pursuing a centuries-old cultural practice, his doleful, disinterested expression matched with his solitariness and lack of viable context suggests, like the crossed out address on the packing crate on which the young craftsman sits, an uncertain future.

Fig. 2 Winold Reiss, *Young Basketmaker*, 1927. Pastel on board. Fisk University Galleries, Nashville, Tenn.

Here, Reiss's use of portraiture, which usually attempts to honor and affirm the people who are placed within its conventions, works to connote a feeling of cultural fragility. Perhaps due to the youth of the subject and his sweet but defenseless countenance, the genre does not function in its typical manner as commemoration for posterity, but rather as documentation before the fall. The artist's portraits accompanied Rossa Cooley's 1928 series of *Survey Graphic* articles in which she elaborated on the shift from formal to vocational education at Penn in order to generate interest in the school and its educational philosophy. In this context, the pastel drawings can be understood as visually corroborating the text by providing images of curiously tender subjects poised for the interest and attention of the professional social welfare community.[19]

A similar visual project of using portraiture within a narrative of impending cultural loss is present in Doris Ulmann's photographic essay for *Roll, Jordan, Roll.* Begun two years after Reiss's visit to St. Helena and first published in 1933, this nonfiction work was a collaboration between Pulitzer Prize winning writer Julia Peterkin and the New York based photographer.[20] A collection of sketches about plantation life and the "folkways" of Sea Islanders accompanied by seventy-two of Ulmann's photographs, the book was based on observations of the 400 to 500 black Americans who lived and worked on Peterkin's coastal South Carolina plantation.[21]

Before collaborating with Peterkin, Ulmann had worked as a portrait photographer for the Manhattan elite.[22] In the late 1920s, however, she changed the focus of her work. Inspired by the renewed national interest in rural life, the byproduct of a period of forceful urban change, she went first to Appalachia and later to the Sea Islands in an attempt to document members of cultures she thought to be vanishing.[23] Like Winold Reiss, who immediately preceded her in visiting the Sea Islands, Ulmann sought to make "a record of certain human types that, she felt, portrayed a quality of life Americans were about to lose and forget."[24] Unlike Reiss, however, she was interested not only in documenting cultural "types," but also in expressing something of their relationship with their environment.

Believing that rural people were uniquely and admirably connected to the land, the photographer sought to reify this seemingly organic relationship in her work (Fig. 3). Due to her curiosity about low country culture, particularly her attraction to aspects of the culture that were most unlike her own, Ulmann's photographs reveal various customs and practices like basketmaking that can be linked to West and Central Africa such as river baptisms, grave decoration, and the carrying of heavy loads on top of the head. Yet because of her preoccupation with cultural demise, her portraits also exude a quiet sense of nostalgia and loss. Quite different from Miner's photographs that show the determination and ability of island residents to function in an increasingly industrialized rural environment, Ulmann's elegiac, Pictorialist-inspired, soft-focus photographs evoke a culture incapable and undesiring of change. Less interested in revealing a useable past than in portraying a soon to be past people, her romantic images often construct a people rooted to an idyllic agrarian past with no routes to the future.[25]

Brief examination of the artistic projects of Reiss and Ulmann makes clear that ideas about vanishing peoples and eroding cultures which had gained credibility in the late nineteenth century were revived in the 1920s and 1930s and both inspired and structured visual projects that approached life on the Sea Islands. Moreover, interest in the visual preservation of culture during this period was, as seen in the collaboration for *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, matched with an interest in textual preservation. Understanding their efforts in a similar manner to Reiss, Peterkin, and Ulmann, members of the Georgia

Fig. 3 Doris Ulmann, *Woman Near Fence*, 1929-30. Platinum print. Doris Ulmann Collection. Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations, N.Y.

Writers' Project devoted themselves to the gathering and recording of African retentions thought to be fast disappearing among residents of the Georgia coast. Under a controlling notion of imminent cultural loss, folktales, social customs, verbal expressions, foodways, and religious practices and beliefs, particularly regarding conjurors and conjuring, were all enthusiastically collected and transcribed by these WPA workers in the late 1930s. Material culture survivals that were believed to be becoming extinct were also documented. Basketmaking, woodcarving, weaving, drummaking, housebuilding, and grave ornamentation were all mentioned by Sea Islands informants.

Drums and Shadows: Survival Studies Among the Georgia Coastal Negroes, the book which grew out of the WPA writers' fieldwork, contained a narrative of inevitable cultural loss.[26] But this book's 1940 publication also marked a significant shift in the understanding of Sea Islands culture. By providing extensive footnotes in which the ideas and practices of interviewees were linked to traditions in West Africa, Haiti, Jamaica, and Surinam, the collection directly challenged prior scholarship in which the alleged loss of African culture due to the trauma of the Middle Passage and the U.S. system of slavery had been emphasized. By focusing on African retentions, which can be seen as indices of cultural tenacity, *Drums and Shadows* served as an intervention in dominant discourses of inevitable cultural loss. Yet the volume undercut this bold theme by dismissing the possibility that these roots or connections with an African past were capable of serving as routes to the future. In her introduction, project supervisor Mary Granger suggested that the culture of her informants was rapidly "vanishing" due to an increased "field of opportunity."[27]

Likewise Guy B. Johnson, an academic consultant to the project, wrote in his forward that African survivals would disappear once Sea Islanders had more access to the dominant culture because of "the overwhelming tendency of the culture of the white man to displace the Negro's African culture."[28] Revealing a central tension of the project, *Drums and Shadows* simultaneously marked a radical departure from prior work by exposing evidence of African cultural vitality and remained within an established paradigm by predicting its future demise. Anthropologist Renato Rosaldo offers the term "salvage ethnography" to explain projects whose aim is to "record the precious culture before it disappears forever."[29] This concept helps to categorize pre-1940s visual projects, both European-centered and African-centered, that approached Sea Islands life. Linking many of these creative endeavors was a veneration and documentation of "folk culture" and "folk types" at the same time that the persistence of a distinct and evolving culture was disavowed and disallowed.

Herskovits and Post-Herskovits Visual Art

Although he was also a consultant to *Drums and Shadows*, Melville Herskovits understood cultural survivals somewhat differently from his colleagues and, in this way, he helped usher in a new wave of visual projects. In 1941 in *The Myth of the Negro Past*, Herskovits posited that there were distinctive and resilient "Afroamerican" cultures in the New World and that they included many African carryovers.[30] Drawing from field research in West Africa, South America, the West Indies, and the United States, he insisted that European culture was not almighty and capable of erasing or displacing all aspects of African culture. Instead, he argued, contact between peoples led to new cultural forms—or reinterpretations of pre-established ones—that incorporated aspects of the new culture while retaining aspects of the old.

Whereas a sense of urgency due to a belief that the "endangered" culture needed rapid documentation before extinction permeated previous art, research, and writings, this particular anxiety did not drive Herskovits. He understood Afroamerican cultures as tenacious, innovative, and always in the making. Thus concepts such as extinction and erasure were not central to his understanding of cultural contact and change. Indeed, such notions were replaced by addition, synthesis, and transformation in his thought. Having conducted his fieldwork largely outside U.S. borders, Herskovits lamented the dearth of "ethnohistorical" work on African survivals in the States and called for extensive "Afroamericanist" field research, particularly in the Sea Islands. To encourage this work, he provided a cursory yet suggestive list of African retentions to be found in the region. They included language patterns, religious practices, cooperative societies, agricultural techniques, basketry, naming rituals, hairwrapping, kinship systems, and burial practices.

Now pressed to witness cultural dynamism and freed from the patronizing sense of nostalgia that had framed earlier projects, many artists and fieldworkers would follow the anthropologist's spirited directives for further study. By stressing that cultural contact and change did not necessarily mean cultural doom and by asserting the power, resiliency, and additive nature of African and African-influenced cultures, Herskovits's writings worked to shift the focus for those trying to understand black cultures from a preoccupation with demise to an interest in studying how aspects of African cultures survive, thrive, and influence other cultures in the New World.

One artist who quickly responded to this shift was Eldzier Cortor. Upon hearing about the new research taking place on southern black culture from fellow WPA worker Horace Cayton, Cortor applied for grant money so that he could participate in this work.[31] After being awarded research funds from the Julius Rosenwald Foundation, the Chicago based painter and printmaker traveled to St. Helena in 1944 and became perhaps the first formally trained African-American visual artist to travel to the Sea Islands for creative inspiration. Like previous artists who had visited the low country in the inter-war years, Cortor brought with him a desire to observe and represent a distinct "type." In his statement to the Rosenwald Foundation he wrote of his interest in painting "Negro racial types."[32] Yet stimulated by the innovative shift in research and supported by black intellectuals and artistic activists attuned to this work such as Howard University professors Alain Locke and James Herring, Cortor created a group of paintings that were vastly unlike prior visual projects that had utilized the Sea Islands as subject matter.[33]

Cortor's paintings over the next couple of years were artistic departures in both content and form. Frequently consisting of black female nudes, his work broke a visual taboo among American artists by confidently representing the unclothed black female body. Furthermore, he abandoned the mode of earlier visual projects that had emphasized either socially engaged realism or nostalgic regionalism by incorporating aspects of surrealism and the study of folkways into his work. The paintings in Cortor's series include dense dreamscapes inhabited by black female figures. In *Sea of Time* (Fig. 4), a 1945 work, a solitary semi-nude woman stands in front of an open window. Her face with its high cheekbones, arched eyebrows, and elegant symmetry looks more like an African mask than the face of a woman who inhabits this world.[34] Adding to this feeling of otherworldliness, the space behind the woman is hazily atmospheric. A torn newspaper and seashell are positioned on the window ledge in front of the woman and

Fig. 4 Eldzier Cortor, *Sea of Time*, 1945. Oil on canvas. © Eldzier Cortor, Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, New York.

a small bird flutters directly above her head. The bird appears to be recently untangled from the frail net that strains to cover the window.

Perhaps because Cortor was interested in the Herskovits-influenced research that was appearing while he painted, three of the recognizable objects in the picture can be associated with the influence of African beliefs. Robert Farris Thompson has observed

bird imagery employed in visual testaments to Osanyin, the Yoruba *orisha* (or deity) of herbal medicine, in various parts of the New World. In particular, the bird is often equated by initiates with the head "as the seat of power and personal destiny" and serves as a visual metaphor for the "mind of the healer."[35] Similarly, both newspapers and shells have been found to aid in communication with the influential spirits of the deceased among some low country residents. Placed on graves, shells both symbolize the sea and are thought to enclose the soul.[36] Likewise, torn and jumbled newspaper pieces are thought to deter harmful spirits by distracting them and, in this way, keeping one from harm.[37] This idea of a potentially threatening and lingering spirit in need of appeasement can be understood as a retention of a common West and Central African belief.[38]

Inspired by surrealism's attention to dreams, nature, and sensuality as well as the unprecedented research on the culture of the Sea Islands, Cortor's series, like Herskovits's research, challenged past conventions by widening the spectrum of possible influences and exchanges. His gorgeous and haunting nudes directly confronted previous realist tendencies by shifting the focus from the documentation of a people to an evocation of a creolized culture. Of his interest in expressing not only images of Sea Islands people but also aspects of their distinct culture, Cortor wrote: "Since I think some assimilation of their background and mode of living would add not only to the authenticity of the paintings but also to their intrinsic value, I should like to paint these pictures while living among the Gullahs."[39]

After Cortor's series of the mid-1940s, both scholarly work and visual projects on Sea Islands culture plummeted. Perhaps the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and early 1960s with its emphasis on equality and inclusion somewhat discouraged research on Africanisms in the United States. Although the Penn campus was a frequent strategizing site for civil rights activists, it was not until the late 1960s and 1970s during the Black Power and Black Arts Movement and their aftermath that artists and other researchers returned to Herskovits's directives.

When researchers did return to the topic, they altered some of the basic premises of the earlier research. In 1979, for example, Winifred Vass posited the thesis of a Bantu (Central African) cultural origin for many black Americans and thus threw into question previous assumptions of West African origins found in the work of W.E.B. DuBois and Melville Herskovits.[40] Furthermore, although few in this new group of scholars believed in the inevitable disappearance of Sea Islands culture, many did feel it was increasingly threatened by forced outmigration. After witnessing the development of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina in the 1950s and the frenzied land speculation, tax hikes, and displacement of the largely black population that went with it, a renewed sense of anxiousness governed some Sea Islands projects. One project that reflects this urgency as well as its contradictions is Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe's photographic essay of the late 1970s.

While vacationing in Charleston with her husband, tennis star Arthur Ashe, in 1977, Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe visited the South Carolina coast and quickly committed herself to returning to photograph Daufuskie Island. The three-by-nine mile island that was inhabited by about eighty-four permanent residents had recently been targeted for a development project similar to that which had occurred on nearby Hilton Head.[41] Residents of Daufuskie were ambivalent about the project. On the one hand, they wanted access to jobs and basic services that they thought the project would make available to them. On the other hand, they wanted their island to remain familiar and

they wanted to be able to rely on the land and water for sustenance. One islander put the dilemma this way: "I tell you, it's like this. Some things around here need to be changed, but others don't."[42]

During this period of likely social, cultural, and economic change Moutoussamy-Ashe, a New York based photojournalist, compiled sixty-eight of her photographs of life on Daufuskie into a book named after the island. *Roots* author Alex Haley wrote the foreword. Interestingly, although the islanders were torn about the future of their home, Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe in her preface confidently stated that the planned development was wrong and that the island should be preserved in its present state. Largely understanding the islanders' way of life as something that was endangered, she embarked on a photographic project of cultural conservation.

Inspired in a manner similar to Doris Ulmann fifty years earlier, the artist wielded her camera as a vehicle with which to document a precious and eroding culture. In this way, Moutoussamy-Ashe, like Ulmann and the Georgia Writers' Project before her, acted upon the assumption of a vanishing culture in need of preservation for posterity. Her sense of urgency in documenting Sea Islands culture before its seemingly inevitable demise pressed her to rationalize the imposition of her project. For although the residents of Daufuskie were often pained and uncomfortable because of her picture taking—believing that the camera was taking something from them—the young photographer confidently countered that they would eventually realize the importance of her work. Of this predicament, she wrote:

> They felt that every time I clicked my shutter I was taking something away from them. Even as they came to accept my cameras there were still feelings of resentment when photographing things, that to them, were very sacred—like funerals and photographing the dead. . . . But in the midst of their defense there was an underlying trust that what I was taking away from them through my lens be something that they would get back almost like an investment. . . . I tried with every visit to convince them that what I was doing was an act of preservation. They always responded with "Why? Why us, why this island?" Well, I hope that with the collection of these images, they will understand, that in the long run it was worth their submission before my lens.[43]

In the discussion of her encouragement of Daufuskie residents to submit to the gaze of her camera, it seems clear that Moutoussamy-Ashe knew that her project was a troubled one, a project that only made sense because the situation was thought to be desperate and thus warranted a desperate act. However in countering the larger violence of development with the smaller violence of submission to her camera, she used her position behind the camera to discount the words and wisdom of island residents. And in this way the threat to a passing culture appeared to become more important than the living people who continued to shape it.

Moutoussamy-Ashe's description of her "salvage ethnography" project emphasizes preservation, conservation, and anxiousness about recording "the old Sea Island life." Her photographic essay, however, belies these concerns and reveals members of a southern coastal community creating and participating in a culture that ingeniously blends the island and the mainland, economic lack and resiliency, the structures of the enslaved past and blueprints for the future. For example, *Daufuskie Island* includes black-and-white photographs of an old prayer house—a type of building also known as a "praise house"—and a contemporary nursery school where a small child naps beneath both a poster laden with numbers and their African translations and play appliances with their appropriate names in English.[44]

Fig. 5 Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe. *The Waving Girl*, 1979. Gelatin silver print. Leica Gallery, N.Y.

In contrast to Doris Ulmann who labored to construct representations of a closed and idyllic rural life, Moutoussamy-Ashe allowed the complexities of daily life on the Sea Islands into her viewfinder. Focusing on movement to and from the island, the third section of her essay exposes how many young and middle-aged residents must leave the island daily to attend school and find livable wages in nearby Savannah, Georgia. *The Waving Girl* (Fig. 5), a photograph of the ferry that transports people to and from the city, reminds viewers that Daufuskie is not a closed community entirely separate from the mainland. Moreover, this critical reminder opens up the possibility of thinking about Sea Islands culture as being continually shaped by economic forces and as influencing the people and places that its members come in contact with off the island.

Another image that departs from previous projects like Reiss's or Ulmann's of depicting "representative island types" and that also exposes Moutoussamy-Ashe's interest in revealing the socio-economic and cultural contexts of her subjects is *Miss Mary in Her Kitchen* (Fig. 6). Included in the first part of *Daufuskie Island* which centers on the daily routines of women, this photograph of a woman in her kitchen poised to

Fig. 6 Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe. *Miss Mary in Her Kitchen*, 1979. Gelatin silver print. Leica Gallery, N.Y.

eat a meal counters the recurrent desire to view the people of the Sea Islands as fragile members of a "living museum." Clearly waiting for the photographer to leave so that she can lift the plates and bowls that are strategically positioned to keep her meal hot, this woman's patience and steady confrontation with the viewer do not work to evoke a sense of finality; instead, they suggest both a past and a future of adaptation to the challenges of Sea Islands life. Despite that it was articulated as an "act of preservation," Moutoussamy-Ashe's photographs lay bare strategies of persistence, exchange, and continuity.[45]

A decade after Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe published *Daufuskie Island* with its documentary style and concentration on island residents and their lives, photographer Carrie Mae Weems, who was familiar with the 1982 book, tried a vastly different strategy to depict Sea Islands culture.[46] Trained in folklore and well-versed in the literature on Africanisms, Weems shifted from a focus on people to a focus on how place and objects articulate worldview. In her 1991-92 series based on the Sea Islands, she sought to express "how a culture lays out a belief system materially."[47] To do this, she chronicled African material and nonmaterial survivals and transformations through a combination of landscape photographs, ceramic dinner plates, and text brimming with wisdom, legend, and myth.

Yet before the artist allowed viewers to engage with the various media that depict and suggest manifestations of African and black diasporic worldviews such as images of shiny hubcaps in yards to thwart evil and burial grounds where the influential dead are placated by the placement of key objects on their graves, Weems pressed viewers to contemplate the history of slavery and the role of its legacy in shaping Sea Islands culture. To do this, she positioned at the start of her series three of the photographs of enslaved Africans taken on a South Carolina plantation for Louis Agassiz's study of

African anatomical difference. Reworked and repositioned as a triptych, these images served both to remind us of the context for African retentions in the United States and to enable the people who were forced to pose for these photographs to symbolically witness survivals of their African heritage.

Many of the images and text in the "Sea Islands Series" document folkloric, linguistic, and material retentions; some also point to reasons for their existence. Emblazoned with the phrase "Went Looking For Africa," one cream colored plate recalls the history of the last slave ship to bring enslaved Africans onto U.S. soil (Fig. 7). The response "and found the Wanderer" reminds us that fifty years after Congress had banned their importation, the slave ship "Wanderer" used the isolation of the Sea Islands to bring 409 African people onto the lush beach of Jekyll Island, Georgia in 1858.[48] By using a plate to relay this story, Weems links the story of forced migration to a powerful carryover from Central Africa, for plates and other dishes, often broken and shiny, have been repeatedly found at burial sites throughout the black Atlantic world as "material messages of the living intended to placate the potential fury of the deceased."[49]

Weems's series not only visualizes material culture and exposes its roots, it also recuperates visual legends. Consisting of two black and white prints joined by a text panel, the triptych *Ebo Landing* (Fig. 8) uses landscape and lore to encourage viewers to

Fig. 7 Carrie Mae Weems, *Went Looking for Africa*, 1992. Ceramic plate. P.P.O.W. Gallery, New York.

Fig. 8 Carrie Mae Weems, *Ebo Landing*, 1992. Two silver prints, one text panel. P.P.O.W. Gallery, New York.

reflect upon the silences, absences, and erasures evoked by the haunting images and prose. The text tells the story of enslaved Ibo (or Ebo) men who were brought to St. Simons Island, Georgia, across the sound from Jekyll Island, and upon recognizing their fate as slaves, turned back toward the water and drowned. This story, however, has at least two endings. The oral histories in *Drums and Shadows* reveal recurrent stories

both of Africans who drowned rather than submit to slavery in the U.S. and of flying Africans who disappeared. Thus while most low country informants told the more somber story, others shared stories of Africans who had gallantly and spectacularly returned to their homeland. For example, eighty-seven-year-old Jonah who had been born on a coastal plantation told this story to a WPA writer: "Wen dey let um out an dey see dey wuzn in Africa, dey jis take wing an fly back home."[50] Devoid of people and dense with nature, Weems's somber and majestic landscape photographs enable imagination and provide a space for disjunctive understandings of this necessary legend. Juxtaposing multiple media and various forms of knowledge, the "Sea Islands Series" examines how the past is rooted in the material and nonmaterial culture of the present. By "looking for Africa" in the coastal South, Weems's work evokes the complexity of a cultural past and its continuing adaptation.

Structures of Strength

In discussing the repatriation of Native American art and objects from national museums to tribal institutions, James Clifford notes that in some cases "master narratives of cultural disappearance and salvage" were able to be "replaced by stories of revival, remembrance, and struggle."[51] Perhaps in a manner similar to the attempts of Northwest coast tribal museums to shift the framing context for cultural displays from one of doom to one of strength and resistance, contemporary African-American women artists such as Carrie Mae Weems, Beverly Buchanan, and Martha Jackson-Jarvis explore the past of the southern coast in order to illuminate the vitality of the present and to suggest routes for the future.

One artist who seeks a useable past in the low country is the versatile artist Beverly Buchanan. Raised on the campus of South Carolina State College where her father was Dean of Agriculture, Buchanan remembers traveling with him on his advisory visits with sharecroppers and tenant farmers throughout the state. Prior to the birth of their daughter, Professor Buchanan and his wife had recorded their visits with struggling rural residents through a series of documentary images. These late 1920s photographs of agricultural workers and their often substandard housing prefigured both similar WPA projects and their not yet born daughter's interest in these structures and their inhabitants.[52]

When Buchanan returned to the South in 1977 after a decade in New York City, she revisited the rural homes she had visited as a young girl and was compelled to express something of the lives of their inhabitants. By the late 1980s, she was creating drawings, paintings, and architectural constructions as part of what she calls her "Shacks" series. Departing from the documentary strategy used by her parents to record living conditions, Buchanan sought to evoke a part of the history and culture of a place and its residents through their absence. Using rural vernacular architecture as subject matter, she concentrated on suggesting the lives of people through their structures. About this desire to use images of dwellings as portraits of people, she states: "I'm interested in their shapes and how they're made and how they reflect the people who built them. I consider my shacks portraits. It's the spirit that comes through the forms."[53]

Impressed by those who have built their own homes and barns with scant economic resources, her works visually affirm the creativity and ingenuity of this labor. *St. Simons* (Fig. 9), a 1989 pastel drawing, depicts two structures randomly yet confidently positioned in the midst of a vibrant green field. Perhaps echoing the tendency—or illustrating the extension of the practice—of enslaved people when given the choice

to position their cabins "at odd, irregular angles to one another," the dwellings are informally linked.[54] Replete with bright colors and a purple path leading up to a house, the work exudes warmth and vitality. Connection to the past is also alluded to as Buchanan's visual preoccupation with red, pink, and purple serves to recall the tender creation of flower gardens by enslaved people and their descendants in their relentless pursuit of beauty despite poverty.[55]

Buchanan's choice of St. Simons Island, Georgia for her affirmation of vernacular architecture is strategic. Blatant struggles among planters and enslaved African people over architecture took place near this site. Members of the Georgia Writers' Project interviewed an eighty-eight-year-old former slave named Ben Sullivan on St. Simons in the 1930s. He remembered how Okra, an African born slave, had made a "territorial claim" by building an African style home on the grounds of a plantation near the island.[56] Recalling the momentous event, Mr. Sullivan told the WPA workers:

> Ole man Okra he say he wahn a place lak he hab in Africa so he buil im a hut. I membuh it well. It wuz bout twelve by foeteen feet an it hab dut flo an he buil duh side lak basket weave wid clay plastuh on it. It hab a flat roof wut he make frum bush an palmettuh an it hab one doe an no winduhs. But Massuh make im pull it down. He say he ain wahn no African hut on he place.[57]

Although Sullivan's recollection was that the plantation owner quickly called for the destruction of Okra's small, windowless, dirt floor house, his memory both serves as a stark reminder that enslaved people struggled to retain aspects of their material

Fig. 9 Beverly Buchanan, *St. Simons*, 1989. Oil pastel on paper. Bernice Steinbaum Gallery, Miami , Fla.

culture in the United States and that physical structures can help illuminate a people's history and culture. Beverly Buchanan's ode to the architecture of the southern coast as well as the labor, influence, and creativity behind it serves to narrate low country history and expose valuable resources of ingenuity and aesthetics. Employing images of dwellings as portraits of people, Buchanan's "Shacks" route the past to the present by encouraging reflection on material culture and its possibilities in contemporary historical reconstructions.

Also utilizing structures to suggest cultural history and resources is Virginia-born ceramicist and installation artist Martha Jackson-Jarvis. Unlike Buchanan who works with vernacular architecture to reveal a legacy of hardship and creativity and Weems who turns toward folklore and material objects to illuminate a present cultural past, Jackson-Jarvis employs symbols and materials to assert and revive aspects of Sea Islands history and culture. Like her contemporaries, however, she too is a visual participant in Herskovits-influenced scholarship. In *Rice, Rattlesnakes, and Rainwater* (Fig. 10), a site-specific installation for the 1997 Spoleto Festival in Charleston, the artist drew inspiration from the natural and cultural history of the South Carolina coast.[58] Installed on the lawn of St. Luke's Reformed Episcopal Church, a 110-year-old church in a largely black and working-class section of Charleston, the "sculptural garden" suggests low country history through visual metaphors and materials.

Composed of a cross shaped walk flagged by two houses meant to evoke slave dwellings and four rain barrels, the entire garden is surrounded by a wrought iron fence which bears emblems of West African deities.[59] Offering reasons why there has been a substantial retention of African culture on the Sea Islands, images of rice plants and mosquitoes abound. Encrusted on the houses the rice plants allude to the fact that

Fig. 10 Martha Jackson-Jarvis, *Rice, Rattlesnakes, and Rainwater*, 1997. Installation on side lawn of St. Lukes Reformed Episcopal Church, Charleston, S.C.

because rice planters actively sought slaves with knowledge of rice cultivation, there was a demand for Africans from a specific area in the 1700s, namely, the Windward Coast.[60] Coupled with these symbols of enslaved labor are images of mosquitoes which suggest that one of the reasons why a "black majority" was created in South Carolina during slavery was because malaria, a sickness caused by infectious mosquitoes which European-Americans were particularly prone to, kept many white Americans from the Sea Islands.[61] Through its use of these recognizable images, the installation sets the context for the survival of African practices and worldviews.

Similarly, large fish embedded on the structures and rattlesnakes sunken into the walkway are also recurrent motifs in the garden, evoking the reliance on water for sustenance, as well as the terrors of the marshy landscape.[62] Perhaps more important than the images the artist uses to recall the natural and cultural history of the low country are the materials she employs for her creation. Interested in working with what she calls "the broken element" in order to create something dynamic and new, Jackson-Jarvis melds pottery shards, broken glass, and shells for her colorful mosaic construction.[63] This practice both upholds and extends a tradition of recycling and reuse that have by necessity been a creative living strategy practiced by the region's residents.

Furthermore, to hold together the fragments, Jackson-Jarvis incorporates a site-specific building technique. By using a combination of coastal materials such as sand and shells and mixing them with concrete, she reinvigorates the practice of tabby construction unique to the region. This form of crushed oyster shell concrete was used as a building material by islanders during and after slavery, including in the construction of homes built by the newly freed on Daufuskie Island and the building that housed basketmaking at Penn School on St. Helena.[64] Through its use of this technique, *Rice, Rattlesnakes, and Rainwater* dynamically encourages knowledge of a cultural past and shares a strategy of reuse for the future. Interested in conveying "new ways of seeing and perceiving the environment in which we live," the artist reworks symbols and materials from the low country past to create mosaics for a vibrant future.[65]

Jackson-Jarvis's sculptural garden is a recent addition to a site-specific body of visual art that spans a century. As these artistic undertakings demonstrate, twentieth-century visual projects that approach the people, land, and culture of the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands are in conversation with critical dialogues about the search for the past and the translation of culture. Implicitly or explicitly these projects visually theorize relationships between the past, present, and future of Sea Islands life.

Although these works reveal narratives of both extinction and survival, most earlier projects emphasized the former. Many attempted to depict examples of what Raymond Williams has called "residual" cultures, in other words, elements of "a previous social formation" that are not part of "the effective dominant culture."[66] As most artists understood this "residue" as passive or merely "alternative," but not as active and "oppositional," much Sea Islands-influenced work exudes nostalgia and loss. Typically these works tended to block the agency of island residents and deny the possibility of sustained and transformative cultural vitality by making visual claims about the inevitable disappearance of the region's culture.

Emboldened by Herskovits's theories of cultural contact and change as well as their sophisticated elaboration by his followers but also extending a visual tradition that was present as early as 1909 in the photographs of Leigh Richmond Miner, many contemporary artists emphasize the survival and transformation of African influences in the low country. Their work suggests that within the "residue" lies a vibrant and

"oppositional" culture as well as elements of an "emergent" one.[67] In their visible affirmation of cultural tenacity and their visual revival of cultural resources, artists such as Beverly Buchanan, Carrie Mae Weems, and Martha Jackson-Jarvis creatively reveal that the search for a cultural past can make visible routes to the future. Although these artists go looking for a past and evidence of African origins in a manner that is frequently met with doubt in dominant critical circles, their work challenges skeptics by suggesting that the search for roots can simultaneously be a search for routes, and that the journey for evidence of a cultural past can expose the complexity of the past, illuminate oppositional meanings and values, and offer resources for the future.

Struggle on the Sea Islands continues. Conflicts over land ownership and use have become increasingly tense as residents are forced off land where their families have worked and lived since slavery in order to make room for condominiums, resorts, golf courses, and private gated communities. Hopefully this recent art will serve as visual inspiration for the struggles for community-determination on the charged islands off the South Carolina and Georgia coast.

University of Minnesota

Lisa Gail Collins is currently an Assistant Professor in the Art Department and Africana Studies Department at Vassar College.

1. Alex Haley, *Roots* (New York: Doubleday, 1976).
2. Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation," in *Black British Cultural Studies: A Reader*, eds. Houston A. Baker, Jr., Manthia Diawara, and Ruth H. Lindeborg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 212-213. Paul Gilroy, "It's a Family Affair: Black Culture and the Trope of Kinship," chap. in *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1993), 193. Kobena Mercer, "Back to My Routes: A Postscript on the 80s," *Ten.8* 2:3 (Spring 1992): 38-39.
3. James Clifford, "Traveling Cultures," chap. in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 25.
4. The conflict centers on the appropriate response to essentialist claims. Whereas Kobena Mercer privileges a rigorous anti-essentialist stance, Paul Gilroy and James Clifford advocate what Gilroy calls an "anti-anti-essentialism" in which "race" is seen as constructed yet the concept is retained due to its past and present material effects on people's lives. In his discussion of the importance of retaining this knowledge of constructedness and materiality, James Clifford writes, "Does inauthenticity now function, in certain circles at least, as a new kind of authenticity? And having knocked certain purist assumptions off center, isn't it time to sidestep the reverse binary position of a prescriptive anti-essentialism? Struggles for integrity and power within and against globalizing systems need to deploy *both* tradition and modernity, authenticity and hybridity—in complex counterpoints." Clifford, "Paradise," chap. in *Routes*, 178. For Gilroy's concept of "anti-anti-essentialism," see Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 178. For insight into the dialogue between Mercer and Gilroy regarding essentialism and anti-essentialism, see Mercer's "Black Art and the Burden of Representation," in *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 236-239 and Gilroy's *Black Atlantic*, 100-102.
5. James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 17.
6. For useful introductions to the history of the Sea Islands, see Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina From 1670 Through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Knopf, 1974; reprint, New York: Norton, 1996) and Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984).
7. Wood, *Black Majority*, 36.
8. Wood, *Black Majority*, 172.

9. Edith M. Dabbs, *Face of an Island: Leigh Richmond Miner's Photographs of Saint Helena Island* (Columbia, SC: R.L. Bryan Company, 1970), 11.

10. Dale Rosengarten, *Row Upon Row: Sea Grass Baskets of the South Carolina Lowcountry* (Columbia: McKissick Museum, 1986; reprint, 1994), 30.

11. Rosengarten, *Row Upon Row*, 9.

12. Today coiled sea-grass baskets are sold by craftswomen on major roads throughout the low country and can be viewed at roadside stands, in homes, and in the streets of Charleston as well as at prominent galleries and museums. Although African and African-American men passed the skill among themselves for centuries, African-American women have been at the forefront of mid-to-late twentieth-century low country basketmaking, albeit frequently with the aid of male family members and neighbors.

13. Rosengarten, *Row Upon Row*, 28.

14. Rosengarten, *Row Upon Row*, 28-29.

15. Jeffrey C. Stewart, *To Color America: Portraits by Winold Reiss* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 81.

16. Stewart, *To Color America*, 81.

17. Romare Bearden and Harry Henderson, *A History of African-American Artists From 1792 to the Present* (New York: Pantheon, 1993), 128.

18. As Reiss participated in both the urban centered New Negro Movement and the rural oriented preoccupation with folkways and folk arts in the 1920s, Eugene Metcalf's crucial linkage of the two trends as providing "strategies of coping with the uncertainties of a culture in transition" seems particularly apt. He writes, "The romanticized image of Africa developed by the Harlem promoters served the same escapist purposes as the vision of a simpler, more virtuous preindustrial America in which the critics located the production of the nation's folk art." Eugene W. Metcalf, "Black Art, Folk Art, and Social Control," *Winterthur Portfolio* 18:4 (Winter 1983): 277-278.

19. See Rossa B. Cooley's four-part series in issues 59:7, 59:9, 60:5, 60:9 of *Survey Graphic* (1928). These articles were also incorporated into her book *School Acres: An Adventure in Rural Education* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930).

20. Julia Peterkin, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, with photographs by Doris Ulmann (New York: Robert O. Ballou, 1933). In her article, Michelle Lamuniére notes that the idea for the project originally came from Ulmann, although Peterkin eventually became more associated with it. Michelle C. Lamuniére, "*Roll, Jordan, Roll* and the Gullah Photographs of Doris Ulmann," *History of Photography* 21:4 (Winter 1997): 300.

21. The irony of a plantation mistress and her guest attempting to preserve the folklife of the people who were providing their labor and enabling their studies was not missed by all. Harold Preece, a white leftist southerner and folklore scholar noted, "We have lost sight of the rather elementary fact that those who profit from Negro primitivism have an obvious interest in preserving that primitivism. Thus, Miss Peterkin sits on the front porch of her South Carolina manor and concocts 'Roll, Jordan, Roll.' It must be a pleasant situation for any author to be supported economically by the same group from which she draws material." Harold Preece, "The Negro Folk Cult," *Crisis* 43:12 (December 1936): 364. See also "The Big House Interprets the Cabin," review of *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, by Julia Peterkin and Doris Ulmann, in *Crisis* 41:2 (February 1934): 37-38.

22. Although most of her Manhattan subjects were leading white physicians, journalists, and artists, Doris Ulmann (like Winold Reiss) also photographed "prominent members of the Harlem Renaissance." See Judith Keller, *In Focus: Doris Ulmann* (Malibu: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1996), 20.

23. William Clift in Doris Ulmann, *The Darkness and the Light* (New York: Aperture, 1974), 8.

24. Clift in Ulmann, *The Darkness and the Light*, 8.

25. James Clifford sees this pattern as recurrent. He writes, "Something similar occurs whenever marginal peoples come into a historical or ethnographic space that has been defined by the Western imagination. 'Entering the modern world,' their distinct histories quickly vanish. Swept up in a destiny dominated by the capitalist West . . . these suddenly 'backward' peoples no longer invent local futures. What is different

about them remains tied to traditional pasts, inherited structures that either resist or yield to the new but cannot produce it." Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, 5.

26. Work Projects Administration, Georgia Writers' Project, Savannah Unit, *Drums and Shadows: Survival Studies Among the Georgia Coastal Negroes* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1940; reprint, 1986).
27. Georgia Writers' Project, *Drums and Shadows*, xliv.
28. Georgia Writers' Project, *Drums and Shadows*, xxxv.
29. Renato Rosaldo, "Imperialist Nostalgia," chap. in *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989; reprint, 1993), 81.
30. Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (1941; reprint, Boston: Beacon Press, 1990).
31. Bearden and Henderson, *A History of African-American Artists*, 275. Although known primarily as a sociologist, Horace Cayton, as part of his work for the WPA, directed a project that created "the first bibliographical index to literature on the work of African-American artists."
32. Eldzier Cortor, Rosenwald Fellowship Plan of Work, Papers of Eldzier Cortor, Reel N70-47, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, New York.
33. Alain Locke, James Herring, and Horace Cayton were all references for Cortor's Rosenwald Fellowship application. Papers of Eldzier Cortor.
34. As a student at the Art Institute of Chicago in the 1930s, Cortor learned about African art by visiting the collection at the Field Museum and studying figures and masks. This experience transformed his art and in an interview he stated, "That was the most important influence of all in my work, for to this day you will find in my handling of the human figure that cylindrical and lyrical quality I was taught . . . to appreciate in African art." Quoted in Elton C. Fax, *Seventeen Black Artists* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1971), 87.
35. Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Random House, 1983; reprint, New York: Vintage, 1984), 45-47. I am grateful to Sonya Clark for pointing out the importance of the bird.
36. Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 135.
37. Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 222.
38. John Michael Vlach, "Cemeteries and Burials," in *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History*, eds. Jack Salzman, David Lionel Smith, and Cornel West (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 511.
39. Papers of Eldzier Cortor. The artist continued to focus on black Atlantic cultures. For his next project he secured a 1949 Guggenheim Fellowship to create work based on the people of African descent in Cuba, Jamaica, and Haiti.
40. Winifred Vass, *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, UCLA, 1979). Currently both West and Central African influences are acknowledged by scholars who continue in the tradition of Herskovits such as Robert Farris Thompson and John Michael Vlach.
41. Alex Haley, foreword to Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe's *Daufuskie Island: A Photographic Essay* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1982), x.
42. Haley in foreward to Moutoussamy-Ashe, *Daufuskie Island*, xiv.
43. Quoted in Moutoussamy-Ashe, *Daufuski Island*, xviii.
44. Praise houses are buildings that were instituted by planters for slave worship. Yet, although these structures were initially the creation of slaveowners, they became centers of community life. In her study of slave religion in the Sea Islands, Margaret Washington Creel writes, "for Gullahs the Praise House was a plantation community hall where they related secular experiences, directed their religious life, openly expressed among each other their innermost frustrations, longings and expectations." Margaret Washington Creel, *"A Peculiar People": Slave Religion and Community-Culture Among the Gullahs* (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 233.
45. Another key aspect of these photographs and the representational strategies they employ–not unlike the pictures taken by Leigh Richmond Miner and the pastels produced by Winold Reiss–is that they were

successful in raising money for and awareness of the Sea Islands. In fact, Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe's "series on Daufuskie Island spawned the exhibition 'A Mind is a Terrible Thing to Waste,' to benefit the United Negro College Fund." Entry on Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe in Leslie King-Hammond, ed. *Gumbo Ya Ya: Anthology of African-American Women Artists* (New York: Midmarch Arts Press, 1995), 181.

46. Susan Fisher Sterling, "Signifying Photographs and Texts in the Work of Carrie Mae Weems," in *Carrie Mae Weems*, eds. Andrea Kirsh and Susan Fisher Sterling (Washington: National Museum of Women in the Arts, 1993), 36.

47. James Robinson, "Dialogue with Carrie Mae Weems," interview, 19 June 1994, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

48. Tom Henderson Wells, *The Slave Ship Wanderer* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1967), 86.

49. John Michael Vlach, *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1978; reprint, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 139.

50. Georgia Writers' Project, *Drums and Shadows*, 116.

51. Clifford, "Four Northwest Coast Museums," chap. in *Routes*, 109.

52. Jock Reynolds, "Not Forgotten," in *House and Home: Spirits of the South*, ed. Jock Reynolds (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 30.

53. Quoted in Reynolds, "Not Forgotten," 32.

54. John Michael Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 14.

55. For a discussion of the creation of a "black landscape" during slavery, see Vlach, *Back of the Big House*. For recurrent mentions of the importance of flower and vegetable gardens for struggling African-Americans along the Georgia Coast in the 1930s, see *Drums and Shadows*. For a recent discussion of black gardens in the South, see Richard Westmacott, *African-American Gardens and Yards in the Rural South* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992).

56. I am borrowing this term from Vlach, *Back of the Big House*, 168.

57. Georgia Writers' Project, *Drums and Shadows*, 179.

58. Another spectacular site-specific work that examines low country history and culture is "The New Charleston." This collaborative work was created for the 1991 Spoleto Festival by Houston Conwill, Joseph DePace, and Estella Conwill. Viewers can see the centerpiece of this work, a cosmogram, on the second floor of the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture, College of Charleston, South Carolina. For a survey of the 1997 Spoleto exhibition, see Eleanor Heartney, "Return to Spoleto," *Art in America* 85:12 (December 1997): 32-37.

59. John Beardsley, *Art and Landscape in Charleston and the Low Country* (Washington: Spacemaker Press, 1998), 97.

60. Wood, *Black Majority*, 59. He also notes that the "intensification of staple agriculture" led to the decline in living conditions for enslaved Africans. Wood, *Black Majority*,163.

61. Wood, *Black Majority*, 88-89.

62. Jackson-Jarvis also explains that snakes are symbols of healing. Beardsley, *Art and Landscape in Charleston*, 98.

63. Tritobia Hayes Benjamin, "Interview with Martha Jackson-Jarvis," in *Sources: Multicultural Influences on Contemporary African American Sculptors*, ed. Stephanie E. Pogue (College Park: Art Gallery at the University of Maryland, 1994), 4.

64. Leland Ferguson, *Uncommon Ground: Archaeology and Early African America, 1650-1800* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), xxxvii.

65. Quoted in Belena Chapp's entry on Martha Jackson-Jarvis in *Gumbo Ya Ya*, 120.

66. Raymond Williams, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory," chap. in *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (New York: Verso, 1980), 40.

67. Williams, "Base and Superstructure,"40-42. In Williams's schematic the distinction between "alternative" and "oppositional" is the difference between "someone who simply finds a different way to live and wishes to be left alone with it, and someone who finds a different way to live and wants to change the society in its light." Similarly, the distinction between "residual" and "emergent" is "experiences, meanings and values" which, in the former, are nondominant elements retained from a "previous social formation" and, in the latter, are elements in the process of formation. Both "residual" and "emergent" forms are found in "alternative" and "oppositional" cultures. James Clifford's distinction between narratives of "homogenization" or "loss" and "emergence" or "invention" appears to draw from Williams's paradigm of incorporation and opposition. Likewise, Clifford's interest in opening "space for cultural futures" parallels recent Sea Islands based creative projects. Clifford, 15.