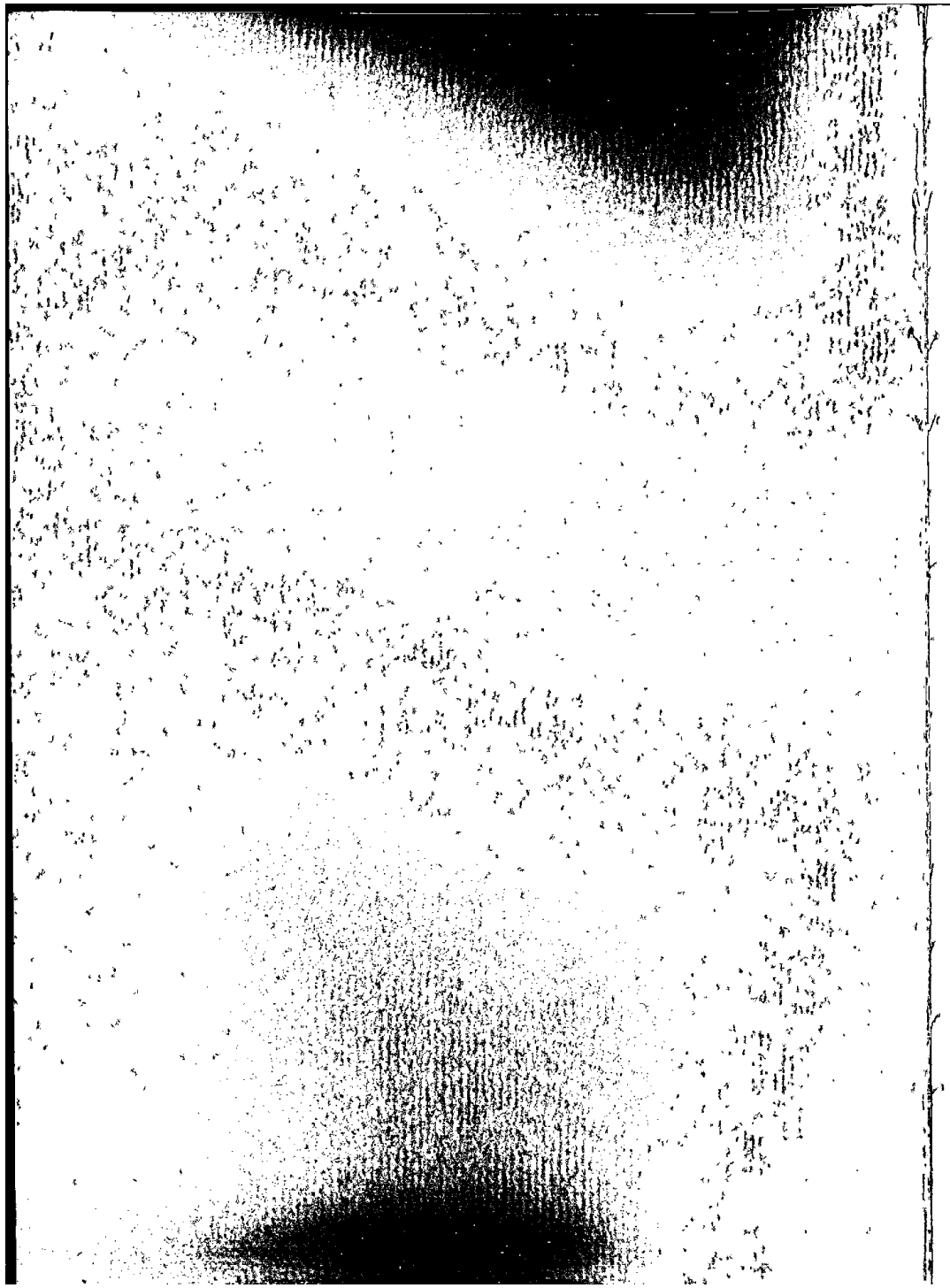

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In Memoriam
James H. Stubblebine
1920-1987

James H. Stubblebine: An Appreciation and Bibliography

Volume VIII of the *Rutgers Art Review* is dedicated to the memory of Professor James H. Stubblebine. The editorial board of the *Rutgers Art Review* had planned to interview Dr. Stubblebine for volume X and present it to him for his many years of unfailing support as our faculty advisor. Sadly, we are unable to do this as he died suddenly on the third of February, 1987.

Dr. Stubblebine came to Rutgers University in 1957 and was the driving force behind the growth of the Art History Department. As teacher and advisor he was truly beloved by his students. The genuine enthusiasm that he generated in the classroom came from his visual acuity which he shared generously with all of his students.

At the time of his death, he was at work at a comprehensive history of Italian Dugento painting. It would have been a culmination of his many years of scholarship in early Italian art. Among his many publications are texts on Duccio, Giotto, and Sienese Trecento painting. In his work, he continued the great tradition of connoisseurship and used it to re-evaluate key monuments in early Italian painting.

Finally, we honor Dr. Stubblebine for his role as the faculty advisor to the *Rutgers Art Review.* He was always ready to offer assistance and advice yet equally respectful of our positions as editors of the journal. Ultimately, we loved him most for his faith in us back in 1979 when volume I of the *Rutgers Art Review* was in its formative stages. Dr. Stubblebine will be sorely missed.

Elizabeth Ayer

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Justin D. Carlino

Raphael's *Parnassus:* The Harmony of the Universe and the Julian Vision of Rome

BONNIE LYNN KATZIVE

At first glance, Raphael's *Parnassus* in the Stanza della Segnatura appears to be the least politically charged of the room's four large wall frescoes. *Parnassus* (fig. 1) is an idyllic representation of Apollo, Muses and poets atop Mount Parnassus (or perhaps Helicon), hardly a political subject in and of itself. Outside of the image's original context, one might connect Raphael's fresco with the Golden Age so fervently desired by nearly every Western ruler since Augustus Caesar, but would probably divine little other political significance. When examined, however, in its original context in terms of setting, patronage, and iconographic tradition, *Parnassus's* participation in the Stanza's celebration of Pope Julius II's power and imperial aims may be seen in a much richer and more specific way.

Raphael's particular depiction of the subject can be associated with a number of themes—the conception of Julius's reign as the birth of a new Golden Age, Renaissance ideas about the function and value of poetry, and a Renaissance conception of the structure and harmony of the universe—that, although essentially poetic, are easily co-opted for use as political symbols. At the heart of the expression of each of these themes in the painting is an emphasis on harmony guided by Apollo, an ancient deity with whom, significantly, Pope Julius sought to identify himself in establishing his own political authority.

The only surviving documentation of a program for *Parnassus,* or for that matter any of Raphael's other frescoes in the Stanza della Segnatura, is Paolo Giovio's enigmatic reference to the two Stanze decorated during Pope Julius II's reign, stating that they were painted "ad praescriptum Julii pontificis,"[1] according to the prescription of Julius the Pope. Giovio provides few details of Julius's prescription. In the absence of an explicit program, scholars, nevertheless, have made numerous attempts to associate the room with different schools of philosophy or theology

An earlier version of this paper was presented as an Honors thesis to the Department of Art History and Archaeology at Washington University in St. Louis. I am grateful to my sponsor, Claudia Rousseau, for her thoughtful comments and assistance. I would also like to credit her with first suggesting that a cosmological interpretation of *Parnassus* might be possible. I also wish to thank Harold Ellis, Deborah Weiss, Randolph Starn, and especially William Wallace for their valuable suggestions and support.

[1]P. Giovio, "Ralphaelis Urbanitis Vita," in *Raffaello nei documenti,* ed. Vincenzo Golzio, Vatican City, 1936, 192. "Pinxit in Vaticano nec adhuc stabili authoritate cubicula duo ad praescriptum Julii Pontificis, in altero novem Musae Apollini cythara canenti applaudent...." This is Giovio's sole reference to the Stanza della Segnatura. The other room Giovio refers to here is the Stanza d'Eliodoro.

1. Raphael, *Parnassus*, 1508-1511, fresco. Rome, Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican Palace (photo: Alinari/ Art Resource, New York)

(Neo-platonic, Franciscan, Dominican)[2] or specific literary sources (Dante, court panegyrics).[3] Perhaps the most convincing approach has been to consider the room not as a separate project, but as part of Julius's greater political program for arts and letters at his court. Recent scholarship has demonstrated that Julius cultivated certain themes in his patronage which alluded to the creation of a Christian Roman empire under his reign.[4] The new empire was to be built on the ruins of the old, adopting and surpassing the ancients' highest virtues and greatest glories. Julius propagated the myth of the return of the Golden Age of peace and justice prophesized by the Cumaean Sibyl in Vergil's fourth *Eclogue* in order to promote his vision.[5] The last Golden Age was considered to have been the reign of Augustus, when peace, faith, justice, and the arts had flourished. During the new, Christian Golden Age, Rome would be the temporal and spiritual center of the world, from where all power would emanate, its renewed glory symbolized by the magnificence of the new St. Peter's.

This vision of a renewed Rome is clearly reflected throughout the Stanza della Segnatura frescoes. Specific references to Roman settings and to Roman antiquity occur throughout the room. Four small panels on the ceiling portray scenes from Roman history. The oblong corner panels on the ceiling are painted to resemble antique mosaics (fig. 2). Nancy Rash-Fabbri has demonstrated that the majority of the decoration is consistent with the themes of a new Golden Age and the return of justice and harmony.[6] Specific allusions to Julius's Rome are also present; the temple in the *School of Athens*, for example, resembles Bramante's plan for St. Peter's. On the opposite wall is the *Disputà*, which takes place upon a partially built altar. This structure, with neither walls nor ceiling, is undoubtedly intended as a reference to the construction of the new St. Peter's, begun only a few years prior to Raphael's work in the Stanza. The high altar of St. Peter's was, in fact, open to the air until 1514, three years after the completion of the *Disputà*.[7] The Stanza's fictive view of St. Peter's is completed by the design of the upper portion of the composition, which

[2]Neo-platonic interpretations include E.H. Gombrich, *Symbolic Images*, London, 1972, 85-101 and G. Danbolt, "Triumphus Concordiae: A Study of Raphael's Camera della Segnatura," *Konsthistorisk Tidskrif*, XLIV/3-4, 1975, 70-84. A Franciscan interpretation can be found in H.B. Gutman, "Zur Ikonologie der Fresken Raffaels in der Stanza della Segnatura," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, XXI, 1958, 27-39 and a Dominican interpretation in L. von Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, trans. F.I. Anthrobus, VI, St. Louis, Missouri, 1950, 580-590.

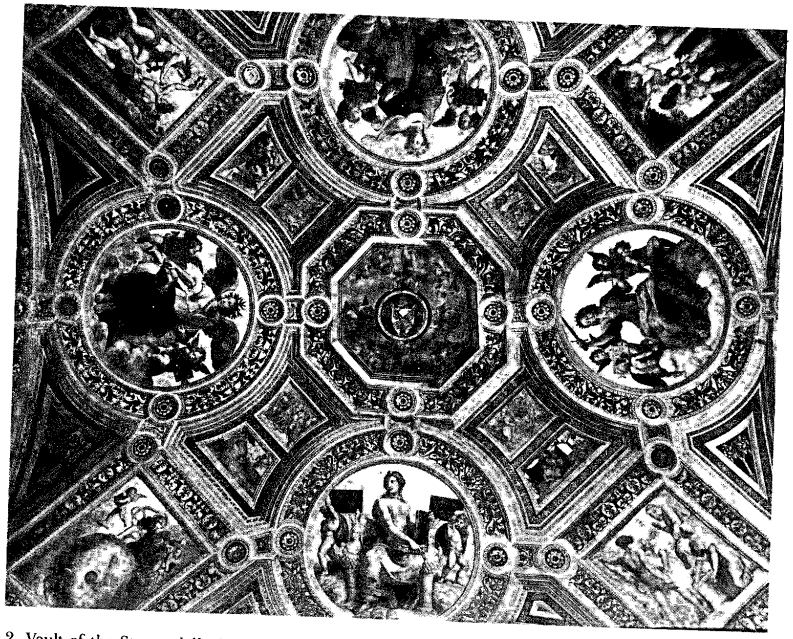
[3]Discussions of Dante's influence in the Stanza's program, based on Landino's commentary on the *Comedy*, are found in Gutman, 33 and in J. Pope-Hennessey, *Raphael*, New York, 1970, 139-140. J. O'Malley, on the other hand, has tentatively suggested an oration delivered in 1508 as a possible source in, "The Vatican Library and the *School of Athens*: a text of Battista Casali, 1508," *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, VII/2, 1977, 275-276.

[4]For a discussion of Julius's efforts to cultivate this image see C.L. Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome*, Bloomington, Indiana, 1985, especially chapters III and V. For an assessment of Julius's personality and the character of his reign see L. Partridge and R. Starn, *A Renaissance Likeness*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1980.

[5]Vergil, *Eclogues*, IV, v. 4. For a discussion of the Golden Age predicted in the Fourth Eclogue and its relationship to the theme of justice in the Stanza della Segnatura see N. Rash-Fabbri, "A Note on the Stanza della Segnatura," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, XCIV, October, 1973, 97-103.

[6]Rash-Fabbri, 101-103.

[7]Stinger, 200 and J. Shearman, *Raphael's Cartoons in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen and the Tapestries for the Sistine Chapel*, London, 1972, 9.



2. Vault of the Stanza della Segnatura 1508. Rome, Vatican Palace (photo: Alinari/Art Resource, New York)

uses images of Christ, apostles, saints, prophets and angels framed by gold rays to recall traditional apse mosaics. Despite the clear importance of the St. Peter's image, the only fresco specifically mentioned in Giovio's account of the Stanza della Segnatura is *Parnassus*.[8]

John Shearman has noted that the two most prominent figures in the Stanza are Christ in the *Disputà* and Apollo in *Parnassus*. Shearman explains Apollo's presence in reference to the probable function of the room as Julius's private library.[9] The tradition of associating libraries with Apollo (as a sort of patron) dates back to antiquity. The most notable example is Suetonius's description of Augustus's great Palatine library, in which he names it the Library of Apollo.[10] Pope Sixtus IV, Julius's uncle, was familiar with the tradition of dedicating libraries to Apollo, and did so with his own.[11] The use of the Apollo image in Julius's own library, however,

[8]Giovio, 192.
[9]J. Shearman, *The Vatican Stanze: Functions and Decoration*, London, 1972, 16.
[10]*Ibid.*, 16, and E. Schröter, "Der Vatican als Hügel Apollons und der Musen. Kunst und Panegyrik von Nicholas V. bis Julius II," *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte*, LXXV/3-4, 1980, 214-215.
[11]Shearman, *Vatican Stanze*, 16, and Schröter, 214-215.

had more than functional significance, and was closely related to Julius's political aims.

The *Parnassus* fresco depicts Apollo on Mount Parnassus playing a *lira da braccio*. The Renaissance instrument, an early violin, replaces Apollo's usual, classicizing lyre. He is surrounded by the nine Muses, many of them bearing attributes such as musical instruments, books, and dramatic masks. The items they hold recall the attributes of the Muses on antique sarcophagi such as the Mattei sarcophagus, which Emmanuel Winternitz has suggested as a source for Raphael's Muses.[12] Eighteen poets line Parnassus's slopes, including figures from antiquity as well as the Renaissance. Their identities remain speculative, with four exceptions. The group of three men on the upper left represents Dante, Homer, and Vergil. Dante and Homer are clearly recognizable from established traditions for their portrayal. Homer, in accordance with tradition, is blind. Vergil is distinguishable chiefly through the gaze which Dante directs toward him, as if acknowledging Vergil's inspiration for Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The fourth clearly identifiable figure is Sappho, seated by the left window, bearing a scroll with her name. She is the sole figure in the painting to be identified explicitly, perhaps because of her mythic role as the inventor of stringed instruments.[13] The identities of the other poets are less certain; some appear to be portraits, and conjectures include such notable men as Horace, Statius, Boccaccio, Petrarch, and Ariosto.[14]

Although the theme of the painting is derived from antique and medieval traditions, its realization is unmistakably new in terms of both visualization and meaning. Illustrations of Apollo and the Muses almost invariably show Apollo occupying the peak of Parnassus, whereas the Muses' domain is another mountain, Helicon, or a separate part of the twin-peaked Mount Parnassus. In a manuscript of the *Ovide Moralisé* from around 1400, an illustration entitled *Mons Helicon* depicts the Muses bathing in the Castalian spring flowing from below Apollo's feet (fig. 3). Apollo plays his lyre and wears a crown as well as displaying a nimbus of light. He is clearly the superior source of inspiration.

The scene is actually a fusion of the Parnassus and Helicon traditions, for Apollo is shown ruling Helicon, the domain of the Muses. Raphael's *Parnassus* takes this fusion even further, depicting only one peak and placing Apollo and the Muses in a single group.[15] Even more innovative in Raphael's representation is the inclusion of poets on the sacred peak, an idea rarely illustrated in art, but sometimes aspired to in poetry.

Placing mortal poets on the peak not only emphasizes the relationship of

[12]E. Winternitz, *Musical Instruments and Their Symbolism in Western Art*, New York, 1967, 192-196.
[13]For Sappho as inventor of stringed instruments, see Winternitz, 198 and note.
[14]For attempts at specific identifications of the other poets, see D. Redig de Campos, *The "Stanze" of Raphael in the Vatican*, Rome, 1963, 30-31, J.D. Passavant, *Raphael d'Urbin et son père Giovanni Santi*, Paris, 1860, II, 77, and Giorgio Vasari, *Artists of the Renaissance*, trans. G. Bull, New York, 1978, 295.
[15]K. Meyer-Baer, "Musical Iconography in Raphael's *Parnassus*," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, VIII, December, 1949, 94. Schröter, 235, suggests that the twin peaks are condensed in order to emphasize a parallel between Mount Parnassus and the Vatican Hill.

3. *Mons Helicon*, Ms. fr. 871, fol. 116v, c. 1400, from the illuminated manuscript *Bible Moralisée*. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale (photo: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

Apollo and the Muses to poetry, but also suggests something about the status of poets in Renaissance culture. The eighteen men represented here are clearly among the greatest poets of history, hence, they are honored by their inclusion in the realm of the immortal Apollo and Muses. All of the poets wear laurel crowns, a personal symbol of Apollo and the attire granted to victors of literary and athletic contests in ancient Greece and Rome. It was believed, in fact, that the Roman poets Vergil and Horace had been thus crowned on the steps of the ancient Capitol—an event emulated on Petrarch's behalf in 1341.[16] The laurel wreath came to symbolize the

[16]J.B. Trapp, "The Poet Laureate: Rome, *Renovatio*, and *Translatio Imperii*," in *Rome in the Renaissance: The City and the Myth*, ed. P.A. Ramsey, Binghamton, N.Y., 1982, 95, and 104.

poet's fame and highest achievement; in the Renaissance, fame was regarded as a form of immortality. Laurel leaves were therefore a highly appropriate sign of such fame, as indicated in an account of Petrarch's Coronation Oration:

> The [laurel] tree is shady, to signify rest after toil; its leaves are not only never-fading but they preserve from time anything wrapped in them; it is a holy tree; its touch brings truth to a sleeper's dreams and the gift of Pythian prophecy to poets; evergreen, it signifies never-dying fame....[17]

Petrarch claims special honor for poetry in the form of the laurel crown; he is the harbinger of the special position attained by poetry among the liberal arts in the Renaissance.

The true poet, according to Renaissance literary theory, is the recipient of divine inspiration which permits him to present moral, physical, and religious truth in the guise of fiction. Poetry, then, is somewhat akin to theology in its true subject matter, if not in its approach. This concept was established very early in Renaissance literature, and, as Charles Trinkaus has demonstrated, is clearly evident in works by Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Landino.[18] For example, in a letter to his brother Gerardo, Petrarch claims that theology is really poetry about God, and that poetry originated as a means of using more elevated expression to describe elevated subjects.[19] This notion is clearly reflected in the vast amount of Renaissance poetry throughout Europe which takes God, faith, the heavens, or man's place in the cosmos as its subject. The relationship between poetry and theology is further described in Boccaccio's *De genealogia deorum*, in which he claims that the *prisci poetae*, the ancient pagan poets, were theologians writing sacred literature.[20]

Expression of these themes relating poetry and theology continued throughout the Renaissance, notably in the works of Tuscan humanist Cristoforo Landino. Trinkaus points out that among commentators on the linkage of theology and poetry, Landino places particular stress upon the concept of the poet as divinely inspired.[21] According to Landino's commentary on Vergil, poets may be differentiated from other men: "...those who are affected by a power of this sort [of divine inspiration] the Greeks called poets because they both ascend above men and yet are not able to become gods."[22] The role of poets on earth is thus to create a ladder or bridge between the realms of man and God. To Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Landino, then, one writes and reads poetry in order to gain comprehension of the higher realm, and thus the poet is both a philosopher and a theologian.

If the poet is also a theologian, then a theologian (or a pope) can also join the ranks of the poets immortalized on Parnassus's slopes. This association is suggested

[17]*Ibid.*, 105.
[18]C. Trinkaus, *In Our Image and Likeness*, II, London, 1970, 683-721.
[19]*Ibid.*, 689-690.
[20]*Ibid.*, 693-697.
[21]*Ibid.*, 713.
[22]*Ibid.*

4. Detail of fig. 1, Sappho from *Parnassus*
(photo: Anderson/Art Resource, New York)

by the illusionary extension of *Parnassus* into the space of Julius's library. Raphael accomplishes this through the two figures framing the window below the fresco, the poetess Sappho and an unidentified male poet. Sappho props her left elbow in front of the border between the painting and window recess and seems to lean out from the painting into the space before it. Her right hand is curled around a stringed instrument at her feet. The musical instrument, almost certainly an invention of Raphael's, is also painted to appear in front of the border frame (fig. 4).[23] On the opposite side of the window, a man in classical robes points outward as he converses with two other poets on the slope above him. His hand appears to reach into the actual physical space of the room. The position of his right leg, painted on top of the

[23]Winternitz, 188.

border frame, strengthens the illusion, for it causes the leg to appear to protrude beyond the wall. This extension of the painting into real space is emphasized further by the recession of the window into the wall, a contrast to the forward movement of the figures in the fresco. The conflation of real and fictive space extends *Parnassus* into the room, implying that the viewer is also a member of the assemblage of immortalized, visionary men crowned on the mountain's slopes and shares with them the receipt of inspiration from above.[24] In this manner, the room itself becomes Julius's own Parnassus, in which the arts and letters of his Rome are glorified and inspired.

The *Parnassus* fresco is part of a complex of poems, processions, orations, and art created at the Julian court which was centered upon the closely related Parnassus and Golden Age themes.[25] The Renaissance conception of a Golden Age is founded on Vergil's fourth *Eclogue,* which prophesizes an age of bucolic peace initiated under Apollo and ruled by Saturn, to be associated with the birth of a savior. The Roman emperor Augustus promoted the idea that the gods had chosen him to fulfill the prophecy.[26] In Julius's time, the reign of Augustus was associated with a Golden Age of peace, harmony, faith and justice. This era brought forth the writings of great Latin poets such as Vergil, Ovid and Horace, as well as the expansion of the Roman Empire. Julius's patronage was oriented toward emulating and surpassing the achievements of Augustus and his predecessor, Julius Caesar, the Pope's namesake.[27]

[24]I am grateful to William Wallace for having brought the suggestion of extension implied by the composition to my attention.
[25]Schröter, 214-215. For a more detailed account of the Golden Age and other literary themes in Raphael's *Parnassus,* see Schröter, "Raffaels Parnass: eine ikonographische Untersuchung," *Actas del XXIII Congreso de Historia del Arte,* Granada, 1973, 593-605.
[26]C. Rousseau, "Cosimo I de Medici and Astrology: The Symbolism of Prophecy," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1983, 123-125.
The most famous example of Augustus's association with the Golden Age is found in Vergil's *Aeneid,* where Anchises, Aeneas's father, reveals the future of Rome:

> ...this is the man, this one,
> Of whom so often you have heard the promise,
> Caesar Augustus, son of the deified,
> Who shall bring once again an Age of Gold
> To Latium, to the land where Saturn reigned
> In early times. He will extend his power
> Beyond the Garamants and Indians,
> Over far territories north and south...

(Vergil, *The Aeneid,* trans. R. Fitzgerald, New York, 1984, book VI, 790-797, 187-188).
[27]For Pope Julius II identified with Julius Caesar see Stinger, 91, 238-239, and 242-245, and Partridge and Starn, 47, 54-55, and especially 63. For Julius II identified with Augustus Caesar see Partridge and Starn, 52-54, and H.H. Brummer, *The Statue Court in the Vatican Belvedere,* Stockholm, 1970, 34. Julius seems to have quite logically preferred identification with his namesake. However, the idea of a Roman Golden Age bears a specific association with Augustus's reign, so in his attempts to establish a new Golden Age, Julius is implicitly identifying himself with Augustus as well.

In the context of Julius's efforts to bring about the return of the Golden Age, the illusionary extension of *Parnassus* into the Stanza acquires further significance. The setting of the painting suggests both a Golden Age paradise and a humanist or poetic *vigne*. This topos of an outdoor *locus amoenus* is familiar in Renaissance art and literature and connotes not only poetic inspiration, but also the idea of the harmony of nature being conducive to the exercise of the intellect. Gardens and natural retreats were seen as expressions of the harmony of God's creation, for they displayed the beauty of divine works and regenerated with the cycle of the seasons.[28] Thus the *locus amoenus* was conceived not only as a place to relax and forget cares, but also as a place where men too could partake of this harmony. *Parnassus*, then, represents not only the harmony of the Golden Age, but also the harmony of man and nature, the harmony of Apollo's music and the harmony of nature together inspiring the proliferation of art and learning.

Just as the *Disputà* and the *School of Athens* refer to Julius's Rome through allusions to St. Peter's, so does *Parnassus* allude to Julius's other major building project, Bramante's Cortile del Belvedere. There is a great deal of evidence suggesting that *Parnassus* was conceived to link harmoniously the Stanza to the Cortile, the two projects working as one in order to emphasize the harmony, peace and splendor of the new Golden Age in Rome. The Cortile del Belvedere had been under construction for nearly three years when Raphael began his work in the Stanza della Segnatura in 1508. The Cortile would be an immense complex, modeled on Classical imperial villas described by Roman writers.[29] It was designed to be seen from the north window of the Stanza—the window on the *Parnassus* wall.[30]

From this viewpoint, the architecture and one's view of it converge on the exedra, the Cortile's culminating structure, directly opposite the window.[31] James Ackerman has noted that the perspectival unity of the garden's architecture, meant to be seen from outside the garden itself, creates the effect of a painting with the window defining the frame.[32] Ackerman also suggested that the Stanza was to have served as the pope's private auditorium for theatrical events and spectacles taking place in the garden.[33] This link between the *Parnassus* wall and the Cortile is further supported by John Shearman's suggestion that the *Parnassus* wall and window were intended to be the most typically viewed part of the room. Shearman noted that the pattern on the floor is strangely asymmetrical, aligned to point northwest, toward the window looking out to the Cortile.[34] *Parnassus* thus functions as a linking point,

[28]For Renaissance ideas about gardens and retreats, see D.R. Coffin, ed., *The Italian Garden*, Washington, D.C., 1972, and T. Comito, *The Idea of the Garden in the Renaissance*, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1978.
[29]Especially Pliny's letter concerning his Tuscan villa. J. Ackerman, *The Cortile del Belvedere*, Vatican City, 1954, 130-132.
[30]*Ibid.*, 123.
[31]*Ibid.* and A. Bruschi, *Bramante*, London, 1970, 100.
[32]Ackerman, 123.
[33]*Ibid.*
[34]Shearman, *Vatican Stanze*, 15-16.

providing a continuity between the Stanza and the Cortile and making both projects into a single, harmonious testimonial to Julius's recreation of Rome.[35]

The popes associated themselves with the Roman Empire not only through the Golden Age mythology and emulation of Augustus, but also, as Elizabeth Schröter has shown, through the image of Apollo, portrayed in the *Aeneid* as one of the gods particularly helpful to Aeneas in founding Rome.[36] Schröter cited poems and panegyrics associating Apollo with the rebirth of Rome, the new Golden Age, and presenting him as a protector of the city and its rulers. For example, in a poetic tribute Jacobus de Horetis styles Sixtus IV as "pastor Apollo," thus associating the pope with Apollo as a protective deity.[37] These efforts escalated under Julius, who continued and surpassed his uncle Sixtus's plans for the rebuilding of Rome and the expansion of papal power, and used the Apollo image with greater frequency in his patronage of arts and letters.

Julius's interest in cultivating the Apollo image to embellish his political program was encouraged not only by his uncle's precedent, but also by his possession of the famous *Apollo Belvedere* statue. He owned it while still a cardinal and had displayed it in the garden at his titular church, San Pietro in Vincoli.[38] The Cumaean Sibyl's prediction of a bucolic Golden Age initiated under Apollo is thus quite apt for Julius's papacy; Julius had been, in a sense, associated with Apollo even before the inception of his reign.

One of the most explicit references to the renewal of the Augustan Golden Age under the protection of Apollo is Evangelista Maddaleni Fausto di Capodiferro's *Ibidem Apollo Loquitur*. In this laudatory poem, the *Apollo Belvedere* sculpture speaks to Julius II, striking a parallel between Rome and heaven, and praising Julius as the keeper of souls on earth. Julius's efforts to protect and expand Italy are praised and

[35]The connection between the Stanza, *Parnassus*, and the Cortile is not only physical but thematic, as the Cortile also emphasizes ideas of Roman resurgence and harmonious rule. The accent of the Cortile on unity and harmony is reflected in a medal dated between 1504-1507 which depicts a profile portrait of Pope Julius II on the obverse, and a representation of the Cortile del Belvedere on the reverse. The inscription below reads VATICANUS.M. (Vaticanus Mons). Above the illustration is a longer inscription, VIA./.IVL.III.ADIT./LON.M./.ALTI.L.XX./.P.. The inscription records the evidently significant fact that the Belvedere courtyard was one thousand feet long and seventy feet high. This interpretation of the medal has been accepted by W. Lotz, "Lectures," R. Weiss, 181, and Ackerman, 192. These measurements are notable first of all for their sheer magnitude, which demonstrates that the Cortile was as colossal as any ancient monument and reflects Julius's desire to renew the glory of Rome. Secondly, the numbers are so round and precise that it seems clear that they were purposeful and convey a symbolic significance. Seventy is the product of 10, which usually represents unity, perfection, and order, and 7, the number of days of the Creation, the planetary bodies, and universality. V.F. Hopper, *Medieval Number Symbolism*, New York, 1969, 79. One thousand, like its cube root, 10, traditionally represents unity or perfection (Hopper, 98 and 102). Together, these numbers recall many of the same themes of cosmic harmony and perfect unity expressed in the Stanza. Furthermore, 1000 also could signify the length of an age (Hopper, 78), an interpretation significant in the context of the Golden Age theme cultivated by Renaissance popes; it is likely that 1000 was intended to signify the length of the harmonious age of peace and justice inaugurated under Julius's rule.
[36]Schröter, 233.
[37]*Ibid.*, 219-220.
[38]Brummer, 44-46.

are compared to those of the caesars.[39] Finally, Julius is told that Apollo has found a safe haven and is speaking to him from the Vatican Hill, where the Apollo statue was indeed placed.

Having established Julius's identification with Apollo as a patron and as a personal symbol, we can now look more closely at the specific role played by Apollo in *Parnassus*. Raphael's composition represents inspiration and harmony not only in the context of human, terrestrial concerns, but also as a representation of the metaphor of the music of the universe, guided by Apollo. Apollo's followers, the Muses, traditionally inspire music as well as poetry in their role as movers of the celestial spheres. A Greek dialogue, *Epinomis*, attributed to a follower of Plato, tells us that the heavenly spheres make music as "a gift from the blessed choir of Muses [which] has imparted to man the services of measured consonance with a view to the enjoyment of rhythm and harmony."[40] The origin of the doctrine of the music of the spheres is attributed to Pythagoras, who discovered a mathematical correlation between the ratios of musical intervals and the ratios describing the relationship between the celestial spheres. Each sphere produces a tone as it moves. Iamblichus, a fourth-century Neo-platonist, claimed that

> Pythagoras himself was able to hear the harmony of the spheres, but, since he believed that no one else could, he made vocal and instrumental imitations of it, so that, indirectly, his disciples might be influenced by this celestial harmony.[41]

Thus, the tones of the spheres together produce a harmonious and perfect symphony, of which earthly music is only a pale imitation.

[39]Capodiferro's poem appears in Brummer, 225. Its character is clear from the introductory lines:

> Ille ego sum Iuli Iulaeque Gentis Apollo
> Perpetuus custos tot qui te invicte periclis
> Eripui nutuque meo super aethera vexi:
> Non me marmoreum nunc aspicis, aspice verum
> Qualis in aethereo sublimis spector Olympo.
> Hinc tibi Romanas animas aequataque caelo
> Moenia commisi Maiestatisque verende
> Imperia.

Apollo's patronage of Pope Julius (cum Julius Caesar) is further made manifest in another section of the poem:

> Nunc mihi maiori turgescunt numine corda,
> Postquam Iuleis domus haec est parta columnis,
> Quae me et magnanimum pariter venerantur Julum.

[40]Meyer-Baer, *The Music of the Spheres and the Dance of Death*, Princeton, 1970, 20.
[41]D.P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, London, 1975, 37-38.

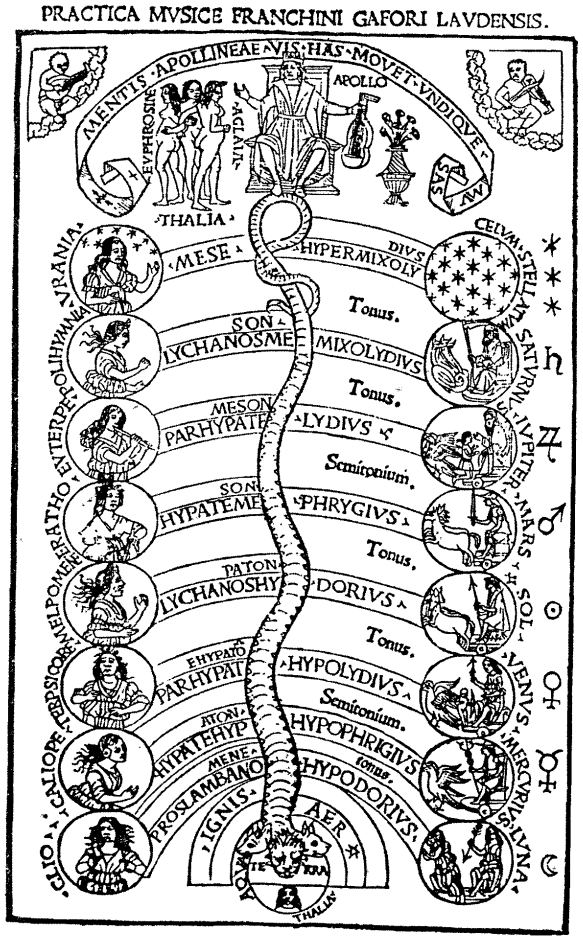
The harmonious relationship of the Muses, spheres, and musical tones in which music has its basis is illustrated in the title page from Franchinus Gaffurius's 1496 publication, *Practica Musicae* (fig. 5). The print shows a Muse, Thalia, at the bottom, inscribed in a sphere marked "terra," earth. A column of spheres rises to each side. The spheres on the left contain Muses, who correspond to the celestial bodies (the seven planets and the fixed stars) represented in the spheres on the right. The arcs connecting the columns to a central axis, represented by a fantastic, serpentine creature, are labeled with the musical modes, tones and half tones thought to correspond to each sphere.[42] Two putti playing stringed instruments frame the upper corners of the page. Between them are the three Graces, arms linked, and, enthroned in the center, Apollo. His authority is declared by his crown and his position atop the serpent which connects the Muses, modes, tones, and planets. A scroll above Apollo reads: MENTIS APOLLINEAE VIS HAS MOVET VNDIQVE MV SAS [MVSAS], (the power of the mind of Apollo moves these Muses in every respect).[43]

Apollo's guidance of the harmonious movement of the universe is illustrated less diagramatically in Mantegna's *Parnassus*, executed for Isabella d'Este in 1497. As in the Gaffurius frontispiece, Apollo and the Muses refer to the harmony and music of the universe. Apollo's role as guide is clear: the music of his *lira* directs the Muses in their dance. The Muses join hands, signifying concord, and move gaily in a line which curves to suggest a circle, not coincidentally the shape that most perfectly expresses the ideas of harmony and unity.

Raphael's *Parnassus* illustrates the same principle of cosmic harmony ruled by Apollo and carried out by the Muses, but it is expressed in a fundamentally new and different way. In the representations by Gaffurius and Mantegna—and in nearly all others before Raphael—Apollo is clearly set apart from the Muses, governing them from the outside. Raphael breaks with tradition and places Apollo in the center of the Muses, a change which is significant not only in structure and composition, but also in adding a new level of meaning to the Parnassus theme.[44]

Shearman's observation that only Apollo is as prominent as Christ in the Stanza's frescoes points out that Apollo occupies not only the physical center of the fresco but the psychological center as well.[45] Although Sappho and two of the Muses

[42]For the identity and symbolism of the serpentine figure, see E. Panofsky, "Titian's *Allegory of Prudence:* A Postscript," in *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, Chicago, 1982, 146-168.
[43]For a more detailed discussion of the iconography of Gaffurius's frontispiece see E. Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, Harmondsworth and Baltimore, 1967, 265-269.
[44]Meyer-Baer, 1949, 87, notes that Raphael does not merely break with tradition, but transforms it. After his version of *Parnassus*, almost all others show Apollo in the center, surrounded by the Muses.
[45]Shearman, *Vatican Stanze*, 16.



5. Franchinus Gaffurius, *Practica Musica*, frontispiece, 1496. Published in Milan (photo: University of California at Berkeley History of Art Department Slide Library, Berkeley)

also bear musical instruments, Apollo is the only one who plays, his music inspiring the lyrical, contemplative attitudes of the Muses and the thoughtful discourse of the poets below. The power of his music to move the spheres is also indicated by a unique characteristic of his *lira da braccio*: it has nine strings, a number which corresponds to the number of Muses and the number of spheres.[46] A normal *lira da braccio*, however, has only seven strings, hence it is fairly certain that the correspondence of strings to spheres is a deliberate illustration of the connection between Apollo's music and the movements of the heavens. *Parnassus*, then, is an illustration not only of cosmic harmony, but of cosmic hierarchy as well.

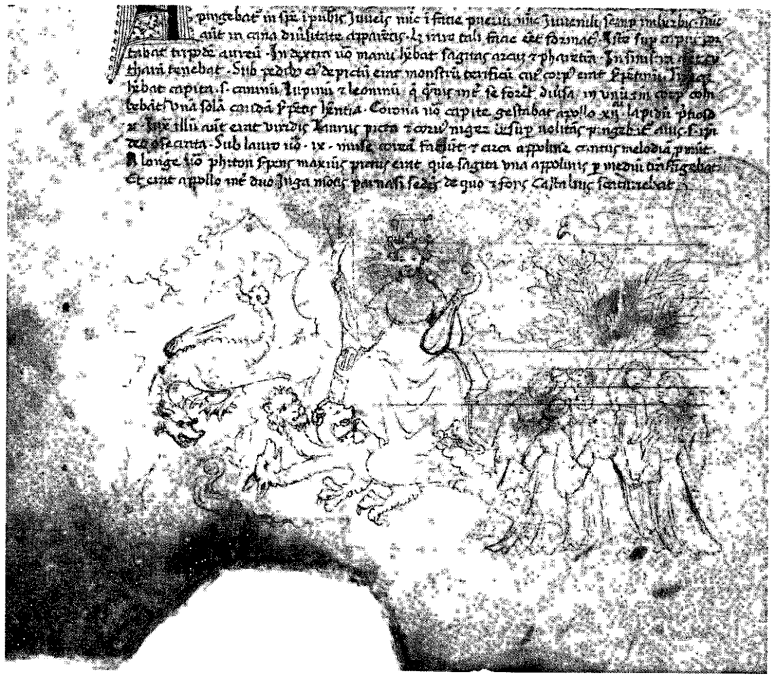
One interpretation of Apollo's significance in *Parnassus* which has not been dealt with extensively in literature on the Stanza is his role as deity of the sun. Like all of the pagan gods of antiquity, Apollo's powers are varied. He is the god of knowledge and prophecy. He inspires reason and measure and is a patron of the liberal arts, in which context he appears as a niche sculpture in the *School of Athens*. As we have already seen, he is connected especially with music and poetry in his role as musician and leader of celestial harmony. But, above all, Apollo represents the sun, a role which would have been instantly associated with him by any educated person in the Renaissance. It would be very surprising indeed if such an identification of Apollo was neither intended nor noticed in the *Parnassus* fresco, given the Renaissance tendency to enjoy multi-leveled symbolism in painting and literature.[47] In fact, viewers would have had a very good reason to make this identification, for the Vatican Hill, in antiquity, had been consecrated to Apollo, and was clearly associated with his role as lord of the sun.[48]

That *Parnassus* represents Apollo in several roles at one time is consistent with traditional representations of the god. For example, in the manuscript illustration of *Mons Helicon* (fig. 3), Apollo plays a lyre while rays of light emanate from his head, thus indicating his dual powers as the deity of sun and music. A slightly later representation of Apollo (c. 1420) which includes other attributes as well occurs in an illustrated mythology handbook, *Libellus de imaginibus deorum*. Under the description of Apollo is a delicate line drawing of the traditional twin summits of

[46]Winternitz, 199-200.

[47]The notion that a painting is of higher moral and intellectual value if its meaning is difficult to ascertain is reflected in many Renaissance paintings, and is explicitly stated in Cortesi's *De cardinalatu*, a treatise dedicated to Julius II. For example, in his chapter on the ideal decoration of a cardinal's palace, Cortesi concludes that "the more erudite are the paintings in a cardinal's chapel, the more easily the soul can be excited by the admonishment of the eyes to the imitation of acts, by looking at [painted representations] of them." This passage is found in J.F. D'Amico and K. Weil-Garris, "The Renaissance Cardinal's Ideal Palace: A Chapter from Cortesi's *De cardinalatu*," in *Studies in Italian Art and Architecture 15th through 18th Centuries*, ed. Henry A. Millon, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 1980, 93.

[48]Stinger, 274, Shearman, *Vatican Stanze*, 16. Shearman, 50, note 105, also notes that Fulvio describes the peak of the Vatican Hill (site of the Villa Belvedere and the statue court) as "Vaticanus apex, phoebo sacratus." It should be pointed out that Phoebus was the appellation of Apollo used most often in describing the deity's role as Sun-god.



6. Page from *Libellus de imaginibus deorum,* Ms. Reg. lat. 1290, fol lv., lower half, c.1420, illuminated manuscript. Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (photo: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome)

Mount Parnassus (fig. 6). Apollo sits enthroned in the center, holding a cithara in his left hand, and the bow and arrows with which he shall slay Python in his right hand. As in the *Mons Helicon* manuscript, his head is surrounded by the rays of light which identify him as the Sun-god. Apollo is shown with the same attributes in a different setting in Francesco Cossa's *Triumph of Apollo,* in the Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara. Here Apollo sits, not on Mount Parnassus, but on a triumphal wagon. The rays of the sun do not emanate from his head, but from the disk of the sun, which he bears in his right hand.

Although in all of these earlier representations Apollo is presented as leader of the Muses, he does not appear among them as he does in Raphael's fresco. If we try to apply Apollo's role as Sun-god to *Parnassus,* we immediately encounter a problem: if he represents the sun, and the Muses the spheres, then his placement in the center might be read as a diagram of a heliocentric cosmos. Yet *Parnassus* cannot represent

heliocentrism for several reasons. The painting was made before Copernicus's ideas were even propounded, much less accepted. And although heliocentric conceptions of the cosmos were present among the Greeks, they were not among the ideas endorsed by mainstream philosophers or the educated class in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Indeed, the idea of heliocentrism would undoubtedly have seemed heretical to Pope Julius. It can be demonstrated, however, that the placement of the sun—not in the physical center of the universe—but in a central position, is perfectly consistent with traditional cosmology, with Scripture, and with Neo-platonic efforts to reconcile pagan wisdom with Christian theology. Indeed, as we shall see, interpreting Apollo as the sun in the center adds a Christian dimension to *Parnassus,* a painting usually discussed as a purely mythological, pagan subject.

The figures on *Parnassus*'s peak can be read as a diagram of the Ptolemaic system.[49] The early sixteenth-century's conception of the universe varied little from that expounded by Ptolemy in the second century A.D. Minor alterations had been made to account for new observations, but these concerned only philosophers and astrologers. To most people, the universe was conceived in the same manner as it had been thirteen hundred years before, when Ptolemy established his system of astronomical calculations for predicting celestial motions in a geocentric universe. The earth was thought of as unmoving in the center of the universe, surrounded by eight crystalline spheres which carried the planets and fixed stars around the terrestrial globe. The order of the spheres from earth was: Luna, Mercury, Venus, Sol, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn and, last, the *primum mobile,* or sphere of fixed stars. Thus, there are seven spheres between the center of the universe, earth and the boundary of the universe, the sphere of the fixed stars. Regarded in a diagrammatic way, the sun, inhabiting the fourth sphere, would be in the exact sequential center of this system, central in, but not the center of, the universe—just as Apollo rests at the center point of *Parnassus.*

This diagrammatic interpretation, although it provides an acceptable explanation for Ápollo-Sol's central location in *Parnassus,* does not adequately account for the hierarchical superiority of the sun in Raphael's allegory, nor for the role of the poets. Even in a geocentric cosmos the sun was thought to play an essential role in maintaining the harmony of the universe and had many qualities not attributable to any other celestial body. Most significant was, of course, the provision of light and warmth to the earth, but the sun had many other extremely important functions. It ruled the Zodiac, lit the face of the moon, and, some people thought, the stars as well. The sun also provided the stationary earth with cycles of time, such as day, night, the measure of the year and the four seasons. But the sun's superiority derived not from these physical attributes as much as from an allegorical one. As the source of light in the physical world it not only regulated earthly life, but was perceived in most religions and philosophical traditions as the physical substance

[49]This diagrammatic interpretation of *Parnassus* was suggested to me by Claudia Rousseau. I am very grateful to her for her guidance in the exposition of the cosmological interpretation of *Parnassus* presented here.

closest in nature to the spiritual light of the divine. We can thus regard *Parnassus* not only in terms of the inspiration of Apollo's divine music, but also in terms of the influence of his divine light. This interpretation can be supported by examining another allegory concerning the nature and influence of the sun in the universe, Marsilio Ficino's essay, *De sole*.

Ficino wrote *De sole* in 1493, about fifteen years before Raphael began to paint in the Stanza della Segnatura. This essay is reviewed here, not as a source for the painting, but as an illustration of ideas quite prevalent in philosophical thought of the period. In fact, Ficino's essay contains very little original material, but is instead a consolidation of hermetic, Neo-platonic and Christian ideas concerning the role of the sun in the universe and its relationship to divine intelligence. He informs us that all of the ancient traditions are in accord and "have placed the sun at the center of the world, even if in different ways."[50] Although *De sole* acknowledges Apollo, the sun, as regulator of physical harmony in the universe and therefore central in it, the sun's centrality is really an allegorical motif—it is central in the resemblance of its light to that of God.

At the outset of his argument, Ficino tells us that the text is not really about the sun, but about God: "...it is within our power to ascend from this sensible light [of the sun] to that of God; not, however, by arguments, but by analogies drawn with light."[51] And as we shall see, light is indeed the factor which provides for this allegorical correspondence. Ficino details how the behavior of sunlight parallels that of the divine light in that it "illumines, gives life and form, and turns toward the heavens every creature of sense,"[52] just as the light of God illumines and attracts the soul.

In this vision, the light of the sun is the metaphorical key to the ascent of the soul, for it provides a comprehensible image of God to help man achieve a higher spiritual state through knowledge of things divine. We ascend from "the image," the sun, to "the model," the divine intellect.[53] The human intellect can be conceived of as inspired by the sun in that the sun's light, like the intellectual light which inspires the human mind, is originally derived from God. Thus, the sun is really an intermediary between heaven and earth, at the midpoint not only of the spheres, but of the cosmic hierarchy as well.

In applying this idea of hierarchical ascent and descent to *Parnassus*, we see that Apollo, the sun, is indeed not the original source of inspiration, but instead directs his enraptured gaze toward the medallion of *Poetry* above him (as seen in figs. 1 and 2). She is winged and rests on clouds, reflecting her celestial nature as well as the loftiness of poetry's matter, and bears a lyre. Beside her, a putto holds a plaque which

[50]Marsilio Ficino, *"De sole,"* in *Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. A.D. Fallico and H. Shapiro, I, New York, 1967, 127. Ficino's ideas concerning light and the sun are derived from a variety of sources, including Hermetic texts, Plato, Iamblichus, Plotinus, St. Augustine and St. Bonaventure. An excellent discussion of antique and medieval conceptions of light along these lines may be found in J.A. Mazzeo, *Medieval Cultural Tradition in Dante's Comedy*, Ithaca, New York, 1960.
[51]Ficino, 119.
[52]*Ibid.*, 134.
[53]*Ibid.*, 130.

reads *numine afflatur*, "divinely inspired." It is from this figure, which represents the Idea of Poetry in the mind of the Creator, that Apollo receives the inspiration which diffuses down the hierarchy to the Muses, the poets, and through them to earth, the bottom of the hierarchy.

Parnassus can be related not only to the concept that the universe is hierarchically arranged, but also to the idea that the different levels of a hierarchy may contain microcosms modeled after cosmic structure. For example, in the *Heptaplus*, an exegesis of the Mosaic account of the Creation, Pico della Mirandola asserts that God generated four corresponding worlds: the elemental world, the celestial world, the angelic and invisible world, and the human world. Since all four worlds are analogous, that which takes place in one world can be represented by the corresponding action of another. This, Pico tells us, is the basis of allegory.[54] Thus Christ, who is the light generated by God's Word, the sun, and Apollo, emblem of the sun, are all analogous as intermediaries between the divine intelligence of God and the lower world of man. They are the means by which divine inspiration descends from the original Idea to its corrupt imitation on earth, and their actions, though varied in nature, are also analogous. Thus the universe is moved on a spiritual level by the non-corporeal light of God, while on a physical level, the universe is guided by the light of the sun. *Parnassus* illustrates a symbolic, imaginary level, in which the music of Apollo's lyre diffuses like the light of the sun. Yet when the music of Apollo reaches the human world, one discovers that it is not really Apollo's music but the music of God himself inspiring human minds—the music of the spheres and the rays of the sun replicating the harmony and unity that is the divine Intellect.

In the context of this hierarchy, in which earthly poetry reflects what is conceived by God, it is interesting to note an idea about the nature of poetic creation which was gaining increasing popularity in humanist circles at this time: the metaphor of poet as creator.[55] Poetry, it was thought, could be conceived of as an imitation of Divine creation. Just as God created the universe with His word, the poet creates a poem, which is an imagined world, with his words. This idea of a creator of art resembling the creator of the world was applied not only to poetry, but to painting as well. In fact, Raphael placed his own portrait in the room in a way which suggests that he, like many of his contemporaries, conceived of painting in just such a manner. He appears on the right side of the *School of Athens*, as part of the group observing the cosmographers studying various spheres and globes. The

[54]Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Heptaplus*, trans. D. Carmichael, in *Oration on the Dignity of Man, On the Being and the One, Heptaplus*, intro. P.J.W. Miller, New York, 1985 (Library of Liberal Arts no. 227), 78-79. For a discussion of Pico's own use of allegory in *Heptaplus* see R. Waddington, "The Sun at the Center: Structure as Meaning in Pico della Mirandola's *Heptaplus*," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, III, Spring 1973, 69-86.
[55]The history and implications of this idea are explored in E.N. Tiegerstedt, "The Poet as Creator: Origins of a Metaphor," *Comparative Literature Studies*, V, 1968, 455-488 and also R.J. Bauer, "A Phenomenon of Epistemology in the Renaissance," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XXXI, 1971, 281-288.

parallel established here is that both philosopher and painter seek to comprehend the harmony of God's cosmos, the one by means of study and the other by means of imitation.

What other evidence is there to support the cosmological interpretation of *Parnassus* proposed here? It can be demonstrated that this reading of the painting is consistent with the room's other decoration which emphasizes the idea of a harmonious Christian universe with Rome as its center. The theme is carried out not only through the references to a Roman Golden Age of peace and justice already discussed above, but also through the coherent conception of the room itself, and through various representations of cosmic harmony.

The conception of the hierarchical nature of the universe displayed in *Parnassus* is reflected, although in varying form, in all three of the other wall frescoes. Knowledge, whether theology, poetry, philosophy, or jurisprudence, radiates from the divine Idea, represented by the personifications, to the figures below, and, finally, to the viewer in the Stanza. This radiation of knowledge is extended into the room through illusion, as in *Parnassus,* or by means of gesture. In the *School of Athens,* for example, Plato's gesture upward indicates the source of knowledge, whereas Aristotle points outward, toward the Stanza. Extension by gesture is also present in the *Disputà,* where a blonde figure looks out into the Stanza and gestures towards the monstrance holding the Eucharist on the altar, the means through which the spirit and body of Christ become accessible to man. On the extreme right, a man leans forward to see the monstrance, his head and shoulders almost appearing to protrude out of the painting into the room.

References to the order and nature of the universe consist not only in the hierarchical structure of the wall frescoes, but in specific references as well. Plato not only points heavenward, but also holds his *Timaeus,* a dialogue concerning the creation and order of the universe. Throughout the *School of Athens* men such as Ptolemy and Pythagoras engage in investigation and analysis of the harmony of the cosmos, diagramming, measuring, regarding globes and actively discussing their findings. This scene of exploration of the universe is linked to the depiction of the structure of the universe, *Parnassus,* by the rectangular ceiling panel between, depicting a Muse, Urania, floating above the outermost sphere of the fixed stars. She looks at her crystalline sphere, regarding the constellations depicted upon it. Rash-Fabbri has shown that the star pattern depicted on the sphere is approximately identical with the configuration of the constellations at the time of Julius's election to the papacy.[56] Thus, like *Parnassus,* this scene may be politically significant as well as indicative of the Renaissance conception of the universe.

[56]Rash-Fabbri, 100.

These examples of cosmic harmony and hierarchy in the Stanza lend support to the interpretation of *Parnassus* as an intentional cosmic diagram. There are, however, some implications of this that require further discussion. How, for example, does it affect the interpretation of the room as a whole? And does the identification of Apollo with the sun relate to the identification of the popes with Apollo?

The introduction of a diagram of the universe to the room strengthens an interpretation of the room promoted by much recent scholarship: the Stanza della Segnatura represents the establishment of the Golden Age of the Catholic church, with its center in Rome. Nearly every panel refers specifically to Rome, either the ancient imperial capitol or the new Rome being established under Julius. Each wall refers to Julius's campaign of restoration and renewal: the room is a celebration of his efforts. *Jurisprudence* alludes to the emphasis of justice under the della Rovere pope.[57] The *Disputà* and *School of Athens* refer to the rebuilding of the church of St. Peter's, the most important church of the Christian religion, and the center of Christendom. *Parnassus* clearly refers to the Cortile del Belvedere behind it, and to the bucolic harmony of the new Golden Age. In its display of cosmic hierarchy it acquires a new, even more political significance.

In order to understand the political implications of the hierarchy illustrated in *Parnassus,* we must return to the popes' cultivation of Apollo and to the idea of a hierarchy of analogous worlds. Just as the Stanza della Segnatura displays that knowledge is hierarchically derived from above, so does the structure of the Catholic church display a hierarchy of authority, ultimately derived, like knowledge, from a divine source above. In *Parnassus,* inspiration passes from the celestial Idea to Apollo, from him to the Muses, and then to the poets. Papal authority, conceived by the Renaissance popes as both temporal and spiritual, passes from God to the pope, and then radiates from him to the faithful through the clergy of the universal church. This idea was consciously cultivated by the popes, as is evident from an oration delivered during Sixtus's reign by Domenico de' Domenichi. Domenichi describes Rome as the center of a Christian *imperium,* and claims that from its center in Rome the church administers the pope's authority and power throughout the world, "as rivers from a fountain, branches from a tree, or rays from the sun."[58] The structure of the church is therefore analogous to the structure of the universe, as displayed in *Parnassus.* This parallel is enhanced by consideration of Apollo's role as intermediary between earth and highest heaven.

In *De sole,* Ficino provides the sun with a variety of epithets and roles. The sun is the "Author of Every Harmony," the "Visible Image of God" in the sky, the means

[57]The fresco might also be considered as a more specific allusion to Julius's palace of justice which was planned, but never executed. A proposed elevation for this project appears on two medals, discussed in Weiss, 173-175.
[58]Stinger, 245.

by which the light of heaven is communicated to earth, and the light which draws our attention heavenward. But Ficino also calls the sun the "Vicar of God on earth,"[59] a title commonly applied to the pope as well. Given the proliferation of comparisons of the pope to Apollo, it seems worthwhile to consider that the Apollo image may have been useful not only as a figure representing the guardianship of Rome but also as a metaphorical parallel to the pope's position in the hierarchy of the Church. In fact, the primacy of the sun in the sky, or of Apollo as presented in Raphael's vision of Mount Parnassus can be seen as analogous to the primacy of the pope on earth. The theme of papal authority is displayed in much of the Vatican decoration, including the Stanza d'Eliodoro and especially the Sistine Chapel.[60]

It is also possible to regard Apollo's image in *Parnassus* as a reflection of the position in the universe of the city of Rome, the center of Christendom, and the home of the true intermediary between Heaven and earth, the church itself.[61] Just as Apollo is ruler of the sky, so was the renewed Catholic church in Rome to be the temporal and spiritual ruler of the earth. Rome even becomes analogous to Heaven itself, as in a 1507 oration given by Egidio da Viterbo: "Listen Romans, listen seven hills, and you above all, great Julius, Most Holy Father. Behold what the Spirit says: Christ is head of heaven, Rome head of earth; Rome sovereign, Christ sovereign."[62] Julius's vision of Rome was the renewal and extension of the ancient Roman empire, a Christian empire that would rule the terrestrial universe from the papal city, Rome. Like Apollo guiding the planets from the midpoint of the cosmos, the pope, "pastor Apollo," would regulate and inspire the earthly microcosm, his very own Parnassus.

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[59]Ficino, 129.
[60]For discussion of the theme of papal primacy in the Sistine Chapel see L.D. Ettlinger, *The Sistine Chapel Before Michelangelo*, Oxford, 1965, especially 104-119.
[61]Stinger, 79-81 and 295, and K.J. Pratt, "Rome as Eternal," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XXVI, 1965, 31-33.
[62]Stinger, 245 and Pratt, 37.

Some Documents Concerning the Patronage and Collections of the Duke of Buckingham

PHILIP MCEVANSONEYA

George Villiers, first Duke of Buckingham (1592-1628) came from Leicestershire gentry stock. According to Sir Henry Wotton, the Duke's first biographer, the Villiers family "had continued about the space of 400 years rather without obscurity than with any great lustre."[1] Villiers was educated locally and travelled in France between May 1609 and 1612/13. He was introduced to James I at Apethorpe in 1614 and soon displaced the former favorite Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset. From about 1618 until his death in 1628, Buckingham was second in power only to the King. James I and Charles I favored him to an extreme degree. As he rose in power and influence, Buckingham established a remarkable collection of paintings and sculpture and a cabinet of rarities which he housed in a series of mansions in London, Essex and Rutland.[2] The purpose of this paper is to shed a little more light on the Duke's patronage and collecting activities by introducing and commenting on five previously unpublished or little known documents.

The early seventeenth century saw the birth of English connoisseurship. Sixteenth-century figures such as Lord Lumley[3] had paved the way for men such as the Earl of Arundel (who inherited some Lumley objects) and Charles I who presided over what was, outwardly, the most civilized court England has ever seen.[4] Writers of this period often assert the qualitative and quantitative superiority of the Arundel and the royal collections. These assertions, however, must be seen in a firm and particular context. The Duke's collections were established from scratch between 1618—when he finally established his personal and political indispensibility to James I—and 1628, the bulk of the objects accruing before 1626.[5] Arundel, in contrast, collected assiduously for over forty years and was a privileged legatee.[6] Charles I inherited the nucleus of his collection from his brother Prince Henry in

Some of the material included here is drawn from my M.A. report "The Houses of the Duke of Buckingham," Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 1985. I would like to thank Roger Lockyer for his swift and encouraging replies to my queries and for bringing Document One to my attention.

[1]H. Wotton, *Reliquiae Wottonianae*, London, 1672, 208.
[2]For Buckingham's biography, see R. Lockyer, *Buckingham: The Life and Political Career of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham 1592-1628*, Harlow and New York, 1981. For his collections see note 21 below and for his houses see note 22 below. For his cabinet of rarities, see P. Leith-Ross, *The John Tradescants, Gardeners to the Rose and Lily Queen*, London, 1984, chapter 6.
[3]L. Cust, "The Lumley Inventories," *Walpole Society*, IV, 1918, 15-35.
[4]O. Millar, *Van Dyck in England*, London, 1982, 9.
[5]On this, see R. Lockyear, "An English Valido? Buckingham and James I" in R. Ollard and P. Tudor-Craig, eds., *For Veronica Wedgewood These: Studies in Seventeenth-Century History*, London, 1986, 45-58.
[6]D. Howarth, *Lord Arundel and His Circle*, London and New Haven, 1985.

1612 and his mother Queen Anne in 1617. He also collected for several decades.[7]

Although Buckingham would have been aware of the artistic and connoisseurial circles at Whitehall from his advent at court in 1614, it was not until Balthasar Gerbier entered his household that he seems to have developed some sort of interest in art. Gerbier (c. 1591-1667) was born to French parents in Zeeland as a scion of a minor noble family.[8] His early life is mysterious but it would seem he travelled widely, learned several languages and acquired polymathic skills. As Gerbier later expressed in an apologia:

> My attendance was pleasing to [Buckingham] because of my several languages, good hand in writing, skill in sciences as mathematics, architecture, drawing, painting, contriving of scenes, shows and entertainments for great Princes, besides many secrets which I had gathered from divers rare persons, as likewise of making of engines useful in war, as I made those which might blow up the dyke that stopped the passage to the town of Rochelle, for it was the same model of that of the Prince of Parma, when the attempt was on Antwerp. He did put me first to the contrivance of his habitations, to choose for him rarities, books, medals, marble statues and pictures. I did keep his cyphers (...).[9]

Gerbier came to England in 1616 in the train of the new Dutch ambassador Noel de Caron, to whom he had been recommended by Prince Maurice of Orange.[10] It is possible Buckingham became acquainted with Gerbier through his diplomatic contacts with de Caron. The latter may have recommended Gerbier to Buckingham as a virtuoso whose company he would enjoy, thereby flattering Buckingham's cultural pretensions and providing himself with a reliable source at the center of the court.[11]

We know that Buckingham sat for Gerbier for an equestrian miniature, signed and dated 1618, but the precise date of Gerbier's entry into Buckingham's household has been disputed.[12] Document One proves 1619 to be the year. It is certain that Buckingham would have realized that Gerbier was exactly the man who could help

[7]O. Millar, *The Queen's Pictures*, London, 1977, chapters 2 and 3. See also R. Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales and England's Lost Renaissance*, London, 1986.

[8]H.R. Williamson, *Four Stuart Portraits*, London, 1949, 29, 147, note 9. Apart from the *Dictionary of National Biography*, this is the only account of Gerbier I know.

[9]*Balthasar Gerbier, Knight, To All Men That Love Truth*, Paris, 1646, 1-2.

[10]*Dictionary of National Biography*, 1894, XXXIX, 148.

[11]I owe this suggestion to Roger Lockyer.

[12]One of only three surviving miniatures by Gerbier, it is in the collection of the Duke of Northumberland. Reproduced in *Apollo*, VIIIC, October, 1970, 250, fig. 2. The others are of Charles I when Prince of Wales in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Victoria and Albert Museum P47-1935) dated c.1618-1620, reproduced in J. Murdoch et al., *The English Miniature*, London and New Haven, 1981, color plate 15d, and of Prince Maurice of Orange, c.1614, in the Dutch Royal Collection. See London, Victoria and Albert Museum, *The Orange and the Rose*, ex. cat. no. 84. References to other paintings by Gerbier can be found in G. Goodman, *The Court and Times of King James the First*, ed. J.S. Brewer, London, 1839, 11: 260-267, where miniatures of the Spanish Infanta and Buckingham's family are mentioned as well as a large oil painting designed to celebrate Buckingham's return from Spain in 1623.

him build up the necessary cultural corollary to his political status and power.

Gerbier was "a man at home in every country and specially attached to none."[13] He was an arrogant self-aggrandiser who, despite his portraits of Prince Maurice and Charles I (when Prince of Wales), as well as Buckingham, once declared:

> Je jure le Dieu vivant que je ne fus jamais peintre que depuis que je me suis adonne sous vos protection sortant du Prince d'Orange. Et vienne ce qu'il pourra, je ne le seray jamais (...).[14]

This is patently untrue. Gerbier was diligent, nevertheless, in the Duke's service, and it is to his efforts and taste that Buckingham owed most of his collection.

While Buckingham's emerging political role confined him to the Court, Gerbier was able to travel across Europe in pursuit of art. He visited France and Italy in 1621-1622[15] and probably attended on the Duke in Spain in 1623.[16] In 1624, Gerbier was once again in France.[17] One of Gerbier's earliest ventures on the Duke's behalf may have been to Antwerp in July 1619 to the auction of the collection of paintings of Charles de Croy, Duc d'Aarschot.[18] Several Veroneses from the d'Aarschot collection entered that of Buckingham—and Veronese was indisputably Gerbier's favorite painter.[19]

Gerbier would have been able to extend his knowledge of Veronese during his time spent in Venice in 1621-1622. Gerbier most likely motivated the Duke, in 1624, to approach the Doge of Venice, through the Venetian ambassador in London, with a virtual demand "to have certain pictures made by Paul Veronese, that are in a certain room or passage towards the great library in the palace of St. Mark at Venice" (see Document Two). This clumsy approach was diplomatically fended off, but the surviving correspondence reveals the less subtle side of the international diplomacy from which Buckingham was apparently ready to profit.

[13]Williamson, 26, citing Gardiner.

[14]Oxford, Bodleian Library Tanner ms 73(2) f. 522.: "I swear by the living God that I was never a painter until I placed myself under your protection leaving that of the Prince of Orange. And come what may, I shall never be one (...)."

[15]L.-R. Betcherman, "Balthasar Gerbier in Seventeenth-Century Italy," *History Today*, XI, May, 1961, 325-331. I.G. Philip, "Balthasar Gerbier and the Duke of Buckingham's Pictures," *Burlington Magazine*, IC, May, 1957, 155-156.

[16]C.R. Cammell, *The Great Duke of Buckingham*, London, 1939, 335.

[17]Goodman, 11: 326-344.

[18]S. Speth-Holterhoff, *Les Peintres Flamands de Cabinets d'Amateurs au XVIIe Siècle*, Brussels, 1957, 37-39. A. Pinchart, "Inventaire de la collection de tableaux de Charles de Croy...," *Archives des Arts, Sciences et Lettres*, I, 1860, 158-173. The d'Aarschot collection seems to have been well known in England. Arundel's Roman agent, William Smith, reminded him in 1616 that he had "at Brussels some five years past (...) showed unto your Honour the paintings of the Duke of Askott;" quoted by Howarth, 56. The Earl of Somerset used William Trumbull in an effort to get some d'Aarschot paintings (he died in January, 1612). In a letter of October, 1612, Trumbull notes "the Late Duke of Aarschot (...) was exceedingly well-fitted in that kind (...) of excellent pictures he hath great abundance and I know some will be sold." Quoted by Howarth, 60, note 8, who did not realize that the two references were to the same individual.

[19]Goodman, 11: 343. For Buckingham's Veroneses, see T. Pignatti, *Veronese: L'Opera Completa*, Venice, 1976, I, nos. 301-307, A383, A384, A388.

Buckingham's and Gerbier's predeliction for Venetian painting is reflected in a "Mesmoire" Gerbier drew up in Paris in 1624. The "Mesmoire" listed paintings and sculpture he was attempting to acquire for the Duke (see Document Three). Indeed, such was the range and quality of works available there that Gerbier prolonged his stay: "I never could have thought that they had so many rare things in France" he wrote to the Duke.[20] Of the items in the "Mesmoire", the following found their way into the Duke's collection: del Sarto's *Christ Mort,* Bassano's *Circumcision,* Titian's *Madonna,* Tintoretto's *Flagellation,* Palma's *Grand Tableau du Roy Henry,* the Bassanos of the Duke of Bourbon, Bassano's *Hercules,* as well as one by Blocklant.[21] Not once, however, in the surviving correspondence between the Duke and Gerbier does the latter ever seek permission to buy anything, underlining the autonomy with which Gerbier was acting.

Buckingham's paintings were principally displayed at York House on the Strand in London. The house was acquired in 1622 and its extension and renovation were begun immediately. For this work Gerbier served as the Duke's architect.[22] He may have personally designed the Great Chamber where Rubens's equestrian portrait of the Duke and his allegorical ceiling piece of the Duke triumphing over Envy and Anger were hung.[23] During the period in which this work was under way, any mention of architecture was an effective means to gain the Duke's attention. His interest was open to exploitation as Document Four indicates.

In December 1624, Sir Albert Morton received several documents from Sir Henry Wotton, the ambassador to Venice, and his step-brother. Most were letters for forwarding, but three of the items were especially interesting. The first was an unsealed letter to Buckingham recommending Morton, the second was a ground plan of the Farnese villa at Caprarola, and the third a perspective elevation of the villa. Morton was to read the letter, seal it and pass it on to the Duke. Its postscript contained a reference to Caprarola to engage the Duke's interest, which Morton could then meet by presenting him with the plans. The whole episode was designed to allow Morton to ingratiate himself with Buckingham. In a postscript to his cover letter, Wotton indicated to Morton that he would need to explain the relationship between the plans to the Duke. Wotton knew that such plans were exactly the thing to interest the Duke—otherwise the plan would have been redundant. Early in 1625,

[20]Goodman, 11: 337.

[21]Compare the "Mesmoire" with the two unpublished ducal inventories: R. Davies, "An Inventory of the Duke of Buckingham's Paintings etc. at York House in 1635," *Burlington Magazine,* X, March, 1907, 376-382. B. Fairfax, *Catalogue of the Curious Collection of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham...,* London, 1758. See also Philip McEvansoneya, "A Note on the Duke of Buckingham's Inventory," *Burlington Magazine,* CXXVIII, August, 1986, 607.

[22]See P. McEvansoneya, "The Houses of the Duke of Buckingham," M.A. report, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 1985, and Document Five where Gerbier is explicitly referred to as the Duke's "architect."

[23]For the Great Chamber, see P.H. Hulton, "Drawings of England in the Seventeenth Century by William Schellinks, Jacob Esselens and Lambert Doomer," *Walpole Society,* XXXV, 1956, cat. 34, pl. 28. For the Rubens painting, see G. Martin, "Rubens and Buckingham's 'fayrie ile'," *Burlington Magazine,* CVIII, December, 1966, 613-618 and J. Held, "Rubens's Sketch of Buckingham Rediscovered," *Burlington Magazine,* CXVIII, August, 1976, 547-551.

Morton replaced Sir John Calvert as Secretary of State.

Gerbier, of course, probably already knew Caprarola from his visits to Italy. He mentions it in two books he published in the 1660's.[24]

Internal changes were also being made at York House. These included the siting of a large marble fireplace which, with a marble gateway, had been presented to Buckingham in a circuitous manner by Sir Dudley Carleton, the ambassador to the Hague, in the hope of advancement of his impending return to London. Buckingham's interest in the marbles was gained by the use of sketches, under the pretence that they were to be sold by a Liège merchant. Gerbier was sent to assess and value them, but Buckingham was persuaded to accept the marbles as a gift without recompence. The fireplace was carved with the arms of the Elector of Bavaria, for whom the marbles were originally intended as a gift from the Elector of Cologne. The latter had given them instead to Carleton who decided to put them to his own purpose. Their value was said to amount to four hundred pounds.[25]

Through his employment of Gerbier as his art agent (as well as his diplomatic agent) and through the good offices of ambassadors, Buckingham was rapidly able to amass a great collection.[26] These ambassadors, principally Carleton in the Low Countries, Wotton in Venice and Sir Thomas Roe in Constantinople, generally used sub-agents rather than handling the actual deals and purchases themselves.[27] Carleton once dispatched his wife to an auction on behalf of Buckingham and Elizabeth of Bohemia.[28] Surprisingly, in his surviving correspondence, Buckingham never mentions his collection or even a particular object.[29] Gerbier's letters, in contrast, are full of information and observations. This fact, and the autonomy with which Gerbier bought art, seems to suggest that he indulged in his own tastes and interests at the Duke's complaisant expense.

Gerbier once wrote to Buckingham rather gloatingly of the "treasure of

[24]B. Gerbier, *A Brief Discourse Concerning the Three Chief Principles of Magnificent Building...,* London, 1662, 10: German travellers would note in their "table-books" the "dimensions of the Phanteon (sic) and of the Amphitheaters; as also of Caprarola...." B. Gerbier, *Subsidium Peregrantibus...,* Oxford, 1665, 74, where Caprarola appears at the end of a list of "good" buildings, mainly French. H. Wotton, *The Elements of Architecture,* London, 1624, 19, refers to Caprarola as "that famous piece" and makes a complimentary reference to Vignola, its architect, on 33. Gerbier, *A Brief Discourse...,* 5, notes that builders "may have seen the books of Italian architects, have the traditions of Vignola in their pockets (...)." Presumably he is referring here to Vignola's *Regola delli Cinque Ordini,* Rome, 1562.

[25]For a discussion of the political aspects of the gift, see J.H. Barcroft, "Carleton and Buckingham: The Quest for Office," in H.S. Reinmuth, ed., *Early Stuart Studies,* Minneapolis, 1970, 122-136. The value of the marbles is given in London, Public Record Office, SP 14/172/57.

[26]Lockyer, *Buckingham,* passim.

[27]L.P. Smith, *Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton,* Oxford, 1907, 11: 243-244, 257-258. S. Richardson, ed., *Negociations of Sir Thomas Roe in his Embassy to the Ottoman Porte from the year 1621 to 1628 Inclusive,* London, 1740, 511, 763-764.

[28]W.N. Sainsbury, *Original, Unpublished Letters Illustrative of the Life of Sir Peter Paul Rubens...,* London, 1859, 305-309.

[29]We have at least one clue to Buckingham's attitude, his infamous instruction to Roe: "(...) lay not out much money upon alabaster (...). Neither am I so fond of antiquity (as you rightly conjecture) to court it in a deformed or misshapen stone: but where you shall find beauty and antiquity together in a stone, I shall not stand upon any cost (...)." Richardson, 534.

rarities" he had amassed on the Duke's behalf in only five years and expressed his pleasure at the cash value of the objects.[30] Yet so little did Buckingham seem to have appreciated the efforts of Gerbier and others in acquiring Titian's *Secretary*, for instance, that Gerbier once begged the Duke "to examine it a little more leisurely."[31] This was the picture in front of which Inigo Jones had almost thrown himself to his knees.[32] Some evidence suggests, nevertheless, that there was a practical component in the Duke's virtuoso interests, such as the occasion on which he went barrow digging on Salisbury Plain and recovered a silver-tipped bugle horn which he displayed in his cabinet of rarities.[33] Buckingham seems to have had no interest in drawings—which Arundel valued highly[34]—nor did he make any attempt to record any part of his collection as Arundel did in *Marmora Arundeliana*.[35] The Duke of Buckingham's collection can best be seen as an exercise in power rather than in taste or genuine antiquarian interest.

[30]Goodman, 11: 369-370.
[31]*Georges d'Armagnac and Guillaume Philandrier* in the collection of the Duke of Northumberland. See M. Jaffe, "The Picture of the Secretary of Titian," *Burlington Magazine*, CVIII, March, 1966, 114-126.
[32]Goodman, 11: 360-361.
[33]Lockyer, *Buckingham*, 411.
[34]D. Sutton, "The Earl of Arundel and Surrey as a Collector of Drawings," *Burlington Magazine*, LXXXIX, January, 1947, 3-9, February, 1947, 32-37, March, 1947, 75-77.
[35]J. Selden, *Mamora Arundeliana*, London, 1628. Patrick Junius, the Royal Librarian who helped prepare the book, described Arundel as "alone among magnates" in caring "for the records of antiquity." Howarth, 97.

Document One
Agreement between the Duke of Buckingham and Balthasar Gerbier.[1]

Whereas I, George, Duke of Buckingham, have given to my servant Balthasar Gerbier the charge and keeping of Buckingham House with all the moveables which are in the same (the wardrobe excepted) of which he hath given me a full account from the year 1619 when he began to have the keeping of my pictures and other rarities to this present day, which house and rarities I do leave in his keeping. [Gerbier is given to dwell in the house at the east side of the gatehouse of Buckingham House] and he and his heirs shall have possession for 31 years for which he shall pay yearly on the birthday (...) of my son George, Earl of Coventry (...) one pair of gloves. [Gerbier is to enjoy possession unless within 31 years] I should build the front of the said Buckingham House [in which case Gerbier shall provide his own accomodation]. It is also my pleasure that whensoever Orazio Gentileschi His Majesty's picture maker doth remove from the lodging (...) which are adjoining to this said house of Balthasar Gerbier my servant that the two upstairs rooms towards the street which are in the same body of the said house shall appertain and be fully to the use of the said Balthasar Gerbier (...) with the kitchen and the great upper room in which the said Orazio Gentileschi is making at this present his pictures (...).[2]

[1]Undated, uncatalogued manuscript published by kind permission of Lord Fairfax of Cameron, on behalf of his mother, the Dowager Lady Fairfax. The document (rendered here into modern English) must date from after 13 January 1628, when the Duke's son was born, and before 23 August 1628, when the Duke was murdered. This seems to be the earlier document referred to in London, Public Record Office E178/5973 "Inquisition as to the possessions of Balthasar Gerbier, an alien, at Buckingham House" (see E. Croft-Murray, "The Landscape Background in Rubens's *St. George and the Dragon*," *Burlington Magazine*, LXXXIX, February, 1947, 90, note 11.)
[2]The brackets denote paraphrases and the ellipses are mine. This is a long legal document and only the operative sections have been included here.
Gerbier, who is not always a reliable or honest source, stated in an undated letter to Sir Francis Windebank that he came to England in 1617, and in 1629 claimed "twelve years' service" to Buckingham and his wife. See Sainsbury, note 28 above, 316: 135-136.

Document Two
Alvise Valaresso, Venetian Ambassador to England, to the Doge and Senate.[1]

It is a good while ago since I received hints more than once of the taste which the Duke of Buckingham had for certain pictures of Venice, but I turned a deaf ear for many reasons. But this week the Earl of Desmont, formally Lord Dingwall and now a near relation of the duke, came to offer you his services and after some preliminary remarks stated clearly that Buckingham desired above all things some pictures in accordance with the enclosed memorial and he would not stint money to buy them, but as they were in the hands of your Serenity, he would value them as a treasure however he obtained them. I told the earl that he might rest assured that your Serenity was anxious above all things to please the duke, whom you esteemed very highly, although with regard to these pictures which he desired, your Serenity was accustomed to guard such things jealously, and rarely if ever to part with them, as is the manner of republics. I said nothing further, recognizing that any concession would open the way to similar demands; on the other hand it is no small matter to win by a thing of no great consideration an influencial person, old in the king's favour and new in the prince's and quite recently considered by the people as the guiding star of their hopes.

London, the 29th March, 1624.

Memorial of pictures desired by the Duke of Buckingham.[2]

The Duke of Buckingham desireth by any means possible to have certain pictures, made by Paul Veronese, that are in a certain room or passage toward the great library in the palace of St. Mark at Venice.

Extract from the Doge's reply.[3]

(...) With regard to the requests for pictures in the name of the Duke of Buckingham, you took a proper course to prevent further demands, and we commend you and your application, confirmed by your last letters, in investigating the current events at that Court are equally praiseworthy (...).

Venice, May 2nd, 1624

[1]The original of this document, which I have not seen, is in Italian and is in the Frari, Venice. This translation is given in *Calendar of State Papers, Venice,* XVIII, 1623-1625, London, 1912, 258, no. 319.
[2]The original of this memorial is in English. *Calendar of State Papers, Venice,* XVIII, 258, no. 320. The paintings referred to were possibly the three tondi in the Libreria Vecchia of *Music, Arithmetic, Music and Philosophy and Honour.* See T. Pignatti, *Veronese L'Opera Completa,* Venice, 1976, cat. 61, 62, 63.
[3]The original in Italian. This translation given in *Calendar of State Papers, Venice,* XVIII, 290, no. 362.

Document Three
Gerbier to Buckingham from Paris, December 1624.[1]

"Mesmoire des choses lesquels sont à Paris entre mains de Seigneurs."
Chez Monsieur de Blinville Chevalier de Esprit et Gentilhomme de la Chambre du Roy un tableau de Tintoret: histoire de Schipion. Excelente.
A l'hostel de Villeroy, chez Monsieur d'Alincourt et son cabinet un tableau d'un Christ mort et cinq figures paint de la main Andreo del Sarto.[2] Chose excelente.
Chez le Marechal de Souvre une circoncision de nos Seigneur. Un grand tableau de la main de Francisco Bassan.
Chez Monsieur de Momorassy un tableau d'une Madonna de Titian chose excelente. et un aultre de Tintoret de Notre Seigneur foitte aussy en la maison.[3] Equan, deux statues de deux Esclaves faittes de Michel Angelo.
Sensuivint certains tableaux du President Chevallier lesquels en une maison à trois lieues de Paris à La Chaussee.
En premier un grand tableau du Roy Henry troisième lequel part de la main de Jacobus Palma.[4]
Second, un grand tableau de l'histoire de Bourbon à cheval lequel assaille la ville de Rome, de Bassan.
Tiercement, un grand tableau de Bourbon qui monte par Escalla la ville de Rome. De Bassan.
4-un grand tableau histoire de Herculle quy sille parmy les Femmes. De Bassan.
5-un tableau de Blocklant. histoire de la Renomme avecques un corps mort.
6-un petit tableau du Jugement de Salomon de la main del Piombo.
Environ 20 testes de Marbre et de Bronze Antiques. Chez celuy qui garde les tableaux du Roy une teste de Sainct Guiliaume. Faict de Giorgion chose Excelente.[6]

[1]Oxford, Bodleian Library, Tanner ms 73(2) f. 121. By permission of the Keeper of Western Manuscripts. It is discussed by L.-R. Betcherman, "The York House Collection and its Keeper," *Apollo,* XCII, October, 1970, 250-259, but published here in its entirety for the first time.
[2]Identifiable as the *Pietà* now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. See J. Shearman, *Andrea del Sarto,* Oxford, 1965, cat. 56.
[3]Identifiable as the *Flagellation* in the National Gallery, Prague. See R. Pallucchini and P. Rossi, *Tintoretto: Le Opere Sacre e Profane,* Milan, 1982, cat. 331.
[4]Identifiable as the *Visit of Henry III to Venice* in the Gemäldegalerie, Dresden. See S.M. Rinaldi, *Palma Il Giovane: L'Opera Completa,* Milan, 1984, cat. 88.
[5]Identifiable as *Hercules spinning amongst the women* in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. See Betcherman, 257, fig. 10.
[6]List of things at Paris in noble hands.
At the house of M. de Blinville Chevalier du Esprit and Gentleman of the Royal Bedchamber a painting by Tintoretto: the story of Scipio. Excellent.
At the house of M. d'Alincourt at Villeroy and his cabinet a painting of the dead Christ with five figures by Andrea del Sarto.
An excellent thing.
At the house of the Marechal de Souvre a circumcision of our Saviour.
A large painting by Francesco Bassano.
At the house of M. de Montmorency, a painting of the Madonna, an excellent thing, and another by Tintoretto of the Flagellation of our Saviour also in the house. Also two statues of two Slaves by Michelangelo.
Following are certain paintings owned by president Chevallier which are in a house three leagues from Paris at La Chaussee.
Firstly a large painting of King Henry III by Jacobo Palma.

Secondly a large painting of the Duke of Bourbon on horseback attacking the city of Rome, by Bassano.
Thirdly a large painting of Bourbon climbing the walls of Rome. By Bassano.
4-a large painting of Hercules spinning amongst the women. By Bassano.
5-a painting by Blocklant. The story of the renowned [Hercules] with a dead body.
6-a small painting of the Judgement of Solomon by del Piombo. About twenty antique bronze and marble heads. At the house of the Keeper of the King's Pictures a head of St. William. By Giorgione, an excellent thing.

Document Four

Sir Henry Wotton to Sir Albert Morton, from Venice, 24th (December?) 1624.[1]

I send you both the inclosed, unclosed, and my seal withal, that when you have perused them, you may seal them; for because they contain a recommendation of yourself, it were somewhat incongruous to present them open.
You had yesterday received them, but that I suspended my hand too long in expectation of James; about whom we are yet in much doubt of some misadventure by his stay. You see that in the postscript to the Duke, I mention the design of Caprarola, which I have left out of his letter, that you may not come unto his with empty hands.
It shall be fit for yourself to offer him your service abroad; which I have (as you see) offered the Prince through Mr. Thomas Carie's hands, who, I hope, will let his Highness see my letter. And so, languishing to hear somewhat from my nephew, with all my duties remembered to all, I rest,

Your ever true friend,
Henry Wotton.

Upon the design you must play the mountebank. And tell the Duke, that the one paper containeth the plant or the ground-lines, the other, the reared work, in perspective with all the dimensions so exactly, as if it please him, he may easily have a model made thereof in pasteboard.[2] If Mr. Thomas Cary should by chance have been sent away again into France, then Deliver, with my humble service, the letter to my Lord of Lepington his father, and beseech him to show it to the Prince.

[1]Given here from L.P. Smith's definitive work *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton*, Oxford, 1907, 11:287, no.408.

[2]Gerbier advocated an italinate architectural aesthetic in his writings, such as in *The Interpreter of the Academie*..., London, 1649, 178. In his book *The Elements of Architecture*, London, 1624, 64-65, Sir Henry Wotton advises the builder to have a model made and never to rely on plans alone, no matter how precise. Gerbier too supported the use of models, both in practice during the building work at York House and at the Duke's residence in Essex, New Hall (see Goodman, 11: 359-360), and in theory in his book *A Brief Discourse*..., 10, where he advises builders never to deviate from a model once finalized. On architectural models generally in this period, see M. Airs, *The Making of the English Country House 1500-1640*, London, 1975, esp. 75.

Document Five

Dudley Carleton to his uncle Sir Dudley Carleton in the Hague, from London, 16th January, 1625.[1]

My very good L^{d}
Understanding by a good friend one very neare my Ld Duke of Buckingham of a deliberation his Grace had off doing y^{r} L^{p} some good turns but that he knew not what in particular to incline, I repared to him two dayes since and represented the hopes and dependence y^{r} L^{p} had fastened uppon him, for the relief of y^{r} private estate, either by some honest revelation or some support in the place where you now are; and rehearsing the best considerations I could make super totam materiam I humbly besought him to be mindefull of you. I pre sed nothing in particular; being so advised by Sr George Goring: and accordingly my answer was generall: that he would have a care of you. I was likewise informed by another way that certainly some good was intended because his L^{p} had lately spoken very affectionately of you. Hereupon by advice of Mr Chamberlain and Mr Burlamachi I rendered yesterday sight of the pourtraicts of the marble (: those which I had of Mr Burlamachi I not haveing yet receaved the other wch y^{r} L^{ps} letters mention to be sent by Mr Argent of a fairer worke:) pretending only that a certain Liege marchant had desired me to show him the same, and that yf they were for his service, the marble was to be had on reasonable termes. he sent one Gerbier, his Architecte, to see the pieces, who made a true report of the worth and beautie of them and I was presently sent for to my L^{d}: who viewing againe the pourtraicts, began to ask for the marchant and to know the price. I desired his Grace to expresse yf he found they were for his service and he saying he was willing to deale for them. I told him the marchant was not in England [illegible word] seeing his L^{p} had a liking for them the truth of the [illegible word] was that they were sent by y^{r} L^{p} to be presented to his G^{r} as a meane token of the devotion you have to his service : that you had caused them to be brought from Liege for his use, understanding how much his G^{r} was addicted to building; at this he was somwhat blank and says he knew y^{r} estate was not in case to make such presents, and that he could not take them uppon such termes. I besought him to make no scruple; saying that they had not bin costly to you, but that the Elector of Collen being at Liege and hearing that you were enquiring for some rarity in this kind took the occasion to gratifie you for service done him (of w^{h} I related the storys) adding that they were provided for the E. of Bavaria, whose armes were uppon the chimney. [Two illegible words] marbles wch I had order to present to his G^{r} if I found they might be useful to him: w^{h} haveing perceaved as well by his Graces one language as that of his architecht I could no longer conceal the truth, and sayd yf he did not accept them, he would kill y^{r} hart. Hereupon he accepted the present, telling me he would give orders about it. And this much passed yesterday.
I must before I speake more of the marbles, here, lett y^{r} L^{p} understand that Sr Albertus Morton is in this interim to be made Secretary in Sr George Calvert's place:

wch is so assured to him (: though not actually dispatched:) that he receaved open congratulation of all men as well for this honour, as for the joy of his wedding... The marbles, being so rich and for no [illegible word] use lying at the charge of the [illegible word] in a warehouse, not likely to be sold on the suddain and if [illegible word] to a marchant [illegible word] for ever being a present I was rather persuaded to offer my Ld Duke at this time (though I dreamt not of doing it when I wrote last to y^r L^p) to show that though he had disposed of the Secretaryes place as above-sayd yet we had no less confidence in his favour than before and likewise to hold him on in any good inclination he might have conceaved, whatsoever it might be.
This day being at york-house Mr Crow came to me and told me that in the morning my L^d had demanded his advice what he should send y^r L^p in recompense of some things he had receaved from you, saying that you looked for the Secretaryes place, wch was disposed, and he doubted that missing thereof in this sort it might dazzle y^r affections to him. Crow answered that sending anything back were all one as yf he should bid you send up the rest and be therew^th content; that it would certainly dead y^r affection to his Grace absolutely; and that he haveing many ways to do good for his friends might think of some better to give y^r L^p contentment. I answeared Mr Crow that I could make it appeare to him by y^r L^ps letters that you never affected the Secretaryes place more than any other honest revocation wch might free you from debts and discredit after so many yeares foreign employm^t; that Sr Albs Morton was a gentleman whome you greatly loved and at whose preferm^t you would be truly glad: I gave him thanks for holding his L^p off from returning present for present.

University of Leicester
Leicester, England

[1]London, Public Record Office SP14/182/4. See also SP 14/172/57,69, SP 14/173/83 and SP 14/182/42 which reveal how the whole episode of the presentation of the marbles builds up and is resolved. I have omitted the end of the letter which is not relevant to present purposes.

Rubens's *The Head of Cyrus Brought to Queen Tomyris*: an Alternative Interpretation

MICHELLE FACOS

The Head of Cyrus Brought to Queen Tomyris in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (hereafter MFA) (fig. 1) had only recently attracted scholarly attention.[1] It is a large work (141 × 204 cm) from the studio of Rubens. No documentation has come to light establishing its date, meaning or patronage. Robert Berger, nonetheless, offers the hypothesis that Rubens painted it in 1622-1623 for the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia (1566-1633)—ruler of the Spanish Netherlands following her husband's death in 1621—as a symbol of her authority and goodness. Available evidence suggests an equally plausible alternative: that the MFA painting is a work by Rubens's studio assistants dating from 1624-1625 and that it was intended for the Brussels town hall as an exemplum of justice.

As Berger states, the version of the death of Cyrus illustrated here comes from Herodotus (I, 213-15).[2] Following the last battle between the Massagetae and the Persians, the widowed Tomyris, queen of the Massagetae, avenged the death of her son, Spargapises, who had been captured by the Persians. She did not know that the reason King Cyrus failed to honor her demand for Spargapises's return was that he had committed suicide while in captivity. She recovered the body of King Cyrus from the battlefield and dipped his decapitated head in a vessel of blood.[3]

The oldest known pictorial record of this subject occurs in the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, a fourteenth-century manuscript, where the victories of Tomyris, Judith and Jael, over Cyrus, Holofernes and Sisera, respectively, prefigure

[1]The most comprehensive study, and the one to which I shall frequently refer, is R.W. Berger's "Rubens's *Queen Tomyris with the Head of Cyrus*," *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin* [Boston], 1979, 4-27.

[2]Herodotus and Xenophon have been the sources most often used for the history of Cyrus the Great, ruler of the Persian Empire from 558 to 529 B.C. Herodotus wrote his highly romanticized and inaccurate account fifty years after Cyrus's death. Xenophon (444-357 B.C.), a general serving under Cyrus's grandson, relates an entirely different version of the king's death in Book VII of his *Cyropaedia*. Here, Cyrus dies quietly in his royal palace in Pasargadae, the capital, surrounded by family and friends after naming his son Cambyses as his successor.

The true story came to light only in this century, when a cylinder and tablets recording the history of Cyrus were unearthed in an archaeological dig. No scribes travelled with Cyrus on his last campaign to drive the nomadic raiders out of Cyra. His army pursued the Sarmatians into a valley where the Massagetae were waiting in ambush. During the Persian retreat, Cyrus was wounded by a lance, and he died three days later. His followers sealed his body in wax and returned it to Pasargadae. (H. Lamb, *Cyrus the Great*, 1960, 269-271.)

Cyrus is also mentioned in the *Book of Ezra*, since in 538 B.C. he freed the Jews from the Babylonian Captivity and sent Seshbazzar to govern Palestine. Cyrus ordered the restoration of religious customs and the rebuilding of the Temple of Solomon.

[3]Stephanie Dickey, a doctoral candidate at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, informed me that the tradition of posthumous punishment continued into the seventeenth century, when the dissection of criminals following their execution was considered as an additional act of retribution.

1. Peter Paul Rubens, *The Head of Cyrus Brought to Queen Tomyris*, c.1622-1625, oil on canvas. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Juliana Cheney Edwards Collection (photo: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

2. Ambrosius Benson (after the Master of Flémalle), *Queen Tomyris with the Head of Cyrus*, early 16th century, oil on panel. Vienna, Gemaeldegalerie der Akademie der bildenden Künste (photo: Gemaeldegalerie der Akademie der bildenden Künste, Vienna)

the victory of the Virgin Mary over Satan through the death of her son Christ.[4] In fifteenth-century illustrations of the *Speculum*, the scene is usually set on the battlefield, in keeping with Herodotus's description. The Master of Flémalle may have been the first to depart from this tradition in his painting of the vengeance of Queen Tomyris (now lost, fig. 2).[5] His work is the earliest known easel painting of

[4]The *Speculum* was written in Strasbourg by a Dominican friar. The manuscript is in the Staatsbibliothek, Munich, and was reprinted in 1907, Lutz and Perdrizet, editors. Berger discusses it in some detail, 5-8.
[5]Hugo von Tschudi attributed this lost work to the Master of Flémalle in "Der Meister von Flémalle," *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, 1898, XIX, 103-105.

the subject and exists in two slightly differing versions, of which a number of copies survive.[6] One of these, by Petrus Peters, dated 1610, hangs in the Palace of Justice in Bruges.[7] From 1587 until at least 1662, the Master of Flémalle's work was hanging in the Episcopal Palace in Ghent.[8]

There are two possible original locations for the Master of Flémalle's *Cyrus*. Some scholars believe that it, along with his *Jael and Sisera* (lost) and *Judith and Holofernes* (lost), and an undocumented painting of the Virgin defeating Satan, belonged to an altarpiece illustrating the *Speculum*.[9] Another more likely possibility is that it originally hung alone in the Episcopal Palace. This explanation is not only consistent with the available data but also with a typological interpretation.

Throughout the sixteenth century, the Catholic clergy in Ghent fought to maintain control over a population whose religious convictions leaned increasingly toward Protestantism (first Lutheranism, then Calvinism). By 1578, Calvinism was the only officially recognized religion. In 1584, Philip II of Spain regained control of the city. He appointed Guillaume Lindanus bishop in 1587, and reestablished Catholicism as the official religion.[10] The subject of Queen Tomyris with the head of Cyrus would have been a symbol particularly appropriate for the triumph of Catholicism over Protestantism, as well as a general reminder of the role of the bishop as a dispenser of ecclesiastical justice.

Juliaan De Ridder has demonstrated that in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Flanders there was an intimate connection between the concepts of secular and religious justice. Indeed, most town halls contained a depiction of the Last Judgement.[11] Thus a dual interpretation of the vengeance of Queen Tomyris would

[6]See Berger, page 8, note 19 and page 20.

[7]Another copy hangs in the Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der bildenden Künste, Vienna (fig. 2) and has most recently been attributed to the sixteenth-century painter Ambrosius Benson. See S. Sulzberger, "Ajoutes au catalogue de Ambrosius Benson," *Oud Holland*, 1961, LXXI, 187-189.

[8]Its presence was recorded in the Palace inventories of 1587 and 1662, as noted in C. van de Velde, "Enkele gegevens over Gentse schilderijen," *Gentse Bijdragen tot de Kunstgeschiedenis en de Oudheidkunde*, 1967, XX, 798, 201.

The Episcopal Palace was erected in the 1560's, during the reign of Philip II of Spain, on the site of the Abbey of St. Bavo, which the Spanish had razed for this purpose along with the Church of St. Savior. In 1568, the first bishop was installed. See *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie écclesiastiques*, Paris, 1977(?), XIX, 1008.

Sulzberger, 187, states that the location of this work was the *"Chirus camer,"* and in van de Velde's article, 198, it is listed as being in "de Camere van Meynen heere vigilus voortyts ghenaempt Cyrus camere." Sulzberger, 187, adds, "la destination originale était certainement celle d'un tableau de justice."

[9]Both Perdrizet (*Étude sur le Speculum humanae salvationis*, Leipzig, 1907, 158-159) and F. Winkler (*Der Meister von Flémalle und Rodier van der Weyden*, Strasbourg, 1913, 23-25) have suggested this.

[10] *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie écclesiastiques*, 1008-1009.

[11]In his survey of paintings commissioned for courts of aldermen in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Flanders, De Ridder has found that "in every town hall there was at least one 'Scene of Justice' (...). In the 16th century there were often more than one on the same spot...most frequently the scene is a 'Last Judgment'...some representations were polyvalent." See "Gerechtigheidstaterein in de 15de en de 16de eeuw, geschilderd voor schepenhuizen in Vlaandern," *Gentse Bijdragen tot de Kunstgeschiedenis*, 1979-1980, XXV, 62. Unfortunately, De Ridder does not survey all such paintings, nor does he give a complete list of the subjects and the locations that he did investigate.

3. Peter Paul Rubens, *Albert and Nicholas, the Artist's Sons*, c.1627-1628, oil on canvas. Vaduz, Liechtenstein Gallery (photo: Atelier Walter Wachter)

make an especially apt subject for a town hall.

The Head of Cyrus Brought to Queen Tomyris is generally dated 1622-1623 on the assumption that the two pages are contemporary portraits of Rubens's sons and on the similarity in facture to that of the *History of Marie de'Medici* series.[12] That these are portraits of Albert (born 1614) and Nicholas (1618) cannot be doubted. They appear two or three years older in the double portrait in Vaduz (fig. 3), and closely resemble the portraits in the firmly dated cartoon *The Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek* (1627-1628, fig. 4). The proximity between the depictions of the youths in these works suggest that the Vaduz portrait can be assigned a similar date.[13] Judging from the age difference of the boys in the cartoon and the MFA painting, I would date the latter about 1624-1625. If the Rooses date of 1623-1624 is correct for

[12]M. Rooses, *L'oeuvre de Rubens*, Anvers, 1890, IV, 4.

[13]Chubby baby Nicholas appears astride a lion in the *Marriage of Henry IV and Marie de'Medici*. If this is a contemporary portrait, it dates from 1621 at the earliest. It then seems unlikely that the MFA portrait of Nicholas dates only a year or two later.

4. Peter Paul Rubens, *The Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek*, c.1627-1628, oil on wood. Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, Gift of Syma Busiel (photo: National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)

Rubens's portrait of Nicholas de Respaigne (fig. 5), whose body was adopted for the portly oriental, this would provide further evidence for the later date.[11]

Rubens usually depicted historical scenes with great precision regarding costume and setting.[15] *The Head of Cyrus Brought to Queen Tomyris* is not set on the battlefield, but instead beside a palatial structure (note the Salomonic pillars), and

[14]M. Rooses, *Rubens*, London, 1904, II, 383.

[15]"Just as Rubens dressed figures from Roman history in garments he had copied from ancient works of art, he depicted rulers of medieval times in costumes established as authentic by earlier Northern works of art." K.L. Belkin, *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard*, XXIV, *The Costume Book*, Brussels, 1980, 52.

For his tapestry illustrations of the life of Decius Mus (1617), Rubens relied on Livy, remaining faithful to the text and to historical detail.

5. Peter Paul Rubens, *Nicholas de Respaigne*, c.1623-1624, oil on wood. Kassel, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen (photo: Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Kassel)

the figures are clad in contemporary attire.[16] Rubens did not base his scene on the common literary descriptions but, more likely, on pictorial tradition. Perhaps the Master of Flémalle's work, which may have initiated this tradition, influenced Rubens's own.[17]

Berger fails to discuss the possibility that tapestries may have had an impact on

[16]Berger, 24-25, maintains that these columns are intended as eucharistic references here as elsewhere in Rubens's oeuvre. While in this instance it is conceivable, it is also possible that the artist simply liked these common architectural elements. They appear in works such as *Earl Thomas of Arundel and his Wife* (1620) and the *Judgement of Solomon* (1620), where their Christian connection would be difficult to explain. Since Cyrus ordered the rebuilding of the Temple of Solomon, a reference to this event is equally plausible. Björn Fredlund notes that the twisted column "was used in religious scenes or in paintings representing royal surroundings." See *Arkitektur i Rubens måleri i form och funktion*, dissertation, Gothenburg University, 1974, 193.

[17]Rubens could have seen this work in the Episcopal Palace where it hung in his day. Berger, 9-10, thinks that this work greatly influenced Rubens's.

Rubens's choice of setting. From the late fifteenth century through the seventeenth century, Flanders, especially Antwerp and Brussels, was an important center.[18] Rubens was certainly aware of tapestry design and manufacture, particularly since he himself came from a family of tapestry makers and designed several series. Indeed, while in Genoa, he made numerous drawings and oil sketches (now lost) after Raphael's cartoons for the Sistine *Acts of the Apostles* series.[19] Rubens visited Rome as early as 1601 where he may have seen the panels of the *History of Cyrus* in the Barberini collection.[20] Although there is no record of a "Death" panel in this series (consisting now of five panels), it seems almost certain that one depicting the climactic event existed. Several of the figures in this series are broadly reminiscent of ones found in the MFA painting, thus a direct connection may have existed.[21]

There are two traditions in tapestry illustrations of this subject. One records the scenes in contemporary costume and locates the action in a palatial setting, like the Master of Flémalle's work. The Gardner set belongs to this tradition. The other records the literary descriptions with great accuracy and sets the death of Cyrus on the battlefield. This design, woven by Nicholas and Everard Leyniers in the first half of the sixteenth century (fig. 6), includes in the "Death" panel a kneeling

[18]Many of the important tapestry weavers working during this period wove series depicting the History of Cyrus. These series include: Martin Reymbouts (Brussels) for Gaspar and Francois Robiano (Antwerp) circa 1615, Everard and Nicholas Leyniers (Brussels) for Philip II circa 1640-1650, Jan van Tielt (Antwerp) circa 1620 and Erasmus de Pannemaker (Brussels) circa 1669.

Berger, 18, note 78, maintains that Pannemaker's direct source was the MFA painting, further supporting my hypothesis that the MFA painting was not a private commission for royalty, but instead a public work.

[19]For information on Raphael's impact on Rubens see M. Jaffè, "Rubens and Raphael," *Studies in Renaissance and Baroque Art presented to Anthony Blunt on his 60th Birthday*, 1967, 98-107 and Müller-Hofstade, "Some early Drawings by Rubens," *Master Drawings*, 1964, II, 3-17.

[20]According to Adolph Cavallo's manuscript for a catalogue of tapestries in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (pending publication), these panels were woven in Flanders between 1535 and 1550 by Jan der Moyen. Their design is of the school of Bernard von Orley. This set is recorded in the Barberini collection (Rome) inventories of 1608 and 1700. Since the Barberini purchased vast numbers of tapestries, Cavallo does not believe that they commissioned this set.

[21]Rubens may also have seen Dieric Bouts's panels illustrating the Judgement of Emperor Otto in the Louvain town hall (1471-1473). Of the four panels commissioned, only two designs were completed, one of which illustrates the *Execution of the Innocent Count*, a decapitation scene that may have influenced Rubens's composition. This work is discussed in M.J. Friedlander, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, III, *Dieric Bouts and Joos van Gent*, 1968, 11, plate 48.

6. *The Victory of Queen Tomyris*, 1550-1575, wool and silk. San Francisco, M. H. de Young Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel C. Jackling (photo: M. H. de Young Museum, San Francisco)

servant dipping Cyrus's head in a blood-filled vessel.[22] While Rubens may have seen this work, the correspondence is not so great as to indicate it as his source of inspiration. It is significant that the MFA painting belongs to the contemporary rather than to the literary/historical tradition of depicting this subject.

[22]A detail which may be of iconographic significance is the fact that in the bottom of each of the panels of the Lochinge set of this design, a scene from the story of Adam and Eve appears in a roundel. In the "Death" panel, the Expulsion is represented. According to von Tschudi, 104, the same subject occurs on one of the capitals in the Master of Flémalle's painting. A depiction of the Return with the Grapes from Canean appears on the capital of the column beside it. Perhaps the vines sculpted on the Salomonic columns in Rubens's work also refer to this theme. Berger, 25, note 119, erroneously describes the capital scenes in the Master of Flémalle's painting as ones of military conquest.

Other associative meanings the grapes and vines may have had included Christ's reference to himself as the true vine, and the marriage feast at Cana where Christ transformed water into wine.

The Expulsion was viewed by theologians as a kind of prefiguration of the Babylonian Captivity—both examples of the concept of Anathema, which means to curse, separate, cut off. In this regard it also traditionally refers to Judith and Holofernes. In Christian times this concept evolved from a physical one to a spiritual one—excommunication. See F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 1974, 50. Perhaps this meaning was known to those who saw the Master of Flémalle's painting in the Episcopal Palace. While Rubens may not have intended the MFA painting to embody all of these ideas, an erudite seventeenth-century viewer's familiarity with them would certainly have enhanced his appreciation of this work.

A resolution of the controversy over the authorship of Rubens's *Cyrus* would aid greatly in determining the painting's patronage. Some scholars believe that Rubens alone executed it.[23] Rooses was the first to doubt Rubens's exclusive authorship.[24] Others maintain that while Rubens designed the work, a likelihood which is supported by the existence of the master's sketch in the Albertina for the pair of women standing behind Tomyris, he had little part in its actual execution.[25] He probably provided sketches for other figures as well. Since many of the figures here occur in earlier works, it seems likely that Rubens's sketches for these works were re-used by his studio for this painting. As mentioned earlier, the Nicholas de Respaigne portrait was the basis for the portly oriental man. The soldier at the far right appears in the oil sketch for the Mechelen *Adoration of the Magi* (1618). The bareheaded soldier at the left, like many of Rubens's figures, is a composite. His head is taken from a sheet of head studies (dated 1619 according to Hind),[26] and his body occurs in the *Miracle of St. Francis Xavier* (1620, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna). The head of Queen Tomyris closely resembles that of one of the allegorical figures in *Peace under the Regency* from the Medici series (Louvre, Paris). Her attitude may derive from the two female figures at the left in the *Conversion of St. Bavo* (1612, National Gallery, London).

Scholars have identified the hand of other artists in addition to that of Rubens.[27] More recently, Professor Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann has questioned the supposition that Rubens had any part in the painting's execution.[28] I believe that an attentive examination of the MFA painting corroborates his findings. The inferior quality of this work becomes apparent when comparing it to other

[23]See E. Dillon, *Rubens*, London, 1909, 151-152. See also C. Cunningham, "A Great Rubens Comes to the Museum," *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts*, 1941, XXXIX, 38, who writes: "[It] is so superb in the organization of color and so brilliant in handling that it seems to bear the imprint of Rubens's own brush fairly consistently throughout."

[24]See Rooses, 4: "C'est un travail d'élève retouché par le maître."

[25]Letter from L. Burchard to Richthofen, 30 December 1960, in the MFA file for this painting. Zirka Filipczak's opinion is noted in an MFA file note made during her visit of 15 November 1978.

[26]*Catalogue of Drawings by Dutch and Flemish Artists Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, II, 31, nr. 98.

[27]In an MFA file note, Jaffè asserts that Van Dyck executed Queen Tomyris and her robes, as well as the maid beyond her, and that Jordaens painted the kneeling youth's drapery. In her MFA file note, Filipczak attributes the lower central area with the bowl to Rubens, the maid beyond her and the kneeling servant to Van Dyck. Burchard's division of labor (30 December 1960 letter to Richthofen) is both the most specific and the least plausible. He maintains that Jan Boeckhorst painted the leftmost section, including the pages, the pair of women and the elderly woman; Van Dyck executed the head of Cyrus, the bowl and perhaps the kneeling youth; Rubens painted Tomyris, and Snyders, the dog. These scholars all agree that Rubens retouched the painting in order to endow it with a feeling of cohesion.

[28]In referring to Rubens's practice of retouching and correcting and adding highlights, Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann thinks it unlikely that Rubens would have added highlights without modifying some of the poorly formed and awkwardly executed areas, particularly the hands of the female figures and the legs and feet of the kneeling servant. He also feels that the highlights in this work are not consistent with Rubens's "handwriting." (Observations made to the author during a visit to the MFA on 28 March 1982.)

contemporary paintings such as the Medici cycle. Especially noticeable is the limp and artificial treatment of hands in the MFA painting. Furthermore, the drapery highlights in Tomyris's costume do not accentuate and enliven the true contours, but instead create new, unnatural patterns wholly uncharacteristic of Rubens's style. Clearly, Rubens, at the very most, played a minor role in the execution of this work.

The correspondence between Sir Dudley Carleton and Rubens in 1618 reveals that collectors found works by the artist's own hand far more desirable than collaborative efforts. Rubens himself made it clear that he felt only works by his own hand were worthy of prominent patrons.[29] Considering these standards, it would be surprising for Rubens to offer a work of such inferior quality to a patron of the Infanta's eminence, as Berger suggests.[30] Rubens was close to the Infanta during the 1620's,[31] and it would be unusual for him to have demonstrated so little interest in a work intended to hang in the residence of so prominent a patron. It would be plausible, however, for an inexpensive work designed for a town hall or palace of justice. In 1623, Rubens completed *Cambyses Installing Otanes, Son of Sisamenes, as Judge*[32] (destroyed 1695) for the chamber of a magistrate in the Brussels town hall.[33] Although no evidence indicates that an illustration of Queen Tomyris's vengeance hung there, it is conceivable that the city was so pleased with *Cambyses* that they commissioned a related and equally appropriate subject. These two grizzly subjects are historically and thematically related. Cambyses was the son and successor of Cyrus. Sisamenes, a royal judge, was caught accepting a bribe. As punishment, Cambyses had him flayed and his skin used to upholster the chair from which Othanes, Sisamenes's son and successor, would dispense justice. Viewed together, these paintings record the just and severe punishment of an evil father whose fate serves as a reminder of retribution to the son. As De Ridder notes, the aim of town hall paintings was "to edify and to admonish the judges as well as the claiming and defending parties."[34] Rogier van der Weyden also painted a justice scene with a

[29]In exchange for antiquities, Rubens offered Carleton paintings of his from three specific categories: 1) ones completely by his own hand, 2) ones which, if begun by a pupil, were "so well retouched by [his] own hand that they are hardly to be distinguished from originals" (12 May 1618 letter), and 3) ones painted solely by Rubens except for specific areas declared to be painted by specialists (e.g., animals by Snyders). See R.S. Magurn, ed. and trans., *The Letters of Peter Paul Rubens*, 1955, 59-68.

[30]Berger, 15.

[31]In January 1622, Rubens delivered the Infanta's gift, a spaniel, to Marie de'Medici and during the 1620's he designed the seventeen panels illustrating the doctrine of the Eucharist delivered in 1628 to the Descalzas Reales convent in Madrid. See N. de Poorter, *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard*, II, *The Eucharist Series*, 1978, I, 36.

[32]According to De Ridder, 48, this subject is found in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Flemish town halls as *"Exempla Iustitiae."*

[33]H.G. Evers, *Rubens*, 1943, 59 and Rooses *L'oeuvre de Rubens*, I, nr. 122.

[34]De Ridder, 61. D'Hulst, in *Tapisseries flamandes de XIVe au XVIIIe siècle*, 1960, 59, notes: "D'après une lointaine coutume, les tableaux de ce genre étaient destinés à decorer dans les hôtels de villes des salles où si engaient les cours de justice afin de rappeler aux juges leurs responsibilités et aux malfaiteurs le triomphe inévitable du droit. Des sujets effrayants aussi bien que des scènes édifiantes pouvaient répondre à ces fins. On empruntait ces thèmes à la foi chrétienne, à l'Antiquité ou aux sources mêmes de l'histoire nationale."

subject from ancient history for the Brussels town hall, *The Justice of Trajan and d'Archambault* (1455-1461). Together, these works would comprise an ingenious and powerful reminder of judicial responsibility.

In arguing that Rubens painted *The Head of Cyrus Brought to Queen Tomyris* for the Infanta Isabella, Berger assumes that the painting was once in her collection, which passed to her successor, the Infante Ferdinand, in 1633.[35] Part of this collection appears to have been sold during an outbreak of political turmoil in 1643. In that year, Chrystyn, a Brussels dealer, noted the sale of six Rubens paintings, including one described as "the head of Cyrus which is presented to a queen, with many accompanying figures, that is very well painted."[36] In 1645, these same paintings were in the possession of Musson, an Antwerp dealer, who wrote that they came from "the Infante." He described the Cyrus painting in greater detail: "A picture of King Cyrus whose head is placed in his blood, with fifteen figures, quite pleasant, by Rubens, life size."[37] In the MFA work, there are visibly seventeen figures, excluding the head of Cyrus and the dogs, and no evidence suggests that figures were added at a later date. Berger offers no explanation for the discrepancy. These entries indicate that a Cyrus painting by Rubens belonged at least to Isabella's successor. No further mention of a Cyrus painting occurs until the posthumous inventory of Queen Christina of Sweden's collection in 1689.[38] The work noted in her inventory is identical to the MFA painting because the subsequent provenance is established beyond dispute.[39] This inventory records the MFA *Cyrus* and two other Rubens works—a *Continence of Scipio*[40] and a *Judith and Holofernes*,[41] neither of which appear in the letters of 1643 and 1645.[42] More significantly, neither *Cyrus* nor the other Rubens paintings described in these letters are mentioned in Christina's inventory of 1653, which would seem peculiar if she had in fact acquired them during the preceding decade, as Berger maintains. Of these paintings, only a *Cyrus* painting appears in the inventory of her Roman collection of about 1660, although some of the others are noted in her posthumous inventory of 1689.

I believe that the MFA *Cyrus* hung in the Brussels town hall and that it was given to Christina as a gift during her visit to that city in 1654-1655. Not only would this be consistent with the evidence of the inventories, but there is precedent for such a

[35]Berger, 10-14, 26-32, Appendices 1-4.
[36]*Ibid.*, 26, Appendix 1.
[37]*Ibid.*, 26-27, Appendix 2.
[38]It appears as number 248. A *Cyrus* painting does not occur in the 24 September 1653 inventory prepared by DuFresne, however. These inventories are published in Olof Granberg, *La galerie de tableaux de la Reine Christine de Suède*, 1897.
[39]Queen Christina of Sweden, pre-1689; Cardinal Deccio Azzolini, Rome, 1689; Marquis Pompeo Azzolini, Rome, 1689-1696; Don Livio Odeschalchi, Duke of Braciano, Rome, 1696-1713; Philippe, Prince Regent, Duc d'Orleans, Paris, 1721-1792; sold by Thomas Moore Slade, Paris, 1793 (?); Earl of Darnley, Cobham Hall, Kent and successive earls, 1793-1919; Sixth Earl of Harewood House, Yorkshire, 1919-1944; MFA, Boston, 1941-. This information comes from the MFA file.
[40]In the 1689 inventory (Appendix 3, nr. 248), *Tomyris* is listed as a pendant to *Scipio*, which Rooses dates 1618 (*Rubens, sa vie et ses oeuvres*, 279). Rubens executed numerous works with similar dimensions, so one cannot assume that these works were intended to hang together.
[41]This work is now lost, and it is interesting to speculate on the possibility of a connection between it and the MFA *Cyrus*.
[42]Indeed *Scipio* was acquired by Queen Christina from the Duc de Richelieu. See Rooses, 279.

7. Peter Paul Rubens, *Thomyris, reine des Sythes, fait plonger la tête de Cyrus dans un vase rempli de sang*, c.1622-1623, oil on canvas. Paris, Le Musée du Louvre (photo: Le Musée du Louvre, Paris)

gift. Rubens's *Adoration of the Magi* of 1609, which was commissioned for and hung in the Antwerp town hall, was given by city officials to the visiting Spanish ambassador.[43] Queen Christina abdicated the Swedish throne in 1654 and subsequently embarked on a European tour, arriving in Brussels on 23 December of that year. She received a splendid royal reception in the Catholic capital.[44] On 24 December, Christmas Eve, she renounced Lutheranism and embraced Roman Catholicism, news of which travelled swiftly across the continent. Christina stayed at the Archduke's palace, and later at the Duke of Egmont's residence. Festivities in her honor were held throughout her visit. At the request of Pope Alexander VII (Chigi), Christina left Brussels for Rome in September 1655, after exchanging rich gifts with her hosts and city officials.

Because of the importance of their guest and the significance of Christina's

[43]The painting was given to Don Rodrigo Calderon, Count of Oliva in 1612. See Rooses, 125.
[44]"Christina made a magnificent journey to Brussels on December 23; being conveyed thither in a barge, richly decorated and gilded, armed with twelve pieces of cannon, and drawn by twelve horses; the banks were lined with gazers, and soldiers drawn up to receive her, who fired volleys in her honor; night fell before she arrived at the gate of the city, which was adorned with an artificial forework, representing two angels holding the name of Christina, crowned with laurel. As she passed through the town, she was welcomed with bonfires, illuminations, bell-ringing, and discharges of cannon, and the plaudits of the all-eager multitude." See F.W. Bain, *Christina, Queen of Sweden*, 1890, 251.

visit, the city would certainly have wanted to choose a gift with suitable meaning and value. Rubens's *Cyrus* would have been an appropriate choice because of the artist's renown and the painting's theme. In this context, *Cyrus* would represent (as it did in the Episcopal Palace, Ghent), the victory of Catholicism over Protestantism, as well as a tribute to the Queen's personal religious triumph, together with an allusion to the justice of her reign. The multi-layered message implicit in such a gift would have been apparent to both donor and recipient. The allusion would have been an extremely flattering one. From the available evidence, one cannot assume, as Berger does, that Christina's *Cyrus* is identical to the painting originating in the Infante's collection. Furthermore, the inferior quality of the MFA work militates against this conclusion. Berger fails to account satisfactorily for Christina's acquisition of this work and for its absence from Du Fresne's inventory of her collection in Rome, which was drawn up in September 1653.

Another version by Rubens of this theme hangs in the Louvre (fig. 7). Like the MFA *Cyrus*, no documentation exists to establish its date, purpose or patronage. Its early provenance is even more mysterious than the MFA's. No record of it occurs until Le Brun's 1683 inventory of the collection of Louis XIV. In 1695, Louis had it hung to the left of his throne in the *Salon d'Apollon* at Versailles. Additions were made at both the top and the left, probably at this time in order to accommodate it to the *Salon's* scheme. Perhaps the canvas underwent another change prior to that, either under the direction of the capricious Louis or that of an earlier owner. It may have been a larger composition with the fifteen figures described in the Musson letter. Unlike the MFA painting, no one has disputed Rubens's authorship of the Louvre version, and its quality is visibly superior to that of the MFA, which suggests that it was a more important commission.[45] Indeed, De Maeyer believes the Louvre version to be the one belonging to the Infanta.[46] The date of the Louvre *Cyrus* has not been firmly established. If, as Roy maintains, Rubens executed it in 1622-1623, it may well have been commissioned by Isabella as a secular allegory of her power, as set forth by Berger regarding the MFA version.[47] If it dates from the early 1630's, it may also have been commissioned by or for the Infanta.[48]

Until further documentation comes to light, it will be impossible to establish

[45]Rooses, 4, states that the MFA painting is "un travail d'élève retouche par le maître," while the Louvre version "est entirement de la main du maître, sauf quelques accessoires sans importance." He describes in great detail the energetic and masterful treatment of the theme in the Louvre work and the vapid quality of that in the MFA.

[46]M. de Maeyer, *Albrecht en Isabella en de Schilderkunst*, 1955, 127-128.

[47]A. Roy, *Le XVIII siècle flamand au Louvre*, 1977, 6, nr. 13.

[48]L. Demonts gives a date of 1633 for this work in *Écoles flamande, hollandaise, allemande et anglaise* in *Musée national du Louvre. Catalogue des peintures exposées dans les galeries*, 1922, III, 3.

with certainty which of these two works belonged to the Infanta. Similarly, any explanation as to the exact meaning and patronage of these works must remain speculative. Nonetheless, the probable date (1624-1625), quality of execution, descriptions and provenance of the MFA painting make it an unlikely candidate for a commission from the Infanta Isabella, while the quality alone of the Louvre version makes it a more likely one. In addition, the MFA painting's size, quality and subject with its plethora of meanings, support its suitability as a public commission.

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Gilbert Stuart's *The Skater (Portrait of William Grant)* and Henry Raeburn's *The Reverend Robert Walker, D.D., Skating on Duddingston Loch*: A Study of Sources

ANDREA G. PEARSON

In 1782, the American artist Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828), who lived in London at the time, exhibited *The Skater (Portrait of William Grant)* (fig. 1) in the English Royal Academy exhibition. Shortly thereafter, probably in 1784, the Scottish artist Sir Henry Raeburn (1756-1823) painted *The Reverend Robert Walker, D.D., Skating on Duddingston Loch* (fig. 2).[1] At first glance, the images seem remarkably similar. Both are skating portraits and the subject of each appears in the foreground of the picture, framed by a winter landscape. They wear similar costumes and might even seem to perform the same skating step, the Dutch roll or travelling step, with arms crossed. Moreover, Raeburn painted his picture in Edinburgh, geographically close to London where Stuart had exhibited the Grant portrait just two years previously. Although the canvases are very different in size (the Stuart portrait measures 96⅝ by 58⅛ inches, the Raeburn 29 by 24 inches), the portraits can seem alike when reproduced in texts, and they have often been referred to together.

Given the superficial similarities of the works, it is not surprising that several authors have mentioned, although merely in passing, that the Stuart portrait might have been a direct source for the Raeburn picture.[2] A study of the paintings in comparison, however, indicates that they are indeed very different and that

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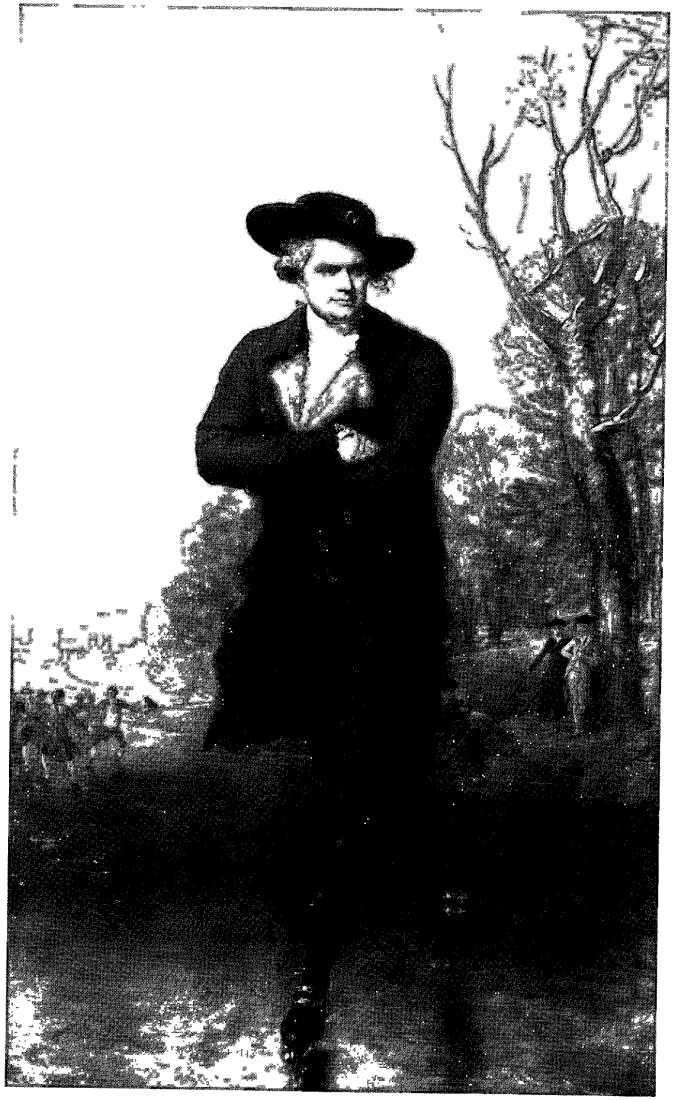
[1]Family tradition dates the Walker portrait to 1784. See *Catalogue of Paintings and Sculpture*, Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland, 1957, 215. This date has seldom been contested, and scholars have never proposed that Raeburn's picture predates Stuart's portrait of Grant. *Shorter Catalogue of Paintings and Sculpture in the Collection*, Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland, 1970, 81, suggests a date for the Walker portrait, based on the sitter's apparent age, of "at least ten years later." D. and F. Irwin, *Scottish Painters at Home and Abroad, 1700-1900*, London, 1975, 429, n. 16, are also cautious and support the possibility of a later date for the portrait.

[2]*Catalogue of Paintings and Sculpture,* 215, says, "It is possible that Raeburn may have been influenced by the life size portrait of *William Grant of Congalton* skating, which was exhibited by Gilbert Stuart, R.A., 1782 (190)." C. Mount, *Gilbert Stuart: A Biography,* New York, 1964, 89, says, "...an increasing number of Stuart's portraits were carried north, where by 1784 Henry Raeburn attempted a small picture of the Rev. Robert Walker, seen skating on Duddingston Loch (...)." M. Waterson, "Hissing Along the Polished Ice," *Country Life,* CLXIX, 2 April 1981, 872, states merely that "[Stuart's portrait of Grant] may have influenced Raeburn."

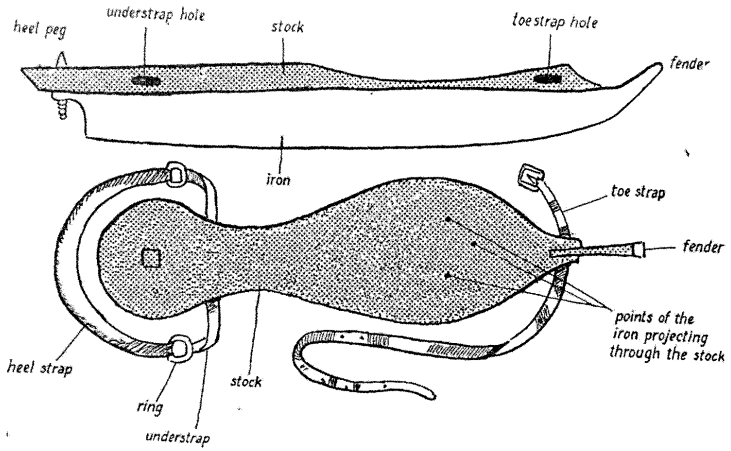


1. Gilbert Stuart, *The Skater (Portrait of William Grant)*, 1782, oil on canvas. Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, Andrew W. Mellon Collection (photo: National Gallery of Art)

2. Henry Raeburn, *The Reverend Robert Walker, D.D., Skating on Duddingston Loch*, c. 1784, oil on canvas. Edinburgh, National Gallery of Art (photo: Tom Scott, Edinburgh)

Raeburn created his skating picture without reliance upon Stuart's work.

In 1782, when Stuart exhibited his portrait of William Grant, the sport of skating was in vogue among the English and Scottish public. The Scots had founded the world's first organized skating society, the Edinburgh Skating Club (to which



3. Drawing of an eighteenth-century skate from Robert Jones, *A Treatise on Skating*, 1772 (photo: The University of Iowa, School of Art and Art History, Iowa City)

Robert Walker belonged), in the middle of the eighteenth century.[3] The club advocated skating as a sport of speed and competition and adopted the motto *Ocior Euro*, or "swifter than the East Wind."[4] Members of the club often socialized at taverns and restaurants, and they also met on the ice at Duddingston Loch and Lochend Loch.[5] The meetings held on the ice seem to have been seriously devoted to skating and members were expected to be competent at the sport. In fact, the society administered strict entrance tests which appraised the skating ability of its potential members.[6] The Edinburgh Skating Club thus helped to establish skating as a sport of skill and competition by creating a standard of performance for skaters.

By contrast, skating in London was far less organized. A formal skating society did not appear in England until the formation in 1842 of the London Skating Club.[7]

[3]N. Brown, *Ice-Skating, A History*, New York, 1959, 37-38. For Walker's 1784 membership in the society, see *Catalogue of Paintings and Sculpture*, 215.
[4]Waterson, 873.
[5]*Ibid.*
[6]Brown, 38, says that it is not known when the Club first began to administer skating tests but a list of members "made up from memory by a quorum of the Society in January 1778" included four members who passed the test in that year. An early nineteenth-century record of the examination still survives and Brown suggests that it was probably very similar to the test taken by the late eighteenth-century skater like Robert Walker. Waterson, 873, says that part of the exam required that each applicant skate in a circle on either foot and then jump over "first one hat, then two, and then three, each on top of the other."
[7]J. Arlott, ed., "Ice Skating," *The Oxford Companion to World Sports and Games*, London, 1975, 527.

4. Detail of fig. 1

5. Detail of fig. 2

The 1772 publication (and several reprintings) of the first written instructional manual on skating, *A Treatise on Skating* by the Englishman Captain Robert Jones, however, bespeaks the popularity of the sport at the time.[8] The *Treatise* included detailed instructions for both the beginning and the intermediate-to-advanced skater. The impact of Jones's manual on the Englishman of leisure is noteworthy; London skating took on a new elegance under its influence. Its illustrations portrayed men of fashion who gracefully performed refined skating feats.

The English even redesigned the skate and the skate binding (fig. 3) in order to ease the execution of the small pivots and graceful maneuvers which were essential to the art of figure skating. Grant wears these skates in his portrait (fig. 4).[9] The curved grooves that Grant cuts into the ice suggest that he was able to execute the tight maneuvers popular in England and does not, as might be assumed, perform the Dutch roll.[10]

By contrast, the Reverend Walker wears skates with bindings that strapped on through holes at the toe of the skates, wrapped around the heel and then tied at the front of the ankle (fig. 5). Walker's tapes must have been satisfactory for the Scottish

[8]Unless otherwise noted, information on Jones's *Treatise* appears in Brown, 42-48.
[9]By about 1750, the English had changed the long, flat blade they had borrowed from the Dutch to a shorter, curved blade that touched the ice along only two inches of its sharpened edge. They also replaced the elaborate tape bindings, which occasionally loosened as the skater moved across the ice, with small straps at the toe and heel and long screws which reached from the skate into the heel of the shoe. See Brown, 40-42.
[10]The Dutch roll suited skaters who were interested in distance travel; the step required skating on the outer edge of the blade, which allowed the skater to travel for long periods without tiring. A. Oswald, "Our Ancestors on the Ice," *Country Life, CXXIX*, 9 February 1961, 269.

skater, whose priority on the ice was swift movement.[11] The long, nearly straight lines that Walker cuts into the ice suggest that he was not interested in performing the graceful movements admired by the English skater; he instead concentrates on his travelling step and on the speed of the sport. Underpainting near the hat indicates that Raeburn first depicted Walker with his head down, which also emphasized the skater's fast pace.

With the popularity of and innovations in the sport of skating in England in the late eighteenth century, it is not surprising to find that the theme of skating appears in British art of the period with some frequency. Philip de Loutherbourg, for instance, exhibited a winter scene with skaters at the Royal Academy in 1776.[12] In 1784, Thomas Rowlandson painted the Dutch-inspired *Skaters on the Serpentine* (London Museum), and Anthony Thomas Devis created *Upton House from the South* (fig. 6) in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. In 1786 Julius Caesar Ibbetson painted *View in Hyde Park: A Winter Scene* (London, Collection Geoffrey Agnew), which includes skaters. A late eighteenth-century print, *Winter Amusement,* by Tookey and Eyde after Ibbetson (fig. 7) also illustrates the sport. These images of skaters demonstrate that the similarity of the skating step and costume in the portraits of Grant and Walker cannot be used to argue a connection between the works. An examination of skating poses and attire from these paintings and prints and Jones's *Treatise* (fig. 8) reveals that both stance and dress were commonplace for skaters of the time.[13] Rather than suggest a connection between Raeburn and Stuart's work, the similarities in posture and garments of the skaters indicate that both artists portrayed a specific sport with some accuracy.

Despite numerous illustrations of skating in landscape and genre art of the period, the use of the theme in English portraiture was novel.[14] In fact, Stuart was

[11]An English gentleman-skater would have considered the design of Walker's skates to be appropriate only for the lower class. Jones, cited in P. Cunningham and A. Mansfield, *English Costume for Sports and Outdoor Recreation, from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries,* New York, 1969, 301, describe Walker's skate bindings, and comments on their social implications: "Some have [bound the skate to the foot] by means of a strong tape put through the holes in front of the skate, which is then tied across the toes, and from thence being carried through the rings in the heel strap, is brought back again, and tightly fastened by a knot over the instep (...). The common people (...) only make use of buckles, straps, rings and heel pegs (...)."

[12]Oswald, 269, describes the de Loutherbourg picture.

[13]In fact, the clothing of Grant and Walker was merely popular common winter wear and was not special to the sport of skating. See Cunningham and Mansfield, 303.

[14]W. Pressly has recently concluded, as I had, that Stuart's theme was unusual for the time. See "Gilbert Stuart's *The Skater*: An Essay in Romantic Melancholy," *American Art Journal,* XVIII, no. 1, 1986, 44. W. Whitley, *Gilbert Stuart,* Cambridge, M.A., 1932, 33, cites the known contemporary comments on Stuart's portrait, which attest the novelty of the theme. For instance, Whitley mentions a 1 May 1782 letter by John Cullum first published by W. Childe-Pemberton, *The Earl Bishop the Life of Frederick Hervey, Bishop of Derry, Earl of Bristol,* London, 1924, n.p. Cullum, an English historian who had an interest in the arts, said, "One would have thought that almost every attitude of a single figure had long been exhausted in this land of portrait painting, but one is now exhibited which I recollect not before—it is that of Skating." A London critic shares Cullum's opinion. See n. 21, below.

6. Anthony Thomas Devis, *Upton House from the South,* late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, oil on canvas. London, Upton House, Bearsted Collection, The National Trust (photo: The National Trust)

7. Tookey and Eyde, *Winter Amusement,* late eighteenth century, etching and aquatint. New York, collection Dick Button (photo: Helga Photo Studios, New York)

8. Drawing of an eighteenth-century skater from Robert Jones, *A Treatise on Skating*, 1772 (photo: The University of Iowa, School of Art and Art History, Iowa City)

the first artist to employ the theme for a full-size Academic portrait, and it might be speculated that Raeburn knew Stuart's earlier painting.[15] This idea seems unlikely, however. While living in Edinburgh between 1771 and 1772, Stuart studied painting with the Scottish artist Cosmo Alexander.[16] In 1771, Raeburn continued his general education at George Heriot's Hospital in Edinburgh and in 1772 began an apprenticeship with a local goldsmith, James Gilliland.[17] Although he had some contact with the Edinburgh painter David Martin, Raeburn was not, when Stuart was there, immersed in Edinburgh's art world. We therefore cannot assume that Raeburn and Stuart ever met, nor would Raeburn have had any reason to follow Stuart's subsequent career in London or pay special attention to the exhibition of his skating portrait.[18]

It is unlikely, furthermore, that Raeburn saw the Stuart picture prior to the execution of his Walker portrait. Its subject, William Grant, originally resided in Congalton, East Lothian, near Edinburgh. Little else is known of Grant, and the history of the portrait after its exhibition at the Royal Academy in the spring of 1782 is mere speculation. It seems safe to say, however, that since the picture later belonged to Grant's daughter, he probably bequeathed it to her. The portrait has no public history, and it is plausible that soon after its exhibition Grant hung the portrait in his private home in Congalton where Raeburn is not likely to have had access to it.[19]

There is no evidence, in addition, that Raeburn knew about Stuart's skating portrait through the small number of Edinburgh artists who at that time periodically travelled to London. These included David Martin, the Scottish portrait painter and owner of a successful business in London, who frequently visited Edinburgh for commissions and eventually moved back there in 1784, and

[15]The use of the term Academic in reference to works discussed in this paper designates portraiture in the Grand Manner, or English Academic portraiture. See Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art*, ed. R. Walk, New Haven, 1975, 43-45; N. Pevsner, "Academies of Art," in *Academies of Art Past and Present*, New York, 1973, 140-189; J. Burke, "The Royal Academy and the Great Style," in *English Art 1714-1800*, Oxford, 1976, 231-272; and C. Goldstein, "Towards a Definition of Academic Art," *The Art Bulletin*, LVII, no. 1, March 1975, 102-109.

[16]For the most recent Stuart biographies, see Mount; R. McLanathan, *Gilbert Stuart*, New York, 1986; and E.P. Richardson in *Gilbert Stuart: Portraitist of the Young Republic*, ex. cat., Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, and the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, R.I., 1967, 9-33. A useful account of Stuart's relationship with Cosmo Alexander in America and Edinburgh appears in G.L.M. Goodfellow, "Cosmo Alexander in America," *Art Quarterly*, XXVI, 1963, 308-322.

[17]The most recent Raeburn biography is in Irwin and Irwin, 146-163.

[18]In Edinburgh, both Raeburn and Stuart knew a George Chalmers. This was not a mutual acquaintance but two different men with the same name: George Chalmers of Pittencrieff, whom Raeburn painted, and Sir George Chalmers, whom Stuart knew through Cosmo Alexander. It is coincidence that their names are alike. R.O. Parks, "Two Portraits and Some Parallels," *Bulletin*, XXXIX, John Herron Art Institute, April 1952, 8, also says that Raeburn and Stuart were probably not acquainted in Edinburgh but provides no scholarly basis for his conclusion.

[19]For the provenance of the Stuart portrait, see L. Park, *Gilbert Stuart*, New York, 1926, I, 359.

George Chalmers, the Edinburgh portraitist who knew Stuart through Cosmo Alexander, and moved to London in 1784.[20] The only known published descriptions of Stuart's skating portrait appear in the Royal Academy exhibition catalogue of 1782 and in three contemporary London newspapers, the *Morning Chronicle,* the *London Courant* and the *St. James's Chronicle.*[21] Had Raeburn read them, these accounts might have suggested the theme of the skating portrait. Because Edinburgh was relatively isolated from London, however, we cannot assume that Raeburn read or even had access to any of the publications. Raeburn, then, was very possibly unaware of Stuart's portrait when he painted his skating picture. If he was, it was most likely through brief written or verbal accounts.

Stuart and Raeburn produced the skating portraits for different purposes. Stuart and Grant were concerned not with the athletics of skating but rather with the decorum of the sport, as is suggested by the choice of redesigned and unobtrusive skate bindings. Because Stuart was an accomplished skater, he knew how best to represent Grant, a mediocre athlete, as a graceful English skater.[22] Stuart shows Grant with two skaters who perform a popular skating maneuver, the salutation, which Jones discussed in his *Treatise.*[23] The elegance and the difficulty of

[20]According to Irwin and Irwin, 413, n. 3, the unpublished memoirs of David Martin's brother mention 1784 as the date for Martin's move to Edinburgh. The Irwins suggest that Martin occasionally travelled from London to Edinburgh prior to his move. For Chalmers's biography, see Irwin and Irwin, 74, and S. Cursiter, *Scottish Art to the Close of the Nineteenth Century,* New York, 1945, 51-52.

[21]I have examined the 1782-1784 issues of the *Edinburgh Magazine and London Review,* the *London Gazette, Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany,* and the *Gentleman's Magazine* and have found no references to the Stuart picture. In *The Exhibition of the Royal Academy,* London, 1782, 10, the portrait is described as Number 190, "Portrait of a gentleman skating." Whitley, 30, 32-33, has found the three contemporary accounts of Stuart's skating portrait published in London, although he does not cite the dates or page numbers for his sources. The critic, also an artist, of the *St. James's Chronicle* merely published the title of Stuart's work, "No. 190, Portrait of a Gentleman Skating." The critic for the *Morning Chronicle* said, "Mr. Stuart may also be an acquisition to the public, his gentleman skating, No. 190, is animated and well drawn." The impression of the critic of the *London Courant* was that Stuart's portrait was his first full-figure painting. "If we have been informed alright [sic] this is the gentleman's first essay in this branch of the art; at all events it does honour to his pencil, from the novelty of the design and the neatness of the execution."

[22]Although probably embellished, an anecdote of the time juxtaposes the skating abilities of Stuart and Grant: "To [skating] the painter assented, and [Stuart and Grant] sallied out to their morning's amusement. Stuart said that early practice had made him very expert in skating. His celerity and activity accordingly attracted crowds on the Serpentine river—which was the scene of their sport. His companion, although a well-made and graceful man, was not as active as himself; and their being a crack in the ice, which made it dangerous to continue their amusement, he told Mr. Grant to hold the skirt of his coat, and follow him off the field." W. Dunlap, *The History of the Rise and Progress of Arts and Design in the United States,* I, eds. F.W. Bayley and C.S. Goodspeed, Boston, 1918, 218.

[23]Jones's *Treatise* included only maneuvers that the author thought were attractive, such as the salutation. D. Button, in "The Art of Skating," *The Magazine Antiques,* CIII, February 1973, 354, described the maneuver thus: "In [the salutation] skaters approach each other on their forward right outside edge, thus creating the first curve of the Serpentine outline. They then change their lean to a forward right inside edge while simultaneously stepping onto the back left inside edge (this single stepping move is similar to one that today is called a Mohawk). While executing this part of the move, they pass each other face to face and doff their hats in greeting. Each skater then pushes off the left back inside edge onto a right back outside edge, thus completing the final curve of the serpentine. The effect is something like a bow in a minuet or a salutation in a square dance." Button also calls the maneuver the "Philadelphia salute" or the "Serpentine greeting."

the step attracted the late eighteenth-century English gentleman-skater as well as the upper-class spectator, some of whom Stuart shows gathering on the shoreline. Although the salutation vignette is secondary to Grant's portrait, Stuart must have been aware of the appeal of the movement and thus deliberately associated Grant with graceful, accomplished skaters who successfully perform a challenging series of steps. Stuart exploited the theme of skating and the English gentleman's obsession with its style in the hope of appealing to London's artistic patrons, who were, of course, gentlemen.

Stuart was also careful to place Grant at London's Serpentine River, a skating site popular for gentlemen of the day. The American artist Benjamin West, court painter for George III and Stuart's teacher, was instructed on the social advantages of skating on the Serpentine:

> A gentleman who had observed [West's skating] movements, came up to him as he retired to unbuckle his skates, and said, "I perceive, Sir, you are a stranger, and do not perhaps know that there are much better places than this for the exercise of skating. The Serpentine River, in Hyde Park, is far superior, and the basin in Kensington Gardens still more preferable. Here, only the populace assemble; on the Serpentine, the company, although better, is also promiscuous; but the persons who frequent the basin in the Gardens are generally of the rank of gentlemen, and you will be less annoyed among them than at either of the other two places."[24]

Thus, the Serpentine became a preferred skating site for West, a fashionable gentleman-skater himself.

Stuart often tried to strengthen his connection with West and this might have prompted the choice of the unusual theme of skating for the Grant picture.[25] Galt says that it was West's expertise on the ice that first brought English patrons to his studio:

> [Colonel Howe, Lord Spencer Hamilton and some of the Cavendishes] spoke of [West's] talents as a skater; and their praise, in all their usual haunts, had such an effect, that, in the course of a few days, prodigious crowds of the fashionable world, and of all descriptions of people, assembled to see the American skater. When it was afterwards known to the public that he was an artist, many of the spectators called at his rooms; and he, perhaps, received more encouragement as a portrait-painter on

[24]J. Galt, *The Life and Works of Benjamin West,* facsimile reproduction, Gainesville, 1960, Part II, 28. Galt was West's contemporary and wrote the biography with West's approval. The Serpentine also attracted other skater/painters, such as the Royal Academician John Francis Rigaud. S.F.D. Rigaud, "Facts and Recollections of the XVIIIth Century in a Memoir of John Francis Rigaud Esq. R.A.," Osborn Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, 143, cited by Pressly, 44.

[25]D. Evans, *Benjamin West and His American Students,* Washington, D.C., 1980, 52, says that West based his c. 1770 *Self-Portrait* on Rubens's *Self-Portrait,* and in 1778, Stuart followed suit by also basing a *Self-Portrait* on Rubens's work. McLanathan, 42, agrees with Evans's suggestion.

> account of his accomplishment as a skater, than he could have hoped for by any ordinary means to obtain.[26]

In fact, Charles Fraser, who knew Stuart, said it was Stuart to whom "(...) it occurred (...) to paint Mr. Grant in the attitude of skating."[27] It is quite possible that Stuart chose to paint Grant on the ice in order to exploit his own relationship with West and attract clients.

Stuart's desire to cultivate his reputation as a portraitist might also have prompted him to model Grant's pose on figures in works of art with which the late eighteenth-century English connoisseur was familiar. Mount has suggested that Stuart borrowed the pose of the much admired Apollo Belvedere.[28] William Pressly finds parallels to Grant's figure in Gainsborough's *Giovanna Baccelli* (Tate Gallery), exhibited with Stuart's portrait at the Royal Academy in 1782, and in two portraits by Reynolds, *Lady Jane Halliday* (Buckinghamshire, England, The National Trust, Waddesdon Manor), exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1779, and *Miss Emily Pott as Thaïs* (fig. 9), exhibited in 1781.[29] Pressly proposes that the placement of Miss Pott's legs and the dramatic plunge of her figure toward the picture plane directly inspired Stuart's representation of Grant.[30]

Stuart also portrayed his sitter in full length to appeal to the upper-class resident of London who often evaluated artists largely on the success of these impressive canvases.[31] Stuart had failed to complete several commissions for full-length portraits prior to the commission from Grant.[32] Furthermore, according to Dunlap, Stuart apparently was not at first comfortable with accepting Grant's commission: "Stuart said that he felt great diffidence in undertaking a whole length; but that there must be a beginning, and a day was accordingly appointed for

[26]Galt, I, 30-31.
[27]Dunlap, I, 218.
[28]Stuart would have been familiar with the cast of the statue that West kept in his studio. An anecdote recorded by Galt recalls West's first reaction to the Apollo when he saw it in Rome in 1760: "and without being aware of the force of what he said, [West] exclaimed, 'My God, how like it is to a young Mohawk warrior!'" Galt, I, 105. West's response to the statue, exotic because it came from an American and involved an American Indian, was widely known in England and Stuart's decision to model Grant's figure after the Apollo might have been another attempt to associate himself with West.
[29]Pressly, 44.
[30]*Ibid.* It is not unlikely that Stuart modeled Grant's pose after Reynolds's pictures in particular; West had once advised an art student that "if you wish to study portrait painting, go see Sir Joshua." Dunlap, I, 220. Evans, 54, proposes that West might have suggested the same to Stuart.
[31]An artist's ability to paint the full-length figure often determined the magnitude of his fame as an English portraitist. See Mount, 20.
[32]When Stuart returned to Newport in 1773 after a year in Edinburgh, the committee of the Redwood Library requested that he paint a full-length picture of Abraham Redwood, the founder of the institution. Stuart failed to finish the work. In London in 1775, Stuart again shirked several similar portrait commissions. See Dunlap, I, 199-200, 205. Stuart's hesitation to paint an entire figure was apparently common knowledge among England's art critics and his peers, as a columnist suggested in a 1795 passage in a London newspaper: "This portrait [of Grant] was given in so Spirited an attitude and with so appropriate a character that when exhibited, it established the fame of the artist, of whom his brethren had before that time said he made a tolerable likeness of a face but as to the figure he could not get below the fifth button [of the vest]." Whitley, 33.

9. Joshua Reynolds, *Miss Emily Pott as Thais,* 1781, oil on canvas. Buckinghamshire, Waddesdon Manor, The National Trust (photo: Courtauld Institute of Art, London)

10. George Chalmers, *William St. Clair of Roslin,* 1772, oil on canvas. Edinburgh, by kind permission of the Queen's Body Guard for Scotland (Royal Company of Archers) (photo: Tom Scott, Edinburgh)

Mr. Grant to sit."[33] The picture of Grant, Stuart's first full-figure picture, caused a stir in the English art world, and patrons and critics finally began to recognize Stuart's talents as a portraitist in the Academic manner. After the exhibition of Grant's portrait in 1782, Nathaniel Dance, an original member of the Royal Academy, reportedly said to Stuart, "You are strong enough to stand alone—take rooms—those who would be unwilling to sit to [an artist who is merely] Mr. West's pupil, will be glad to sit to Mr. Stuart."[34] Stuart took Dance's advice and soon established his own successful studio in London.

While Stuart created his commissioned skating portrait for exhibition at the Royal Academy with a desire to cause a sensation among English critics and patrons, Raeburn painted the cabinet-sized skating portrait of his friend, the Reverend Walker, for his own or his friend's pleasure.[35] Raeburn probably never intended that the picture be exhibited formally. In fact, since he presented the portrait to Walker's

[33]Dunlap, I, 218.
[34]*Ibid.*, 180.
[35]*Catalogue of Paintings and Sculpture*, 215.

widow in 1808, Raeburn most likely retained it as his own until that time.[36]

The small scale of the canvas, furthermore, suggests that Raeburn wanted the Walker portrait to be hung in a room of modest dimensions. The picture corresponds in size to the conventional British sporting print, also meant to be displayed in a small space. Unlike Stuart's full-size skating portrait, it invites the intimate approach of the spectator.

Other Edinburgh artists also occasionally used the cabinet-sized format for the sporting portrait. Richard Wiatt's full-length portrait *Archibald Burnet of Carlops* of 1715 measures 28 by 24 inches. In fact, sporting portraits in general were part of an Edinburgh pictorial tradition, and Raeburn could have modeled his picture of Walker on any number of these.[37] Unlike Stuart's portrait of Grant, Edinburgh sporting portraits were designed to preserve the memory of distinguished athletes who contributed to and seriously participated in their particular sport.[38] Raeburn's portrait of Walker, although unique to the Edinburgh artistic tradition in its subject of skating, is akin in purpose to these, rather than to Stuart's portrait of Grant. In this way, Raeburn clearly expresses his friend's true enthusiasm for the sport.

Raeburn might have known the golfing portrait, *William St. Clair of Roslin*, painted by the Edinburgh artist George Chalmers in 1771 (fig. 10).[39] Until the early nineteenth century, the picture hung in the meeting place of the Honorable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, Golfers' Hall in Leith (the port of Edinburgh), where Raeburn, an avid golfer, might have seen it.[40] The portrait of St. Clair received a great deal of attention in Edinburgh when it was painted and even inspired a poem entitled *On Seeing the Full-length Portrait of Mr. St. Clair of Roslin*

[36]*Ibid.*

[37]The Honorable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, the Royal Company of Scottish Archers, the Royal Burgess Golfing Society and certain eighteenth-century residents of Edinburgh frequently commissioned portraits of sportsmen. Raeburn relied on Edinburgh works of art quite frequently, so it would not be surprising to find that he also studied the sporting portraits. For examples of Raeburn's borrowing of devices from Edinburgh pictures, see Irwin and Irwin, 149-150.

[38]The awards for which Edinburgh club members vied demonstrate the Scottish pride in sporting excellence. In the middle of the eighteenth century, the Royal Company of Scottish Archers, the Honorable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, the Society of Bowlers and the Company of Hunters honored with prizes certain members who excelled at their sport. See H. Arnot, *The History of Edinburgh from the Earliest Accounts, to the Year 1780*, Edinburgh, 1816, 276-279.

[39]According to A.E.H. Martin, "Catalogue of Important Pictures and Sculpture at Archer's Hall," Appendix J in I. Hay, *The Royal Company of Archers*, Edinburgh and London, 1951, 283, St. Clair was a skilled archer: between 1723 and 1773 he won twenty coveted awards for his expertise at shooting.

[40]Chalmers's portrait of St. Clair is now owned by the Royal Company of Scottish Archers, Edinburgh. Raeburn's interest in golf and membership in the Honorable Company of Edinburgh Golfers was mentioned by A. Duncan, *A Tribute of Regard to the Memory of Sir Henry Raeburn*, lecture delivered to the Harveian Society of Edinburgh, 1824, 20-21: "[Raeburn] was also conspicuous in companies for healthful and manly exercise; and (...) I continued to be not only his fellow-member in (...) the Golfers' Company at Leith (...) but I was also his antagonist on the Links as a practical golfer (...). [In golf] we conjoined, with pleasing conversation, a trial of skill at a salutary and interesting exercise, to which we had both a strong attachment."

Playing at Golf.[41] Raeburn's portrait of Walker, then, might actually be part of an Edinburgh artistic tradition, for just as Chalmers shows St. Clair concentrating on sending the golf ball down the fairway, Raeburn depicts the Reverend Walker concentrating on the execution of a successful skating step. The individual as a serious sportsman is the primary theme of each work.[42]

Because the English approached sports in general as activities of leisure, the visiting Englishman Edward Topham noticed immediately the energetic attitude of the Scottish toward athletics:

> A Scotchman does not relax himself for amusements, as if to pass away the hour: he seems, even in the height of pleasure, busy and intent, and as he would do, were he about to gain some advantage. His diversions are not calculated to seduce the unwary, or recreate the idle, but to unbend the mind, without corrupting it. He seems as if in his infancy he had been taught to make learning his diversion, and was now reversing it, and making his diversion his study.[43]

Walker was indeed an accomplished athlete, and wrote a description of the game "kolf" that was accurate enough to be published in Sir John Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland* in 1795.[44] Walker even claimed to be "no mean player" at kolf; he was obviously proud of his sporting skills.[45] Walker's interest in sports might have prompted Raeburn to paint his friend as he performed the entrance tests for the Edinburgh Skating Club and also to choose the profile, unusual in his portraits. The profile most effectively describes Walker's execution of the Dutch roll and this might have been all the more important if the painting was a record of Walker's examinations.

[41]"From Greece the dawn of social arts began,
In shadowy lines and sketches after man;
The hero's deeds the artist's hands inspir'd,
The swelling piece some future hero fir'd.
Thus breathing canvass Rosline's feats proclaim,
And leaves behind a Matchless Sportsman's name.
See! how the ball lies on the grassy ground,
Which, tho' on canvas, seems a fertile mound;
This future ages Rosline's feats must see,
While C[halmers]' name immortal too will be.

R.L.

Edinburgh,
June 9, 1772."
Weekly Magazine; or, Edinburgh Amusement, 11 June 1772, 338.

[42]Other Edinburgh artists also executed sporting portraits which honored local athletes. A portrait of about 1740, *James Wemyss, 5th Earl of Wemyss*, which has been attributed to Alan Ramsey, shows the sitter in full length with a bow and arrow in hand. Wemyss was well known in Edinburgh for his talents as an archer; he won the first Silver Bowl awarded by the Honorable Company of Edinburgh Archers in 1720, repeatedly participated in the shooting of the Edinburgh Arrow, and served as commander of its parade in 1726. Martin, 289.

[43]Topham to Miss Eliz. R—, 30 December 1774, *Letters from Edinburgh*, London, 1776, 90.

[44]J. Sinclair, *Statistical Account of Scotland*, XVI, 1795, 28-30.

[45]*Ibid.*, 30. Raeburn also belonged to the Royal Company of Scottish Archers and the Waggering Club. Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland, *Raeburn Bi-Centenary Exhibition*, ex. cat., 1956, 12.

It is significant that Raeburn and Stuart shared a familiarity with, if not the same kind of reliance upon, the sporting tradition of Edinburgh. Stuart, who visited Edinburgh from 1771 to 1772, might also have been familiar with the celebrated golfing portrait of St. Clair of 1772 by George Chalmers, the brother-in-law of Stuart's teacher. But if Stuart recalled the portrait when he painted his picture of Grant, he remembered it for its full-sized format rather than for its serious concern for the sport as Raeburn did. Moreover, Stuart was probably not only acquainted with the Edinburgh Skating Club (especially since he once lived in Edinburgh and had an interest in skating) but knew how its philosophy toward the sport differed from that of the English skaters on the Serpentine. Stuart, then, deliberately portrayed Grant as an English gentleman skater, not as a Scottish speed skater.

Clearly, Raeburn created his skating portrait without any documented or circumstantial dependence on Stuart's picture with the same theme. Stuart relied extensively on the traditions of the English Academy and mirrored the portraits of the famous Academicians whose work he studied in London. The life-size, full-length, commissioned portrait of Grant employs the unusual theme of skating, and was Stuart's attempt to align himself subtly with Benjamin West and the admired English painters as well as to gain recognition and patronage in London. Through its exhibition at the Royal Academy, the picture brought Stuart the fame that he desired.

Raeburn, however, relied on themes and images in the sporting paintings of Edinburgh to create a skating portrait different in aim. He painted a cabinet-sized, personal skating picture that was not meant for the public eye. Raeburn portrayed his friend, the Reverend Walker, as a participant in his favorite sport of skating and kept the painting for his own private pleasure.

The dissimilar disposition of Grant and Walker toward the sport in which they take part reflects the abilities of each skater and the distinctly different English and Scottish concepts of the sport. William Grant glides across the ice, composed and graceful, as the English required of a gentleman-skater. Walker, by contrast, propels himself rapidly over the ice, and demonstrates the purely Scottish affinity for skating with speed.

Thus, Stuart's painting is a portrait of a late eighteenth-century English gentleman who dabbles in a leisure activity popular with the upper echelons of London society, and Grant's Scottish heritage did not deter Stuart from portraying his patron with a truly English attitude toward the sport. Raeburn intentionally focuses on the sport, and his work borders on genre painting. Raeburn clearly shows his friend's athletic skill, and Walker truly makes "his diversion his study." In Stuart's image, the sport of skating is of secondary importance, and Grant's skates are hardly noticeable. The picture is first and foremost an Academic portrait. The skating portraits are so dissimilar in purpose and context that the possibility of a direct relationship between the two is no longer an issue.

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Jackson Pollock: American Culture, the Media and the Myth

MARY LEE CORLETT

"Is he the greatest living painter in the United States?" *Life* magazine posed this question about Jackson Pollock in 1949. Most would agree that this relatively brief but potent full-color spread was seminal to Pollock's career because it thrust him irrevocably into the glaring view of the American public. The article continued:

> Recently, a formidably high-brow New York critic hailed the brooding, puzzled-looking man shown above as a major artist of our time and a fine candidate to become "the greatest American painter of the 20th Century." Others believe that Jackson Pollock produces nothing more than interesting, if inexplicable, decorations. Still others condemn his pictures as degenerate and find them as unpalatable as yesterday's macaroni. Even so, Pollock, at the age of 37, has burst forth as the shining new phenomenon of American art.[1]

Life's opinion was further revealed in the caption that accompanied a photograph of Pollock standing in front of one of his canvases (fig. 1):

> Jackson Pollock, 37, stands moodily next to his most extensive painting, which is called *Number Nine*. The picture is only three feet high, but is 18 feet long and sells for $1,800, or $100 a foot. Critics have wondered why Pollock happened to stop this painting where he did. The answer: his studio is only 22 feet long.[2]

A second picture caption beneath a photograph of Pollock at work, stated, "Pollock Drools Enamel Paint on Canvas."[3]

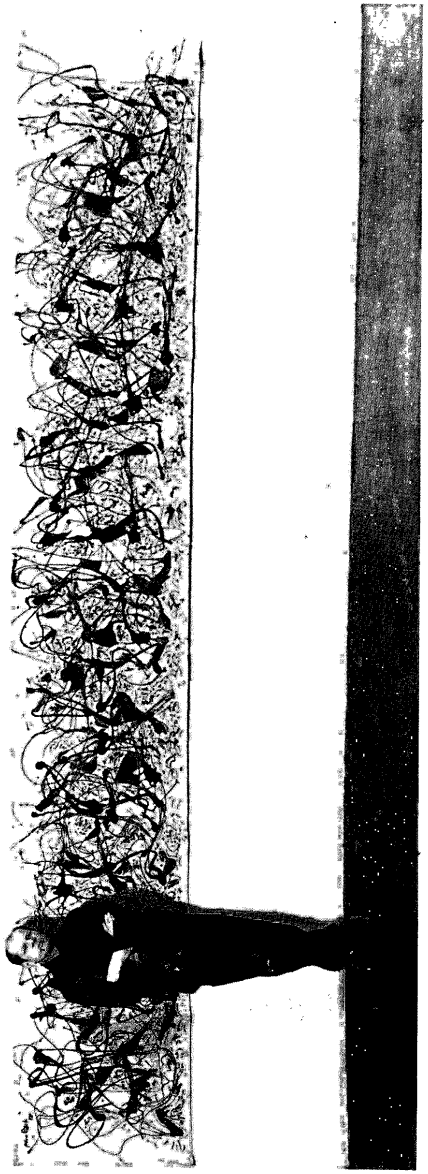
Just ten years later, in 1959, *Life* published another article, this one written by Dorothy Seiberling, featuring Jackson Pollock. The piece is entitled, "Baffling U.S.

This paper was written for a seminar on Jackson Pollock conducted by Professor Ellen Landau at Case Western Reserve University in the spring of 1985. Dr. Landau referred to some of the same source materials in her paper on Jackson Pollock delivered at the February 1987 meeting of the College Art Association. I wish to thank Dr. Landau for her encouragement and assistance in the preparation of this manuscript for publication.

[1]"Jackson Pollock: Is He The Greatest Living Painter in the United States?" *Life*, 27, August 8, 1949, 42. Hereafter cited as *Life*, 1949.

[2]*Ibid.*, 43.

[3]*Ibid.*, 44.



1. Arnold Newman, *Jackson Pollock with His Painting Number Nine*, 1949, photograph (photo: Copyright Arnold Newman)

Art: What it is About." The text begins:

> The tangled, blotched skeins of paint shown at left [*Autumn Rhythm*, fig. 2] represent the most influential style of art in the world today. It is called abstract expressionism and its creators are a handful of Americans who have become the most talked-about painters on the globe. But in spite of the established reputations of the artists and the impressive prices their paintings command, the work of the abstract expressionists is a source of bafflement and irritation to the public at large.
>
> Herewith in two essays *Life* undertakes to explain how abstract expressionism developed and what it aims to communicate. In this first essay *Life* analyzes the evolution of the most celebrated exponent of the style, Jackson Pollock.[4]

In her discussion of what she termed the "revolutionary art of Jackson Pollock," Seiberling described the evolution of the painter's technique:

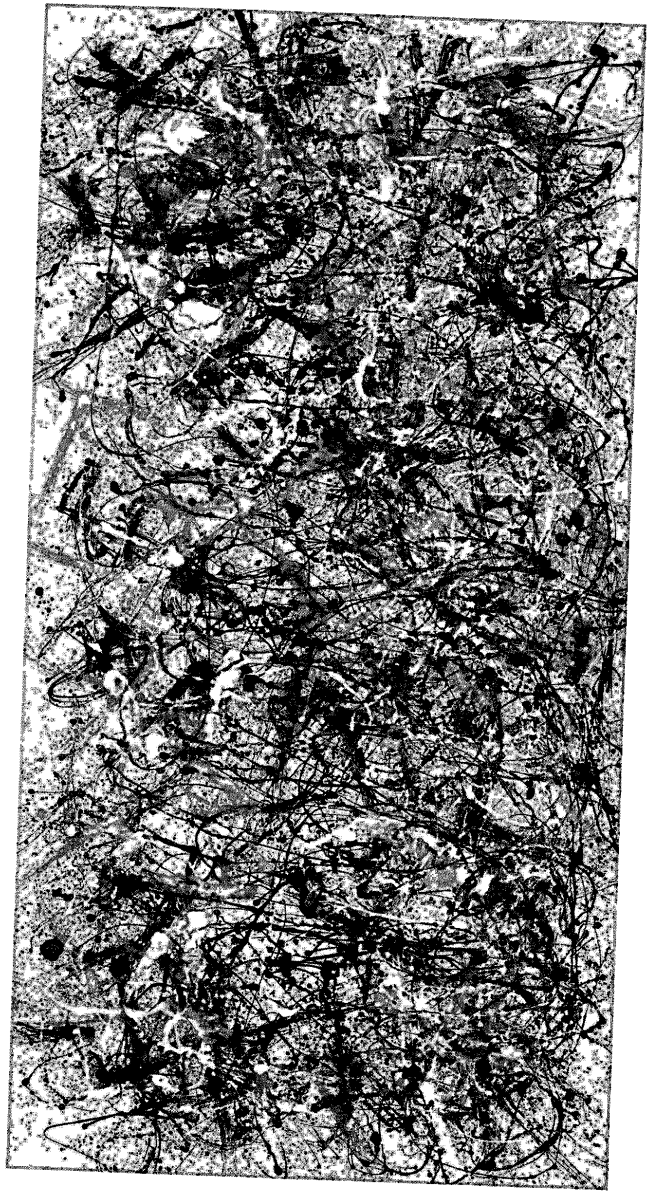
> Abandoning the slow method of painting with a brush, he began to use liquid colors which he dripped over the canvas. This fast and free technique, responding to his every impulse and mood, enabled him to create an art that seemed to swirl before the viewer's eyes.[5]

Thus, what *Life* had not long before sardonically referred to as "drool" had become Pollock's "fast and free technique." Obviously, Seiberling's didactic, often over-simplified attempts at elucidation in the 1959 article were in marked contrast to the sarcastic, disdainful tone of the earlier *Life* piece.

How was it that the rather dramatic attitude shift concerning Jackson Pollock—and Abstract Expressionism in general—revealed in these *Life* articles could have occurred in the relatively brief period of ten years? What follows is an exploration of the media image of Jackson Pollock as it unfolded in the popular press during the 1940s and 1950s, the purpose of which is to suggest possible answers to that question. But before the popular image of Jackson Pollock is examined, it is necessary to begin with a review of some of the ideological issues being debated in the popular press during these years. These debates provide the backdrop against which the media image of Jackson Pollock gradually took shape.

As has been noted by Serge Guilbaut and others, America's self-image during the 1940s had been slowly but decidedly undergoing an important transformation

[4]D. Seiberling, "Baffling U.S. Art: What It Is About," *Life*, November 9, 1959, 68.
[5]*Ibid.*, 73.



2. Jackson Pollock, *Autumn Rhythm*, 1950, oil on canvas. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, George A. Hearn Fund, 1957 (57.92) (photo: The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

for which World War II was a primary catalyst.[6] For the first time in our history, we had collectively begun to think of our nation as a world leader. Henry R. Luce, founder, publisher and editor of *Life, Time,* and *Fortune* magazines, published "The American Century," in *Life* in 1941. In this article, he anticipated what was to become dogma for most Americans after the war. He asserted:

> America as the dynamic center of ever-widening spheres of enterprise, America as the training center of the skillful servants of mankind, America as the good Samaritan, really believing again that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and America as the powerhouse of the ideals of Freedom and Justice—out of these elements surely can be fashioned a vision of the 20th century to which we can and will devote ourselves in joy and gladness and vigor and enthusiasm.[7]

For Luce, this country was engaged in a battle to preserve and protect world freedom. In essence, what Luce was defining was a democratic imperative for which the United States was the torchbearer. Moreover, this democratic imperative was a moral obligation for America.[8]

By 1948, the idea that there was a moral basis for the democratic system had become firmly embedded in popular American thought, as indicated by the first discussion at *Life* magazine's "Round Table" on the subject of "The Pursuit of Happiness." *Life* assembled an eighteen-member panel, to "reinterpret" the concept in "modern terms." Participants included such recognized authorities as William M. Millikin, Henry R. Luce, Sidney Hook, Stuart Chase and Erich Fromm. The discussion published in *Life's* July 12 issue was replete with references to the intimate connection between morality and democracy. This concept was so unequivocally acceptable that the Round Table saw no need to elaborate on how or why the connection existed in the first place. But, the moral imperative upon which democratic principles were thought to rest was emphatically summarized in a single sentence: "The American democratic heritage itself provides the best common ground on which to base the moral principles required for the intelligent pursuit of happiness."[9]

[6]See S. Guilbaut's recent study on the development of the American avant-garde during this period, entitled, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War,* trans. A. Goldhammer, Chicago and London, especially pages 49-63. (Hereafter cited as Guilbaut, 1983.) See also M. Kozloff, "American Painting During the Cold War," *Artforum,* XI, May, 1973, 43-54. For an historical account of this period, see G. Perrett, *A Dream of Greatness: The American People 1945-1963,* New York, 1979; J. Lukacs, *1945—Year Zero: The Shaping of the Modern Age,* New York, 1978; and J.C. Goulden, *The Best Years: 1945-50,* New York, 1976.

[7]H.R. Luce, "The American Century," *Life,* February 17, 1941, 65.

[8]Luce further underscored this belief when he declared: "(...) the world of the 20th Century, if it is to come to life in any nobility of health and vigor, must be to a significant degree an American century." (*Ibid.*, 64); and, "We must undertake now to be the Good Samaritan of the entire world." (*Ibid.*, 65.)

[9]R.W. Davenport, "The Report of the Round Table," *Life,* July 12, 1948, 113.

Indeed, for mainstream society in postwar America, morality was a central feature in the definition of the "American" way of life. As the Round Table participants summarized, morality and happiness are one and the same:

> In the view of the Rye Round Table the whole moral question—not only sacrifice, but duty, honor, generosity, courage, fairness, justice and so forth—is inseparable from the question of happiness. The very idea of pursuing happiness with no reference to moral standards is self-defeating, not to say destructive. The good is implicit in the search for happiness; moral goals must be realized if happiness is to be achieved. In this the Table was thoroughly Jeffersonian.[10]

Thus, as the country formulated a new vision of itself during the 1940s, the concepts of democracy, morality and happiness became the central interlocking components of the American ideology that shaped this new vision.

As postwar America began to recognize and assert the potential of its growing political and economic power, there was a concomitant growth of interest on the part of Americans in the nation's cultural life as well. Most assuredly, the developing interest in the arts was facilitated by the ever-widening availability of information and opinion made possible by the burgeoning mass media, as well as by the greater financial flexibility and leisure time of the middle class. For perhaps the first time in American history, art truly began to matter to increasing numbers of Americans as the United States sought to establish its cultural potency both at home and abroad.

As early as the spring of 1940, *Life* magazine co-sponsored an art exhibit at the Cranbrook Academy of Art. An article about the exhibit appeared in the May 27 issue of *Life*. The headline, "Cranbrook-*Life* Exhibition: Great Detroit Art Center holds a Democratic Show of 60 Paintings by Living Americans," underscores the goal of the exhibit—to showcase the cultural advantages of the American Democratic system. *Life* reproduced (in color) twenty paintings from the show, including John Curry's *Wisconsin Landscape*, Vaughn Flannery's *Item 9, Man'O'War*, Edward Hopper's *Ground Swell*, and Doris Lee's *The Widow*. *Life* further noted:

> [other works] are by foreign born artists who have found creative freedom in this new homeland.
>
> Today the Cranbrook Academy of Art and its current exhibit stand as a symbol of America's increasing responsibility as a democratic world art center, enriched alike by a Corbino of Sicily, a Kuniyoshi of Japan, a Biddle of Philadelphia and a Joe Jones of Missouri.[11]

Time magazine further described the show as representative of "the fresh cream of

[10]*Ibid.*, 98.

"Cranbrook-*Life* Exhibition: Great Detroit Art Center Holds a Democratic Show of 60 Paintings by Living Americans," *Life*, May 27, 1940, 64.

U.S. painting."[12]

As the Cranbrook-*Life* show demonstrated, America hoped to wrest the baton of Western culture, definitively, away from Europe.[13] In order for America to assume cultural leadership, however, it was recognized that American art must first be perceived as a vital, dominating force in the international art world.[14] Thus, a discussion, wrought with differing opinions, over the current state of art in America—and the implications for its future—began in the print media and gradually intensified as the decade of the 1940s progressed.[15]

As Guilbaut points out, critics such as Clement Greenberg and James Johnson Sweeney ardently supported the new American avant-garde painters as the producers of a truly original, "American" modern art that would catapult America to the forefront of the international art world.[16] But an equally strong, more conservative, opinion called for an American art that would represent the strength of the American democratic system on the international front in a more direct way; that is, American democratic art should be an art for the people. George Biddle may

[12]"Cranbrook Show," *Time*, June 3, 1940, 43.

[13]Guilbaut deals extensively with the manifestations of this growing concern for establishing American art as an important international cultural force, especially where this concern relates to the American avant-garde and its proponents, in his book cited in note 6 above. (See especially Chapter 4.) See also Guilbaut, "The New Adventures of the Avant-Garde in America: Greenberg, Pollock or from Trotskyism to the New Liberalism of the 'Vital Center,'" *October*, no. 15, Winter 1980, 61-78. Other related works on the American avant-garde and the political climate of the 1940s and 1950s include, M. Kozloff, note 6; E. Cockroft, "Abstract Expressionism, Weapon of the Cold War," *Artforum*, XII, June, 1974, 39-41; A. Cox, *Art-as-Politics: The Abstract Expressionist Avant-Garde and Society*, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1982.

[14]H. Devree, writing in the *New York Times*, July 14, 1946, ("Straws in the Wind: Some Opinions on Art in the Postwar World of Europe and America") suggests that before America can develop a truly American art of international importance, its artists must both renounce Regionalism (old-fashioned, panders to industry) and European Modernism (it is waning, and it is not "American.") American artists must quit depending on the stale formulas of European modernism if they are to develop an art that is both truly "American" and of international cultural significance. For a similar point of view, see also E.A. Jewell, "When is Art American," *New York Times*, September 1, 1946, 8. On the importance of an internationally recognized American Art, see S. Verk, "Art and The Cultural Cycle," *American Artist*, 11, December, 1947, 55-57; or J.T. Soby, "Does Our Art Impress Europe," *Saturday Review of Literature*, 32, August 6, 1949, 142-149.

[15]This discussion took place on the pages of a variety of popular periodicals—*New York Times*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*—some of which are examined in the context of this paper. But it should be noted that, of course, these same issues were being examined in the art press as well; see for example, E.M. Benson, "Viewpoint: The Role of Art in a Democracy," *Magazine of Art*, 38, February, 1945, 54; I. Edman, "The Civilizing Influence of Art," *Art News*, 46, April, 1947, 17; and R. d'Harnoncourt, "Challenge and Promise: Modern Art and Modern Society," *Magazine of Art*, 41, November, 1948, 250-252. See also "A Symposium: The State of American Art," *Magazine of Art*, 42, March, 1949. Contributors included Alfred H. Barr, Jr., John I. H. Baur, Holger Cahill, Lloyd Goodrich, Clement Greenberg, George Heard Hamilton, H. W. Janson, Daniel Catton Rich and James Thrall Soby.

[16]Guilbaut, 1983. See also C. Greenberg, "The Present Prospects of American Painting and Sculpture," *Horizon*, no. 93-94, October, 1947, 20-30; C. Greenberg, "Art," *Nation*, January 10, 1948, 51; J. T. Soby, "The Younger American Artists," *Harper's Bazaar*, September, 1947, 194; J. J. Sweeney, "Five American Painters," *Harper's Bazaar*, April, 1944, 75ff.

have fired one of the first shots in what was to be a decade of skirmishes over the issue of art in America when in 1940 he stated, "I believe that an impartial review of these and similar facts leads us to the conclusion that the trend of art in America today is democratic, in that it aims to satisfy a widening popular curiosity and interest."[17]

Francis Henry Taylor (director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art), suggested that modern art in America had largely betrayed the public—precisely because it was elitist. In an article appearing in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1948, he stated in no uncertain terms:

> To humiliate and patronize the masses with an art which can be deciphered only by an intellectual elite—the fashionably initiated—must inevitably arouse a people's antagonism and then their indignation.[18]

Content, intelligibility, communicability—these qualities were identified repeatedly by a strong, conservative constituency as characteristics desired, but often found conspiciously lacking, in modern art.[19] F. H. Taylor further denounced the elitist point of view for its blatant disregard for these qualities when he wrote:

> Even to attempt to associate truth with beauty brings down the horror and contempt of the intelligensia today. Art for them has ceased to have any moral or religious significance; they have divorced it from the area of common human experience and made it a form of private communication—when it communicates at all....[20]

[17]G. Biddle, "Can Artists Make A Living?" *Harper's*, 181, September, 1940, 396. Biddle reasserted this belief in the *New York Times* in 1946 in an article entitled, "The Artist on the Horns of a Dilemma," (May 19, 1946, sec. 6, 21, 44) when he stated, "For it is nonsense to think that we shall ever produce a really great art without a great understanding audience." Biddle was a great advocate of art for the people; see "The Victory and Defeat of Modernism: Art in a New World," *Harper's*, 187, June, 1943, 32-37. Biddle's arguments do not go unanswered; see Stuart "Davis, What About Modern Art and Democracy?" *Harper's*, 188, December, 1943, 16-23. It is important to note that there was indeed a "debate" taking place in the press—the art press included—on the issue of modern art in America. It is the conservative argument that will be focused upon here, because it is this position that surfaces in the popular, mass-circulation periodicals—especially *Time* and *Life*—in their treatment of the American avant-garde and, specifically, of Jackson Pollock. But articles offering the counter-arguments will be noted, as appropriate, in the respective footnotes.

[18]F.H. Taylor, "Modern Art and the Dignity of Man," *Atlantic Monthly*, 182, December 30, 1948, 31. See also W. Pach's response, "Art Must Be Modern," *Atlantic Monthly*, 185, May, 1950, 44-48.

[19]See, for example, M. Cresson, "It's 'Modern'—But Is It Art?" *New York Times Magazine*, July 23, 1944, 18-19ff; S.J. Woolf, "Is It Art—Or Is It Double Talk?" *New York Times Magazine*, April 14, 1946, 22-23ff; and, S.A. Lewisohn, "Is There Chaos in Art?" *New York Times Magazine*, March 4, 1945, 18-19ff. The Cresson article sparked an especially lively series of exchanges on the subject; see E.A. Jewell's rebuttal, "In Defense of Modern Art," *New York Times Magazine*, July 30, 1944, 18-19, 32-33; see also reader responses in "Letters," *New York Times Magazine*, August 13, 1944, 34; in addition, see M. Vaughan, "Beauty in Art: The Debate Continued," *New York Times Magazine*, September 3, 1944, 20-21, 34; and R. Pearson, "A Modernist Explains Modern Art," *New York Times Magazine*, September 1, 1946, 20-21ff.

As Taylor's statement suggests, attached to the belief that America should offer to its people, and to the world, a democratic, intelligible art, were references to a 'moral foundation'—a concept that has already been shown to have been intimately connected to the concept of American democracy itself.

Somerset Maugham summarized the prevailing popular opinion about the moral purpose and value of art in an article published in *Life* magazine entitled, "Paintings I Have Liked." Maugham stated:

> Now I must tell you that I do not believe, as most people believed a generation ago, in art for art's sake (...). The ultimate value of art lies in its moral value. Unless art enriches the soul and leads to right conduct it is merely entertainment and then is no more estimable than (...) an ice-cream sundae.[21]

And he concluded, "For in the end democracy depends on the virtue of the individual and great art conduces to virtue."[22]

Life was to take up the issue of morality, democracy and art in 1948 with its second Round Table—this one on modern art.[23] During the course of the discussion it became apparent that the issue of morality was central to the panel's conclusions. As Russell Davenport reported:

> Mr. Frankfurter made the point more strongly than anyone at the table—though a great number agreed—that art must have some moral reference. "Once you use the words 'genuine' and 'authentic' you cannot entirely separate morality and truth from the work of art."[24]

And Frankfurter elaborated further on this point:

> We have now reached the stage where we must finally face the question of how much of the Classical-Christian tradition we wish to retain in our attitude toward art. According to the Classical-Christian tradition, the arts, as all things human, are implicated in the problem of good and evil; esthetics is implicated in ethics. This tradition is now opposed by a newer

[20]Taylor, 30.

[21]S. Maugham, "Paintings I Have Liked," *Life*, December 1, 1941, 76.

[22]*Ibid.*, 81.

[23]Panel members included Meyer Shapiro, Georges Duthuit, Aldous Huxley, Francis Henry Taylor, Sir Leigh Ashton, Alfred Frankfurter, James Johnson Sweeney, Clement Greenberg, H.W. Janson, and James Thrall Soby.

[24]R.W. Davenport, "A Life Round Table on Modern Art," *Life*, October 11, 1948, 78. Hereafter cited as *Life*, "Modern Art."

> one, which says that esthetics stands alone as a part of human experience; that art is good or bad purely in its own terms, with no ethical or theological references.[25]

This "new" tradition—lacking "ethical or theological references"—included, of course, the American avant-garde.

In the opening paragraphs of this article, *Life* summarized the dilemma posed by modern art:

> It is not easy to sum up the nature of modern art in a few words (...). But when the layman uses the phrase he has in mind two particular characterists which, for him, set this art off from more conventional painting. First of all, he finds it difficult to understand; secondly, he often finds that it does not concern itself with the 'beautiful' but with the 'ugly' or the strange.[26]

"How," *Life* asked, "can a great civilization like ours continue to flourish without the humanizing influence of a living art that is understood and enjoyed by a large public?"[27]

But it was not only *Life* magazine that was concerned. The foremost question asked by an increasingly art-conscious middle class was: "Is 'modern' art a hoax?" Many articles appeared in the 1940s in the popular press both to support and refute this premise.

As early as 1940, Anita Brenner was writing articles for the *New York Times Magazine* that attempted to explain to the American public, in rather didactic prose, just what modern art was all about and how it was actually steeped in the same tradition as conventional art. Brenner recognized that a major concern of the "layman" was the suspicion that modern art is a hoax. In her article, "Modern Art: What? Why?" she asked:

> What is it all about anyway? Is it a hoax, put over by clever publicity for the satisfaction of eccentric sensation-seekers? A cult of obscurity; to cover up artists who are too incompetent or too lazy to bother with making things look real?[28]

S. J. Woolf, in his article, "Is It Art or Is It Double-Talk?" compares the acceptance of modern art by the public to the acceptance of the "new" robes made

[25]*Ibid.*
[26]*Ibid.*, 56.
[27]*Ibid.*
[28]A. Brenner, "Modern Art: What? Why?" *New York Times Magazine*, December 8, 1940, 10.

for the Emperor in the Hans Christian Anderson tale. He states:

> The same thing is happening in the art world today. Artistic atrocities in museums are explained by sweet young men who get rid of their Oedipus complexes by pointing out the charm and entrancement of meaningless daubs.[29]

For Woolf, the curators, critics and dealers are as much to blame as the artists themselves for the hoax of modern art.

Even *Good Housekeeping*, while recognizing the growing interest in art, toyed with middle-class America's suspicion of modern art when it published a piece entitled, "Can You Tell Which Are Valuable?" The article, which illustrated a number of paintings, taunted, "Six of these pictures were done by famous artists and are considered masterpieces. How good are you at picking them?" Certainly, fears of the "hoax" of modern art were reinforced when the reader was informed that among the works by Cézanne, Picasso, Vermeer, Renoir, Van Gogh and Corot, was a painting, "done by an eleven year old child."[30]

The intensity of the controversy over modern art in America in the 1940s cannot be overstated.[31] In 1948, the Institute of Modern Art in Boston even changed its name to the Institute of Contemporary Art in official protest against the decadence of modern art. *Newsweek* reported this event and published the Institute's own explanation for the change:

> —Modern art failed to speak clearly...There emerged a general cult of bewilderment.
> —Once the gap between artist and public was widened sufficiently, it became an attractive playground for double-talk, opportunism, and chicanery at the public expense.
> —'modern art,' denoting simply the art of our times, came to signify for millions something unintelligible, even meaningless.[32]

Life, too, reported this incident, in an article entitled, "Revolt in Boston: Shootin' Resumes in the Art World," drawing particular attention to the American avant-garde. The text began:

> The U.S. art world is full of temperamental people who have been

[29]Woolf, note 19, 22.
[30]"Can You Tell Which Are Valuable?" *Good Housekeeping*, 114, June, 1942, 163.
[31]It is interesting to note that this ongoing controversy in the popular press was not ignored by avant-garde supporters like Clement Greenberg. In 1949 ("Art," *Magazine of Art*, 42, March, 1949, 92) Greenberg wrote: "Today the art public asks expressly not to be made conscious of its own inadequacy. The new social areas that have been opened up for art consumption are able to make their wishes felt through such vessels of expression as *Life*, *Art News*, *Art Digest*, *Harper's*, and *Atlantic Monthly*. The philistinism that feels itself confirmed by this sort of art journalism is, I am afraid, more dangerous to culture than is generally realized."
[32]"Modern Into Contemporary," *Newsweek*, March 1, 1948, 73.

> wrangling for years over whether modern American paintings like those at the left are works of art or unintelligible nonsense. Some find them fascinating experiments in design and in portraying man's subconscious life. To others these "modern" experiments are not modern at all, but are imitations of contemporary European schools. By their imitativeness they have diverted modern art into a silly and secretive fadism.[33]

Opposite the text (reproduced in black and white) are three American modernist paintings: *Fallen Angel*, by Paul Burlin; *Dwarf*, by William Baziotes; and *Unequal Combat*, by George L. K. Morris. On the pages following the text, however, *Life* reproduced, in color, works then on exhibit at the Boston Institute—paintings by John Sloan, George Bellows, Yasou Kuniyoshi, Franklin Watkins, Charles Burchfield and others. Through the discriminating use of color photography, *Life* thereby underscored the message delivered by the Boston Institute's decision to change its name—that art in a democracy should be intelligible and fully accessible to the widest possible audience. American art should offer a democratic alternative to elitist, European modernism.

Thus, the state of modern art was particularly disturbing to an American public increasingly interested in having an American art that could represent American ideals on an international level. At issue was whether or not modern art, including the art of the American avant-garde, was actually a "hoax," deliberately and irresponsibly void of content, uncommunicative, and having no relationship to American democratic or moral principles.

It was also during the 1940s that Jackson Pollock was beginning to be noticed by art critics and the art press. His work had been reviewed by the critics since 1942 and was receiving notice, albeit mixed and usually very brief, in such publications as the *New York Times*, the *New Yorker*, the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. In addition, Pollock had given an interview to *Art and Architecture* in 1944, the same year that James Johnson Sweeney published a full-color reproduction of Pollock's *She-Wolf* (fig. 3) in an article for *Harper's Bazaar* entitled, "Five American Painters."[34] Thus, the art critics and the art press, while not necessarily in agreement over Jackson Pollock, were at least taking him seriously, while at the same time, the debate was raging on in the popular press over the legitimacy of modern art.

Then, in 1947, *Time* responded to the comments of Clement Greenberg

[33]"Revolt In Boston: Shootin' Resumes in the Art World," *Life*, February 21, 1949, 84.
[34][Jackson Pollock], "Answers to a Questionnaire," *Arts and Architecture*, 61, February 1944, 14; Sweeney, note 16. The first time Pollock was given notice in the art press was early 1942 (*Art News*, January, 15-31), when Pollock's *Birth* was exhibited in "American and French Painting" at McMillen Gallery. For a summary of Pollock's critical notices, see F.V. O'Connor, *Jackson Pollock*, New York, Museum of Modern Art, ex. cat., 1967.

3. Jackson Pollock, *The She-Wolf*, 1943, oil, gouache, and plaster on canvas. 41 ⅞ x 67 inches New York, Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, Purchase (photo: The Museum of Modern Art)

published in *Horizon* magazine. Under the title, "The Best?", *Time* asked: "Is any good art being painted in the U.S.? Britain's highbrow magazine *Horizon* scanned the U.S., and found three little sunbeams peeping through."[35] The article then quoted Greenberg directly: "'The most powerful painter in America,' wrote Manhattan critic Clement Greenberg, is Jackson Pollock, who painted this: [*The Key*, 1946]." The painting is then reproduced. After sneering in the same manner at a David Smith sculpture and a Hans Hofmann painting, *Time* concluded: "These, the *Horizon* article says, are the only three American artists worth noting."[36]

In July of 1948, in the *New York Times Magazine*, an article appeared that serves as an important barometer for the role of the American avant-garde, and Jackson Pollock in particular, in the raging controversy over the legitimacy of modern art. References to Pollock and two small reproductions of his work appeared in the article, "ABC (or XYZ) of Abstract Art: An Attempt at a Dispassionate Survey of a Subject that is Currently Inspiring a Passionate Debate," written by Aline

[35]"The Best?" *Time*, December 1, 1947, 55. It is interesting to note that the painting was reproduced upside down.
[36]*Ibid.*

Louchheim. She began the discussion by briefly delineating the role of Picasso's *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* in the development of modern abstract art. She then offered the following summary of the "hoax" controversy:

> Today there is a heated debate over 'abstract' art. Is it mere experimentation or is it art? Is it real or is it phony? Is there a basis of sense and reality? There is the sharpest kind of division of opinion.[37]

Later in the article, Louchheim reproduced a Pollock "drip" painting, along with a painting by Loren MacIver, stating:

> This license with traditional formulas upsets many people. They complain that much modern painting has a haphazard look, lawless and chaotic. They accuse it of slovenliness (...). The antagonists have another argument. This is all tommyrot, they say, charlatanism. The artist is making fun of the public and we won't be taken in.[38]

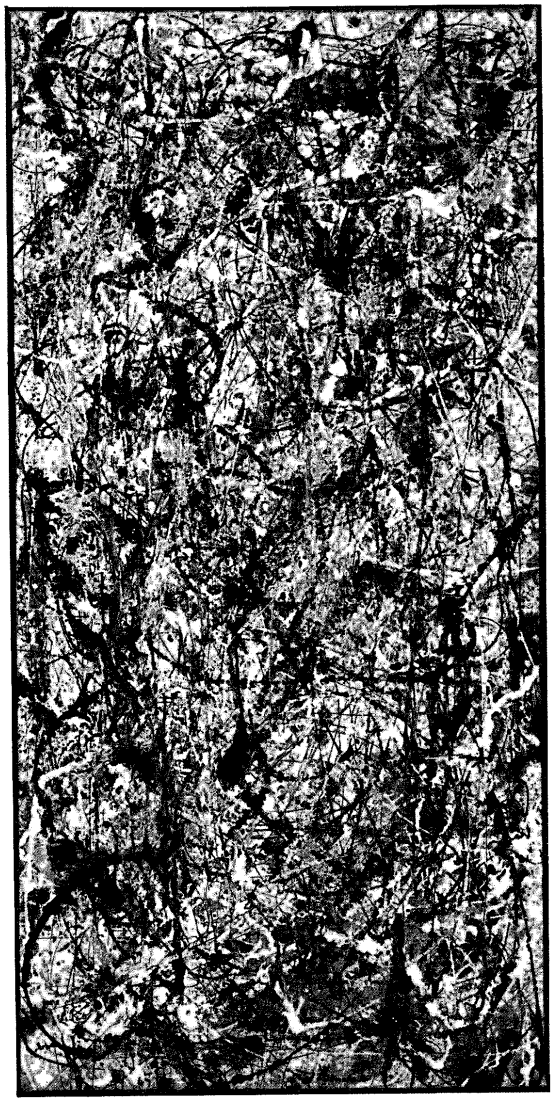
Louchheim thereby placed Pollock directly into the ongoing "hoax" debate.

Another of Pollock's paintings, *Cathedral* (fig. 4), was a topic of controversy at *Life's* Round Table on Modern Art in 1948.[39] Again, there was debate among the assembled experts as to the legitimacy of Pollock's work. Greenberg championed the work, considering it, as *Life* reported, "(...) one of the best paintings recently produced in this country." Others, such as Georges Duthuit and Leigh Ashton, thought it "lovely" and "exquisite." Aldous Huxley, however, is quoted as having said, "It raises a question of why it stops when it does. The artist could go on forever. (Laughter). I don't know. It seems to me like a panel for a wallpaper which is repeated indefinitely around the wall." Another skeptic, A. Hyatt Mayor (curator of prints, the Metropolitan Museum of Art) summed up the attitude of many Americans as revealed by the "hoax" debate when he said, "I suspect any picture I think I could have made myself."[40]

Thus, a strong voice could be found in the popular press that was seriously calling into question whether a modern American art should in fact offer more than the suspiciously contentless, highly personal, amoral, elitist and even fraudulent art that the new American avant-garde seemed to be offering. By 1948, the paintings of Jackson Pollock had already become a very important part of that controversy. It was not until 1949, however, that the man himself truly emerged to capture the attention, although surely not the general support, of the American public.

The publication of a small notice about Jackson Pollock in the February 7, 1949

[37]A.B. Louchheim, "ABC (or XYZ) of Abstract Art," *New York Times Magazine*, July 11, 1948, 16. Hereafter cited as Louchheim, "ABC."
[38]*Ibid.*, 43.
[39]*Life*, "Modern Art," 62.
[40]*Ibid.*



4. Jackson Pollock, *Cathedral*, 1947, enamel and aluminum paint on canvas. Dallas, Dallas Museum of Art, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Bernard J. Reis (photo: Dallas Museum of Art)

issue of *Time* shows that this magazine was finding Pollock's appeal to certain art critics disturbing. Next to a reproduction of Pollock's *Number Eleven* the text began:

> A Jackson Pollock painting is apt to resemble a child's contour map of the Battle of Gettysburg (...). Nevertheless, he is the darling of a highbrow cult which considers him 'the most powerful painter in America (...).'[41]

Six months later, less than a year after the Round Table on Modern Art, Jackson Pollock became a focus of media attention when he appeared as the "brooding" and "puzzled-looking" "phenomenon of American art" in the full-color exposé in *Life* magazine.

This *Life* article, complete with two photographs, described for its readers Pollock's working method:

> Working on the floor gives him room to scramble around the canvas, attacking it from the top, the bottom or the side (if his pictures can be said to have a top, a bottom or a side) as the mood suits him. In this way, "I can...literally be in the painting." He surrounds himself with quart cans of aluminum paint and many hues of ordinary household enamel. Then, starting anywhere on the canvas, he goes to work. Sometimes he dribbles the paint on with a brush. (above) Sometimes he scrawls it on with a stick, scoops it with a trowel or even pours it on straight out of the can. In with it all he deliberately mixes sand (below), broken glass, nails, screws or other foreign matter lying around. Cigaret ashes and an occasional dead bee sometimes get in the picture inadvertently.[42]

Obviously, this detailed description of Pollock's process was deliberately provocative and was intended to elicit a negative response from a readership already familiar with *Life*'s own feature articles on more "traditional" painters whose methods harkened back to the old masters.[43] The contrast between Pollock's methods and conventional painting techniques would have been startling.

[41]"Words," *Time*, February 7, 1949, 51.

[42]*Life*, 1949, 44. This article, of course, has been discussed by a number of scholars; see Guilbaut, 1983, 185-187; or D. Ashton, *The New York School: A Cultural Reckoning*, London, 1972; reprint, New York, 1980, 154-155.

[43]See, for example, "Like An Old Master, Taubes Makes His Own Paints," *Life*, January 15, 1949, 38; "Brackman's Quiet Nudes and Portraits Win Fame in Era of Noisy 'Isms'," *Life*, February 5, 1940, 58; "Tradition and Technique are Watchwords at Yale's School of The Fine Arts," *Life*, February 12, 1940, 44. Furthermore, the influence of *Life* magazine should not go underestimated. It was one of the top four popular magazines in terms of circulation throughout the forties and fifties—along with *Reader's Digest*, *Look*, and *The Saturday Evening Post*. See the comments of G. Biddle in "Can Artists Make a Living?" *Harper's*, 181, September, 1940, 395; see also L. Simonson, "Viewpoints: Post War Painters and Patrons," *Magazine of Art*, 36, February, 1943, 52. See also J.T. Soby's comments on *Life*'s treatment of Picasso in "Life Magazine Stoops to Conquer," the *Saturday Review of Literature*, 30, December 6, 1947, 34, 93.

Time magazine would also ridicule Pollock's work one last time before the year ended. In an article called "Handful of Fire," appearing in *Time* on December 26, 1949, the magazine referred to Pollock's *No. 14* as a "non-objective snarl of tar and confetti."[44] Then, speaking specifically of Pollock and Willem de Kooning, another Abstract Expressionist painter, the piece concluded, "If their sort of painting represented the most vital force in contemporary U.S. art, as some critics had contended, art was in a bad way."[45]

What caused *Time* and *Life* to consider Jackson Pollock a serious threat in 1949—and not just an avant-garde nuisance to sneer at, then dismiss? B. H. Friedman, in his biography of Pollock, noticed the reactionary response of these periodicals. He wrote:

> However, it is ironic that while many critics were becoming more friendly, *Life* and *Time* were adopting an attitude of increasing hostility, perhaps backlash, to Pollock and other avant-garde American painters, which would last until Pollock's death.[46]

As has already been noted, a conservative voice had, throughout the decade, called for an art that would communicate truth through beauty, and would be appreciated by the masses (and therefore be democratic). It was when art critics like Greenberg began loudly and more frequently to proclaim Pollock, and the Abstract Expressionists, to be representative of America's creative force, that *Life* and *Time*

[44]"Handful of Fire," *Time*, December 26, 1949, 26. For an additional (negative) reference to Pollock's paintings appearing in *Time* magazine, see "Into The Void," *Time*, October 3, 1949, 38.

[45]"Handful of Fire," 26.

[46]B.H. Friedman, *Jackson Pollock: Energy Made Visible*, New York, 1972, 144. During his lifetime, commentary about Jackson Pollock directed toward a general audience seems to have been reserved for the pages of *Life* and *Time* magazines. Why it was that these periodicals, both published by Henry Luce, chose to speak out so derisively on Jackson Pollock while many other general audience magazines, such as *Newsweek* or *Look*, opted to remain uninvolved in the discussion, is a topic worthy of investigation but would extend this study beyond the intended purpose of examining the media image of Jackson Pollock as it existed in the popular literature of the 1940s and 1950s. For a brief but concise discussion of the coverage of the art world by *Time* and *Life* in the 1940s (as well as of other periodicals such as *Newsweek* and *New Yorker*), see P. Halasz, *Directions, Concerns, and Critical Perceptions of Paintings Exhibited in New York, 1940-1949: Abraham Rattner and His Contemporaries*, Ann Arbor, 1984, esp. 67-79. (I would like to thank Dr. Ellen Landau for directing me to this study.) It may be noted that Luce's own bias in favor of a native art that would reflect moral and democratic principles can be found in his essay, "The Place of Art in American Life," *Architectural Forum*, 104, January, 1956. In this article Luce theorized, "Art has not been and is not now a central motivating and unifying force in America. But I think it may become so. Thus I express my bias in favor of the 'moral imperative'—a bias from which, in any case, few Americans can escape." (p. 131).

became concerned.[47]

Most importantly, however, Pollock had devised a working method (i.e., his "poured" style) that, when focused upon, could be made to appear to be the final assault on both the artistic tradition and the "honesty" demanded from it by the American public.[48] The end of the decade of the 1940s had brought more frequent criticisms of Pollock's method. Louchheim addressed these criticisms directly in her 1948 article cited above. She offers the following about the Pollock "drip" painting reproduced on the first page of her article:

> One critic writes this of its author, Pollack [sic]: "...the most powerful painter in contemporary America and the only one who promises to be a major one." Another writes this: "It makes me think of webs of very white ash with tar judiciously dribbled for accents in what may or may not be meaningful patterns."[49]

Pouring (or dribbling) paint onto a canvas casually unrolled on the studio floor, and then calling it fine art, was not an idea that was going to be readily accepted by the general American public.

Thus, from 1949 until Pollock's death, *Life* and *Time* seized upon Pollock's process, his unorthodox method, and implied that this technique was proof that he was insincere, a fraud, a hoax. Even though Pollock's unorthodox "drip" technique

[47]This conservative mood is further illustrated by the attack on modern art by George A. Dondero, Republican representative from Michigan and McCarthy ally. As W. Hauptman explains in his article, "The Supression of Art in the McCarthy Decade," *Artforum*, 12, October, 1973, 48-52: "His assaults were principally political, though he claimed on aesthetic grounds all modern art was communist-inspired because of the 'depraved' and 'destructive' nature of its forms." (p. 48). The following excerpt, quoted in the Hauptman article, is from an interview with Dondero published in the *New York World Telegram:* "Modern art is Communistic because it is distorted and ugly, because it does not glorify our beautiful country, our cheerful and smiling people, and our material progress. Art which does not glorify our beautiful country in plain, simple terms that everyone can understand breeds dissatisfaction. It is therefore opposed to our government, and those who create and promote it are our 'enemies.'" (p. 48). Thus, Dondero, by precisely reiterating the beliefs concerning art, morality and democracy as argued by a conservative American press throughout the decade of the 1940s, is able to employ them as a political weapon. The message is clear: if art is not intelligible, representational, beautiful and moral, then it is communistic and subversive. William C. Murphy also attacked modern art on similar grounds in 1947; see "It's Striking, but is it Art or Extravagance?" *Newsweek*, August 25, 1947, 17. (On Cold War politics and American art, see also Cox, note 13, and Cockcroft, note 13.) It should also be noted that 1949 was a watershed year in many ways. Alger Hiss, the State Department official accused of espionage, went on trial that year. (It would take two trials before he was actually convicted of perjury. He was sentenced in 1950.) The Hiss trials, along with the trials of eleven American Communist party leaders also held in 1949, were among the first rumblings of the communist hysteria that would soon catapult Senator Joseph McCarthy into the national limelight, and eventually claim the lives of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg.

[48]This may, in fact, be the most significant reason why Pollock became the frequent target of negative publicity generated by *Time* and *Life*—and not de Kooning or one of the other Abstract Expressionists. For example, *Time*'s treatment of de Kooning is generally not as vitriolic when compared to commentary on Pollock; see "Willem the Walloper," *Time*, April 30, 1951, 63; or "Big City Dames," *Time*, April 6, 1953, 80.

[49]Louchheim, "ABC," 16.

was increasingly made the object of ridicule before the American public, the artist was capturing the attention of Europeans. Reporting on the Venice Biennale on August 21, 1950, in an article entitled, "Americans Abroad," *Time* stated:

> U.S. painting did not seem to be making much of a hit abroad last week. At Venice's "Biennale," the U.S. pavilion (featuring the wild and wooly abstractions of Arshile Gorky and Jackson Pollock—*Time*, June 12) was getting the silent treatment from the critics.[50]

But *Art News*, in its September 1950 issue, quickly printed a rebuttal. In part it read:

> As a matter of record (which *Time*'s widespread European news bureaus should not find too difficult to check), the U.S. pavilion was not "getting silent treatment." While it is still too early for European monthly art magazines to have commented on the Biennale which opened in mid-June, critics of the Italian press have been vociferous in their opinions—some good, some nasty.[51]

Art News then went on to mention Pollock specifically:

> Jackson Pollock is described as representing the "extreme effect attained by European formulas on the virgin American spirit."[52]

Louchheim, in the September 10 edition of the *New York Times*, seems to have offered a compromise between the two respective positions of *Time* and *Art News*. She commented, "It would be accurate to report...simply that Europeans do not bother to give our pavilion very serious consideration."[53] But she continued:

> Pollock is a special case....His detailed description of how he works (dripping paint, etc. on to canvas spread on the floor) has been assiduously translated and is grounds for violent arguments pro and con all abstract and automatic art.[54]

Just three months after the Biennale report, *Time* vehemently attacked Pollock again. This time it was in an article pointedly entitled, "Chaos, Damn It!" Its caustic sarcasm is worth quoting in some detail:

> Jackson Pollock's abstractions (...) stump experts as well as laymen. Laymen wonder what to look for in the labyrinths which Pollock achieves

[50]"Americans Abroad," *Time*, August 21, 1950, 49.
[51]"Vernissage," *Art News*, 49, September, 1950, 13.
[52]*Ibid.*
[53]Quoted in Friedman, note 46, 155.
[54]*Ibid.*

> by dripping paint onto canvases laid flat on the floor; experts wonder what on earth to say about the artist. One advance-guard U.S. critic has gone so far as to call him the "most powerful painter in America." Another, more cautious, reported that Pollock "has carried the irrational quality of picture-making to one extremity" (meaning, presumably, his foot.)[55]

To be sure that the reader did not miss the point of this last bit of sardonic wit, *Time* included a photograph of Pollock at work—the same photograph that appeared in the 1949 *Life* article with the caption "Pollock Drools Enamel Paint on Canvas." This time the caption read, "Pollock at Work: At one extremity, labyrinths."[56] Again, it was Pollock's aberrant process that was brought to the reader's attention.

"Chaos, Damn It!" included extensive quotations from the commentary of Italian critic Bruno Alfieri concerning Pollock's work in the Venice Biennale:

> It is easy (...) to describe a [Pollock]. Think of a canvas surface on which the following ingredients have been poured: the contents of several tubes of paint of the best quality; sand, glass, various powders, pastels, gouache, charcoal... It is important to state immediately that these "colors" have not been distributed according to a logical plan (whether naturalistic, abstract or otherwise). This is essential. Jackson Pollock's paintings represent absolutely nothing: no facts, no ideas, no geometrical forms... It is easy to detect the following things in all of his paintings:
> Chaos.
> Absolute lack of harmony.
> Complete lack of structural organization.
> Total absence of technique, however rudimentary.
> Once again, Chaos.[57]

And the article concluded with Alfieri's statement, "Damn it, if I must judge a painting by the artist it is no longer the painting that I am interested in (...)."[58] Hence, the title of *Time*'s essay.

Time, in effect, sabotaged the content of Alfieri's article, by offering its readers only a select portion of the whole. By selecting passages such as those referring to the work's "chaos," "lack of harmony" and "total absence of technique," and then ending the article with the seemingly inflammatory statement about being forced to judge

[55]"Chaos, Damn It," *Time*, November 20, 1950, 70-71.
[56]*Ibid.*, 71. The use of the phrase, "at one extremity, labyrinths," is also a sardonic reference to the comments of critic Sam Hunter, quoted in *Time*'s "Words," see note 41 above.
[57]*Ibid.*
[58]*Ibid.*

the artist and not the painting, *Time* deliberately lead its readers to believe that Alfieri was questioning the legitimacy of Pollock's art because it was not accessible, did not communicate, and his technique did not conform to traditional standards. The apparent urgency that *Time* felt about delivering that message is underscored when one discovers some of what *Time* had conveniently omitted from Alfieri's commentary:

> The exact conclusion is that Jackson Pollock is the modern painter who sits at the extreme apex of the most advanced and unprejudiced avant-garde of modern art (...). Compared to Pollock, Picasso, poor Pablo Picasso, the little gentleman who, for a few decades now, troubles the sleep of his colleagues with the everlasting nightmare of his destructive undertakings, becomes a quiet conformist, a painter of the past.[59]

Thus, in its selective quotations, *Time* deliberately conveyed its own particular point of view, rather than Alfieri's, to the reader. This was one instance in his career where Pollock felt compelled to respond; he sent a wire to the magazine. The wire, published in the December 11 issue, read:

> No chaos damn it. Damned busy painting as you can see by my show coming up Nov. 28. I've never been to Europe. Think you left out most exciting part of Mr. Alfieri's piece.[60]

If the general public was not, by this time, convinced of Pollock's rebelliousness, more fuel was added to the fire when *Life* published a full-page photograph of eighteen artists who, as a result, came to be known as the "Irascible 18." The group, which included Jackson Pollock, was protesting the Metropolitan's first juried U.S. painting competition. The lengthy caption beneath the picture was entitled, "Irascible Group of Advanced Artists Led Fight Against Show." The text began:

> The solemn people above, along with three others, made up the group of "irascible" artists who raised the biggest fuss about the Metropolitan's competition. All representatives of advanced art, they paint in styles which vary from the dribblings of Pollock (...) to the Cyclopean phantoms of Baziotes, and all have distrusted the museum since its director likened

[59]Quoted in Friedman, 158.
[60]"Letters to the Editor," *Time*, December 11, 1950, 10.
[61]"The Metropolitan and Modern Art," *Life*, January 15, 1951, 34. Although *Life* referred to these artists as "a crew of 18 indignant painters, all exponents of the most extreme varieties of abstract art," and chose to identify Pollock by his controversial method, i.e., the "dribblings of Pollock," the commentary as a whole was not as caustic as that regularly found in *Time* magazine. *Life*, without sarcasm, referred to these painters as "advanced" artists. In fact, the last few sentences of the caption even placed these artists within an artistic tradition—that of the rebellious Impressionist avant-garde.

them to "flat-chested" pelicans "strutting upon the intellectual wastelands."[61]

Time magazine also continued to surge ahead with its attacks on Pollock and the avant-garde.[62] In the August 27, 1951 issue, it published the following in a brief essay on art collectors and collecting entitled, "Rich Tastes":

> Mrs. John D. Rockefeller III can afford to experiment, since she keeps her modern art purchases in a guest house. The boldest of collectors, she is also the most reticent, and springs from rather than to the defense of her choices. Along with distinguished sculptures by such European moderns as Brancusi, Giacometti, Lipchitz and Marini, she buys the smear-technique of such avant-garde Manhattanites as Baziotes, Motherwell, Rothko and Tomlin. Her hand dribbled Jackson Pollock (...) is appropriately small.[63]

The essay concluded with another reference to Pollock:

> Such private enthusiasms as these have a way of becoming public. By gifts and example, individual collectors help shape the taste of museums, and museums obviously influence the public. So the day may not be far off when Mondrian and Klee are as generally admired as Renoir and Seurat. Even Pollock and Co. may eventually find a niche in the hearts of their countrymen.[64]

It is important to point out that not all popular periodicals viewed "Pollock and Co." the way *Time* and *Life* did. *Harper's Bazaar,* the *New Yorker* and even *Vogue,* targeting a more specifically upper middle-class audience, were generally much more sympathetic. Commentary on Pollock appearing in these periodicals was more apt to refer to him in a positive light, as the embodiment of uniquely "American" characteristics of which "rugged individualism" was primary.[65]

In August, 1950, for example, the *New Yorker* published an interview with Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner entitled, "Unframed Space." Again, Pollock's ruggedly individualistic, eccentric nature and his roots in the West were emphasized. The following is a brief excerpt quoting first Pollock and then Krasner:

> "I grew up in the country. Real country—Wyoming, Arizona, northern and southern California. I was born in Wyoming. My father had a farm near Cody. By the time I was fourteen, I was milking a dozen cows twice a day." "Jackson's work is full of the West," Mrs. Pollock said. "That's what gives it that feeling of spaciousness. It's what makes it so American." Pollock confirmed this with a reflective scowl (...).[66]

Pollock did not appear on the pages of *Time* and *Life* until after he began working in his "poured" style (1947). But readers of *Harper's Bazaar* and the *New Yorker* would have known of him soon after his one-man show in 1943. Simple familiarity with Pollock's work may have made acceptance of his more radical "poured" style easier for the generally upper middle-class subscribers of these latter publications.

In addition, Guilbaut has speculated that the violent reaction of the middle class against avant-garde art led to feelings of superiority on the part of the upper classes. Acceptance of the avant-garde became, in effect, a symbol of status. To support this supposition Guilbaut discussed a series of advertisements for exclusive real estate properties that featured the work of avant-garde artists, including Pollock.[67]

Vogue, too, utilized Pollock's paintings as backdrops for high fashion in order to suggest to its readers their own sophistication and intelligence. On the final page of a feature on fashion that appeared in the March 1951 issue, an explanatory paragraph entitled "Jackson Pollock's Abstractions" appeared:

> The dazzling and curious paintings of Jackson Pollock which are in the photographs on these four pages, almost always cause an intensity of feelings. The puzzled call them idiotic, the admiring call him a genius. Among the latter are some of the most astute private collectors and museum directors in the country.[68]

It is clear where *Vogue* expected the sympathies of its readers to lie.[69]

The hostilities, nevertheless, on the part of conservative America toward

[62]For additional brief references to Pollock and his "dribble" technique in *Time,* see "What's In Fashion?" *Time,* June 12, 1950, 50; and "Does Easy Do It?" *Time,* May 29, 1950, 68-69.
[63]"Rich Tastes," *Time,* August 27, 1951, 78.
[64]*Ibid.,* 81.
[65]Contemporary art critics (Greenberg, Sweeney, Robert M. Coates, Soby) were regularly published in these periodicals. Many saw the American avant-garde as the means through which the legitimacy of contemporary American art could be established in world opinion. See note 16 above.

[66][B. Rouche], "Unframed Space," *New Yorker,* 26, August 5, 1950, 16. Hereafter cited as "Unframed Space."
[67]For a reproduction of the advertisement featuring Pollock, see Guilbaut, 1983, 185; or see *Partisan Review,* 15, no. 9, September, 1948.
[68]"Jackson Pollock's Abstractions," *Vogue,* March, 1951, 159.
[69]It is interesting to note that several months after the Pollock fashion spread, *Vogue* ran a feature article on Betty Parsons, Pollock's dealer; see A.B. Louchheim, "Betty Parsons: Her Gallery, Her Influence," *Vogue,* 18, October 1, 1951, 140-141ff. Although a full discussion of this article would go beyond the scope intended for this paper, it should be noted that this article contributed to the establishment of avant-garde art as a viable commodity for the status-seeking upper middle class.

Pollock and his methods raged on well into the 1950s. Indeed, this was the decade in which many subversive elements seemed to threaten the American way of life as defined by the American middle class. Along with the "external" threats of McCarthyism and the communist menace, including the ubiquitous danger of atomic annihilation, there were "internal" rumblings which seemed to be gaining momentum. For example, the "decline" of the traditional American family, perceived to be caused at least in part by increased divorce and juvenile delinquency, was of growing concern to postwar America.[70] Yet the idea of "conformity" and its "suffocating" and "emasculating" effects became an issue, as indicated by the appearance of such works of popular literature as David Riesman's best-selling *The Lonely Crowd* (1950), Robert Lindner's *Must You Conform?* (1955) and, of course, Sloan Wilson's *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1955). *Playboy's* appearance in 1953, too, was in very large part an expression of male dissatisfaction with the socially preordained, restrictive lifestyle of marriage, job and family.

In addition, youth culture and youth rebellion were to become vital forces in American society after World War II. It was, of course, the young people of the 1950s who, much to the dismay of their parents, popularized rock and roll. *Time* magazine likened rock and roll concerts to the mass meetings held by Hitler in Nazi Germany.[71] In some American cities they were actually forbidden, and it was the teenage audience that popularized movies about the alienation of youth such as *Wild One* (1954), *Rebel Without A Cause* (1955), and *Blackboard Jungle* (1955), as well as rock and roll movies such as *Rock Around the Clock* (1956) and *Don't Knock the Rock* (1957).

Thus, it was primarily the young people who idolized a new breed of movie star personified by Marlon Brando and James Dean. Unlike the favorite stars of older Americans—Clark Gable, Cary Grant, Humphrey Bogart—these newcomers, as historian Robert Toll observed, "combined raw sexuality, rebelliousness, and emotional vulnerability."[72]

The first to appear was Brando in *Wild One* (1954). *Time* magazine was less than pleased:

> The *Wild One* is a percussion piece played on the movie-goer's nerves, a kind of audio-visual fugue in which the themes of boogie and terror heap up in alterations of juke-yowl and gear-gnash to a climax of violence—and then fall patly silent, leaving the audience to console its disordered pulse and unsweat itself from the seat.[73]

And the commentary about Brando himself was delivered in the by-now-familiar *Time* hallmark style:

> Pacing the pack is Marlon Brando, the wild one of the title, an actor whose

[70]See "The American Family in Trouble," *Life*, July 26, 1948, 83ff.
[71]*Time*, June 18, 1956, 54.
[72]R. Toll, *The Entertainment Machine: American Show Business in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford, 1982, 293.
[73]"*The Wild One*," [review of the movie *Wild One*], *Time*, January 18, 1954, 100.

> sullen face, slurred accents and dream-drugged eyes have made him a supreme portrayer of morose juvenility.[74]

The following year (1955), Dean appeared in *Rebel Without A Cause*. In March of 1955, just prior to the release of Dean's first film, *East of Eden*, *Life* had published a short article entitled, "Moody New Star: Hoosier James Dean Excites Hollywood." Although not openly hostile, *Life* nevertheless emphasized Dean's alienation using words such as "moody" and "recluse" and further underscored it with: "His militantly independent offstage behavior and his scorn for movie convention have studio executives at Warner Bros. apprehensive."[75]

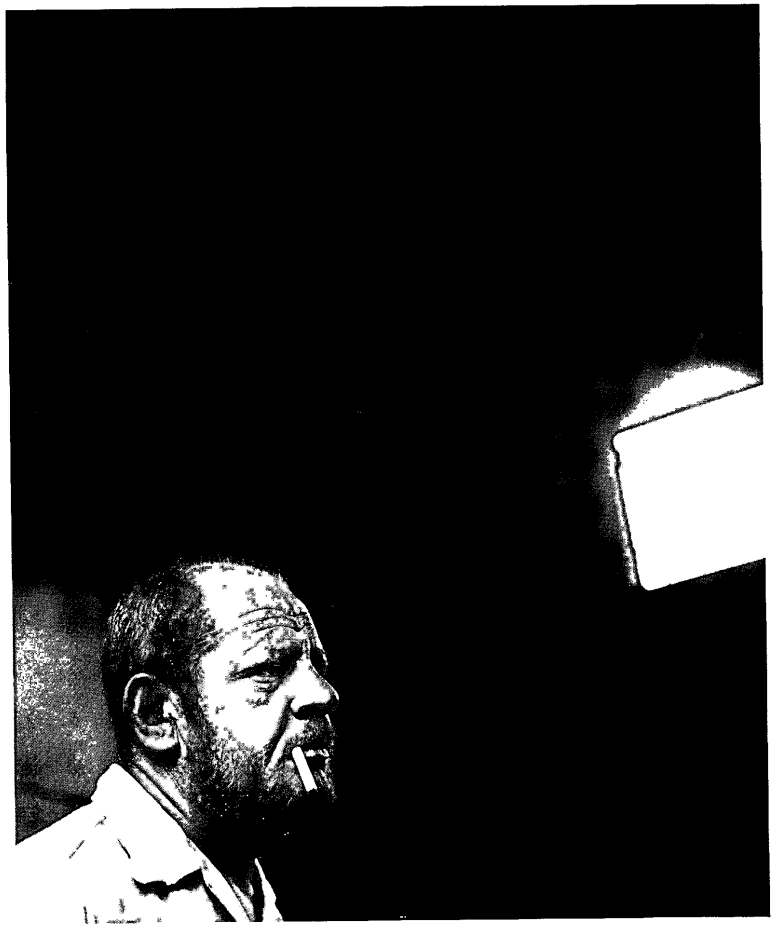
At this time (1955-1956), *Time* magazine's treatment of Pollock began to exhibit subtle changes. When compared to articles such as "Chaos, Damn it!" or "Is He The Greatest Living Painter in the United States?", which emphasize Pollock's non-conventional process, articles such as "The Champ" and "The Wild Ones," while not abandoning the controversy over the technique, focused even more closely on Pollock as a "personality." The periodical was just as hostile to Pollock's methods, but now the descriptions included references that implied a certain ruggedness and virility, in conjunction with his rebelliousness, that was curiously reminiscent of the new alienated anti-heroes of the silver screen:

> Jackson Pollock, at 43 the bush-bearded heavyweight champion of abstract expressionism, shuffled into the ring at Manhattan's Sidney Janis Gallery, and flexed his muscles for the crowd with a retrospective show covering 15 years of his career. The exhibition stretched back to the time when Pollock was imitating imitations of Picasso, reached a climax with the year 1948, when Pollock first conceived the idea of dripping and sloshing paint from buckets onto vast canvases laid flat on the floor. Once the canvases were hung upright, what gravity had accomplished came to look like the outpouring of Herculean energy. Pollock had invented a new kind of decoration, astonishingly vehement.[76]

The article quoted above, "The Champ," also referred to Pollock as a proponent of the "slosh-and-splatter school of postwar art." In addition, the author cited other reviews with the intention of sarcastically highlighting the opinions of the "experts." The excerpt chosen from the *New York Times*, however, included a passage about "the gruff, turgid, sporadically vital reelings and writhings of Pollock's inner-directed art,"[77] while that from the *New York Herald Tribune* referred to the "potency of his process"—descriptions which might easily be associated with the alienation of Dean and the "raw sexuality" of Brando.

The Hans Namuth photograph *Time* chose to reproduce with this commentary is particularly telling (fig. 5). Pollock's near-profile head filled the frame. His

[74]*Ibid.*
[75]"Moody New Star: Hoosier James Dean Excites Hollywood," *Life*, March 7, 1955, 125.
[76]"The Champ," *Time*, December 19, 1955, 64, 66.
[77]*Ibid.*, 66.



5. Hans Namuth, *Jackson Pollock,* 1955, black-and-white photograph (photo: Courtesy of Hans Namuth)

furrowed brow, thick neck, beard and dangling cigarette gave him the look of raw, intense rebelliousness. The caption beneath read, "Painter Pollock: What Gravity Hath Wrought."[78]

Of particular interest is the fact that the young sculptor George Segal had immediately thought of Marlon Brando upon first viewing Namuth's photographs of Pollock. He commented:

> I had an image of Marlon Brando's brooding, pouting profile (...). Pollock's creased forehead in his photographs intrigued me. He had the agonized look of a man wrestling with himself in a game of unnameable but very high stakes.[79]

The probability that Segal was not the only one associating Pollock with the movie rebels is further suggested by the appearance of another article in *Time*—this one in the February 20, 1956 issue. Entitled "The Wild Ones," an obvious reference to the infamous motion picture, the article discussed not only Pollock, but Gottlieb, DeKooning, Motherwell, Gorky, Guston, Baziotes and Rothko. A reproduction of a painting by each of these artists was included, with Jackson Pollock's *Scent* occupying a full page opposite the title page. In addition, on the last page of the text a small photograph of each painter was reproduced, with Pollock at the top (fig. 6). He looked directly into the camera, his eyes set in an intense stare, and, once again, a cigarette dangled from his lips.

The commentary in this article further suggested a certain emotional vulnerability on the part of these artists, that is reminiscent of *Time*'s description of Brando's "sullen," "morose juvenility":

> Sympathy, in fact, is something the new advance-guard demands. Far from wishing to needle the bourgeoisie, as did the school-of-Paris moderns half a century ago, the young pioneers of American painting crave appreciation. When it is not forthcoming, some of them sulk and some shrug.[80]

This was the article in which *Time* referred to Pollock as "Jack the Dripper." Although by and large antagonistic, it is interesting that, perhaps in the interest of fairness, the positive comments of James Johnson Sweeney were paraphrased. In part, *Time* stated:

> Sweeney's own enthusiasm for advance-guard painting leads him to argue that it is, in the best sense, conservative. Recognizable objects, he says, are

[78]*Ibid.* It should be noted that *Time* magazine tightly cropped this photograph (as well as the photograph reproduced in fig. 6) against the wishes of Mr. Namuth.
[79]G. Segal, "Jackson Pollock: an Artist's Symposium, Part 2," *Art News,* May, 1967, 29.
[80]"The Wild Ones," *Time,* February 20, 1956, 75.

6. Hans Namuth, *Jackson Pollock with His Painting Portrait and a Dream,* 1953, black-and-white photograph. (photo: Courtesy of Hans Namuth)

> only the surface of painting, mere vocabulary. Abstract composition is the basis of all painting—the syntax. Therefore, the young American pioneers are blazing a trail back to fundamentals.[81]

It could be argued that this was the first real glimpse *Time* had given its readers of alternative attitudes (i.e., not hostile) toward modern art. However, the article concluded, "The layman can best refresh his eyes by turning to the great masters, (...) and hope that art may once again grow meaningful and whole."[82]

This was the last article in *Time* to include Pollock that the artist himself could have seen. Six months later, on August 11, 1956, Jackson Pollock died in a car crash. And, in many ways it was only after Pollock died that the larger-than-life Pollock myth truly began to coalesce.

In the August 27, 1956 issue, *Life* magazine informed its readers of Pollock's death in a brief article entitled, "Rebel Artist's Tragic Ending." The single-page announcement featured two photographs of Pollock and a reproduction of one of his late works. At the top of the page was the same photograph of the artist standing—"moody" and "puzzled-looking"—in front of his eighteen foot canvas, *Number Nine,* which had first been reproduced in *Life* in the 1949 article. The second photograph was a Namuth portrait of Pollock taken shortly before his death. The caption beneath it read, "Pollock photographed 10 days before his death, sports recent growth of shaggy beard."[83]

The brief text indicates how quickly and to what extent popular opinion began to change after Pollock's death. Under the subtitle, "Critical Storm Brought Jackson Pollock Fame," the following was written:

> In an auto accident near East Hampton, Long Island, the 44-year-old painter, Jackson Pollock, a fortnight ago met a violent death. During his lifetime Pollock was the most talked of, the most stormily controversial artist in the U.S. Pollock tacked his huge canvases to the floor and dribbled enamel and sand on them. The result was vistas of writhing paint trails like the 18-foot long "Number Nine" which *Life* once (Aug. 8, 1949) reproduced complete and which is shown in part with the artist at the top of this page. Works like this threw some critics into rhapsodies but reminded others of half-baked macaroni.
>
> Pollock's method made him famous. His style, with its restless activity of color and dramatic textures, stirred a whole generation of young American painters. His designs have found their way into everyday things

[81] *Ibid.*
[82] *Ibid.*
[83] "Rebel Artist's Tragic Ending," *Life,* August 27, 1956, 58. *Time* offered its readers only a brief notice of Pollock's accident: "Died. Jackson Pollock, 44, bearded shock trooper of modern painting, who spread his canvases on the floor, dribbled paint, sand and broken glass on them, smeared and scratched them, named them with numbers, and became one of the art world's hottest sellers by 1949; at the wheel of his convertible in a side-road crack up near East Hampton, NY." (*Time,* August 20, 1956, 90). See also *Newsweek,* August 20, 1956, 64.

> like fabrics and his paintings, which sell today for as much as $10,000, are in nearly every major U.S. gallery.[84]

As others have pointed out, *Life* was prone to exaggeration where Pollock's success was concerned.[85] For example, the most paid for a Pollock at that time was $8,000, not $10,000, and that was not a regular event as *Life* would have had its readers believe.

But the importance of this account as it appeared in *Life* is that, without question, Pollock's "scorn for convention" had become a true asset. His shaggy beard, his method, and the controversy it generated were now seen as the reason for his importance and his success, and not as a reason to question that success—as had been the case in 1949.

As we have seen, *Time* magazine had already begun, prior to Pollock's death, to equate him (negatively) with the alienation and rebelliousness of the youth culture heroes. But, as the *Life* report on his death suggests, this facet of the youth culture was to eventually act as one vehicle through which the conservative press would gradually come to accept Jackson Pollock, even if they were not to understand or approve of him.

Significantly, the first mention of Pollock's drinking habits appeared in the press only after his death; the periodical was the *Village Voice*. In the September 26, 1956 issue, Ivan C. Karp wrote:

> To those who knew him, or only saw him during the months before his death, Jackson Pollock seemed like a formidable and defiant fortress that was being shattered by some dreadful calamity within. Pollock, who generally drank a great deal, was sober, though fatigued, on the night of his violent death. (...) We can only speculate whether the pain in him had come to the point where, driving at terrific speed, he had conceived a permanent release from the unrelenting pressure of his art.[86]

Karp quickly added, "His last conversations, however, do not support this suggestion. They were, for Pollock, optimistic."[87] But even this partial retraction did not lessen the initial suggestion that perhaps Pollock's death was actually the suicide of an anguished genius.

In the *Voice*, Karp painted a picture of a talented but volatile, virile but misunderstood genius, who, in his alienation from society was able to create an emotionally-charged art that was indeed wrenched from deep within the gut:

> Pollock held nothing in reserve. In a sustained paroxysm of passion

[84]"Rebel Artist," 58.
[85]See Friedman, 242.
[86]I.C. Karp, "In Memorium: The Ecstasy and Tragedy of Jackson Pollock, Artist," *Village Voice*, September 26, 1956, 8.
[87]*Ibid.*

> he poured his vision out of him, freeing a captive army of painters in the first attack and leaving behind on the now so celebrated battlefield his testimony to anti-painting, to originality in American art, and to the renunciation of aesthetic "hive life" by the artist.[88]

And about the public reaction to Pollock, Karp stated:

> (...) it was infuriated. Not because someone had finally tilted the paint can—this must have been anticipated—but because a painter had dared to shout, to bellow with all his resources, and from the summit of Art History, that what he had created, the subject matter itself, was the dynamics of the mystery of Art.[89]

These passages, and others like them, while not completely removed from the "pioneering," "trail-blazing," "rugged-individualist" praises of Pollock found in the discussions of the avant-garde critics published in upper middle-class periodicals like *Harper's Bazaar*, are even more directly suggestive of another cultural phenomenon of the 1950s—the alienated social rebels of the Beat Generation.

In 1958, John Clellon Holmes wrote an article for *Esquire* magazine that cogently articulated the "Beat" point of view. Holmes asserted:

> (...) the short, violent life of alto-saxist Charlie Parker (together with those of Dean and Dylan Thomas) exerts a strong attraction on this generation, because all three went their own uncompromising way, listening to their inner voices, celebrating whatever they could find to celebrate, and then willingly paying the cost in self-destruction.[90]

This passage is strikingly similar in tone to those passages quoted above from the *Village Voice* about Pollock. Of the Beat poets, Holmes wrote:

> All of them believe that only that which cries to be said, no matter how "unpoetic" it may seem; only that which is unalterably true to the sayer, and bursts out of him in a flood, finding its own form as it comes, is worth saying in the first place. Literary attitudes, concern about meter or grammar, everything self-conscious and artificial that separates literature from life (they say) has got to go.[91]

Compare these thoughts to Karp's references to Pollock's "anti-painting" and to the "passion" with which the artist "poured his vision out," or to the following Karp

[88]*Ibid.*, 12.
[89]*Ibid.*
[90]J.C. Holmes, "The Philosophy of the Beat Generation," *Esquire*, 35, February, 1958, 38.
[91]*Ibid.*

passage:

> What appeared on those wide, unquiet spaces, bearing such titles as "Eyes in the Heat" and "Out of the Web" was Pollock's personal galaxy, the "spiritual nebulae" of his own body, feelings, and sensibility, the ultimately unharassed confrontation of the painter and his material.[92]

Only after Pollock's death, and after the emergence of youth culture phenomena like Dean and Brando, did it become logical for the popular image of Jackson Pollock to be further adjusted to include parallels between Pollock and the counter culture, that is, the Beat. It makes sense that these parallels would be so convincingly drawn in a periodical like the *Village Voice,* whose readership—especially during the 1950s—was far from the middle-class conservative audience of *Life* or *Time.*

The Europeans, too, were making similar associations between Pollock and the counter culture. For example, an article on Pollock in the *London Times* (November 11, 1958) entitled, "The Hero-Figure of Action Painting," referred to Pollock as "very much a product of the age of anxiety." Describing the influence of Pollock on younger artists, the article stated:

> The strongest response, in fact, seems to have been made by that generation to which the youthful rebel is still a meaningful symbol and which has found in action painting a sympathetic echo of its own gestures of protest both against authority and against responsibility.[93]

Even *Time* magazine (albeit reluctantly) acknowledged this growing notion of Pollock as the tragic rebel-artist. In a brief report on England's reaction to the Pollock exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery in 1958, *Time* noted:

> There was still some British reserve (...). Yet even the *New Statesman's* gloomy John Berger had a last swung to Pollock's side, comparing him to Actor James Dean as an unhappy genius in an age out of joint. Berger's best guess on Pollock's approach to art: "In desperation he made his theme the impossibility of finding a theme. Having the ability to speak, he acted dumb."[94]

By the end of the decade of the 1950s, Jackson Pollock as the "tragic rebel-hero" (paralleling both youth culture and counter-culture figures) had become firmly embedded in the American imagination. The essence of this image was captured in the *Life* article by Dorothy Seiberling (November 9, 1959) quoted earlier in this investigation. Seiberling's opening remarks on Pollock, under the subtitle "Beginning of the Rebellious Career of Jackson Pollock," clearly illuminated the Pollock

[92]Karp, 12.
[93]"The Hero-Figure of Action Painting," *London Times,* November 11, 1958.
[94]"Posh Pollock," *Time,* December 15, 1958, 58.

myth. She began:

> His face deeply furrowed, his eyes shadowed and searching, Jackson Pollock wore the look of a man seldom at peace. In his studio on Long Island, amid a cluster of paint tins, driftwood, a human skull and large rolls of canvas, he brooded and wrestled with an art that surged restlessly into uncharted territory.[95]

In clear contrast to the image presented in the first *Life* article of 1949, Pollock's "brooding" had now become a characteristic of his genius.

Seiberling continued the discussion with a description of Pollock's "American" origins. She stated:

> Restlessness and a probing spirit ruled Pollock's entire life. Born in Wyoming in 1912 and raised in Arizona and California, he loved to ride, explore nature, collect bird's eggs and make "driftwood" out of clay. He worked with a surveying crew and several times hoboed his way across the U.S., studying the sweep of the landscape from the top of a freight car.[96]

Further into the article, Seiberling again referred to Pollock's roots in the West: "With his radical painting style and his unruly way of life, he appeared to be a kind of bronco-buster of the art world." And also, "He was both confident and full of doubt, a down-to-earth Westerner with mystical leanings."[97]

Since the late 1950s, much has been written about the cowboy image of Jackson Pollock. As Thomas Hess wrote: "And woven into the tissue of the Jackson Pollock story is one word, repeated endlessly—'America,' the New World with its innocence and violence, the go-for-broke Westerner with his hand on a six-shooter and his life on the turn of a card (...)."[98]

It is particularly important to place this aspect of the Pollock myth within its proper context. As with Pollock's alcoholism—which had not been mentioned in the popular press until after he died—references to Pollock's "cowboy" nature have only appeared since 1956. There is no evidence to suggest that this image was an integral part of the general public's perception of Jackson Pollock—at least in this country—during his lifetime. For example, the only mention of Pollock's "western-ness" in the 1949 *Life* article was the simple fact that he was born in Cody, Wyoming.

Even those publications generally sympathetic to Pollock stressed first and foremost his ruggedness and his individuality—positive "American" qualities that clearly transcended the stereotypical cowboy image. For example, Krasner's statements appearing in the August 5, 1950 *New Yorker,* including, "Jackson's work is full

[95]Seiberling, 70.
[96]*Ibid.,* 70-71.
[97]*Ibid.,* 79.
[98]T. Hess, "Pollock: The Art of A Myth," *Art News,* 62, January, 1964, 39.

of the West," are a reference to the intrinsically "American" qualities of his art.[99]

Furthermore, the fact that Pollock wore cowboy boots, or that he was prone to "frontier behavior," such as drinking and brawling, was simply not widely known during his lifetime; it was never mentioned in the popular press. Thus, this aspect of Pollock's personality had virtually nothing to do with the image that the American public had of him before he died.

By 1959, however, the discussion of Pollock in the popular press had become primarily a re-telling of a multi-faceted "Jackson Pollock myth." It was indeed ironic that Pollock's rebelliousness and his alienation were now seen as proof of his sincerity, rather than as a reason to suspect insincerity. A section of Seiberling's *Life* article entitled "Focused Fury of Creation," discussed Pollock's process, and was accompanied by a series of photographs showing Pollock at work, giving the unmistakable, if mistaken, impression of frenzy as implied by the title. The brief text no longer questioned whether or not this heroic process produced "art," although it did admit that the mystery of it all was "baffling to many."[100]

In the final section of this article, subtitled, "A Shy and Turbulent Man Who Became A Myth," Seiberling addressed the Pollock myth directly. She asserted:

> Like most myths, the myth of Pollock both simplified and exaggerated the man. Though he threw tradition overboard in his own art, he revered old masters like Rembrandt and spent hours copying Rubens or studying Goya. Though given sometimes to surliness and brawling, Pollock was also a man of gentleness and serenity who liked to garden, chat with the neighbors and ramble through the woods with his dogs. He was both confident and full of doubt, a down-to-earth Westerner with mystical leanings.[101]

Thus, Seiberling offered us a description that was very much the image of the American hero: strong but also gentle, passionate but down-to-earth, confident but not arrogant, willing to challenge authority but not completely without regard for tradition.

She then proceeded to discuss Pollock's background, mentioning his move to New York in 1929 to study with Thomas Hart Benton. She explained:

> To pay for his classes at the Art Students League he worked as a busboy

[99]"Unframed Space," 16. For many Americans, the west may have seemed freer of European influences than the east and therefore more purely "American." In fact, the "American-ness" of American art was an important debate that had surfaced in the 1940s simultaneously with the Modern-Art-as-hoax debate. See E.A. Jewell, "When is Art American?" *New York Times*, June 13, 1943, sec. 2, 9; C.M. Rourke, "Have We an American Art?" *Nation*, November 11, 1939, 527-529; T.B. Hess, "Is Abstraction Un-American?" *Art News*, 49, February, 1951, 38-41.
[100]Seiberling, 74.
[101]*Ibid.*, 79.

> and dishwasher. He also got a job as janitor of a Greenwich Village school which, for $10 a week, he conscientiously cleaned every night, swabbing it down on Fridays.[102]

Seiberling, in effect, painted the picture of Pollock as "the poor boy who made good." Ironically, Jackson Pollock seemed no longer to be a threat to the American dream, but a symbol of it.

In Seiberling's essay we also find glimpses of what could be described as the "eccentric genius." Seiberling wrote, "Starting work in the afternoon, he would stay in his studio far into the night, furiously 'pouring out' his complex compositions."[103] This description is strongly reminiscent of Karp's discussion in the *Village Voice*. The "tragic-alienated-artist" emerged directly as well: "As his acclaim and income grew, Pollock fell more and more into a state of depression and unease. An off-and-on drinker since he was 18, he plunged into prolonged bouts of drunkenness."[104] This was the first mention in a Luce publication (*Time* or *Life*) of Pollock's problem with alcohol.

Seiberling completed her telling of the myth with an account of the tragic death of the rebel artist:

> But at the age of 44 he appeared exhausted from hard living and from the doubts and conflicts raging within him. The night of his accident he was on his way to a concert when, in a wave of fatigue, he decided to go back home. Speeding along the road, he hit a hump, was thrown from the car and killed. His neighbors said it was an accident that could have happened to anybody. Others felt it was inevitable. "He was born with too big an engine inside him," said a friend. "He had to paint to survive. And he had stopped painting."[105]

Ironically, it was *Time* magazine some years later that so aptly summed up the impact of Pollock's death on the American public. In the February 1, 1982 issue Robert Hughes asserted:

> Pollock became Vincent van Gogh from Wyoming, and his car crash—the American way of death par excellence—was elevated to symbolism, as though it meant something more than a hunk of uncontrolled Detroit metal hitting a tree on Long Island.[106]

And so the initial hostility toward Jackson Pollock found in the conservative

[102]*Ibid.*
[103]*Ibid.*, 80.
[104]*Ibid.*
[105]*Ibid.*
[106]R. Hughes, "An American Legend in Paris," *Time*, February 1, 1982, 70.

popular press in the late 1940s had come full circle. Pollock's radical painting style had at first made him an easy target for a conservative press interested in promoting a wholly conventional art as the true representative of the strengths of democratic America. Ironically, it was largely due to other rebellious elements in American society in the 1950s that the popular press, and certainly the general public, found a new way to think about Jackson Pollock, the man—even if this new attitude did not necessarily lead to a better understanding of his work. *Life*'s phenomenal circulation in the 1940s and 1950s makes *Life*'s own process of transformation an important index to the general acceptance of the Abstract Expressionists in America.

It was largely through the vehicle of the mass media (and in no small way through the publicity generated by *Time* and *Life*) that a popular image emerged that was to form the bedrock for the Jackson Pollock Myth that survives today. Yet the media-promoted myth of Jackson Pollock was as much a product of postwar American society as his paintings were an expression of the artist and his relationship to the times in which he lived.

Case Western Reserve University
Cleveland, Ohio

[1]John Rupert Martin (photo: Robert Matthews)

Interview with John Rupert Martin

DIANE H. GURIEN AND BRYAN A. McCORMICK

John Rupert Martin, who retires this year from the faculty of Princeton University, has had a long and distinguished career as both an art historian and an art educator. In addition to his notable contributions as a scholar, Professor Martin has also served as a president of the College Art Association. His well known book, Baroque *(1977), is rapidly on its way to becoming a classic. The dual nature of this text, at once both a valuable resource for the scholar and a guide to the concepts of the baroque for the general student, reflects Professor Martin's concerns and interests as both an academic and a teacher. The following interview further illuminates these two aspects of his thought.*

INTERVIEWER: What prompted you, Dr. Martin, to switch your specialty from medieval to baroque studies?
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: It was really very simple, in fact. On one level, it didn't have very much to do with me because it was prompted by the teaching needs of the department. The medieval faculty at that point was very strong here. And that was one of the reasons I had chosen to work with Weitzmann and his colleagues. But when it came to an appointment, I really saw no opportunity, either immediately or later on, for teaching a medieval subject. The chairman, Baldwin Smith, pointed out that they really needed some teaching in later periods, post-Renaissance in particular. When he asked me if I would consider this, I thought of it as an opportunity not to be missed. Of course, it wasn't very long before I found myself totally immersed in the seventeenth century. As a result, I have no longer concerned myself with Byzantine art.
INTERVIEWER: Were you still working on your dissertation at that time?
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: No. I had finished the dissertation which I did with Professor Kurt Weitzmann. You must picture someone who had spent four years in the Canadian army, had interrupted graduate study before that, and who came back with a kind of demon resolve. I worked about a year and a half to complete the dissertation with Weitzmann and was then taken on as a junior person in the department. And, as I say, it wasn't very long after that that Baldwin Smith spoke with me. Eventually, I settled on the seventeenth century, which seemed to me to be full of interest and bristling with all kinds of problems.
INTERVIEWER: You had considered other post-Renaissance periods?
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Yes, I had worked rather a lot with Erwin Panofsky from the first moments of my graduate study here and again in the period following the Second World War. He was then professor of the history of art at the Institute for Advanced Study and taught here regularly. He not only had a visiting appointment in the department; he loved to teach, and his seminars were brilliant. I had the very

great advantage, as a number of us did, of working with this extraordinary man. I found him particularly helpful in dealing with problems in Renaissance and post-Renaissance art. I have, in fact, never forgotten the stimulus of Panofsky. It's fashionable now to say, "Oh, well, it's all iconology, isn't it?" and so on. But there was more to Panofsky than that. It was his wonderful humanity and sense of quality that really made a deep and lasting impression.

INTERVIEWER: Had Panofsky been working on Poussin at the time you were studying with him?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Yes, he had worked on Poussin as early as 1936. But you could engage him in conversation on any topic and he would have something interesting and original to say about it. I remember his opening a seminar on the International Style by reading in perfect French from the poetry of Charles d'Orléans. His English was faultless; I think he knew Shakespeare by heart. It goes without saying that he was equally at home in the classical languages and in the major modern tongues.

INTERVIEWER: Did any of the methods which you acquired in the study of medieval art inform your approach to the baroque?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Yes, they did. I am not only thinking about those basic art-historical methods which serve us equally well in any period, but also about the importance of languages. I had studied Latin, French and German in high school. On hearing that I wanted to work in Byzantine art, Weitzmann asked, "How well do you read Greek?" I replied that I had little familiarity with the language. "Well," he said, "that's the first order of business." I was fortunate to be able to work with one of our classical archaeologists who had developed an informal course in Christian Greek for medievalists. It was an excellent course, and I was soon able to make my way in a language which, as I discovered, was not grammatically dissimilar to Latin. I have never regretted the time spent on Greek, because in the end it gave me greater confidence in taking on still other languages.

INTERVIEWER: Were you influenced by an essentially documentary approach, at that point, in terms of the study of medieval? Or were you considering something else when you were studying the medieval and was that then carried over into your study of the baroque?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: One thing that was carried over was the taste for consecutive narrative. I began work under Weitzmann's supervision on the cycle of illustrations in an eleventh-century manuscript of "The Heavenly Ladder of St. John Climacus" in the Princeton University Library.[1] There is, in fact, a whole class of such illustrated "ladder" manuscripts, which I also analyzed and described. I have subsequently made comparable studies of monumental cycles of a much later period.

[1]J. R. Martin, *The Illustration of the Heavenly Ladder of John Climacus*, (*Studies in Manuscript Illumination*, V), Princeton, 1954.

INTERVIEWER: So, perhaps with the Farnese ceiling...?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Yes, exactly. Or the Jesuit ceiling and the Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi, both by Rubens.

INTERVIEWER: In your first paper on the baroque you seemed to suggest that there was an antipathy between mannerist and baroque art. Did you formulate this split based on your investigation of style, iconography, or both? Would you still hold your observations to be valid today?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: That paper was written a good many years ago, and there are things in it that I would probably rephrase. But in general, style was primary. Rather than "antipathy," I would prefer to speak of change of taste. As regards inconography, I tried to set up categories that reflected some of the new interests of the baroque. That first paper was produced for a symposium held by the American Historical Association and was subsequently published in the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*.[2] I was later encouraged to develop those ideas at greater length in my book *Baroque*.[3] A great style change took place around 1600. There is no doubt, I think, that an artist such as Rubens consciously sought to break free from manneristic conventions in order to find a new mode of expression. This would apply to many artists of the period.

INTERVIEWER: Can we apply it, for example, to the early work of the Carracci?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Yes, surely. It was the Italians—Caravaggio, the Carracci—who took the first steps.

INTERVIEWER: At the time you wrote the article, how well developed was the study of the baroque in the English language?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Not very well developed at all. The very word is troublesome to many people. I tried to accept it simply as a neutral term, which we ought to be able to use just as we do Renaissance or Rococo, without having to justify its etymology.

INTERVIEWER: Is it not true that, at one point, the College Art Association did not separate the baroque from renaissance studies?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: When did that split take place?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: In America, at least, the recognition of the distinctness of baroque has come about since the Second World War. In speaking of my own efforts to find an area of specialization, I deliberately used the term "Post-Renaissance." "Baroque" was still thought of as a rather peculiar and unnecessary word. It is now, of course, an established field of study. The "discovery" of the baroque by those of us returning to our studies from military service is for me still a vivid memory.

INTERVIEWER: Would you welcome a more broad-ranging and integrated study of the baroque period as a whole in order to inform art historical study? Or, do you think such studies exist now?

[2]J. R. Martin, "Baroque from the Point of View of the Art Historian," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, XIV, December 1955, 164-171.

[3]J. R. Martin, *Baroque*, New York, 1977.

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[3]J. R. Martin, *Baroque*, New York, 1977.

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: I'm not sure that such studies are feasible within the normal graduate curriculum, where there is already a conflict between general and specialized knowledge. We have nothing of the kind here at Princeton. What would you say about Rutgers?
INTERVIEWER: There are attempts, but not on the graduate level. There have been attempts to provide, in a more general sense, a good comprehension of art, music and literature in relation to one another.
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: I am personally quite interested in that sort of thing.
INTERVIEWER: I think the response on the part of the students has always been extremely positive in that environment.
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: I participated for three or four years in a summer academy in baroque music conducted by the Aston Magna Foundation. My contribution consisted of art-historical lectures on the particular subject of the academy: " Rome, 1650-1725"; "France in the Age of Louis XIV," etc. I enjoyed the music (performed on instruments of the period), and the musicians were equally keen to learn more about works of visual art. The whole experience was very worthwhile, and I hope to resume my association with this group. In 1981, I gave a week of lectures under similar auspices at the Sweelinck Conservatory in Amsterdam, where again I found the association with musicians and musicologists stimulating and enjoyable.
INTERVIEWER: So you would definitely welcome this kind of thing?
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Yes, indeed. I wish that kind of thing, even if it can't be done under an academic curriculum, could be available in a university setting.
INTERVIEWER: To focus more particularly on your own work, Professor Martin, do you agree with the criticism that both Shearman and Posner made concerning your "overserious" interpretation of the iconography of the Farnese ceiling?[4] Have your thoughts changed on this in the years since the book first appeared?
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: There is always something to be learned from criticism, even when one does not agree with it. I must say that my ideas about the Farnese Gallery have not fundamentally changed. Knowing what we do about the fame and distinction of the Farnese family, I find it inconceivable that the fresco cycle can be characterized as "a display of mythological licentiousness." But these and other questions must be left to future scholars to decide.
INTERVIEWER: Will you be making any future contributions to the Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard?
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: I have often thought about renewing my association with the Rubenianum in Antwerp, which I greatly enjoyed when I was engaged in preparing two volumes for the Corpus. I now have several other projects in hand and consequently cannot take on another major book at this moment. My preference would be for one of the great series, like the two that I have already done: the

[4]J. R. Martin, *The Farnese Gallery*, Princeton, 1965.

Ceiling Paintings for the Antwerp Jesuit Church[5] (echoes of the Farnese ceiling!), and the Decorations for the Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi.[6] Some of the Rubens subjects, I have to confess, are less attractive to me: Angels, Apostles and Saints, for example. But I suspect that by this time most of the volumes have already been assigned.
INTERVIEWER: Well, you've said you would not like to work on a limited topic. Is there a Rubens project currently in the back of your mind?
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: No. The obvious ones, for example, the Whitehall Ceiling and the Medici Cycle, have been assigned though they are not yet complete. The latter is in the hands of Jacques Foucart of the Louvre.
INTERVIEWER: Will there be a separate volume in the Corpus on the Maria de Medici Cycle?
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Yes. There must be, according to the terms of the bequest. You see, Burchard left all his documentation and notes, which are immensely valuable, to the City of Antwerp, with the understanding that they would be used by the scholars engaged to prepare the Corpus. The volume on the Medici Cycle will also include the Henry IV Cycle, which Rubens never completed.
INTERVIEWER: Do you foresee another series similar to the Corpus Rubenianum focusing around the work of a different baroque artist whose individual works merit a similar investigation?
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: What comes to mind at once is the great Rembrandt Corpus now being prepared by the Rembrandt Research Committee in Amsterdam. This will be another monumental project. Can we think of others that ought to be done?
INTERVIEWER: I had thought of three names—Poussin, Pietro da Cortona and Bernini.
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: In the case of Poussin, we have Blunt's volumes.[7] Pietro da Cortona is still a rather neglected figure. Malcolm Campbell has a study of the Pitti Palace decorations, but we still lack a really comprehensive study of the artist as painter and architect.[8] There is a great deal of scholarly activity on Bernini, in which Irving Lavin plays a central role. It does not appear, however, that for these artists there is any thought of teamwork, as in the Rembrandt Research Project. That project, by the way, will be a long time in the making.
INTERVIEWER: The second volume is just into the 1630s.
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Yes, and with some rather funny results. There is a nice portrait pair in Vienna. The judgment? The man is painted by Rembrandt and his wife is painted by an assistant! It's not the same hand at all! I think a great deal of

[5]J. R. Martin, *The Ceiling Paintings for the Jesuit Church in Antwerp, Corpus Rubenianum*, pt. 1, London and New York, 1968.
[6]J. R. Martin, *The Decorations for the Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi, Corpus Rubenianum*, pt. 16, London and New York, 1972.
[7]A. Blunt, *The Paintings of Nicolas Poussin. Critical Catalogue*, New York, 1966, *The Drawings of Poussin*, New Haven, 1979, and other books.
[8]M. Campbell, *Pietro da Cortona at the Pitti Palace: A Study of the Planetary Rooms and Related Projects*, Princeton, 1977.

light is being shed, not only on Rembrandt, but on the whole studio operation. The central figure remains Rembrandt. He was responsible for everything, but in some cases he left the work to an assistant—quite a different situation from Rubens. The Medici Cycle and the Jesuit Ceiling both have contracts in which it is specified what will be done by the master, what will be done by the assistants, and what is the final obligation. It's all very cut-and-dried if you read his letters, and we have a few, where he says, "This is entirely by my hand; here, the landscape was done by so-and-so" or "The eagle was painted by somebody else."

INTERVIEWER: It seems like the *letters patent*, the system of copyrighting that Rubens used.

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Yes, it is, because he wants things to be absolutely clear, so that there shall be no misunderstanding and no recrimination. And, interestingly, that is not what prevails in the Rembrandt studio.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think there is a northern or southern baroque artist who has a "mythology" similar to Rembrandt's that needs paring away?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Not to my knowledge. In Van Dyck there are still problems, but nothing beyond the reach of competent art historians.

INTERVIEWER: Professor Martin, in contrast to the texts we've been discussing above, on what basis did you decide to organize your 1977 *Baroque* text by theme rather than chronology or by individual artist? What was your ultimate goal in taking this thematic approach?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Well, I have a rather simple, I hope not oversimple, answer to that question. As a teacher, I wanted something that would complement the customary approach used, and I think very effectively used, in lectures. That is to say, treating the individual artist by school and chronology and so on. I devised what I hoped might serve as companion reading to this kind of teaching method. It has worked, I think, very well. I use it, of course, myself and I'm advised that it is used elsewhere and that it seems to meet with general approval. One takes off on a different plane and uses chronology and artists rather freely as occasion, works of art, and the topic might suggest.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think the process had been germinating since you had written the earlier baroque article?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Yes, precisely. I have recently been asked if I might consider a revised edition. I think I might seriously revise the bibliography and make other alterations.

INTERVIEWER: Would you mind giving a sample of something that you would revise in the book?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Well, there are some areas of fact, dating and so on, that need attention. And the other thing, as I mentioned, is bibliography. That ages quickly, and I would uproot some titles and insert others.

INTERVIEWER: What generally has been the reaction to the text? Has there been anything that's particularly negative from your colleagues?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: No. Perhaps people are simply kind. In general, I couldn't be more pleased.

INTERVIEWER: Have you had any useful suggestions that might amplify the text?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: No, I haven't, but if I take on any kind of revision, I will certainly ask for suggestions, especially from colleagues who use the text for teaching.

INTERVIEWER: In light of the Corpus and other projects of that nature, do you think it's important for art historians in the future to start working more in teams rather than in isolation? Do you see that as a productive possibility in relation to projects like the *Baroque* book that are intended as general guides?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: In a very general way, I think books of this kind should be done singlehandedly. I would feel uneasy about a collaborative effort, but only for this reason: no two minds work along precisely the same lines. Somebody is going to give in on this issue or that or insist on a particular point. Where do we get the best kind of collaboration? I suppose in the Rembrandt Research Project. But who takes on different responsibilities and rotates these things from one problem to the next? It is a committee, I suppose. But that's different from a book that has a definite point of view. How many things of this kind do we know? Not many, I suppose. I think it depends very much on the subject that's being done and how it's being done, whether collaboration is required.

INTERVIEWER: From your involvement in the College Art Association and your general awareness of the needs and demands of art historical education in the United States, what would you see as being important in terms of, say, providing a better introductory text, something that is going to be used by a broad-ranging mass of students in their first and second year of college. I ask this in relation to the idea of collaboration; do you perceive a need to have modules assigned to particular historians who then produce separate texts that could be read as a series...

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Do you mean within phases or periods?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: The trouble there, if there is trouble, is that you don't get the same controlling mind. We're all familiar with introductory courses. Indeed, we have one here which calls on a sort of course chairman. The lectures are "two by so-and-so" and "one by this person" and so forth. They're lots of fun and the students like the constant change of speakers. But what one very quickly becomes conscious of is that there is no single point of view. There's not even a single vocabulary. And I think students, though they may not pinpoint this as a problem, are left sometimes inarticulate. The limitations of the single teacher in a general art history course are obvious, but I have the feeling that the single person, if broad-minded enough, can do a better job by pressing home connections, or contrasts, in terms of what has already been said. We used to do it that way. However, we cannot now get anybody to agree to take on the whole history of art, and I regret that. I regret it because I think that it's very, very valuable to have that single vocabulary

and point of view, and that ability to stitch the course together by going back and gathering up the threads.

INTERVIEWER: Do all the members of this team that teach sit in on each other's lectures?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: No, we can't ask them, because many of them are senior people with all kinds of responsibilities. They just say, "No, I'm sorry, I can't do it." The only person that hears it all is the course chairman. It doesn't matter all that much, I suppose, but I do feel that it would bring a much better concept of the thing if there were a single mind focusing on it. And I feel a little bit that way, too, I suppose, about the textbook, if it's not informed by one mind. I'm not talking about the facts or even the characterizations of style and so on. Of course, this can be done by a great number of people. It is the similarity of approach and terminology that I feel is desirable.

INTERVIEWER: Now to two questions. The first is, in his 1980 review of your "Van Dyck as a Religious Artist" exhibition,[9] Waterhouse noted the difference between Van Dyck's and Rubens's interpretation of Titian's colorism. What is your opinion on this?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Well, my opinion, of course, is that there is a difference. Waterhouse was quite right to speak of it. One might even say that each of these artists naturally emphasizes what's important to him. In the case of Van Dyck, particularly, it is a certain sense of refinement. I think that was what Waterhouse was getting at. In addition, Van Dyck owned an astonishing number of Titians. He continued to use what he learned from Titian right on into the English period. I think that whereas Rubens saw power in Titian, Van Dyck saw grace.

INTERVIEWER: Well, just to add, is it valid, then, to understand Van Dyck's interpretation of Titian as being gained *through* Rubens?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Oh, I think it's quite independent, too. I'm sure that as a young man he was introduced to the art of Titian by Rubens. But he was on his own in Italy. One can see him making very effective use of Titian's ideas in some Italian altarpieces, the big Sicilian ones, for example. It is interesting to see Van Dyck choosing a Titian formula for certain male portraits of the Italian period, whereas the tall Genoese ladies are of a pure Rubens type.

INTERVIEWER: Did you see the Van Dyck exhibition as being a response, let's say, to the *Gods, Saints and Heroes* exhibition at the National Gallery?[10] Do you think that provided you with a stimulus to start looking at other northern artists as being concerned with history painting?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Oh, no doubt. There was real interest in what we were doing at the National Gallery. I went down to see the restoration of the painting of the *Assumption of the Virgin.* They cleaned it for us, in fact, which was very nice. I'm afraid I made a little fun in the catalogue about some of the ecstatic appreciations of that Van Dyck and its beautiful golden color, which is no longer what we find; it

[9] J. R. Martin and G. Feigenbaum, *Van Dyck as Religious Artist*, Princeton, 1979.
[10] *Gods, Saints, and Heroes: Dutch Painting in the Age of Rembrandt*, Washington, D. C., 1980.

looks almost Rococo now, with its blues and pinks! Ours was a very modest show, obviously. We couldn't expect any of the great Van Dyck altars and didn't ask for them. We were dealing mostly with what are sometimes called "cabinet pictures." We did have the Minneapolis *Betrayal of Christ,* together with a very good full-sized studio copy of the Madrid picture which came from a dealer in New York. It wasn't in the Catalogue, but it happened to be a decent picture and it provided the scale of the original beside which we could set the Minneapolis picture. The whole thing began as a seminar. I had half a dozen students, all of whom worked on the catalogue in one way or another. One of them, Gail Feigenbaum, I simply made a co-author because she was doing such an extensive amount of work. The exhibition was one of the nicest things I've ever had to do.

INTERVIEWER: In reviewing the Van Dyck exhibition, C. W. White implied that the notion of seeing Van Dyck as a secular painter was simply an American view and that Europeans traditionally consider him, equally, a religious artist. Do you believe that there can be such a concept as an "American" or a "European" point of view?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: I would have said that the view of Van Dyck chiefly as a secular portraitist is, if anything, more English than American. I remember a wonderful exhibition a few years ago called "Van Dyck in England," which was made up almost entirely of portraits. It was Sir Joshua Reynolds who said of Van Dyck "that he had truly a genius for history painting, if it had not been taken off by portraits." I do not believe, to come to your question, that there is or can be an American versus a European point of view.

INTERVIEWER: In speaking, now, of a rather different critique you made of a particular point of view, you noted that a Marxist approach to art history is based on distortions you felt were introduced by imposing a preconceived structure on the material at hand. Would you still characterize Marxist, or leftist, approaches in this manner? What motivated you to write the article, given that little of the material covered by the authors you cited related directly to your own interests? And, do you think the political climate of the early 1950s influenced your decision to write the article?[11]

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: The political climate had very little to do with it, though I realized of course that these issues were being discussed and that socio-political aspects were involved. Having given up the medieval field, I was searching for new challenges. It happened that I had read F. Antal on Hogarth and didn't care for it at all. I jotted down some ideas and showed them to Professor Donald Egbert, whose field of scholarship was Socialism and American art, and who encouraged me to send the paper to the *College Art Journal.* I would describe it as a jeu d'esprit. Neither the subject nor that form of criticism are of any interest to me now.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have a better response to Antal's study on Florentine painting?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Yes, of course. It was not my intention to denigrate such a distinguished scholar as Antal.

[11] J. R. Martin, "Marxism and the History of Art," *College Art Journal*, XI, no. 1, 1951, 3-9.

INTERVIEWER: I'm not sure if you're familiar with some of the work that's been done recently, for example, the work of someone like Richard Goldthwaite, who's established a socio-economic basis for the evolution of the Renaissance palazzo.[12] Do you think this kind of thing is an important type of work to undertake?
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: There is no question of its importance, above all in architectural history. I hope I am not going too far afield if I say that there are some of our colleagues, in history, for example, who regard works of art as documents to be taken quite literally as historical evidence. What happens, of course, is that the work of art is reduced to the level of statistics. While we may deplore this kind of thing, we must recognize that art history is viewed by many social historians as a subject lacking in relevance.
INTERVIEWER: In recent years, some art historians, for example, Ernst Gombrich and Richard Brilliant, have voiced their concern that art history is becoming too narrow and essentially documentary in orientation. Do you agree with this?
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Though I agree that documentation is not the chief business of art history, I am not convinced that the discipline is suffering from an over-narrow and documentary, or archival, approach. We do, after all, need adequate documentation as a foundation for our work. Where would we be without Lugt's *Répertoire des Catalogues de Ventes*?[13] Publications of this kind are invaluable. I have already mentioned the usefulness of the Burchard documentation, now housed in the Rubenianum at Antwerp. The work of the Rembrandt Research Committee mainly has to do with style; but they too frequently depend on documentary confirmation of their conclusions. We should not expect everyone to produce this kind of evidence, but we should be grateful to those who do.
INTERVIEWER: Do you see any urgent project that has to be undertaken by the next generation of art historians?
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: I think each generation must define its goals and develop methods to realize them. My colleague, David Coffin, is a historian of garden design. This is a subject that has blossomed into a wholly new field of study. Other projects of this kind will surely continue to take shape in the future. What these might be we can only guess.
INTERVIEWER: There's been a lot of discussion about the fact that art history students are not generally well prepared in languages. Do you see any other skills that art historians should be developing, say, in the area of computer application or something like that, that will help them in the future? Are there any trends that you see in art education that should be implemented?
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: It is true, I'm afraid, that many art history students are lacking in literary skills. Having no competence in Latin, they are often without an adequate command of English and must spend some time rectifying this fault. As regards foreign languages, my experience has been the most people acquire at least a working knowledge of French or Italian, or whatever it may be, especially if they

[12]R. Goldthwaite, "The Florentine Palace as Domestic Architecture," *The American Historical Review*, vol. 77, 1972, 977-1012.
[13]F. Lugt, *Répertoire des catalogues de ventes publiques*, The Hague, v. 1, 1938, v. 2, 1953, v. 3, 1964.

spend some time abroad. As to the computer, we can all see that it will enable students to organize and marshall material in a way undreamed of by my generation. It will not, of course, make up for weaknesses in thinking and writing.
INTERVIEWER: I was just thinking of something like the Index of Christian Art being available on computer. You could access it with such ease that it would be incredible. It would save weeks of time in research.
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: The Index is an obvious candidate for computerization. Plans have been under discussion for several years, but so far nothing has been done. It will happen one day, no doubt.
INTERVIEWER: We were just wondering if you were planning on curating any future exhibitions in the University Art Museum or at another location. Also, if you had carte blanche to plan the exhibition of your dreams, what would that be?
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: If I had carte blanche, I would propose an exhibition of Rubens of the late period, which would make a really spectacular show. Such an exhibition could, in fact, never be done here, but it is something to dream about.
INTERVIEWER: Are you planning any future exhibitions at the University Art Museum?
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: No, I have no such plans, because of my impending retirement. In any event, we don't have a university art museum at present, because the construction of a large addition has made it necessary to shut down the entire building for a lengthy period. It is, of course, very frustrating not to be able to direct our students to the museum where they can confront works of art directly.
INTERVIEWER: Do you get involved with acquisitions?
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Yes, we do. We have an advisory role, of course, but that can be quite an important one. There is also a fund for the acquisition of prints and drawings, which is administered by a department committee, of which I happen to be chairman. Purchases are made in consultation with the director of the museum and the curator of prints and drawings.
INTERVIEWER: What prompted me to ask this was that I believe that both the Van Dyck and the "Rubens before 1620" exhibitions were prompted by acquisitions by the museum.[14] Is that correct?
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Yes, the Forbes picture of *Jupiter and Cupid* by Rubens was the raison d'être of the exhibition "Rubens before 1620." It has been promised to the museum. Similarly, it was the gift to the museum of Van Dyck's *Mocking of Christ* that gave rise to the exhibition "Van Dyck as Religious Artist."
INTERVIEWER: Do you see having a Museum Studies option as being important for all the students involved in your program so that they, as you have said, can confront the art object directly?
JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: We have something like this in a seminar now being offered by our museum conservation expert, Norman Muller, which has proved to be a great success.
INTERVIEWER: What are you presently working on, and what projects do you have in mind for yourself in the future?

[14]J. R. Martin, ed., *Rubens before 1620*, Princeton, 1972.

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: The chief project that I have in mind has yet no title, but will deal with topics in Rubens and Rembrandt. These will include such things as their conception of the self-portrait, their interest in physicians, their activity as collectors, and the place of the print in each artist's work. If I have an ulterior motive, it is to reaffirm the essentially Netherlandish character of these two masters, the one Flemish and the other Dutch. In his autobiography, written about 1630, the Leiden poet and diplomat Constantijn Huygens wrote that he regarded Rubens as the greatest artist of the Netherlands and that he looked upon the young Rembrandt as a worthy successor. This is perhaps the underlying theme of the book that I hope to write on the two artists. I have plans for possible future projects, but these are still too shadowy to be described.

INTERVIEWER: That sounds really interesting. Actually a friend of mine is working on Rembrandt in light of his religious orientation, a much debated point, and has come across evidence to suggest that indeed there are patrons who come from both sides of the line. This has to be considered, because for too long people have been pretending that there was no contact.

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: It is not true, of course, that the United Provinces and the Spanish Netherlands were divided by an iron curtain. This is the subject to which I hope to devote more time when I retire from teaching here.

INTERVIEWER: Are you planning to take on any visiting lectureships?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: My calendar shows a number of lecture engagements for the coming year. In the fall semester of 1988, I shall be the Visiting Clark Professor at Williams College.

INTERVIEWER: I would be remiss if I didn't ask you one last question.

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: What is that?

INTERVIEWER: In an article in *Art in America* in 1978 called "A Taste for Rubens," Svetlana Alpers said the following, "To professional students of art history, Rubens's art is exemplary. He could be called the art historian's artist."[15] What do you think about that?

JOHN RUPERT MARTIN: Well, I'm bound to say that it awakens an echo in my own thoughts. While Rubens takes a bit of getting used to for the undergraduate, I think the characterization as "the art historian's artist" is rather neat and very apt.

[15]S. Alpers, "A Taste for Rubens," *Art in America*, v. 66, no. 3, May-June 1978, 64-72.

[1] Sir Ernst Gombrich (photo: Leonie Gombrich)

Sir Ernst Gombrich: An Autobiographical Sketch and Discussion

In March 1987, the Center for the Critical Analysis of Contemporary Culture invited Sir Ernst Gombrich to speak at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. At the request of the Art History Department, Sir Ernst also presented a talk on his life followed by an open discussion with students, professors and other members of the Rutgers community. The Rutgers Art Review *has been given the rare opportunity to publish the transcript of this informal autobiographical sketch of one of the great scholars of our time. Throughout his distinguished career, beginning in Austria and continuing at the Warburg Institute, London, Sir Ernst has made many important contributions to the study of the history of art and culture. His innovative interdisciplinary work in art, culture, and perceptual psychology has produced such well known titles as* Art and Illusion, Norm and Form, *and* Symbolic Images. New Light on Old Masters *is his most recent book.*

ERNST GOMBRICH: Thank you for your kind invitation to talk about that particular subject I have never discussed in public in my life, that is, myself. I must warn you not to be disappointed when I talk about my life because there are no sensations, no scandals, no intrigues. The only strange and astonishing fact about my long life is that in a period which was so full of dangers, of horrors, which were grim indeed, I managed by-and-large to lead what is known as the cloistered life of a scholar. I couldn't have written so much if I had been on the run, as many others had to be in those dreadful years we are talking about.

I was born in 1909—that's long enough ago. There are people who are always against teaching dates, but dates are the most important pegs to hang the knowledge of history on. If you hear 1909 as the year of my birth, you will immediately realize that I was five when the First World War broke out and that, therefore, that period of Vienna (where I was born), which is now so much discussed, the Vienna of the fin-de-siècle, of the turn-of-the-century, was for me a matter of hearsay. I don't remember any of it. On the contrary, I must say that the Vienna in which I grew up, post-war Vienna, was a strife-torn, sad city with a lot of economic misery. So, for me this idea about the Golden Age of Vienna, which I saw represented in an exhibition in the Pompidou in Paris and which also came to New York, is only a matter of hearsay. Even as hearsay, it is slightly stereotyped and simplified, as history tends to become when it is turned into myth. Vienna, like every other large city, consisted of many people, many different circles. Some of them liked each other, and some of them utterly disliked each other. It wasn't a monolithic society in which everybody talked about modern music or psychoanalysis. It was intellectually very lively but very different from the clichés, which you should take with a grain of salt.

On the other hand, the fact that I was born in 1909 does not yet tell you that I

was born into a home where I could hear a lot about that famous period of Vienna. My mother, who was a pianist, was born in 1873. That is to say, as a young musician she was able to hear Brahms himself. In the Vienna Conservatoire, she was a pupil of Anton Bruckner who taught her harmony. She knew Gustav Mahler extremely well and also remembered Hugo Wolf. So that from family tradition, I have many of the stories of that famous period of Vienna of which I have been talking. My father was one year younger, born in 1874. He was actually a classmate of Hugo von Hofmannsthal in the Academic *Gymnasium* and knew him very well. And so, at home I heard about these years. But my family memory goes even much further back, because my mother was a late child. My grandfather was sixty when she was born. So he was born in 1813. That is to say, the same generation as Wagner. It is strange to contemplate, isn't it, that history is so short. All these things are not as long ago as people tend to think. They only appear to be so long ago because so many things happened in between. I never knew my grandfather, who was born in 1813, but, again, I have some sort of idea of the changes that occurred in his life and that of my parents. My mother remembered vividly the first exhibition of the uses of electricity where for the first time she saw a lamp which plugged into the wall and lit up. So that what we take for granted, was a miracle at the time. And though, as I say, I was very young during the First World War, I still saw the Emperor Franz Joseph riding in his carriage on his way to the castle of Schönbrunn. I also remember very well his funeral cortege, which we watched from a window on the Ringstrasse. So, by now, you will see that I'm really an historical monument.

I went to school, like most middle-class children, to a *Humanistisches Gymnasium.* I learned Latin and Greek in school. Though times were grim, as I said, there was a lot of intellectual life. There was a lot of music, as one expects of Vienna, in the house of my parents, even though the economic situation was not easy. My father was a lawyer, but not one of those who are very successful in making money, though he was very respected. In fact, I think that my development was at least as much influenced by the music in the home of my parents as by any other influence. We were on very intimate terms with a great musician whose name you may no longer know, Adolf Busch, the leader of the Busch Quartet, a great musician dedicated to the classical tradition of Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and Schubert, and very critical of the modern movement. If people have accused me of being rather distant from the modern movement, maybe this early imprinting played a part in my life. Not that one didn't know about it. My mother knew Schönberg quite well when she went to the Conservatoire, but she didn't like playing with him because she said he wasn't very good at keeping time. And my sister, who is still alive and is a violinist, knew Webern and Berg extremely well—she first performed some of their works. Even so now, at this distance of time, she is a little skeptical about the dodecaphonic music which Schönberg tried to launch.

This is the background for a person who became an art historian rather than a musician. I did learn to play the cello very badly and never practiced enough, but the

visual arts played a lesser part in my parental home. Of course, my father used to take us children to the Kunsthistorisches Museum, which was very close to where we lived. On a rainy Sunday we used to go there, though when I was a small child I always wished he would have taken us to the natural history museum with the stuffed animals. But later I, too, enjoyed the paintings in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, and my parent's library was certainly one of the formative influences of my life. Not that they had a particularly large library, but they had volumes of the *Klassiker der Kunst.* And the series edited by Knackfuss—monographs on the leading masters of the Italian Renaissance and of the Dutch seventeenth century—were a matter of course in our house.[1] We looked at these and talked about them. So that while I went to school to the *Gymnasium,* I acquired an increasing interest first in pre-history—stone axes and things which interest small boys, and later also in ancient Egypt and classical art. As it happens in middle-class families, I would get books on subjects that interested me for my birthday or for Christmas. So when I was about fifteen or sixteen, I read books on Greek art and on Medieval art. As soon as the book by Max Dvořák came out, with the title—not by him—*Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte (Art History as the History of the Spirit),* I got this as a present and devoured it.[2] I found it one of the most impressive books I had ever read. About Greek art I read a book by Hans Schrader on Phidias.[3] It was a convention in Austrian schools that for the final exam there should be what one might call an extended essay written over the last few months of the academic year. In the year 1927-1928, when I was eighteen, I selected as a subject the changes in art appreciation from Winckelmann to the present age. I have sometimes thought that this is all I have ever done, being interested in this particular subject, and I asked myself why did I select this subject?

I selected it partly because I had read a book by Wilhelm Waetzoldt, *Deutsche Kunsthistoriker,* in two volumes, on the development of art history—which I found very interesting.[4] But I also selected it because I was puzzled. I was puzzled—remember, these are the late 1920s—because in the generation of my parents, which I have just mentioned, and of our friends, the approach to art was very traditional indeed. It was a tradition going back to Goethe and the eighteenth century in which the subject matter of art was very relevant and the classics were of great importance. People who had traveled to Italy came back talking about these masters. But I was already touched at that time by the new wave, which reached me through books. I am speaking of Expressionism, the new wave of the discovery of late medieval art, of

[1] *Klassiker der Kunst in Gesamtausgaben* is a series of monographs illustrating the complete oeuvre of individual masters, published in the early years of this century (Deutsche Verlags, Anstalt, Stuttgart and Leipzig). *Knackfuss Kunstler Monographien* cover a wider range, with fuller text and more selective illustrations (Verlag Velhagen, Klasing, Bielefeld and Leipzig).

[2] M. Dvořák, *Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte, Studien zur abendländischen Kunstentwicklung,* Munich, 1924.

[3] H. Schrader, *Phidias,* Frankfurt am Main, 1924.

[4] W. Waetzoldt, *Deutsche Kunsthistoriker,* 2 vols., Leipzig, 1921–1924.

late Gothic, of Grünewald, of the woodcuts of the late fifteenth century and such things. I was, therefore, confronted with a new approach to art which didn't chime in so well with what I knew from the older generation. I think this was the reason that I selected this topic of how the appreciation of art had changed from the time of Winckelmann to the Romantics, and from the Romantics to the Positivists, and from the Positivists to the later periods in which, of course, Max Dvořák figured largely together with older writers of my own time.

It was with this study in mind, that art was such a marvelous key to the past—an idea which I had learned from Dvořák—that I decided I wanted to read the history of art at Vienna University. There were two chairs of art history in Vienna because there had been a quarrel between Dvořák and another professor. One holder of a chair was Josef Strzygowski.[5] He was an interesting figure, a kind of rabble-rouser in his lectures, a man emphasizing the importance of global art, of the art of the steppes of the migrant populations. It was, in a way, an early expressionist version of anti-art, because he hated what he called *Machtkunst,* "the art of the powers," and he wanted a complete re-evaluation of art. Not stone architecture, but timber architecture was what mattered and the art of tent-making and crafts of that kind. I went to his lectures, but I found him very egotistic, very conceited, and I was rather repelled by his approach.

The holder of the rival chair, Julius von Schlosser, was a very quiet scholar. He was the author of that famous standard work, *Die Kunstliteratur (La letteratura dell'arte)* which is still the most admirable survey of writings about art from antiquity to the eighteenth century.[6] He was steeped in all these texts. He was not a good lecturer. His lectures were more or less monologues. He reflected on problems in front of his audience as far as the audience managed to keep awake. But he was, at the same time, a towering scholar. He was at the Vienna Museum before he took that chair after Dvořák's death. Everybody knew that his erudition was formidable and, therefore, one respected him despite his aloofness and oddity. Thinking back at how he taught, I'm still filled with admiration at the way Julius von Schlosser conceived of his task of introducing his students to the history of art.

Apart from his lectures which, as I said, were not so successful, Schlosser gave three types of seminars. One that was natural for him was about Vasari's *Lives of the Painters.* One took one of the lives and analyzed it according to the sources and all these aspects. It was more or less routine. It was taken for granted that everybody knew Italian. It was inconceivable that you should go to Schlosser and not be able to read Vasari. But there were two other more interesting subjects. Every fortnight he had a meeting in the museum in the department of which he had been the keeper, the Department of the Applied Arts. He selected for his students objects which he had found puzzling while he was still in charge—an ivory here, a little bronze there—and he asked the student, "What can you make of it? What do you think it is?"

[5] J. Strzygowski, *Early Church Art in Northern Europe, with Special Reference to Timber Construction and Decoration,* London, 1928.
[6] J. Schlosser, *Die Kunstliteratur: ein Handbuch zur Quellenkunde der neueren Kunstgeschichte,* Vienna, 1924.

One had a lot of time to prepare these reports for his seminar because they were given out at the beginning of the year and they usually dragged on much longer than he intended. So that one had much time to find one's way into the problem that had interested him. For example, I had to talk about an ivory book cover of the Carolingian period, representing the writing St. Gregory, and to try to fit it into the period.

The following year, Schlosser gave me another ivory, a pyxis. It was a little puzzling both in iconography and in other respects. It was considered Late Antique but I came up with the suggestion that it wasn't Late Antique, that it was a Carolingian copy of a Late Antique ivory. Schlosser said, "Don't you want to publish this in our yearbook?" In those days, there was no real distinction between undergraduate and graduate. One was taken as an adult. As soon as you entered the seminar you were a colleague, as it were, and you were taken seriously. I think that was a great education. I did, in fact, publish something about this ivory in 1933.[7] It was my first publication. At that time I had started being a medievalist, as they would call it nowadays. I tried my best to survey the whole field. I was struck by the arbitrariness and the many blank patches on the map of seventh-, eighth- and ninth-century art history. I became a little skeptical about the possibility of finding exactly when and where this particular ivory carving was made. And this was one of the reasons why gradually I turned away from medieval studies.

The other type of seminar which Schlosser gave was on problems. Although he was very aloof and one never thought that he had read a contemporary book, all the time he had his finger on the pulse. So he asked me one day—he asked the students and I volunteered to do this—to talk about Alois Riegl's *Stilfragen,* the first great book by Alois Riegl, about the history of ornamental decoration.[8] Schlosser, of course, had known Riegl very well. He used to talk about him with admiration, but also with slight distance. He always mentioned that Riegl had been very hard-of-hearing and was a rather lonely, self-centered scholar. In any case, I was asked to tell Schlosser and his seminar what to think about that book after the lapse of many years—and this I did. Much later, of course, I returned to the subject several times. I've been accused of not being particularly respectful to Riegl, but in fact, I admire him very much and my acquaintance with his work goes back to my student days.

The other problem which he set, one which I also discussed in one of his seminars, was the *Sachsenspiegel,* a legal manuscript of the fourteenth century. It represented various legal rituals and the gestures appropriate to them: when you swear the oath to your feudal lord and similar formalities. These were the hand gestures represented in this manuscript. An historian called Karl von Amira had written about the *Sachsenspiegel,* and Schlosser was interested to fit this into a general subject.[9] So for months I got interested in the gestures and rituals of

[7] E. Gombrich, "Eine verkannte karolingische Pyxis im Wiener Kunsthistorischen Museum," *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien,* neue Folge VII, 1933, 1-14.
[8] A. Riegl, *Stilfragen,* Berlin, 1893.
[9] K. von Amira, *Die Dresdener Bilderhandschrift des Sachsenspiegels,* Leipzig, 1902.

medieval legal practice. And this is another subject which you may find has continued to interest me: communication through gesture.

The subjects that were set, therefore, were certainly grown-up subjects. Standards were high. The number of students in Schlosser's seminar was not very large; we were a very, very close-knit community. One talked about one's subjects all day, with one's colleagues. They gave one tips. One gave them tips. And we learned a lot also about the subject they were asked to do. It was in this form that we studied art history. Lectures were not so important. Seminars much more so. And, of course, Schlosser wasn't the only one who gave seminars. We had some seminars in the museum. We had other seminars under Swobodo, Hahnloser and under Hans Tietze. Tietze was just writing about the Cathedral of St. Stephen, so we had a seminar there in front of the Cathedral on the various aspects of its history. So you see that the formation of a student was much less rigorous at that time. One wasn't expected to cover a particular ground. I am not so sure that during all the years of my studies I heard the name of Rembrandt mentioned very often. But one was introduced into dealing with problems and methods and such matters. There were, of course, various teachers, which was, I think, a very important part of one's intellectual formation.

In the Continental universities it was a matter of course that one didn't only attend lectures of one's own subjects, but went to any lecture that interested one. If you wanted to hear about late Latin, you went to a lecture on late Latin. And if you wanted to hear about history, you went to the history lecture, or whatever it was. One went and sampled lectures and subjects, and I did so quite frequently as did all my colleagues. It was therefore, much less of a prescribed syllabus, except that one was expected at the end to select a subject for one's thesis, to submit to your teacher—in my case Schlosser. Because there was no division between undergraduate and graduate, the course ended when you had written your Ph.D. thesis. Usually one was expected to do this at the end of the fifth year of one's study. It was considered very important, yet it didn't take one more than a little over a year to write.

Vienna is geographically close enough to Italy so one went fairly often to Italy to look at museums and works of art. On one of these trips I saw the Palazzo del Tè in Mantua and found it a very puzzling building indeed, with its strange architecture and its even stranger fresco cycle by Giulio Romano. Now this was a time when Mannerism was all the intellectual fashion. People talked a good deal about the significance of Mannerism, and particularly about the problem of whether there was Mannerism in architecture as there was in painting. Here was a building which was built by the same man who also did the paintings, Giulio Romano's Palazzo del Tè, and I thought that was a very good object for discussing the question of whether Mannerism existed in architecture. I suggested to Schlosser that I would like to write my dissertation on Giulio Romano as an architect. He said that's a very good idea, and so off I went and did it. I went to Mantua and worked in the archives a little. I tried to find new documents, but mainly I tried to interpret this strange shift

in architecture which had happened in the next generation after Raphael. After all, Giulio Romano was Raphael's favorite pupil. I discussed these matters in my dissertation. All this time, I became a little skeptical about the current interpretation of Mannerism as an expression of a great spiritual crisis of the Renaissance. You see, if you sit down in an archive and read one letter after another by the family of the Gonzaga, the children and the hangers-on and so on, you become gradually much more aware that these were human beings and not "ages" or "periods" or anything of that kind. I wondered about these people undergoing such a tremendous spiritual crisis. Federigo Gonzaga, the patron of Giulio Romano, was in fact a very sensuous prince, particularly interested in his horses, his mistresses, and his falcons. He certainly wasn't a great spiritual leader. Yet, Mannerism was the style in which he had built his castle outside the town, the Palazzo del Tè. Therefore, at that time, I started asking myself the question whether this idea about art being the expression of the age isn't a cliché that is in need of revision, whether or not there are other forces operating within society. In this case it seemed pretty clear to me that what was expected of the court artists such as Giulio Romano was something bizarre, something to surprise, something to entertain, and all this I found confirmed, in a way, while investigating this artist.

My development, therefore, intellectually moved away from the approach I had learned from Max Dvořák. This move was certainly encouraged by Schlosser, though he would never have said a word against a former colleague. Yet, his skepticism and aloofness was very much felt in the way he spoke about these matters. He was really steeped in the past and disliked any stereotypes of this kind, without specifically condemning them.

I handed in my dissertation in 1933, and had done my course in art history. At that time, the situation in Vienna was economically very serious. I had absolutely no chance of a job. My father had warned me of that long before, but he never protested against my studying art history. So, indeed, having graduated, I had no job. But, I had friends and I went on working. One of the friends who had a great influence on me later on was Ernst Kris, who was keeper of the department which had been Schlosser's department before: Applied Art in the Kunsthistorisches Museum. Kris had meanwhile also become very interested in psychoanalysis. He belonged to the circle of Sigmund Freud. Having written some very important pieces of, as it were, orthodox art history on goldsmith work and engraved gems, he had hoped to see how much of this new approach could be applied to art history.[10] Freud had written a book on the wit, on the joke, and Kris at that time had the idea that it would be very interesting to write on caricature as an application of wit to the visual arts. He invited me to be his assistant, to write on caricature with him. We jointly wrote a big manuscript which was never published, but we wrote small essays which were published.[11] I learned an enormous amount after my graduation, working prac-

[10] E. Kris, *Die Kameen im Kunsthistorischen Museum; Beschreibender Katalog,* Vienna, 1927.
[11] E. Gombrich and E. Kris, *Caricature,* Harmondsworth, 1940 and E. Gombrich and E. Kris, "The Principles of Caricature" (1938), included in E. Kris, *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art,* New York, 1952.

tically every day with Ernst Kris on this project. He was at that time both keeper of the department and practicing analyst. He was a man of unbelievable industry, and in the evening when he had finished, I came after supper and we worked together. He would explain things to me about psychology. So I count him among my teachers, despite the fact that this project was aborted because of political events. I still have this vast unpublished manuscript at home.

The project was aborted because this was the time when National Socialism advanced in Germany and threatened the independence and the well-being of Austria. Kris was one of the few who were so wide awake that he always read the *Völkischer Beobachter,* the Nazi daily, and he knew what these people were about, what was awaiting us, and what was coming if the international front, which tried to maintain very feebly the independence of Austria, broke down. Therefore, he urged me very much to look for a job not within Austria, where I wouldn't have found one anyhow, but outside. He recommended me to the director of the Warburg Institute. At that time, the Warburg Institute had emigrated from Hamburg in Nazi Germany to London. Kris recommended me to Fritz Saxl, who engaged me to come to England in 1936 because he was looking for somebody who knew German. It may seem a little paradoxical that he, having just received quite a number of refugees, still wanted somebody else. But the fact was that he had committed himself to publishing the literary remains of the founder of the Institute, Aby Warburg. Obviously, the notes and drafts of Warburg could only be handled by somebody who knew German. He needed an amanuensis, as it were, to help sort these notes and write about them because his assistant, Gertrud Bing, was too busy with other things and couldn't really find the time. I accepted this offer to come to England to help with the literary remains of Warburg. In the first week of 1936, I moved from Austria to England—before the *Anschluss*. I was immensely lucky that I did not have to witness the *Anschluss*. By this stroke of luck I escaped it and went to England before it actually happened, because Kris had so much urged me to do so and because he found a job for me. Not that it was a very lucrative job. I received a grant and on that grant my wife and I decided to marry. It was a very, very small sum we had at that time when we settled in London and I became part of the staff of the Warburg Institute.

Aby Warburg, who founded the Institute as his private library in Hamburg, was in fact an art historian very interested in cultural history, and the tradition of Jakob Burckhardt and so on. He called his institute, or his library the Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg, the library for cultural history. He claimed his main interest was cultural psychology. I think the most important thing to remember about the Warburg Institute is not what it is but what it is not. It is not an art historical institute and it never was. There was no official art history as an academic subject in England at that time. The Warburg Institute in England was privately supported. There, a number of refugee scholars worked in many different fields connected with what interested Warburg: the "after-life," as he called it, of classical antiquity.

So here I found myself in an entirely new milieu among rather eminent scholars, including one of my former friends and fellow students, Otto Kurz, who had also come through Kris to the Warburg Institute. I was working among Warburg's papers at that time. These were the "overshadowed" years before the outbreak of the war when everybody felt that things couldn't last very long because Hitler was rising in power and was claiming one country after another. One felt that it was one day going to end in war. When the war came, the Institute was evacuated. Because of the danger of bombing, the library was evacuated to the country estate. But I did not stay among the staff of the Warburg Institute. I spent six years of the war listening to broadcasts, mainly German broadcasts. From 1939 till 1945, I was what was called a radio monitor. Not an easy job—hard life, long hours, much pressure. But I was, in one respect, very lucky. Imagine being forced at least eight hours a day to translate from German into English. You learned the language reasonably well, of course. And I also learned other things. I became interested in perception, in the problem of hearing, in other matters which were concerns at that time. So I wouldn't claim that these six years when we were not in London—London was under bombardment—were wasted years for me. They were wasted in the sense that I was relatively older, by 1945, than I might otherwise have been had I not left scholarship. It was not until after the war that, apart from taking up my work on the papers of Warburg, I could go back to scholarship and write papers. My first paper was very much in the tradition of the interest of the Warburg Institute at that time: on Neo-Platonic symbolism. I wrote about Botticelli's mythologies and on emblematics. I also taught at the Warburg Institute, but not the history of art.

The institute of the history of art in London was, and is, the Courtauld Institute of Art. The Warburg Institute had meanwhile been taken over by the University of London, though it was a rather odd body and nobody knew quite what we were doing and why we were doing it. There was a rumor going which had not yet been stifled that we were an institute for iconography, an idea that is quite wrong and quite misleading, but very much believed. At that time one of our interests was indeed in iconography, but it wasn't the only interest, by any means, that we had. I taught not art historians, but historians who were studying Renaissance civilization. I became a university teacher, taught classes in the patronage of the de Medici, the survival of Neo-Platonism, Vasari, astrology—all these cultural subjects which are not directly connected with the history of art as the history of styles. Thus, what is usually called mainstream art history—connoisseurship, attributions—is very much on the fringe of my formation. I was never much concerned with it, not entirely through a lack of interest, but because my work took me into very different directions.

Perhaps I should mention that while still in Vienna and being rather unemployed in 1934-1935, I had the opportunity given to me by a publisher to write a world history for children. This book, which I wrote very quickly in a few weeks' time, was a commission which simply required the help of the encyclopedia more or

less. For example, I looked up when Charlemagne was born and I wrote it into the book. This book was an unexpected success and was translated into a number of languages. It came out in several editions till, of course, the *Anschluss* put an end to all that. Before that, the Viennese publishers of that book asked me whether I would now write a history of art for children—to which I replied, history of art isn't for children and I can't write it for children. So they offered a little more money. Their first offers were very meager, and I was in need of money and I tried to think of what I could do. This, of course, is really the origin of *The Story of Art,* which I started writing at the suggestion of an English publisher—who then didn't take it. It was then written for the Phaidon Press.[12] As soon as my slavery at the monitoring service had ended, I decided I must quickly write this book because I wanted to go back to research. I engaged a typist to whom I dictated three times a week. In this way the book was quickly finished. The publisher printed it and, once again, I had a piece of luck. It was a great success. My editions were published. It has been translated by now, I think, into eighteen languages.

So at this point I had two lives, as it were. To the outside world, I was the author of *The Story of Art.* Within the Warburg Institute nobody was interested in that book, and I don't think anyone ever read it. In fact, Saxl, the director of the Institute, said that he did not want me to write such a popular book, but to return to research and do proper work. I nevertheless had promised to write the book—so I did. You see how strange life can be. I did that on the stealth, as it were, and for many outsiders this is what I'm known for. I could write it I think because I used my own memory as a kind of filter. I wrote it almost without consulting reference books. I just put down what I remembered of the history of art after the distance of time and I told it as a story. That's why it's called *The Story of Art.*

This is how this book developed in its narrative form. I used illustrations which I had at home. Thanks to my wife, we had the *Propyläen Kunstgeschichte* at home. I picked out illustrations which seemed suitable to me, and in this way I improvised the various chapters. If it has a certain freshness, it's because I never thought of it as a textbook or anything of that kind. I just had to write it, and so I wrote it. It interested me, of course, to see the conspectus of the whole development from a certain vantage point, but it wasn't intended as a teaching aid of any kind.

Even so, *The Story of Art* plays a certain part in my biography. I was back in London after the war when the book came out. A very favorable review appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement* which, I now know, was written by Tom Boase, the director of the Courtauld Institute. When it came to the election of a Slade Professor of Fine Arts for Oxford, which was a guest professorship for a period of three years, he proposed me and I became Slade Professor in Oxford. Not that this meant leaving the Warburg Institute, it was only a matter of twelve lectures or so in the academic year. However, as you know, the prestige of the position which Ruskin had once held was sufficient to give me a different kind of standing than I would have

[12] E. Gombrich, *The Story of Art,* London and New York, 1950.

had without it. For three years I was Slade Professor in Oxford, when there and lectured on many topics. Later they made me Slade Professor in Cambridge, and they invited me to Harvard. And so it went on and on. Thus, from that point of view of my career, there wasn't much of a problem for me. I had, by this concatenation of circumstances, become sufficiently known, so I didn't have a worry what my job would be.

The position at the Warburg was not so simple because, as I told you, it is not an art historical institute and I was not an art historian there. I was a reader in Renaissance studies, or whatever else it may have been. Through the mediation of Kenneth Clark, who had liked some of my writings, I was invited to give the Mellon Lectures in Washington, for which I chose the subject of art and illusion because of my interest in perception and in psychology.[13] This is the first book in which I staked my claim to be interested not only in the history of art as it is taught, but in something different.[14] That difference is an interest in *explanations.* Explanations are scientific matters, how do you *explain* an event? I thought that certain aspects of the development of representation in the history of art, which I had discussed in *The Story of Art* in the rather old terms of "seeing and knowing," deserved to be investigated in terms of contemporary psychology. I spent a good deal of time in psychology libraries. I studied the subject for the sake of explanation. That is, explanation of the phenomenon of style, because, as I mentioned, the phenomenon of style as it had been seen traditionally did not satisfy me. Style became one of my worries, one of my problems, because the idea that style is simply the expression of an age seemed to me not only to say very little, but to be rather vacuous in every respect. I wanted to know what is actually going on when somebody draws a tree in a particular way, in a particular tradition and in a particular style. So by looking into books on psychology, I learned the importance of formulae. When another opportunity arose after the book, and I was invited to give the Wrightsman Lectures in New York, I chose the other side, as it were. I thought, "Well, I have tried to explain something about representation. Now I should like to explain something about form or decoration." So I gave a series of lectures which turned into the book *The Sense of Order.*[15] In other words, you see that my ambition—and it is rather much of an ambition—was, and continued to be a kind of commentator of the history of art. I wanted to write a commentary on what actually happened in the development of art. I sometimes see it as representation in the center with symbolism on the one hand and decoration on the other. One can reflect about all these things and say something in more general terms. It was my ambition to do precisely this.

[13] A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, given in 1956.
[14] E. Gombrich, *Art & Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation,* London and New York, 1960.
[15] E. Gombrich, *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art,* Oxford and Ithaca, New York, 1979.

This, of course, meant, on the other hand, that I never became a proper art historian. I never became a connoisseur. I wouldn't say, when people asked me, that I had no opinions about whether this painting is or is not by Raphael, but it isn't my main interest to practice connoisseurship. My main interest has always been in more general types of explanation, which meant a certain kinship with science. Science tries to explain. In history we record, but in science we try to explain single events by referring them to a general regularity. Here, I think I should mention another friend who had a great influence on me, the philosopher of science, Sir Karl Popper, who was always interested in the problem of research and of scientific explanation. We're on very close terms and I learned very much from him about these matters, both in perceptual psychology and in the more general problems of science.

So you see that I moved in a certain sense outside the charmed circle of art history. By the "charmed circle of art history" I mean the people who say, "You know this picture will come up at Christie's in three weeks' time. Do you really think it is by Luca Giordano? And if it is, how much do you think it will fetch?" I have never been able to join in these conversations, and I'm still unable to do so. On the other hand, I don't want to give you the idea that I look down on people who are able to do so. Some of my best friends are connoisseurs. If they are real connoisseurs, then I respect them very much.

But this is a different matter, a different approach altogether from the one which tries to explain. I should add briefly that in dealing with explanations, I became very interested in the changing functions of the visual image. Also, one can ask, how do traditions change? What is their influence? You all know the slogan that "form follows function" in architecture. An element of that is also true for the imagemaker. The poster has a different type of formal treatment from an altar painting. Here, the history of imagemaking, as I like to call it, sometimes impinges on social developments, on the role of an image in a particular society. All this must interest anybody who looks at the whole development and asks this uncomfortable question, "But why? Why? What actually went on at that time?" I don't claim that one can ever give a full answer to this question of why, but one can always speculate—and this is not always fruitless.

My current work deals with another approach to a question which was important in *Art and Illusion*. My discussion of the development of representation has led to the interpretation of some of my writing that I am an advocate of naturalism and that I see the history of art as an unbroken progress towards naturalistic, photographic images, which is, of course, nonsense. I am now interested in the reaction against certain movements in representation due to the tides of taste. My project, upon which I have been working too long, is what I call the preference for the primitive among lovers of art. That is rejection of things which are considered decadent, corrupt, too sweet, too insinuating, the reaction against the ideal of beauty. All these reactions have interested me for a long time. There are parallels in classical antiquity, but the movement really started in the eighteenth century. This book which I am still hoping to write is called "The Preference for the

Primitive," in which psychological explanations inevitably figure, as other things as well. So here, again, it is a rather large-scale topic I am trying to tackle. I have discussed it in lectures several times, which has its advantages and its disadvantages. Once a subject has gelled in one form, it's not so easy to boil up again and to dissolve it to make it into a different kind of chapter. But I'm doing my best.

QUESTION: I know how much you admire Kris's scientific grounding in psychoanalysis. I'm wondering how you accommodate Kris's approach with that of Popper who so vigorously challenged the "viability" of psychoanalysis.

ERNST GOMBRICH: Well, things are not quite so simple. Popper would never deny that Freud was a great man and a great explorer. He just doesn't think that some of the propositions of psychoanalysis are purely scientific in the sense that they can be tested and then proven true or false. First of all, we don't entirely agree about it. Secondly, I think that I have learned a lot from Kris precisely about these matters.

QUESTION: Do you feel that there's a change occurring in the field of art history? Can you foresee the path that the study of art history is going to take?

ERNST GOMBRICH: When Winston Churchill was asked to lecture in the States, he said, "I am particularly grateful that you asked me to talk about the past rather than the future, because I know so much more about the past than I know about the future." I often quote this, because it's true. I am not a prophet. I don't know where art history will be going or whether it will be going anywhere. I mean, how should one know? Of course, one sees various trends. Some of them one likes, some of them one dislikes, and all one can do is to speak one's mind about them. I don't like the relative popularity of certain Marxist approaches, not that we can't learn something by investigating economic and social conditions. Of course, one can always learn something, but the kind of link that is made seems to me very unconvincing in many respects. There are other such movements which I find not uncongenial. Which of these intellectual fashions will last and which will be forgotten next year, I cannot say.

What I can say and would like to say is that one shouldn't take these intellectual fashions too seriously. I mean, they are like fashions in clothing or other things—one day skirts are worn long and another they are worn short. And one day you speak about deconstruction and then you speak about construction or structure, or whatever they are, all these words which show that you are in the know. A British humorist Steven Potter wrote a wonderful book about gamesmanship and the most important game in society is one-upmanship, where you know that you are "one up" because you can use these counters and use it in the language.[16] I am not a great friend of one-upmanship, but if necessary, I can also play the game.

QUESTION: Has your dissertation on Giulio Romano been published?

ERNST GOMBRICH: No. An extract from my thesis was published in *The Vienna*

[16] S. Potter, *The Theory and Practice of Gamesmanship; or the Art of Winning Games Without Actually Cheating*, London, 1947.

Yearbook in 1934-1935, but the thesis was never published in full.[17] Some of it was translated into Italian and published in the *Quaderni del Tè.*[18]

I was invited to Mantua some ten years ago to give a talk on the "Fortuna del Giulio Romano." This talk and some later things I wrote on Giulio Romano I included in my volume of essays called *New Light on Old Masters.*[19] In addition, the latest issue of the bi-monthly *FMR* contains extracts from the Mantua talk and from some of my writings on Giulio Romano.[20] These texts are published in four languages: English, German, Italian and French, some of it in execrable translation.

QUESTION: [child in audience]: What happened when you were knighted by the Queen?

ERNST GOMBRICH: [performing the gesture of the accolade]: This! You know, that is a very, very old ritual, and, as I told you, I was interested in legal rituals from the Middle Ages. So I was very happy to take part in such a ritual. But the original idea was that she hits you with the sword and this is the last time you are supposed not to hit back. To be knighted, you kneel in front of the queen. And one is told to be careful not to get up too early, otherwise you may get the sword in your face.

QUESTION: In your "In Search of Cultural History," you speak out against generalized theories of cultural development in favor of the more specific historical research.[21] What do you think of the current trend in art historical scholarship, of scholars relying on the general theories of cultural analysis?

ERNST GOMBRICH: I don't think one can answer these questions in a very general way. I'm always suspicious of large generalizations. My first reaction is that of any scholar worthy of his salt, "Well, don't I know an exception? Is that really true?" But sometimes it's illuminating. Are you thinking of people like Foucault? I think what he writes is interesting, but certainly not entirely true. I don't really think that his analysis of the eighteenth century is a complete picture of what was going on at that age. But it's a clever aperçu. I once heard him speak and I found him a bit of a clown, quite frankly. I don't want to offend anyone, but he was certainly very facile, and I think his writings are facile.

QUESTION: Has music had a continuing influence in your life?

ERNST GOMBRICH: Surely, yes. My wife is a pianist. And I couldn't live without music. But when you speak of influence, yes, I think that when questions of artistic

[17] E. Gombrich, "Zum Werke Giulio Romanos. I. Der Palazzo del Tè," *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien,* neue Folge VIII, 1934, 79-104 and "II. Versuch einer Deutung," *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien,* neue Folge IX, 1935, 121-150.

[18] E. Gombrich, "L'opera di Giulio Romano," *Quaderni di Palazzo Tè,* 1, July-December 1984, 22-79. Also in the same issue: E. Gombrich "Il palazzo del Tè: Riflessioni su mezzo secolo di fortuna critica: 1932-1982," 17-21.

[19] E. Gombrich, *New Light on Old Masters,* Oxford and Chicago, 1986. Another essay about the Palazzo, "The *Sala dei Venti* in the Palazzo del Tè," was included in *Symbolic Images: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance,* London, 1972, 109-118.

[20] E. Gombrich, "Palazzo Tè," *FMR,* V, no. 25, March/April 1987, 29-63 (English edition).

[21] E. Gombrich, *In Search of Cultural History,* Oxford, 1969, reprinted in *Ideals & Idols, Essays on Values in History and in Art,* Oxford, 1979, 24-59.

quality and aesthetics are mentioned I always also have music in mind. The effects of a masterpiece, the importance of tradition, all these things which I learned from my acquaintance with music have affected me enormously. I have come to think that the question, "Why is it so beautiful or so moving?" is not answerable. If you hear a wonderful piece of music and want to know why it is so wonderful, I don't think that the answer is very simple. However, it is true that because of my interest in artistic quality, I have made a habit also to listen to the music of the minor masters, let us say, of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century—Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf, Johan Nepomuk Hummel and others. I find it very interesting to see how engaging, how pleasant their works are when you listen, but gradually you miss something. There are no surprises. It is just a trifle empty. Mozart could have done better, you see. There is this immense creativity in the great musicians and in a great painter which makes all the difference. So that if you asked what I have learned from music, I think it is that one has to learn an enormous respect for the great masters. I happen to be particularly fond of Franz Joseph Haydn. The richness, the enormous inventiveness of such a master, the fantastic ability to turn something which may even sound a little unpromising, a theme or a motif, into something that's astounding after a few moves—this is something which one learns when one is interested in music. Of course, there are parallel things in architecture, in poetry, and in painting, but I wouldn't say that I have ever been able to apply music to art. Only I think I can claim that the allegation that I identify painting with representation, with naturalism, falls down since I know perfectly well that late Beethoven quartets don't represent Nature. It's something different again.

QUESTION: During World War II many scholars were under physical hardship and some nearly lost their lives. Do you think this had a profound psychological effect on the way they looked at art history or the way they looked at art?

ERNST GOMBRICH: On me, probably yes. I think it's very difficult to generalize on art history or art historians. The misuse of art history by nationalism didn't start only in the Second World War. It has a long history, particularly, but not only, in German art history. Also in France, there was this quarrel between Emile Mâle and the Germans, I don't know if you know about it. Certainly one learned a lot in getting to grips with the misuse of the humanities altogether. This is a very important topic one should not underrate. Whether all art historians learned these lessons or were even interested in these lessons, I don't know. I don't think so.

QUESTION: What do you think of the Marxist approach to art history?

ERNST GOMBRICH: I don't really want to embark on a Marxist lecture now—it would take a little long. But there is this very interesting fact that there is a certain parallelism between ancient Athens and Florence, of which incidentally Vasari was aware. You can ask why. The answer is not so easy, but certainly one can say that these are trading societies which were very open to outside influence. There was the experience of culture clash, of knowledge what other people were doing. There is a certain contrast between static societies, ancient Egypt, Byzantium, and others, and the immense liveliness and movement in these middle-class societies of Athens and

Florence, which certainly calls for reflection on the influence of social factors. In a section on the life of Perugino in Vasari's *Lives*, Vasari explains how the atmosphere in Florence makes for rapid change and rapid growth through criticism and competition. It's an immensely interesting sociological analysis of Florentine society. So I would not say that one should close one's mind to the influence of social conditions. What I cannot accept is a sort of schematic equation between various types of society and various types of art, because it just doesn't work that way.

QUESTION: A propos of the relationship to social conditions, how would your position with regard to Riegl differ markedly from, or be analogous to, the differences with somebody like Hans Sedlmayr, who was under the influence of Nazism, while you, of course, took a very opposite position? You both have a very defined position about Dr. Riegl.

ERNST GOMBRICH: Sedlmayr wrote an introduction, "Die Quintessenz der Lehren Riegls."[22] I wrote an article on art history and psychology in Vienna fifty years ago, which was published in *Art Journal* and in the Acts of The Art Historical Congress in Vienna. In the article I said that I was impressed by Sedlmayr when he wrote his book on Borromini.[23] I thought it was a very interesting and very challenging book. He was a bit of a poseur, he tried to make things as simple and impressive as possible. He was certainly a very intelligent man with great ideas, but he took Riegl I think too much *au pied de la lettre*.

You see, there are various Riegls. One is the Riegl of the *Stilfragen*. I think this is a work of genius, with its discovery of the continued existence of the palmette and acanthus leaf up to the present day. It was something from which I learned a lot and which everybody should study. His work on late Roman art, *Spätrömische Kunstindustrie* is, to my mind, less convincing.[24] It is even a failure, up to a point. He tried to convince himself and others that these botched-up figures on the Arch of Constantine were made to look that way for some profound reasons of the *Kunstwollen*. I wouldn't want to go into a critique of the *Spätrömische Kunstindustrie*, which has some very interesting observations. Riegl was one of the first to discuss the figure/ground relationship, the reversal of figure and ground in certain techniques, long before the psychologists cottoned onto this. He was always a very intelligent man, but the *Spätrömische Kunstindustrie* is an example of complete determinism. He thought that there was a kind of clock-work going on. Art had to move in a particular direction. This direction was parallel to religion, science and everything. Here we are back at our old friend, or not friend, Hegel, with the idea that there must be one monolithic culture. The determinism in Riegl is so strong that in a passage, which should be famous, he says that if in late antiquity people hadn't started to believe so much in

[22] H. Sedlmayr, "Die Quintessenz der Lehren Riegls," introduction to A. Riegl, *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, Augsburg and Vienna, 1929.

[23] E. Gombrich, "Art History and Psychology in Vienna Fifty Years Ago," *Art Journal*, XLIV, Summer 1984, 162-164, a translation of his talk at the XXVth International Congress for the History of Art in Vienna, September, 1983; H. Sedlmayr, *Die Architektur Borrominis*, Munich, 1930.

[24] A. Riegl, *Spätrömische Kunstindustrie nach den Funden in Österrich-Ungarn*, 1901, 2nd ed. Vienna, 1927.

magic, modern science couldn't have invented field forces, electricity, or goodness knows what.[25] He claimed that all these things followed of necessity. People who are offended if one criticizes Riegl may not have read him all that carefully. There are really quite absurd things in there. But he was a man of great intelligence. I mean, for instance, *Das Holländische Gruppenporträt* had some beautiful observations about visual attention and other matters.[26]

QUESTION: You say that you disagree with an art history as expressing the spirit of the time. Do you consider yourself as a Non-Hegelian?

ERNST GOMBRICH: Yes, I daresay I am not a Hegelian, though I got the Hegel Prize of the city of Stuttgart, much to my embarrassment. You see, the first question to ask is "What on earth is it supposed to mean that art is an expression of the spirit of the age?" Who is the age? Are we the age? Are the people we meet in the street the age? What is all this about, really? I mean, there are only people, there are no ages. It's a kind of collectivism, you see. You make the age into a kind of super artist who then produces a style, and you get really far removed from the man in his workshop who paints a painting. Therefore, I do not take this all that seriously. I would not want to posit that I knew all that before Popper, but it is true that I criticized the Hegelian position before I read *The Open Society*, Popper's attack of Hegel. I discussed his ideas in "In Search of Cultural History" and then in the speech I had to give when I received the Hegel Prize. It was a diplomatic speech. It was called "Hegel, the Father of Art History," which is true.[27] It may be regrettable, but it's true.

QUESTION: Could you see the representation of violence as a traditional representation, and not just as a reaction to a specific situation?

ERNST GOMBRICH: No. I don't see it quite like that. There are subjects, traditional subjects, in the history of art like the Passion of Christ which cannot really be represented without violence, nor can the martyrdoms be represented without violence since the church wanted their martyrs to be admired. These are topics which play a part in the history of Western art. On the other hand, violence has always played a part on the stage. It's strong meat, isn't it? You can move an audience very much by showing violence. There's a lot of violence in Shakespeare. There's a lot of violence in Sophocles. What worse things can you imagine on the stage then when Oedipus blinds himself? So that violence is always something with which art can have to deal. There's perhaps no more shocking painting than the *Blinding of Samson* by Rembrandt in the Städelsches Kunstinstitut in Frankfurt, a picture which I find very hard to look at because it is so shocking. But I don't think it would be right to say that there's a tradition of violence in Western art. There are periods and there are fashions, again, when violence, or anxiety or such themes come up.

[25] A. Riegl, 404 of the 2nd edition.

[26] A. Riegl, *Das Holländische Gruppenporträt*, 2 vols. 1902, 2nd ed. Vienna, 1931.

[27] E. Gombrich, "The Father of Art History, A Reading of the *Lectures on Aesthetics* of G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831)," in *Tributes, Interpreters of our Cultural Tradition*, Oxford, 1984, 51-69.

QUESTION: What about the contrast of beauty and violence in Counter Reformation painting?
ERNST GOMBRICH: I don't think the two things are contradictory. If you think of some famous and sometimes horrible pictures of martyrdom, they are all the more horrible because the violence happens, is inflicted, on beauty. So I wouldn't say that there is a real contradiction there.
QUESTION: I'd like to know what you think about the responsibility of the art historian?
ERNST GOMBRICH: The only responsibility of a scholar is to be honest. He shouldn't make up things to make an effect. I don't know whether he has any other responsibility. He must say what he thinks. It is I think a pleasant by-product of the existence of history, and therefore also history of art, that the past is not forgotten. I believe that is very important. But I couldn't prove it. You might say that the past should be forgotten because there are so many horrors in the past. I wouldn't contradict you. But we lack one dimension, if the time dimension is cut out. Without it we cannot ask: "Well, how did this arise? When did things happen? In cultural history we may want to know when did universities begin? When did lectures?" All these things you can ask and even find an answer. In art history we are interested in the history of art. Let us take exhibitions as a typical example. We take exhibitions for granted, don't we? But when did people start sending paintings to exhibitions? Take art dealers. Who were art dealers or critics? When did newspaper criticism of exhibitions start? All these things can be answered. If you look at the marvelous volumes of Elizabeth Holt, you will find some answers to these questions. I think that once you see these things in three dimensions, or, if you like, four, with the dimension of time, you are a little less prone to think that everything has to be as it is. You can abolish certain traditions.
QUESTION: In your biography of Aby Warburg, while writing about his interest in the Italian Rennaissance, you mention the lack of attention given to Medieval art at that time; not only by him, but generally as a trend.[28] Having been a medievalist yourself, could you explain why this occurred?
ERNST GOMBRICH: Yes, I think it wouldn't be quite true that Aby Warburg wasn't interested at all in the Middle Ages, but he saw them in very, very negative terms. You see, Warburg had a very subjective view of the development of art from classical antiquity. He thought that the heritage of classical antiquity had been threatened and perverted in the Middle Ages, and that the Renaissance, the High Renaissance, was the restoration of beauty, of what he called *Besonnenheit,* of clarity and reflection. For him, the High Renaissance of Raphael, Michelangelo, was a moment in human history of great moral significance and he saw the Middle Ages as a foil to this great efflorescence. There, he was much influenced by Jakob Burckhardt. He needed the Middle Ages as the Dark Ages, you see, degradation

[28] E. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography* with a Memoir on the History of the Library by F. Saxl, London, 1970 (2nd edition Oxford and Chicago, 1986).

and triumph. So, although as a student he heard quite a number of lectures on Medieval art, it didn't figure in his world picture very much.
QUESTION: What about an artist like Picasso who changed his style so many times?
ERNST GOMBRICH: He is an exhilarating example in many respects. I was in the new Picasso museum not long ago, and I found what he was driving at immensely interesting. It isn't so much that he changed his style, but that he was a constant creator. He enjoyed watching what happened under his brush, confronting these images and these creatures which he had created ever, ever fresh. I think that up to a point this was the liberation he needed. Though immensely gifted, he had, as you know, started as a slightly maudlin, slightly sentimental artist in the pink period. There were these wan figures, these acrobats, et cetera. Then he broke loose, as it were, and he discovered that if he took a piece of paper and made three strokes with his pen, suddenly a face looked at him. There is this astonishing enjoyment of playful creativity in him. At a period when representation as such becomes a problem for many reasons—one of them, is, of course, photography—here was somebody who broke out, as it were, and said, "I can do anything. I'm entitled to do anything." It is a *divino artista,* isn't it, a divine artist who creates out of the fullness of his inventiveness? He didn't always succeed, but the fertility of his ideas is certainly most impressive. I wouldn't say that he shunned repeating himself. He had certain motifs and things in his pottery at this house and things of that kind which he always did again. He played, but in a very gifted way. I think that he dominates the art of our century.
QUESTION: He said, "When I was a child..."
ERNST GOMBRICH: I know he said it. He was wrong. May I—I apologize for taking the words out of your mouth. He said, "When I was young, I could draw like Raphael. Now I would like to draw like these children." Now, of course, he couldn't draw like Raphael, but he was very, very good. Drawing like Raphael is still something different, isn't it? Although he probably believed it. But he certainly tried to regress to the state of childhood and to be as creative as children are. There's no doubt about it. I mean, he was the son of a drawing teacher and he was excellent in drawing—very subtle, very clear, but the best Raphael drawings are still different.