

Humanities

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Scholarship
in the Museum
Rediscovering
the Romantics



Cover: *The romantics' enthusiasm for the picturesque grew out of the conviction that certain aspects of the natural landscape, although initiated by nature, could be critically appreciated in the same way as if they existed on canvas. J.M.W. Turner captured the romantic melancholy of the ruined abbey in this carefully detailed watercolor, Interior of Tintern Abbey, 1794. (Photo courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum.)*

Humanities

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Editor's Notes

The Place of the Muses

As repositories of artifacts, museums exist to satisfy an essentially human curiosity about the lives and cultures of others. In ancient Alexandria, these places of the muses housed both artifacts and scholars. Museums today have brought the collections and their interpretation back together. This issue of *Humanities* features several articles illustrating that regressive progress. William Tramosch writes about the museum as a center of scholarship and how the transmission of that scholarship to the public is creating a generation skilled at "reading" material culture. Doran Ross examines the importance of exhibition catalogues as scholarly works and describes how exhibition catalogues have been the primary medium for transmitting knowledge in the field of African art. Other articles include a look at the revitalized Valentine Museum of Richmond, which has used an NEH challenge grant to develop exhibitions and programs that interpret its collections relating to the history of Richmond, and a description of the museum exhibition organized by Rutgers University on William Wordsworth and the age of English romanticism.

For the English romantics, museums were seen as temples of art in which the visitor could experience aesthetic exaltation. Through the marriage of mind and nature, a new world could be created out of the old. In an essay on the relationship of romantic poetry to romantic art, James Heffernan illustrates how this elevation of Nature to the sublime found expression not only in poetry but in the paintings of the great romantic artists J.M.W. Turner and John Constable. Jonathan Wordsworth, a descendant of the poet, discusses Wordsworth's message for the modern age. Laraine Fergenson examines the American response to English romanticism in an essay about Wordsworth's influence on Emerson and Thoreau. Other articles include a discussion of Coleridge's theory of the imagination, a review of literature in the Age of Revolutions, and a description of the painstaking efforts taken by editors of the Cornell Wordsworth edition to discover the earlier texts of his poetry beneath pasted-over corrections.

The *Humanities* Guide gives a recipe for cooking up a successful collaboration among museums and scholars, and "The Persuasive Proposal" explains why certain aspects of a collaborative exhibition on Spanish exploration of the Caribbean and southeastern United States found favor with panelists and reviewers.

In Greek mythology, memory is the mother of the muses, but in our day the museum has more to do with understanding than with merely recollecting the past. The former is humanities; the latter nostalgia. The place of the muses may no longer be viewed as a temple of art, but in a world dominated by the visual image, museums continue to bring human beings in touch with the artifacts they have created—and in touch with the long history of humanity.

—Caroline Taylor

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SCHOLARSHIP IN THE MUSEUM:

Making the World Understandable

BY WILLIAM J. TRAMPOSCH

WITHIN SAN FRANCISCO'S Palace of Fine Arts sits one of America's most successful museums, the Exploratorium. Founded by the late Frank Oppenheimer, co-developer of the atomic bomb, the Exploratorium introduces visitors to a myriad of natural phenomena through the use of highly interactive exhibits. There, the complex concepts of magnetism, echoes, reflection, and refraction, to name a few, are grasped by the least scientific minds. A child who yells into the wide throat of a forty-foot transparent tube can begin to appreciate (and almost see) what happens to his voice within space as it comes barreling back to him. Throughout the Exploratorium, extensively trained museum teachers seize on the opportunity to expand on these experiences. It is not uncommon for children to visit this facility ten to twenty times.

Oppenheimer said that he created this museological fun house because he had become increasingly frustrated by the fact that many modern children were growing up with the assumption that the world is not understandable. Concerned about where such apathy would lead society, the physicist created an environment in which he could awaken visitors' curiosity about the natural wonders around them and reaffirm to them that the world is understandable after all.

Taking potentially complex concepts and making them both understandable and interesting to the public is a difficult task. Successful programs in American museums do

"Just as formal education has concentrated on teaching through words, the museum has pioneered in teaching through objects."

not simply happen. They emanate from a core of well-considered, interdisciplinary research. The scholars from various disciplines within a museum collaborate actively among themselves and also with colleagues outside the museum setting. In the most effective of American museums, this collaboration is best observed between the research and education departments. Although many universities usually do little to encourage "border traffic" between the so-called traditionally academic departments, in the best of museums, researchers and educators enjoy equal status and respect. Interdisciplinary effort is encouraged.

Of course, scholars and educators have distinctively different responsibilities within museums, but the ultimate needs of programming bring them together in a way that is unique to education. The effective museum scholar is confronted with the extra challenge of considering how his research will ultimately be perceived by the public, and this public is no small group of people "in the know." It is anybody who chooses to visit. The educator's role, in turn, is to remind the scholar of this responsibility and to work with the scholar to assure that the mes-

sage communicated is stimulating, provocative, and understandable.

How do scholars on a museum's staff contribute to understanding and appreciation of the humanities? At their best, effective museum scholars contribute in four ways:

1. They **introduce** the visitor to new tools for learning about the humanities;
2. They **respect** the visitor's intelligence and experience;
3. They **provoke** questions that reawaken the visitor's curiosity about the human condition; and
4. They help **synthesize** different areas of knowledge.

New Tools for Learning

Just as formal education has concentrated on teaching through words, the museum has pioneered in teaching through objects. Most museum visitors today are still more competent in learning from the written word, but increasingly our society is also becoming literate in the "reading" of material culture. Today's museums are keenly devoted to bringing to life the concepts and cultures behind their artifacts, be they paintings, scientific gadgetry, nineteenth-century furnishings, or even Fonzie's jacket (which has hung in the Smithsonian).

In this respect, the Jorvik Viking Centre in York, England, is a paradigm. There, visitors enter "time machines" that take them on an underground journey to a reconstructed Viking village replete with authentic sights, smells, and sounds. Close by sits the actual excavation on which the reconstruction is based. The point is clearly made that, at Jorvik, scholarship supports everything that one sees.

Similarly, the Winterthur Museum in Delaware also employs new and

WILLIAM TRAMPOSCH is director of interpretive education and special program officer at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in Williamsburg, Virginia.

enjoyable ways of stimulating thought about the past through the study of objects. In an NEH-supported slide-lecture project, "The Material Culture of American Homes," scholars introduce both general and scholarly viewers to the notion that, as director Ian Quimby says, "household furnishings can be treated as working tools, signs, symbols, and expressions of the societies and cultures that produce them."

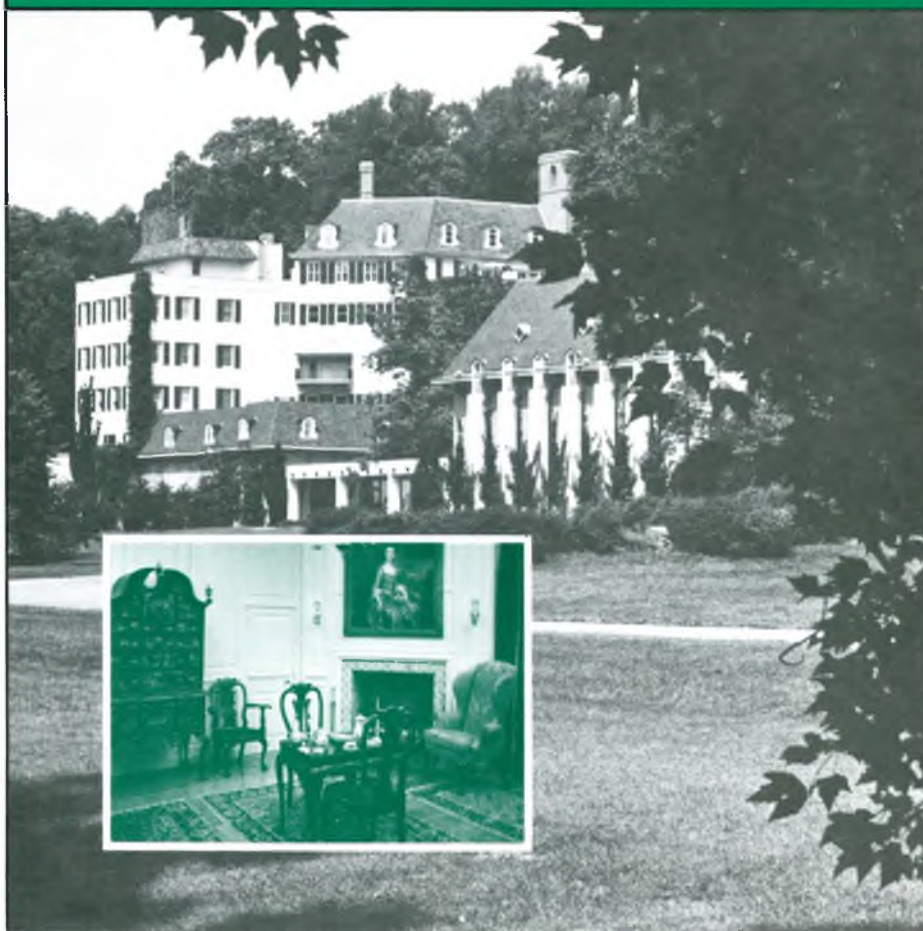
Respecting the Visitor's Intelligence and Experience

In the effective museum, the scholarly process remains unfulfilled until it has found active and successful ways to communicate the significance of its objects to the visitor. At their worst, museums simply display their collections with little interest in who comes to learn from them, yet scholars in America's best museums acknowledge and adhere to Emerson's adage: "The secret of education is in respecting the learner."

Museums that are particularly sensitive to their visitors' intelligence and experience rely heavily on well-composed and regularly conducted audience evaluations. These surveys help museum professionals better understand the varieties of people who visit the institution, and they also help scholars increase their understanding of how people learn in a museum environment. In one study, for example, evaluators at the Royal Governor's Palace in Williamsburg observed and recorded eye movements of random visitors as they toured. Surveyors also made notes of visitors' comments. Later, the tabulated results of this study assisted researchers, curators, and educators as they developed a new interpretation, which developed from many of those artifacts that commonly attracted the visitors' attention.

The Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore has a reputation for creating exhibitions that recognize diverse audiences and that dynamically engage the visitors' curiosities. Working in admirable concert, the gallery's museum educators and curators, along with university scholars, have developed numerous successful NEH-supported exhibitions. "Silver Treasures from Early Byzantium," an impressive recent example, featured the Walters' extensive collection of

WINTERTHUR



Photos courtesy of Winterthur Museum and Gardens

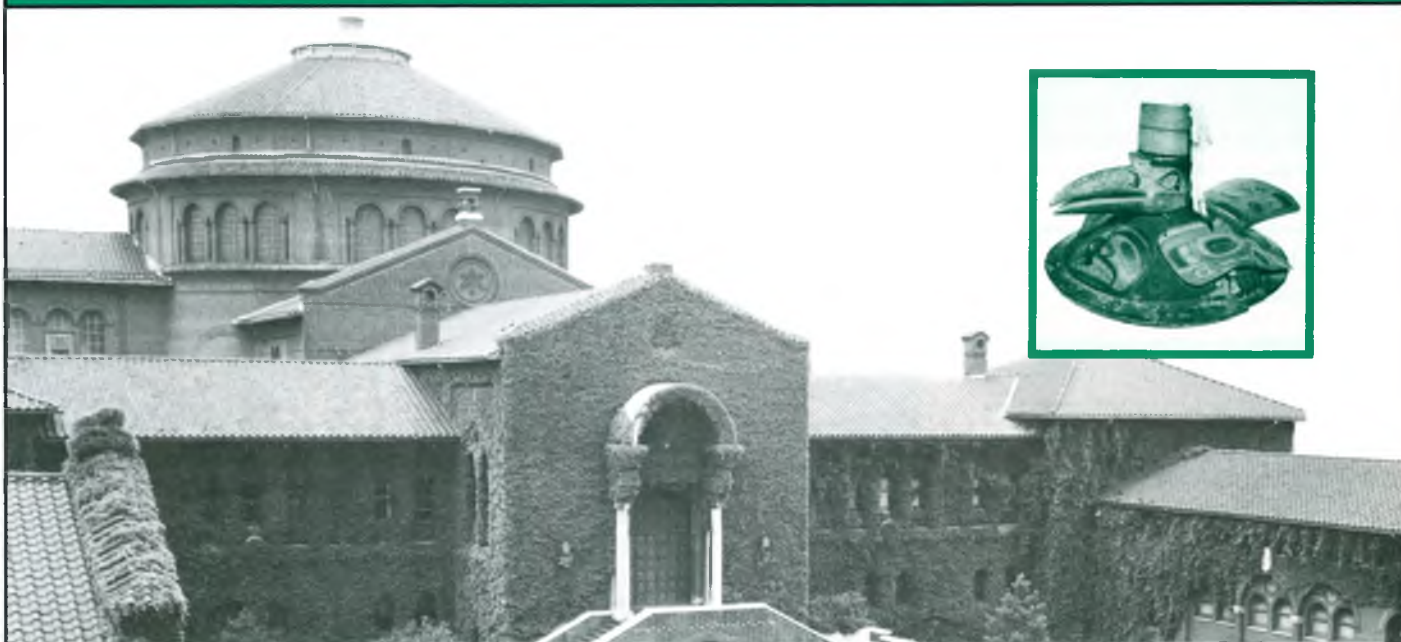
Louise du Pont Crowninshield Research Building at Winterthur Museum Inset: One of the best examples at Winterthur of Colonial America's taste for Chinese ornamentation is the japanned maple and white pine high chest of drawers made by Joshua Pimm of Boston around 1745. It is displayed in the Readbourne Parlor, one of 196 period rooms in the Winterthur.

ROCKEFELLER FOLK ART CENTER



Photos courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Center at Colonial Williamsburg Inset: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation library, which is open to the public, is widely used by researchers and historians. The library's collection includes rare books, manuscripts, slides, periodicals, and microfilms.



Photograph by W.T. Clough.
Photos courtesy of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania

The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania **Inset:** Included in the exhibition "Raven's Journey: The World of Alaska's Native People," is this hat of carved wood, leather, and ermine skin from the Tlingit culture, Sitka.

Byzantine art, widely agreed to be one of the three or four most important collections in America.

The gallery staff planned and coordinated a series of educational events around the exhibition itself: a public lecture series; a community day featuring a Greek buffet and Greek music (organized in conjunction with many community groups); a children's workshop; an outreach lecture program for the handicapped and senior citizens around the city; musical events; docent training; and teacher workshops. The exhibition catalogue, *Silver from Early Byzantium: The Kaper Koraon and Related Treasures*, written by Marlia Mundell Mango of Oxford University, recently received the Schlumberger Prize of the Academie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres of the Institut de France for an "outstanding work of scholarship produced worldwide over a three-year period." The catalogue is the first publication produced by a museum to be awarded the Schlumberger Prize. For meeting the "highest standards of design excellence," the catalogue also received an award of distinction this year from the American Association of Museums.

Raising Questions

A third way that museum scholars

contribute to an appreciation of the humanities is by raising questions among visitors. For generations, museums have been perceived to be static places in which objects and the facts about them were placed side by side, mute memorials to cultures past. Today's museum is anything but static and is now more likely to be perceived as a forum where, through various programs, the visitor and museum scholar have opportunities to discuss the human condition. Astute scholars work to ensure that the visitor has a true place in the great conversations that museums continue.

"From Field to Factory," an exhibition at the National Museum of American History, is an example of ongoing research in exhibit form. This exhibition, which received planning support from NEH, traces the history of the great migration of African Americans to the industrial northern cities from the agrarian South. Aware of the limits of their own first-hand knowledge, scholar Spencer Crew and designer Jim Sims developed an exhibition that not only illuminates the topic but also enlists the public's help in advancing academic discussions about the subject. An oral historian is regularly stationed in the exhibition itself, and as an exhibit stimulates visitors' questions and discussions, the histo-

rian interviews anyone who seems to have had a significant link to the subject matter.

Ongoing research is also conducted in an NEH-supported program developed by Colonial Williamsburg's Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Center. The center is the oldest museum complex in the United States devoted exclusively to American folk art, its creators, and the social cultural histories associated with both. While the project studies Joshua Johnson, a nineteenth-century black American folk artist, it also searches for answers to many larger questions in black history research. As with "From Field to Factory," the Joshua Johnson exhibition has been motivated both by an interest in furthering the study of African-American history and by a desire to exhibit known and recently discovered information about the artist himself.

Synthesizing Knowledge

Nick Carroway would have loved museums. The Great Gatsby's neighbor on Long Island said that, early in his life, he decided to become "that most limited of all specialists, the well-rounded man." An effective museum consists of well-qualified members of various disciplines all working together—and all under-

standing thoroughly the institution's general educational mission. Robert C. Birney, senior vice president for education and research at Colonial Williamsburg, has said that "in a field that must always embrace the task of integrating contributions from all quadrants of the specialist's compass, the needs of museum visitors will best be served by people who *cannot* claim some special right to define what a good museum practice is." This is not to say that the work of specialists goes unappreciated. On the contrary, it is essential; but in the end, the specialists' efforts must be understood by more than a few people.

Over the past twenty years, Old Sturbridge Village, a re-created nineteenth-century New England town, has expended enormous effort on its own interdisciplinary research on life in a nineteenth-century village. Without a framework for presenting that research, much of it would not be understood by visitors. Consequently, the staff has identified three major topics on which all historical scholarship at Old Sturbridge hangs: family, work, and community. To introduce modern visitors to their nineteenth-century kin, the museum simplifies history without oversimplifying it. For example, the Sunday visitor to Old Sturbridge Village can attend an abbreviated meetinghouse service in which a minister in nineteenth-century role and clothing recites an actual sermon by Lyman Beecher on the responsibilities of women. The service offers abundant opportunities for drawing comparisons between life today and in the federal period.

The University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, now marking its one-hundredth anniversary, has made a sustained contribution to the synthesizing of disciplines. For a century, the University Museum has carried out ethnographic and archaeological work throughout the world to explore the history of humans and to examine and interpret cultural diversity. For an equally long period, the museum has been devoted to promulgating its findings to the largest possible audience. In an NEH-supported exhibition, "Raven's Journey: The World of Alaska's Native People," the museum has researched and displayed 350 objects from several of Pennsylv-

vania's collections depicting the art and culture of Alaska's late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Eskimo and Indian people.

The museum's curators believe that most people do not understand Alaskan material culture, nor do they realize that Alaskans developed sophisticated religious and artistic traditions. To ensure that these concepts are accurately and effectively transmitted, the museum has asked four outside scholars to sit on an exhibit review panel. Such panels are not uncommon components of carefully planned exhibits today.

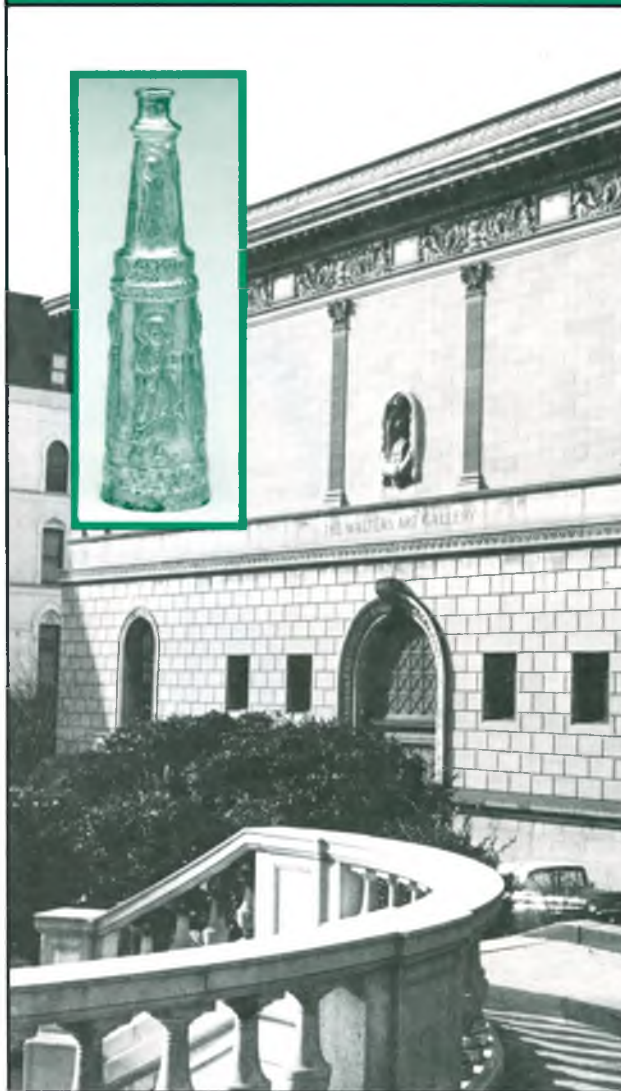
Professional Collaboration

As the museum field matures, so too do museum scholars grow in their belief that professional collaboration is essential to the future health of museology. Over the past decade, an astonishing number of collaborative efforts have developed, both nationally and internationally. A recent example is the NEH-funded "Common Agenda for History Museums," which originated in the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History and is now under the direction of the American Association for State and Local History. The project began a year ago when seventy leaders in the history museum profession met in Washington, D.C., to discuss the strengthening of history museums' services nationwide. The group's ultimate goal is to improve the preservation and interpretation of the nation's material heritage. A national coordinator, based at the National Museum of American History, facilitates the work of two important task forces: one that considers the development of a common data base for collections nationwide and another that is enlisting the cooperation of scholars from a variety of scholarly disciplines that contribute to museum work.

The Scholar As Scholar

Increasingly, scholars are attracted to museum work because it encourages interdisciplinary thinking and research. It appeals to the Nick Carraway in many of us. Museum scholarship also offers one a wider and considerably larger audience than does university scholarship. In addition, the stimulation of learning and

THE WALTERS ART GALLERY



Photos courtesy of the Walters Art Gallery

The Walters Art Gallery Inset: Included in the exhibition "Silver from Early Byzantium" is this Byzantine silver flask, which was probably used to hold oil, perhaps for a baptismal service.

teaching through objects has offered a refreshing change to scholars who felt restricted to the study of the written word.

In this age of increasing specialization, the museum serves both as a model for educating the public and as an example of what can be achieved when scholars collaborate, cooperate, and keep firmly in mind the beneficiary of their efforts: the museum visitor. Museums attract more people today than ever before. Repeat visitation to these institutions is at an all-time high. A generation of people conversant in the reading of material culture demands more sophisticated programming—programming that fully succeeds when visitors emerge from an exhibition believing, after all, that the world is understandable. ∞

Exhibition Catalogues and African Art

BY DORAN H. ROSS



OBJECT-ORIENTED BY their very nature, museums are increasingly interested in publishing scholarly research based on their collections, making this material accessible to both scholars and the general public. At the same time, university-based scholars have become increasingly interested in publishing their research in conjunction with highly visible museum exhibitions. Indeed, much of the important original research on African art and material culture during the past thirty years has been published in exhibition catalogues.

Although temporary exhibitions of African art consistently draw large and diverse audiences, the publications produced in conjunction with them remain the lasting and more fully developed documents that provide crucial interpretive analysis of the exhibitions and their scholarly intents. The best of these publications are much more than mere object inventories with brief descriptive captions. They demonstrate a concerted effort to strip away stereotypes while synthesizing evidence from the disciplines of linguistics, history, anthropology, and religious studies in combinations with the methodologies of art history to produce as accurate and illuminating a picture as possible.

Art in Context

Although there were several American installations of African art accompanied by modest brochures during the second and third decades of this century, it was not until the 1935 exhibition at the Museum of

*Doran H. Ross is associate director and curator of African art at the UCLA Museum of Cultural History. He is currently working on two exhibitions with catalogues: *Elephant: The Animal and Its Ivory in African Art* and *Let the Gods Decide: African Arts of Divination*.*



Modern Art that significant issues concerning the understanding and appreciation of African art were addressed in a catalogue. The MOMA exhibition, like many that followed in the forties and fifties, was a general survey of the arts of sub-Saharan Africa. A significant new trend was started by Robert Goldwater shortly after the founding of the Museum of Primitive Art in New York City in 1957. His exhibitions and two catalogues, *Bambara Sculpture from the Western Sudan* (1960) and *Senufo Sculpture from West Africa* (1964) were the first to provide a concentrated focus on the arts of individual ethnic groups. In both publications, Goldwater was careful to introduce the environment of the people and their subsistence patterns, social organization, and religious beliefs, relating these to the arts. These two volumes were also the first catalogues to publish photographs of art in use, especially masks worn with complete costume ensembles. Henceforth, *in situ* photographs were an integral part of most serious exhibition catalogues. Placing arts in their cultural context was to become a guiding principle for subsequent studies.

This incremental step—a shift from studies dependent solely on studio “portraits” of isolated and carefully selected masterpieces to investigations that included contextual photographs of artifacts in use or performance—was one of the fundamental advances in the re-presentation of African art. In the first instance, the object was chosen by a curator or photographer; in the second, the piece was necessarily selected by the users, the performers, or their superiors. The context photograph generally presents more information about the complete artistic ensemble and the society in which it functions. Contextual photographs also help us recognize a basic distinction between African art and most of contemporary Western art: African art tends to be more functionally integrated with both the daily and ritual life of Africa than is generally true for the West.

As a single example, a decorated gourd in northeastern Nigeria may serve as an infant’s sunbonnet, a



Photos courtesy of the UCLA Museum of Cultural History

The exhibition catalogue *Sculpture of Northern Nigeria* included these standing carved wooden figures by African artists Mumuye, Wurbo, and Idoma (left to right). The catalogue was the first to emphasize that these artists are not anonymous laborers, but well-known and respected individuals.

soup bowl or ladle, a grain storage container, a dowry item, or a tourist’s souvenir. An engraved calabash may also be displayed in the household as a thing of beauty, but it is always much more than just an aesthetic object. Although this may be clear when put into words, it is more enlightening when put into pictures.

In 1958 Roy Sieber of the University of Iowa worked in the Benue River Valley of Nigeria. The preliminary results of his research were published in the *Sculpture of Northern Nigeria* by the Museum of Primitive Art in 1961. In addition to being the first American exhibition catalogue based on field work, Sieber’s monograph was also the first to provide such basic art historical information as artists’ names, provenance, and dates of works, emphasizing that African artists are not anonymous laborers but often well-known and respected individuals.

Art across Cultures

Balancing more focused studies of relatively discreet groups, cross-cultural surveys increased in popularity during the 1960s. The 1968 presentation of *Sculpture of Black Africa: The Paul Tishman Collection* with a catalogue by Roy Sieber and Arnold Rubin drew from linguistic evidence, comparative ethnology, and oral traditions in an initial attempt to understand the relationship between the historical interaction of the African people and their arts.

Rene A. Bravmann amplified this approach five years later in *Open Frontiers: The Mobility of Art in Black Africa*. The catalogue emphasized the exchange of leadership arts in the northwest Asante borderlands of Ghana and the Ivory Coast and in the grasslands of Cameroon. The term *open frontiers* has since entered the literature of material culture studies to refer to the long history of cultural exchange among Africa’s diverse populations regardless of national or “tribal” boundaries.

The first cross-cultural exhibition in the United States to have a strong thematic focus was Herbert M. Cole’s *African Arts of Transformation* at the University of California, Santa Barbara, in 1970. The catalogue mir-



For a full month during the rainy season, several Igbo village groups cease everyday activities and engage in masquerades commemorating the time when water spirits descended to earth to cavort among human beings. Igbo Arts includes a discussion of the masked character, Okoroshi Amara, who visits every major compound at the end of the masquerading season.

rored the exhibition and emphasized the necessary consideration of music, dance, ritual theater, and oral literature in understanding any masking tradition. That African art included more than the artifact was to become another leitmotif in subsequent publications.

Two of the most influential publications of the early seventies were authored by Robert Farris Thompson: *Black Gods and Kings: Yoruba Art at UCLA* (1971) and *African Art in Motion: Icon and Act in the Collection of*

Katherine Coryton White (1974). The former coupled the results of long-term field studies with a comprehensive catalogue of Yoruba sculpture in a single public collection. This remains one of the most probing and analytical considerations of the arts of a single African people. With this volume Thompson expanded our understanding of the highly intellectual foundations of African art. While "primitive art" has long been seen as an inappropriate and severely misleading label for the arts of Africa, Thompson's insights have made it clear that the social institutions and religious beliefs of Africa rival those of the Western world in both complexity and sophistication.

As the exhibition of African art in the United States matured, there was a corresponding refinement in associated publications. Simon Ottenberg's *Masked Rituals of Afikpo: The Context of an African Art* (1975) provides a penetrating view of the sociological, psychological, and aesthetic components of masquerades in one Igbo subgroup in southwestern Nigeria. A model of contextual analysis, this catalogue is especially vital in its discussion of the role of masking in social criticism and community entertainment.

Art and Language

An understanding of the interaction of language and art is a key to the meaning of many African sculptural traditions. In *The Arts of Ghana* (1977), Herbert M. Cole and I examined the verbal-visual nexus of Akan art in which the subject matter of most images is elucidated by proverbs, riddles, folktales, and other forms of oral literature. Similarly the various authors contributing to *Somalia in Word and Image* (1986) related the poetry of pastoral Somalis to their arts and material culture.

Anthology-format catalogues featuring contributions of several authors have become increasingly



African art is part of everyday life. The baby the woman is carrying is hidden underneath a decorated gourd sunbonnet. The photograph is from a mural in the exhibition, "The Essential Gourd: Art and History in Northeastern Nigeria."

common in the 1980s as area specializations become more sophisticated. Susan Vogel edited the landmark publication *For Spirits and Kings* (1981) for the Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition of the Tishman collection. Seventy-one scholars with diverse backgrounds wrote short essays on 150 pieces. The approaches included historical interpretations, iconographical analyses, functional descriptions, and artistic attributions, among others.

At the UCLA Museum of Cultural History, we have increasingly attempted to bring leading scholars in the field together with advanced

graduate students to produce anthology-format catalogues that address segments of the collections along with related artifacts from elsewhere. *The Art of Power, the Power of Art: Studies in Benin Iconography* (1983) focused on meaning and symbolism in Benin imagery. Papers by Paula Ben Amos and Barbara Livingston Blackmun provided a valuable analysis of costume and regalia as they identify historic figures from the kingdom, thus enhancing our understanding of related artistic iconography. *Akan Transformations: Problems in Ghanaian Art History* (1983) examined select Akan object types that were altered by European and Islamic influences over five centuries. The emphasis was on historical reconstruction.

During the 1980s, projects that provided a comprehensive survey of the cultural context of the arts of a single people continued to be the major building blocks in our understanding of African cultures. Two of the best were *Igbo Arts: Community and Cosmos* (1984) by Herbert M. Cole and Chike Aniakor and *The Rising of a New Moon: A Century of Tabwa Art* (1986) by Evan M. Mauer and Allen F. Roberts. The former considered the arts in increasing spheres of influence from the individual to the family to the community, and was the first major exhibition catalogue to be coauthored by an individual from the culture it addressed. Among the many achievements of the Tabwa volume, the catalogue raisonné should be singled out as a major contribution. For the first time both scholars and the general public could consider the full corpus of objects from which the exhibition was selected. While such an inventory is prohibitive for more populous and artistically prolific peoples, the 417 objects illustrated represent one of the most accurate presentations of artistic quality and variety ever published.

The Essential Gourd: Art and History

Photos courtesy of the UCLA Museum of Cultural History



"The Essential Gourd" explored the versatile properties of African gourds, which in addition to being light, durable, portable, and watertight, also lend themselves to numerous decorative treatments.

in Northeastern Nigeria (1986), by Marla C. Berns and Barbara Rubin Hudson, addresses the artistic elaboration and multifunctional nature of one object type among twenty-six ethnic groups in the Benue River Valley. Of particular importance are the chapters "The Ga'anda: Gourd Decoration from a Sociocultural Perspective" and "Decorated Gourds and History," both by Berns. The first demonstrates how a cohesive design vocabulary with substantial meaning can permeate media as diverse as scarification, pottery ornamentation, metal arts, and gourd decoration. The second combines linguistic evidence, technological

considerations, and stylistic analysis in a provisional reconstruction of the area's history.

The future of quality exhibition catalogues on African art and material culture was significantly enhanced by the opening of The Center for African Art in New York City in September 1984. Another major commitment to publish original research in the field has been shown with the appointment of Sylvia Williams as director and Roy Sieber as associate director of the National Museum of African Art shortly after its inclusion as part of the Smithsonian Institution. The opening of the new museum facility in September 1987 was marked by the simultaneous publication of three catalogues: *African Art in the Cycle of Life* by Roy Sieber and Roslyn Adele Walker; *Royal Benin Art in the Collection of the National Museum of African Art* by Bryna Freyer; and *Patterns of Life: West African Strip-Weaving Traditions* by Peggy Stoltz Gilfoy.

With the increased publishing activity of these two museums and others, exhibition catalogues should continue to remain the dominant medium for presenting fresh and innovative research dealing with African art and culture. Many of these, in part or whole, have become basic textbooks for courses in the anthropology of art and in African art history. As efforts intensify to develop and refine the interpretive and didactic components of exhibitions, the catalogue as a scholarly document will be even more vital. ♀

Note: The following African art exhibition catalogues have received support from NEH:

Somalia in Word and Image

Igbo Arts: Community and Cosmos

The Rising of a New Moon: A Century of Tabwa Art

The Essential Gourd: Art and History in Northeastern Nigeria

Revitalizing the Valentine

BY SUSAN QUERRY



TO PRESERVE THE history of his native city, in 1892 Mann S. Valentine II donated his collections, his family's sculpture studio, and his home at the corner of Eleventh and Clay streets to the city of Richmond. A successful businessman and patron of the arts, Valentine had amassed a collection of books, letters, and manuscripts depicting Richmond's social, business, and political life, as well as paintings, prints, and photographs of and by Virginians.

The museum was formally opened to the public in 1898. In the years that followed, the museum became a static repository for objects and memorabilia of the past. By 1980, to address escalating financial and managerial problems, the museum's board of directors initiated long-range plans to retire debts, to rebuild cash value, to create a continuing exhibition on the history of Richmond, and to engage a professional staff.

In 1984, with the advice of expert consultants and the guidance of newly hired Director Frank Jewell and Assistant Directors Judy Lankford and Eryl Platzer, the museum staff conducted a self-examination that revealed many weaknesses: Annual visitation stood at 26,000 be-

cause of the museum's appeal to a limited audience. Exhibitions, which had largely focused on expressions of Richmond in its Victorian period, did not convey the idea that seemingly localized ideas and objects were actually the manifestations of national and international trends.

Staff members sought answers to these questions: What can ensure the invigorating yet responsible and accurate interpretation of exhibitions? How does a small museum cultivate relationships with scholars and scholarly institutions, and what could be gained from those relationships? How is it possible to continue to educate and appeal to a population as varied as that of Richmond?

The self-examination led to the development of a five-year plan calling for the interpretation of collections in a way that would interest the broadest possible audience. The plan also required that the staff, which previously boasted only four humanities scholars, be composed of professionals with responsibilities not only to a particular collection or program area, but to the entire museum.

WITHIN THE PAST three years, the staff at the Valentine Museum has based its work on the belief that the institution's success and longevity depend on its ability to generate questions among its visitors. For example, how does Richmond's history fit into the broader context of American and even Euro-

pean history? Are previously accepted versions of Richmond's history correct? "It is a real shock for people to remember that Virginia went into the Union as the largest, richest, and most populous colony," says Jewell. "One could argue from the political writings of the late eighteenth century—those of James Madison and Thomas Jefferson for instance—that it was intellectually the most vital colony. It is not at all surprising then that Richmond was a much more sophisticated city and much more fully integrated into American life in 1815 than it is today."

In 1986 the Valentine successfully applied for an NEH Challenge Grant to launch the public phase of a fundraising campaign and to support the implementation of the five-year plan and the restoration and reinterpretation of the historic Wickham-Valentine House.

Inherent in the five-year plan is the use of collections that interpret not only Richmond's Victorian period, but the early national period, the twentieth century, and the history of the city's minorities.

Addressing Richmond's more recent history, the museum launched in the spring of 1986 a series of exhibitions to enrich its collections, to document Richmond's minority community, and, most importantly, to make the public aware of the history of race relations in Richmond. "Never before had any Richmond museum made such overt efforts to

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Photos courtesy of the Valentine Museum

The picture of Mrs. Edward Virginius Valentine and her daughter is part of the large collection of historic photographs in the Valentine Museum. At the museum, schoolchildren examine the equipment in the Victorian kitchen, and visitors inspect the restoration in progress. The newspaper clipping announces the opening of the Valentine Museum in 1898. The architectural drawings of the Wickham-Valentine House in the background were done by the Historic American Buildings Survey.

represent the city's minorities," says Lankford. "The series received overwhelming community support."

One exhibition, "Jackson Ward: A Century of Community," presented objects, costumes, videotapes, audiotapes, and photographs borrowed from the National Archives and from the residents and institutions of Jackson Ward, Richmond's major black neighborhood. Public programs included a workshop on family artifacts, a walking tour of Jackson Ward, and musical performances.

FOR AN EXHIBITION on the early national period, the Valentine is working with scholars to reinterpret the history of the urban South. At the outbreak of the Civil War, Richmond was an urban, industrial city with northern sympathies and ties through trade and commerce. Prevailing Union sentiment and fear of economic decline made the citizens of Richmond reluctant to enter the Civil War. It was only after President Lincoln ordered Virginia troops to suppress the rebellion in South Carolina that Richmond's inhabitants supported secession. Like many southern cities at the end of the war, Richmond became isolated from northern business and trade associates. This insularity stunted the growth of what was once a vigorous economy. How


Richmond has fared in the post-Civil War era is of interest not only to its inhabitants but to students of urban history.

One aspect of Richmond's eloquent past can be viewed in the neo-classical Wickham-Valentine House, a townhouse connected to and owned by the museum. Built in 1812 by John Wickham, the wealthiest man in early nineteenth-century Richmond, the house illustrates a portion of Richmond's history that has been overlooked. Decorated with wall and ceiling frescoes of Homer's *Iliad*, the house was filled with what conservators have defined to be the most avant-garde furnishings available at that time from the eastern seaboard and Europe. Among these were a pair of card tables considered by conservators to be the finest work of furniture maker Charles-Honoré Lannuier and decorative trim created by Daniel Raynerd, a respected stuccoer whose designs were used over a wide span of the eastern seaboard.

A 1920S RESTORATION removed any accurate portrayal of life in nineteenth-century Richmond. Coats of beige paint covering the frescoes reflected not Wickham's taste, but that of restorers who mistakenly believed Richmond's architectural history to be dominated by colonial and Victorian themes. Input from expert

conservators led the Valentine staff to conclude that the inaccurate restoration in itself is also valuable for the study of urban history. Conservators plan to restore portions of the original artwork but will not eliminate all of the 1920s restoration. The Valentine will remain open for guided tours during the entire process of restoration, thus enabling the public to witness the work in progress.

"We need to address—first in our marketing and then inside the museum—how to approach people on a level that is not threatening and on a level that communicates," says Jewell. The Valentine currently is meeting, and in many cases exceeding, the goals of the five-year plan. The full-time staff consists of seventeen museum professionals, fifteen of whom hold humanities degrees.

By attacking and exploring key questions about the role and responsibility of an urban history museum, the Valentine staff has created a classroom where both mind and eye are stimulated by an ever-changing curriculum. Annual visitation has increased to 59,000, and the goal is to reach 65,000 by 1990. 

In 1987 the Valentine Museum, under Director B. Frank Jewell, was awarded \$400,000 from the Office of Challenge Grants.

Wordsworth and English Romanticism

BY ELLEN MARSH



Interior of Tintern Abbey, an early watercolor by J.M.W. Turner, 1794. Gothic ruins were favorite subjects for poets and artists in the romantic era. The realism is characteristic of Turner's early work.

TOWARD THE END of the eighteenth century, a series of political, technological, and intellectual revolutions combined to change the world. There was a feeling abroad that the old order was dying, to be replaced by what William Blake called a New Jerusalem.

"The modern age begins with the romantic era," says Michael Jaye, professor of English literature at Rutgers University and director-curator of a major museum exhibition, "William Wordsworth and the Age of English Romanticism." According to Jaye, "we are still living in the romantic age. From romanticism comes our appreciation of nature, ideas about the importance of childhood as the formative stage of life, the sense of self and the wholeness of one's self, and the concept of the power of intuition and imagination."

Poets and artists led the romantic movement in England. "Not since the Elizabethan era had there been such an explosion of creative energy," remarks Jaye. Many of the writers and artists knew each other; read, admired, and discussed each other's work. When we consider that Robert Burns, William Blake, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Charles Lamb, Lord Byron, and John Keats were contemporaries, along with painters John Constable, J.M.W. Turner, and a host of lesser-known, but undeniably brilliant artists, we have some idea of the flowering of English culture at that time.

"There was a concentrated society of poets and artists who believed they were important, that their art had a purpose," Jaye says. "In this confluence of genius, William Wordsworth was the central figure. Wordsworth's aim was to find the kind of faith that would take the place of a political revolution. The French Revolution had failed to create Utopia; human capacities could."

The Exhibition

"William Wordsworth and the Age of English Romanticism" illuminates

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the romantic period through books, paintings, and manuscripts—the works of Wordsworth and his contemporaries. Peter Funnell, associate director for the exhibition, stresses that this is a rare opportunity to view both romantic art and literature in a single exhibition. Many of the more than 300 objects in the exhibition have never before been seen in this country.

The exhibition was organized by Jaye and involved Rutgers University in Newark and the Wordsworth Trust (England), the New York Public Library, Indiana University (Bloomington), the Chicago Historical Society, and the National Federation of State Humanities Councils. It opened at the New York Public Library on October 31. (See exhibition schedule, page 15.)

Jaye emphasizes that one of the most important elements of "Wordsworth and the Age of English Romanticism" is the traveling exhibition of twenty-four photographic panels based on material in the exhibition. Humanities councils in nearly every state have received at

Exhibition Schedule

New York Public Library: October 31, 1987–January 2, 1988

Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington: January 27–March 6, 1988

Chicago Historical Society: April 6–June 5, 1988

least two sets of these panels, which come with a teacher's guide. (See

"The States and Romanticism," page 16.) Other publications connected with the program include a full-color exhibition catalogue and a collection of essays about romanticism written for the general reader. Both are published by Rutgers University Press.

"Bliss was it in that dawn . . ."

The exhibition begins with the historical context of romanticism. Wordsworth, the only English poet to experience the French Revolution first hand, was exhilarated by its implications and wrote about it with enthusiasm until he became disillusioned by the Reign of Terror and the rise of Napoleon.

"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive" from *The Prelude* introduces the first part of the exhibition. Documents and images present the political, social, and intellectual currents of the age—the American Revolution, the French Revolution, the Reign of Terror and rise of Napoleon, and English responses to these events. Also included are a watercolor of the fall of the Bastille, painted by a participant of the storming, Claude Cholat, and Baron Gros's portrait of *Napoleon at Arcole*.

In "Spirit of the Age," visitors are introduced to Wordsworth and his contemporaries. This section of the exhibition contains the rare Bristol edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), which was the product of collaboration between young Wordsworth and Coleridge. The work includes *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. "It is one of the most revered single volumes ever published in English

literature. It transformed English poetry," says Funnell. Among the manuscripts, books, and portraits are illuminated books by Blake, a manuscript of Byron's *Don Juan* and a portrait of Byron in Albanian costume, Keats's "On First Looking into Chapman's *Homer*," and Mary Shelley's annotated manuscript of *Frankenstein*.

"The Child Is Father of the Man" presents Wordsworth's revolutionary view of childhood as the crucial period of human development. The exhibition displays the earliest manuscript passages from the posthumously published autobiographical poem, *The Prelude*, which scholars consider Wordsworth's most important work. The rainbow theme is developed by studies of rainbows by Constable, who had a scientific interest in atmospheric effects, and the Turner watercolor, *Rainbow over Loch Awe*. Of particular interest is Constable's handwritten copy of "The Rainbow."

"Unity Entire"

Nature, in its simplest, humblest forms as well as its grandest and most sublime held a special significance for the romantics. Natural forms were admired not only for their aesthetic qualities, but for the profound meanings the poets ascribed to them. As Wordsworth wrote in the "Immortality Ode":

*To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.*

The romantics' almost religious appreciation of nature can be seen in the art of the period. "Both Constable and Turner strove to make landscape painting a serious genre," Funnell points out. He says that many landscapes were painted in watercolor, a medium that changed completely between 1795 and 1805, becoming technically and expressively sophisticated. "Watercolor had an immediacy and an intimacy that was very appealing to the romantic artist; furthermore, unlike oils, it was a portable medium—watercolorists could make drawings on the spot."

The exhibition devotes two sections, "The Discovery of Nature" and "Unity Entire" (the title is taken from *The Recluse*), to the relationship between romanticism and nature.



Many of the creative people of the romantic era were friends, as evidenced in Sir Walter Scott and His Literary Friends at Abbotsford, engraved for *The Eclectic Magazine* after a painting by Thomas Ward. Scott is at the far left; Wordsworth is sixth from the left; Constable sits at the far right.



John Constable's great watercolor of Stonehenge (1836), showing a double rainbow, was painted the year before his death.

The States and Romanticism

STATE HUMANITIES COUNCILS in forty-nine states are enabling schools, libraries, and other cultural institutions to plan conferences, lectures, films, and musical and theatrical performances that complement the traveling poster panel exhibition, "William Wordsworth and the Age of English Romanticism." Each state can tailor its use of the panels to its own needs.

Douglass Thomson of Georgia Southern College, who is coordinating Wordsworth programs for the state, says the college hosted an interdisciplinary program examining the role of romanticism in history, religion, and poetry, with lectures by visiting scholars, including Stephen Parrish of Cornell University; a recital of romantic music by pianist John Salmon from Florida State University; discussion groups; workshops; films; and an operetta. The panel exhibition is being circulated to high schools and six cultural centers in various parts of Georgia.

The main speaker at an international conference, "Wordsworth, Byron, and the Age of English Romanticism," at Brigham Young University in Utah was Richard Wordsworth, who is a great-great-grandson of the poet, a Shake-

spearean actor, and a scholar. The conference, which was open to the general public, featured dramatic readings by Richard Wordsworth of poems by Wordsworth and Byron, and lectures and panel discussions.

In Connecticut, a lecture by Malcolm Cormack, curator of paintings at the Yale Center for British Art, inaugurated a year-long series of events at the University of Hartford. In addition to concerts, films, and the poster panel exhibitions, there will be lectures by visiting scholars, including Jonathan Wordsworth, the poet's great-great-grandnephew, who teaches at Oxford University and is chairman of the Wordsworth Trust. The British Art Center at Yale University devoted a weekend in November to Wordsworth and English romanticism. M.H. Abrams, professor emeritus of English literature at Cornell University, and other scholars participated in a one-day symposium, accompanied by an art exhibition, lectures, and theatrical performances.

Information on "William Wordsworth and the Age of English Romanticism" is available from the Wordsworth Project. The poster sets are available on loan from state humanities councils.—E.M.

Turner's watercolor of the ruins of Tintern Abbey is juxtaposed to paintings by other artists of the same subject and by Wordsworth's poem, "Tintern Abbey." There are examples of Constable's studies of cloud formations, carefully labeled with the time of year, hour of the day, weather, and wind direction. Paintings of urban and industrial landscapes that show the effects of the Industrial Revolution offer a striking contrast to pictures and poems of the Lake District, Wordsworth's home country.

"The Mind of Man"

The exhibition ends with a display of paintings and poetry illustrating the theme, "Memory, Imagination, and the Sublime." Here are brought together the great manuscripts of the romantics: *The Prelude*, Blake's *Vala or The Four Zoas*, Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, "Ode to the West Wind" by Shelley, and John Keats's "To Autumn." J.M.W. Turner's masterpiece, *Valley of Aosta—Snowstorm, Avalanche, and Thunderstorm*, provides a visual translation of the poetic idea of the sublime; major works by Constable (*The Lock* in the New York exhibition and *Hadleigh Castle* in Chicago) and paintings by Samuel Palmer, Thomas Girtin, and others illustrate the romantics' view of the imagination and its power to transform the world.

On the final wall of the exhibition is the last sentence from *The Prelude*:

*Prophets of Nature, we to them will speak
A lasting inspiration, sanctified
By reason, blest by faith: what we have loved
Others will love, and we will teach them how.
Instruct them how the mind of Man becomes
A thousand times more beautiful than the
earth
On which he dwells, above this Frame of
things
(Which 'mid all revolutions in the hopes
And fears of Men doth still remain
unchanged)
In beauty exalted, as it is itself
Of quality and fabric more divine.* ∞

Michael Jaye received \$467,833 in outright funds and \$450,000 in matching funds to support "William Wordsworth and the Age of English Romanticism." The award was made through the Humanities Projects in Museums and Historical Organizations program of the Division of General Programs.

Wordsworth on Wordsworth

BY JONATHAN WORDSWORTH

WHAT DOES WILLIAM Wordsworth have to say to the modern age? Many of the issues that are taken for granted today—the problems of urban life, the importance of childhood—had their origins in the romantic era.

"The world is too much with us," wrote Wordsworth 185 years ago,

late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our
powers
(Little we see in Nature that is ours),
We have given our hearts away, a sordid
boon!

Wordsworth's vehemence was characteristic—partly because he was thinking of city life, partly because he was upholding values that even then seemed under threat. The London that provoked his thoughts was the center of the commercial world. William Cowper had written of it a generation earlier:

thither flow
As to a common and most noisome sewer,
The dregs and feculence of every land.

Wordsworth was less censorious. He could respond to the city's power, vitality, color, bustle—even at times see it as beautiful—but the endless round of "getting and spending" seemed to him a denial of all that is natural, generous, and life-enhancing. To give away the heart was for him a rejection of life itself.

He was right, of course—but then we expect great writers to be right. If they are to speak to us now, they must do more than merely tell the

truth. Somehow they must bring it home. The vehemence is a good start, but not enough. More important are the pronouns: "us," "we," "our." Wordsworth is telling us of shared experience. "We have all of us," he wrote, "one human heart: There's not a man who lives that hath not had / His godlike hours." His aspirations are for us all, and his sense of human frailty started with himself: "we lay waste our powers."

It may be that we need to be reminded of the very existence of these powers. Wordsworth makes us think better of ourselves. Not only was life to him infinitely precious, he believed passionately (as we all do in theory) in the importance of the individual human being. He was the spokesman of humanity and the humanities, believing above all that we have to be educated to live, to enjoy, to feel, and to give. "Every great poet is a teacher," he wrote, "I wish either to be considered as a teacher, or as nothing." The aim of his poetry, he said, was to render the values of his audience "more sane, pure and permanent, in short, more consonant to Nature and the great moving spirit of things." It was a wisdom

that has proved to be accessible to people of many different ways of thought. Though spiritual in his aspirations, Wordsworth was undogmatic, deeply rooted in the ordinary and everyday. His was

the very world which is the world
Of all of us, the place in which in the end
We find our happiness or not at all.

We should beware of thinking that Wordsworth's world is the one that we make for ourselves with our "getting and spending." Happiness for him had little to do with acquisition. It was a way of seeing, giving, loving—an act of imaginative sympathy that was ordinary only in the sense that it was (or should be) within everybody's reach. "Thanks to the human heart by which we live," wrote Wordsworth at the end of his great "Immortality Ode":

Thanks to its tenderness, its joys and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

Some of us, of course, may find ourselves more in tune with Peter Bell than with the poet:

A primrose by a river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him
And it was nothing more.

It is extraordinary that those last five simple words can mean so much. Because Wordsworth had, as he put it, "create[d] the taste by which he is enjoyed," he could depend on our reading into Peter's failure of response a whole system of values. The poet was not quite saying as Blake did, "If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite!" but he believed it was his task "to travel before men occasionally as well as at their sides." Thoughts that for him "do often lie too deep for



A 1904 stereopticon photograph of Dove Cottage, Grasmere, for years Wordsworth's home and now the site of the Wordsworth Trust.

JONATHAN WORDSWORTH, a great-great-grandnephew of William Wordsworth, is chairman of the Wordsworth Trust and a professor at St. Catherine's College, Oxford University.

tears" take the rest of us into realms of experience that we very seldom reach. Wordsworth had, in the famous words of *Tintern Abbey*:

*a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.*

Laying waste our powers, we lose the wonderment of life—lose our sense of the "something" that connects "the mind of man" to the natural world in which he lives. To call this something God is to do what Wordsworth himself chose not to do. He would not have denied the implication, but he was writing about the human mind—about his own religious sense, and ours—and not about a specific creed or religion. From our late twentieth-century point of view, it is fascinating that at times he would go further still, tell us of exalted "moods / That are their own perfection and reward." Anticipating the Freudian *un* (or *sub*) conscious, he was able to conceive of "a mighty mind"

*that feeds upon infinity,
That is exalted by an underpresence,
The sense of God, or whatso'er is dim
Or vast in its own being . . .*

Certain moods can be regarded, Wordsworth was saying, either in religious terms as the "sense of God," or in terms of secular intuition. By implication he refused to value one way of thinking above the other. Each was a "feed[ing] upon infinity," a drawing of imaginative strength from underlying sources that cannot in the nature of things be fully understood but that enable the human mind to attain its highest fulfillment. Freud's brilliant myth-making has never been verified, and Wordsworth's intuitions also reached a point where they could not be taken

further. They are true now in the same sense in which they were true then—true, that is, to human experience.


One of the most impressive things about Wordsworth is that in his study of the mind he did not expect that everything could be explained. His method was broadly empirical: He looked inward, and back, and asked "How is it that I find myself here?" "What forces, pressures, influences turned the child of my distant memories into the adult of the present?" In doing so, he set a higher value on memory than any writer had ever done before—and yet he knew that memory tells only part of the story. In the "Immortality Ode," he gave thanks not for the conventionally happy childhood that we all like to look back upon,

*But for those first affections
Those shadowy recollections
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
Are yet the master-light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish us, and make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence . . .*

What then are the "shadowy recollections," which, *be they what they may*, are the basis of adult vision? Wordsworth's answer was that they will be different for each of us and yet essentially the same. They will be that which makes sense of existence, shows us how "Our noisy years"—brilliantly evocative both of childhood and of human life as a whole—can be seen as part of "the being / Of the eternal silence." Those who are not familiar with Wordsworth might expect that the memories would therefore be tranquil, comforting. Some are; many are not. Those for which he is especially grateful take us back to what we should now regard as traumatic experience:

*. . . obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realized . . .*

The poetry mimics the child's confusion. We admire his resolute questioning, share with him in his sense of betrayal, his life of the imagination amid worlds that are, and are not, real. We are reminded of comparable moods, moments, shadowy recollections of our own past. And then we have to confront the poet's strange certainty that such experience has been of value. The most obvious reason why it should be so for Wordsworth himself is that much of his writing was autobiographical and that writing about his childhood fears makes the most exciting poetry. But we have to go further. Wordsworth had a whole philosophy to offer—a philosophy of wholeness that took him back through "The twilight of rememberable life" to the period when as an infant he "held mute dialogues with [his] mother's heart." In an intuition that was a hundred years ahead of his time, he saw the child as "subjected to the discipline of love," receiving in the mother's love the confidence to respond to the world about him.

Everything, it seemed to Wordsworth, depended on this start in life. "So feeling comes in aid / Of feeling," he wrote, "and diversity of strength / Attends us, if but once we have been strong." Life is bound together by imaginative response. However painful at the time, the fears, guilts, and confusions of childhood are precious in retrospect because they have played their part in forming the adult psyche, and because they contribute through "shadowy recollections" to an understanding of the oneness of experience. It is a very modern view. 

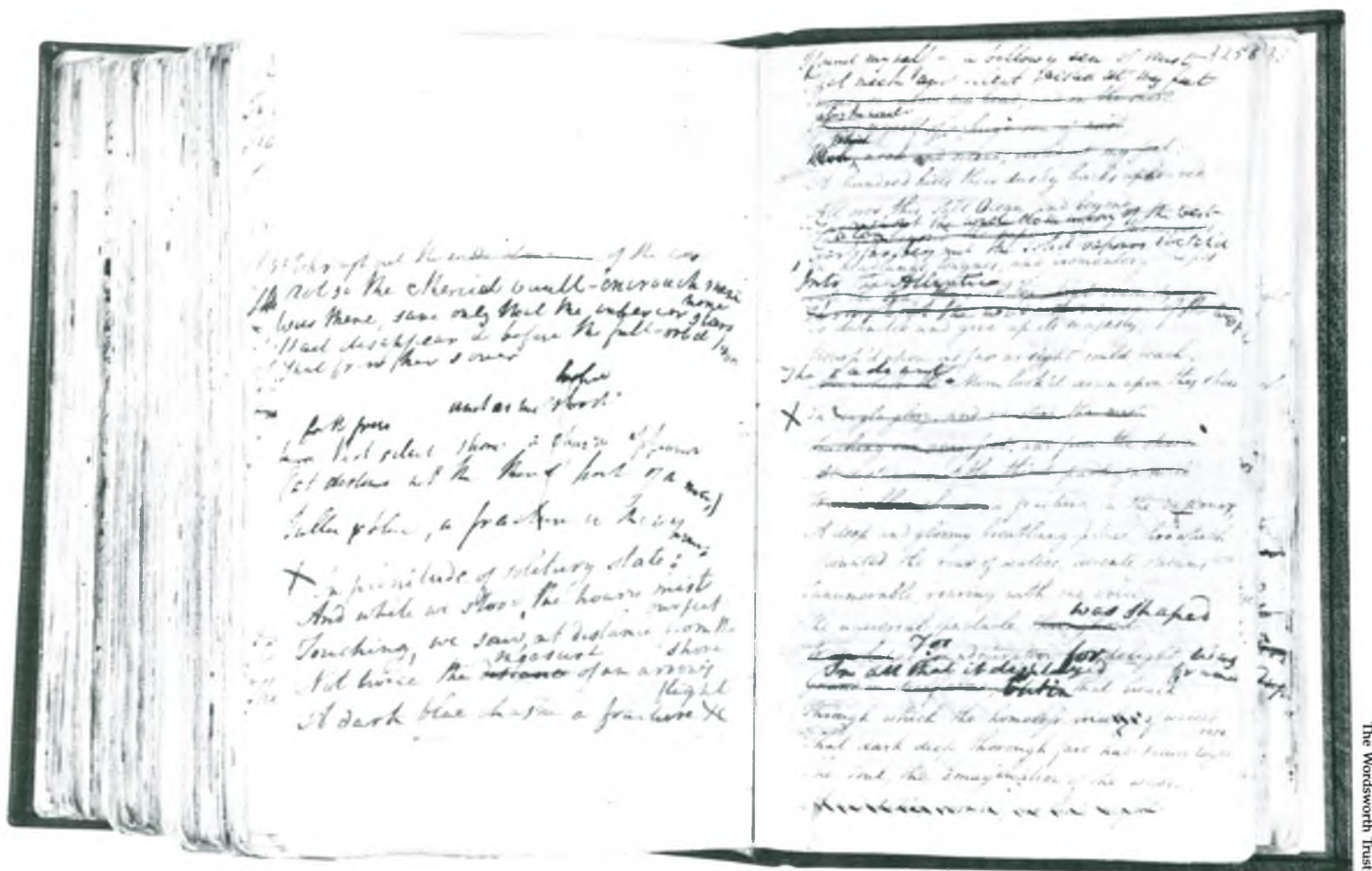


Lake Windermere, Cumbria. Wordsworth and his fellow artists extolled the beauties of the remote Lake District.

Courtesy British Tourist Authority

Getting One's Wordsworth

BY CAROLINE TAYLOR



This manuscript of "The Ascent of Snowdon" passage from *The Prelude* shows the innumerable corrections and deletions made by the author in the course of writing the poem.

MOST PEOPLE ASSUME that a work of art—when it is finally displayed, sold, or published—represents its creator's final statement. There comes a time when the artist says, in effect, "It is finished."

That moment never seemed to arrive for William Wordsworth. He was driven by the need to revise, to polish, to reconstruct, up to the moment of his death. Poems published early in his career were later revised and incorporated into larger poetical

works. As a consequence, many Wordsworth scholars have questioned whether "the definitive version" of a Wordsworth poem is not a contradiction in terms and whether the "final" or latest versions are necessarily the best.

According to Stephen Parrish, general editor of the *Cornell Wordsworth* edition, "Most of us now recognize that Wordsworth did not get better as he aged—he got worse; and he lived a long time." Parrish believes that the poems composed by Wordsworth, the youthful revolutionary, are better than the poems composed by the aging Victorian laureate. (See "Wordsworth Early and Late" on page 21.) "What we value

in his manuscripts," says Parrish, "is not so much the record of the growth or decline of his poetic art, as the underlying, crossed-out, over-written texts that lie beneath the final versions."

In 1975 a new international edition of the poet's works was begun under the direction of scholars at Cornell, Oxford, North Carolina, La Salle, and Yale universities. The *Cornell Wordsworth* edition, which has received NEH support since 1977, collects all of the manuscripts that have survived for a particular work and presents them in a manner that allows scholars to compare all variant readings from the earliest draft to the final revision.

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The series is based on Wordsworth manuscripts at Dove Cottage, Grasmere, as well as at Yale University, Wellesley College, and other institutions. Scholars involved with the project learned that although it was possible in some circumstances to work with films from these archives, the many penciled and inked-over passages made Wordsworth's nearly indecipherable handwriting exceptionally difficult to

read. It became necessary to work with the original manuscripts at Grasmere. There, texts could also be more accurately dated by analyzing the physical evidence provided by watermarks and the stubs of leaves torn out of the original notebooks. Only by working with the originals could sense be made of the innumerable crossed out words, penciled insertions, blank spots, and erasures that signified the impossibility, for

Wordsworth, of saying, "It is finished."

Wordsworth often held onto his poems for years while he worked on one revision after another. Even after publication, he would revise the printed text in later editions. According to Parrish, "Wordsworth's editors, right up to the past decade, have without exception adopted the poet's final text, underneath which lies buried the brilliant early Wordsworth, obscured from view by the crusted layers of a lifetime of revision."

Digging through these crusted layers became an archaeological undertaking for Parrish because of Wordsworth's distinctive work habits:

When [Wordsworth] had finished composing a poem, he would have a fair copy of it written out neatly in a notebook, or on large folio sheets folded up, by the women of his household. . . . Even as the fair copies, often in duplicate, were being prepared, the poet began dictating revisions and alterations, indiscriminately in one copy or the other, obliging the copyists to erase and overwrite to keep step with each other. When the copies had been revised to illegibility, a decision had to be reached. Fresh copies were commonly started, but sometimes bits of blank paper were gummed onto the old sheets with

Wordsworth Early and Late

Prelude, 1798–99

(from manuscript JJ, the earliest *Prelude* manuscript)

*The soul of man is fashioned & built up
Just like a strain of music I believe
That there are spirits which when they would
form*

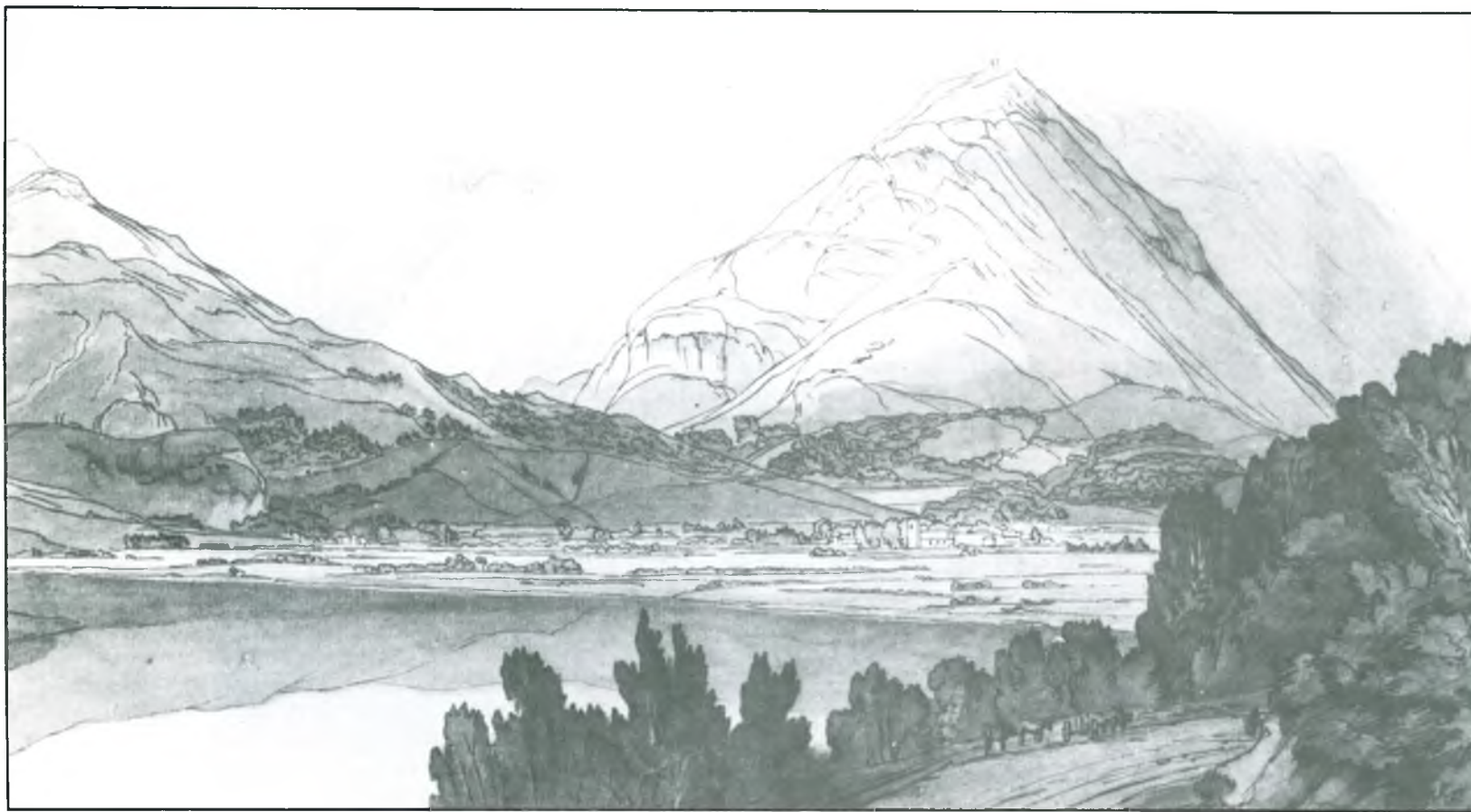
*A favor'd being open out the clouds
As at the touch of lightning seeking him
With gentle visitation and with such
Though rarely in my wanderings I have held
Communion Others too there are who use
Yet haply aiming at the self-same end
Severer interventions ministry
Of grosser kind & of their school was I
And that a needful part, in making up
The calm existence that is mine when I*

*Am worthy of myself! Praise to the end!
Thanks to the means which Nature deigned
to employ!*

Prelude, 1850

(first printed edition, based on manuscripts D and E)

*Dust as we are, the immortal Spirit grows
Like harmony in music; there is a dark
Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
Discordant elements, makes them cling
together
In one society. How strange that all
The terrors, pains, and early miseries,
Regrets, vexations, lassitudes, interfused
Within my mind, should e'er have borne a
part,*



Grasmere from the Rydal Road, a watercolor by Francis Towne, ca. 1787.

Birmingham (England) Museum and Art Gallery

sealing wax to receive fresh revision, and occasionally a third or a fourth layer was patched on. Finally sheets could be cut or torn into segments and the text reassembled like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, some of them still bearing the pasted-over scraps.

Parrish first tried to lift off the gummed-down pieces of paper with a knife and with his fingernails. He discovered that nineteenth-century sealing wax was extraordinarily tough. Often bits of writing were obscured by the blobs remaining on the paper. After Parrish accidentally sliced into text in an effort to slice off wax, the Dove Cottage trustees turned to Sidney Cockerell, a rare-book and manuscript binder and restorer. "Cockerell brewed up a liquid solution of such discriminating pungency as to dissolve the sealing wax when the manuscripts were immersed in it without harming the ink on the pages," Parrish reports. To make it possible for scholars to examine the underlying text alongside the revised version, Cockerell put the loose paste-overs into the mar-

gins of the notebook at the exact location where they had originally been pasted over.

Each volume in the *Cornell Wordsworth* edition covers either a single long poem or a collection of shorter poems that were written over a certain period of time (see publication schedule opposite). Reading texts of the earliest finished versions of the poems are followed by complete transcriptions of the principal manuscripts. These transcripts show all drafting, revisions, and deletions. Roman type is used to indicate Wordsworth's handwriting, and the handwriting of the copyists is printed in italic. On facing pages, photographs reproduce the most important and complicated manuscripts. Finally, an *apparatus criticus* gives printed variant readings in all authorized lifetime editions.

"It is risky to speak of 'the text' of any Wordsworth poem," says Parrish, for "the 'text' turns out to be a continuum, stretching over the poet's lifetime, terminated only by his descent into the grave." He be-

lieves that Wordsworth's earlier editors did not serve him well in their attempts to remain faithful to what they saw as the poet's "final intention."

Only by digging through the strata of his lifetime have Wordsworth's later editors unearthed the best of his poetry. There, beneath the scribbles of the aged Tory humanist, lie the brilliant verses of the man Coleridge called the greatest philosophical poet since Milton. ♪

The Endowment has supported the Cornell Wordsworth through various categories of the Division of Research Programs. Stephen M. Parrish received \$136,807 in outright funds and \$10,000 in matching funds from the Editions category. The Cornell University Press has received a total of \$40,298 in outright funds and \$5,000 in matching funds from the Publications Subvention category. To edit two volumes of the Cornell Wordsworth, Jared Curtis has received \$95,666 in outright funds from the Editions category.

The Cornell Wordsworth Edition Publication Schedule

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| Volume 1: <i>The Salisbury Plain Poems</i> , Stephen Gill (Oxford), ed., 1975. | Volume 13: <i>The White Doe</i> , Kristine Dugas (Ohio State), ed., forthcoming 1988. |
| Volume 2: <i>The Prelude</i> , 1798-99, Stephen Parrish (Cornell), ed., 1977. | Volume 14: <i>Poems</i> , 1807-1820, Carl Ketcham (Arizona), ed., forthcoming 1988. |
| Volume 3: <i>Home at Grasmere</i> , Beth Darlington (Vassar), ed., 1977. | Volume 15: <i>The Thirteen-Book Prelude</i> , Mark Reed (North Carolina), ed., forthcoming. |
| Volume 4: <i>The Ruined Cottage and The Pedlar</i> , James Butler (La Salle), ed., 1979. | Volume 16: <i>Lyrical Ballads</i> , 1797-1800, James Butler (La Salle) and Karen Green (London), eds., forthcoming. |
| Volume 5: <i>Benjamin the Waggoner</i> , Paul Betz (Georgetown), ed., 1981. | Volume 17: <i>Sonnet Sequences and Itinerary Poems</i> , Geoffrey Jackson (London), ed., forthcoming. |
| Volume 6: <i>The Borderers</i> , Robert Osborn (Lancaster, UK), ed., 1982. | Volume 18: <i>The Excursion</i> , Michael Jaye (Rutgers), ed., forthcoming. |
| Volume 7: <i>Poems in Two Volumes and Other Poems</i> , 1800-1807, Jared Curtis (Simon Fraser, Canada), ed., 1983. | Volume 19: <i>Juvenilia</i> , 1785-97, Robert Woof (Newcastle-upon-Tyne) and Carol Landon (Keswick, UK), eds., forthcoming. |
| Volume 8: <i>An Evening Walk</i> , James Averill (Princeton), ed., 1983. | Volume 20: <i>Last Poems</i> , 1820-50, Jeffrey Robinson (Colorado), ed., forthcoming. |
| Volume 9: <i>Descriptive Sketches</i> , Eric Birdsall (Penn State), ed., 1983. | Volume 21: <i>Translations of Virgil and Chaucer</i> , Bruce Graver (Providence College), ed., forthcoming. |
| Volume 10: <i>Peter Bell</i> , John Jordan (California), ed., 1984. | |
| Volume 11: <i>The Fourteen-Book Prelude</i> , W.J.B. Owen (McMaster, Canada), ed., 1984. | |
| Volume 12: <i>The Tuft of Primroses</i> , Joseph Kishel (Columbia), ed., 1986. | |



William Wordsworth by B.R. Haydon, 1842 (detail).

National Portrait Gallery, London

Rediscovering the Romantics

BY JOSEPH H. BROWN

AT FIRST GLANCE, romantic literature might seem an unlikely subject for the high school classroom. Gene W. Ruoff, director of the Institute for the Humanities at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), disagrees. "The biggest obstacle in teaching the romantics to high school students is to get past the notion of the romantics as effete, withdrawn visionaries who took not the slightest interest in the world around them. In fact, the romantics were very much engaged in the world around them. This aspect of their work makes them most accessible to high school students."

Ruoff is in a good position to know. In 1985 and again in 1987, he planned and conducted a summer institute for teachers of high school English. "Literature in an Age of Revolutions," funded by NEH's Division of Education Programs, brought together three university scholars, a teacher-training specialist, and more than twenty participants representing a broad range of midwestern institutions for a month of intensive study at UIC. Through a series of plenary and special lectures and meetings and more narrowly focused seminars, the institute explored one of the richest and most tumultuous periods of English literature.

"The issues the romantic writers faced—personal and national self-determination, understanding of the self, man and nature, religious and ethnic toleration, emancipation of

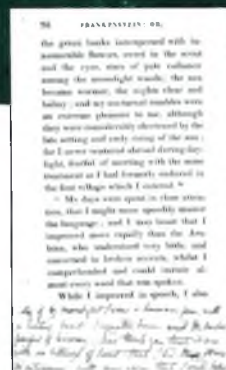
women, abolition of the slave trade, industrialization and urbanization, and revolutionary change in political institutions—all remain with us in one form or another," says Ruoff. "Teachers who have an understanding of the age and its many forces and counterforces can help its writings come alive for their students, can show them that the issues the romantics addressed are issues that have meaning for their lives and their traditions. I don't know that all periods of literary study lend themselves to this."

Romantic Misconceptions

According to Ruoff, some misconceptions about the romantic period prevail because the canon has only recently been opened up. "There are a lot of works that high school teachers trained even fifteen and twenty



Walt Whitman by George C. Cox, 1887.



Annotated copy of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. The portrait of Mary Shelley is by Richard Rothwell.

years ago simply don't know about." And they are not aided by the standard anthologies. "Although it is unclear just how far the compilers of high school texts lag behind the best judgments of the profession," Ruoff explained, "a quarter century would be a generous estimate. For example, I have seldom seen a high school text that does not include Wordsworth's 'Immortality Ode' or one that does include 'Resolution and Independence,' 'The Ruined Cottage,' or 'Michael.' As a lover of the ode, I am still not persuaded that this poem, one of the half dozen most difficult in the language, is the best way to introduce seventeen-year-olds to Wordsworth. The other poems I mentioned are equally fine examples of Wordsworth's mastery of the poem of middle length; they're equally subtle and rewarding and much more readily accessible."

A little-known work that can be used to introduce students to literature about social minorities is Mrs. Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent*, "a novel about how white people have treated other white people because they

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happen to be of another nationality and a different religion," says Ruoff.

The institute faculty was most concerned, however, to present a challenging intellectual program.

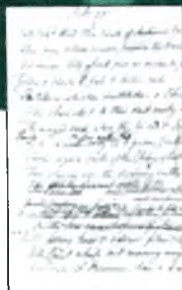
"Teachers who know only the texts they are teaching don't really know even those texts," explains Ruoff.

"To have prejudged the intellectual needs of professional high school English teachers, to have offered only what they 'need' to know rather than what they can learn, would have been to treat them as something less than fellow scholars."

Thus, along with such common high school texts as Keats's odes and Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, the group read Wordsworth's *Prelude* and Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.

Discovering 'New' Texts

Such exposure to texts not normally read in the high school English curriculum has another advantage. As James Chandler, professor of English at the University of Chicago and a faculty member at both summer institutes, explains, "not only are textbook selections out of step with much of contemporary scholarship on the romantics, but the texts that have come to be representative of particular authors in high schools are very often not particularly characteristic. In some cases, such as Whitman's 'O Captain! My Captain!' and Shelley's 'Ozymandias,' they're very uncharacteristic. If, for example, the *Songs of Innocence and Experience* is the only Blake you know, you're bound to say things about his work that are badly misleading. An understanding of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* helps correct certain fundamental misconceptions that have been generated about Blake."



Manuscript of Percy Bysshe Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" with a portrait of the author.

As a complement to reading seldom-read works, participants and faculty members also shared techniques for presenting texts in ways that interest high school students. Barbara Jemielity, a participant in the 1987 institute who teaches at St. Joseph's High School in South Bend, Indiana, had previously excluded such lyrics as Coleridge's "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison" from her reading list, thinking her students would not respond. She now plans to teach it. "Approaching these poems the way we did in the institute makes them extremely accessible in a way that it never occurred to me they could be. The situation created in 'This Lime-Tree Bower' is one in which Coleridge has sent his friends off for a walk without him. That calls for an emotional response—one of, 'Poor me, here I am left behind'—that is not uncommon to adolescents. Such an approach gives students important insights into what it means to be human, how people respond to different situations."

Similarly, Kenneth Resch, who teaches at Stephen Hempstead High School in Dubuque, Iowa, and who attended the institute in 1985, outlined teaching methods that he has since used successfully in the classroom. "What my students hear now is how we can come to terms with romantic poetry by recognizing the ways in which the poets worked out their own feelings through their poetry. Recognizing this personal element in the poetry gives students something to connect with."

Resch's enthusiasm for this approach led him to accept Ruoff's challenge to propose the topic as a program for the annual conference of the National Council of Teachers of English. Resch and four of his institute colleagues presented "British and American Romanticism: CPR for the Classroom" at the council's November 1986 meeting.

Pedagogy aside, the main focus of the institute was intellectual regeneration. Iris Cleveland, a teacher from Bloom Trail High School in Park Forest, Illinois, concludes: "It's important for high school teachers to be treated as scholars. The institute made me feel like a born-again scholar. High school teachers really do have scholarly selves, but often they've been so battered down by the system—by the lack of time and the bureaucracy—that they forget that we all became teachers because we love learning."

In 1985 the Division of Education Programs awarded \$126,804 in outright funds to Gene Ruoff to support "Literature in an Age of Revolutions: Project on Romanticism," an institute for high-school English teachers.

Re-creating Romantic A

lorn and blind"—and to urge that the poet "drink the spirit breathed / From dead men to their kind." Figuratively, of course, the speaker is urging the poet to read texts that have survived their authors. But literally and unwittingly, he is asking the poet to inhale the vaporous stench that passes from one corpse to another—from "dead men to their kind." The bibliophile's attack on the poet's ignorance thus becomes an unwitting tribute to the Adamic freshness of his vision.

In a companion poem called "The Tables Turned," which also appeared in the *Lyrical Ballads*, the poet exhorts the bibliophile to quit his books, to leave their metaphorical light for the actual, visible light of the setting sun shedding its yellow luster through all the long green fields, to forsake the "barren leaves" of ancient texts for the green and living leaves of the vernal wood. The poet expresses an original relation to nature in words that have recovered their original, pre-figurative relation to things. Re-created in such language, nature becomes—momentarily at least—the paradise that Wordsworth promised to unveil in his uncompleted philosophic epic, *The Recluse*.

The desire to recover and more especially to represent an original or Adamic relation to nature was just as strong in Constable as it was in Wordsworth. "When I sit down to make a sketch from nature," said Constable, "the first thing I try to do is, to forget that I have ever seen a picture." What Constable sought to express not only in his sketches but in many of his large-scale oils was the intensity of a direct, unmediated perception of landscape. "We are all of us no doubt placed in a paradise here if we choose to make it such," he said in the very last of the lectures on landscape painting that he gave during the final year of his life. "All of us must have felt ourselves in the same place and situation as that of our first parent, when on opening

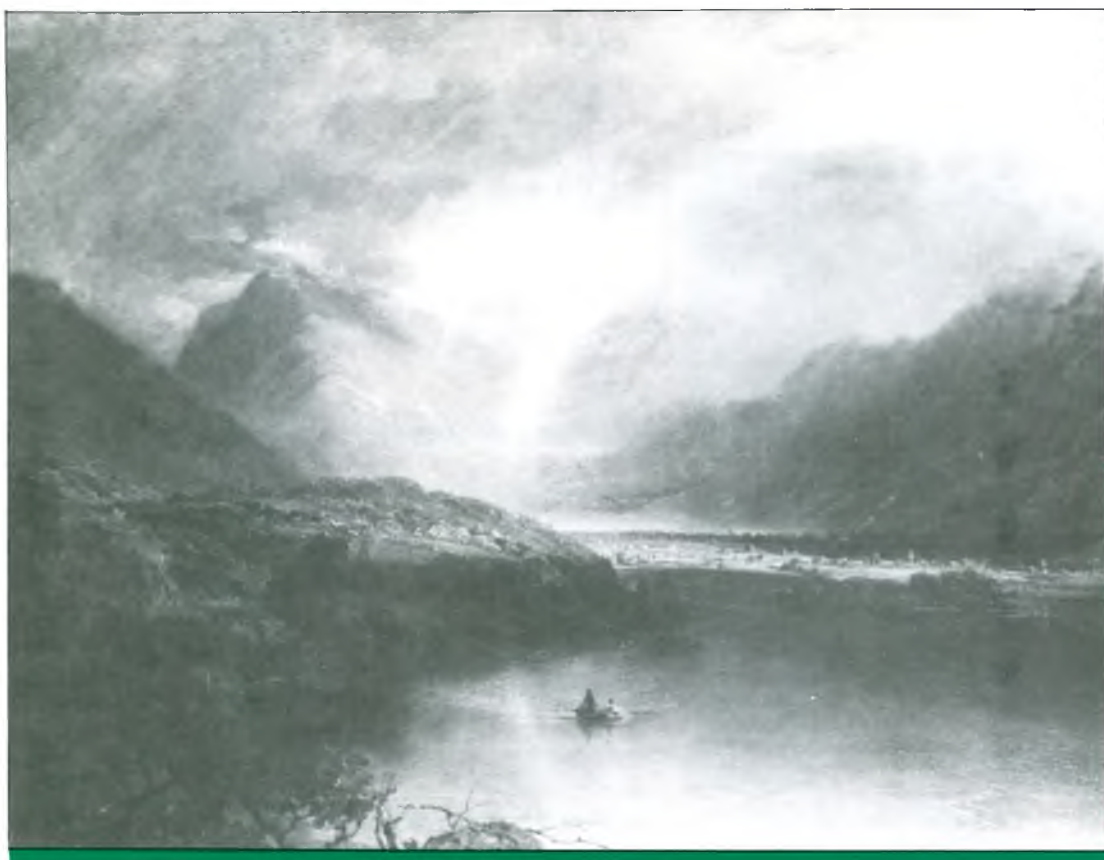


PLATE 1. Buttermere Lake, with Part of Cromackwater, Cumberland, a Shower, J.M.W. Turner.

ACCORDING TO SOME literary historians, the English romantic period is the moment at which poetry declared its independence of painting. In the eighteenth century, we are told, poets took painting as a model of vividness and verisimilitude; for example, James Thomson, author of the celebrated *Seasons* (1730), "painted" scenery with words. But at the turn of the century, the romantic poets are said to have repudiated pictorialism in their quest for an essentially invisible sublimity, which they typically achieved through the ear rather than the eye. They felt—as Wordsworth writes—"whate'er there is of power in sound / To breathe an elevated mood, by form / Or image unprofaned."

In passages such as that, the romantic poets defined themselves as anti-pictorial. Yet such passages do not tell the whole story, and they ac-

tually suppress the story of what can be learned by comparing romantic poetry with the landscape painting that emerged beside it. During the same years in which Wordsworth began to express in poetry a fundamentally original vision of man's relation to nature, new ways of representing or re-creating landscape also began to surface on the canvases of John Constable and J.M.W. Turner, two of the greatest painters England ever produced. The works of all three men can help us better to understand the impact of English romanticism on our concept of that elusive thing we call "nature."

In a poem by Wordsworth called "Expostulation and Reply," which first appeared in the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798; an anxious promoter of book-learning accuses the poet of looking at landscape with utterly un-instructed eyes:

You look round your Mother Earth
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth
And none had lived before you.

The irony of this accusation becomes clear when the speaker goes on to recommend the light of books—"The light bequeathed / To beings else for-

JAMES A.W. HEFFERNAN, professor of English at Dartmouth College, recently published *The Re-Creation of Landscape, a study of English romantic poetry and landscape painting*. He also gave an NEH Summer Seminar on this topic in 1987.

Landscape in t and Poetry

JAMES A.W. HEFFERNAN

his eyes the beauty and magnificence of external nature broke on his astonished sight intensely."

Constable then quoted the passage from *Paradise Lost* in which Milton describes what Adam saw and felt when he first awakened in Paradise. Yet in quoting Milton, Constable not only illustrates the impact of an original revelation, he also situates himself within the history of landscape as a cultural phenomenon: something generated by poetry, painting, and history itself. The very word *landscape* originally meant a picture representing natural scenery, and in the history of painting, landscape first appears as a background to the depiction of "historical" subjects taken from Scripture, classical literature, or what we now call history. To understand how the romantic poets and painters re-created landscape, therefore, we must grasp the complexity of their response to what their predecessors had done. Instead of assuming that the romantics could abandon art for nature—that they could quit their books or forget all pictures—we must rather try to see just how they re-created their respective arts in the very act of re-creating nature.

Consider what Turner does in a painting called *Buttermere Lake* (Plate 1), which he exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1798, the same year Wordsworth and Coleridge produced the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads*. Because painters were allowed to say what they pleased about their own works in the exhibition catalogue, Turner put lines from Thomson's *Seasons* beneath the title of *Buttermere*. In these lines, Thomson describes broken clouds, sunlight striking a mountain, and a rainbow, which Thomson presents as a demonstration of Sir Isaac Newton's theory of optics. Apostrophizing Newton, in fact, Thomson says that

*the dissolving Clouds
Form, fronting on the Sun, thy showery
Prism;
And to the sage-instructed Eye unfold*



PLATE 2. William Kent-N. Tardieu, *Spring* (frontispiece to Thomson's *Seasons*, 1730).

*The various twine of light, by thee disclosed
From the white mingling maze. Not so the
swain;
He wondering views the bright enchantment
bend
Delightful o'er the radiant fields.*

All the elements in Thomson's passage appear in Turner's picture: broken clouds, sunlight striking a mountain, and a rainbow. But the most striking element in Thomson's passage—the rainbow—bears the least resemblance to Turner's picture.

Thomson's rainbow is explicitly Newtonian. As a true product of the Enlightenment, it no longer bears the meaning it was given in the Book

of Genesis; it no longer signifies the Covenant in which God promised never again to flood the earth. Instead, the rainbow has become the property of Newton—"thy showery prism"—because in his *Opticks* (1704) Newton explained the principle of refraction and thus showed how the white light of the sun is broken up into various colors as it passes through moisture. Significantly, Thomson's eighteenth-century illustrators took pains to emphasize the Newtonian character of the rainbow by representing it as a broad ribbon made up of narrow stripes, which engravers rendered as alternating bands of light and dark (Plate 2).

The rainbow in Turner's *Buttermere* is altogether different. Although Turner quotes the phrase "every hue unfolds," he gives us an arc of delicate, evanescent, and ultimately indivisible light. In doing so he implicitly takes the side of Thomson's "wondering" swain and rejects the vision of the "sage-instructed eye."

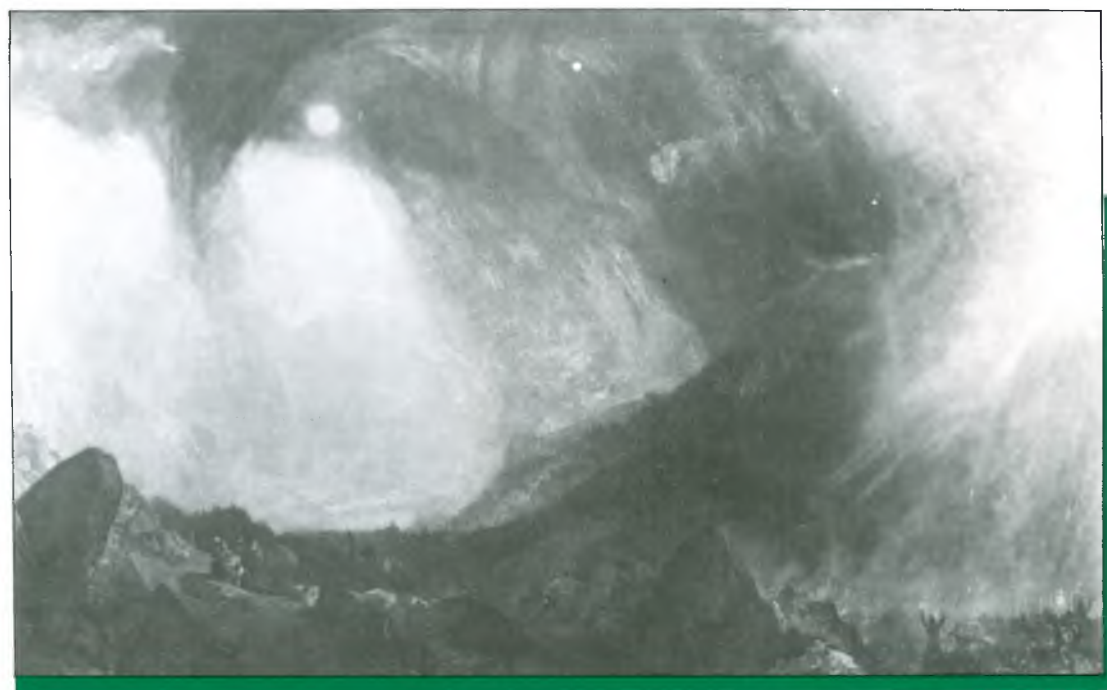


PLATE 3. *Snow Storm: Hannibal and His Army Crossing the Alps*, J.M.W. Turner.



Musée nationale du château de Malmaison

PLATE 4. Napoleon Crossing the Alps, Jacques Louis David.

To compare Turner's rainbow with those of Kent and Thomson, in fact, is to see exactly what Wordsworth means when he says in "The Tables Turned" that "our meddling intellect / Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:—/ We murder to dissect." Wordsworth's lines help us to see how Turner leaves Thomson behind. Wordsworth tells his bibliographic friend to quit his books, and Turner gives the same advice to us. Although he salutes Thomson and the sagacity of Newton in the lines he quotes, he turns his back on both in the painting, which at last compels us to give up all our books: the *Opticks*, *Seasons*, and even the exhibition catalogue.

There remains, however, the Book of Genesis. Turner's picture subtly evokes the biblical typology that Thomson discards. Floating on a lake in the center foreground of *Buttermere* are two figures in a small fishing boat. Because the arc of the rainbow is extended by its reflection in the water just beside them, they are caught in an uncompleted circle of light—an almost supernatural embrace. Coleridge described Wordsworth's poetry as aiming "to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analo-

gous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us." Turner's *Buttermere* has a comparable effect. Without representing anything supernatural, it reveals—as art historian Lawrence Gowing says—"the unearthly majesty of light." Subtly but powerfully, its depiction of an "everyday" rainbow hovering over a fishing boat recalls the primordial rainbow that hovered over Noah's ark.

In *Buttermere*, then, the rainbow is an unequivocal sign of transcendence. Interrupted by the promontory that cuts it off from its reflection and partially obscured by the very light and mist from which it emerges, the rainbow nevertheless signifies the transcendent perfection of the circle. The English romantic poets and painters of landscape sought to elicit from nature more than abstract geometrical patterns.

In paintings such as *Snowstorm: Hannibal and His Army Crossing the Alps* (Plate 3), Turner aimed to show that natural phenomena could dramatically challenge the supremacy of "historical" subjects, that landscape would no longer serve as simply background for the depiction of historical events, as it does in David's *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* (Plate 4).

While David's gloriously mounted figure dominates the landscape and boldly reenacts the heroic feat of the Carthaginian whose name is carved in stone at lower left, Turner makes Hannibal and his army altogether subordinate to a natural force. The figures in this picture are nameless, inglorious, and insignificant. They are Lilliputians caught in the Brobdingnagian sickle of the snowstorm, and the elephant profiled in the far distance, trunk upthrust, is a microscopic toy. The protagonist in a great historical event is thus displaced by the elemental power of nature.

In "Tintern Abbey," Wordsworth's first major poem, nature displaces history more subtly. The abbey itself is nowhere mentioned in the poem, and its full title—"Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey, on revisiting the banks of the Wye during a tour. July 13, 1798"—invites us to see that the poem Wordsworth might have written on the political and ecclesiastical history of a magnificent Cistercian ruin has been daringly displaced by a poem on the history of his own relation to the landscape of the river Wye. Placing himself above the abbey, he presents himself as a figure not merely equal to it in importance but superior or, more precisely, anterior to it, above it in time as well as in space. The landscape of the opening passage is



National Gallery, London

PLATE 5. The Hay Wain, John Constable.

actually prehistoric, prefiguring the abbey that is waiting downriver in the flow of time. The "steep and lofty cliffs, / that on a wild secluded scene impress / Thoughts of more deep seclusion" suggest the soaring walls of a Gothic structure. The cliffs connect the landscape not only with "the quiet of the sky" but also with the quiet of the roofless ruin miles below them. They surround this wild secluded scene and thus convert it into a place of contemplation, an external sign of the depth, seclusion, and vastness of the human mind. Revisiting the Wye for the first time in five years, Wordsworth sees what he once was in his tempestuous adolescence, what he is now in his contemplative maturity, and what he hopes to be. Just as the medieval abbey has survived the very disruption to which its ruined grandeur bears enduring witness, Wordsworth ultimately hopes that his faith in the sublime serenity of nature will enable him to withstand the ravages of time.

Like Wordsworth, Constable recreated the landscapes of his past. Deliberately eschewing public history, Constable's greatest works represent the history of his own relation to the valley of the Stour, where he spent his childhood. To his friend John Fisher he wrote, "I should paint my own places best—Painting is but another word for feeling. I associate my 'careless boyhood' to all that lies on the banks of the Stour. They made me a painter." In 1821, the very year he made this statement, Constable exhibited what is probably the best known of all the paintings based on his experience of the Stour: *The Hay Wain* (Plate 5).

Caught in a pool of brightly reflected light and driving diagonally through the center of the picture, the horse-drawn cart and the figures in it command our attention, especially since one of them is pointing the way across the river and thus reinforcing the diagonal line in which the cart is moving. But the figures are small and nameless. Though a pointing arm can signify heroic leadership, and though the crossing of a river—like the crossing of the Alps—can be charged with historic reverberations, the figures in this picture have neither heroic dimension nor




PLATE 6. Full-scale study for *The Leaping Horse*, John Constable.

historic significance. The would-be moment of political or military history here is displaced by a moment of what Constable called "natural history": a moment in the ever-changing life of the natural world that he remembers from his childhood. The original title of *The Hay Wain*, in fact, was *Landscape: Noon*.

Some four years after exhibiting *The Hay Wain*, Constable painted *The Leaping Horse* (Plate 6), which emphatically elevates the horse and rider. As Kenneth Clark has noted, Constable puts them on a high stage, so that they achieve the dignity of monumental sculpture—or, one might add, something like the bravura of David's Napoleon. Yet even as he evokes the historic grandeur traditionally associated with majestically mounted figures, Constable displaces history with rural incident. The Pegasian steed in David's picture seems ready to leap the Alps in a single bound. In Constable's picture, a horse that significantly faces the other way is merely leaping over the stile, and the rider is anonymous. Yet Constable's horse decisively breaks the line between the earth and the sky, and even as it does so, it also cuts across the diagonals formed by the leaning buttress

at lower right and the willow stump just above it. Given the muscular vitality of the trees at the left, the surging of the clouds at the right, and the churning of the water just below the bridge, the leaping horse seems to epitomize the very life of the landscape that surrounds it.

To compare a picture such as *The Leaping Horse* with a poem such as "Tintern Abbey" is to see obvious differences. While the poem is explicitly retrospective, juxtaposing two different periods of the painter's life, the painting represents a single moment in a rural day. Yet Wordsworth, Turner, and Constable each re-created the power of landscape in their respective arts. Challenging at once the analytical authority of a science that "murders to dissect" and the cultural dominance of public history, they represent their own experience of nature: the ferocity of a storm, the transcendent symmetry of a rainbow, the serene majesty of cliffs, the irrepressible energy embodied in a leaping horse. Working in the separate and yet strikingly complementary media of word and pigment, they show us how—as Wordsworth says—the mind and the external world achieve "creation" with their "blended might." 

The American Response to British Romanticism

BY LARAIN FERGENSEN

R ALPH WALDO EMERSON and Henry David Thoreau are thought of as preeminent American writers, major figures in that uniquely Yankee movement of the nineteenth-century American renaissance—New England transcendentalism. Emerson gave us such famous American essays as “Nature,” “Self-Reliance,” and “The American Scholar,” in which he heralded the development of a national literature: “Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close.”

Thoreau, long thought of as Emerson’s disciple, practiced his own brand of self-reliance by taking up residence for two years in a small house he had built himself near the shore of Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts, birthplace of the Revolution. There he produced such American masterpieces as *Walden* (published in 1854) and “Resistance to Civil Government” (1849), now better known as “Civil Disobedience.” And yet these writers, staunch as they were in declaring America’s literary independence, owed a deep debt to the Old World. Their works may be viewed as American responses to British romanticism.

By the year 1836 the romantic movement in England had passed its peak, but William Wordsworth, the

author of its once revolutionary manifesto, the preface to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), was accepted as the great poet of the age. His works were widely read in America, and his ideas formed part of our intellectual landscape.

The year 1836 is a landmark in American literature, for it saw the publication of Emerson’s “Nature,” a seminal essay for American transcendentalism. In it Emerson expressed the great ideas of this important literary movement. One was the reverence for Nature (a word that Emerson often capitalized) because of the divine presence manifested in every natural object. “What is a farm,” Emerson asked, “but a mute gospel?” But this famous American essay did not spring unaided from the mind of a writer born on American soil: It is permeated by Wordsworthian ideas; and, in turn, it had a profound impact on the young Henry Thoreau.

Emerson, who had visited Wordsworth during a trip to England in 1833 (and who saw him again in 1848, just two years before Wordsworth’s death), considered the famous “Immortality Ode” to be “the high-water mark which the intellect has reached in this age.” In this “Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood,” begun in 1802 and completed in 1804, Wordsworth had advanced the neo-Platonic idea that the preexistence of the soul renders children closer to and more perceptive of the all-pervasive God in Nature than are adults:

*Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life’s Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,*



National Portrait Gallery,
Smithsonian Institution.
Gift of an anonymous donor.

The daguerreotype of Henry David Thoreau by Benjamin D. Maxham, 1856, and the portrait of Ralph Waldo Emerson by F. Gutekunst, ca. 1875, are set against the backdrop of Walden Pond.

*And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!*

Wordsworth went on to explain that children, who, following his metaphor of a rising sun, are at the dawn of life, maintain this “vision splendid,” but it does not endure: “At length the Man perceives it die away, / And fade into the light of common day.” According to Wordsworth, adults lose the ability to see the spiritual heart of Nature. They see outwardly, but not inwardly. Both Wordsworth’s idea and his image of the sun can be seen in the following passage from Emerson’s “Nature”:

To speak truly, few adult persons can see nature. Most persons do not see the sun. At least they have a very superficial seeing. The sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and the heart of the child. The lover of nature

LARAIN FERGENSEN is a professor of English at Bronx Community College, CUNY. She helped to establish the text of Thoreau’s *Walden* for the Princeton University Press edition of *The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau*, which received NEH support.



National Portrait Gallery,
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Mr. and Mrs. Charles Feinberg.

is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood.

Thus, we clearly see in Emerson the Wordsworthian idea that "The Child is Father of the Man" (a phrase from another poem that Wordsworth added as the introduction to the "Immortality Ode"), and this idea is also evident in the writings of Henry Thoreau, Emerson's long-time friend and admirer. "I have always been regretting that I was not as wise as the day I was born," wrote Thoreau in *Walden*.

According to Thoreau's biographer, Walter Harding, several months after "Nature" was published, the young Thoreau, who was still at Harvard, withdrew the book twice from the college library and then obtained his own copy. Apparently there was a chain of influence from Wordsworth to Emerson to Thoreau, but Thoreau also derived Wordsworthian ideas from their source. His personal library at the time of his death in 1862 contained a copy of Wordsworth's *Complete Poetical Works* and *The Prelude*, the epic poem Wordsworth wrote of his spiritual and intellectual growth—in which love of nature played a large role. Because of the way Thoreau catalogued his books, we know that he owned Wordsworth's *Poetical Works*

by 1840. *The Prelude* was first published following Wordsworth's death in 1850. Almost immediately it became available in America, and there is evidence that Thoreau read it in 1850 or 1851. In fact, there is an intriguing sequence of Wordsworthian echoes in Thoreau's journals during the summer of 1851, which suggest that he was rereading Wordsworth at that time and finding the poet's ideas poignantly pertinent to his own life in nature.

One of Wordsworth's great themes is the gradual fading of one's perceptions of the divine in nature with the passage of time. In the "Immortality Ode," Wordsworth wrote movingly of this feeling of loss. Although still able to admire the beauty of the natural world, the adult Wordsworth was convinced that "The things which I have seen I now can see no more":

*Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the
earth.*

Thoreau echoes this sentiment repeatedly in his journals of the summer of 1851. Having left his house at Walden Pond in September 1847, he was still taking daily walks in the Massachusetts woods but was finding himself more concerned with the physical as opposed to the spiritual aspects of nature. Thoreau's increasing tendency to catalogue, list, and chart natural phenomena is evident in later journal entries. He was concerned with this tendency in himself, for he wrote on August 19, 1851:

I fear that the character of my knowledge is from year to year becoming more distinct and scientific; that, in exchange for views as wide as heaven's cope, I am being narrowed down to the field of the microscope. I see details, not wholes nor the shadow of the whole. I count some parts, and say, "I know."

Relating this tendency to the Wordsworthian loss of vision, Thoreau quoted (actually misquoted) from the "Immortality Ode" to express his deepening sense of dissatisfaction in his relationship to nature. His journal entry of July 16, 1851, contains an echo of the famous line "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting" quoted previously. It is significant that Thoreau misquoted Wordsworth, for it shows that he was familiar enough with the British poet to cite his works from memory:



Ralph Waldo Emerson's study from an 1888 photograph.

Methinks my present experience is nothing; my past experience is all in all. I think that no experience which I have today comes up to, or is comparable with, the experiences of my boyhood. And not only this is true, but as far back as I can remember I have unconsciously referred to the experiences of a previous state of existence. "For life is a forgetting," etc.

In this entry, Thoreau echoed not only the "Immortality Ode," but also Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey," another great poem about changes and losses in the relationship to nature, for Wordsworth had written about his youth, "Nature then . . . to me was all in all."

A crucial element in the Wordsworthian relationship between man and nature was mystical experience, a means by which "we are laid asleep/ In body, and become a living soul" so that we may "see into the

life of things" ("Tintern Abbey"). In much quoted lines from "Nature," Emerson recorded a similar feeling:

Standing on the bare ground,—my head bathed by the blithe air and uplifted into infinite space,—all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel of God.

We can see this romantic or transcendental idea in *Walden*, but it is especially apparent in Thoreau's early poetry. "Cliffs," written in 1838, is an example: in this poem Thoreau described moments of "extasy" in which the soul, almost leaving the body, communicates directly with the Soul of nature. Small wonder if the later loss of such experiences was mourned in Wordsworthian terms.

Thoreau, nevertheless, did not uncritically accept the ideas he had inherited from British romanticism. As early as 1841, he remarked that Wordsworth was "too tame" for the American wilderness, which was "sterner, savager than any poet has sung." During his 1846 trip to climb Mt. Katahdin in Maine, Thoreau came face to face with the type of nature that he felt was missing in Wordsworth's writing—the wild and untamed nature of the American continent. He wrote in what became a section of *The Maine Woods*:

. . . We have not seen pure Nature, unless we have seen her thus vast and drear and inhuman. . . . Nature was here something savage and awful, though beautiful. I looked with awe at the ground I trod on. . . . Here was no man's garden, but the unhand-selled globe. . . . It was Matter, vast, terrific. . . .

With the emphasis on the material aspect of nature, Thoreau specifically rejected Wordsworthian idealism.

He sympathized with the woodsmen who knew how to live physically in nature. In "Peter Bell" (1819) a poem very widely read in America, Wordsworth had criticized his main character for insensitivity to nature with the lines—

*A primrose by a river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.*

But in *A Week on the Concord and the Merrimack Rivers* (1849) Thoreau wrote:

The surliness with which the woodchopper speaks of his woods, handling them as indifferently as his ax, is better than the mealy-mouthed enthusiasm of the lover of nature. Better that the primrose by the river's brim be a yellow primrose, and nothing more, than that it be something less.

Thoreau's clear preference here reveals his dissatisfaction with Wordsworthian and Emersonian idealism, especially with the effects that the idealization of nature could have on their readers. Perhaps Thoreau was thinking here of William Ellery Channing, a friend who sometimes accompanied him on his walks. In a journal entry of November 9, 1851 (note that it was just a few months after the Wordsworthian expressions of regret), Thoreau recorded his friend's reaction to Thoreau's taking notes on specific natural phenomena: ". . . he will say that he confines himself to the ideal, purely ideal remarks; he leaves the facts to me. Sometimes, too, he will say a little petulantly, 'I am universal; I have nothing to do with the particular and definite!'" Thoreau, for his part, could not forgo the particular and the definite in nature, even though he felt his vision of the whole, the great Unity, threatened by it. For Thoreau, nature had to be more than an emblem of the human mind and a representation of the transcendental Oversoul. He might look upon Walden Pond as the "earth's eye," reflecting the divinity in man and nature, but it was also his well.

To maintain a balance between two very different ways of looking at nature was the difficulty that Thoreau faced throughout his life. Wordsworth, too, had a philosophical balance to maintain, but a much heavier weight lay on the materialistic end of the scale for Thoreau.

The literary movement known as transcendentalism is not entirely home-grown, but neither is it simply the American equivalent of British romanticism. A careful reading of Thoreau's work shows how profoundly the romantic idea of nature was transformed by the experience of the American wilderness. ♡

Portions of this article have appeared previously in the *Thoreau Journal Quarterly*.

The Act of Changing Minds

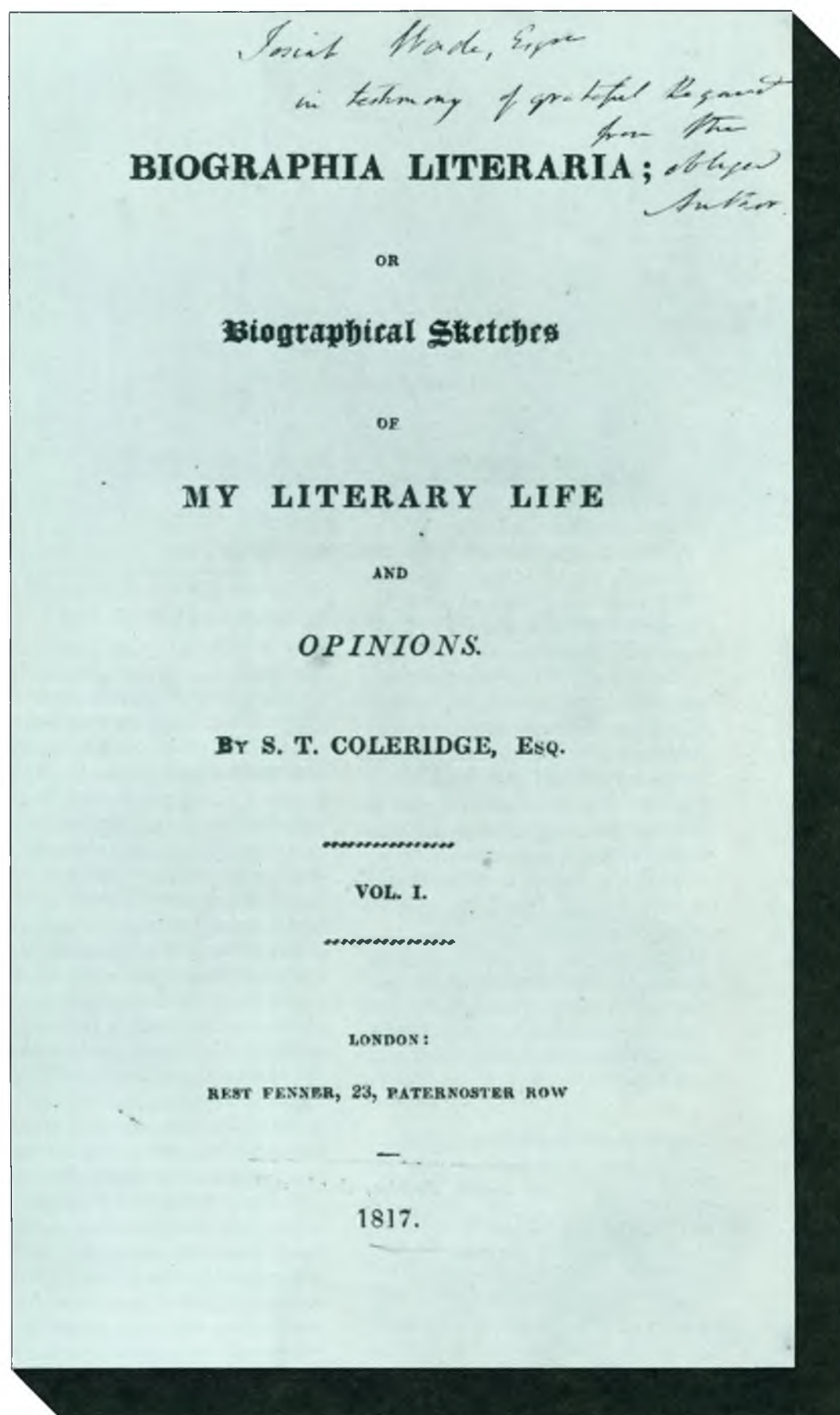
BY LINDA R. BLANKEN

BY THE END OF the first week of the NEH Summer Seminar on "Coleridge and the Imagination," high school teacher Robert Hunt and most of the other fourteen teachers who had been selected to spend six weeks as students "were pretty disgusted with Coleridge," Hunt says. They had become acquainted—for many, reacquainted—with the outline of the unfortunate poet's life, a miserable story of abandoned projects, procrastination, dependencies on friends, and opium addiction. They had also skimmed the *Biographia Literaria*, a demanding, cryptic text, which is dotted with Coleridge's confessions of idleness and which at first, confusing glance reinforces the poet's reputation for failure. Coleridge opens the work, for example, seemingly determined that his readers will close it. This is his first sentence:

It has been my lot to have had my name introduced, both in conversation and in print, more frequently than I find it easy to explain, whether I consider the fewness, unimportance and limited circulation of my writings, or the retirement and distance in which I have lived, both from the literary and political world.

As Coleridge commentator I.A. Richards wrote, "Nobody did more than Coleridge to inculcate this view of

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An 1817 edition of *Biographia Literaria*, inscribed by Coleridge, "in testimony of grateful Regard from the obliged Author."

Houghton Library, Harvard University

himself. It was one of his most successful teachings. On this task, at least, he shrank not from labor."

"I don't think anybody liked him in the beginning," Hunt recalls. "I regarded him as a sponge, a free-loader." At the end of the six-week seminar, Hunt attests, the teachers had changed their minds. "We knew we'd been exposed to a unique, immensely powerful mind," he says, and they came to understand the indulgence of Coleridge's contemporaries. "Any of us would have been happy to house him," Hunt laughs.

The transformation is neither new nor strange. Since *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* first startled English sensibilities in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), Coleridge has inspired extreme and conflicting judgments, often in the same judge. T.S. Eliot called him "perhaps the greatest of English critics" in *The Sacred Wood* and later, in *The Uses of Poetry*, referred to the "stupefaction of his powers in transcendental metaphysics."

The transformation was also the product of hard work. With the help of seminar director James Cutsinger, professor of religious studies at the University of South Carolina, the teachers analyzed the twenty-two chapters and conclusion of the *Biographia Literaria*, sometimes, Cutsinger says, "taking apart sentences or even words." This is the hallmark of NEH Summer Seminars for School Teachers: immersion in monumental texts in the humanities, a six-week wrestle with ideas that reinvigorates the mind and reestablishes membership in the community of scholars.

Erudite and Exasperating

Coleridge was as erudite as he was exasperating. Sir Herbert Read once said that "it is never safe to assume that Coleridge had not read anything published before the year of his death." Coleridge intended the *Biographia* as a "statement of my principles in politics, religion and philosophy, and the application of the rules deduced from philosophical principles to poetry and criticism." An astoundingly synthetic collection of ideas, according to Cutsinger, the *Biographia* draws these principles practically from the whole of Western philosophy and most frequently



This portrait of Samuel Taylor Coleridge was executed by George Dance in 1804.

from Plato and Immanuel Kant.

Coleridge's famous theory of imagination—dangled carrot-like throughout the *Biographia* but stated with Coleridgean fanfare in Chapter 13—is, Cutsinger says, one of the expressions of Platonic influence. The definition distinguishes three levels of reality implicit in the Platonic idea that "perception of the physical world is a distillation or coagulation of the immaterial or spiritual world," Cutsinger says. "The mind, according to Plato, and now Coleridge, has ideas or forms which it projects on an unorganized background of sensory information. The act of perception creates the physical object," he explains. The famous definition not only reached back to Platonic theory but forward to the Anthropic Principle, a topic which is the current rage among popularizers of science. (See the August 1987 issues of both *The Sciences* and *The World and I*.) Inspired by theories in quantum mechanics, the Anthropic Principle holds that the universe is what it is because human knowing makes it so.

Coleridge's definition of the imagination is shorter than his prefatory remarks. It is the concise composite of Coleridge's learning and his creative experience, his passive and active mental powers.

The IMAGINATION then, I consider as primary or secondary. The primary IMAGINATION I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary Imagination I consider as an echo of the former, co-primary in the *kind* of its agency, and differing only in *degree*, and in the *mode* of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially *vital*, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead.

FANCY, on the contrary, has no other counters to play with, but fixities and definites. The Fancy is indeed no other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space; while it is blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word CHOICE. But equally with the ordinary memory the Fancy must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association.

As Critic James Baker observes in *The Sacred River: Coleridge's Theory of Imagination* (Louisiana State University Press, 1957), "Imagination is robed with the lightnings and thunders of Sinai; Fancy sits in the tavern and plays checkers." Fancy merely connects. Baker likens its activity to that of the assembly in a game of dominoes. "The objects are joined by a single note of likeness," he explains. "They undergo no modification." But the imagination *changes* objects. It absorbs—"dissolves, diffuses, dissipates"—and elevates them to the ideal.

Coleridge Anticipated Psychology

In his description of active and passive mental powers, Coleridge anticipated the concerns of the coming field of psychology. Cutsinger, whose book *The Form of Transformed Vision: Coleridge and the Knowledge of God*, will be published this fall by Mercer University Press, referred his students to an earlier passage in the *Biographia* to elucidate the two powers at work in the act of thinking.

Let us consider what we do when we leap. We first resist the gravitating power by an act purely voluntary, and then by another act, voluntary in part, we yield to it in order to light on the spot, which we had previously proposed to ourselves.



Courtesy James Cutsinger

A diagram from one of Coleridge's notebooks illustrates an application of his idea of polarity. A similar diagram also appears on the blackboard in the photo of Cutsinger's summer seminar, which met in the South Caroliniana Library at the University of South Carolina.

Now let a man watch his mind while he is composing; or, to take a still more common case, while he is trying to recollect a name; and he will find the process completely analogous. Most of my readers will have observed a small water-insect on the surface of rivulets, which throws a cinque-spotted shadow fringed with prismatic colours on the sunny bottom of the brook; and will have noticed, how the little animal *wins* its way up against the stream, by alternate pulses of active and passive motion, now resisting the current, and now yielding to it in order to gather strength and a momentary *fulcrum* for a further propulsion. This is no unapt emblem of the mind's self-experience in the act of thinking. There are evidently two powers at work, which relatively to each other are active and passive. (In philosophical language, we must denominate this intermediate faculty in all its degrees and determinations, the Imagination.)

The principles considered in these passages of the *Biographia* are applied to literary criticism in the second volume of the work, chapters 14 through 22. But they are a general description of how the mind works, and they can be applied to religion, science, philosophy, psychology, and other disciplines besides literature. "The Coleridgean method," explains Cutsinger, "has as its distinctive form the imaginative disclosure of true unity based on principles that, Coleridge was convinced, would be the province of no single

field of learning, but the sources and motivating powers rather of all learning." It was, therefore, appropriate that the teachers studying the work last summer represented the disciplines of science, history, English literature, foreign languages, special education, and religion.

Robert Hunt, a chemistry teacher at Collegiate Schools in Richmond, wrote a paper on the relationship between Coleridge's concept of the ideal and the image of gold as the ideal material in alchemy. He liked the interdisciplinary view of literature and science that the seminar encouraged. Each participant wrote two short essays addressing Coleridge's literary, scientific, philosophical, or theological theories and expounded on one of the paper topics in an oral presentation. For his oral presentation, Hunt examined the poem "Frost at Midnight" in light of Coleridge's ideas on perception.

The seminar was successful, says Hunt, "because we took away not 714 things to use in English or in chemistry class but the concept of perception and the awareness that there are other ways of seeing."

Hunt seems to be paraphrasing Coleridge's theory of education, expressed in his *Treatise on Method*:

We see, that to open anew a well of springing water, not to cleanse the stagnant tank, or fill bucket by bucket, the leaden cistern; that the education of

the intellect, by awakening the principle and method of self-development was [Plato's] proposed object.

It was Coleridge's object as well, and he does not apologize for the difficulty of the operation. On the contrary, he defends the effort required by his works in *The Friend*, the magazine he wrote single-handedly and published between June 1809 and March 1810:

... a writer, whose meaning is everywhere comprehended as quickly as his sentences can be read, may indeed have produced an amusing composition ... but most assuredly he will not have *ADDED* either to the stock of our knowledge, or to the vigour of our intellect. For how can we gather strength, but by exercise?

Last summer, fifteen high school teachers changed their minds through exercise. With the hard labor required to produce that result, they absorbed, analyzed, synthesized. They exercised and broadened their minds and prepared them to change other, younger ones.

James Cutsinger received \$49,939 in outright funds to support "Coleridge and the Imagination." The award was made in 1985 by the Division of Fellowships and Seminars, Summer Seminars for Secondary School Teachers Program.

HUMANITIES AFTER SCHOOL

Ed. Note: In recent years, the number of college students electing to major in the humanities has declined sharply. Rising costs of undergraduate education, changes in the job market, and shifting cultural values have all played a part in these declining enrollments. Many students believe that the best preparation for professional success lies in the study of skills-oriented courses and subjects. Arguing from a practical standpoint, defenders of the humanities have made the case that, in a world where the average person will hold nine jobs over a lifetime, what is needed from a college education is breadth of knowledge and the ability to learn. They also cite the fact that many of the most successful individuals in American society studied the humanities as undergraduates. To learn how the study of the humanities has shaped or contributed to the lives of several prominent Americans, Humanities asked leaders in business, media, the arts, politics, and industry to describe how study of the humanities has shaped their lives. Here are some of their responses:



**HARRINGTON
DRAKE**

Former Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of The Dun & Bradstreet Corporation
Colgate University / Philosophy, B.A.

If I were to have the opportunity to re-do my college years, with the benefit of my experience to date, I would once again major in philosophy and totally immerse myself in the humanities.



**CLAUDINE B.
MALONE**

Management Consultant and Corporate Director
Wellesley College / Philosophy, B.A.

Immanuel Kant raised and addressed three fundamental questions for human intellectual life: What can I know? What must I do? What may I hope for? Throughout my formal and informal education, I have reflected on these questions. Critical thought and the history of ideas have been powerful tools in my professional pursuits and powerful friends in pursuing the joys of life.



**MARK O.
HATFIELD**

U.S. Senator (R-Oregon)
Willamette University / Political Science, B.A.

Like many of my contemporaries prior to World War II, I was firmly committed to an isolationist foreign policy, and like many of my contemporaries I was shaken out of that commitment by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. But this change in

viewpoint required intellectual underpinnings to be more than an emotional reflex. The world of ideas, given life in books, always has been the primary environment in which my prejudices were challenged and my thinking has matured.



**NANCY
STERN
BAIN**

Choreographer, High School for the Performing Arts, New York
The Colorado College / Philosophy, B.A.

My undergraduate study of the humanities has had a direct effect on my professional and personal life. It has allowed me, as a choreographer, to create works that deal with a variety of subjects, and it has also enabled me to comprehend the fascinating interconnections between the arts and social, political, and philosophical trends. I have always been one to look at all sides of an issue before making up my mind. My parents encouraged this, and my study of the humanities has reinforced it.



**JAMES A.
BAKER III**

Secretary of the Treasury
Princeton University / History, B.A.

Although I have since spent a career immersed in law, politics, and economics, that effort was made easier by my training in the humanities. Training in subjects like history and Latin also helps train the mind. Like most students, I came to college understanding where I, and America, existed in place better than I understood where we existed in time. The critical reading of Plato, Dante, Shakespeare, or St. Paul gave me a notion of what our culture and institutions developed from and represent and why we must work to preserve them.

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THE Humanities GUIDE

for those who are
thinking of applying
for an NEH grant

How to Cook Up a Successful Museum Collaborative Project

BY SCOTT SANBORN

THERE IS ONE case—a museum collaborative project—where too many cooks cannot spoil the broth: When cultural institutions, outside scholars, and exhibition designers pool their talents and expertise in developing a humanities project, such as a traveling exhibition, everyone benefits. The institutions benefit when intellectual substance and context are drawn from their humanities collections. Scholars benefit by working with primary documents and sources in formulating exhibition themes that may provide new insight into a humanities field of study. Exhibition designers gain

a chance to apply their skills through presenting the project's content to a general audience in a meaningful and interesting way. And finally, the general public benefits through the generation and presentation of new insights into our nation's material culture.

To encourage such collaboration, the NEH Museums and Historical Organizations Program welcomes applications for planning or implementation projects that involve an institution's own collections, the sharing of collections for exhibitions, the joint production of exhibitions, or the creation of traveling exhibitions.

Here is the program's recipe for successful collaboration:

STEP

1

Begin with a project idea based on a collection of data or artifacts that is significant to the study of the humanities.

The best collaborative proposals submitted to NEH have four key ingredients: (1) **collections** that are important to a humanities discipline or disciplines; (2) **interpretation** that fully mines the scholarly potential of a collection; (3) **personnel** who are knowledgeable about a collection or body of work and are aware of its intellectual potential; and (4) **institutions** that are willing to give the project high priority.

Once these four ingredients have been identified, several important questions should be addressed: Will the project convey sound humanities scholarship to a general audience? Does the project theme relate naturally to any collections involved, or is there some sort of contrived marriage? Are the institutions and personnel strongly committed to the project objectives?

STEP

2

Enlist project staff and consultants who are experts in the subject area of the project.

The project director, other project staff members, and consultants must be chosen carefully because their qualifications will be closely scrutinized by NEH review panels. The role of each staff member and consultant should be clearly stated in the project application so that reviewers can determine whether project personnel have been chosen for the proper reasons and that these personnel will actually perform in the ways specified in the proposal.

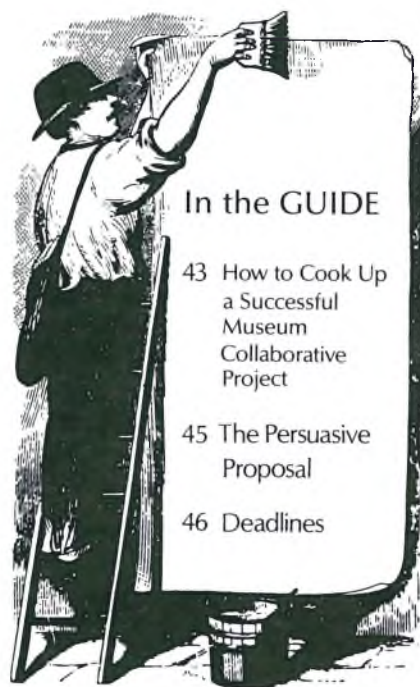
STEP

3

Carefully evaluate the proposed format of presentation.

Before submitting a proposal, applicants should determine the project's mode of presentation and format. For example, will the ideas presented be conveyed best by a thematic or chronological presentation?

Working closely with project staff, exhibition designers, and other consultants, applicants should strive to develop a presentation that will provide a synthesis of visual elements and rele-



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vant and expert interpretation. An example is labels and wall texts for an exhibition that are substantial enough to provide a context for visitors but that do not overwhelm the artifacts on display.

Also, in planning an exhibition, applicants should consider other interpretive elements, such as participatory displays, audiovisual components, publications, and educational materials.

Interpretation should be comprehensible and creatively presented to general audiences, but applicants must also guard against interpretation that is superficial and self-evident.

STEP

4

Consult with NEH program staff members.

Prospective applicants should call or write the Museums and Historical Organizations Program to discuss project ideas. Experience has shown that applicants who confer with staff are more likely to submit a competitive proposal. Program officers will comment on the eligibility of a proposed project and can provide applicants with copies of successful proposals.

Applicants are encouraged to submit a preliminary or draft proposal at least six weeks in advance of the program's application deadline date. Drafts should include a narrative description, a work plan, a list of project personnel, and a budget estimate.

A final check for the proper amount of humanities seasoning should be made to ensure that the proposal proves edifying to Endowment reviewers.

SCOTT SANBORN is a writer-editor in the NEH Office of Publications and Public Affairs.

Correction

In the article, "Linguistics," on pages 37-39 of *Humanities*, Volume 8, number 5, the author's name was inadvertently omitted. Dr. Geoffrey Nunberg wrote the brochure, "The Field of Linguistics," from which the article was excerpted. *Humanities* regrets the error.

NEH APPLICATION COVER SHEET

OMB No. 3136-0089
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1. Name of applicant or project director
Name (last) Milanich, Jerald T.
Address Department of Anthropology
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2. Type of applicant
a. ☐ by an individual
If a, indicate an institutional affiliation, if applicable, on line 1
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c. Type Museum:
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b. Form

The Persuasive Proposal

PANELISTS REVIEWING FLORIDA State Museum's proposal for a collaborative exhibition were impressed by the content of "First Encounters: Spanish Explorations of the Caribbean and the Southeastern United States" and by the proposed method of presentation.

"The proposal addresses in intelligent fashion what is a major set of questions raised by the Spanish encounter and deals with them in the context of the latest scholarship," noted one panelist. "There are many misconceptions about this subject—such as Ponce de Leon and the Fountain of Youth—that the exhibition will help to correct."

When Ponce de Leon sailed from San Juan in 1513, he was not going in search of the Fountain of Youth, as is popularly believed, but in search of the Bimini islands, rumored to be located somewhere north of Puerto Rico. De Leon never found Bimini. Three weeks into the voyage, however, he did discover and explore the coast of a new land called *La Florida*. His voyage to the North American mainland is one of many historic events addressed by the exhibition, which traces the initial attempts by Spain to explore and settle the Caribbean and the southeastern United States.

To ensure that labels and wall panels reflect accurately work in progress, the museum chose some of the University of Florida's leading specialists to serve on its advisory board. This decision paid off with the Endowment's reviewers. One panelist observed that the "scholarly qualifications of the muse-

um staff and consultants are superb for the tasks assigned." Another noted that these advisers were responsible for "generating new information in the subject area." One of the project's scholars, for example, recently unearthed in Spanish archives an inventory of sails, rigging, and other purchases made for the *Niña*. Using information in that inventory, the museum has been able to build a two-thirds size replica of the *Niña*. The exhibition also includes maps, site plans, and other objects related to late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spain and the Caribbean.

Collaborating with the museum are an art historian specializing in pre-Columbian art and culture, two history consultants specializing in Spanish colonial history, an ethnohistory consultant specializing in the culture of native Americans who inhabited the southeastern United States, and an exhibition designer.

Panelists considered the application especially convincing because the museum demonstrated how each of the humanities themes would be manifested in the proposed exhibition layout and design. Every artifact described in the proposal seemed to reflect a sound curatorial decision to include it in the display, and the panel agreed that the proposed format would prove engaging to visitors. "The planned presentation of the ideas and artifacts is exciting enough to make the exhibition an event," said one panelist. Artifacts from the Florida State Museum's extensive archaeological collections will be supplemented with objects on loan from other collections —S.S.

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April 1, 1988

October 1988

Elementary and Secondary Education in the Humanities—*Linda Spoerl, Stephanie Quinn Katz, Jayme A. Sokolow, Thomas Gregory Ward 786-0377*

January 8, 1988

July 1988

High School Humanities Institutes at Historically Black Colleges and Universities—*Jayme A. Sokolow 786-0377*

March 15, 1988

September 1988

Faculty Humanities Institutes at Historically Black Colleges and Universities—*Lyn Maxwell White 786-0380*

March 15, 1988

September 1988

Division of Fellowships and Seminars—Guinevere L. Griest, Director 786-0458

Fellowships for University Teachers—*Maben D. Herring 786-0466*

June 1, 1988

January 1, 1989

Fellowships for College Teachers and Independent Scholars—*Karen Fuglie 786-0466*

June 1, 1988

January 1, 1989

Fellowships on the Foundations of American Society—*Maben D. Herring, Karen Fuglie 786-0466*

June 1, 1988

January 1, 1989

Summer Stipends—*Joseph B. Neville 786-0466*

October 1, 1988

May 1, 1989

Travel to Collections—*Kathleen Mitchell 786-0463*

January 15, 1988

June 1, 1988

Faculty Graduate Study Program for Historically Black Colleges and Universities—*Beatrice Stith Clark, Maben D. Herring 786-0466*

March 15, 1988

September 1, 1989

Younger Scholars—*Leon Bramson 786-0463*

November 1, 1988

May 1, 1989

Summer Seminars for College Teachers—*Kenneth Kolson 786-0463*

Participants

March 1, 1988

Summer 1988

Directors

March 1, 1988

Summer 1989

Summer Seminars for School Teachers—*Michael Hall 786-0463*

Participants

March 1, 1988

Summer 1988

Directors

April 1, 1988

Summer 1989

Guidelines are available from the Office of Publications and Public Affairs two months in advance of the application deadlines. Telecommunications device for the deaf: 786-0282.

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	Deadlines in boldface	For projects beginning
Division of General Programs —Donald Gibson, Director 786-0267		
Humanities Projects in Media—James Dougherty 786-0278	March 18, 1988	October 1, 1988
Humanities Projects in Museums and Historical Organizations—Marsha Semmel 786-0284	June 10, 1988	January 1, 1989
Public Humanities Projects—Wilsonia Cherry 786-0271	March 18, 1988	October 1, 1988
Humanities Projects in Libraries—Thomas Phelps 786-0271	March 18, 1988	October 1, 1988
Division of Research Programs —Richard Ekman, Director 786-0200		
Texts —Margot Backas 786-0207		
Editions—Kathy Fuller 786-0207	June 1, 1988	April 1, 1989
Translations—Martha Chomiak 786-0207	June 1, 1988	April 1, 1989
Publication Subvention—Margot Backas 786-0207	April 1, 1988	October 1, 1988
Reference Materials —Charles J. Meyers 786-0358		
Tools—Helen Aguera 786-0358	November 1, 1988	July 1, 1989
Access—Jane Rosenberg 786-0358	November 1, 1988	July 1, 1989
Interpretive Research —Dorothy Wartenberg 786-0210		
Projects—David Wise 786-0210	October 1, 1988	July 1, 1989
Humanities, Science and Technology—Daniel Jones 786-0210	October 1, 1988	July 1, 1989
Regrants —Crale Hopkins 786-0204		
Conferences—Crale Hopkins 786-0204	February 15, 1988	October 1, 1988
Centers for Advanced Study—David Coder 786-0204	December 1, 1988	July 1, 1989
Regrants for International Research—David Coder 786-0204	March 15, 1988	January 1, 1989
Regrants in Selected Areas—David Coder 786-0204	March 15, 1988	January 1, 1989
Division of State Programs —Marjorie A. Berlincourt, Director 786-0254		
Each state humanities council establishes its own grant guidelines and application deadlines. Addresses and telephone numbers of these state programs may be obtained from the division.		
Office of Challenge Grants —Harold Cannon, Director 786-0361		
	May 1, 1988	December 1, 1988
Office of Preservation —George F. Farr, Jr., Senior Preservation Officer 786-0570		
Preservation—George F. Farr, Jr. 786-0570	June 1, 1988	January 1, 1989
U.S. Newspaper Program—Jeffrey Field 786-0570	June 1, 1988	January 1, 1989

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