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The Technique of Originality: "Innocence" and Artifice in the Painting of Corot, Monet, and Cézanne

Richard Shiff

Received opinion suggests that painting, as an art of depiction, serves as a vehicle of imaginative invention, a means of representing not only how the world appears but how one might desire the world to appear. Painting shows things as they are or, alternatively, as they might be. It is also often stated that arts of depiction do more than represent an external world of nature, whether real or imaginary; they reflect back on their authors and express, even identify, the character of the artist. Whenever one says without qualification that a painting represents a naive vision, one may be making any of three assertions: (1) that the image depicted is naive (true-to-nature); (2) that its creator is naive (innocent, childlike); (3) that the element of mediation, the technique, is naive (primitive, untrained). And there is still another possibility: in the representation of a naive vision, the painter’s technique may merely signify naïveté without itself being unlearned. Such generalized significations of naïveté may refer to all three of the other senses of naïve vision—the innocence of the artist, the genuine simplicity of his technique, the fundamental truth of his world.

The "Myth of the Innocent Eye"

During the nineteenth century, when classicists, romantics, realists, and others argued for the value of the "naive" (usually associated with the "original"), any number of sophisticated references to naïveté appeared in the arts. The innocence of childhood, however, could not be recovered by those adults who desired what they had lost; naïveté could be represented only by means of technical skill, not by direct application of an innocent vision itself. Obviously there is some internal contradiction in self-consciously striving to attain a naïveté antithetical to self-consciousness. From the start, exponents of naïveté questioned themselves and were criticized by doubters; by 1824, E. J. Delécluze, who commented upon both classicism and romanticism, had already noted three major ideological attempts at recovering a primitive innocence within his own lifetime: "All of this," he wrote, seeming to delight in the irony, "is an artificial naïveté [ naïveté factice] which cannot last very long" (1942:135–136).

Delécluze and others recognized that human expression is an art. A bit of introspection demonstrates the point. Some of us, for example, require a great deal of linguistic experience in order to speak simply—or "sincerely." Certainly we know that a discourse of sincerity can be appropriated by both naive and sophisticated men, and by both honest and deceitful men; we rarely assume complete candor on the part of a speaker solely on the basis of his expressions of sincerity. To mistake a feigned sincerity or innocence for the real thing is to confuse the value signified with the nature of the mark that signifies it. Usually we do more than take signifiers at face value. The interpretation of another’s language, or of any other means of expression, can be aided by some assessment of the other’s technical capabilities and potential motivation—what does this person want? how could it be attained? can he attain it?

In interpreting visual representations, art historians make judgments concerning the values held by the artists under scrutiny and the ends toward which these artists might direct their works. Often, it seems to me, art historians have overestimated the naïveté of artists of the nineteenth century, especially those realists, naturalists, and impressionists who professed a desire to capture a naive vision of reality. There has indeed been some confusion between what a particular artistic technique signifies and the nature of that signification itself (and of the artist who could conceivably perform such an act of meaning).

The "myth of the innocent eye" is central to the art-historical problem of evaluating the radically naturalistic paintings produced during the nineteenth century. The theory of the innocent eye has two aspects:1 First, it is a theory of "natural" vision, a proper vision associated with the uneducated, disinterested curiosity of childhood. Supposedly, such vision, at its most primordial, provides sensory experience in the form of conceptually undifferentiated patches of color. Second, the theory of the innocent eye is one of a proper process of painting that represents a "true" vision of (externalized) nature or of one’s (internalized) experience of nature.

Perhaps the most familiar statement of the theory of the innocent eye comes from John Ruskin. In 1857 he made the following comment to the reader about to embark on a course of lessons in artistic practice, Ruskin’s own Elements of Drawing:

We see nothing but flat colors. . . . The whole technical power of painting depends on our recovery of what may be called the innocence of the eye; that is to say, of a sort of childish perception of these flat stains of color, merely as such, without consciousness of what they signify. . . .

Richard Shiff is Associate Professor of Art at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is presently completing a book on Cézanne, impressionism, and the issue of originality in art.

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Now, a highly accomplished artist has always reduced himself as nearly as possible to this condition of infantine sight. He sees the colors of nature exactly as they are... the whole art of Painting consists merely in perceiving the shape and depth of these patches of color, and putting patches of the same size, depth, and shape on canvas. [Ruskin 1971:27-28]

It seems that Ruskin is calling for a very straightforward and unmediated recording of vision. But he closes this passage with a remark that introduces a code of translation into the painting process; the recording of vision becomes mediated by a technical limitation:

The only obstacle to the success of painting is, that many of the real colors are brighter and paler than it is possible to put on canvas: we must put darker ones to represent them. [ibid.:28]

Ruskin's observation here is a commonplace of painting practice, but it jars with the notion of an innocent eye. How do we know what the artist's innocent eye is really seeing if what he paints is not exactly what he sees? How does the artist know what he sees, both in terms of the colors themselves and in terms of what they ultimately represent? Painting with an innocent eye would seem to require that the artist avoid acknowledging his own subject until after he had completed its picture—otherwise he would lose the quality of innocence as he painted.

Despite Ruskin's apparent belief in the necessity of attaining naive vision, it is not at all clear that he really thought it possible, for his technical and practical recommendations to artists do not seem entirely consistent with it. This point has been noted by Ernst Gombrich, whose study *Art and Illusion* squarely faces the problem of relating naive “sensation” to conceptualized or interpretive “perception.” Gombrich cites another element of Ruskin's advice on the subject of color:

Color is wholly relative... what was warm a minute ago, becomes cold when you have put a hotter color in another place... every touch must be laid, not with a view to its effect at the time, but with a view to its effect in futurity, the result upon it of all that is afterwards to be done being previously considered. [Ruskin 1971:134]

On the basis of this passage, Gombrich concludes that “Ruskin has, without realizing it, amended his own theory of childlike vision,” for the artist seems to depend upon the “knowledge of how colors will affect each other” (Gombrich 1969:309–310).

One of the major aims of *Art and Illusion* is to demonstrate that the theory of the innocent eye is untenable, both as a theory of vision and as a theory of painting; the contradiction that Gombrich notes in Ruskin serves his purpose. In general, Gombrich concludes that the innocent eye is a myth... seeing is never just registering... The whole distinction between sensation and perception, plausible as it was, had to be given up... Nobody has ever seen a visual sensation, not even the impressionists, however ingenuously they stalked their prey. [ibid.:298]

Gombrich refers to the impressionist painters in the context of a discussion of the innocent eye because he regards impressionism as the least schematic of manners of depiction. But even this art represents nature by way of a special language or system of conventions (ibid.:293, 324). Gombrich openly recognizes the artifice of impressionism, but—along with other, less canny art historians—he implies that the impressionists themselves may have suffered Ruskin's delusion concerning the possibility of recording naive vision.

One calls the innocent eye a “myth” when one does not believe in it as a reality. Historians sometimes argue that during the nineteenth century many, if not most, painters of nature regarded the innocent eye as real. But it is generally stated today that there is no innocent or completely externalized and objective vision of reality, no pure sensation without interpretation. This distinction—between what the past regarded as real and what the present regards as mythic—has led historians to presume a passage from innocence to knowledge, from art as naive sensation to art as interpretive perception; and this sense of historical development has been used to explain any number of shifts in style or theory around the turn of the century. Cézanne, for example, as well as the French symbolists and many abstract painters of the earlier twentieth century, have been seen as departing from any attempt to reproduce external appearances because they realized the folly of their impressionist fathers who had (supposedly) thought they could view the world naively, recording it with “accuracy.”

It is true that the generation to follow the impressionists sometimes ascribed to these painters the belief that naive vision was possible and desirable and equally true that these impressionist painters were sometimes accused of being positivists. But these claims were the rhetorical pronouncements of a younger generation striving to distinguish itself from an older one, whose most fundamental principles it accepted. The claims made against the impressionists appear to be largely false. They have generally
gone unchallenged because of a mistaken sense of the signification of labels such as "positivist" and "impressionist" and even of broad descriptive terms such as "real" and "ideal" as they were applied in nineteenth-century art criticism (Shiff 1978). The impressionists neither had, nor believed they could have, an innocent eye. They did, however, hold naiveté as a value to be represented even if it could not be attained. Thus the innocent eye was desirable, but, like other objects of desire, it was absent, unattainable. The innocent eye was the myth of the impressionists and of other artists of the nineteenth century; this innocent eye existed only in myth even among those whom historians have criticized for naively believing in its reality.

Creation as Making v. Creation as Finding

If historians have often ascribed to nineteenth-century impressionists and Naturalists a belief in the innocent eye as the foundation of a theory of painting, it may be the result of their familiarity with critics such as Émile Zola who so often exhorted artists to represent only "what one sees." This call for a direct recording of visual experience stood in conflict with the position of the typical "academic." The academics did not advocate an innocence of vision; instead, they taught the importance of acquired technical convention. They trained artists in technical skills so that they might engage in an active process of invention and composition (creation as making) rather than a relatively passive process of observation and discovery (creation as finding).

The divergence of academic and antiacademic artists is reflected in many areas of the theoretical discourse that accompanied the painting of the nineteenth century. The use of the terms "imitation" and "copy" within that specialized discourse reveals much. Sometimes the two terms were opposed to each other (especially during the earlier part of the century), sometimes they were used interchangeably (especially during the later part of the century) (Shiff, forthcoming, a). When the terms were used to mark a distinction, "imitation" served to indicate a liberal or inventive use of a source, while "copy" denoted a literal or derivative reproduction.

Charles Blanc, whose Grammaire des arts du dessin of 1867 gave an authoritative account of academic theory, defined the imitation of nature in what may seem today to be the most straightforward way: imitation is merely a "faithful copy," the kind of copy one might hope to attain if one valued the "innocent eye." Since academics such as Blanc stressed the intellectual act of interpretation and not the recording of sensory experience, for them imitation (as a copying) could not be art (Blanc 1880:17). In true art, choice or invention would always be a factor. In a composition of human figures, for example, the artist (according to Blanc) will "choose within the immense repertory of [observed] human forms, those that serve best to translate his emotion or his thought." Even an initial drawing or compositional sketch "is not a simple imitation, a copy mathematically conforming to the original, an inert reproduction, a superfluity" (ibid.:531). Accordingly, Blanc notes that Poussin and Claude transformed the nature they viewed, as if they knew that what they found in their direct observation were not in agreement with their own feeling, their source of originality, or, as Blanc writes, their "genius" (ibid.: 20). For the academic, then, the original expression of the self—its vision and desires—follows from conscious artistic choice, an active employment of artistic techniques.

Surely the academic position seems clear and quite sensible; but the importance it gave to acquired technique—the means of expression with which the active intellect could fashion a work of art—clouded the issue of naïveté and self-expression. For those whose aim was to attain a direct and specific expression either of themselves or of their modern world, a technical procedure inherited from the past might prove to be an inhibiting or limiting factor. In a curious and complex linguistic turn, the naïve "copying" dismissed by academics came to be conceived as an artistic process that might liberate the artist from the techniques of the past, techniques associated with an academic form of education by way of their being acquired through "imitation" of academic models—that is, the paintings of others. The model to be copied by the antiacademic artist became the "original" one, the one present to view in its innocent state, simply the nature that the artist sees.4

So much seems to have been invested in resisting academic models that some of those very models for emulation became the subject of critical revision: in other words, some of the great academic heroes of the past were discussed as if they themselves had been antiacademic, concerned primarily with avoiding technical convention rather than mastering it. Such was the fate of Poussin as he was represented in the commentaries of many of his admirers during the later nineteenth century. The motivation behind the revision of Poussin was complex. In part, French critics wanted to divorce this seminal French master from any dependence on the art of Raphael and other Italian classicists.5 Poussin's own classicism was to be inherently French in its character, a product of the artist's direct contact with nature and with those ancient sources that were themselves intimately bound to nature. His art would leave all conventional mediation behind and return only to true "origins" (Mantz 1858:41). In 1867, the painter and theorist Thomas Couture wrote: "It is generally believed that [Poussin]
interprets, creates a style that recalls nature somewhat, but which is nevertheless conventional. No, he copies" (1868:247). Copying, then, was regarded as a kind of artistic creation that involved no interpretation, nothing of the transformation that a preconceived artistic method would entail. The advantage of the copy was not necessarily that it afforded a greater resemblance to the model in nature (as if the product of an "innocent eye"), but that, whatever the relationship of artwork to model might be, it escaped definition in terms of a conventional transformation.

In 1868, Manet painted a portrait of his friend and critic Zola (Figure 1). Zola referred to the creation of this portrait as an act of copying, and he repeatedly noted that Manet's style was characterized by idiosyncracy; Manet failed to employ the usual conventional devices for rendering nature and for organizing pictorial composition. All this led not so much to a more objective view of nature, a view potentially corresponding to that of others, but to an image of Manet himself, what we might call the artist's self-portrait. The Portrait of Zola, in other words, becomes Manet's self-expression, his own vision and his own portrait.

According to Zola, Manet professed a kind of visual innocence; supposedly, the artist admitted to his critic:

I can do nothing without nature. I do not know how to invent. As long as I wanted to paint according to the instruction I had received, I produced nothing of merit. [Zola 1970c:142]

And, as Zola observed Manet at work on his portrait, he stressed the same passive absorption in nature that Thomas Couture had claimed for Poussin:

[Manet] had forgotten me, he no longer knew that I was there, he was copying me [il me copiait] as he would have copied any human animal whatever, with an attentiveness, an artistic awareness [une conscience artistique] that I have never seen elsewhere. [1970c:141]

Manet does not seek out Zola's special character, his intellectual or spiritual qualities; he seems naively to concentrate on the surface appearance. He is "copying" a portrait. Traditionally, portraits had indeed been called "copies" and had been associated with a realistic manner of painting. But there is more significance to Zola's choice of the term "copy" in his description. Manet's "copying" becomes a characterization of his style or technical procedure, not a reference to the realistic nature of his subject matter. What we would today call the subject matter of this portrait of Zola is actually quite complexly presented; Manet depicts Zola surrounded by identifiable works of visual art and literature. Iconographers delight in this painting; as they do so, they sometimes berate Zola for being insensitive to everything in the painting save Manet's style. But this is naive on the part of the art historian. Surely Zola the aspiring novelist knew about subject matter, symbolization, and allegory. More important than any consideration of subject matter, however, is Zola's observation that Manet attempts to remain apart from any technical tradition; his representation does not belong to a sequence of imitative works forming a tradition as many academic portraits do. The only sources to which Manet can openly refer— or to which Zola, speaking for him, refers—are the model in nature and that which cannot be separated from it, the artist's own vision, the expression of his self.

Can the self be revealed in, or even influence, a copy? Zola could speak of "copying" and could reintroduce notions of interpretation, translation, and expression, and make these all seem compatible terms. His critical strategy was anything but naive. He implied that copying would assure strict adherence to nature; it would eliminate the influence of other artists by obviating access to the works of art that might serve the more academic painter as models for his own image of reality. I believe that painters of the late nineteenth century recognized what is generally recognized today (especially in view of Gombrich's study), namely, the power that convention exercises over any representation of reality. But these painters made use of their own myth of the innocent eye, the myth of the naive artist, in order to claim a desired independence from the past, a purity of the self. While Zola denied to his favored artists any limiting sources in artistic tradition, he assumed that the self would give form to their work even in the case of painting a direct copy; for no conscious or sane man could negate the living presence of his own particular being.

Zola defined the work of art as "a bit of nature seen through a temperament." "Temperament" was the product of individual physical constitution and caused the actual immediate vision of artists to vary accordingly (Shiff 1978:357–358). Hence Zola always praised an artist for painting "what he sees [ce qu'il voit]." There could be no fixed reality in genuine art; such art must always be the product of human experience. No artist could see or render an invariant reality, nor could a rigid idealism, a normative standard, have any relation to real experience or life. In the artist's "copy" of nature, there would always be a difference, and this difference, this individual identity, was not in the appearance of things, but in a man:
Figure 1  Édouard Manet. Portrait of Zola, 1868. Louvre, Paris.
The artist places himself before nature. . . he copies it in interpreting it. . . he is no more or less realistic in his own eyes; in a word . . . his mission is to render objects for us as he sees them [teils qu’il les voit], relying on such detail, creating anew. I will express my whole thought in saying that a work of art is a bit of nature [création] seen through a temperament. . . .

A work for me, is a man; I would find [retrouver] a temperament in this work, a particular unique accent. [Zola 1879:229, 225]

Zola’s definition of art has two broad implications. First, the modern artist becomes radically individual and becomes the absolute origin of his own style to an extent never so openly advocated by academicians—had they done so, they would have been undermining their academic function in society, their transmission of technical and philosophical principles transcending individual artistic expression. Second, the modern critic, to an unprecedented degree, must yield his normative standard of evaluation to some vague sense of artistic sincerity. Although an intangible sincerity may have been the effect sought, it nevertheless seemed to many critics to be the product of specific technical means. Thus, in 1868, Jules Antoine Castagnary could advise naturalist painters that they might manipulate their compositions so long as the representation appeared in the end to be a simple direct copy, for anything that seemed an unmediated copy would seem “sincere” (Castagnary 1892b:1, 292).

When Manet—or Zola, speaking for him—claimed artistic sincerity by denying any invention or compositional manipulation on his part, he was, of course, creating a very specific verbal picture of the activity of the modern artist, a picture he attempted to represent visually in his painting. Zola stated that Manet’s technique was merely to follow nature and find himself: “il s’était trouvé lui-même” (Zola 1970b:97). The painter did not compose but rather recorded chance groupings, and his works were marked by strong contrasts of color (ibid.:102). At nearly every point in his critical analysis, Zola managed to show that Manet’s art was as unmediated as it could be.

Zola’s project might seem to be to convert the highest artistic expression from the very willful activity that academicians such as Blanc conceived to a more passive course of discovery in which one finds oneself only as a result of the artistic process. For Blanc, “the last word in imitation is to produce a copy that one could take for the original; in other words, the masterwork of the imitator would be to make an illusion” (1880:18). Imitation, or copying, is thus performed when the original is already available; it adds nothing new and, as Blanc argues, produces only a potential deception. For Zola, however, art lives and grows as artists do and, so long as art remains independent of convention, its “copy” of nature will reveal an originality ever changing, an evolving artistic temperament:

I am not for any school, because I am for the truth of humanity which excludes every clique and every system. The word “art” displeases me; it encompasses certain ideas of necessary arrangement, of an absolute ideal. To make art, is this not to do something outside of man and nature? For my part, I want to make life; I want people to be alive, to create anew, outside of everything, according to their own eyes and their own temperaments. [1970a:60]

Manet, then, becomes an artist in Zola’s sense not by making “art,” that is, not by employing conventional artistic techniques to express his ideas, but by following the chance patterns of nature, as he sees them, in his own unique and original manner. He finds both nature and himself in this vision, a vision which may indeed, at face value, seem “innocent.”

Zola writes that he is displeased by the word “art,” with its suggestion of artifice. His rhetorical gesture here verges on the quixotic, for he knew that artists can represent neither the natural nor the original automatically, but must consciously strive after the mastery that would insure originality (Shiff 1978:358–360). Manet himself, according to his friend Antonin Proust, has reasoned in 1858 that there must be some method of representing the experience of nature with minimal mediation:

An artist should be a spontanéiste. There’s the right term. But to have spontaneity, one must be master of his art. Undirected groping never leads anywhere. One must translate what one experiences, but translate it instantaneously, so to speak. [Proust 1897:427]

The solution, then, is not to eliminate the means of making, not to cede all control, but to arrive at a means of immediacy. Instantaneous translation in terms of some medium would be quite a feat, a mastery that would seem to render negligible the influence of the medium itself. Zola, in speaking of Manet’s unrestrained “copying” and freedom from rule and thought, describes the artist’s work as if its technical principles had indeed become invisible. And when Castagnary, another champion of naturalism, considered the paintings of the somewhat older landscapist Jongkind, he seems to have made the claim for the attainment of a disappearing technique even more definitively:

[Jongkind’s] craft hardly concerns him, and this results in the fact that, before his canvases, it does not concern you either. The sketch finished, the picture completed, you do not trouble yourself with the execution; it disappears before the power or the charm of the effect. [Castagnary 1892a:1, 170]
Whether Jongkind has deliberated over his art or not, the viewer cannot say; the appearance of spontaneity, if not its reality, has been achieved.

Despite such enthusiastic response to self-effacing procedures, we must suspect that critics such as Castagnary and Zola knew well that specific identifiable, visible techniques had been employed by artists who wished to present a naive and original vision. Zola gives clues as to what might define the technique of originality. He notes that Manet’s work is characterized by strong oppositions of value (dark/light) and that his “composition” appears haphazard, unplanned (Zola 1970b:102). Zola also relates that Jongkind paints sky and earth with an “apparent disorder” (1970c:160). The technique of originality is thus consistently revealed negatively, as the antithesis of conventional academic procedure—if the one is deliberate, the other is spontaneous; if the one employs (“artificial”) chiaroscuro transitions, the other employs (“natural”) violent oppositions of value or hue; if the one is orderly or systematic, the other is haphazard; if the one is complex in its internal compositional differentiation, the other is simple in its uniformity. Our question now is this: how, more precisely, did French artists of the later nineteenth century make “original” paintings?

Making “Original” Paintings

In 1876, the artist and man of letters, Eugène Fromentin, criticized the painting of his younger contemporaries; he had in mind the works of both the independent impressionists and those academics who exhibited a naturalistic manner. Fromentin felt that these artists worked without adequate observation and manipulation of “values,” the chiaroscuro modulation he so much admired in Rembrandt and others. The critic stressed attention to detail and nuance, and he distinguished those who presented a finely worked and highly differentiated picture surface from those who seemed to leave things almost as they found them, as if in a state of innocence. According to Fromentin, the attempted removal of artifice and convention from modern art had merely brought about a loss of imaginative invention (Fromentin 1876:285).

Fromentin’s comments appeared in the context of a historical study of the Dutch and Flemish masters of past ages; had he focused instead on the French, Claude would have been his paradigm in the area of landscape art: “we have had in France only one landscapist, Claude Lorrain” (ibid.:271). For Thomas Couture, too, Claude served as a model of excellence: “[his painting] escapes the analysis of its procedure; its technique is so perfect that [any sign of] the worker disappears completely” (Couture 1869:63). Couture seems to claim that Claude had achieved the
technical mastery Manet would later seek, to render technique itself invisible. This genius freed himself from all academic practice; yet Claude became the model for academics. Succeeding generations emulated his refined manner because his well-differentiated light and color corresponded with the academic ideal of a technique subtly responsive to specific expressive aims. While perhaps attaining magical effects, Claude’s technique was yet subject to academic analysis of the simplest sort, for his compositions quite obviously depended on the interrelationships of their well-defined parts. His light (and the space it created) exemplified what became a traditional academic principle; as Charles Blanc would say, such pictorial light was properly arranged and composed of its varying elements—"unified, but not uniform" (1880:555).

Analysis of a characteristic painting by Claude—The Ford (Figure 2), usually dated 1636—may serve to establish a norm for compositional differentiation, for the achievement of the hierarchical ordering of composite elements that academics advocated. The structured order of The Ford seems internalized, having its own sense of scale and system of spatial recession. Once we imagine ourselves to “enter” the painting, we have no difficulty in moving from part to part, “through the landscape,” for we are guided by a sense of continual transition or passage. We seem never to be confronted by spaces or objects (rendered as patches of color) of equal attraction, for each area of the painting holds a unique position in the compositional hierarchy. The foreground, for example, reveals a play of patterns of light and shade (primarily warm greens and browns) which changes gradually as we glance either from right to left or from the illusionistic “near” to the illusionistic “far.”

In The Ford, Claude renders a figural group in the central foreground with a pattern of differentiated light similar to that seen in the surrounding landscape. One female figure, clothed primarily in white and ochre, constitutes the principal highlight. Two pairs of figures are in dimmer illumination, with the female of each pair highlighted and more luminously colored than the male. This pattern of subtle opposition and variation extends to the vegetation of the middleground. To the extreme left, an aged tree trunk with a few live branches is set against a mass of healthy foliage. Within that mass, one tree with warm yellowish leaves serves to animate the dominant cool green tones of the others, while in each individual tree a highlighted and shaded area are defined. Similarly, to

the right of the central river, a second mass of foliage is differentiated by the presence of both a decaying tree and healthy ones.

Claude tints deep blues off into paler tones in order to suggest a gradual spatial transition in the area of the river. There are two groups of boatmen on the river; here, too, the artist seems to achieve maximal compositional variety by placing one group relatively near (large in scale) and toward the left bank, and the other far (small) and toward the right. A passage of hills and valleys beyond the bridge over the river is characterized by systematic variation from larger to smaller forms and from warmer to cooler tones (greens and ochres to blues). The sky above (i.e., adjacent to) the bluish mountains or hills is pale and yellowish, its color gradually shifting to a cooler and progressively deeper blue toward the upper margin of the painting. In sum, there are no areas of abrupt juxtaposition and none of the “flattness” or lack of modulation of which Fromentin might complain. Nuances of hue and especially value suggest a compositional ordering likely to be the product of careful deliberative technique.

Indeed, Corot was well known for the care with which he established relationships of chiaroscuro values within naturalistic views. His paintings, according to Fromentin, became formularizations of the laws for the use of values (1876:238–239). And Blanc, on his part, compared Corot to Claude as an artist capable of presenting “the sense [sentiment] of the ideal through the sensation of the real” (1876:377). Corot, in other words, did not merely imitate nature; he maintained control over his technique for the sake of poetic expression. Most critics recognized “poetry” in Corot’s work; this quality had been defined generally by Théophile Thoré as “the opposite of imitation. It is invention, it is originality, it is the manifested sign of a particular impression. Poetry is not nature, but the feeling [sentiment] that nature inspires in the artist” (1893:1, 20).

Notes from Corot’s own hand and accounts of the artist’s conversations indicate that he thought systematically about his technical procedure as a means to establish his personal vision. In fact, he seems to have followed the same hierarchy of expressive devices that Blanc established in his Grammaire. In undated notes, Corot advised the artist to consider first drawing and the general compositional arrangement, then chiaroscuro values (arranged in sequence from
Figure 5  Claude Lorrain. *Landscape with the Voyage of Jacob*, 1677. Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Mass.
dark to light), then color, and finally execution or brushstroke (Courthion 1946:1, 82–83, 89; II, 94–96). Corot even employed an abstract system of notation, involving circles and squares, to aid him in arranging the areas of light and dark in his compositions (Moreau-Nélaton 1924:1, 126). This device may have facilitated the recording of transient effects of natural illumination (a "naive" vision), but it also indicates the systematic quality of the technical procedure.

Corot's refined and conventionalized approach to rendering landscape effects is evident in his View of Genoa of 1834 (Figure 3), a work of small scale yet rich detail. As Claude often did, Corot locates his primary subject, the city itself, in the central middle-ground, and he frames its illuminated brilliance with contrasting darker areas situated to the left and right. The foreground consists of relatively dark tones of great variety — foliage of greens, ochres, and browns differentiated in terms of both value (dark and light) and hue (warm and cool). As the darker masses to the left and right of the illuminated city recede illusionistically from the extreme foreground (the bottom edge of the painting), they culminate in architectural structures, the villa at the left and the tower at the right, which vary both in form (the relatively massive horizontal opposed to the slender vertical) and scale (the larger and relatively near opposed to the smaller and relatively distant). At any point of comparison we might choose in our description of the two landscape masses flanking the city (or, rather, framing it from the central foreground and sides), differentiation or variation will be noted. For example, in the immediate foreground, the central area of landscape is relatively dark, while lighter tones characterize the areas to the left and right. And these two areas themselves are dissimilar, since the right side appears at a lower spatial level than the left and is defined by a more complex pattern of chiaroscuro modulation.

In general, Corot's very simple composition avoids the symmetry we might at first imagine from a verbal description of the arrangement of his subject. The artist accomplishes this through the use of a complex chiaroscuro system, a unified but not uniform light. At the same time, Corot achieves an effective logic of expression by placing his central subject in the composition's highest illumination and by using the surrounding, contrasting forms to direct vision toward it. According to traditional standards, Corot has chosen his subject and his means of expression carefully, leaving little, if anything, to chance.

Like Delacroix, Corot was one of a few French artists who received nearly universal acclaim in the 1860s and 1870s. His more conservative critics tended to appreciate his "poetry," the expression of his thought through natural effects, while his more radical admirers, such as Zola, emphasized his extreme fidelity to nature (Bigot 1888:65–67; De Montaiglon 1875:22; Zola 1970c:161). Corot himself, especially in his later years, is recorded to have made remarks that the impressionists or any others concerned with originality would indeed have applauded. Many of these statements seem inconsistent with the artist's careful account of his own conventionalized technique. For example, in 1872, Corot spoke of interpreting nature "with naïveté and according to your personal feeling, separating yourself entirely from what you know of old masters or contemporaries" (Courthion 1946:1, 84). And in 1874, he claimed:

No one has taught me anything. . . . Yes, I put white in all my tones, but I swear to you that I do not do this according to a principle. It's my instinct that urges me to do this and I obey my instinct. [ibid.:86]

Corot, then, minimizes the role of system and codified learning, while bringing impulse, instinct, and chance encounter to the fore. Furthermore, his sense of the artist's "impression" is that of the impressionists themselves: he conceives of it as the spontaneous interaction of self and nature; hence, the "first impression," the object of his art, involves both "imitation" of nature and the expression of personal emotion.

Corot's concern for naïveté and spontaneity seems to have led him to distrust the orderly devices of compositional arrangement, even those he had so carefully studied himself throughout his long career. The conflict he felt was, of course, a common one. Paillot de Montabert, an authority whom Blanc cited many times in his Grammaire, had made this pertinent observation in a text completed in 1843:

The word "disposition" [meaning willful arrangement, a term used to indicate that an artistic composition has been actively constructed rather than passively copied], although it signifies in the language of art a most essential condition, sometimes frightens the exponents of naïveté and spontaneity, and in consequence they are scared away also by the words "arrangement," "adjustment," "coordinate," "symmetry," "contrast," etc. [arrangements, agencements, coordonner, symétries, contrastes, etc.]. . . . To be sure, an excellent composition should seem to be a fortunate chance effect; but it will not be at all excellent if, under this appearance of a fortunate accident, it does not allow one to discover the beneficial principle of the beautiful . . . the combinations from which result harmony [and] unity. [Paillot de Montabert 1855:182–183]

Corot might well be included in the category of those "exponents of naïveté and spontaneity" unnerved by the apparent omnipresence of willful pictorial organization — its results were visible in all the compositions he would consider artificial, unnatural.

As if in verification of the genuineness of Corot's remarks on his own naïveté and independence from past masters and fixed principles, many of the artist's
later works (although praised by conservative critics) are not so easily analyzed as is his View of Genoa. His Ville d’Avray (Figure 4), for example, usually dated c. 1867–1870, does not focus on a central subject. The willow trees occupy the compositional position analogous to that of the city of Genoa in the earlier painting but are located in the foreground, not the middle distance. They are flanked by two other points of interest, the building complex to the left and the receding river to the right. We must ask what constitutes the primary “subject” of this painting: the foreground composition of trees and figures? perhaps the river itself? or possibly Corot’s general “impression”? Several parts of the image seem to vie for the viewer’s final attention without allowing any hierarchical resolution. For the “academic,” this situation might be experienced in terms of an uncomfortably “divided” attention, but, for the antiacademic painter of originality, such lack of conventional resolution would signify a state of immediate consciousness, a wholeness existing prior to the application of any differentiating concepts or techniques.

Corot presents a uniformity of elements in his landscape subject, and he reinforces this lack of differentiation through his particular use of chiaroscuro. The general lighting effect in Ville d’Avray is much more uniform than that in Claude’s Ford or in Corot’s own View of Genoa. This can be seen, for example, in the sky, which Corot renders quite evenly; in View of Genoa, in contrast, transitions from lighter to darker tones and from warm pinks and violets to cool blues give the sky a more (conventionally) spacious and vaulted character.

The river depicted in Ville d’Avray raises the question of spatial differentiation once again. Slight variations in tone indicate that this river runs back into an illusionistic distance at the right side of the picture, but in its compositional placement it seems to extend laterally across the picture, separating foreground from middle-ground. Yet Corot confuses this potentially clear distinction by the central placement of the trees and by their coloring. The two trees seem to link the near bank of the river to its far side, denying spatial differentiation; these trees have obvious physical roots in the foreground bank, yet their foliage, which extends into the compositional area of the opposite bank, is a cool green more similar to other tones of the middle distance than to the somewhat warmer greens of the foreground grasses. In addition, a single small building, seen through a gap in the foliage of the left-hand tree, seems to project forward, further confusing any systematic ordering of the illusionistic spaces of the painting.

The general topographical features of the landscape depicted in Corot’s Ville d’Avray resemble those seen in Claude’s Landscape with the Voyage of Jacob (1677) (Figure 5), which shares the technical qualities of The Ford. In the Voyage of Jacob composition, a group of trees forms a strong central focus, and the architectural mass at the left and the area of foliage at the extreme right serve as framing elements as well as secondary accents. If read from left to right as two-dimensional patterns, the sequences of buildings, trees, and foliage in these paintings by Claude and Corot seem alike. Furthermore, as in Ville d’Avray, a river traverses Voyage of Jacob as if flowing from left to right and front to back. Claude, however, defines each segment of his river as it courses “through” his composition in a manner Corot simply does not follow (although we must assume he had the capacity to do so). Claude uses the course of the river—in addition to the general modulation of chiaroscuro and color from foreground to background—to establish a spatial progression marked by clear steps; he depicts the river (in combination with a tributary?) as winding around the central trees so that it appears first before them and then behind them, distinguishing a singular location for the trees not only beside the framing elements of architecture and foliage but decidedly in front of them. As if to reiterate the spatial hierarchy, Claude presents a caravan of camels, sheep, cattle, and goats winding through the illusionistic space of the composition, parallel to the river. The viewer observes a voyage in duplicate—the river’s and the caravan’s (Jacob’s)—and can see all elements of the landscape as specific spatial markers. Corot’s composition, in contrast, lacks just this specificity of spatial definition.

In general, in Ville d’Avray Corot uses neither a hierarchical ordering of dark and light values nor one of warm and cool hues, and does not establish the sense of a single spatial sequence from an imagined “front” to an imagined “back” of his depiction of nature. Within the painting’s surface of predominantly cool coloration, the noticeably warmer areas are found both in the foreground (in the figure at the left) and in the middle distance (in the building complex on the far bank). The foreground area contains a number of specks of impasto to define highlights on the herbage and foliage. The middle-ground contains less of this textured paint, but the difference is slight. Within the foreground, the artist distributes these highlights quite evenly; they do not themselves suggest a variation of compositional parts. In addition, the two human figures and the two trees appear lined up across this area, as if the artist has taken no pains to group them in a picturesque or expressive manner.
This is the kind of straightforward presentation for which impressionists, such as Pissarro, were often criticized in their earlier years; it was said that they lacked skill in composition (Duret 1885a:8–9).

Given the evidence of View of Genoa and many similarly conventional paintings in Corot’s oeuvre, the artist must have known the extent to which works like Ville d’Avray departed from established norms. Even if Genoa and Ville d’Avray had been painted in the same spirit of “naiveté,” with the same spontaneity and speed of execution and the same “sincere” fidelity to nature, one would seem less conventional and more original than the other. Ville d’Avray would appear less differentiated compositionally and hence less deliberate; it would serve to convince the viewer of Corot’s joint discovery of nature and his artistic self, instead of seeming a proof of the artist’s self-conscious application of technique. If Corot’s works of the type of View of Genoa succeeded according to standards of orderly representation, they might fail (for some viewers) once a technical link to the tradition of Claude had been recognized; for Corot would then appear as an imitator—not an imitator of nature, but of art, of Claude. He would appear as a willful maker, not a naive finder. Works of the type of Ville d’Avray, however, solve the problem: Corot’s own technique of originality yields an image that cannot be translated into the Claudean system of compositional differentiation.

When Théodore Duret, a critic and a friend of Manet, wrote on naturalism in 1867, he chose Corot as a prime example of an artist who had derived his “original style” from direct contact with nature, independent of any experience of the art of others (1867:21–28). In general, even for critics who did not advocate such a radical break with the past, Corot served as an example of independence and originality. Raymond Bouyer, for instance, called Corot the “petit-fils de Claude,” but remarked that his disavowal of academic “servitude” indicated that he had understood the true value of tradition; Corot had honored the original “eloquence” of Claude by resisting the stylistic conventions established by this master’s own “academic” pupils (1893:v. 5, 22; v. 6, 125). As it was often said of Poussin, Corot had made a return, but only to “original” sources—to the classic master of his own tradition, Claude, and to nature itself.

Personal “Style”

The young impressionists admired Corot’s apparent independence and shared his concern for the development of a personal “style” that did not depend on conventionalized technique. Having isolated himself at Etretat in 1868, Monet wrote that his works would now escape resemblance to those of anyone else and would become “simply the expression of what I shall have personally deeply felt” (Wildenstein 1974–1979:1, 425–426). He wanted specifically to avoid the ideas he would have received in Paris, concepts and procedures that would inhibit his own expression. He spoke of rejecting acquired knowledge in order to concentrate on experience.

A year earlier, in 1867, Monet had worked during the summer at Sainte-Adresse and had produced a series of remarkable studies of the coastline. These paintings demonstrate that the artist had indeed succeeded in rejecting much; they lack even the greatly attenuated hierarchical ordering visible in Corot’s Ville d’Avray. For example, The Beach at Sainte-Adresse (Figure 6) (now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art) seems the pictorial negation of the traditional manner of proceeding in orderly fashion from a linear compositional framework to a systematic application of chiaroscuro, to end finally with a harmony of expressive color. Monet differentiates the parts of his composition primarily by means of color itself and, to judge by conventional standards, seems hardly to differentiate at all. The parts of his composition are so similar in visual intensity that his work might appear either entirely uniform or completely fragmented, a juxtaposition of elements never cohering into a whole. In our analysis, we shall assume that Monet did not work out of ignorance of the standard, but rather, as he himself implies, out of a desire to be different from others for the sake of being true to the sources of his originality, nature and his own self.

Monet’s technique obviously suggests that of the “spontaneous” outdoor sketch. By employing a very apparent broad brushstroke, the painter makes reference to a rapid speed of execution and, by implication, the spontaneity and lack of deliberation in his own response to nature. This technique appears quick enough to “capture” the transient impression, a shift of mood in nature or in the artist. But Monet’s technique is not that of the conventional sketch. He does not establish an “effect” of the usual sort, for his surface of color patches fails to provide, even in rudimentary form, a chiaroscuro system that might characterize a structured completed painting. Instead, the parts of The Beach at Sainte-Adresse seem independently observed (at least by conventional standards), without any resolution into a hierarchy. The appearance of an expansive depth of space in this painting derives not from Monet’s application of
color but from the nature of the motif itself, a shoreline receding to a distant horizon. The artist does not "use" perspective; instead of building a volumetric space, he appears to "copy" what is inherent in the natural site.

The academic sketch, or landscape étude, was intended to establish the character of the general illumination in a picture (Boime 1971:137-139). Monet does something of the same sort, but with a calculated distinction. He creates a light that we might consider either extremely particularized (he carefully renders local shadows, but not a broad contrast of light and shadow as in Corot's View of Genoa) or extremely generalized (the intensity of his hues remains nearly equal everywhere). By either estimation, Monet seems to have avoided the imposition of what would be recognized as a familiar pictorial effect of illumination, the generalized differentiation of light achieved by conventional chiaroscuro, just what the traditional sketch provided (in its own quest for innocent vision). Because it had been acquired as conventional, the technique of the traditional sketch could no longer be considered "naive," nor a means to originality.

A more concrete description of The Beach at Sainte-Adresse will help to indicate the signified "original" of Monet's own sketchlike composition. The immediate foreground of the painting seems to divide into three areas. To the left, Monet has painted the beach primarily with gray, umber, and ochre. At the center, he has employed dull yellow-green, dull blue, and green in the water. To the right, the colors of the water are brighter: green, yellow-green, and blue-green. These three areas of modulated color can be followed "back into" the seascape (i.e., upward from the bottom of the painting) according to a conventional shift in the scale of the individual strokes (from larger to smaller) and in their degree of independent articulation (from clear distinction to relative lack of distinction). When the view passes from one of these suggest deliberation and artifice. In other words, Monet must avoid the imposition of what would be recognized as a familiar pictorial effect of illumination, the generalized differentiation of light achieved by conventional chiaroscuro, just what the traditional sketch provided (in its own quest for innocent vision). Because it had been acquired as conventional, the technique of the traditional sketch could no longer be considered "naive," nor a means to originality.

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broad areas of color to another, however, the radical nature of Monet's technique becomes evident, for no spatial progression, no systematic variation in illumination, is suggested. These areas do not lead to a central subject nor do they set one another off in a rational sequence — all seem capable of competing for attention as if, as I have stated, one were viewing either a fragmented image or an unusually integrated one. In the case of a fragmented image, the abrupt juxtaposition of brilliant hues would suggest a "naive" vision recording in a simplified manner only the colors nature seems to provide; this is the technique often associated with the Japanese who (it was said) had never mastered "European" chiaroscuro (Duret 1885b:98–99). In the case of an integrated image, the uniformity of the illumination would suggest, in effect, that Monet employed no technique, for he imposed no devices of differentiation upon his vision. The Beach at Sainte-Adresse might then serve to signify only "what the artist sees," a "copying" of nature. At the same time, such an image would serve to convey what Monet, in his words, "personally deeply felt"; for what he may have learned from others can, suppos-edly, be nowhere in evidence in such an ignorant style.9

A second painting of The Beach at Sainte-Adresse (Figure 7) (also of 1867 and now in The Art Institute of Chicago) could be analyzed similarly in terms of the interrelationship of its parts. By the Claudean standard, its composition, too, must fail, or at least appear extremely awkward. Objects of interest within the composition seem either too similar in scale (e.g., the beached rowboats at center and left) or too dissimilar (e.g., the figural group by the boats and the much smaller figures sitting on the beach). Such failure to establish a definite pattern of variation makes the transition from one area to another difficult, as if no gradual passage were conceivable. Indeed, the composition suggests Zola's description of Manet's painting, given the same year: "he groups figures [or other objects] before him, somewhat haphazardly, and he cares subsequently only to fix them on the canvas as he sees them ..." (1970b:102). Monet's unconventional composition might qualify as one innocently "found" in nature.9
Creating Spontaneity

Robert Herbert has shown that, throughout his career, Monet deliberated over his choices of color and often consciously disguised the true nature of his technical procedure in order to maintain an appearance of spontaneity. He applied impasto to create, as Herbert writes, a "texture of 'spontaneity' " (1979:97). Given the history of modern art criticism, Monet must be judged to have succeeded in his deception; he has been immortalized as the painter of the moment. But Cézanne, too, although known in the critical literature for his reflection and deliberation, developed a style of spontaneity and immediacy; Cézanne, too, employed the technique of originality.

In 1866, Cézanne wrote to Zola concerning the distinction between artificial studio illumination and natural outdoor light — a distinction which was, at that time, becoming so important to critics like Zola and Duret and artists like Monet and Pissarro. Cézanne insisted that the old masters' representations of outdoor scenes lacked the "original" quality that characterized nature; having been painted by traditional studio means, they were "chic," that is, refined in an artificial and conventional manner (Rewald 1937:98–99). By the early 1870s, profiting from the example of Pissarro with whom he worked closely, Cézanne had developed his own "plein-air" style. He employed unusually bright hues and, as we might suspect, an unconventional distribution of values.

Cézanne’s Auvers: Village Panorama, also called View of Auvers (Figure 8), dated c. 1874, reveals one of the artist’s typical palettes and a manner of execution common in this period of his career. As a panoramic view of a town, this painting may bear comparison with Corot’s View of Genoa: both seem to set architectural features against a surrounding landscape and a distant vista. In Auvers, Cézanne suggests distance through the progressive diminution of the architectural forms and the relatively loose, broad execution of the background hills and sky. In addition, he uses a somewhat duller coloring in the background areas. Yet, View of Auvers embodies no clear compositional pattern or differentiation, for its hues, values, and textures are distributed evenly enough to create a sense of uniform illumination, a light that encompasses but does not determine or define. Bright primary hues — red, blue, yellow, brilliant green — range across the picture along with accents of white. Unlike Corot’s Genoa, Cézanne’s Auvers gives little sense of framing an architectural subject by a contrasting expanse of foliage, nor does it center one element among others of decidedly different visual character. The village itself, like the general illumination, seems expansive and diffused. Some sense of a differentiating diagonal recession arises from the row of houses in the right foreground and seems reinforced by the placement of a mass of architectural
Figure 10  Paul Cézanne. *The Pond*, late 1870s. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Tompkins Collection, Arthur Gordon Tompkins Residuary Fund.
forms in the left middle-ground, but this configuration appears simply as evidence of the artist’s direct observation. Cézanne’s viewers would not see it as a preconceived pictorial device, the application of a law of perspective, because there is no corresponding variation in illumination (i.e., chiaroscuro modeling). Similarly, the rising slope of land at the left foreground does not serve as a conventional repoussoir device, for it, too, is relatively undifferentiated in terms of value, and its green coloration readily agrees with that of the central area which it might otherwise set off.

Cézanne did not paint his View of Auvers out of ignorance of convention but by way of an intentional forgetting, the kind of attitude that had enabled Monet to see original “truth” at Sainte-Adresse. Cézanne certainly knew how to employ chiaroscuro modeling; he had done so, albeit in a simplified, condensed form, in many portraits of the late 1860s. If we can allow some of the artist’s later comments to bear on the interpretation of View of Auvers, they confirm the hypothesis that Cézanne wished to reject traditional technique and become an “original” finder, sensitive to whatever nature might lay before him. He advised Émile Bernard in 1905 that nature “falls before our eyes [and] gives us the picture . . . . [we must] give the image of what we see, forgetting all that has existed before us” (Rewald 1937:276–277). And in several letters to his son in 1906, he complained that Bernard’s own art could not succeed because he was too closely bound to what he saw in art museums, learned in academies, or merely conceptualized by way of his own theories (ibid.: 289, 292–293). Cézanne’s flight from artistic convention identified him with the independent impressionists to a degree Bernard never comprehended. At the end of his life, Cézanne could probably still admire the critical statement of Émile Blémont that he had once endorsed in 1876 (ibid.:125). Blémont had written that the impressionists strive to render with absolute sincerity, without arrangement or attenuation, by simple and broad techniques, the impression evoked in them by aspects of reality . . . . And as there are not perhaps two men on the earth who perceive the same relationships with the same object, [the impressionists] do not see the need to modify their personal and direct sensation according to any convention whatever. [Blémont 1876, emphasis added]
All who avoid conventional practice remain unique; all such artists maintain their originality.

Clearly, Cézanne’s own attitude demanded a technique of originality, for he never went so far as to deny the importance of technique itself. He accounted for his own lack of “realization,” the incompleteness of his art, and his reluctance to exhibit, by noting that he had not yet found the proper means of expression. Even as he stressed fidelity to nature in the same radical manner that Zola had, he spoke also of technical mastery: “One is neither too scrupulous, too sincere, nor too submissive before nature; but one is more or less master of his model, and above all his means of expression. One must penetrate what lies before him, and strive to express himself as logically as possible” (Rewald 1937:262).

Is there a logic, even a system, in Cézanne’s personalized, “original” vision of nature? At this point we can say at least that Cézanne chooses elements of technique that are decidedly unconventional and applies them repeatedly as if they bore some specific signification. In other words, he does not seem bound to a transient observation of nature — ever-changing, ever-original — but masters a technique that represents originality. Thus, in painting images of his own imagination or those derived from other representations (photographs, graphic illustrations, other paintings), he repeats the same technical features seen in View of Auvers, although no immediate observation of nature may be involved in the process. For example, his Bathers (Metropolitan Museum, c. 1875–1876) (Figure 9), an “awkward” arrangement of six female nudes in a landscape, contains the same brilliant yellow-green that accents the foliage in View of Auvers. The Pond (Boston Museum of Fine Arts, late 1870s) (Figure 10), which Cézanne may have derived from a black-and-white illustration, also displays this color as part of a highly simplified pattern of relatively pure hues. This harsh yellow-green, made from mixing blue or green with a pure yellow, is an example of what Blémont and other critics would associate with an “unattenuated” or spontaneous recording of vision, despite the obviously contrived character of both Cézanne’s subjects and his systematic “modeling” in sequences of blue-green, green, and yellow-green. Such a yellow-green tends to appear brighter than its position on a scale of values would indicate. Accordingly, it was avoided by those artists (such as Claude) who were concerned with an orderly hierarchy of values within their painting; they would employ instead an attenuated variation of this color, mixed perhaps from blue or black and a duller type of yellow pigment. Cézanne’s unusual color serves to signify in all his painting, whether of observed or imagined subjects, that his technique is original in a double sense: it is derived from his direct “unattenuated” observation of nature, and it is independent of the technical tradition it clearly defies. In other words, the technique (or style) of Cézanne’s art communicates a message of “direct observation” even when the subject matter can be recognized as an imaginative invention.

It might be argued that Cézanne paints in terms of parts rather than wholes. He moves from part to part on his canvases, unifying the whole only by means of the uniformity of his coloristic illumination, his “atmosphere.” “Draw,” he said to Bernard, “but [remember that] it’s the light-reflection that is enveloping; light, by the general reflection, is the envelope” (ibid.:276). Drawing, the foundation of compositional differentiation, is subordinated to unifying color. By working from part to part with patches of color, the artist could avoid the sense of a preconceived compositional hierarchy and would seem to respond only to immediate “sensation.” His compositions would seem to materialize only as he submitted his vision to a relatively passive observation, and the order of his picture would be that of lived experience rather than learned convention. Defined by juxtapositions of color rather than by line or chiaroscuro, Cézanne’s technique of originality — like Monet’s — develops in opposition to the accepted notion of a controlled artistic procedure. Indeed, when the artist-critics R. P. Rivière and J. F. Schnorb observed and questioned Cézanne in 1905, they noted that the master worked from part to part on his canvases, allowing one form to define the adjacent one, as if the end of this free process could not be foreseen. Moreover, they discovered that Cézanne was aware of the distortion and fragmentary nature of his images; yet he would make no corrections, being unwilling even to cover awkward bare patches of canvas. He seemed obsessed by a concern for “sincerity” (Rivière/Schnorb’s term) to the point of accepting absolutely the results of his own immediate pictorial expression (Rivière and Schnerb 1907:813–816).

Cézanne’s paintings, whether or not they are finished in terms of covering the whole canvas, frequently seem incomplete; their images reach the edges of the canvas indecisively and they often lack a central focus. This is a factor of painting many parts (sometimes simply many strokes) with equal attention and intensity and denying them any differentiating hierarchy. Paysage d’hiver, or Winter Landscape (Figure 11), probably painted in the late 1880s, is an unfinished work in which none of the observed individual elements (farmhouse, trees, foreground field) seems complete; the image appears to have been arrested in a process in which these conceptual “wholes” would eventually have been revealed only as an interlocking configuration of parts. The composition expands by addition of areas adjacent to those already defined. Patches of blue sky, for example, are
rendered primarily where they border the trees or farmhouse. And although his total image remains incomplete, the artist seems already to concentrate on adjustments among the details, rearranging the pattern of contrasting hues (primarily greens and brownish oranges) in the foreground field. Cézanne’s dual concern for detail and for the unifying pattern of color over the whole picture surface — the two interrelated aspects of his single technique of originality — becomes evident in his paintings of L’Estaque, dated in the mid-1880s. *Estaque and the Gulf of Marseille* (Tyson Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art, c. 1883–1885) (Figure 12) and *The Gulf of Marseille Seen from L’Estaque* (Metropolitan Museum, c. 1883–1885) (Figure 13) are typical of the series of studies made or at least initiated at this site. The vantage point of the Philadelphia version is more distant from the town of L’Estaque than that of the New York version, and the Philadelphia painting remains in a decidedly sketch-like state; but neither version presents an arrangement of the town, bay, and distant mountains that orders these elements into a traditional compositional hierarchy. In both paintings, evidence of the artist’s close attention to peculiarities of the site — contour lines of rock against the sky or bay, architectural elements such as chimneys, or the twisting tree branches in the Philadelphia version — serves to indicate “submission” to nature, not the manipulation of form that an academic might seek as a sign of the studied expression of an artistic ideal. Cézanne does have a definite manner of execution; he chooses his colors carefully and develops patterns of contrasting warm and cool hues to suggest the powerful vibration of a uniform illumination. But all this is done with the artist’s assuming, even feigning, the role of the naive finder, avoiding any compositional effects that might be recognized as artifice.

Cézanne began the Philadelphia version of L’Estaque by sketching a few pencil lines to indicate the placement of some of the most important divisions in the natural site, the meeting of land and sea, for example. These lines are very tentative, like those of many of his sketchbook drawings; the formal distinctions they suggest remain subject to continual adjustment. The artist subsequently applied his paint quite fluidly, leaving the directional quality of his strokes apparent. These individual strokes are relatively uni-
The Technique of Originality

Figure 13  Paul Cézanne.  

form in size, suggesting a uniformity of interest or of detail in the visual field. The scale of the rendered architectural structures naturalistically corresponds to their distance within the implied space of the motif, but this spatial differentiation seems contradicted by the lack of variation both in the brushstrokes that form these identifiable objects and in the intensity of their coloration. The individual architectural elements, then, like the patches of foliage, merge into a general pattern of color characterized by a relatively even distribution of dark and light, and warm and cool contrasts. Accordingly, reddish and yellowish architectural elements become part of a set of warm tones that includes areas of exposed earth or rock and is opposed to the patches of cool vegetation ("modeled" with yellow-green, pale green, deep green, and blue-green). The color of the distant mountains is likewise much more defined by contrasts of hue than of value; here the "modeling" ranges from blue-green, blue, and violet to tones of red-violet and touches of red. The color contrasts in the bay and distant mountains are somewhat subdued, but these areas, like the immediate foreground, are the least heavily painted, the least attended to, and perhaps, in Cézanne’s terms, the least experienced or felt.

The New York version of L’Estaque appears quite finished by comparison with many works of similar date. Unlike Corot’s *View of Genoa* or even his *Ville d'Avray, Cézanne’s L’Estaque* seems a motif seized from nature with genuine immediacy rather than an arrangement of nature chosen in advance for the canvas; the architecture of the town is disrupted by the edges of the canvas itself, as if the composition had been generated part by part, its final extent not foreseen. The illumination is strikingly uniform. The artist confines variations in chiaroscuro to local areas such as patches of foliage and especially the geometric volumes of architectural elements; here we would expect even a direct “spontaneous” rendering of nature to record strong shifts in light and shadow on the fine scale of architectural detail.

The colors of the more distant parts of the town do not diminish in intensity, nor is there significant variation in the illumination on the bay from the near shore to the far. The entire landscape area of foreground and middle-ground becomes unified in the repetition of warm ochres and oranges which contrast with cool greens and some accents of blue; similarly, the bay...
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displays a regular pattern of blue and blue-green, with some touches of blue tending toward blue-violet. In this painting, Cézanne confined the remaining compositional area, the sky, to minor variations of a single hue (blue-green), but in other paintings, especially later ones, he often created a scintillating pattern of juxtaposed hues even in nominally "clear blue" skies. For example, in his Mont Sainte-Victoire of c. 1885 (Metropolitan Museum) (Figure 14), tones of pale blue-green vibrate among pale blues to suggest a brilliant luminosity.

In the View of the Domaine Saint-Joseph (Metropolitan Museum) (Figure 15), a painting that might date anywhere from the late 1880s to the late 1890s, Cézanne’s predominantly pale-blue sky contains additions of both pale blue-green and pale violet. This extended chromatic range, an exaggeration of hue where perhaps academic convention might have suggested an exaggeration of value, characterizes the entire rendering of this very simple motif. The painting as a whole exhibits a full spectral range, with the warmer hues distributed as accents set against the dominant cooler blues and greens. The foliage and background hills consist of patches of blue, blue-green, green, yellow-green, yellow-ochre, orange, red, red-violet, and violet — the list approximates a verbal rendering of a color circle. The architecture at the center of the motif is the only interruption to this pattern. Details of the estate buildings are accented in strong blue, red, red-violet, and green, all set against the basic yellows and pale oranges of the architectural planes. Over the entire image, Cézanne maintains such uniformity of light and intensity of color that compositional differentiation and the attendant sense of artistic deliberation either pass unnoticed or indeed are not communicated by such a painting at all.¹⁵

Like the Domaine Saint-Joseph, Cézanne’s Pines and Rocks (Museum of Modern Art, New York) (Figure 16), which dates c. 1896–1900, is another example of an image developed in terms of contrasts of hue that are distributed nearly uniformly. In the area of “foliage” in the foreground of this landscape, patches of yellow-green, red-orange, and blue-violet create a vibrating field of luminosity. In the rocks above this area, the artist placed patches of dull green and ochre among the prevalent blues, violets,
and red-violets, and in the upper part of the canvas, he added red-orange, ochre, and violet to the blues and greens of the sky and foliage. The red-orange of the tree trunks distributes still more warm color throughout this area of the image, so that the cooler colors do not become decidedly dominant. Reciprocally, the linear integrity of these warmly colored trunks and branches becomes attenuated by additions of contrasting cool color painted over the base of warm tones. In general, the sense of an equal distribution of warm and cool colors is preserved in nearly every area of Pines and Rocks. Like the Domaine Saint-Joseph and so many other works by Cézanne, it lacks the clearly established spatial hierarchy conventionally determined by extended passages from dark to light or warm to cool.

The most thorough and reliable eyewitness accounts of Cézanne's mature technical procedure — those of Bernard (1904, 1907), Denis (1920b), and Rivière and Schnerb (1907) — concur in stating the importance of the artist's use of contrasts of warm and cool colors and his subordination of both line and chiaroscuro values to effects of hue. Cézanne, then, clearly inverted the conventional hierarchy of procedure established in academic practice: rather than working from line to chiaroscuro (value) to color (hue), he conceived his paintings in terms of relationships of color from the very start; his working process depended on the manipulation of color, the element traditionally believed to be least subject to rational control, the element of spontaneous expressive power (Paillot de Montabert 1855:119–120). According to Bernard (and Rivière and Schnerb), Cézanne believed that "there is no line, there is no [chiaroscuro] modeling, there are only contrasts. These contrasts are not given by black and white, but by the sensation of color." For Cézanne, nature was perceived immediately as contrasts of color; from these relationships of hue, any pictorial order of shape or modeling would follow, as if automatically (Bernard 1904:23–24). Denis cited Bernard on this point, and amplified it: "In [Cézanne's] truly concrete perception of objects, form is not separated from color; the one regulates the other, they are indissolubly united. And moreover, in the execution, he wants to realize them
as he sees them, by the same stroke of the brush.” According to Denis, Cézanne’s technique depends upon his substitution of “contrasts of hues for contrasts of values… his system excludes certainly the relationships of values in the academic [scolaire] sense of this word, that is to say, in the sense of aerial perspective.” Cézanne, then, eliminates the conventional spatial differentiation that might result from a progressive gradation of chiaroscuro, and favors instead a unifying pattern of brilliant hues. Denis observes that, even in the background areas, Cézanne’s canvases reveal the scintillating pattern of contrasting colors: “The entire canvas is a tapestry where each color plays separately and yet mingle its sonority in the ensemble. The characteristic aspect of Cézanne’s painting derives from this juxtaposition, from this mosaic of separate tones gently merging one into the other.” As a result of this technique, “the perspective planes disappear, [as do the chiaroscuro] values (in the sense of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts)” (Denis 1920b:257–259). This was all for the good, since Denis had considered conventional chiaroscuro an “artifice of composition” (1920a:214).

In sum, Cézanne’s technique of originality was characterized primarily by a unifying and repetitious pattern of contrasting warm and cool colors which seemed to suppress, supplant, or simply supercede a differentiating chiaroscuro. Cézanne’s use of color appeared naively expressive, spontaneous. But it also could be seen as signifying the natural and spontaneous. Although it was a technique suited to an art of immediacy and passive discovery, it might be regarded either as innocently found or as wilfully made. Cézanne’s most important critics had great difficulty in deciding upon this matter.  

Cézanne: “Found” or “Made”?  

Is Cézanne’s art “found” or “made”—independently original or dependent on some form of conventionalized technique? My own answer would simply be that Cézanne was not naive, that he did not have an “innocent eye”; like other artists, he manipulated technique to assert his own values and ideals. But his critics, who shared many of these same ideals, could not easily admit to the use of a self-conscious technique of originality in the art of their mythic hero. Instead, they made of Cézanne a new “classic” who represented nature in its originality, naively, even primitives. Furthermore, they compared Cézanne to an earlier French “classic,” Poussin; Cézanne became the “Poussin of impressionism” (Denis 1920b:260).

We recall that Poussin himself had been regarded as radically original, as one who had copied his sources directly without the mediation of academic convention and interpretation. As if to dispel any doubt as to the meaning of the Cézanne/Poussin relationship, a particular remark (supposedly emanating from Cézanne) was repeated frequently in the critical literature: it was said that Cézanne wished “to bring Poussin back to life by way of (according to) nature” (Camoin 1905). In French, the phrase was “vivifier Poussin sur nature”; an alternative translation might be “to bring Poussin back to life on the model of nature” or (in other words) by following nature, perhaps even “copying” nature. Nature—or one’s experience of it—becomes the preferred model: not art, not Poussin, nor any other artist. The ideal of independence and originality that had been associated with Poussin was said to live again in Cézanne’s direct experience of nature.

This notion appealed to many of Cézanne’s admirers, including Roger Fry, who, like Ruskin, had some difficulty in coordinating a theory of the “innocent eye” with his own practical knowledge of the painter’s craft. Fry ascribed an innocence of vision to Monet and impressionist painting in general. In 1909, he wrote that Monet was an artist of “really naive innocence and sincerity” who had an “astonishing power of faithfully reproducing certain aspects of nature” (1956a:25). Yet Fry stressed the logical analysis of the technical elements of expression in his criticism (ibid.:31). He was therefore attracted to Cézanne, in whom he thought he could discern a “post-impressionism,” a new movement toward the “classic” that would combine spontaneous expression with technical control.
Classic art . . . communicates a new and otherwise unattainable experience. [Fry 1956b:242]

I call a work “classic” if it depends on its formal organization to evoke emotion. [Fry 1924:152]

Cézanne counts pre-eminently as a great classic master. [Fry 1958:87]

The persuasive power of Cézanne’s own technique of originality is indicated by Fry’s failure to resolve the question of whether or not this painter had entirely mastered his medium—was Cézanne ultimately a maker or a finder, knowledgeable or naive? In 1910, Fry commented that “his work has that baffling mysterious quality of the greatest originators in art. It has that supreme spontaneity as though he had almost made himself the passive, half-conscious instrument of some directing power” (1910:402). Fry seems to suggest here that Cézanne may have “made” himself naive by a deliberate act; the critic, in his own knowledgeable manner, conceives of the possibility of controlling originality. He is near to admitting the possibility of the mediated representation of a desired originality. But Fry had enough respect for the myth of the innocent artist to admire Cézanne for his lack of a fully controlled technique. In his definitive study of 1927, he spoke of the artist’s “unconscious” impulses:

It is probable that Cézanne himself was ignorant of [the] deformations [in his rendering of still-life forms in perspective]. I doubt if he deliberately calculated them; they came almost as an unconscious response to a need for the most evident formal harmony. [Fry 1958:48–49]

Still, Fry could go on to speak of Cézanne as “interpreting” his vision with an “acquired science” and with a color that had “become increasingly systematic” (ibid.:76). Fry’s attention oscillates between the made and the found aspects of Cézanne’s art.

Ultimately, this modern “classic” art seems to approach an innocent “copying”:

[The achievement of Cézanne’s mature style] lies not by way of willed and a priori invention, but through the acceptance and final assimilation of appearance. [ibid.:77]

What Fry here calls “appearance” is not identified with the ordinary effects of nature but with a transforming vision peculiar to the artist. It is a vision to which the artist must submit himself; the viewer becomes convinced that the paintings “copy” Cézanne’s sensations with immediacy and sincerity. Such “copying,” like that which Zola once attributed to Manet, belongs to an art that finds its originality in the immediate experience of self and nature. To probe this “naive” art of self-expression, however, one must see it as a technical product of the desire for originality. This art advocates originality just as its sympathetic critics do. Even when “original,” copies are not found in an “innocent” vision; they are made.
Notes

1 My discussion of the innocent eye does not include what may be a third aspect of the theory: the broad philosophical discourse (as in Kant and Schopenhauer) regarding the value of "pure" aesthetic perception, a revelatory vision detached from specific material interest and purpose.

2 In France, Charles Baudelaire may be regarded as advocating an innocent childlike vision: "Le génie n'est que l'enfance retrouvée à volonté" [Genius is only childhood recovered at will]. But Baudelaire added immediately that this would be an "adult" childhood, endowed with a power of reason to organize the material facts of innocent vision. The artist's eye would be both compromised and fortified by the intellect (1971:114).

3 For an example of the confusion of "real" appearances with depicted appearances — a confusion that Gombrich always avoids — within the discussion of impressionist aims and methods, cf. Venturi 1941:38-39.

4 The definition of proper models was central to the conflict between romantics and classicists during the 1820s and 1830s and still earlier, around 1800-1810, to the conflict between those who advocated imitation of live models and those who advocated imitation of antique statuary.

5 Similarly, Raphael himself was subject to revision and was discussed as a "naive painter" by many of the same critics who regarded Poussin in this manner.

6 Cf. The advice of Valenciennes (1800:425) to the effect that a landscape composition should not have a "monotonous regularity" nor lack of "contrast on its different planes"; the artist should seek "a site which presents him continually with inequality, that is, correspondences and contrasts." Valenciennes suggests as a suitable landscape element a tree bearing both dead and healthy, foliated branches.


8 This reasoning is similar to that which Baudelaire applied in his defense of Manet's Incient in the Bull Ring in 1864. It was generally recognized that this painting was "original," that is, that its technique appeared so unconventional that it might be judged naive or even incompetent. Baudelaire could turn this observation to his advantage. But to assert Manet's original genius he had to deny a further observation, namely, that Manet's imagery seemed to derive from other artists, Velazquez and Goya (Shift 1981:65-66).

9 Monet seems to display color, too, "as he sees it" in nature — and, furthermore, as he finds it in his painter's tubes. He inserts the three primaries into his composition (Figure 7) in an unattenuated state: one of the central rowboats is pure blue; a rowboat at left is trim of brilliant yellow; the figure at the extreme left wears blue and red; and a stroke of red is located beneath the female figure at center. These colors call attention to the natural, or immediate, state of Monet's art. The same device of exhibiting the three primary colors is seen in another painting of 1867, Monet's The Cradle — Camille with the Artist's Son Jean (in the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, Upperville, Va.).

10 Many of Cézanne's works of the 1870s — many still-lifes, for example — appear more dependent on a linear framework than does Auvers; this, however, is primarily a factor of the nature of the motif itself and not an indication that the artist considered one manner more successful than another. Coloristically and compositionally, both types of painting, with strong outlining and without, reveal the "technique of originality."

11 The colors are set against a gray ground; Cézanne painted on gray grounds very often, especially during the 1870s and 1880s. The use of the middle-value gray ground, a unifying device, was common among the impressionists and others.

12 "Awkward," hence naive or original. Awkwardness was commonly associated with artistic sincerity by both impressionists and symbolists. See, for example, Rivière and Schnerb 1907:813.

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The work of a few early French and British photographers in the Holy Land and the Near East is a famous chapter in the history of photography. The region was part of the European historical consciousness. Biblical scenes were a perennial feature in the arts. Timeless landscapes and medieval monuments lit by the Eastern sun suited early photographic technologies as well as the period’s romantic and “Orientalist” attitudes. As a natural consequence, the Holy Land became one of the prominent subjects in early photography.

The first photographer had already arrived in Jerusalem by December 11, 1839, only four months after the dramatic publication of the invention of photography by Daguerre. And yet, the following two decades did not produce any portraits of local persons. Engraved reproductions of daguerreotypes printed in France and Great Britain included small drawn-in imaginary “enlivening” figures. These did not depict the local population; they merely indicated its presence in the scenery and its scale. George Bridges, an English clergyman, photographed at least twice in 1849 a figure that appears on his calotypes: both persons were dressed in European clothes and one of them was possibly Bridges himself. Nothing comparable to the millions of daguerreotype portraits produced all over the world in the 1840s and 1850s appeared in the Holy Land. The famous albums of calotypes produced in Jerusalem in the 1850s showed it as a ghost city. True, Jewish and Moslem traditions opposed the making of images. But this was only part of the story.¹

The first known picture with human figures was a “wet-plate” photograph signed Roberton and Beato, taken most probably in 1857. A single such picture, among two dozen included in their magnificent album, Jerusalem, published in 1865, showed a group of Jews praying at the Wailing Wall. It is a dignified beginning, not a breakthrough. The figures are medium-small silhouettes, part of the subject, not the subject itself. In the spring of 1858, Francis Frith captured on one of his many wet-plates from Palestine another group of local inhabitants, at a similar distance from the camera. Rarely published, the photograph shows a ruin of an ancient arch near Ramleh, a town on the way from Jaffa to Jerusalem. In the shadow under the arch, a dark tent is pitched. The wet process necessitated the close proximity of the camera to the darkroom, and the tent most likely served this purpose. (“Because of the heat,” Frith wrote, “I used to develop my plates in ancient tombs. . . .”) The figures in local dress are, most likely, Frith’s own staff. Beato’s and Frith’s cameras were not suited to capturing unstaged scenes.

But technical problems also represented only a part of the story.² A year later, an American traveler from Petersburg, Virginia, Dr. William Mason Turner, had his own likeness taken in the Garden of Gethsemane in Jerusalem by Deniss, a local photographer of Russian-Protestant origin. Such “touristic-pilgrim” portrait photography has been part of the local scene ever since. Peter Bergheim, another local photographer, a converted Jew, had such a portrait published in 1865, in the Ordinance Survey of Jerusalem, a well-known photographic album produced by the British

Yeshayahu Nir is a Senior Lecturer at the Hebrew University. He is also Consultant on the History of Photography in the Near East, Semitic Museum, Harvard University, and in 1981 was Visiting Professor, Department of Cinema Studies, New York University. Dr. Nir plays an active role in Israeli film and television policy-making and is a leading scholar and critic in these fields.

Figure 1  H. Phillips, “Group of Polish Jews, Jerusalem,” 1867. Albumen print.
Royal Engineers. It shows two women at the Wailing Wall, one most likely a local woman, her face completely veiled, the other facing the photographer in the characteristic pose of a tourist visiting a monument. Even at this place, no interdiction to photographs seems to have existed. The publishers of the album, uninterested in people, entitled the photograph "Detail of Masonry at the Wailing Wall." In the 1860s, the studio at the Armenian convent took primacy in the trade. As a matter of fact, portrait photographs were produced in the Holy Land from the 1860s onward but only in the 1880s found some distribution. Extant portraits from this period are rare; written evidence of them is almost nonexistent. I therefore considered these photographs and those of later decades as primary evidence of their own mode of production and their own history.

H. Phillips (1866–1867)

It was nearly three decades after the invention of photography before the first series of "ethnographic" portraits of the Holy Land's inhabitants reached Europe. The first photographer to produce such pictures was Sergeant H. Phillips, Royal Engineers, of the Palestine Exploration Fund (P.E.F.) expedition, in 1867.\(^3\) The P.E.F. had designated "manners and customs" as an area for a future survey. Phillips made a modest start in this direction, although his superiors did not request such pictures at the time. His assignment related to sites in the investigated areas; he produced altogether 366 pictures. His twenty-seven "ethnographic" pictures showed, in descending order of numbers, Samaritans in Nablus; Armenian priests in Jerusalem; Arab village women in Jerusalem; Polish Jews (Figure 1); Russian pilgrims; and Ta'amirah Bedouins. There were a few single pictures related to the daily life: of a village, irrigation equipment, an "Arab Kawass" (consular clerk), women grinding corn, a threshing floor, a Bedouin camp. This was a remarkable achievement, the first of its kind. Significantly, it was made by a photographer attached to a scientific expedition, possibly in his spare time. As a survey, however, Phillips's work was even more limited in scope than in quantity, and it was biased toward minorities. His choice and selection are of particular interest.

First, more than half of these pictures portrayed two of the smallest communities in the Holy Land, the Nablus Samaritans (Figure 2) and the Armenians in Jerusalem. The Samaritans of Nablus were an old indigenous sect less than two hundred in number. They obeyed the Pentateuch, rejecting the later Scriptures. Nablus is located on the route from Jerusalem to Nazareth frequently used by pilgrims. Francis Bedford, in 1862, and many later photographers took pictures of their Bible, a very ancient scroll. The Samaritans were literate and worked as clerks and scribes in Nablus. Their particular culture and status explain why traveling photographers found them both interesting and accessible: isolated among Moslems, they welcomed contacts with foreigners who were interested in their faith, and were far more open to them than the other townspeople, fiercely religious Moslems. Phillips took one photograph of Samaritans at prayer, and arranged the others as a group or a family in Europe might pose; he also took a photograph of the head of the community with the head of the exploration party.

The Armenian quarter is located on the way from the Jaffa Gate, the main entrance to Jerusalem for travelers coming from Jaffa Harbor to the Temple.
Mount. This latter site was the main subject of the P.E.F. excavations, to which Phillips was assigned. The Armenians were a tiny and respected enclave of some 400 Christians, and as such were easily accessible to Europeans. Involved as they already were at that time in photography, the Armenians must have welcomed Phillips, who took their portraits indoors, with his models, Armenian priests, in seated poses. The photographs of Armenians and Samaritans show no ethnographic element other than dress.

Second, only about one-third of the portraits show any of the more than 300,000 Arabs, the overwhelming majority of the population. These do not show the results of a systematic survey of Arab society and its "manners and customs" (the title of the section in the P.E.F. catalog) either. Photographs of villagers were mostly taken in Jerusalem. The Ta'amirah Bedouin were partly urbanized and worked in the tourist trade. Phillips's Arabs at least partly belonged to the segments of the population most exposed to Western travelers' "manners and customs." More accessible to photographers, they were less typical of peasants in the hill country, Bedouins in the desert, and the majority of the Moslem townspeople. Phillips's photographs of Arabs represent a beginning but in no sense a representative sample.

Two of Phillips's photographs show Jews, and the seven "models" in each picture are the same people; they merely changed their position, adding an overcoat and fur caps. A numbered hanger on the wall, in the background, indicates that the place where the photograph was taken was not the environment proper to the models but belonged to a European institution—perhaps the P.E.F. exploration party's lodgings. I would not discard even the possibility that Phillips's Jewish models were photographed at the premises of the London Jews Society, a missionary establishment and hospital founded by the Church of England and oriented toward the Jewish population, located between Jaffa Gate and the Armenian quarter. The use of the same setting and subjects twice perhaps illustrates the limited access to sitters. In Jerusalem, the biggest town, the majority of the population was Jewish, about 11,000 out of 19,000 in 1860. To make wider Jewish contacts as well as wider Moslem and Christian contacts—4,000 Jerusalemites were Christians—Phillips would have needed, perhaps, more time and interest than he had. In conclusion, the common denominator of all Phillips's subjects appears to have been not representativeness but ease of access.

Phillips stayed in the country for a longer time than any of his predecessors and worked for an expedition that employed local manpower. Phillips was in this respect the most advantaged of his Victorian contemporaries. However, he did not and possibly could not show a cross-section of the majority of the local population and reflect authentically its "manners and customs." The relationship with local people that he and his party had was deeper than that of other foreign photographers and of longer duration, but it was limited to groups ethnically and socially marginal to the bulk of the local population. Phillips's primacy also points to the importance of the photographers' market. Traveling commercial photographers who worked in publishing apparently viewed their equipment, their profession, their publishers' needs, and the public taste as related only to landscape photography; the P.E.F. catered to a noncommercial, highly interested audience. The buyers of Phillips's photographs were the subscribers to the Exploration Fund. Photographs were distributed by the Fund's organizational network in portfolios and loose pictures. The relationship between the P.E.F. party and the very specific groups of local inhabitants, on the one hand, and between the P.E.F. and its supporters, on the other hand, was an exception both in Palestine and in England. Of all wet-plate photographers, only Phillips had the advantage of both.

The caption "Two Women Grinding Corn," for one of Phillips's photographs of Arabs, was followed in the P.E.F. catalogue printed in the 1890s by an interesting text in small letters: "Illustrating the prophecy: 'Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, the other left.' The corn is still ground in the manner shown, as in former days." The photograph was not included in the published portfolios; if the text was written by Phillips or his superiors in 1867, it has to be considered an interesting precedent, an interpretation that became current in photography of later decades.
Frank Mason Good (1867, 1874)

Englishman F. M. Good was the last traveling landscape photographer of the wet-plate period to visit the country. The first definite information about his own work in the Holy Land is an article published in London in 1868, praising his stereoscopic pictures from the Holy Land. He was thus Phillips's contemporary and counterpart in the commercial field. Unfortunately, these pictures or their listings have not survived. In 1875 Good's portfolio of new photographs from the Holy Land (photomechanically reproduced by the "woodburytype" process) was reviewed in London. Good still preferred the wet-plate process, although the new "dry-gelatin" process was already known and used. Good made some portraits but the reviewer did not mention them. For him, apparently, Holy Land photography was still synonymous with landscape. Representing a novelty in the commercial field, Good's portraits are technically superior but formally not different from Phillips's. His "Group of Native Women" (Figure 3) is a portrait of three sitting persons, taken from close range, in their natural environment. A drawing made after this photograph, entitled "Christian Oil Sellers," was published by Dr. Lortet in his luxurious travel account of 1884 entitled Syria Today. (Palestine had no political or traditional geographic identity and Holy Land photographs were often entitled "Syria.") The drawing was often reprinted in the 1890s. Another Good photograph shows "Pilgrims Bathing in the Jordan Near Jericho," with the figures distant and small. This is a scene of a ritual in a holy place and recalls Beato's photograph of the Wailing Wall; obviously, the former is not a photograph of local people.

Local people are portrayed in a new manner in another two of Good's pictures. One, taken near Nablus, shows Arab men sitting at "Jacob's Well," revered as the place where Christ talked with the Samaritan woman. Water jugs are arranged next to the well. Normally, women (or children) carried jugs to and from wells; men are almost never seen near wells in later photographs. They may well have been Good's own staff or, not less likely, guardians and guides at this place, a frequent subject of photographs in later decades. Frith's photograph is a precedent, but here people were arranged by the photographer at a holy place and stared at him.

A real novelty was a photograph of "Fishing Boat on the Lake of Gehezareth." People stand in their boat, busy with some chore, posing as if in action. Although too far away for faces or details of dress to be recognized, they are close enough to let us understand that they stood still for the sake of the photograph. The novelty is the strong biblical echo of the picture. We are here in the region linked to the story of Jesus Christ's life. In Good's and his buyers' eyes, the fishermen were not a mere ethno-graphic subject. Good's picture is, like Beato's praying Jews, both from life and a metaphor rich in biblical connotations. The meaning of Good's scene, however, is different. Beato's subjects mourned after the glorious past; Good's fishermen represented it in their daily work. Photographers who followed Good would share this approach and further develop this type of photography. It became a genre.

Good's approach to people was consistent with his approach to landscape. Photographs of mountains, fields, trees, and villages abound in his work. Monumental architectural views and the topography of towns, subjects preferred by his predecessors, were to him secondary. Good's photography may have been inspired by personal sensitivity or religious orientation to the natural landscape and the people who were part of it. Good may also have seen that his predecessors had saturated the market with views of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Dome of the Rock, the city gates, and so on, and had the wisdom to offer additional views — as well as portraits — which earlier had seemed marginal or less attractive. Allusions to the biblical inhabitants and customs allegedly represented by present-day inhabitants did no harm to sales.

Early wet-plate photographers and their clients seem to have resented having photographs of beautiful and impressive sites connoting the past "married" by the inclusion of Turkish soldiers and wretched-looking Hassidic Jews. That the most beautiful buildings on the Temple Mount represented postbiblical Moslem architecture, that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was of Byzantine origin and in the opinion of many nineteenth-century travelers and photographers of doubtful authenticity, did not lead in their eyes to denigration of the biblical images associated with the location. Ancient monuments spoke for ancient glory: that was the motto. Portraits of the present population could not but destroy this discourse. If nineteenth-century inhabitants were prominent in photographs of monuments, they would cause a transfer of connotation from the past to the present. Good added a new dimension, representing the landscape as seen through the eyes of the biblical figures. He mythologized the portrayed inhabitants and transformed them into representatives of the past. He saw both landscape and people historically, as related to the Bible. The approach was not new; theological and literary precedents are numerous. Good was the first to use it in his portfolio of photographs.

Neither Good nor any of the later photographers depicted Palestinian Jews in scenes representing David's and Solomon's kingdom. This role was reserved for Arab inhabitants. That many of Good's human subjects were, as in Phillips's series, Christians and tourist-trade people is another story. So is the fact that the Galilean [Gehezarethian] fishermen did not share his biblical vision of themselves.
Felix Bonfils (1867–1884)

While Good was redefining Bible life and landscape, Felix Bonfils, a French photographer who settled in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1867, became the chief supplier of photographs for pilgrims and travelers, as well as for writers and publishers who bought from his stock. From the 1870s to the end of the century, Bonfils’ studio produced landscapes, Bible scenes, and portraits of all kinds (Figures 4–14). On the level of technology, his work represented a bridge spanning the transition from wet-plate to dry-plate negatives and from single-album prints to mass-produced reproductions in books, magazines, and newspapers. By the time he published his catalogue in 1876 and his albums Souvenirs d’Orient (1877–1878), Bonfils’ image of the Holy Land was the image that became known in the Occident.8 Lortet’s Syria Today (1884) was illustrated by dozens of drawings made, among others, after Bonfils’ photographs. In the 1890s, when books became illustrated by photographs reproduced by the half-tone process, the Bonfils image dominated the market. It reflected the image this Frenchman had of the region as well as the image he had of his clients. These were as far from each other as could be imagined.

Bonfils’ photography of local inhabitants was manufactured in three categories: studio portraits of individuals and groups, staged outdoor “scenes,” and straight “documentary” pictures, arranged for exposure. Technically, there was a fourth category: montages composed from several negatives. A fifth category, Good’s biblical scenes, was more developed by others in the 1890s. Bonfils’ company made at least two contributions, with “Lazarus’ Tomb” and “Ruth and Boaz” (see Figure 7). These were outdoor photographs, as were Good’s and all other “biblical” scenes. The Eastern landscape was their only ingredient of authenticity. “Lazarus’ Tomb” is a place traditionally linked to the story of Christ’s activities in Bethany, near Jerusalem. There are two versions of this photograph. In both, one figure stands within the tomb and might be interpreted as “playing the role” of the biblical figure. The figures that surround the entrance might be the custodial guardians. This is one of the rare photographs in which figures of inhabitants represent New Testament characters. Almost all “biblical” photographs relate Old Testament stories and figures, as does “Ruth and Boaz.” This photograph literally represents the scene, “models” personifying specific characters, Ruth, the poor girl, wearing a poor robe, women in the background wearing the better Bethlehem dress (used in Bonfils’ studio portrait “Bethlehem Woman”; see Figure 9). The rich landowner, Boaz, speaks to Ruth. The setting is neutral and the picture might have been staged near Beirut or elsewhere in the region. More than an allegory, this is a tableau vivant, exceptional to the Bonfils style.

Bonfils’ original contribution to Holy Land photography was his studio portraits, entitled, in the 1876 catalogue published by Bonfils himself, “Costume Views.” The least characteristic of real life, they were also the most successful. Many of them were technically superior to most outdoor portraits. Often used, and misused, they were attractive, lively, and “Westernized.” “A Jew from Beyrouth” was one of the earliest published reproductions engraved after a Bonfils studio portrait. Printed in Lortet’s book, it showed a squatting Jew holding an implement for carding cotton. A head of the same person, now captioned “Polish Jew” (see Figure 4a) appeared as an engraving in a London magazine in 1885, on a plate of “Types of Palestine.” A year later, the same magazine published an engraving of the same figure holding the tool as “A Jew of Algiers” (see Figure 4b). A Swiss album of photographs carried it, reprinted by “typotie,” an early photomechanical printing process, in 1887, with the caption, “A Jew of Jerusalem” (see Figure 5). A half-tone reproduction — using the modern and cheap process — of the same person, without the carder and also called “A Jew of Jerusalem,” was published in a Viennese book in 1892. No book credited the photographer.

Beirut, Algiers, Jerusalem? A cotton carder or a Bonfils model? The tool was indeed in use in Jerusalem — there is a Bonfils outdoor photograph showing it — but also in the entire Eastern Mediterranean region (see Figure 6). The fur cap and the black coat are authentically and unmistakably Eastern European Jewish. The striped robe beneath the coat was worn in Jerusalem; coat, robe, and cap appear in Phillips’ 1867 photograph of Jews in Jerusalem. Beard and sidelocks look authentically Jewish. The portrait itself is of professional quality and pose: the figure displays the tool (which looks like and recently was described to be a musical instrument) and is isolated from its real environment by a neutral gray studio background. Who the model was remains an enigma. The numerous and contradictory captions — due to error or to purposeful misuse — are no less typical of the period and of the use of Bonfils’ photographs than his photographic style and especially his studio “costume” portraits.

More often than not, Bonfils’ figures were overloaded with parts of costumes and decorations. A real “Young Woman from Nablus” (see Figure 11), this fiercely religious town in the hill country, would only very exceptionally, if at all, have decorated her headcovering with flowers, with jewels usually worn as pendants, and have painted her fingernails as she appears in a Bonfils photograph. Lortet’s book of 1884 includes a very similar drawing of a head, entitled “Lady from Beyrouth.” It is more than likely that
the drawing was made after this or after another very similar photograph. The lady depicted could have been one of the Beirut “models” or a tourist who assembled her costume and head decorations from Bonfils’ wardrobe. To be sure, there is some ethnographic truth in Bonfils’ “Costume Views,” but there is not all of the truth, and there is usually more than the truth. Sometimes the costume is typical and the wearing is not. Charming little locks that make the face of a “Turkish Woman” (see Figure 8) more coquettish quite transcend the Moslem rule that the head covering has to cover the hair. In a genre scene of a group of Bedouin women, faces unveiled (as usual in rural regions, in opposition to towns), clapping hands to accompany a musician, one young woman displays her breast. Even though there is a baby in her arms, the display is ostentatiously for the viewer. Bonfils has other similar portraits with and without babies. A naked breast does not transcend the local code of behavior. But together with other elements, the staged pose with the studio backdrop negates authenticity and represents one of Bonfils’ many little voyeuristic sins—local color being only a pretext in an exploitative mode of photography.

Bonfils’ Jewish female subjects are young, his Jewish male models old. So are, less exclusively, his Arab models. Dragomans and kawasses (guides and consular guardians) are often young.

Bonfils used neutral gray or romantic painted European backdrops. “Bethlehem Woman” and other models allegedly from this country were photographed against a background of birches, trees unknown in the region; the “Nablus Woman” and the “Bethlehem Bead Sellers” (see Figure 10) appeared with the same “salon” of decidedly European design behind their backs. Sometimes Bonfils treated the negative to disguise the familiar backdrops; elsewhere he modified the position of the props, most often of the papier-mâché stones and of plants. All these ingredients were arranged to make the “native” models both attractive and acceptable to the Western buyer. To do this, Bonfils simply applied the conven-
Phillips, Good, Bonfils, and the Human Image in Early Holy Land Photography

Figure 5 “A Jew of Jerusalem.” Phototype reproduction. Original studio portrait by Bonfils, taken between 1876 and 1884. Published in La Palestine Illustrée, Lausanne, 1888.

Figure 5 “A Jew of Jerusalem.” Phototype reproduction. Original studio portrait by Bonfils, taken between 1876 and 1884. Published in La Palestine Illustrée, Lausanne, 1888.

tional tools of the photographic trade. It might be assumed that he wanted simply to flatter the local sitter, but the latter was most often a paid model, not the buyer. Bonfils aimed at the Western traveler and publisher or editor, not excluding photographers and writers. He offered them honorable merchandise, well made and well packaged.

In only one respect did Bonfils flout European bourgeois portrait conventions: he consistently omitted, in photographs allegedly depicting inhabitants of Palestine, the chair, table, or little column that the sitter (or stander) conventionally leaned against to rest during the exposure. I do not think this is an accident, nor is it characteristic of other studios in the region. The photographers at the Armenian convent in Jerusalem, only a few hundred yards from Bonfils' branch near Jaffa Gate, did use them in carte-de-visite portraits from the 1860s on. Bonfils himself took numerous portraits in his studio in which a rich, decorated sofa was emphatically displayed. These portraits, however, referred to more cosmopolitan cities like Beirut, which he must have equated with European cities. Figures representing Palestine were usually standing, or when seated, used invisible stools or visible papier-mâché stones. His Bethlehem woman sat on these stones as if they were a European loveseat. Some figures sat on the floor.

Only one visitor left a written record describing Bonfils’ studio models. Abbe Raboisson, the French writer and photographer who toured the region in 1882, noted in his diary: “Sunday, 23 April: I have to take a group photograph of natives in Bonfils' atelier which will allow me to acquaint our readers with the Moslem models procured for me by Madame Bonfils” (Raboisson 1887:317). No doubt this was a professional enterprise.

Also, only one written record relates to Bonfils' outdoor photographs. The Reverend Lucien Gautier, who visited Palestine with his wife in the late 1890s, supplied accidental evidence about subjects Bonfils photographed on location. Gautier recognized some of his local acquaintances from a village in Upper Galilee “in the beautiful collection of photographs of Palestine in the Bonfils house in Beirut No. 729 under the caption ‘Group of Metaouilis’ showing our people from Hounin, among them the Moukhtar with his long pipe, and at his left our friend Oakid.” Not all of Bonfils’ portraits were “adapted” merchandise.

Gautier photographed the same people in Hounin and showed them his results. As he tells us, they failed to recognize themselves: “When our relationship with the inhabitants became closer and even intimate I tried to show them photographs, including photographs of some of those present. They stared at the image and unable to unravel the similarity they resorted to what seemed to them plausible . . . that the photographs were of the ‘Sultan’ or the ‘priest.’” (Gautier 1899:333–335). These villagers had faced a camera, possibly twice (Bonfils’ and Gautier’s), but they still did not understand that it was their own images being taken.

Lortet published a Bonfils’ Metaouilis picture in his 1884 book, and he tells a story that might throw some light on Gautier’s. While visiting a bigger Metaouili township, Hanaoue, closer to the coastal towns of Tyre and Sidon, Lortet noticed that the interior of the houses was “covered by images, which is as opposed as possible to the Sunnite (Moslem) spirit. These are, first of all, the portrait of the Schah of Persia . . .” (Lortet 1884:134). Most likely, the Hounin people saw these images in Hanaoue or elsewhere and identified the concept of a picture with that of a ruler or dignitary.

Gautier’s story should not be generalized. Upper Galilee was a remote region. Nevertheless, photography was considered generally as the stranger’s affair. People gradually learned and accepted to pose for the former’s purpose and his money. But the biblical
Figure 6 Felix Bonfils. "Jewish Cotton-Carders in Jerusalem," ca. 1890. Albumen print. A very rarely published straight photograph.

Figure 7 Felix Bonfils. "Ruth and Boaz." Halftone reproduction. Published in Album de la Terre Sainte, Paris, 1896. Illustrating the biblical story of rich landowner Boaz and poor Moabite girl Ruth.

Characteristically for Bonfils' commercial flair, he did not include any of his "costume views" or outdoor scenes in his own editions of the Souvenirs d'Orient published in 1877 and 1878, although his 1876 catalogue testifies without doubt to their availability prior to the publishing of the albums. Lortet, who traveled in the region between 1875 and 1880, either purchased the photographs in Beirut or after returning home to Paris. His 1884 book is the earliest source of visual evidence to Bonfils' studio and outdoor portraits.

The popularity of Bonfils' "costume" genre with editors in the 1880s and 1890s contrasts with a lack of interest in his straight portraits made on location in fields and streets between 1873 and 1890. Some were not published at all, others infrequently. Bonfils' photographs acquired by the Harvard Semitic Museum in 1890 included photographs of this type. The collection provides, of course, evidence of their worldwide availability by that time.

Bonfils' portraits and genre scenes owe their success to two composite layers, one relating to the person viewed, the other to the viewer. Costumes, head coverings, tools, represented the region, its way of life, figures and scenes as any traveler might have seen them. Their decorative mixture provided a romantic "Oriental" tonality. The conventions of the photographer's studio conveyed acceptability, prestige,

metaphor or scene for which they were asked to stand or status-conferring European postures meant nothing to them.

For a traditionally noniconic culture and a society unexposed to technical novelties, photography was a one-sided process. "Closer and intimate" relationships as described by Gautier (who spoke Arabic) certainly helped the photographer to dissipate suspicions and create the proper atmosphere. Remuneration, small talk, politeness, and even intimidation could help, but the "Moukhtars" and the "Oakids" were only passive participants in the interaction between photographer and photographed. At the turn of the century, some travelers noted more active attitudes of "natives," who struck the anticipated poses and so reacted to a photographer's presence. Money was almost always the only and surest motif. Traveling photographers were not met with smiles and free response from the people to be photographed—this attitude was non-existent until the end of the century.
Figure 8  "Turkish Woman." Phototype reproduction. Original studio portrait attributed to Bonfils. Published in La Palestine Illustrée, Lausanne, 1888.
Figure 9  “Bethlehem Woman.” Half-tone reproduction of the most popular Bonfils studio portrait, ca. 1880. See birch trees on painted backdrop. Published in *Album de la Terre Sainte*, Paris, 1896.

Figure 10  “Bethlehem Bead Sellers.” Half-tone reproduction. Photograph by Bonfils, mounted from three negatives, merchandise paint-in. Published in *Album de la Terre Sainte*, Paris, 1896.
structure. "Costume" portraits obviously had to have some real ingredients and be realistic enough to be believed. They also had to conform to the viewer's preconceptions and stereotypes, both of the Orient and of respectable bourgeois photography. Familiar European settings and poses modified and deviated from the reality of the country but guaranteed the reception of the foreign and exotic features of the subjects. Bonfils did not work for scrupulous ethnographers nor for the anticolonialist sensibilities of a later time. He offered organization and titillation, verisimilitude and kitsch, codes of behavior and their transgression, the recognizable and the strange. To today's eyes, Bonfils' portraits refer both to subject and audience; double reference is in their very nature.

The emergence of the human image in Holy Land photography appears generally to have been influenced by two factors—the degree of access to the various parts of the population a photographer could have had, which determined the number and choice of the portrayed subjects; and the cultural biases proper to the photographer and to his audience-market, which were felt mostly in the photographic interpretation of the accessible subjects. The classical history of photography is based on the consideration of contemporary photographic technologies, on the one hand, and of artistic trends on the other, as the main factors that influenced a traveling photographer's work. Elements of social access and cultural bias were not less influential in determining the nature of his output. The role and importance of these factors in the history of photography in Israel and probably elsewhere equal those of more generally recognized technical and artistic factors.
Notes

1 Both Jewish and Moslem artistic traditions are decorative and mostly nonfigurative. Lack of tradition of portraiture and possibly also superstition contributed to the local reluctance toward photography. Moreover, given the general poverty and the technological gap, photography was considered a stranger's business; strangers, equipped with unknown instruments, were suspect. The assumption that Jewish and Moslem inhabitants of nineteenth-century Palestine refused to have their portraits taken for religious reasons cannot be substantiated by written evidence.

2 To produce large-format landscape photographs, wet-plate photographers had to use large-format cameras, as enlargement was not yet practicable. Large-format cameras necessitated long exposures, lasting sometimes for dozens of seconds. Hence, the smaller the figure in the picture, the less perceptible a blur caused by an eventual movement during exposure. Smaller cameras like the "stereoscopic" camera were available but not used; this decision points to the priority given to landscape photographs.

3 The Palestine Exploration Fund was founded in London in 1865 and conducted archeological and geographical research that culminated in the 1880s by the publication of the Survey of Western Palestine. The exploration was conducted by Royal Engineer officers, and the photographers belonged to the same army corps. Exploration of ethnography, called "manners and customs," was intended in very general terms for later periods of work but was never executed.

4 The Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews was founded in 1809 as a mission to London Jews. It operated in Jerusalem after 1829, and James Graham, its secretary, practiced photography there between 1854 and 1857. Peter Bergheim's father, Paul, was the pharmaceutical assistant since 1839. Peter was educated at the missionary school and most likely initiated there into photography. J. A. Hanauer, a missionary, was acquainted with Captain Warren, one of the heads of the P.E.F. exploration party; an amateur photographer, he published, in the late 1890s and early 1900s, many photographs of archeology.

5 Good's photographs from Palestine were reviewed in the London Photographic News of January 9, 1868, and August 20, 1875. Considered here one of the best landscape photographers in Britain, Good was later nominated a lifetime member of the Royal Photographic Society.

6 Bonfils' photographs were apparently first made known in 1871 in Paris. No portraits were mentioned. See Gavin 1978:458. Bonfils published his own catalogue in Alais, France, in 1876. This catalogue lists 32 photographs of 18/21 cm, entitled "Costumes Divers," of which three refer to Palestine. Another section, entitled "Costumes Stereoscopy," includes 98 pictures, of which 26 were allegedly taken in Palestine (Catalogue des Vues Photographiques de l'Orient, Égypte, Palestine (Terre Sainte), Syrie, Grèce et Constantinople Photographies et Editées par Bonfils Felix, Alais (Gard), 1876). The "costume" pictures were most likely produced between 1873 and 1876; a short notice published in 1873 in Paris refers to the availability in this city of Bonfils' landscapes, in numbers sensibly close to those listed in Bonfils' own catalogue (Gaultier de Claibry 1873). No portraits were mentioned there. For Bonfils' family biography see Gavin et al. 1980. In his Harvard Library Bulletin article, Gavin writes, "Professor Nir contends that some Bonfils studies of Orthodox Jews in Jerusalem seem to show blind men who may not have known they were being photographed" (1978:457). This was never my interpretation; Gavin quotes from memory and must be referring to another source unknown to me.
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Figure 14 “Group of Bedouins.” Half-tone reproduction, Bonfils studio portrait. Published in Hellig Jord, ed. by E. Blaumüller, Copenhagen, 1898.
Richard Lawson received his B.S. in photography from Southern Illinois University and his M.F.A. in photography from the University of Illinois. He taught photography at Southern Illinois University from 1977 to 1981 and is currently in charge of Color Technical Services at Ambassador International, Tempe, Arizona.

On April 1, 1969, I was sentenced to a term of from two to six years at hard labor in the Illinois State Penitentiary for possession of marijuana. By May I had been transferred from the county jail in Rock Island to a diagnostic depot next to Joliet Penitentiary in what once was the women’s division. I was first placed in a three-man cell, approximately six feet by nine feet, which had been designed to hold one woman. A month later, I was housed in one of the round panopticon cellblocks at Stateville Penitentiary, Joliet’s sister prison, where I had been assigned as an inmate photographer in the Bureau of Identification. The B.I. maintained mugshots, fingerprints, and criminal records of convicts from the early days of the prison. In a corner of the basement darkroom in an old filing cabinet were several hundred glass-plate negatives that documented Joliet prison around the turn of the century. I spent most of my two years working in these darkrooms, producing a blend of public relations and evidence photographs for the prison administration. The photographs were used in penal publications and were occasionally released to news agencies to illustrate the events and social progress of the prison.

Of all the memories which I carried from that period in my life, the photographs recorded on the old plates were among them; especially: “Cell with two male convicts,” ca. 1915. Finally, in 1977, I managed to have them transferred to the Illinois State Archives in order to preserve what remained of the dwindling collection. Over time, many of the plates had been broken from handling or destroyed by fire. This collection is merely what remains of a much larger documentation.

During the time period covered by these photographs, the Illinois penal system had progressed from the various forms of public punishment used in the early 1800s to what was considered a more humane retribution: the penitentiary system. This system had been first introduced in 1790 by the Pennsylvania Quakers under the leadership of Doctor Benjamin Rush, and it resulted in the world’s first penitentiary—the Walnut Street Jail. It was the first to combine a method of isolated cellular confinement with solitary work and the reading of the scriptures. This concept of purification through suffering, inherent in Christianity, was becoming deeply imbedded in penal thought. The system of almost total solitude was more than many prisoners could endure. When New York built its first prison at Auburn, it varied the Pennsylvania System so that the men were isolated in the evening but had congregate work areas in the day. The silence rule prevented any communication during congregate times. Both of these models had adopted the work ethic and reform through suffering, penitence; hence “penitentiary.”
The state's first prison, built in Alton, Illinois, had followed this model with dedication, but by 1847 there were no studies in penal progress. It has come slowly, but with a certainty which leaves no doubt as to its permanency. Crude, cruel, and barbarous methods which were almost universally in vogue at the beginning of the present generation have been or are being superseded by methods which are founded upon principles of humanity and square dealing.

The man inside is being given a chance to prove that he possesses at least some qualifications which determine character and purpose. For my own part, I am glad it is here. I rejoice at the thought that I am in a position to contribute, so far as my own abilities will permit, toward the creation of a new system that must eventually lift the man who has sinned and atoned for his sin from the shallows and perils that heretofore have surrounded and destroyed him.

I have always believed in the theory that there is some good in every man; that there exists some influence which will appeal to his heart and reason. When I was chosen warden of this penitentiary, I found that the man who gave me my appointment entertained views similar to my own. His views, perhaps, were broader than mine. His philosophy is founded upon a bigger and more generous conception of life and its amenities. He believes in the Golden Rule. All his life he has stood ready to extend the helping hand to the man that is down and out. As a judge his decisions were tempered by a spirit of humanity and mercy.

I told him about the things that I had been considering in connection with my plans to regenerate the penitentiary at Joliet. I told him that I believed the lives of the men confined therein could be rendered happier and that hope could be re-awakened in their hearts by relieving them of some of the barbarous exactions and ruthless discipline to which they had been subjected for many years. I told him that I would endeavor to lift the fifteen hundred men who would be under my direction from dead levels of silence and unbroken routine which breaks the hearts and spirits of men and sends them out into the world without courage and without hope. He assured me that every idea I had discussed with him had his unequivocal endorsement and approval and that he would stand behind me while I was endeavoring to put them in force.

Not only the people of the State of Illinois, but the Nation are fortunate in the fact that Edward F. Dunne occupies the governor's chair at Springfield. Those among us who believe that the old way is passing, that a new and better era is dawning in penology, are fortunate in having so eminent a friend and counsellor as Governor Dunne. His earnest cooperation in the work of regeneration in the penal institutions of Illinois is certain to bear results that will be far reaching in their effects on penological work in years to come. The work that has been started under his auspices will progress far and will leave an uneradicable impression which will serve as a guide to the generations which are to come hereafter.
Public sentiment is slowly but surely grasping the new thought and stamping it with approval. The people know that the barbarities of the nineteenth century will not be tolerated in the twentieth century. The people are becoming insistent that those who are atoning for their sins committed against society shall be treated with decent consideration and taught not that they shall expect the blackjack or the bludgeon, but that if they will observe the fundamental rules of honor and manhood within their enforced environment, their opportunities outside will multiply.

This is the underlying theory of my work at this penitentiary. You cannot maltreat men, you cannot starve men, you cannot force them to live in surroundings that are unhygienic and unsanitary; you cannot break their bodies in performance of tasks that strain their powers to the limits of endurance and then expect to receive in return their confidence and cooperation. You must feed them an abundance of healthful food; you must clothe them so that their sense of self-respect will not be entirely violated by contemplation of their rags; you must provide healthy outdoor recreation; you must see to it that the cell houses in which they are compelled to spend most of their waking and sleeping hours are clean and sanitary.

One of my first innovations was the granting of one hour a day for recreation. Every hour of the day from 8 o'clock in the morning until 5 o'clock in the afternoon, excepting the mid-day hour, there can be found about two hundred men playing baseball, pitching quoits, and some other games that are congenial to themselves, on a field set apart for that purpose within the prison walls. When I published my recreation program a number of the older employees of the prison who had come down from the period when recreation in any form was unheard of told me frankly and with sincerity that I was undertaking something which was potentially perilous. I told every man that if he believed I was wrong and did not care to take the chance of testing the plan with me that he could resign and step aside. I told them that I wanted around me only men who were in complete sympathy with my plan. I received no resignations. Notwithstanding that the space in which two hundred men have to play is less than two acres in extent and is cluttered with overhead pipes, buildings, and materials, and that the base lines of the various diamonds overrun each other; that the fielders both in and out, in various games play in identical territory; that collisions and mixups are of hourly occurrence, not a single prisoner has been taken from the recreation field for violation of the rules of the prison. I am more proud of this record than any other thing that has come into my life. It has vindicated my hopes; it has proved that the man inside, when given a chance, knows how to take advantage of it. It has done more than this—it has practically wiped out the punishment rooms of the prison.

Where previous confinements in solitary would average upwards of seventy-five a month, they now run about thirty a month and appear to be decreasing all the time. The men are happier; and some of them told me they would rather be deprived of their lives than of the outdoor recreation period. The pallor that once marked them as men from the inside has given way to tan and ruddy health. They look more like men and they act more like men. I cannot help believing, and I think you gentlemen will concur in the thought, that men coming from an environment that is lightened by healthy and enjoyable physical exercise are more apt to be self-respecting, more self-reliant, than men who are crushed by ruthless discipline.

The man inside at this penitentiary is no longer bound by the rule of silence in talk. If he desires to address a fellow inmate it is his privilege to do so. He can exchange conversation with his comrade in line of march, and that privilege has not been abused. The men have not neglected their work for the purpose of talking. The keepers in the shops have reported from day to day since the new rule went into effect that the men have observed it in about the same spirit and manner as men would in occupations outside. I believed when I prepared and promulgated this rule that it would have precisely that effect. I believed the man inside would not care to waste his own time nor the time of the State in useless conversation, and that if he felt he could address a guard or a fellow inmate when the spirit moved him that he would do it in precisely the same manner as one employee of an industrial shop would address a fellow worker. The results of these reforms or innovations, or whatever you may chance to call them, have been provocative of good discipline. There is no doubt on that score, because the records of the prison prove my statements. I do not want it understood that there has been any relaxation of vigilance, nor do I want it understood that we have reached a point in our work where we believe the millennium in penology has arrived. I appreciate that there are desperate and ruthless men among our prisoners. I appreciate, moreover, that the abnormal conditions which are inevitably created by confinement within the walls of a prison, especially such a prison as this one, breed plots against authority and discipline. But I can state with a spirit of self-rejoicing that the discipline was never better in the history of this prison than it is at the present day. I need hardly tell you that this is a condition more than satisfactory. The man inside at this penitentiary is beginning to understand what it means to be placed upon his honor; he understands precisely as we understand it outside the prison. It means to him just as much as it means to us outside. It means freedom from unnecessary espionage, or freedom from espionage that changes and injures one's self-respect, and freedom from ruthless barbaric punishments. He performs his work in a better spirit; he performs more work in a better spirit, and he performs more and better work. This fact has been demonstrated by the output of the various shops. When I introduced an hour's recreation for every man here, I naturally concluded there would be a diminution of production in the shops in proportion to the time lost by outdoor play. There was in fact no loss in production. The men not only worked faster, but better. The output of the shops today is of better quality than at any time in the history of the prison. The man inside is beginning to take an actual personal interest in his work and pride in its performance. That is something I thought would never come to pass in a prison. I pray that the spirit of performance such as this will grow among these men, because if it goes with them outside of the walls it must necessarily become a bulwark for their redemption and regeneration.
On Saturday, June 19, 1915, Warden Allen and his wife were preparing for a short trip to the hot springs in Indiana, but since her dress was not yet back from the dressmaker, Odette decided to wait until the next morning and encouraged Edmund to proceed without her. Shortly after six the next morning, a fire was reported on the second floor of the warden’s house. Some guards, along with convicts from the volunteer fire department, managed to break down the door to Odette’s bedroom and extinguish the flames. The coroner reported that her skull was fractured by a water bottle which was found next to the bed and that, although she was unconscious from the blow, she was killed by the smoke and flames which engulfed her bed. The fire had been started by a container of alcohol spread over the bedding. A trustee by the name of “Chicken Joe” Campbell, who had been appointed by Edmund a few months earlier as Odette’s personal servant, was charged and convicted on circumstantial evidence and sentenced to death. The sentence was commuted to life imprisonment by Governor Dunne. Warden Allen continued to support the honor program and begged others not to judge all men by the actions of one man. He resigned several months later. This event and the increasing involvement by the United States in World War I brought an end to the era of progress. Reform would not be attempted again for many decades.

Law creates crime by defining criminal acts, and it is the primary nature of law to reflect the moral and social codes which allow a society to function. Basically, crime may be thought of as acts of aggression or violence against another person and damage to or theft of property. It is the purpose of law to create social order through a system of rules and penalties; but Jessica Mitford writes: “Criminal law is essentially a reflection of the values, and a codification of the self-interest, and a method of control, of the dominant class in any given society.” Even Plato said that justice represented the will of the stronger—power. What exists in the United States, as in most of the world, is not justice in the sense of fair play, but justice as power of the ruling class over the working class.

Prisons were designed as an extension of the criminal justice system and were meant to perform four functions: punishment, deterrence, isolation, and rehabilitation. There is no question as to their ability to punish and isolate individuals. Even a partial reading of In the Belly of the Beast by Jack Henry Abbott brings a clear understanding of the brutality of the modern penal system. The Quakers started the penitentiary system in order to abolish the physical assault on the body and to bring about a more humane system. Further, it is widely known that rehabilitation in prison is almost nonexistent since government budgets barely allow for enough funds to “warehouse” convicts, let alone treat them. That the primary function of prisons is deterrence is the most frightening aspect, and although the mechanisms of the system are focused upon the criminal, the severity of the punishment is for the benefit of those on the outside who might otherwise consider criminal acts. By increasing the cost to the criminal (it is thought), prisoners are meant to deter others from crime, even though substantial research shows that most persons who commit crimes never consider the cost—most don’t even know the penalty for their particular crime. There are two injustices here. One is that punishment against an individual is imposed, not for therapeutic value, but to affect others who may have criminal intentions. The other is that the principle of deterrence does not work. The concept of sending one person to prison as an example to others is an archaic home remedy.

It is important to understand that the criminal justice system is disproportionately directed at those individuals who are least able to defend themselves. American law is the extension of the influence of the ruling class in an industrialized economic power. This is not democracy, but capitalism; crime, in part, is the result of the choice to maintain this structure of wealth and power. Ramsey Clark, in Crime in America, reports that in major American cities “two-thirds of the arrests take place among only about two percent of the population”—the poor. This statistic is contrary to evidence showing that crime exists in very high percentages in all levels of society, but citizens in the upper two-thirds of the social structure manage, for the most part, to escape the consequences of the system. These people are better prepared to defend themselves and have more financial resources. Both the system and society tend to be lenient with the more affluent offender and do not choose imprisonment as a form of punishment.

Today our prisons are overflowing, and legislators are talking of increasing the number of men per cell rather than expanding the system. Rehabilitation isn’t even being discussed in today’s budgets. All of this is being done in spite of the evidence that white-collar crime costs the individual a hundred times more than
street crime ever has. Both the problem and the solution are not to be found in the penal system but in society. In *Cooperation and Competition Among Primitive Peoples*, Margaret Mead wrote:

There is a correspondence between: a major emphasis upon competition, a social structure which depends upon the initiative of the individual, a valuation of property for individual ends, a single scale of success, and a strong development of the ego.

There is a correspondence between: a major emphasis upon cooperation, a social structure which does not depend upon individual initiative or the exercise of power over persons, a faith in an ordered universe, weak emphasis upon rising in status, and a high degree of security for the individual.

Cooperation or competition. The choice is whether to cure the symptom or the disease.
“Unidentified Warden,” ca. 1915.

“Memorial to a Dead Warden,” ca. 1915.
"Catalog Photograph of Three Brooms," ca. 1915.

"Cell for Female Prisoner," ca. 1915.
"Training Kitchen in Women’s Division," ca. 1915.
"Prison Bakery," ca. 1890.
"Prison Chaplain with Four Inmate Assistants," ca. 1915.
"Mugshot, No. 7280."
"Contraband," ca. 1915.

"Yard Activities," ca. 1915.
"Official Tour of Stateville Penitentiary," ca. 1925.
Some Observations about Contemporary Cuban Photography: The Union of Cuban Writers and Artists (UNEAC)

Amy Conger

Last spring in Mexico City, I saw two exhibitions of Latin American photography, a total of about 670 pictures. Sixty of these were by Cuban photographers. Despite the cultural heritage shared by all these countries, the Cuban images stood out and held together for several reasons—not only because of the high-contrast printing, or the ubiquitous use of the wide-angle lens, or the constant emphasis on unnamed people here-and-now—but, more than anything else, because of their common mood. The photographs were optimistic, energetic, and somewhat playful, not rigid or resigned as one might expect. Themes that were common in other Latin American pictures, such as death, adversity, ethnography, denunciation, and self-consciousness, were not apparent in the Cuban work.

The Photography Subsection

While any attempt to understand Cuban photography, its makers, and the cultural situation it reflects involves many variables, some generalizations may prove useful, particularly because virtually nothing is known in the United States about Cuban photography. Methodological and political problems will not be solved in this article, but acknowledging their existence does provide perspective. For example, in the last three years I have seen more than 400 photographs made by fifteen Cuban artists during the last decade. I have listened to several lectures on the subject by Cubans and attended a fifteen-hour course on the history of Cuban photography, taught by the Cuban photographer Mario García Joya. I have tried to read what is available on the subject in Spanish and English, and in Mexico City, in May 1981, I interviewed three Cuban photographers:

Amy Conger recently received a Ph.D. in the History of Art, with a specialization in the History of Photography and Graphics, from the University of New Mexico. Twentieth-century North American and Latin American photography are her main interest. Her dissertation, written under the supervision of Beaumont Newhall, on photography by Edward Weston from 1903 to 1926 is being prepared for publication along with two other manuscripts: an anthology of criticism on Weston (with Dr. Newhall) and a catalog for an exhibition of Weston's work in Mexico from 1923 to 1926.

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Figure 1 Tito Alvarez. Untitled. From the series "La gente de mi barrio," ca. 1980.

Mario García Joya (Mayito), Raúl Corral Varela (Corrales), and María Eugenia Haya (Marucha). However, all the people I have spoken with and all the works I have seen come from the Photography Subsection of the Unión de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba—the Union of Cuban Writers and Artists (UNEAC)—which is the national council of photography and the organ responsible for selecting works to represent Cuba abroad. In several cases, the collections of Cuban prints were submitted to a jury of Latin American and United States photographers. In one instance, I was able to examine the works that were not accepted and agreed that the jury had chosen the most interesting photographs.

Mayito, who is the director of the Subsection as well as a photographer and filmmaker, described UNEAC as a nongovernmental organization subsi-
The Union of Cuban Writers and Artists (UNEAC)

Felix Beltrán, a graphic designer and president of UNEAC's Visual Arts Section, stated: "What we don't have is freedom to behave against the system... we do not have any stylistic restrictions; we have a topic restriction... we must try to build a better environment for society." Mayito said that UNEAC membership was both voluntary and selective: those who wish to become members submit a résumé, a portfolio, and letters of recommendation to the executive committee, which chooses new members on the merits of their work.

The Photography Subsection has a wide variety of functions. Since photography is taught in the journalism departments of the universities, teaching photographic technology is not one of the Subsection's responsibilities. It does sponsor seminars in appreciation and photographic history, subjects not now offered as courses in the universities (although plans are being made to include them in the Cuban studies departments). Another function of the Subsection is to obtain and distribute equipment and materials to its members. Single-lens reflex cameras are not available in retail stores in Cuba, and, consequently, news photographers regularly borrow equipment from their papers; the Subsection, however, can obtain some Soviet cameras for its members and provides darkrooms for them to share. The Subsection also orga-
nizes international and national exhibitions and sponsors and teaches workshops for children and amateurs. Members have regular weekly meetings where they criticize one another's work and that of other photographers seeking constructive criticism.

I asked Mayito, Marucha, and Corrales specifically about the career of the photographer José Gonzalez Alvarez (Tito Alvarez) because I had noted that although he was born in 1916, I did not recall having seen work by him before the late seventies. Marucha pointed out that I had in fact seen his work—that there was a pictorial-abstract dance picture by him in her essay on the history of Cuban photography (Haya 1979:68). Obviously, it had not impressed me. Tito Alvarez had brought his work to one of the Subsection's Wednesday photo-critiques, where he considered this criticism thoughtfully and within a short while began working on the series “La gente de mi barrio” [The people of my neighborhood], in which he managed to use forms, body language, and rhythm more effectively than in his earlier dance pictures (Figures 1, 2, 15, 16).

During the interview, I asked Mayito, Marucha, and Corrales how many of the UNEAC photographers were members of the Communist party. They laughed and Mayito replied, "Not one, I believe." He added, however, that some fine artists, such as the designer Alfredo Rostgaard and the filmmaker Santiago Alvarez, were members of the party.

**Issues of Artistic Freedom**

In analyzing the information that is available, it is imperative to discriminate between the ideal and the actual, the verbal and the visual, and the artists' expectations and their accomplishments. This contradiction, in fact, appears in this article, which deals only tangentially with the Cuban society of which art is allegedly an inseparable part. Therefore, either my analysis is lacking or art is not as integrated into society as pages of official statements would lead us to believe. But as Beltrán stated, "We are dialectical, we can change our minds."

Patently, the creative situation in Cuba is not as directed, unilateral, or mechanically homogeneous as it would be facile to believe. For example, I asked three Cubans, all involved with filmmaking, their opinions about a recent Cuban movie, Cantata de Chile [Ballad of Chile]. I was curious about their reactions to this particular film because I considered it artistically and technically quite beautiful but thematically incoherent. Each of them stated clearly in his own way that the film was unfortunately a failure. On the other hand, a leftist art critic from the United States thought about the film at length and presented an abstruse explanation to justify it. Apparently, she was uncomfortable or incapable of accepting the fact that Cubans could botch a film. Beltrán stated the Cuban viewpoint clearly: "We are critical, not of the revolution but of the mistakes."

With predictable regularity in any discussion on Cuban culture, Fidel Castro's 1961 speech "Words to the Intellectuals" is quoted: "What are the rights of Revolutionary writers and artists? Within the Revolution: all; against the Revolution, none." This worked its way into the 1976 Constitution as follows: "Artistic creation is free as long as its content is not contrary to the Revolution. Forms of artistic expression are free." Sometimes, however, there is a tendency toward rhetorical hyperbole that verges on the incredible. At the 1977 UNEAC Congress, Armando Hart, the Minister of Culture, claimed that the Cubans were in the avant-garde of individual and intellectual freedom since, unlike the capitalists, they represented the interests of the greatest percentage of the population against oppression by a minority. He then proceeded to warn UNEAC members against individualism, elitism, voyeurism, alienation, and thematic speculation (Hart 1977:44–47). Unofficial statements may be more revealing of the actual situation. Hugh Thomas reported that in 1965 Castro said, "Art is not an end in itself. Man is the end. Making man happier, better. ..." (Thomas 1977: 689). Five years later, the poet-priest Ernesto Cardenal (now Nicaraguan Minister of Culture) described an incident which the painter René Portocarrero had related to him. A Russian or a
Figure 3  Rigoberto Romero. Untitled. From the series "Con sudor de millonario," 1980.
Communist delegate had asked Castro what a semi-abstract mural by Portocarrero in the National Palace "meant," and Castro replied: "Nothing. This doesn't mean a thing. It's just some madness... painted by a madman for people who like this kind of madness, and it was sponsored by the madmen who made this Revolution." (Cardenal 1974:127) This, of course, suggests that the Cubans are not as removed from an art-for-art's sake aesthetic as is commonly thought.

Another part of misunderstanding in the United States of Cuban photography is caused by simple misreadings owing to varied cultural, social, and economic backgrounds as well as different intentions. For example, the title of Rigoberto Romero's series on sugar cane cutters is "Con sudor de millonario" [With the sweat of a millionaire] (Figure 3). This is not a sarcastic slight on a wealthy capitalist but instead an homage to a worker who has cut about a million pounds of sugar cane in one season and thus made an exceptional contribution to the Cuban economy.

Because of the almost total lack of information and the very infrequent opportunities to see Cuban art in the United States—a situation which is worsening because of the tightening of the embargo on Cuban goods, including movies, magazines, and books—those tourists who visit Cuba even briefly are endowed with an "expertise" that in other cases would be absurd. Sometimes foreign visitors seem unwilling to accept the fact that every Cuban does not live, breathe, eat, and dream socialism. For example, in Radical America, Steve Cagan, a United States photographer and photo-critic, described Corrales's Dream of a Soldier (Figure 4) as "a sleeping guerrilla; his fatigues and machine-gun contrasting with the opulent, yet decadent interior of an occupied mansion" (Cagan 1980:56). Talking with Corrales, I mentioned that this particular photograph had always amused me. He was pleased; that was the purpose of the picture. Apparently, it had never occurred to him that a viewer could interpret this work as a critical comparison of the rough-and-ready with the opulent and decadent or could imagine that this soldier might be dreaming of the glory of defending the patria. It is common that foreigners interested in the Cuban process feel that a sense of humor is out of place within a socialist framework.
This style survives today, particularly in the work of Mayito and Ramón Grandal. In a photograph by Mayito from the seventies, an old man in the foreground wears a sign that says: "Outstanding Basic Worker of the Month." A mural on the back wall proclaims: "It Is Our Ideology That Makes Us Strong and Invincible!" (Figure 5). The subject of this mural is the photographic portrait of Che Guevara taken by Alberto Korda in 1960, probably the best known of all Cuban photographs. Significantly, however, it has been reproduced in a manicured version: the outlines of the beard, mustache, and eyebrows are sharper than in the original, and the shadow on the right side of the chin has been toned down considerably. On a whole, the face seems more symmetrical, more perfect, and less human.

A portfolio of pictures and a statement by Ramón Grandal were recently published in a Swiss photographic magazine. Part of Grandal’s explanation of his photographs reads:

The mere idea of seeing their heroes displayed on the wall gives the Cubans new courage to perform heroic deeds each day. By these means, they determine their position with regard to their political, patriotic and social situation. Every Cuban who follows the path set by his hero becomes a living example for others. Cubans sacrifice themselves in a struggle against an enemy who is determined to sow the seeds of his terrible hatred over the continental borders of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Motivation and ideas are free from all creative intention; they represent a compromise between an idea and that which exists forever and proves that Cuba in spite of all her sufferings and struggles, will continue to exist. [Porter 1980:4; translation not mine]

Most likely, Grandal was sincere in his statement, but this type of aggressive rhetoric, seemingly written with a hammer and chisel, is not obvious in his photographs, which are imposing but also somewhat playful (Figures 6, 7). The written text is not consistent with his imagery, suggesting that this style of statement may have been more common in the past than it is today.

A "lyric" style of photography, as Mayito called it, is more prevalent now and has been popular since the consolidation of the Revolution, a period roughly characterized by the almost complete elimination of illiteracy, an increase in the average level of education, the approval of the National Constitution in 1976, and a slackening of certain basic problems of survival. Mayito said:

As the society itself improved, and the individual was gradually being freed from anxieties dealing with housing, health, and education, general tensions were lessened and an individual could dedicate himself to the product of this reality, and think more about, for example, his girlfriend. . . . In music, the love songs of the Nueva Trova would be another example of this. . . . [today] the social process itself is different. There aren't rallies in the plaza all the time. Life has changed so that the process itself is more profound, more complex, and less evident.

Beltrán commented on the same phenomenon:

. . . the current poster has to deal with a more complex body of ideas which are less able to be converted into visual form. For example, in the early days, an idea for a poster might be "you must study to help the revolution." This is easier to represent in visual form than the concept of the importance of economic efficiency.
Basically, this new trend in photography involves a more personalized, more insightful, and, in a certain sense, more respectful reflection of society—that is, the consolidation of the Revolution has been visually acknowledged. Photographic aesthetics are evolving; less weight is given to eliciting emotions and impressing the viewer, and more to spontaneity, to a certain traditional type of beauty, and to individual expression (only in the last few years have Cuban photographers started to sign their work and to discuss the possibilities of copyright). This can be seen in the photograph by Mayra Martínez of four young girls standing in a pool of rushing water (Figure 8) or in those by Corrales of young people in a summer work camp (Figures 9–13). Martínez's composition probably would not have received any attention immediately after the Revolution, and Corrales's subject would have been treated in a heroic, exemplary manner. Today, however, he concentrates instead on the coquiness and gracefulness of the human form, the overall composition, and the uninhibited, silly reactions of some of the teenagers in front of the camera.

Figure 7  Grandal.Untitled, n.d. (Reproduced from *XX Aniversario*, p. 80.)

Figure 8  Mayra Martínez. Untitled, n.d.
Publication and Exhibition

Although the general outlook has evolved, there is a decided stylistic homogeneity in Cuban photography since 1959. I have never seen a modern Cuban photograph with a long, soft, tonal range; obviously, high-contrast images are visually more striking than subtle ones. Part of this penchant for high-contrast work is due to the fact that Cuban photography has been primarily intended for publication rather than for exhibition; delicate textures, suave nuances, and a gentle tonal range do not reproduce well on the primitive printing presses and cheap papers found in Cuba. In addition, the Photographic Subsection of UNEAC was not founded until late 1977, and one of its responsibilities has been to disseminate photography and arrange photographic exhibitions. Previously, professional photographers had seen very few exhibition prints, and their aesthetic was probably based largely on what they had seen in Cuban publications. It is also probable that, ideologically, they might consider virtuoso printing self-indulgent and wasteful.

Moreover, obtaining materials is a serious problem, since the arrival of film and enlarging paper from East Germany is unpredictable and haphazard. The photographer Alberto Figueroa explained that once, in order to make an exhibition of fifty photographs, he was allotted a box of fifty sheets of paper—and he added: "What you get out of this are about forty-five photographs that are poorly printed." Obviously, photographers in less industrialized countries are at a disadvantage: the prices of photographic goods are high and the distribution is shoddy. However, Corrales felt that this made him technologically less dependent and more experienced with improvisation than some of his foreign colleagues. He commented that sometimes he gets nine negatives off a roll of thirty-six that he feels are "good" and that he uses. He suggested that the minuscule percentage of interesting negatives obtained by many professional photographers in more developed countries called into question their abilities. The lack of photographic goods in Cuba causes photographers to be less experimental and less wasteful and, at the same time, more respectful of what they have and more motivated to obtain images which are meaningful to them.

I also asked Mayito why so many Cuban photographers use wide-angle lenses. He said that there were two reasons for this. First, they are less expensive and, consequently, more readily available. Second, the photographers like the wide-angle vision, finding it less limiting and less exclusive, more comprehensive and democratic, as well as including more context "in a country where it is always important."
Subject Matter

Figure 11  Corrales. Untitled. From the series "Campo de verano," 1980.

Figure 12  Corrales. Untitled. From the series "Campo de verano," 1980.
The Union of Cuban Writers and Artists (UNEAC)
Since the Revolution in 1959, Cuban photography has almost exclusively used people for subject matter, as opposed to photography in the United States during the same period, in which people have become a less and less popular theme (Figures 11–20). I have never seen a post-Revolutionary photograph of a nude; Mayito called it an "old theme," like the gravures of lovely ladies that once decorated cigar boxes. Landscapes, still lifes, and abstract compositions, which he described as "decorative," are rare. Mayito commented that "when things that are so important are taking place, it doesn't make sense to be shooting pictures of little pieces of wall."

It is also worth noting that the people who are the subjects of these Cuban photographs seem incredibly normal, representative, and ever-present. Often they seem delighted, not bored or offended, at having their picture taken, almost as if the fact that they were being recorded made a vital difference, as if this were some sort of affirmation of their individual importance. Obviously, they have not been overworked as the subjects of family snapshot sessions—especially since there is not a camera in every household. (Mayito commented that amateur cameras could be purchased occasionally but that the percentage of people owning cameras was considerably lower than that in Mexico.) The subjects are rarely singled out because of their unusual dress, behavior, status, attitudes, or deformities. The fact that they are seldom identified in the titles does not seem to leave the viewer with unanswered questions, as it might in other cases. Even if the photograph is created as a portrait, the subject is usually not isolated against a plain background, but appears instead against a group of people, a sugar cane field, the side of a postered building, or a corner of a work place. In relation to this, Mayito quoted Engels: "The fundamental forms of every being are space and time, and a being conceived outside of time is as absurd as one conceived outside of space."

Mayito elaborated on the common thematic interest of Cuban photographers, despite the differences in their ages and education, by emphasizing that it was a result not of "directed cultural politics" but of their involvement in the problems of the moment. None of the photographers, he claimed, was alienated from contemporary reality. He said that many of them were members of the militia (including himself) and others did voluntary work together: "They were all concerned with what Reagan said in the morning to decide what they would do in the afternoon."
Figure 15  Tito Alvarez. Untitled. From the series “La gente de mi barrio,” ca. 1980.

Figure 16  Tito Alvarez. Untitled. From the series “La gente de mi barrio,” ca. 1980.
Figure 17  Mayra Martínez. Untitled, n.d.

Figure 18  Mayito. Untitled, n.d.
Figure 19  Marucha. Untitled, 1979.

Figure 20  Marucha. Untitled, 1979.
Attitudes toward Photography

Since neither of us believes that the camera is an objective recording tool, I asked him how he felt about manipulating reality. He said: "Everyone has a point of view and I project myself from my point of view. . . . that is ethical; . . . It is not the same as lying or inventing, which is illicit." Mayito mentioned the project "Hermanos" [Brothers and sisters] (Figure 21) which he and three other Cuban photographers undertook in Nicaragua in November 1980:

We went to Nicaragua and we got the image of Nicaragua that we wanted to give, that emerged from our principles and our criteria—and we believe in principles that are revolutionary. That is not manipulation or a lie. That is licit. If a photographer from the United Press goes to Nicaragua, he will make another reality. So it's logical that we'll make ours. No? And, in a certain sense, we also did it to show the other side—to show what we believe is truer than the alternative. . . . Although there are no absolute truths, there are some that are a little larger than others.

Finally, I asked the Cuban photographers with whom I was talking why they made photographs. Mayito answered: "Why do I make photographs? Because I don't write poetry." Corrales quickly replied: "Because I don't write poetry either." Marucha said: "Because it's a way of expressing so many things I have to express."

Compared to the contemporary art/photo scene in the United States, Cuban photography from UNEAC might be considered classic, ultraconservative, wholesome, and thematically and technically unoriginal. These photographers are not, however, living in a consumer-oriented society; artistic originality, intuition, and individualism are not valued to the extremes that have motivated photographers in the United States, as they have in radical cases, to concentrate on masturbation, stretch marks, child porn, or unauthorized portraits in a morgue of an autopsied corpse dressed in a lace brassiere. Violation of privacy and exploitation of minors and others in the name of Art do not arise in contemporary Cuban photography from UNEAC.

Rather than comparing artistic freedom in the United States and Cuba, it would seem more relevant to consider what values the market will support—in Cuba, the market being largely UNEAC, and in the United States, dealers, museum directors, book publishers, and individual collectors. Some themes which have been successful in exhibitions in the United States, such as apathy, conceptualism, and introspection, do not appear to have emerged as acceptable, viable, or even interesting subjects to Cuban photographers associated with UNEAC. What I have seen of their work and what I have understood from talking with them would indicate that these particular men and women, who are part of an elite, care deeply about their society and that for them art is not a superstructural entity or a luxury but is capable of making a difference—perhaps even, in some ways, of "making man happier, better. . . ."

Clearly, membership in UNEAC and the opportunity to exhibit abroad are limited by what appeals to others, a process of selection that has profound implications about freedom of expression. Whether an "old boy network" exists is extremely difficult to evaluate. I also do not know the consequences or possibilities of a photographer not associated with UNEAC submitting work, as an individual, to an international photographic competition. I can imagine, however, how depressing it would be for a photographer who believes in the merits of his or her own work to be refused membership in UNEAC, since it is the only available group of its kind—if for nothing more than obtaining materials and facilities.

It must be kept in mind that the availability of photographic equipment and supplies is and will be limited in Cuba for economic reasons and that, instead of distributing these goods to photographers according to some sort of lottery or placing them on the open market so that only the wealthiest would be able to photograph, the government, through UNEAC, prefers to allot them to those photographers who are projecting the image of Cuba which they wish to see projected. These values are not unlike those employed by the United States Information Service for selecting photographs to represent the United States abroad. However, in Cuba, as the economic situation has gradually become less pressing over the last twenty years, photography, especially thematically
and compositionally, has become less graphic, exemplary, and idealistic, and more personal and spontaneous. What is persistent in the photographic work since the Revolution is the pride that these photographers convey about Cuba’s positive accomplishments, sometimes in the face of impressive odds, and their continued awareness of and involvement in the development of their country.

Notes
1 Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine, and any statement by Raúl Corral Varela, Mario García Joya, or María Eugenia Haya comes from my interview (in Spanish) with them in Mexico City on May 2, 1981, or from conversations which we had individually.
2 All statements by Félix Belltrán quoted in this article come from Eve Cockroft, "Art in Cuba Today: An Interview with Félix Belltrán," Art in America 68 (January 1980), pp. 9–11.
4 "Es libre la creación artística siempre que su contenido no sea contrario a la Revolución. Las formas de expresión en el arte son libres." "Educación y Cultura (Capítulo IV de la Constitución de la República de Cuba, proclamada el 24 de febrero de 1976)" in Política cultural de la revolución cubana: documentos (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1977), art. 38d, p. 138.
5 "Fue muy usual que durante los momentos más delicados y decisivos, en apoyo a los patrióticos y dramáticos llamados de la Revolución, se utilizara la fotografía como lenguaje para sensibilizar y movilizar a las masas a través de la prensa o impresa directamente en carteles y vallas, con textos como los siguientes: 'Estos cubanos necesitan tu ayuda'... '¡A las armas!' 'A la Plaza!' '¡Comandante en Jefe, ordena!' y otros." María Eugenia Haya, "Sobre la fotografía cubana," Revolución y cultura (May 1980), p. 54.
6 "... por eso una exposición así sale con cuarenta y pico de fotos más o menos, mal impresas..." "Frente al lente," Revolución y cultura (May 1980), p. 31.

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Reviews and Discussion

**Berthold Hinz.** Art in the Third Reich. New York: Pantheon Books, 1979. 268 pp., 8 leaves. $15.95 (cloth), $7.95 (paper).

**Review Essay by Amos Vogel**
University of Pennsylvania

Whether the value systems of a given society are inscribed in its art should be a fatuous question; Egyptian friezes clearly respond to different realities than do Elizabethan drama, and high tech art could not have originated in Bulgaria. In our time, it is useful to refer to such "controlled experiments" in precisely this question as Nazi Germany or Stalinist Russia, in which art was both fully controlled and forcefully directed toward particular styles and narrative structures, while others were explicitly forbidden. In such situations, art is nakedly revealed as the ideological handmaiden of a power structure, destined to assuage tensions, create the appropriate myths, and harness our sensuous need for aesthetic release to its own purposes. The Nazi experience is a perfect laboratory model in directed art, and it is the particular merit of Berthold Hinz's *Art in the Third Reich* to have placed this crucial issue at the center of his carefully researched inquiry.

My personal encounter with German fascism—an experience that traumatized my entire life—convinces me that it is impossible for those not having lived through such an event to believe it, just as we cannot truly "believe" what was done in our name in Vietnam, Dresden, or Hiroshima. If someone told us today that the works of Rauschenberg, Mailer, Warhol, Bateson, Welles, Meyer Schapiro, Goffman, and Woody Allen had been forbidden and burned, their authors forced into emigration, suicide, concentration camps, or ovens, it would be but a small sample of what occurred in German art and culture during the Nazi period. It must be remembered that the Weimar Republic had been one of the most vital centers of the modernist movement in the arts, its very social viability contributing to the spectacular flowering of the most progressive experimentation and stylistic advances in the plastic arts, literature, theater, dance, and film. In a move unprecedented in modern history, the Nazis quite simply eradicated the entire movement and an entire generation of outstanding artists and intellectuals, with results so incalculable that Germany (the world, in fact) has not recovered from this wholesale bloodletting.

Ferdinand Staeger. "We Are the Work Soldiers" (title supplied by the painter in 1974: Work Corps). (From Hinz.)

Walter Hoeck. "Young Germany" (railroad station waiting room, Braunschweig). (From Hinz.)
Hinz properly concentrates on 1937 as the spectacular culmination of this drive. It was then that the Nazi government organized, simultaneously and tendentiously, the Great German Art and the Degenerate Art Exhibitions in Munich.

"Degenerate art" was the official title given by German fascism to "Jew" art, "culturally Bolshevist" art, i.e., modern art: in painting, the over 16,000 works in Germany by Beckmann, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Grosz, Kandinsky, Matisse, Klee, Kokoschka, Mondrian, Leger, Marc, Picasso, Rouault, Munch, De Chirico, Braque, et al. From 1933 on, their works had been confiscated from museums and private collections, their names eradicated from the history books, their intellectual supporters—critics, journalists, teachers, curators—driven from their posts. The entire faculty and administration of Germany's legendary Bauhaus had been eliminated; surrealism, expressionism, cubism, abstract art, were verboten.

In an impressive demonstration of totalitarian social engineering, new bureaucratic and administrative control structures had been created by Reich Minister for Popular Education and Propaganda, Goebbels, now the president of the newly formed Reich Chamber of Culture. This was the prototype of class-collaborationist Fascist "corporate" structures, in which management and labor were forced into the same organization, with membership (Aryans only) obligatory, leadership appointed from above, collective bargaining and strikes outlawed. The thousands of new positions were immediately filled by previously spurned outsiders, failures, and new opportunists, all clamoring to settle scores and exercise absolute power. It was this organization which, by admission or denial of membership, literally determined who was or was not an artist in Nazi Germany. Contractual freedoms were annulled ("degenerate" art being confiscated without compensation), while a para-military chain of command involved everyone engaged in the "creation, reproduction, processing, dissemination, preservation, sale and promotion of cultural products" (unlike the liberals, the Nazis knew that "art" involves more than aesthetics). Goebbels's famed 1936 decree even established new criteria for art criticism:

I am herewith forbidding, from this day on, the conduct of art criticism as it has been practiced to date during the period of the Jewish domination of art. From today on, the art report will replace art criticism. ... it will be less an evaluation than a description and appreciation. ... art editors must have undefiled hearts and national-socialist convictions.

The public culmination of this counter-revolution in the arts was the 1937 Degenerate Art Exhibition. Kafka and the surrealists would have appreciated the irony of two million people (three times the number of those at the concurrent Nazi art show) attending what was the largest modern art exhibition ever held anywhere. One-hundred and twelve of the most famous artists of our time were displayed helter-skelter, floor-to-ceiling, each work accompanied by inflammatory, often obscene captions. The catalog stated that this was "a general survey of barbarous methods of representation ... Jewish trash ... Marxist propaganda ... total madness ... the progressive destruction of sensibility for form and color ... with the Negro and South Sea Islanders representing the racial ideal of modern art ... either a hoax or suffering from dreadful visual disorders." Following the exhibition, the most important works were sold abroad (the profits accruing to the state). The rest—five thousand masterpieces of the modern period—were burned March 20, 1939, in Berlin.

The new art to take the place of these "symbols of a doomed world" was simultaneously displayed in Munich's Great German Art Exhibition, and from then on annually until the end of the war, amidst spectacular ceremonies and pageantry. It was to be genuine German art, explicitly designed to last at least as long as the Thousand Year Reich. In the event, it lasted seven; the 1955 Dokumenta Exhibition in Kassel signaled, with a vengeance, the renewed triumph of modern art in Germany.

What was the nature of this "Germanic" art? Instead of the "rootless cosmopolitanism" of modern art (significantly attacked in identical terms by Stalin at the same time), the "new" art, ironically, heralded an attempt to fuse long-exhausted stylistic and thematic preoccupations with the ideology of German fascism.

Hinz's outstanding work is based on over 700 Nazi art works (many later destroyed in air raids, the rest now locked away in Munich and forbidden to Germans). It discusses, on sixteen color and forty-five black-and-white pages, a wide variety of works thematically and stylistically organized into an analysis of Nazi art as a whole.

This study gives the lie to the claim that the regime was able to create a "new art." Instead, it continued ancient trends, reactivating artists who had been left behind, and drawing on hidebound regionalists, provincial artists, and even semi-amateurs of pre-Nazi times for its artistic and administrative personnel. The characteristics of this art include an artificial return to ancient trends, reactivating artists who had been left behind, and drawing on hidebound regionalists, provincial artists, and even semi-amateurs of pre-Nazi times for its artistic and administrative personnel. The characteristics of this art include an artificial return to pre-modernist concentration on simple content (modern art involving a shift from narrative to exploration of form): a return, therefore, to traditional landscape painting, still lifes, portraits, nudes, and allegories—discredited subcategories of the plastic
Separate chapters on photography and architecture unfortunately remain too sketchy. Nazi architecture, in particular, demands an in-depth treatment that is lacking here.

Photography, due to its inevitably more rigorous adherence to the notion that reality reflects truth, was not recognized by the Nazis as art, but only as a means of information and propaganda. Only to the extent that it approached the painterly did it come closer to art; hence, there was an emphasis on posed, artificial compositions, based on traditional visual conventions. Film and painting thus merge (cf. Riefenstahl’s 1936 Olympia films, in which classical sculptures merge with naked bodies, and her postwar picture books of African natives, which perpetuate the fascist aesthetic of idealized nature.

Nazi architecture remains crucial testimony to the ideology and megalomaniac fantasies of the fascist state. Massive, sepulchral, ominous, overwhelming in size, it was designed to inspire religious awe and human impotence in the face of limitless power physically displayed (the Nuremberg Stadium seats 400,000; the Berlin Arch of Triumph was to have had a 260-foot-high opening). Employed for government buildings, shrines and monuments, this architecture addressed “eternity” (hence the use of massive stone, granite, marble, instead of steel and concrete). Hitler and Speer, deeply aware of the permanence of Roman ruins and ancient cathedrals, consciously attempted to emulate them: “Our buildings,” said Hitler in 1937 in Nuremberg, “will tower over the millenia of the future like the cathedrals of the past.” Architecture represents perhaps the clearest indication of how consciously the Nazis understood form to express content.

Hinz’s work—a demystificatory study of a manipulative aesthetic—is a splendid contribution to the growing literature regarding the semiotic and ideological significance of art and offers closely researched insights into the philosophical underpinnings of Nazism. The approach is resolutely grounded in Marxist aesthetics and sociology, at times ideologically overassertive without sufficient data. The weak representation of the other arts is due to the original German edition’s having been limited only to paintings; the scope has been widened for the American edition. Beautifully produced on coated stock, the reproductions are voluminous and first-rate; a comprehensive bibliography of over 400 sources adds to the work’s scholarly value. Unfortunately, Hinz repeatedly analyzes paintings without indicating whether or where they are reproduced in the book; one must constantly consult the index for this. Nor are their actual size or production year provided.
Hinz's work is intellectually so stimulating that it forces the attentive reader into uncomfortable questions. Does art express a society's ideological value systems only in totalitarian societies, or must it inevitably do so also in the present-day nominally democratic societies of the West? Do not the art market and the mass media in these societies also act as constraints, if not censors, legitimizing certain artists and deligitimizing others? What does post-modernist, conceptual, or minimal art have to say about the nature of contemporary society? Has not the New Right shown preference for certain artists and content from the invocation of family, clean thinking, and national glory espoused by the Nazis? Are there not increasing references to decadent art, to the unAmerican forces, Jews, and "secular humanists," "Communists"? Have we not recently suffered from books being banned or burned and art works being removed? It is to Hinz's credit that he succeeds in making us feel uneasy. We begin to sense that the moldy terror faintly emanating from these art works of defeated megalomaniacs in "someone else's" past may just possibly be portents of our own future.

Ernst Pfannschmidt, Honoring the Memory of Dead Heros.


Reviewed by James Borchert
University of California, Santa Cruz

Let him who wishes to know what war is, look at this series of illustrations. . . . The sight of these pictures is a commentary on civilization such as the savage might well triumph to show its missionaries.

—Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. (1863)

Only slightly more than 20 years after the "discovery" of photography in 1839, photographers set out to record visually what was to become the bloodiest war in the history of the United States. They did so with a strong interest in the financial "possibilities" as well as a concern for posterity. While their efforts seldom realized the profits they imagined, these pioneering photographers did provide Americans and the rest of the world with the first photographs of the human carnage that results from war. Although these were not the first visual representations of war (drawings had long depicted the glories of the battlefield and some military scenes had been photographed in the European and Asian wars immediately preceding), the photographs of the U.S. Civil War were the first of these views to be widely available.

Before Civil War scenes could be a commercial possibility, however, several preconditions had to be met. The introduction of an inexpensive (though cumbersome) negative and multiple print process (collodion wet plate) reduced the technological constraints on such a venture, while the number of photograph studios and supply companies developed the necessary distribution systems. Finally, on the eve of the great war, the introduction and immediate popularity of the cartes de visite and stereographs created a market for inexpensive photographs. Thus, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., a frequent writer on photography for the Atlantic Monthly, could prophesy in 1859 that "the next European war will send us stereographs of battles" (Holmes 1859:748).

While photographers were active throughout the war on both sides, often in the employ of a major studio like that of Mathew Brady, virtually all the views recorded posed troop scenes, gun emplacements, and occasional shell-torn buildings. Technology did not permit photographing actual battle scenes; long exposures (10—30 seconds), large cumbersome cameras, and a portable darkroom to prepare and imme-

Ernst Pfannschmidt, Honoring the Memory of Dead Heros.
diately develop the glass plate negatives greatly limited the photographer's available subject matter and method of operation. However, as Frassanito points out, there were further conditions necessary for a photographer to successfully record the human tragedy of war:

Initially, there had to occur an action of noteworthy size in order to attract the photographer's attention. The action had to be a victory, with the friendly side remaining in undisputed possession of the field and out of the range of hostile fire during cleanup operations. Equally important, the photographer had to be present on the site with all his equipment before the ugliest of the scars were covered. [p. 21]

It was not until the Battle of Antietam (Sharpsburg, Maryland, September 17, 1862) that a photographer first got his chance to "cover" a battle "before the dead had been buried" (p. 17). It is significant that this first opportunity also coincided with the battle in which the largest number of casualties (26,000) ever suffered by Americans (North and South) in a single day took place.

In his study of Antietam, Frassanito presents a narrative description of the battle and an analysis of 63 of the 95 photographs that comprise the Antietam series. Within this framework, his concerns are threefold: to "establish Antietam's significance as a landmark event in the history of photography"; to "document the Antietam series" according to location, subject, date, photographer, and the flow of the battle itself; and to humanize the visual record through vignettes of common soldiers who fought at Antietam (p. 18). While the book's close discussion of the ebb and flow of battle and the detailed discussion on locating sites of photographs are more likely to appeal to Civil War buffs, the work does raise a number of questions about the meaning and impact of these views that presented to Americans and the world for the first time the human carnage of war. It also provides important insights into early documentary photography: its practices, constraints, and limitations.

Alexander Gardner, who was the first Civil War photographer to have the opportunity to record the dead on the battlefield, took full advantage of it. While two-thirds of the Antietam photographs were typical battlefield landscapes and group portraits of northern troops, the other third focused on "human wreckage." Moreover, when presented with another opportunity, at Gettysburg, Gardner devoted nearly three-fourths of his work to "the bloated corpses of soldiers and horses" (p. 265). Other Civil War photographers focused on human carnage when the opportunity arose. Frassanito concludes that "had Gardner's Antietam series of 1862 proved a financial failure, it is doubtful that" others would have expended so much to gain similar views in later battles.
Unfortunately, Frassanito does not pursue Gardner in any detail; we do not learn how this interest evolved. Similarly, there is no analysis to determine Gardner's method or form of presentation for these death studies; Gardner's influence on other Civil War photographers is not treated, while the work of these latter photographers is not analyzed or contrasted. Finally, Frassanito does not try to determine the conventions developed by Civil War photographers.

While it is clear that Civil War photographs, including the death studies, were widely viewed throughout the North via exhibit in photographic studios, sales of cards and stereographs, and the conversion to drawings for illustrations in periodicals, Frassanito develops neither the extent to which these photographs were viewed nor the impact of the scenes on the viewer. Although portrait photographs of the dead prior to burial were common in the nineteenth century (Taft 1964:162; Lesy 1973), it is not clear how Americans responded to the studies of anonymous dead of the war nor how these views shaped and influenced their attitudes toward war and death.

Drawing on an anonymous New York Times reporter who found on viewing the Antietam death studies in Mathew Brady's New York Studio "a terrible fascination," Frassanito concludes that the visual documentary is incomplete. He effectively uses the vignettes of common soldiers to supplement what is clearly missing from the visual record: "the smells and agonizing screams" as well as the heartbeat of family and friends (p. 286). Thus, without the human element, he finds "the photographs become only sanitized and hence distorted portrayals of reality" (p. 254).

It is possible to conjecture widely varying responses to these views based on past experience of the viewer and the context in which they are seen. In contrast to the reporter, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., reported a very different response after reviewing the Antietam series in 1863. Holmes, who visited Antietam shortly after the battle to search for his wounded son (later to be the noted jurist), found the views brought back "all the emotions excited by the actual sight of the stained and sordid scene" (Holmes 1863:12).

Frassanito provides important insights into the selection process of the Civil War photographers. The constraints of technology not only ruled out actual battle scenes, they also encouraged photographers to select camera sites from which a number of photographs could be taken. When he does uncover two Civil War photographs of a battle scene (place, time, and photographer unknown), Frassanito effectively demonstrates the scene's contrived nature. However, while other nineteenth-century photographers also used deceptive posing as well as a number of other fraudulent practices (Scherer 1975), Gardner's Antietam scenes were not consciously altered.

Gardner did tend "to emphasize, whether consciously or unconsciously, scenes that would evoke memories of national pride rather than sites reminiscent of clear-cut defeats" (p. 224); he "was not above occasionally stretching the truth" in captions "to increase the historical nature of his views" (p. 71).

While Antietam succeeds well in what it sets out to do, it also sheds considerable light on other issues. If it is written largely for the Civil War buff, it remains useful for the student of photography and visual communication. Finally, it is a powerful statement about the realities and conditions of war.

Note

See, for example, Miller 1911, which unfortunately, like many early accounts of Civil War photography, distorts more than it reveals. Less comprehensive but more accurate is Gardner 1959. Among the studies that chronicle the sad plight of Civil War photographs is Taft 1964:236–246.

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Reviewed by Simon Ottenberg
University of Washington

This collection of thirteen papers in English on male and female masking and secret societies in Liberia and Sierra Leone was presented at the Peabody Museum of Ethnology at Harvard University in April 1978, and edited by Marie Jeanne Adams of that university. The articles, by anthropologists, art historians, sociologists, and a historian, are generally based on field research carried out in the 1970s. This region of Africa is unusual in having women's masquerades and secret societies as well as those for males. The area traditionally consisted of small chiefdoms in which men and the male secret societies have played the dominant political roles. Many of the masquerades of the secret societies for each sex are public and to a large extent acquire meaning through performance in front of members of the other sex. Warren d'Azevedo's paper on these societies among the Gola also stresses the alternating ritual roles that members of each sex play through time in their societies and masquerades.

Despite the quite varied writings presented in this journal, it is clear that the use of masquerades in cross-sex visual communication is important in the cultures of this region and that what is being communicated includes, no matter what else, various senses and meanings of secrecy, gender distinctiveness, and political and mystical power. The costumes, dances, and music, it is also evident, differ radically for each sex in a given culture, further emphasizing the idea of gender identification and cross-sex communication. Again, as Ruth Philips, an art historian, shows for the Mende people of Sierra Leone, there is a very explicit iconography pertaining to the masks and costumes, often badly interpreted by Western writers working outside the cultural context. And clearly, as Carol McCormack shows for the Sherbro of the same country, there is also a richer and deeper level of symbolism to these moving objects, which act as visual metaphors of humans, gods, ancestors, animals, and spirits. From these articles one can see that the visual aspects of the masqueraders are more important than any verbalization or sounds that they may produce (some give out none), a situation that could be interestingly compared to mime with musical accompaniment, with the added quality that the maskers represent secret knowledge, societies, and spirits. While cross-sex communication is restricted through these masking mechanisms, it is paradoxically greatly emphasized and enhanced in the process.

The secret societies and their masqueraders serve a variety of purposes: settling serious legal cases and disputes, representing myths of culture, acting as curing agents, expressing in highly visible form the spiritual world, and symbolizing gender and the transition from childhood to adulthood, as well as being entertaining. Not only is there a rich variety of functions but also a variety of performances and types of performers in each of the cultures discussed in this work, so that we are dealing with many styles of nonverbal communications. The articles suggest a people skilled in performance-oriented impression management of a nonverbal kind. As Beryl Bellman, the sociologist, points out for the Kpelle of Liberia, they are masters of the management of illusion, and as many of the papers suggest, masking as communication is not restricted to a few skilled performers of one sex but many persons of both gender: this form of largely nonverbal communication is experienced by many adults in a particular culture.

It is not, paradoxically, that these Africans are thus unskilled in verbal communication. On the contrary, like others from this continent, they are magnificent users of proverb, metaphor and metonym, and the double and triple meaning (the latter an analog of their music's multiple rhythms). But it is as if they have added to this rich verbalization a major and conscious nonverbal pattern. Why this is so is not clearly explained, although William Siegmann's paper attempts an understanding based on social organization and political grounds. Why women should communicate here through the use of masquerades but not elsewhere in Africa is also a question of importance but not one discussed in these papers.

Other writers cover a variety of topics: stratification and politics (Caroline Bledsoe), structural analysis of secret societies (M. C. Jedrej), and more ethnographically oriented articles by several others. While the work as a whole does not focus on nonverbal communication, it raises tantalizing suggestions; the collection of articles serves as a useful entrée to this topic in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Reviewed by Howard S. Becker
Northwestern University

John Berger, a versatile writer and critic, and Jean Mohr, an experienced photojournalist, have collaborated on three previous books. Ways of Seeing investigated visual habits in relation to painting and photography. A Seventh Man and A Fortunate Man experimented in combining words and photographs to convey social analysis, the most ambitious and thoughtful such experiments since Mead and Bateson's Balinese Character.

I have always been particularly impressed by A Seventh Man, which looks at the phenomenon of migrant workers in Europe in three ways: a more-or-less conventional Marxist analysis, complete with abstract theories and statistics; a story about a nameless migrant from a nameless country ("He") whose experiences embody the general theory as he moves back and forth between his home village and the country in which he is a "guest worker"; and a series of photo essays about those same experiences. The theory was incisive, the story gave it a subjective dimension, and the photographs filled in all the details the other two modes left out. A Fortunate Man was less successful, I thought, mostly because the theory invoked to illuminate the life of a medical practitioner was less persuasive. But that judgment is only relative to the first book's success. Both were remarkably inventive, thought-provoking and attention-compelling.

Another Way of Telling continues this collaborative exploration, with more explicit attention, practical and theoretical, to the problems of combining photographs and text analytically. The general theme is that photographs have some inherent ambiguity, that furnishing text cuts down that ambiguity and makes pictures more "meaningful" and by the same token more capable of misleading, that the photographer, the editor, and the viewer contribute to the photograph's eventual meaning, and that in this fundamental sense the meaning of a picture is socially constructed. But Berger also argues that photographs make use not only of a conventionalized language of visual forms but also of a "half-language" of appearances, whose coherences furnish the raw material for all these later manipulations. Although in real life appearances rarely fulfill our expectation that they will reveal further meaning, photographers quote from appearances selectively so as to produce that added meaning. Some photographs quote from appearances so as to provide evidence for an argument about the operations of history. Most people use their own personal photographs to preserve a timeless moment of their own lives against the continual historical change of contemporary capitalist life.

As well argued as these ideas are in Berger's essay "Appearances," it is the least interesting of the book's five parts. Mohr's very personal "Beyond my Camera" gets at the same ideas more concretely, through stories of his own experiences photographing and discussing photographs with people. Like Berger, and as personally felt as his essay is, Mohr is saying something by now quite familiar.

What makes Another Way of Telling stand out from other such discussions by photographers and theoreticians of photography is the 150-page image essay without words, "If each time . . ." and the accompanying short essay, "Stories." This essay attempts to follow an [old mountain] peasant woman's reflections on her life. If she were suddenly asked: What are you thinking about? she would invent a simple answer, because the question, when taken seriously, becomes unanswerable. Her reflections cannot be defined by any answer to a question beginning with What? And yet she was thinking, reflecting, remembering, recalling, and doing so in a consecutive manner. She was making sense of herself to herself.

They mean to give you the experience of reflecting with her, not particularly in narrative form (though the images are arranged, necessarily, sequentially in a quasi-narrative), but ultimately in a free-ranging way, in which you move among the images as the old woman might herself.

That is a tall order and I am not sure the authors have filled it. But the essay (and readers' knowledge of their previous work) makes the attempt and the discussion of it necessary reading for anyone who cares about pictures and their use for social and political analysis. In addition there are all sorts of extra treats tucked into these pages, such as Berger's wonderful readings of some early photographs by Andre Kertesz.
Reviewed by Lisa Aronson
University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point

In *The Fabrics of Culture*, dress and body adornment are viewed as a communication system. This interpretation is reflected in the selection and organization of the twenty-two studies on the theme of dress compiled in this volume, most of which were presented at the Ninth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences. The studies have been grouped into five categories which follow a theoretical framework clearly presented in the first section. Entitled "Cloth, Culture and Communication," this section provides a broad theoretical model for the study of dress as a conveyor of symbols functioning as part of a total communication system. The second category, "Signs, Symbols and Social Order," discusses the types of information about history, religious beliefs, and sociopolitical organization that symbols in dress can communicate. "Man, Masks and Morals," the third category, stresses the heightened meaning of dress symbols in the context of a masquerade, and the fourth, "Cloth of Culture Change," demonstrates how dress forms and their symbols can change in response to other changes in culture. The fifth category, "Textiles and Technology," concerns itself with techniques of production and marketing rather than the symbolic meaning of dress itself.

Apart from this last section, the editors' theoretical framework determines the order of the categories; thus, it is particularly useful to discuss them with that order in mind. While all studies will be mentioned, space permits that only the more instructive be discussed in any great detail.

Equal attention must be given to each of the four articles in the first section, because of the complementary information they give about a theoretical approach to the study of dress. In the first, sociologists Roach and Eicher outline ten social functions of cloth, e.g., "as Political Symbol," "as Sexual Symbol," "as Definition of Social Role," "as Indicator of Magico-Religious Condition." Thus, they establish social context. Context serves as only one criterion in Schwarz's theoretical approach to the study of dress, presented in the second article. In it, Schwarz argues that clothing, like the body itself, can be viewed as a total system which incorporates the social context, the function, the human body, and its natural environment. Dress and body adornment within this broadly defined framework serve as a conveyor of symbols through which "social action and communication" are generated. He demonstrates this through a structural analysis of the dress of male and female Gambianos, the design and production of which communicate information about role-gendering in this Columbian culture. Male superiority is seen in terms of production. The hats, a symbol of political status and worn above, are made by men, while the cotton garments worn below are women's work. And yet, sexual equality, also evident in Gambianos culture, is interpreted by the male-female symbols placed in opposing positions on the garments, which Schwarz sees as contradicting this hierarchical order.

Cordwell, in the third essay, takes a more historical approach. She cites the earliest known examples of body painting and tattooing to 1500 B.C., during which time there is evidence of mining and trade of ferrous oxide (red ochre) used to lessen the deterioration of skin. Using this evidence as a functional and historical base, she presents a detailed survey of body decoration, cross-culturally outlining the varying functions and the geographic distribution of individual practices. She also offers reasons for the distinctions between temporary and permanent decoration and for evolutionary changes in body decoration over time.

To conclude this section, Keali'i'inohomoku, a dance ethnographer, demonstrates how the structure of Japanese dance movement is partially determined by the spatial limitations of the kimono garment. In so doing, she argues that cloth not only expresses culture but shapes it as well. Thus, through the efforts of these five authors, the reader is presented with a dynamic model for the cross-cultural study of body adornment as a symbolic system, viewed in a specific environmental and situational context, capable of expressing and shaping culture and undergoing change over time.

The section headed "Signs, Symbols and Social Order" follows, with a discussion of the symbolic function of clothing in differentiating sexes; reinforcing kinship patterns, ethnic identity, and social status; and communicating history. Cole maintains that for the Samburu of Kenya, beads and other forms of dress communicate important information about Samburu culture. The color of the beads is one important criterion. White is linked with Samburu myths of origin; strings of green and black, worn by pregnant women, ensure safe delivery. How beads and other forms of adornment are worn can differentiate sexes and establish social status. When girls marry, they wear iron circlets on their wrists and elaborate beaded necklaces. Men of warrior status (Moran) apply ochre to their uncut hair as a symbol of manhood.
Samburu decorative forms are noticeably distinct from those of surrounding ethnic groups; thus Samburu identity is also validated through their dress.

For the Yoruba of Nigeria, beads also communicate information about history, social identity, and status (Pokornowski); clothing attire serves similar functions for a variety of North American Indian groups (Mauer) and for the Badagra of India (Hockings). In discussing the Badagra, Hockings makes the important point that the ceremonial exchange of cloth serves to reinforce kinship ties, particularly at times when such links are threatened.

The next section, "Man, Masks and Morals," shows that masquerades give heightened meaning to dress symbols and provide channels of communication not permissible in everyday life. For example, the wearing of cloth and masks can conceal the individual's identity and thus permit communication with the spirit community. The nature of the costume can also determine which spirit is to be addressed, as Reinhardt suggests in her description of the varied costumes worn to honor different Mende spirits. However, Reinhardt fails to ask why particular masked spirits dictate certain costume styles.

Drewal addresses this very problem by analyzing the structure of Yoruba Egunung and Gelede masquerade costumes in terms of the specific social aims of the masquerade itself. Egungun honors the ancestors with an elaborate masked display involving cloth. This event, according to Drewal, is sponsored by one family, which purchases the cloths in the market and then has them tailored at a formidable expense. Thus, the costume speaks of the dignity of the sponsoring family whose financial means have permitted them to honor the ancestors with a very expensive display of cloth. The costuming of Gelede conveys a very different message. The aim of this masquerade is to appease the witches believed to be harmful to the community. The Gelede garment, consistent with the more collective concern of the masquerade, is made up of untailored cloths, borrowed from each member of the community.

Masquerade events can also permit the display of antitobavior, role reversal, and exaggeration for emphasis, aimed at assuaging social tensions and establishing social order. Masquerades performed by the Mexicans of the village of Uruapan display three main mask types reflective of important figures in the community: Negritos (emulating colonial overseers), Viejitos (young dressed as elders), and Hortenalos (the gardeners, the dominant workers of the community). Combined, these masked figures provide the theater through which the dynamics of their social structure are acted out. For example, the Hortenalos, who figure most prominently in the event, are accompanied by the Marinquillos, or female escorts, impersonated by men. While said to honor the women who carry food to the Hortelanos at work in the fields, the Marinquillos also provide a social vehicle through which Hortelanos manhood is defined, such as when the Hortelanos behave furiously and rather protectively toward their "female" escorts who offer kisses to spectators.

According to Ottenberg, similar displays are characteristic of Igbo masquerades at Afikpo, Nigeria. There, middle-age members of the ruling men's society parade through the village in costumes impersonating men and women of the village, foreigners, and historical figures such as the Aro slave traders, active in past centuries. Based on the range, interpretation, and sequence of dress types appearing in the procession (e.g., earlier dress forms followed by European varieties), the Afikpo Igbo communicate information about age, status, role-gendering, and history.

Changes in dress and the symbols associated with it are often an indication of culture change, as Houlberg and others demonstrate in the next section, "Cloth of Culture Change." In her discussion of Yoruba hairstyles, Houlberg points out that hair is an important vehicle for communication of information about Yoruba culture. Traditionally, certain hairstyles were strictly used in certain religious cults, others for royalty, and still others to indicate social status. Now the boundaries are not so rigid; any who wish to wear the styles may choose to do so. Houlberg sees this as an indication of change in the religious, social, and political make-up of Yoruba society. The wide range of recent styles referring to popular culture, which she documents, also points to change. However, Houlberg avoids asking why the changes occur amidst culture change.

This question is also overlooked in Miller's discussion of changes in Potawamoni Indian dress and Trofimova's essay about changes in dress among the Azerbaidzhan of the Caucasus. While the intrusion of Western or Russian cultures accounts for changes in dress in these two cultures, neither factor explains why the changes took place.

Wass attempts to answer such a question in her discussion of Yoruba dress. Documenting (through photographs) changes in dress styles over a seventy-five year period, Wass notes a high percentage of European dress during colonial rule, with a noticeable reversal of that trend during the period of Nigerian nationalism. Thus, as a statement about one's political identity, dress is likely to undergo change in response to changing political trends.
Identity is also a motivation for change in Siona dress which, according to Langdon, is traditionally used to establish social ties with powerful figures in the community. Traditionally, such a figure was the shaman, controller of the powerful spirits (Yage). The Siona identified with the shaman by decorating their bodies with painted designs which he had envisioned. These designs continued to appear on cloth attire introduced by the Franciscan missionaries after 1700, suggesting the continued importance of shaman activity following their arrival. However, with the increasing impact of Western culture, the role of the shaman has dwindled and power is now in the hands of the white intruders, economically in control of the area. Dress, continuing to serve as an identity symbol, is now linked to this new power structure and is noticeably Western in character.

Two authors talk about the ill effects that dress changes can have on culture. Ehrenfals editorializes about the psychological, physical, and social abuse that "Western" dress can have on Third World cultures. A more specific problem is dealt with in Roach's article on the impact of technology in the United States in the nineteenth century. Industrial developments in North America encouraged a more functional men's attire. The impracticalness of women's dress, left unchanged, then hampered their abilities to enter male industrial professions. Thus, Roach's findings lend support to Kealiiinohomoku's theory that clothing can shape culture—in this case, the formation of sex roles.

The one section of the book that avoids discussion of the symbolic significance of dress is the final one, "Textile and Technology." In it are detailed accounts of techniques, marketing, and consumption of three different textile industries. The logical ordering of the three articles makes an interesting statement about evolutionary change in textile production. The first is about Yemen weaving tradition, several thousands of years old and seemingly impervious to change (Klein). Sierra Leone resist-dyeing, discussed by Wahlman and Chuta, is again craft of a historical dimension (introduced from the north) but with the addition of new materials, techniques, and an ever-expanding patronage. A totally nonindigenous textile tradition is discussed last, in Neilson's article outlining Manchester produced wax-resist cloths. Initially introduced through trade to West and Central Africa, these British-manufactured textiles are now solely used for African consumption, dictated by the latter's preferences for color, motif, and overall design.

While such material may be of interest, I question the editors' reasons for including this section in a book dealing primarily with cloth and body adornment as communication. In this regard, the section on masks also poses certain problems. While the main theme is dress used in masquerades, many of the authors (Drewal, Esser, and Reinhardt, specifically) go much further in their descriptions of the event, occasionally losing sight of the main focus, the meaning of the dress itself. One article, Houlberg's on Yoruba hairstyles, seems misplaced. While change is implied, her focus is mainly on the symbolic function of hair; thus her article would have been more appropriate in the section on symbols. One final criticism concerns the range of cultures represented: certain of them are over-emphasized at the expense of others. For example, why include four articles on the Yoruba while ignoring entirely the rich traditions of dress and body adornment among the cultures of Indonesia and of the South Sea Islands? The inclusion of these cultures would only enhance the scope of the book, which already points to some interesting cross-cultural patterns regarding dress. For example, in a number of cultures, men take to impersonating women for the purpose of reinforcing male, and thus female, sex roles. Efforts to achieve status may explain why the clothing of men is traditionally more susceptible to change than that of women, as noted by Cole, Wass, and Miller.

The cross-cultural dimension of Cordwell and Schwarz's book makes it a valuable contribution to the literature on dress and culture. Even more valuable is the highly instructive and sensibly expanded symbolic approach to the study of dress which the editors have presented. In spite of my few criticisms of the book, which includes its almost prohibitive price of $70 (and no color plates), I strongly recommend that The Fabrics of Culture be purchased, or at least read, by those interested in learning about dress as a communicator of culture.
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Editors:
Larry Gross
Annenberg School
of Communications
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Jay Ruby
Department
of Anthropology
Temple University
Philadelphia, PA 19122