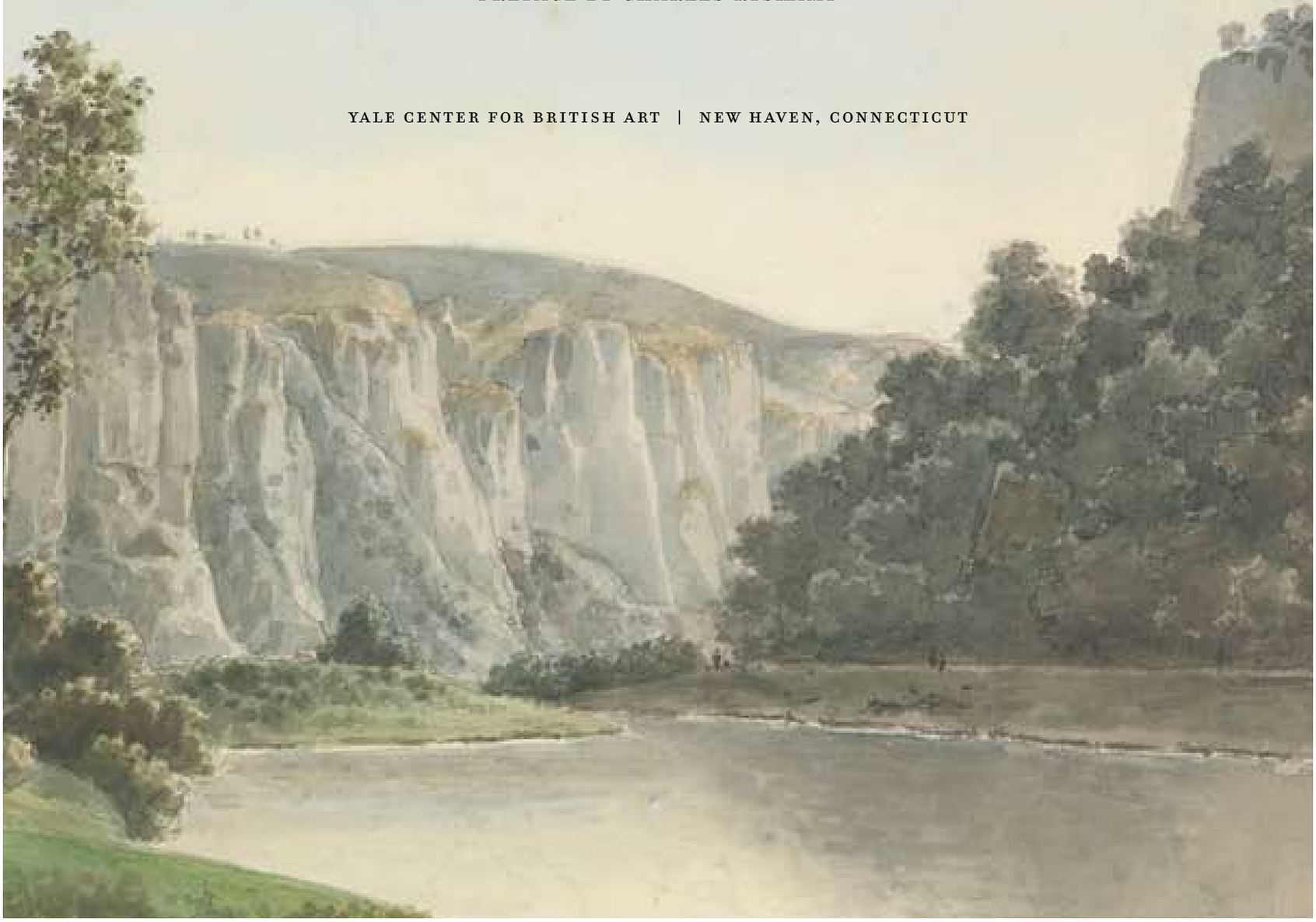
# VARIETIES *of* ROMANTIC EXPERIENCE

*British, Danish, Dutch, French, and German Drawings from the Collection of Charles Ryskamp*

Matthew Hargraves

PREFACE BY CHARLES RYSKAMP

YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART | NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT



*It is time to show that the arts are cosmopolitan and that all national prejudice is foreign to them.*

DAVID WILKIE TO THE COMTE DE FORBIN, 25 JULY 1824

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# Why I Collect

CHARLES RYSKAMP

My title is stolen from my favorite essayist, George Orwell. His essay "Why I Write" begins: "From a very early age, perhaps the age of five or six, I knew that when I grew up I should be a writer." At the same age I did not know that I would be a collector, but collecting was becoming an essential part of my daily life. Unlike Orwell, who, between the ages of seventeen and twenty-four, abandoned his idea of being a writer, I never gave up collecting.

As much as possible I have devoted my life to the appreciation, study, and teaching of art and literature; to those pursuits I must add, and with equal conviction, collecting. First of all, I was concerned with building my personal library. But my passion for art began well before my commitment to literature. At a very young age I studied the family copy of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and read hundreds of biographies of artists from all ages and from every country in Europe. My earliest recollection of anything at all (when I was about three) is of a book and its engravings: it was Stubbs's *Anatomy of the Horse*. It was not until I was nearly forty years old that I was able to acquire that large volume, a very fine and rare contemporary copy that had belonged to the Grosvenor family, among Stubbs's most important patrons.

Beginning in my days in graduate school at Yale I bought books and manuscripts of British eighteenth-century literature, as well as rare materials that related to geography, topography, periodical literature, and biography in support of those primary texts. I was encouraged in this collecting by eminent Yale scholars like Chauncey Brewster Tinker, Wilmarth S. Lewis, and Herman W. Liebert. Afterward I became even more persistently a collector because of the many days and months I spent with Sir Geoffrey Keynes, the distinguished surgeon and collector of Blake and of English books and art, in London and at his home in Brinkley, near Newmarket. When I was thirteen I had bought a few modern etchings, and just before I went up to Cambridge, I acquired one or two prints by Dürer and Rembrandt for my rooms in college. After meeting Keynes, who had a remarkable group of engravings after Pieter Bruegel the Elder, I was also encouraged to buy those prints and many others.

I have never formally studied art or art history. Mine was self-education in museums and principally in the great print rooms, first of all at the British Museum, but later at the Fitzwilliam, the Ashmolean, the Albertina, Berlin, Munich, Yale, Princeton, and the Fogg. They were my haunts and their curators became my good friends. The print rooms gave me what was the traditional and classic curriculum for scholars, curators, collectors, and dealers, although this was not my purpose in studying there. It was sheer joy.

FIG. 1. Corner of the library in Charles Ryskamp's New York apartment, with a 1969 portrait of him by Cecil Beaton

FIG. 2. The living room in Charles Ryskamp's New York apartment, with two drawings by Edward Lear over the sofa

By the time I was in my late twenties I found that the Old Master prints I admired had grown too expensive for me, and I increasingly sought out drawings. I felt that their immediate, graphic qualities were more to my taste. My reasons for this new, absorbing interest were similar to those well expressed by Goethe, the towering presence dominating much of the literature and philosophical thought of the Romantic period. He particularly appreciated drawings and collected them. Goethe believed that drawings were "invaluable, not only because they give, in its purity, the mental intention of the artist, but because they bring immediately before us the mood of his mind at the moment of creation" (from Goethe's conversations with Eckermann). Goethe discovered in drawings the clearness and "the quiet, serene resolution, in the mind of the artist; and this beneficial mood is extended to us while we contemplate the work." This "beneficial mood" became all important for me in my ordinary daily life, as well as in my hours of scholarship, writing, and teaching.

FOR SOME YEARS, aside from books and the occasional manuscript, I only collected English drawings. It seemed a small step from English literature to English art; above all, it was William Blake and his followers—every aspect of their art and letters—that attracted me. Gradually I looked for the whole range of English draftsmanship from 1700 to 1850, from Skelton to Stubbs to Palmer and Linnell. The artist I was especially excited about was Cornelius Varley.

I first strayed from buying British drawings exclusively because of my discovery of the outstanding department of drawings at Colnaghi's in London. (I had frequented the print department there since the summer before I went up to Cambridge.) The July exhibition at the gallery each year was more wonderful

FIG. 3. The library in Charles Ryskamp's New York apartment

than I could imagine. Before long I tried to buy a late-sixteenth-century colored drawing of the Castle of Tervueren (most frequently attributed to Jan Breughel the Elder). I could not afford it, so I decided to buy it with a very close friend, Eliza Lloyd. We were, however, unsuccessful in our acquisition; thus, my earliest attempt to collect drawings by masters was a failure. But the story has a happy ending. Later this drawing was bought by my friend Miss Alice Tully, and I often saw it in her magnificent apartment in New York. She knew how much the drawing meant to me and bequeathed it to me; today it hangs in my New York apartment.

Patience is more than a virtue when it comes to collecting drawings; it is a necessity. I waited years to acquire works by artists significant to me. For example, I had to wait decades before I was able to buy a work by Corot.

Collecting became a way of extending my knowledge. I bought works by uncommon artists and also uncommon works by celebrated draftsmen. I was attracted to sketches showing aspects of a well-known artist's work that I had not hitherto seen. Collecting gradually became an essential part of my education. It was not so much about ownership as about the opportunity to know. I searched for works that represented little-known corners of my favorite artists' work. I wished to know types of draftsmanship I could not see in the great collections of the Morgan Library or the Metropolitan Museum. I looked for English drawings that even Paul Mellon, in his wide-ranging collection of British drawings, did not have. I had grown to know his drawings as he acquired them one by one, or when he bought whole collections; but now I looked for subjects and themes not often represented in museums and collections.

FIG. 4. The bedroom in Charles Ryskamp's New York apartment

BEFORE MY TENURE at the Morgan Library I had given all of my time to teaching English at Princeton, often combining in my classes the art of Blake, Turner, Constable, and their contemporaries with the literature of their time. Only later in life did I have a little more time for collecting and a bit more money than I had from my teacher's salary. Even then, my finest drawings most often had to be acquired through exchange of two or more lesser works that I had purchased many years earlier. During my years as director of the Morgan Library (1969–87) I had to avoid any conflict of interest. But in those years I also had little opportunity to build my personal collection. I had to spend more than half of each year in fund-raising. I also did some teaching—in many years giving a graduate seminar at Princeton; and I was coeditor of ten volumes of English literature of the late eighteenth century for the Clarendon Press, Oxford.

For my literary research I traveled all over Britain, working in private libraries, county record offices, and large and small university and town libraries. Wherever I went I would try to find a little time for bookshops, antique shops, and galleries. Many dealers, especially those in London, became friends, and I depended on them as much as I had on my teachers and fellow students for my knowledge of literature and art. I was fortunate to be able to make expeditions with celebrated collectors like Geoffrey Keynes and

A. N. L. Munby, the distinguished librarian of King's College, Cambridge.

There were shops close at hand for more numerous visits. One such place was just outside the gates of the British Museum, where I spent hundreds of hours studying, usually in the summer months. At the end of many days there I frequented the old-fashioned dealer in prints Craddock and Barnard, in Museum Street. When I was at Cambridge, I often stopped at Gabor Cossa's antiques shop, across the street from the Fitzwilliam Museum, after the study rooms there had shut. I bought my first drawings from Cossa: two large pen-and-wash drawings by Edward Lear depicting the Bay of Naples, from the sea and from land. They have always hung over the sofa in my living room in any home that I have had.

If I visited dealers or auction houses with another collector, I resolved to buy nothing myself so that there could not possibly be any rivalry between us. Most of the time this could not happen anyway, for my friend was looking for art or books that I could never afford. I often went to galleries with Paul Mellon. I still have a vivid recollection of going to introduce him to a new young dealer who had temporarily taken a flat in London several flights up a steep staircase. This was Bill Drummond, whose galleries—especially the Covent Garden Gallery—later gave us so much pleasure. Most of the drawings we saw in that first visit were very inexpensive, and Paul was like a small boy in a candy shop, buying one after another. I watched with a little envy: for once I could have afforded one or two drawings. Our strong interests in English drawings were also shared with John Baskett, then beginning as a dealer in London. In my first years of collecting drawings I never had a friendship with dealers on the Continent comparable to that which I found in London with Bill Drummond, John Baskett, and Richard Day.

AFTER SOME YEARS of collecting only English drawings, I turned first to German Romantic art, a world that had fascinated me but was scarcely represented in American museums. A little later I also began to buy Danish drawings, for no one I knew had even thought of buying them. Beginning with my first trip to Copenhagen, I was in love with Danish art of the Golden Age (1800–1850), and drawings from that country and era have given an unusual focus to my collection. I was fortunate above all to be able to find so many examples of the draftsmanship of Eckersberg and Købke. When I saw a drawing that truly excited me, like Købke's portrait of Sophie Frimodt, it took me less than a minute to decide to buy it. I could act just as quickly when I saw a striking drawing by an unknown artist; so many in my collection are by artists whose works I had never seen before and have never seen again, like the drawing of a seated man by Hilaire Le Dru, which I purchased in an instant. Most of these are early-nineteenth-century French works, not Danish or British or German.

My own perspective on drawings broadened with the wide range of fields I grew to know at the Morgan Library; I found my old outlook too narrow. I might have partially agreed with Orwell, although I would never have put my beliefs so strongly: he objected to "the insularity of the English, their refusal to take foreigners seriously" (from "The Lion and the Unicorn"). I would certainly have seconded what David Wilkie wrote in a letter of 1824 to the comte de Forbin: "It is time to show that the arts are cosmopolitan and that all national prejudice is foreign to them." That time had come for me.

THE FIVE OR SIX HUNDRED drawings I own or have owned fall into three periods: 1500–1790, 1790–1850, and 1850–the present. Almost all of them are European drawings, chiefly British, French, German, Danish, and Dutch. For the Romantic period represented in this volume, more than one-third (over seventy) are British; the next largest group is French (forty-nine); and there are about the same number (approximately twenty-five) for both the Germanic and Danish schools. I have had the most difficulty finding Dutch drawings of this period that were attractive to me; there are only eleven Dutch works in this volume. There are also a handful of prints, in part because of my early collecting, but chiefly to reflect the importance of this form of graphic art in the spread of Romanticism. Some of the impressions have never been exhibited before, while others, especially the Danish prints by Købke,

are almost unknown outside their countries of origin. Two of the prints, by Stubbs and Turner, are masterpieces of British printmaking. They all enforce important aspects of Romanticism.

The chronological limits in this book are essentially between two revolutions: those of 1789 and 1848. There are two or three works from before 1790, and a few more from after 1848. Some of the drawings illustrative of the major themes were created in the 1850s, and one or two as late as 1870. The Romantic period was not only a time of change and ferment, but also one with peaceful interludes. It also produced a wide variety of styles: Gothic, Troubadour, Biedermeier, rustic, courtly, sentimental, classical, Neoclassical, and finally the beginnings of Realism. Chronologically the volume ends with an important and beautifully preserved drawing by Daubigny of a beached boat on the shore at Étaples.

The year 1848 remains key for reasons artistic as well as political. It is represented here by full-length portrait drawings by Bonvin and Menzel. These works show a new realism, which may be owing to the changing political and social movements. Certainly this difference was true in the case of the young Menzel, whose drawings of 1848 begin to stretch beyond his previous boundaries of genre. The many portraits from this era may be seen as an affirmation of the individual, as has been claimed, in such turbulent times.

Among the drawings here are one of an Austrian soldier (by Adam) and a Danish soldier (by Sonne). There are, however, no depictions of the horrors of war, no dead and decaying bodies, as in Menzel's drawings of the Prussian-Austrian war of 1866. Wars and revolutions not only define the beginning and end of this Romantic period, they also dominate the middle year of 1830, which saw the March Revolution in Berlin and the July Revolution in France. Yet you will not find in this book sketches of riots or of crowds suffering food shortages. There are no views of turmoil in the cities or of a bleak existence in the face of industrialization. Such works of art are rare in the early nineteenth century, and most drawings are without political commitment. My drawings show the people and their landscapes in peace and in permanence. They often visualize the essence of things rather than transience and conflict. They are not reportage, nor are they characterized by stark realism; they are transmutations of an object into art.

The themes of this volume seem to me to be pervasive in northern Europe in the Romantic era. The solitary tree, the blasted tree, the tree stump with a few sprigs emerging; these may imply death or they may suggest new growth, new life. Individual watercolor studies of fruit or leaves may be essentially botanical, but usually they are portraits of inanimate objects. There are many beached boats and studies of small skiffs. There are plain, direct images of men and women that may make you think of early photography. There are standing figures that, like single trees separated from forests, may suggest loneliness. As Paul Nash wrote about his paintings of trees, "True, I have tried to paint trees as though they were human beings" (to Gordon Bottomley, August 1912). One will find also human figures turned away and seen from the back (*Rückenfiguren*) or in deep sleep. The Romantic artist may have found his source in seventeenth-century Dutch drawing (in works, for example, by Lievens—I own one portrait of a girl by him—or Rembrandt or Van Goyen). But inspiration may just as well have come from daily life in his home country or in his travels.

Almost all of the single motifs from nature shown here were considered necessary to the ideals of landscape art and were emphasized in plein-air sketching of the early 1800s. The treatise that was most important in establishing these goals (particularly for French landscape painters) was Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes's huge work of nearly 650 pages, *Élémens de perspective pratique à l'usage des artistes* (1800). Valenciennes also stressed observing the sky at different times of the day, and such studies from several countries are illustrated here.

There was an artistic bond between England and France from time to time in the early years of the nineteenth century. British artists like Bonington and Francia (French-born) did much of their finest work across

FIG. 5. The corner of the living room in Charles Ryskamp's New York apartment, looking toward a small hall

the Channel. Constable received some of his important early recognition in France, especially from Géricault and Delacroix. Although a few English Romantics like Coleridge may be indebted to Germany and German thought, generally the philosophical and religious worlds did not engage the English unless they were searching for the sublime or profound. And—much as I have tried—I have found it almost impossible to acquire such works or dark, tragic drawings, whether English or Continental.

If I could have afforded it, I would have wished above all to have bought a tragic scene by Géricault. I have never found such a drawing by him, and if I had, I would have acquired it for the Morgan Library during the eighteen years I was there. Romantic drawings of a bold and somber nature are rare, and so the extremes of experience are rarely seen in my drawings. Most of them reveal a sunnier view of life; that is, until artists like Fuseli, Blake, and Delacroix portray a world that grows out of their inner visions. In some cases man and nature are drawn from a spiritual impulse, what G. F. Kersting recognized as the "inner eye" of his friend Caspar David Friedrich. I believe the preeminent moment of Romanticism—at least French Romanticism—is represented by the lion hunts of the early 1850s by Delacroix. The lion hunt illustrated here portrays the ultimate tangle of man and beasts, in one wild jumble, where it is scarcely possible to determine what is animal and what is human. There is also a large double-sided study by Fuseli showing the naked Job subjected to a blistering plague, while the verso of the drawing derives from the beginning of the *Nibelungenlied* as Siegfried fights the serpent, which has half devoured the hero's horse. Both of these drawings, which seem to me ultimate visionary depictions, represent terrific aspects of Romanticism and conclude this volume.

IF I DID NOT have to be concerned about conflicts of interest with my professional life, and if I were not originally confined in my collecting to what I could spare from my salary, I would have tried to buy more sixteenth-century Italian and seventeenth-century Dutch drawings. I have only been able to acquire a small collection of Dutch works of that time, principally of the school of Rembrandt, and a scattering of drawings from earlier than 1750 of other European schools. I had hoped also to find more drawings by Northern artists while they were working in Italy. Longing for Italy and then savoring every bit of the Italian sun, the light, the warmth, and the sweep of the landscape were fundamental to the lives of most of the Romantic artists. Over the years I have been able to buy a few such drawings, and, fortunately, as this text was going to press, I bought a watercolor by an obscure Danzig artist showing Ariccia, one of the favorite Romantic Italian retreats, with the large sky deep orange from the setting sun. The town and countryside are in darkness, and the dome of the great Bernini church is silhouetted against the fading light.

I collected Romantic drawings because they made me happy and often pictured man and nature in rapport. I wish I could have bought a great abstract watercolor by Turner, one where he has burned through outward forms to the essence of land and sea and air. I should have liked to have one of the sublime cavern interiors by Cozens. These drawings have always been far beyond my means. At the opposite extreme from either the completely abstract or the truly terrible, there are a few humorous drawings here; but very few. I have always looked for drawings that are witty, but not caricature—not the bolder humor of Gilray or Rowlandson or Daumier. I have found two or three that are delicately humorous, with slight exaggeration, or that grow out of amusing episodes.

One of the drawings that gives me much pleasure is German—utterly German, yet playful and provoking laughter. It is by Friedrich Voltz and shows the performers in a *Schubertiad*, or home concert. I like to associate this drawing with Weimar, although I have no evidence that is was produced there. Another German drawing is also humorous. The artist may be either Franz or Johannes Riepenhausen, and the subject may be an actor from the end of Schiller's drama *The Robbers* (1781). This also has associations for me with Weimar, which is above all the city of Goethe and Schiller, who still seem to live in its buildings and streets. From the time of Bach it became the home of many composers

and musicians, including Liszt and Berlioz. Weimar (not Vienna or London) is my favorite Romantic city. It has wit and humor as well as elegance and seriousness. It has poetry; it has music.

England and Germany, Weimar and Romanticism. Sometimes there is an incongruous mixture of art and life resulting in misapprehensions. Such happenings remind me of the stories of the eccentric, amusing Englishman Lord Berners. Like so many Englishmen he went to Weimar to study German language, literature, and philosophy. He describes his professor of German in conversation with a Scottish spinster, gaunt and ungainly, a fellow boarder in his pension. The professor sometimes lapsed into English and was in the habit of referring to the Holy Ghost as the "holy goat, which very much distressed Miss Macpherson."

Such a Germanic world was not always understood by English or French artists and poets. You may find that the Romantic observations or visions of the various European countries do not always coexist easily, though the artists choose similar themes. Yet these favorite representations are for the most part remarkably alike. Toward the end of this period, the varieties of experience are transformed into brilliant comedy in *Vanity Fair* (1847), Thackeray's great novel, where in the last chapters the characters are united in Weimar, which has become "the little comfortable Ducal town of Pumpernickel."

IT GIVES ME a very special pleasure to show my drawings and watercolors at the Yale Center for British Art. In my own home it is not possible to see them chronologically or according to country or theme. I have never before known an exhibition to show Romantic drawings of all of these countries together. I have long hoped for such an exhibition, and it is a rare privilege to have this wish fulfilled.

Drawings cover my walls; they are arranged according to no plan except for my delight and that of my guests. Smaller drawings—often too small for showing on the walls—have always been favorites of mine. My choosing them was no doubt encouraged in my long, close friendship with Paul and Bunny Mellon, who also cherished small and intimate works. In this volume you will find a very finished drawing by Sir David Wilkie no bigger than a postage stamp; an only slightly larger view of Chatsworth by David Cox (given by one member of the Cavendish family to another); and a brilliant, miniature, fantasy landscape by Oehme.

My favorite room in any of the Mellons' houses (or, I think of *any* living room or library in *any* house) was Paul Mellon's office on the ground floor of their New York house. I spent many hours there over the years, and I knew that room from the time it was shown in the architectural drawings for the house until its walls had been covered with small pictures. Paul loved his wall of oil sketches by Constable, and the tabletops held small jewels like the Stubbs enamel of a sleeping leopard and Blake's magical white horse. I was supremely happy in that room. My rooms in New York are similarly crowded to the ceiling with drawings; every bit of space seems to have been filled with art.

I should like to dedicate this catalogue to Paul Mellon's memory and to that of his stepdaughter Eliza Lloyd Moore, both of whom shared their love of drawings with me. This book comes as well with the hope that it may inspire some new collectors of drawings, or young persons just beginning to live with them. There are still amazing opportunities to acquire works of the nineteenth century. Several of mine were bought as this manuscript was being prepared for press. The book and exhibitions are fundamental to my purpose in collecting: I collect in order to give to others. I have already given to museums as many works of art as are shown here (often presented in memory of strong supporters of the institution), and many more books and manuscripts. I plan to share what I have collected as long as I live and, if possible, bequeath what is left of my collections to public institutions. I have always believed that giving, as much as acquiring, is the principle of my collecting.

# Introduction: The Varieties of Romantic Experience

In 1824 the comte de forbin, director of the French Royal Museums, invited David Wilkie to contribute to the upcoming Salon in Paris. Forbin was working hard to ensure that the Salon would feature leading British artists; Sir Thomas Lawrence, John Constable, and Anthony Vandyke Copley Fielding had already committed to participating. In a letter of 25 July, Wilkie declined the invitation but warmly endorsed the spirit that lay behind Forbin's generous offer: "It is time to show that the arts are cosmopolitan," he declared, "and that all national prejudice is foreign to them."[1]

Despite Wilkie's absence, the Salon of 1824 proved his conviction that the arts had achieved a new state of cosmopolitanism with the emergence of the trend that was already known as Romanticism. The admiration expressed for British artists in general, and especially for Lawrence, demonstrated that even the Salon, an event traditionally dedicated to proclaiming French cultural achievement and preeminence, now recognized the accomplishments of other nations.[2] As Marcia Pointon has noted, this seminal Salon was the *effect* of the growing appreciation of British art in France, not its cause, and should be seen as "a manifestation of the communicating, traveling, looking and learning that had been going on scarcely noticed" between British and French artists.[3]

But what exactly was this cosmopolitan phenomenon called Romanticism? Even at the time commentators remarked that they could not pin it down. As early as 1798 the German scholar Friedrich von Schlegel warned against any attempt to circumscribe the movement. "The Romantic kind of poetry is still in the process of becoming: that, in fact, is its real essence: that it should forever be becoming and never be perfected. It can be exhausted by no theory and only a divinatory criticism would dare to want to characterize its ideal."[4] Others agreed. After visiting the Salon in 1824, Émile Deschamps declared that Romanticism defied elucidation and that his attempts to shed light on it would only make the shadows stronger.[5] Historians in the twentieth century even went so far as to dismiss the notion of something called *Romanticism*. In an influential article of 1924, Arthur Lovejoy claimed that the term had been used to mean so many different, even contradictory, things that it was effectively meaningless. Better to abandon the term, he argued, and to think of a "plurality of Romanticisms" instead of a unified movement embracing artists across the world.[6] But more recently there has been a rejection of this fragmentary view. Thomas McFarland, for instance, contends that simply because one cannot reduce Romanticism to a tidy definition does not make the term misleading or prove that the movement was not a genuinely international phenomenon.[7]

That Romanticism cannot be easily explained, that "it cannot be exhausted by any theory," is symptomatic of the era's reaction against the universalizing attitude

of the Enlightenment. The Romantic age saw the collapse of many of the cherished assumptions that had underpinned eighteenth-century thought. This rejection of Enlightenment optimism and certainty was matched by the dramatic fall of regimes across Europe; a series of political earthquakes rocked the Continent from the French Revolution in 1789 to the revolutions of 1848. This age of flux gave rise to Romanticism's very lack of internal coherence and uniformity. Nevertheless, McFarland has identified some of the multiple characteristics that make up the amorphous Romantic spirit. Among these were a new delight in the particular rather than the general; a pleasure in all things transitory; an acceptance of the inescapable reality of subjectivity; the liberation of the individual imagination; the cultivation of melancholy; and, above all, a persistent sense of undefined longing. Contemporaries certainly recognized the reality of Romanticism even if they couldn't express it, and they understood it as something new. In 1846 Charles Baudelaire declared: "For me, Romanticism is the most recent, the most contemporary expression of beauty." He continued: "To say the word Romanticism is to say modern art—that is intimacy, spirituality, color, aspiration toward the infinite, expressed by every means available to the arts."[8]

In the visual arts, the Romantic spirit was marked by a novel exploration of two worlds: those of nature and of the imagination. Artists across Europe explored these worlds in all manner of ways. As Hugh Honour has argued, "There is no single work of art which exemplified the aims and ideals of the Romantics. . . . There is no paradigmatic Romantic masterpiece."[9] Yet certain themes, many of which are explored in this volume, seem to have preoccupied these artists. An exhibition of this scope dedicated to a thematic exploration of Northern European drawings has never before been attempted, and it is premature to draw conclusions from their combination. Nevertheless, bringing these drawings together may highlight the direct connections between artists, who worked in an age when art took on a distinctively collaborative aspect, as well as the simple affinities in approach between artists who could not possibly have known each other. Above all, it is hoped that these drawings, when taken together, will serve to demonstrate the real cosmopolitanism of Romantic art and the remarkable depth and breadth of the many varieties of Romantic experience.

# The Inner Vision

*Painting, architecture, poetry, and the higher species of eloquence, have invariably degenerated in philosophic ages; because a reasoning spirit, by destroying the imagination, undermines the foundation of the fine arts.*

—FRANÇOIS-RENÉ, VICOMTE DE CHATEAUBRIAND, *The Genius of Christianity*, 1802

*One power alone makes the Poet: Imagination, the Divine Vision.*

—WILLIAM BLAKE, *Annotations to Wordsworth's Poems*, 1815

## *Visions of Landscape*

THE YOUNG WILLIAM BLAKE was often beaten by his father for telling him that he saw angels in the trees and fields.[1] James Blake assumed his son was a liar, and, as Blake aged, the incomprehension of others toward his imaginative visions only increased. Most of his contemporaries would end up dismissing him as a madman, until Linnell and the Ancients discovered him later in life. But across Europe the Romantic spirit was manifested in a similar visionary capacity, in the rejection of the Enlightenment's focus on materialism and its faith in the power of reason and the innate benevolence of man. When the apparent triumph of these ideals in France ended in the blood-soaked Place de la Révolution, the Enlightenment's facile optimism was left discredited. Advances in philosophy simultaneously seemed to challenge the primacy of earlier epistemological assumptions, especially the empiricism of John Locke (1632–1704). The customary idea that art was based on the empirical imitation of nature—whether common or abstracted to the ideal—was profoundly shaken by the advent of German idealism stemming from Kant. Kantian philosophy decisively undermined commonsense assumptions about the relationship between subject and object, introducing the idea of a gulf between nature as perceived by the senses (the phenomenal world) and the unknowable realm of nature as things in themselves (the noumenal world). Artists responded by escaping from the confines of pure materialism and turning to things both above and within. Friedrich, for instance, expressed the conviction that "The artist should not only paint what he sees before him, but also what he sees within him. If, however, he sees nothing within him, then he should also omit to paint that which he sees before him. Otherwise his pictures will resemble those folding screens behind which one expects to find only the sick or even the dead."[2]

We already have seen how Friedrich expressed what he saw within himself by using drawings from his sketchbooks in new compositions that he created from his imagination. Landscapists across Europe began to instill their own views with similarly visionary qualities. Most often, however, this Romantic spirit was manifested in making what was familiar seem unsettling,

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FRÉDÉRIC SORRIEU (French, 1807–ca. 1881), *Woodland Scene with a Cavern*, 1871. Black chalk on wove paper, 11½ x 8⅜ in. (29.2 x 21.3 cm). Inscribed in black chalk, lower left: *LE GOUFFRE DE COURTANVAUT/ F. Sorrieu, Mai 1871*

based on disturbing assumptions about the natural world and the place of man within it. Just such a disconcerting note is struck in a graphite drawing by Frédéric Sorrieu (1807–ca. 1881) of a cavern discovered deep within a wood **[cat. 180]**. Sorrieu was principally a lithographer, but his astonishingly detailed drawing, which exhibits a heightened, almost distressing, realism, seems to owe something to the advent of photography, ushered in during the late 1830s by the daguerreotypes of Louis Daguerre (1787–1851) in France and by Henry Fox Talbot's "photogenic drawings,"—soon to be replaced by calotypes—in Britain. This drawing, however, seems to go beyond realism to an almost obsessive and unwholesome degree. In this respect it can be related to what Beaumont Newhall has called the "fever for reality [that] was running high" in the nineteenth century.[3]

A drawing of a forest interior by Wilhelm Georgy (1819–1887) presents a similarly unsettling view of nature, in which it is almost alarming in its fecundity **[cat. 181]**. The extreme lushness of Georgy's forest recalls the intensely described nature in Chateaubriand's seminal Romantic novellas *Atala* (1801) and *René* (1802), in which the American wilderness, evoking a lost paradise, is cast with a visionary fervor. For example, he writes in *Atala*:

> *Overhanging the streams, grouped together on rocks and mountains scattered in the valleys, trees of every shape, of every hue and every odor, grow side by side and tangle together as they tower up to heights which weary the eye. Wild vines, bignonias and colocynths, twine around the foot of these trees, scale the boughs and crawl out to the tips of the branches, swinging from the maple to the tulip tree and from the tulip tree to the hollyhock, forming a thousand bowers, a thousand vaults and a thousand porticoes.*[4]

An analysis of Chateaubriand's landscapes might equally apply to Georgy's drawing: "the very lushness of that description, its anti-classical and exotic fullness, is related to the paradise tradition of lovely landscapes."[5] But lushness and fecundity are forever on the verge of chaos and decay, and the Baroque fondness for exploiting this liminal space was revived by the Romantics. This spirit is found in the remarkable *Kraüterblätter*

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WILHELM GEORGY (German, 1819–1887), *Forest Scene*, n.d. Graphite on thin, off-white wove paper, sheet: 8½ x 5½ in. (21.6 x 14 cm); image: 7⅛ x 4⅜ in. (18.1 x 11.1 cm). Stamped, lower right: Atelier Georgy

etchings made by Kolbe in the 1820s **[cat. 53]**. In one example from the series, Kolbe represented a gnarled tree set alongside, and almost in confrontation with, rampant burdock plants **[cat. 182]**. This imaginary scene suggests nature entirely outside the cultivation of man; however, rather than a lush paradise it is a wild and fetid environment. It brings to mind the words Shakespeare gave Hamlet when he called the world "an

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CARL WILHELM KOLBE (German, 1759–1835), *A Tree with Giant Vegetation*, after 1820.
Etching on wove paper, 6½ x 5¼ in. (16.5 x 13.3 cm)

unweeded garden that grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature possess it merely," or George Crabbe's antipastoral poem "The Village" (1783), in which he describes how "Rank weeds, that every art and care defy,/ Reign o'er the land and rob the blighted rye:/ There thistles stretch their prickly arms afar,/ And to the ragged infant threaten war."[6]

This sense of estrangement from paradise in even the most familiar and commonplace surroundings is captured in a watercolor by Robert Streatfeild (1786–1852) of a coastline at Boulogne in northern France **[cat. 183]**. Streatfeild was a naval officer, having reached the rank of captain after joining the navy in 1799 at the age of thirteen.[7] It is likely that the Royal Navy trained Streatfeild to draw in order to gather intelligence on the topography of the coastlines of France and other French territories, something of paramount importance during the Napoleonic Wars. As Huon Mallalieu has pointed out, however, Streatfeild left England just a couple of months after enlisting in the navy, which raises questions about when and from whom he could have received lessons.[8] He retired in 1815, and beginning in the early 1830s he produced what have rightly been called "highly original" and "eerily intense watercolors" made on travels through Europe.[9] Streatfeild traveled extensively through northern France, Belgium, and into Darmstadt, Germany, where he presented an album of his watercolor drawings to the grand duchess Matilde in 1842.[10]

In the early 1840s Streatfeild was a regular visitor to Boulogne, a fashionable resort town, which John Murray noted in his 1854 guide to France was "one of

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CAPTAIN ROBERT STREATFEILD (1786–1852), recto: *Coastline with Figures on a Rocky Beach at Boulogne*, 1844; verso (not illustrated): graphite outlines of rock formations at Boulogne. Watercolor on wove paper, 4 3/8 x 6 13/16 in. (11.2 x 17.3 cm). Dated in black ink, lower right: *1844*. Inscribed, verso, in graphite, lower right: *the weak point* [?] *Boulogne*

the chief British colonies abroad," adding approvingly, "almost every third person you meet is either a country man or speaking our language."[11] In 1844 Streatfeild drew a lonely and diminutive figure scrambling across the rocky beach, almost certainly at Cap Gris-Nez just along the coast from the town itself. In another view of the beach made the previous year, he had noted on the back of the drawing that the rock formation he was drawing was an "antediluvian monument."[12] The man is a *Rückenfigur*, a figure seen from behind, which was, as we have seen, a characteristically Romantic motif. He seems alone, save for a few distant figures whose estrangement only serves to emphasize the sense of isolation. As Joseph Koerner has put it, the *Rückenfigur* has a "paradoxical nature as site of both our identification with, and our isolation from, the painted landscape."[13] The solitary figure seems on the verge of being overwhelmed by the vastness of the jagged rocks that separate him from his companions. The antediluvian nature of the landscape noted by the artist and the man's struggle across the barren rocks both suggest a view of nature as corrupted by the sin of Adam. Streatfeild undoubtedly embraced a distinctly Germanic approach to landscape, which chimes with the poet Novalis's recommendation to turn the familiar into the unfamiliar. This approach also has an affinity with the desire expressed by Coleridge and Wordsworth to take "situations from common life" but to "to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual way."[14]

The Romantic desire to shake the heart with the

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BERNHARD STANGE (German, 1807–1880), *Moonlit Landscape with Graveyard*, n.d.
Pen and brush with black ink on wove paper, 9 3/8 x 12 in. (23.8 x 30.5 cm)

unfamiliar and strange finds extreme expression in a view of an ancient graveyard in moonlight by Bernhard Stange (1807–1880), which even includes a dead horse in the foreground **[cat. 184]**. Much of the impetus behind this supernatural imagery came from the enduring popularity of pre-Romantic graveyard poetry, in particular the work of the British poet Edward Young (1683–1765). Young's "Night Thoughts" (1742–46) had a lasting influence across Europe, especially on the development and themes of German Romanticism.[15] Stange's use of ink with the brush imbues the scene with an eerie sfumato.

These developments in German landscape art were manifested particularly in the work of Friedrich and his followers, and Streatfeild must have been aware of their work. Friedrich was appointed a professor in the Dresden Academy in 1824 but was never invited to deliver formal lectures, so his influence came through lessons to private pupils. One of them, Ernst Ferdinand Oehme (1797–1855), imbibed his teacher's

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ERNST FERDINAND OEHME (German, 1797–1855), *Fantasy Landscape with a Ruined Church*, n.d.
Watercolor on wove paper, 3⅝ x 4 in. (9.2 x 10.2 cm). Attached monogram lower right. Reproduced actual size

fondness for the symbolic possibilities of ruins, as is evident in his watercolor of a ruined Gothic church or abbey in the woods **[cat. 185]**. As we have seen, in the mid-eighteenth century a vogue for ruins began across Europe. The greatest Continental exponent of this imagery was Friedrich, in whose work Gothic ruins typically appear more as "an image of transience than of restoration."[16] Oehme's drawing conveys more ambiguity. Is this a church that has rightly sunk into decline and been reclaimed by the supremacy of nature? Or is this a mournful scene of nature overtaking a monument of civilization? The carefully composed coloring, which is clearly abstracted rather than observed from nature, gives the impression of a "certain colouring of imagination," thus preventing us from taking it as a straightforward topographical view, such as Edward Dayes's watercolor of the old barn at Abbotsbury **[cat. 100]**. Such ambiguity was characteristic of Oehme, whom the German painter and draftsman Ludwig Adrian Richter (1803–1884) cast as a figure who might have stepped straight from a Friedrich painting, calling him a "night bird who was happiest flitting to and fro at dusk and at night."[17]

Friedrich and his circle turned to German landscapes during and after the Napoleonic Wars just as their confreres in Britain and Denmark were turning to their nations' native scenery. This was its own form of turning inward, of seeking what lay within one's own native place to express the spirit supposedly shared by a people. The traditional supremacy of the Italian landscape was increasingly challenged as artists sought landscapes that expressed the soul of their own countries. This nationalist spirit lies behind a curious drawing by Theodor Markus Rehbenitz (1791–1861) of an imaginary oratory set within a remote and fantastic landscape **[cat. 186]**. The landscape is clearly derived

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THEODOR MARKUS REHBENITZ (German, 1791–1861), *Fantastic Landscape with a Monk Crossing a Bridge*, n.d.
Pen with black, gray, and brown ink on wove paper, 6⅝ x 5⅞ in. (16.8 x 14.9 cm). Inscribed verso: *Ramboux*

from early German sources, especially the works of Albrecht Altdorfer. A solitary, cowled monk, recalling Dürer's celebrated engraving of St. Anthony the Hermit (1519), hastens from the oratory over a bridge and out into a landscape. The very style of draftsmanship, fortified with a variety of colored inks, is obviously intended to evoke early woodcuts, creating a visionary association that celebrates the German spirit.

*The Interior World*

In 1832 Delacroix left Paris for Morocco in the company of a diplomatic expeditionary team under the leadership of the comte de Mornay. This excursion was crucial to his artistic development. As Lee Johnson has suggested, "Delacroix's journey to North Africa in 1832 was arguably the most important single event in his life

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EUGÈNE DELACROIX (French, 1798–1863), *A Moroccan Interior*, 1832.
Watercolor and gouache over graphite on wove paper, 3 13/16 x 5 7/8 in. (9.7 x 14.9 cm).
Inscribed variously, in graphite: *daurer; drap; au avant/ bors ou/ al frauger/ vert loin; oisax; rouge/ rouge/ bo/ bleu/ r/ b.*
Estate stamp in red ink, lower left: E.D. Reproduced actual size

in terms of the influence it had on his art."[18] By February he had become entranced by Moorish architecture. On the twenty-third of that month he wrote from Tangier: "One must despair at giving an idea of the charming details of the painting of their buildings and of the charming proportions of their architecture."[19] He had no access to Arab homes, however, since he was barred entry for being a Christian. His knowledge of interiors, as in the case of this watercolor study **[cat. 187]**, came through Jewish families who allowed him into their homes through the good offices of an embassy employee named Abraham Benchimol.[20] These small studies became the "springboards for orientalist pictorial fantasies," serving as both a visual record of hidden, interior worlds and a means for the artist to open up his own inner vision. This watercolor study of a Moroccan interior was also one of the "hundreds" of Delacroix's drawings, watercolors, and pastels in Degas's collection.[21]

This use of the interior as a metaphor for the inner life—the *Innenleben*—is implicit in a black chalk drawing by Johannes Jelgerhuis (1770–1836) of a young clerk working at a desk by lamplight **[cat. 188]**. Jelgerhuis was a pupil of Barbiers's and shared his teacher's admiration for the Dutch golden age; the image of a young man at work in a lamp-lit interior has been likened to the work of Jan Vermeer (1632–1675).[22] His depiction of a solitary figure inside a darkened space alludes to a long tradition of picturing philosophers, hermits, and sibyls by lamplight, which focuses attention on the life

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JOHANNES JELGERHUIS (Dutch, 1770–1836), *A Young Man Seated at a Writing Desk by Lamplight*, n.d.
Black chalk and gray wash on wove paper, 14 3/8 x 11 7/16 in. (36.4 x 29 cm).
Formerly signed on original mount, in graphite: *J. Jelgerhuis* [cropped]

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HENRY FUSELI (British, 1741–1825), *A Sibyl*, 1792. Graphite on laid paper; verso rubbed with red chalk, 4½ x 5 7/16 in. (11.4 x 13.9 cm). Watermark: Partial letter W. Initialed in graphite, lower right: *H.F.*

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CHARLES GRIGNION (British, 1721–1810) after Henry Fuseli (British, 1741–1825), *A Sibyl*, 1792. Line engraving on laid paper, sheet: 4¼ x 5¼ in. (10.8 x 13.3 cm) [irregular sheet]; plate: 3½ x 4⅜ in. (8.9 x 11.1 cm)

of the mind or the soul. A direct reference to this earlier tradition is found in Henry Fuseli's small drawing of a sibyl **[cat. 189]**, which was designed as a vignette for Henry Hunter's English translation of *Essays on Physiognomy* by Johann Caspar Lavater (1741–1801). In January 1793 the publisher John Murray released the twenty-sixth installment of the essays, which included Fuseli's sybil in reverse in an engraving by Charles Grignion (1721–1810) **[cat. 190]**.[23] The pensive figure hunched over an open book was possibly taken from Altdorfer's *Thinking Man*, an early German print of the kind that had an important influence on the Nazarenes.[24] Either Fuseli or Grignion colored the reverse of the drawing with red chalk in order to trace the counterproof from which Griginion made his engravings; two proofs of this print are also in the Ryskamp collection.[25]

The idea of the solitary scholar working late into the night was expressed most memorably by John Milton (1608–1674) in his description of the studious life in *Il Penseroso* (1631), a text beloved by Blake and his circle: "Or let my lamp at midnight hour/ be seen in some high lonely tower."[26] Jelgerhuis's young clerk is engaged in more mundane business than Milton's philosopher, but that his ambitions might be more extensive than his work allows is alluded to through the inclusion of emblematic objects in the Dutch tradition. The clerk's confinement within a small interior is contrasted with the wider horizons beyond suggested by the large map hanging on the wall behind the young man. He is not quite the oppressed clerk of Charles Dickens's imagination, but his thoughts seem to extend beyond the narrow confines of his desk.

An attempt to draw out the inner life of a sitter was made by John Flaxman in a remarkable portrait of the young Delvalle Lowry (1800–1860) **[cat. 191]**. Delvalle was the daughter of the engraver Wilson Lowry (1760–1824), a member of the British Mineralogical Society and later a founding member of its successor, the Geological Society. In 1796 Wilson Lowry married Rebekah Eliza Delvalle (1761–1848), a fellow mineralogist; they were, incidentally, among the subscribers to the Varley brothers' *Shipping, Fishing Boats, and other Vessels* in 1809.[27] In 1800 Wilson Lowry began working on engravings to illustrate Abraham Rees's *Cyclopaedia*, a project on which Flaxman and Blake would collaborate. The twenty-year project was daunting, and Wilson later enlisted the help of Delvalle in preparing the drawings for the engraved plates.[28] Delvalle was by then a published author on geological and mineralogical subjects; her first work, *Conversations on Mineralogy*, was published in 1822. In 1825 she married John Varley, and the couple enjoyed a long and happy marriage. Flaxman's portrait of Delvalle must have been drawn about 1815 given her apparent age.[29] It was made in a sketchbook that Flaxman reserved for some of his most private drawings, studies that were not connected

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JOHN FLAXMAN (British, 1755–1826), *Delvalle Lowry*, ca. 1815. Graphite on cream wove paper, laid down on another sheet, 6¾ x 5¼ in. (17.2 x 13.3 cm). Inscribed in graphite on the original mount, lower left: *Delvalle Lowry*; lower right: *Flaxman*; inscribed verso, in graphite, in a later hand: *Delvalle Elizabeth Rebecca Varley (1800–1860)/ Daughter of the Engraver Wilson Lowry/ & 2nd Wife of John Varley)*.

to sculptural commissions or projects for engraving. The album from which this sheet is taken included small graphite portraits of the Lowry family. Flaxman must have been struck by the force of Delvalle's mind, despite her youth, for this erudite young woman has been posed as Polyhymnia, the muse of sacred hymns, who was customarily posed in this pensive manner, with her head in her hand and an elbow on a column. The celebrated antique sculpture of the muse, in which she is posed in just this manner (Capitoline Museum, Rome), would have been familiar to Flaxman from his time in Italy. Despite the small scale and informality of the portrait, Flaxman went beyond external appearance and captured the inner world of Delvalle's formidable mind.

Flaxman was perhaps the best-known British artist in Europe, and his influence on German draftsmanship was particularly strong, especially after his illustrations to Homer, first published in 1793, received the endorsement of both Goethe and the Romantic theorist August von Schlegel. One German reviewer remarked that Flaxman was "a shining star . . . in England's artistic heaven."[30] Schlegel argued that the abstract linearity of Flaxman's style spoke directly to the viewer's imagination by involving the mind in completing the image.[31] The Nazarenes in Rome also appreciated his illustrations because it was widely observed that his graphic style displayed a keen appreciation of the Gothic, rather than a pagan classicism.[32] This commitment to linearity was passed on to countless students in Germany once the Nazarenes began to return home and settle into teaching posts in prominent academies.

In 1821 Peter Cornelius became director of the Düsseldorf Academy, where he taught Wilhelm von Kaulbach (1805–1874). Kaulbach's adoption of the chaste Nazarene outline is shown in his graphite self-portrait as a madman, which relates to a series of sketches in the evolution of a major composition titled *Das Narrenhaus (The Madhouse)* **[cat. 192]**. *The Madhouse* was to be the final scene in a series of works modeled on *A Rake's Progress* (1735) by William Hogarth (1697–1764), which also culminated in a scene of inmates at an asylum. Kaulbach never finished his series, but *The Madhouse* was engraved as a single plate in 1835 and became a celebrated print. Admiration for Hogarth was particularly high in Germany in the early nineteenth century, especially among artists in the Nazarene circle.[33] This popularity had been aided by Georg Christoph Lichtenberg's explanatory commentaries on Hogarth, which were published in installments from 1784 to 1796 and helped cement Hogarth's reputation in German-speaking lands. In his discussion of the

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WILHELM VON KAULBACH (German, 1805–1874), *Study of a Madman for "Das Narrenhaus,"* 1835. Graphite on wove paper, 10 x 6⅝ in. (25.4 x 16.8 cm)

final plate of Hogarth's *Rake's Progress*, Lichtenberg described the protagonist as buried alive "among the civic dead" and defined the world of the asylum as but a miniature version of the world outside: "In the Microcosmos where he lives now, affairs are ordered very much as they are in the extended Macro-Bedlam, the world outside."[34] Kaulbach claimed to have taken his subject from a real asylum near Düsseldorf and to have been so moved by the plight of the patients that he produced his composition as a way of resolving his feelings.[35] The scene includes inmates suffering a variety of mental disorders: a religious maniac, a woman with a pretend baby, an obsessive scholar, a figure in despair, and a man who thinks he is a king. The central figure, surrounded by the throng of patients and yet isolated, is the self-portrait of Kaulbach as a brooding madman, for which the drawing is a study. Kaulbach may have felt genuinely moved by the conditions in the madhouse, but he also seems to have used the subject as a form of oblique political satire. The entire composition is structured as a parody of Raphael's *School of Athens* (1510–11) that turns Raphael's celebration of philosophy and culture upside down in a squalid mass of unreason and barbarism.

Kaulbach's teacher, Cornelius, revered Raphael and had helped revive the fresco tradition, and Kaulbach was himself a painter of frescoes. His self-portrait is based on Raphael's figure of the "weeping philosopher" Heracleitus in the *School of Athens*, believed to be a portrait of Michelangelo. In *The Madhouse*, Kaulbach seems to mock his place in the "Macro-Bedlam" of Bavaria ruled by his patron, King Ludwig I, who, though liberal in sentiment, was struggling to contain the opposing political forces within his kingdom, which would eventually force him to abdicate during the revolutions of 1848. It thus conforms to the "paradigmatic image of the solitary and tormented artist—a cherished romantic notion."[36] The subtle satire of the print appears to have done him no harm. Just two years later Kaulbach ousted his master Cornelius from Ludwig's favor and became the new court painter. After Ludwig's abdication, Kaulbach became the influential director of the Munich Academy, a post he held until his death in 1874.

*Blake and Fuseli*

In 1799 William Blake attempted to convey his philosophy to the Reverend Dr. John Trusler (1735–1820). He explained:

> *I know that This World Is a World of IMAGINATION & Vision. I see Every thing I paint In This World, but Every body does not see alike . . . to the Eyes of the Man of Imagination, Nature is Imagination itself. As a man is, So he Sees. As the Eye is formed, such are its Powers. You certainly Mistake, when you say that the Visions of Fancy are not to be found in This World. To Me This World is all One continued Vision of Fancy or Imagination. . . . What is it sets Homer, Virgil & Milton in so high a rank of Art? Why is the Bible more Entertaining & Instructive than any other book? Is it not because they are addressed to the Imagination, which is Spiritual Sensation, & but mediately to the Understanding or Reason? Such is True Painting, and such alone valued by the Greeks & the best modern Artists.*[37]

For Blake, imagination was the world of real essences of which the visible world seen by the physical eye was merely a faint echo. Elsewhere he argued that "This World of Imagination is the World of Eternity. . . . This World is Infinite & Eternal whereas the world of Generation or Vegetation is Finite & Temporal."[38] To make the finite and temporal world of matter the basis of philosophy or art was thus absurd. He had nothing but contempt for those who based their art on these crude empirical principles, such as the watercolorist William Henry Pyne, who asserted in 1806: "The poet, the painter or the dramatist who makes an imaginary nature his model, or any other nature, but the nature of common life, if he lives long, will himself live to see his attempts consigned to oblivion."[39] The neglect Blake suffered in his own lifetime may have made Pyne appear correct, but it was Flaxman and Fuseli who would prove the better prophets. They declared that one day Blake's work "would be as much sought after and treasured in the portfolios of men discerning in art as those of Michael Angelo now."[40]

Blake's point was not that the things of the imagination were fantasies, but that they belonged to a higher



WILLIAM BLAKE (cat. 193 verso, detail)

193 (RECTO)

WILLIAM BLAKE (British, 1757–1827), *Sketches for America and Other Books*, ca. 1793.
Graphite on wove paper, 8 x 10⅝ in. (20.3 x 27 cm).
Inscribed (in a later hand) upper right and on arm lower right: *C-2*; upper left: *2*

193 (VERSO)

WILLIAM BLAKE (British, 1757–1827), *The Lion Lying Down with the Ox*, ca. 1793.
Graphite on wove paper, 8 x 10⅝ in. (20.3 x 27 cm)

level of vision, that of the inner eye. If this approach was found impenetrable to some, he was unabashed. "What is Grand is necessarily obscure to Weak men. That which can be made Explicit to the Idiot is not worth my care."[41] We can instead turn to a passage from John Ruskin, which was not directly addressed to Blake but nonetheless provides an apologia for Blake's art. Ruskin, incidentally, was no unalloyed admirer of Blake by any means and described him as "sincere, but full of wild creeds, and somewhat diseased in the brain."[42] However, his musings on what it means to be faithful when copying nature clarifies the difference between Blake and Pyne:

> *Touching the duty or fitness of altering nature at all, the quarrels which have so woefully divided the world of art are caused only by want of understanding this simplest of all canons: "It is always wrong to draw what you do not see." This law is inviolable. But then, some people see only things that exist, and others see things that do not exist, or do not exist apparently. And if they really* see *these non-apparent things, they are quite right to draw them; the only harm is when people try to draw non-apparent things, who* don't *see them, but think they can calculate or compose into existence what is to them for evermore invisible. If some people really see angels where others see only empty space, let them paint the angels; only let not anybody else think* they *can paint an angel too, on any calculated principles of the angelic.*[43]

And Blake had been seeing angels since he was a boy.

Blake created a mythological world to express his unique philosophy and invented a figure dubbed Urizen to embody the repressive, rationalist, and materialistic philosophy of the age. Urizen was the enemy of all Imagination, who corrupted the natural ability of people to see things in their true essence. Blake was therefore delighted that his work had been "Elucidated by Children, who have taken a greater delight in contemplating my Pictures than I even hoped. Neither Youth nor Childhood is folly or Incapacity."[44] Children had yet to become slaves to Urizen. His vision of childhood should be contrasted to the ruthlessly utilitarian views promoted by Maria Edgeworth, who expostulated against giving fantastical storybooks to children in her book *The Parent's Assistant* (1796). "Why," she demanded, "should the mind be filled with fantastic visions, instead of useful knowledge? Why should so much valuable time be lost? Why should we vitiate their taste, and spoil their appetite, by suffering them to feed upon sweetmeats?"[45] To Blake, this epitomized the spirit of Urizen, which he had denounced in two prophetic books published in 1793.

The books were *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and *America*, the latter being his first to intermingle engraved plates with text, as in a medieval illumination. The poem dealt with the emergence of revolutionary freedom in America through a clash between two figures from Blake's mythology: Orc, the spirit of revolution; and Urizen, the repressive materialist deity. These two figures represented, in turn, America and Albion in Blake's imagination, and his prophecy celebrated American liberty and condemned Britain's repressive society. *America* was conceived at a time when the reform movement in Britain was reaching a climactic moment. Charles James Fox (1749–1806) was the standard-bearer for change, championing the French revolutionaries and leading the call for progressive reforms, including giving dissenters like Blake more representation in government. But with the execution of Louis XVI and the advent of the Terror in France from 1793, a loyalist reaction emerged in Britain, with "Church and King" groups springing up across the country to fight the radicals.[46] In February that year Revolutionary France declared war on Britain, and the government began a crackdown on perceived homegrown "revolutionaries." It was a courageous step to release *America* when the country had decisively shifted away from progressive ideas.

Blake had been working on the prophecy for several years before its final publication. A number of studies for *America* survive, including this double-sided sheet **[cat. 193]**. On the recto are studies of hands, arms, and feet, as well ideas for full figures. The drawings of the man breaking free of his chains and the running woman were both used on the opening page of *America*, where Blake has George Washington describe how "a heavy iron chain/ Descends link by link from

Albion's cliffs across the sea to bind/ Brothers & sons of America." The man soaring upward and breaking his chains thus represents America liberated from all forms of tyranny (political, intellectual, sexual), while the woman flees the "terrible blast" unleashed from Albion in retaliation, which will ignite the flames of war.[47] Blake alludes to these figures further on in the prophecy:

*Let the inchained soul, shut up in darkness*
*and in sighing,*
*Whose face has never seen a smile in thirty*
*weary years,*
*Rise and look out; his chains are loose,*
*his dungeon doors are open;*
*And let his wife and children return from*
*the oppressor's scourge.*

Blake figures the "inchained soul," who awakens to freedom and breaks the bonds of oppression, in terms of resurrection, making a direct quotation from Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* (1536–41) in the Sistine Chapel, which he knew from prints. The image also had a personal source. When his beloved brother Robert died in 1787, Blake claimed to have seen his spirit rise from the bed and pass through the ceiling "clapping its hands for joy."[48]

The verso of the sheet is filled with a slightly later and more detailed compositional study for a design that in the end seems never to have been used. The iconography is, as Geoffrey Keynes put it, "allusive rather than illustrative," reflecting Blake's concerns about oppression as expressed in a number of different poetical works of the period.[49] A boy and a girl accompany a lion and an ox, while behind them sits a bearded figure carrying a crook. The subject appears to relate to an idea first developed in Blake's *Tiriel*, the first of his prophetic books, which, despite being completed about 1789, was never published in his lifetime.[50] The children have been identified as Har and Heva, the parents of all mankind, while the bearded figure is the blind tyrant Tiriel, carrying a crook or whip.[51] Tiriel is, in fact, the son of Har and Heva, but their advanced age has reduced them to a second childhood while Tiriel rules the West as a tyrant.[52] The poem is an attack on oppression in all its forms and contains a bleak picture of the spirit being beaten from a newborn child: "The little lids are lifted & the little nostrils open'd:/ The father forms a whip to rouze the sluggish senses to act/ And scourges off all youthful fancies from the new-born man." The design sketched here appears to allude to a chief theme of *Tiriel*, rendered by Blake as a question: "Why is one law given to the lion & the patient Ox?"[53] For whatever reason Blake lost confidence in the poem, although this question recurs in his *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* as an emphatic statement: "One Law for the Lion & Ox is Oppression."[54] Here, as David Bindman has pointed out, "The domination of the two animals . . . carries, however, the suggestion of a false paradise: a docile peace which allows a tyrant to thrive."[55]

Among Blake's final works was the engraving of a calling card for his friend George Cumberland **[cat. 194]**. Blake had known Cumberland since 1784 and had provided him with illustrations to his essay *Thoughts on Outline* (1796).[56] In 1827 Cumberland commissioned the card from the aging Blake to be decorated with "a few ornaments engraved or etched round my name." It would prove to be Blake's last engraving. The artist was fading rapidly, and, despite vowing to do the card "as soon as Possible," he pointed out his physical infirmity would make this hard: "When you Consider that I have been reduced to a Skeleton from which I am slowly recovering you will I hope have Patience with me."[57] Cumberland sent Blake a copperplate already engraved with his name for the artist to embellish as he chose. It seems, however, that Blake left the plate incomplete when he died in August, for his widow informed Cumberland, "The Card would have been more finished if WB had lived."[58] Despite its apparent lack of finish, the plate is, as Robert Essick has observed, "the final testament" to Blake's faith in the everlasting life of the spirit.[59] He told Cumberland in his final months that his physical body might be "feeble & tottering, but not in Spirit & Life, not in the Real Man The Imagination which Liveth for Ever."[60] The three Fates—Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos—hover in the sky above Cumberland's name, while an angel on the left prepares to cut the thread of life held by another


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WILLIAM BLAKE (British, 1757–1827), *Calling Card for Mr. George Cumberland*, 1827.
Line engraving on wove paper, sheet: 6¼ x 4 in. (15.9 x 10.2 cm); plate: 1⅜ x 3 3/16 in. (3.5 x 8 cm).
Lettered, within image, center: Mr. Cumberland; lower left: W Blake inv & sc:/ A Æ 70 1827. Reproduced actual size

angel on the right. But far from being a source of terror, the "radiant angel" bearing the sickle promises release and fulfillment, a theme echoed below by the captive birds straining to be set free.[61] These Fates are not the terrifying crones of Greek lore but eternally youthful and weightless figures who lead the spirit to everlasting life, the life of Blake's "Imagination." That Blake could fill the most prosaic of objects with such profound meaning, and in such a small space, is a tribute to the extraordinary fertility of his inner vision and his confidence in eternal life. As he told William Hayley when the latter lost his son in 1800: "I lost a brother & with his spirit I converse daily & hourly in the Spirit & See him in my remembrance in the regions of my Imagination. . . . Every Mortal loss is an Immortal Gain. The Ruins of Time build Mansions in Eternity."[62]

In 1818, during the final decade of Blake's life, Cumberland introduced Blake to John Linnell and thus to like-minded young friends and admirers among the Ancients. They all shared Blake's religious view of the world, as George Richmond recalled years later when he declared that the Ancients "all said our prayers, attended church and Trusted wholly in God and were blessed in that Trust."[63] While the religious convictions of Blake's circle were real, they were never uniform, unlike those of the German Nazarenes. Blake himself was alarmingly heterodox in his opinions but had a certain sympathy for Catholicism.[64] Palmer was a High Church Anglican; his father-in-law, Linnell, was a Baptist; Richmond was an evangelical with "rather gloomy views on religion."[65] Edward Calvert (1799–1883), meanwhile, was a self-declared pagan who preferred worshipping at the altar of Pan in his garden to saying prayers in church. Palmer expressed his "daily anxiety for a dear friend . . . who though the most amiable and conscientious of men . . . [is] remaining in deliberate hostility to the gospel of Christ."[66]

Calvert began experimenting with printmaking soon after meeting Blake in 1826.[67] Among Blake's final works was a series of small wood engravings made to illustrate Dr. Robert John Thornton's edition of Virgil. The engravings were also influenced by the work of Giulio Bonasone (ca. 1510– after 1576), an engraver much admired in the Blake circle and in whom Delacroix also had an interest.[68] Calvert began making small copperplate and wood engravings of his own, each pastoral in theme but with religious lettering, which the artist later removed. The original text gave the designs a thin veneer of Christian meaning that was at best only implicit in the designs. In 1829 he abandoned the text as a means of legitimizing his engravings and allowed them to speak with an unabashed paganism, which distanced them from the work of his fellow Ancients.[69] Calvert himself spoke of "a fondness for the earth, and a rather Phrygian mood of regarding it," associating himself with the Phrygian veneration for the Sky-Father and Earth-Mother.[70] He began experimenting with lithography but produced only

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EDWARD CAL VERT (British, 1799–1883), *Ideal Pastoral Life*, 1829. Lithograph on wove paper, 2⅛ x 3½ in. (5.4 x 8.9 cm). Lettered within image, lower right: EDW.D CALVERT./ INVEN.; below image, lower left to lower right: LONDON PUBLISHED OCTOBER 1 MDCCCXXIX BY EDW.D CALVERT XVII RUSSELL ST. BRIXTON RD. Reproduced actual size

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EDWARD CAL VERT (British, 1799–1883), *The Flood*, 1829. Lithograph on wove paper, 2⅛ x 3½ in. (5.4 x 8.9 cm). Lettered within image, lower right: EDW.D CALVERT./ INVEN.; below image, lower left to lower right: LONDON PUBLISHED OCTOBER 1 MDCCCXXIX BY EDW.D CALVERT XVII RUSSELL ST. BRIXTON RD. Reproduced actual size

two examples in this technique, which he published in October 1829: *Ideal Pastoral Life* **[cat. 195]** and *The Flood* **[cat. 196]**.[71] Together they present a meditation on paradise and its loss.

It is unclear why Calvert switched to the lithographic process—which required drawing with greasy ink on stone—since, as one observer has pointed out, the results were virtually indistinguishable from his earlier and later wood engravings.[72] *Ideal Pastoral* depicts a nude shepherdess surrounded by her flock and a companion shepherd in the distance, standing in a fertile landscape made up of "little dells, and nooks, and corners of Paradise" derived from Blake's Virgil engravings.[73] It breathes the Arcadian spirit of "some forgotten age when innocence and pleasure walked hand in hand."[74] *The Flood* represents the antithesis of this pastoral paradise. A man carries a weeping woman over a primitive bridge across a swollen river, while the drowned bodies of a woman and a sheep are swept away beneath them. Though the two prints are pendants, and were presumably intended to form a dialogue of sorts, their precise meaning is unclear and depends upon the order in which the images are treated. The contrast between the stillness of the former and drama of the latter suggests the contingency of any pastoral paradise: that its existence is fragile and belongs to fortune rather than design. But if *The Flood* is considered first, then the paradise of *Ideal Pastoral* appears to emerge as a new creation springing out of the all-consuming deluge, as in the Greek myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha, which Calvert may have known.

Such an interpretation was not unknown in the Romantic age. Thomas Jefferson once compared rebellions to electrical storms that purified the air: "I like a little rebellion now and then. It is like a storm in the atmosphere."[75] Richard Payne Knight's 1794 poem "The Landscape" made a similar point about the beneficial function of revolutions by comparing them to an overflowing pool that first overwhelms then brings fertility to the land: "So when rebellion breaks the despot's chain,/ First wasteful ruin mark's the rabble's reign/ . . . Then temperate order from confusion springs."[76] The turmoil of Calvert's time might have suggested such an interpretation of his two

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WILLIAM BLAKE (British, 1757–1827), *Owen Glendower*, ca. 1820. Graphite on laid paper, 9 1/8 x 7 1/8 in. (23.2 x 18.1 cm). Inscribed in graphite, lower right (over previously erased inscription): *Owen Glendower*

prints. In March 1829 a bill for Catholic Emancipation was introduced into the Commons but then greeted by an immense backlash across Britain.[77] However, whether we are meant to see these little glimpses of another world as related in a narrative sense, or simply as contrasting visions of the ideal and the chaotic, remains ambiguous.

Once Linnell met Blake in 1818 he quickly introduced him to his teacher, John Varley, in September of that year. Blake and Varley instantly became friends, sharing a passion for arcane knowledge and mystical speculation. John Varley was a keen astrologer and would eventually be a published author on the subject, though he was never able to persuade Blake to take an interest in reading his own horoscope.[78] They quickly hit upon a shared enthusiasm: the drawing of "visionary heads." In 1819 Blake began to visit Varley's house on Great Titchfield Street and in the early hours of the morning would draw the heads of apparitions he claimed to be able to conjure up at Varley's urging, ranging widely from the fantastical *Ghost of a Flea* to historical figures, many of them medieval, as in the case of Owen Glendower **[cat. 197]**. Varley provided the sketchbooks for Blake to draw in as the characters came into view.[79] The status of these heads in Blake's oeuvre is a matter of contention. Some have

seen them as a lighthearted amusement at the expense of the credulous Varley, others as a serious exploration of the realms of history and the imagination.[80] The medieval warrior Owen Glendower (Owain Glyn Dŵr in Welsh) was the Welsh leader who, beginning in 1400, led a fifteen-year rebellion against Henry IV and Henry V of England and declared himself Prince of Wales. He occupied Harlech Castle from 1404 to 1409, when it fell to the English, forcing him to live in hiding until his death sometime about 1416. Blake could have known about Glendower from two principal sources, Shakespeare's play *Henry IV, Part I* (1597) and Thomas Pennant's *Tours in Wales* (1778), which did much to uncover surviving Welsh folklore about him.[81] Shakespeare called him "the irregular and wild Glendower," which makes a fitting description of the subject of Blake's visionary head, with its noble yet unpolished features.[82] Three versions of the Owen Glendower head survive: one is the recently rediscovered primary drawing and the other two are counterproofs, of which this is one. Blake, Varley, and Linnell made the counterproofs by tracing over the back of the original drawings and then fortifying the traced lines, with the result being that the counterproof heads are reproduced in reverse.[83] This may have been done with reproduction in mind because some of the heads were reproduced as engravings in John Varley's *Treatise on Zodiacal Physiognomy* (1828).[84] Linnell reminisced in his autobiographical notes, "Blake would occasionally explain unasked how he believed that both Varley & I could see the same visions as he saw making it evident to me that Blake claimed the possession of some powers only in a greater degree that all men possessed and which they undervalued in themselves & lost through love of sordid pursuits—pride, vanity, & the unrighteous mammon."[85] Linnell and Varley were still too attached to the material world to share Blake's visions, although Varley soon abandoned his old advice to "Go to Nature for Everything" in favor of a new belief that "Nature wants cooking."[86]

Blake's friend Henry Fuseli shared his aversion to drawing from nature, once exclaiming "Damn Nature!—she always puts me out."[87] Flaxman—who tried to steer clear of Fuseli because he couldn't abide his swearing—had written an entry on sculpture for Abraham Rees's *Cyclopaedia*, and in 1815 Blake was enlisted to help with the engraved illustrations.[88] Blake went to the Royal Academy to draw its cast of the *Laocoön* in preparation for a print, whereupon his old friend Fuseli spotted him and exclaimed: "Why Mr. Blake, you a Student! You might teach us!" Fuseli and Blake had probably known each other since 1780 and had worked together on a number of projects, including the illustrations for Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy*.[89] Blake praised Fuseli highly and attentively studied his Roman drawings, while Fuseli declared Blake to be "damned good to steal from."[90] Blake defended Fuseli from his critics by declaring, "This country must advance two centuries in civilization before it can appreciate him," a prediction not far off the mark.[91]

While Blake devised his own mythology, Fuseli turned to the revival of interest in early Nordic epics, which challenged the supremacy of Homer. The sensational discovery and translation of fragments of early Gaelic poetry by James Macpherson in 1759 and the appearance of full-scale Gaelic epics in 1761 and 1763 proved to be fraudulent, though the influence of Macpherson's *Works of Ossian*, as the collected volume of 1765 was called, was felt across Europe. Even Napoléon became an enthusiastic admirer. Genuine early epics and sagas were, however, also being rediscovered and translated, including Amos Cottle's (1768?–1800) *Icelandic Poetry, or, The Edda of Saemund, Translated into English Verse* (1797) and the Germanic *Nibelungenlied* (Song of the Nibelungs), which was found in 1755 by Fuseli's friend Johann Jacob Bodmer (1698–1783).[92] The tale of the hero Siegfried, written about 1200 in Passau, Austria, recalled events from earlier Norse sagas that emerged before the end of the sixth century A.D.[93] First published in 1757 the *Nibelungenlied* attracted little interest until Schlegel lectured on the poem in 1802–3 in the face of Napoléon's invasion of the German lands.[94] Coleridge, for one, would have been introduced to the poem during the year he spent in Germany seeking advice on early Germanic literature from Georg Friedrich Benecke (1762–1844).[95] The epic expressed German resistance to the cultural sovereignty of France and was held up as a worthy German counterpart to anything from classical antiquity.

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HENRY FUSELI (British, 1741–1825), *A Fallen Horseman Attacked by a Monstrous Serpent*, n.d.
Pen and brown ink with gray wash over black chalk on laid paper, 15 x 11¾ in. (38.1 x 29.8 cm)

198 (verso)

HENRY FUSELI (British, 1741–1825), *Satan Looming over Job and a Seated Old Man*, n.d.
Pen and brown ink over black chalk on laid paper, 15 x 11¾ in. (38.1 x 29.8 cm). Inscribed in graphite, lower right: *Fuseli*

Fuseli was the first artist to illustrate the poem, although other German-speaking artists such as the Nazarenes would also take up the subject. D. H. Weinglass has identified Fuseli's dramatic drawing of a man on horseback attacked by a serpent as an illustration of Siegfried battling the dragon from the *Nibelungenlied* **[cat. 198]**. Like the majority of Fuseli's surviving drawings, it was made with pen and ink and wash, embracing the potential of chiaroscuro as opposed to Blakean linearity, a style of drawing Fuseli shared with other members of his circle, including Romney.[96] Fuseli's earliest drawings had been made furtively while his father read the Scripture and other religious texts to his children, so he taught himself to draw with his left hand to avoid getting caught.[97] Though he would prove ambidextrous he would always prefer to draw with his left hand, as in this case where the hatching runs in the opposite direction from that drawn by right-handed artists.[98]

In Fuseli's drawing, a dragon lurking in a tree has attacked Siegfried by coiling himself around Siegfried's horse. The hero, thrown to the ground, wrestles the dragon's tail to prevent it from overpowering him. This was precisely the kind of fantastic subject that Fuseli prized. Like Blake, Fuseli believed in the power of the imagination as the central guide for the artist. An anecdote from the Academy Schools captures Fuseli's commitment to the imaginative capacity. Catching a student gazing into space, Fuseli approached him and asked, "What do you see, Sir?" When the student replied, "Nothing, Sir," Fuseli exclaimed, "Nothing, young man . . . then I tell you that you ought to see something—you ought to see distinctly the true image of what you are trying to draw. I see the vision of all I paint—and I wish to heaven I could paint up to what I can see."[99] Thomas Lawrence, the academy's president and a patron of Blake, claimed, "In poetic imagination he [Fuseli] has had no equal since the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and if his drawings and proportions are mannered carried to excess, still it was exaggeration of the grandeur of antique form and not the enlargement of the mean and ordinary in nature."[100]

The verso has been identified as Job stricken by boils, an illustration of Job 2:7 where Satan "struck Job down with malignant ulcers from the sole of his foot to the top of his head." The foreground figure is probably one of the three friends—Eliphaz of Teman, Bildad of Shuah, or Zophar of Naamath—who came to comfort him. Upon discovering the stricken figure of Job they "sat there on the ground beside him for seven days and seven nights. To Job they spoke never a word, for they saw how much he was suffering" (Job 2:13). Fuseli's Job has obvious visual precedents in images of the Deposition of Christ, which reflects Fuseli's learning and former career as a Zwinglian minister. Job was recognized as a type for Christ, an innocent man who bears his suffering patiently. Certain similarities between Fuseli's design and Girodet's *Pietà* altarpiece (1789, Church of Montesquieu-Volvestre, Haute-Garonne) are probably coincidental, the painting having been intended for a provincial convent that Fuseli was unlikely to visit, but Fuseli did admire Girodet's works. He also had an important French admirer in Léonor Mérimée, who was the professor of drawing at the École Polytechnique beginning in 1801 and secretary of the École des Beaux-Arts beginning in 1807.[101] The sheet was formerly in the possession of Susan, the countess of Guilford, one of Fuseli's most important patrons, and it was at her Putney Hill estate in Surrey that he died in April 1825. Many of Fuseli's late drawings were made on visits to the estate, where Fuseli served as drawing master to the countess's daughters.[102]

### *Wilkie and Delacroix*

It seems fitting to end a study of the varieties of Romantic experience with two artists utterly contrary to Blake and yet also fully Romantic in spirit. In 1832 David Wilkie began work on a painting exploring a dramatic episode from British history: *The Burial of the Scottish Regalia.* The subject was based on a well-known historical event that happened in Scotland in the seventeenth century. After the execution of Charles I (reigned 1625–49) in 1649, the new English republic recognized Scotland's independence and its right to accept Charles II (reigned 1660–85) as its king. But when the Scots raised an army in 1650 to attempt the restoration of the monarchy in England, the army of

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SIR DAVID WILKIE (British, 1785–1841), *Study of Two Figures for "The Burial of the Scottish Regalia,"* ca. 1832. Black chalk, some red chalk, and brown wash with touches of blue, pink, peach, and white gouache on brown wove paper, 14 7/16 x 18 7/16 in. (36.7 x 46.8 cm)

Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658) defeated them, first at Dunbar and then at Worcester in 1651. Scottish Royalists, knowing that the ancient English coronation regalia had been destroyed in 1649, feared that the Scottish regalia would meet with the same fate. After the defeat at Dunbar, the crown, scepter, and sword of state were taken from Edinburgh to Dunnottar Castle for safekeeping. When Dunnottar was besieged in 1651, the regalia were smuggled to a nearby church at Kinneff and buried in the dead of night in separate parts of the church. Although the regalia were unearthed in 1660 and returned to Edinburgh Castle, they were lost until Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832) led a campaign for their recovery in 1815. They were duly rediscovered in 1817, in time to take part in George IV's (1762–1830) extraordinary visit to Scotland in 1822, a progress to

Edinburgh and Holyroodhouse, stage-managed by Scott, for which the king was clad in full Highland tartan.[103] George IV's venture into Scotland in Highland dress symbolically legitimized the Hanoverian dynasty as the ruling house of Scotland and relegated Jacobitism to the status of a romantic, but utterly vanquished, cause. This rather preposterous event was nonetheless of great symbolic importance. George IV's visit projected an image of a united Scotland, in full union with England, and proclaimed the king as the improbable heir to the House of Stuart. The rival claimant to the thrones of England and Scotland, Henry Benedict Stuart (1725–1807), the self-styled King Henry IX of Great Britain, had died in 1807, leaving George IV free to appropriate the Stuart legacy. Being seen in Scotland with the ancient regalia boosted the king's reputation at a time when, in the wake of his divorce proceedings and the death of his queen the year before, the monarchy had been reduced to the nadir of its popularity.[104]

Wilkie, who was both a friend of Scott's and one of the contemporary artists warmly admired and collected by the king, witnessed the various pageants. By 1822 Wilkie had become a widely recognized artist in France on the strength of prints after his early works, which were based on the seventeenth-century Flemish genre pictures of David Teniers the Younger (1610–1690) and Isack van Ostade.[105] The Scottish spectacle also coincided with Wilkie's development as a painter away from the manner of Teniers and toward a more expansive style, exploiting bolder chiaroscuro and richer coloring derived from Rembrandt and Rubens. This shift was cemented by a European tour from 1825 to 1828; upon his return home he worked up his 1822 sketches into major paintings, exhibiting a state portrait of the king in Highland dress (Royal Collection) in 1830 and a large canvas, *Entrance of George IV at Holyroodhouse* (Royal Collection), the latter including the ancient regalia. The death of Walter Scott in 1832 prompted Wilkie to explore the subject of the burial of the regalia in the desperate winter of 1651 as a tribute to the late novelist.[106]

Wilkie never completed the painting, though at least two detailed sketches survive (one in the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, and one formerly in the Eugene V. Thaw Collection). A study of the heads **[cat. 199]** was prepared as a guide for the crucial protagonists in the composition: an upper figure who reverently hands the crown to a colleague standing ready in the pit to inter the regalia in the ground. Wilkie's draftsmanship was unorthodox by academic standards, and when he began drawing in the Royal Academy Schools it was greeted with a mixture of admiration and derision. His contemporary Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786–1846) claimed, "Wilkie drew at the Academy with spirit, it was in a style of smartness, so full of what are called spirited touches that it could not be recommended for imitation."[107] He nevertheless made laborious studies for his multifigure compositions, and this example is typical of his approach. Line is eschewed in favor of rich color. The brown paper is left untouched to act as a midtone, allowing Wilkie to apply dark washes of watercolor and white gouache to suggest both light and shade, the qualities that characterized his later work. The obvious references to the iconography of the Entombment of Christ, in particular the coloring of Rembrandt's version (1633, Alte Pinakothek, Munich), make a direct association between the survival of the monarchy and the divine plan. It was, for a monarchist, a timely subject. Charles X (reigned 1824–30) of France had been overthrown in 1830 and replaced by his moderate cousin Louis-Philippe (reigned 1830–48). In 1832 Britain passed the Reform Act, which, though "essentially conservative in measure," staved off criticism of the archaic electoral system and helped dampen revolutionary sentiments among the lower orders.[108] In an age of revolutions the painting was to be decidedly counterrevolutionary in iconography. Such work was highly regarded abroad. Although admiration for Wilkie on the Continent was based almost exclusively on his drawings and prints rather than paintings, that did not prevent him from being nominated a corresponding member of the Institut de France in 1836 and a Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur in 1841, honors that would have been unthinkable for a British artist at the beginning of the century.[109]

The two leading French Romantic artists had seen and admired Wilkie's paintings, however. Géricault had praised Wilkie warmly during his visit to London

in 1820–21 and told his French colleagues to "be steeped in the English school" since "color and effect are understood and felt only here."[110] When Delacroix crossed the Channel in 1825 he, too, met Wilkie and judged that "his sketches and rough drafts are beyond all praise."[111] He particularly admired his sketch for *Preaching of John Knox before the Lords of the Congregation* (1832, Tate Britain) and recalled telling him, "with typically French impetuosity, that 'Apollo himself, if he took up the brush, could only spoil it by finishing it.'"[112] This Romantic appreciation for "color and effect" was antithetical to Blake's form of Romanticism. The admiration for Rubens left Blake positively apoplectic. "Rubens is the most outrageous demon," he thundered, "and by infusing the remembrances of his pictures and style of execution, hinders all powers of individual thought."[113]

Delacroix's late work moved into ever-deeper explorations of Rubensian color and reached a climax in his last major painting, *Lion Hunt* (1855, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Bordeaux). In 1854 the French government had commissioned paintings from both Delacroix and Ingres with the intention of hanging them side by side at the 1855 Exposition Universelle in Paris. Artists from all nations were invited to submit works for the paintings category, and there was a significant British contribution: Landseer won a Grand Médaille d'honneur, the only British artist to receive the accolade.[114] But the centerpiece was to be the display of works by Delacroix and Ingres so that the world could compare the merits of the two leading exponents—both Frenchmen, of course—of Romanticism and Neoclassicism.[115] Delacroix was free to choose his own subject on the understanding that he would submit preliminary sketches to the head of the fine arts section of the exposition. It seems Delacroix settled on a lion hunt almost immediately; indeed, the subject had been brewing in his mind and in smaller works for almost a decade. A crucial moment was a visit to the Natural History Museum at the Jardin des Plantes in Paris on 9 January 1847 that, he confessed, had left him profoundly unsettled: "What an immense variety of animals and species of different shapes and function!" he wrote, "And at every turn I saw what we call deformity side by side with what seems to us to be beauty and grace of form."[116] He particularly singled out "the tigers, the panthers, the jaguars, the lions, etc."[117] Rubens was his point of reference when viewing these animals, as he affirmed, "The way Rubens has rendered this is marvelous."[118] Pondering his day at the museum by the fireside that evening, Delacroix wondered, "Whence comes the impression which the sight of all that produced on me? From the fact that I got out of my everyday ideas which are my whole world, that I got out of my street which is my universe? How necessary it is to give oneself a shaking up, to get one's head out, to try to read in the book of creation, which has nothing in common with our cities and with the works of men!"[119] In the mid-1840s Delacroix had returned to making drawings, paintings, and prints of wild animals, especially lions and tigers. In these late studies, the big cats are represented as if ready to pounce on unseen prey, fighting one other, killing other animals, or even attacking humans.

This was a belated resumption of earlier themes in Delacroix's art. His fascination with animals had been sparked early in his career, in part through exposure to British sporting art. George Stubbs's series of paintings of lions attacking horses was well-known to the French Romantics, and contacts with British artists in Paris had deepened his knowledge of the genre. His friend Newton Fielding had published *British Game*, a collection of prints, in 1821, and he could well have known the early lion studies by Sir Edwin Landseer and John Frederick Lewis from his trip to London in 1825, when their work was on view in the Royal Academy's exhibition.[120] Delacroix also owned a set of small woodcuts of wild animals after drawings by William Harvey that were made in 1828 from live specimens in the menagerie at the Tower of London.[121] Delacroix's fascination with animal contest was shared by the *animalier* sculptor Antoine Louis Bayre (1796–1875), with whom he had studied animals from 1828 to 1833.[122]

When developing plans for the 1855 lion hunt Delacroix turned once again to Rubens for inspiration. His drawing of a lion leaping upon a fallen horseman **[cat. 200]** is copied from the lower section of Rubens's *Lion Hunt* (1616–17), which hung in Bordeaux beginning

in 1803.[123] Whether or not Delacroix knew the Rubens firsthand, he certainly knew the composition from the etchings by Pieter Soutman (ca. 1580–1657).[124] Evidently he looked again at Rubens after his visit to the animal specimens in the Jardin des Plantes, for just a week later he recorded in his journal:

> *I have under my eyes the* Hunts *by Rubens, among others the* Lion Hunt *etched by Soutman, where . . . a Moorish horseman has been thrown to earth; his horse, also overthrown, is already seized by an enormous lion. But the animal turns with a horrible grimace toward another fighter lying flat on the ground who, in the final effort, buries a dagger of terrifying width in the body of the monster; the man is as if nailed to the earth by one of the hind feet of the animals, which claws his face in frightful fashion as it feels itself stabbed. The rearing horses, the bristling manes, a thousand accessories, shields torn from the arms, tangled bridles, the whole thing combines to strike the imagination, and the execution is admirable. But the picture has an aspect of confusion, the eye does not know where to stop, it gets the feeling of a frightful disorder; and it seems that art has not presided sufficiently to augment, by prudent distribution or by sacrifices, the effect of so many inventions of genius.*[125]

It was precisely this spectacle of "frightful disorder" that Delacroix copied in this drawing of the lion hunt, faithfully repeating the lower left portion of Soutman's etching. Although the etching after Rubens provided the inspiration for the 1855 *Lion Hunt* canvas, the final composition would be a less a direct borrowing and more a critical emulation of the Flemish master. After the exposition Delacroix's painting hung alongside the Rubens in Bordeaux, where both were struck by fire in 1870; the Rubens was destroyed, the Delacroix reduced to a fragment.

In Delacroix's drawing, form has been almost completely dissolved in light, a direct rebuttal of the primacy of line found in the work of Ingres and Blake. In 1849 Delacroix wrote: "I am at my window, and I see the most beautiful landscape: the idea of a line does not come to my mind. The lark sings, the river sparkles with a thousand diamonds, the foliage murmurs; where are any lines to produce these charming sensations?"[126] Delacroix's completed canvas was criticized precisely for its color: "Curious tangles of horses fallen to pieces. . . . Color here is at its most extravagant and verges on raving madness; and there is a complete disregard for harmony."[127] In these late works, Delacroix proclaimed the triumph of color and effect; he also presented a view of the world governed not by divine order but by acts of violence under the sway of primal instincts.

Here, then, the human hunters have become the hunted, forced to enter deadly combat as just one species among many, fighting for life. Man is no longer the master of nature but its subject, cast adrift within a hostile and brutal realm.[128] This was one variety of Romantic experience, in which "the new imagery of a wild nature provided a vivid symbolic language in which to conjure up and dramatize the idea of a world governed by elemental conflict and raw instinct."[129] And yet, despite the aesthetic gulf that divided Blake from Delacroix, they both used their art to react against the age. Blake saw his art as part of a radical critique of the materialism and rationalism of British culture and society; Delacroix based his principles on a conservative disgust for the banality of the new bourgeois world, with its climate of greed and mediocrity, believing that "The growth in material knowledge . . . inhibits works of the imagination."[130]

Delacroix went on, "If by Romanticism is meant the free manifestation of one's personal impressions I am a Romantic, and not only that, but I was a Romantic at the age of fifteen."[131] It was this spirit that defined the Romantic age, an age at once progressive and reactionary, mundane and yet filled with dynamic promise. Little wonder, then, that the practice of drawing was swept along with the tide, blossoming forth to embrace everything from a lingering commitment to Neoclassicism to the first stirrings of Realism. The varieties of Romantic experience are thus no surprise. As Thomas Paine (1737–1809), the British revolutionary, declared at the start of these events: "It is an age of Revolutions, in which every thing may be looked for."[132]

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EUGÈNE DELACROIX (French, 1798–1863), *A Lion Hunt*, ca. 1855. Graphite on laid paper, 7½ x 9¼ in. (19.1 x 23.5 cm). Stamped in red-brown ink, lower right: *ED.* Inscribed verso, in graphite, lower right: *Inv 833*