PETER MILTON

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Peter Milton's Turn:
An American Printmaker Marks the End of the Millennium

James A. W. Heffernan

> "I sometimes regret that because I am primarily a printmaker I live necessarily outside the critically sanctioned center of the contemporary establishment. But this has proved in a great many ways to be a blessing; at least it has reinforced my move inward, which is, after all, not the worst place for an artist to be."
>
> --Peter Milton

The prints of Peter Milton, who has produced well over a hundred of them since 1960, have generated a good deal of attention. He has been granted more than eighty one-man exhibitions in galleries and museums throughout the United States as well as in London, Osaka, Bogota, and Paris; he has won prizes in Columbia, Korea, Ukraine, and Poland; his work has found its way into the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Bibliotheque Nationale, the British Museum, and the Tate Gallery. Yet he is anything but a household name. As recently as the spring of 1997, Ann Landi wrote: "Milton is known mainly to aficionados and a cadre of loyal collectors."[1] He is conspicuously absent from a recent article on photography and contemporary printmaking that appeared in Art New England. Though he lives and works in New Hampshire, though many of his prints originate from photographs, and though the article was written by the Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, which owns some of Milton's work, he is not even mentioned.[2]

Why is he not better known? Part of the reason is that except for a single painting called The Rehearsal (1984), now in the Currier Gallery of Manchester, New Hampshire, he has produced nothing but graphite drawings and black-and-white etchings since 1962, when he was diagnosed as color blind. In an age of ubiquitous color--on film,

television, billboards, magazines, and newspapers (even the good grey The New York Times has become a painted lady)--it is very hard to capture the eyes of the public with an art of black and white alone. To make matters worse, Milton offers consummate draughtsmanship at a time when drawing has been all but eliminated from art--first by abstract expressionism and then, starting in 1962, by the postmodern appropriation of photomechanical imagery in the work of such figures as Robert Rauschenberg and Andy Warhol. Like them, Milton incorporates photographs into his work, but unlike them, he redraws almost every photograph he uses, and he never uses anything like the instantly recognizable icons that dominate Warhol's Marilyn Monroe Diptych (1962), with its fifty silkscreened variations on a famous face, or Rauschenberg's Retroactive I (1964), which is built around the photo of a finger-stabbing John F. Kennedy. Nor does he take as his model a single photograph of a contemporary scene, as the Photorealists did. The photographs Milton uses come chiefly from the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and while a few of them--such as those of Henry James in The Jolly Corner suite (1971)--may be immediately familiar to some of his viewers, most of them are not. They are either anonymous or require identification, which is often helpfully furnished by Milton himself in his own commentaries. Just as his deep recesses flout the modernist prohibition against breaking the flatness of the picture plane, his mysterious figures defy modernity itself. Deployed in three-dimensional space, they signify a distant past--something available only to memory or to imagination that has been aided, perhaps, by some research. Ignoring both the decrees of modernism and the conventions of post-modernism, Milton's work cannot be easily situated anywhere on the map of late twentieth century art. Yet it emphatically deserves a place on this map--if only because he marked the turn of the millennium with a series of prints that take us from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first.

Since Milton brought to the making of this new series over three decades of printmaking experience, it may be helpful to know something of what he has done before. He was trained in the early fifties at the Yale School of Art and Architecture, where Josef Albers was the dominant influence. Though the geometric severity of Albers' Homage to the Square series hardly seems to have fathered Milton's exquisitely sinuous draughtsmanship, he credits Albers for giving him an Apollonian alternative to the Dionysian gospel of Vitality preached by another of his Yale mentors, Gabor Peterdi.

Albers, he recalls,

> was both purely Apollonian and, I thought, wonderfully monk-like in the ascetic, demanding, disciplined quality of his particular search for beauty. . . . Hard as he could be, and he was apparently irreversibly discouraging to some, he introduced a concept of picture making that has been with me ever since. This concept as I interpreted it had Cezanne as the High Priest (I think he still may be)--picture making as a search for part relationships and an equilibrium of their tensions as demanding and structurally exquisite as the structure of a living organism.[3]

Preaching an organicism that surely evokes Coleridge as much as Cezanne, Albers defined picture making as the "natural" or inevitable solution to a set of pictorial problems that could not be resolved in any other way without resort to something arbitrary or superimposed. For Albers, Milton recalls,

> there were many arbitrary solutions to any pictorial problem but only one right solution. . . . One could be non-objective, one could be literal--who cared? The point was to find the way, the one right way that, when you were through, turned out to be the only way it could be.[4]

Unlike most of his fellow students, Milton did not chafe under Albers. He did not rebel against the would-be Prussian absoluteness of the claim that for every pictorial problem there could be only one right solution, one organic way of resolving its tensions. Instead he has applied this principle to pictures of ever-increasing complexity, etching pure landscapes in the early sixties, adding small figures (chiefly his own two small children) in the later sixties, and then--in the early seventies--turning to urban scenery and intricate interiors populated with figures modeled on late nineteenth and early twentieth-century photographs. Since 1971 his work has been deeply inflected by literature and subtly informed by history. Among other things, it includes a suite of 21 etchings based on Henry James's novelette, The Jolly Corner; a suite of 18 drawings suggested by James's Aspern Papers; a set of two etchings and a painting that erotically explore the myth of beauty and the beast; and a suite of seven etchings that begin with a meditation on Milton's familial past and end by evoking Europe on the eve of World War II. That moment is signified by a study of the railroad station from which the young Jewish girl who would later become Milton's wife fled Germany in 1939.[5]

Mere listing of his themes, however, can hardly explain the kind of equilibrium that Milton achieves, the Albersian rightness--or inevitability--of his solutions to pictorial problems, the geometric precision with which he places and juxtaposes the often heterogeneous components of an individual print. Some of his prints offer us

surreal collages. In The Jolly Corner II:3, the bearded face of Spencer Brydon (James's protagonist) looks down over a stairway into a room containing only a leaping stag--the visible embodiment of James's metaphor for Brydon's alter ego as "the fanged or antlered animal brought at last to bay." In The Jolly Corner III:7, the face of Henry James in profile is flanked by a double-ended version of his full face and a locomotive; above are the crossed timbers of a work under construction (the Brooklyn Bridge), with workmen sitting on it, a bull and a man standing on the air beside it, and a large female nude posing over the locomotive at right. In A Sky-Blue Life (1976), a crowd stands on a long terrace floating above an urban park while a man's bespectacled face looks down on them, children ride swings above them, a gigantic blurred outspread wing hovers at right, and--below them--a fully clothed man standing in thin air offers a sprig of greenery to the naked woman seated on the air beside him. But Chagallian touches like this play only a small role in Milton's work. Most of his figures are governed by the laws of gravity and set within realistically drawn three-dimensional space or within the frames of pictures that are represented as such in the world of the print.

Figure 1. Peter Milton, *Daylilies* (1975). Artist's Collection.

I. Daylilies: Art, Photography, Memory

Daylilies (figure 1) shows what Milton can make from a collection of photographs.

Because it exemplifies not only his way of making art from photography but also his way of using photographs to signify memory, I treat it as a prelude to Points of Departure.

By 1975, when Milton produced Daylilies, he had begun to draw on transparent Mylar and to etch his copper plates with the aid of photo-resist coating, which hardens when exposed to ultraviolet light but remains soft and permeable wherever covered by a mark. Interposed between the coating and the light, the marks made by a drawing, photograph, or collage leave the coating beneath them penetrable, so that when the coated plate is immersed in acid, the acid will bite in the trail or shadow (so to speak) of the marks.[6] This method of etching allows Milton to combine on one plate an indefinite number of drawings and photographs that can be directly transferred. But generally he uses the photograph as a "guide or model" for his own drawing hand (CE, p. 30). For Daylilies he transferred a photograph of his two children--just to the left of the central figure's head--but almost every other element here comes from a photograph taken by someone else and redrawn by the artist.

The photographs used span the history of photography, beginning with Hippolyte Bayard's 1840 Still Life of a set of sculptures, one of which led Milton to draw the nude seated on the mantelpiece at right.[7] Beside the nude is an oval portrait drawn from a daguerreotype of the same period; just above, the framed picture of a young woman is based on a contemporary photo cut from an advertisement in the New York Times. In between--chronologically--come the photos that stand behind the other figures. The white-shirted man in the center foreground and the cat seated beside him come from two photographs by Thomas Eakins. The little picture of the paralytic child walking on all fours at lower right comes from a photograph by Eadweard Muybridge of ca. 1885.[8] The picture of the crowd near the top originates from a 1909 photograph of people watching a Zeppelin. Most of the other elements are drawn from photographs taken by Andre Kertesz, including the boy with the hat (1923) the three hatless figures just to the left of him (1934), the ballet dancers at upper left (1938), and the hand in the lower left corner of the mirror (1968).

The question raised by this wide-ranging collection of photographs is what Milton makes from them--not just in re-drawing nearly all of them individually but in making

them work together as a whole. The simple answer is that he produces a collage, a word Milton himself has used about his work.[9] But two things sharply distinguish Milton's prints from what are usually known as collages. Strictly speaking, a collage is a work of art assembled not from hand-drawn figures but from pre-existing objects--such as photographs and news clippings--that are pasted onto a flat surface (coller means in French "to paste or glue"). Paste is not essential to collage, but arrangement is. In the early twentieth century, when collage became a serious form of art, some of its practitioners frankly dismissed the value of draughtsmanship. Marcel Duchamp announced that his works aimed "to reduce the aesthetic considerations to the choice of the mind, not to the ability or cleverness of the hand . . . "[10] Besides privileging the mind over the hand, a collage is free to be spatially incoherent. In Rauschenberg's Breakthrough II (1965), the relation between the photo-silkscreened images of the key, the eye chart, the inverted head of the Statue of Liberty, and Velasquez's nude Venus is purely conceptual. On the other hand, Milton's prints are both meticulously drawn and spatially coherent. Though largely taken from photographs, the components of Daylilies are drawn into a three-dimensional world which they inhabit together. They are not simply juxtaposed.

The spatial co-operation of these components is nowhere more evident than in the center foreground, where a man drawn from one Eakins photograph is shown stroking a cat drawn from another. The original of the chair that is beside the man came to Milton from his maternal grandmother; the man's hands are "vaguely" Milton's own; and the spray of eponymous daylilies arching over the cat came from Milton's garden.[11] Spatially integrated, these things together constitute the meditative center of the print, the site of conciousness--so to speak--on which its other impressions weigh.

To grasp the relation between this meditative center and the other photographically-based elements in the print, we should first consider why a magisterial draughtsman would not only use photographs as models but also take special pains to make his drawings look photographic. The history of the relation between painting and photography, like the much longer history of the relation between visual art and literature, is a history of mutual contention, resentment, envy, and emulation.[12] Initially, the dageurreotype made artists feel suddenly eclipsed. "It is not painting," wrote an

anonymous French reporter in January 1839, "it is drawing, but drawing carried to a degree of perfection which art can never attain."[13] J.M.W. Turner thought his life was over. "This is the end of Art," he reportedly said. "I am glad I have had my day."[14]

But the very claim that photography was incomparably accurate became the basis for a new argument about the value of art. In August 1839 a critic for the Journal du Commerce declared that the aim of art is not to imitate but to interpret nature; since photography reproduces nature without the intervention of the artist's genius, he wrote, it will never dethrone art (qtd. Gasser, p. 16). Twenty years later, Baudelaire likewise decried the notion that mere fidelity to nature could supplant the creative labors of an artist. Let photography, he wrote, "be the secretary and record-keeper of whomsoever needs absolute material accuracy for professional reasons. . . . But if once it be allowed to impinge on the sphere of the intangible and the imaginary, on anything that has value solely because man adds something to it from his soul, then woe betide us!"[15]

In part, Baudelaire neutralized the impact of photography on painting by implicitly construing the opposition between them as a variant of the difference between color and drawing. These two partners in art have long been credited with contrasting personalities. As Jacqueline Lichtenstein has shown, drawing has traditionally signified the mind and its orderly, Platonic, articulable conceptions of the world while color has been thought to express the materiality of the body and its ineffable passions.[16] In 1846, Baudelaire reconfigured these terms to distinguish between history and fiction in portraiture. Draughtsmanship, he says, reproduces "faithfully, rigorously, minutely, the contour and modelling of the sitter." But the method of the colorists is more subtle. The colorist "must know how to bathe a head in the soft light of a warm atmosphere or bring it out from the depths of 'chiaroscuro.' Here imagination plays a greater part, and yet, just as fiction is often truer than history, so a sitter may be more clearly interpreted by the rich and skilful brush of a colorist than by the pencil of a draughtsman" ("Salon of 1846," SW, pp. 83-84).

To read this comment in light of what Milton does with the central figure of Daylilies is to see how Milton's draughtsmanship dissolves Baudelaire's distinction. For it is precisely "from the depths of 'chiaroscuro'"--the would-be haunt of colorists

alone--that Milton's draughtsmanship elicits the central figure of Daylilies. Still more threatening to Baudelaire's distinction is the fact that Milton's model for the central figure is a photograph, product of a medium that Baudelaire identifies with "absolute material accuracy" and that, he says, must never be allowed to trespass on "the sphere of the intangible and the imaginary."

Baudelaire's notion that the materialism of photography threatened to usurp and corrupt the soul of art was radically reformulated by Walter Benjamin in his landmark essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936). While Baudelaire decried what he thought photography might do to art, Benjamin hailed photography as an instrument of Marxist redemption. In denying the "unique existence" of a work of art and thus dissolving its "aura," he argued, mechanical reproduction emancipates it from ritual, cult, and magic to make it available for public exhibition and political service.[17] We may applaud or deplore this development. But we may also wonder whether it ever came to pass. For in explaining how photography could demystify or desanctify art, Benjamin signally failed to see--or foresee--how art would come to sanctify photography. Is the unique existence of Andy Warhol's Marilyn Monroe Diptych (1962) nullified by the fact that it consists of fifty identical photographs which have been variously silkscreened? Is the unique existence of Warhol's painting nullified even by the frequency with which it has been reproduced? Or do the reproductions simply enhance the notoriety and hence the aura of the original, which hangs in London's Tate Gallery? To switch to the declarative mood with another example, it is precisely because they have seen countless reproductions of the Mona Lisa that nearly all visitors to the Louvre make a special pilgrimage to the original, which is displayed as if it were a shrine. Sixty years after Benjamin's celebrated essay, the evidence against its claim is overwhelming. While mechanical reproduction has thoroughly invaded the world of art, it has only heightened the aura that it was supposed to expunge.[18]

All this may help to explain something that would have dumbfounded Benjamin: how photographs help Milton produce the "magic" of his art. Benjamin salutes photography for purging art of magic, turning the work of art from "an instrument of magic" into a politically serviceable item to exhibit. But Milton frankly defines himself as a kind of magician: "I find my reward," he says, "in the unexpected pleasures of a

surprising and mysterious effect, when all the knowns have finally, magically combined, to produce a completely unknown, magical end."[19] Furthermore, photography plays a crucial part in generating this magic. Besides furnishing many of the pieces from which Milton makes a collage, photographs reveal to him the mysteries of both light and shadow. "We all know," he writes,

> the old cliche about photography making realism in painting irrelevant. To me, the reverse is true--what the camera tells us about how light behaves is as interesting as what the camera tells us about how things look. I remember first becoming struck by this in the Parisian photographs of Atget. We know that shadows create mystery: but the camera shows how much mystery exists in the light. I am also fascinated by the ineffable implications of perception when all it takes is a lens, some silver nitrate, and a click to transform the randomness of the present into the absolutes of the past. (CP, p. 16)

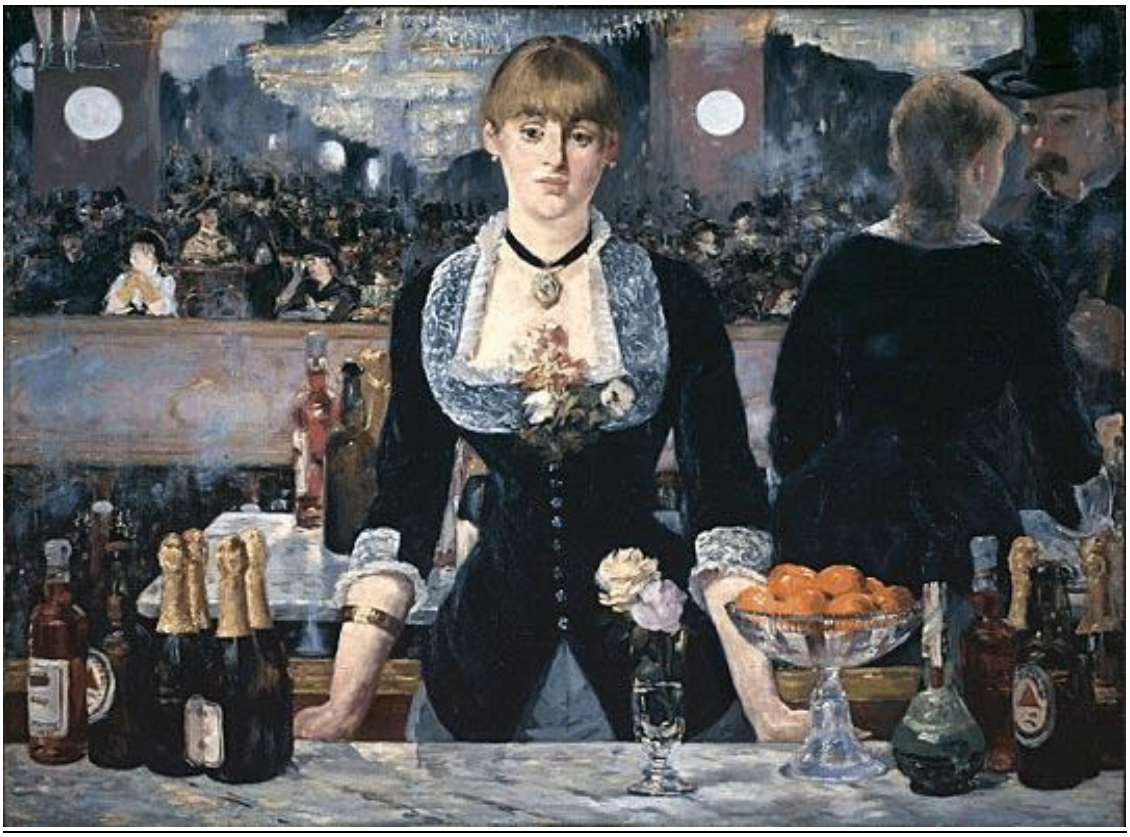

Figure 2. Edouard Manet, A Bar at the Folies-Bergere (1882). London, The Courtauld Gallery .

For Milton, part of the mystery of photographs lies precisely in their evocation of the past. He loves the photograph, he says, because it suggests "the mnemonic" (CE, p. 30), the memory of moments captured from as far back as the middle of the nineteenth century. Memory lives in the central figure of Daylilies, who (as already noted) is

modelled after a photograph by Eakins. Backed by a mantelpiece and what seems to be a mirror reflecting heterogeneous groups of people, his position recalls that of the young woman at the center of Eduard Manet's Bar at the Folies-Bergere (1882) (figure 2). But to compare the two is to see more clearly how Milton's central figure is made to signify memory. While Manet's standing barmaid reaches nearly to the top of his painting, the central figure of Daylilies sits beneath its center. Also, while her flesh-toned, fully illuminated face stares blankly out over the bright colors of the bar at us, or rather at the revelers reflected in the mirror behind her, Milton's black-and-white figure looks somberly down, and his eyes are so deeply shadowed that we cannot tell what he is looking at--or even if he is observing anything at all. Unlike Manet's mirror, the mirror behind this man cannot plausibly reflect the world in front of him.[20] Instead it seems to display what temporally stretches out behind him--the landscape of his memories.

The boy with a hat--perhaps a younger self?--is the geometrical centerpoint of the mirror, the intersection of two strong diagonals. An ascending diagonal runs precisely from the cross in the center of the Durer magic square at lower left through the boy's right eye to the cross hanging from the rosary at upper right; the other diagonal descends from the raised arms of the ballerinas at upper left to the boy's upper arm, the face of the man in the oval portrait, the waist of the seated nude, and the paralytic walker at lower right. Reinforcing the descending diagonal are the heads of the three figures ranged between the dancers and the boy; reinforcing the ascending diagonal are the stepped heads of the children in the photograph, the wings of the bird flying over the crowd, and the stepped cluster of shadowy figures beneath it. Across these intersecting diagonals run a series of horizontals (the mantelpiece, the lower edge of the mirror, the top edge of the sofa, the lower edge of the crowd painting) and verticals (the windows at left and right, the shadows at lower left, the left and right edges of the mirror, the edges of the wall at left and archway at right).

This complex geometry does not encompass everything. In the picture next to the mirror at right, a young woman in a high-necked dress looks serenely away, lost in her own contemplation. But the geometry of the forms within the mirror is recapitulated in the central figure. His upright torso precisely bisects the horizontal line of the mantelpiece while the two sides of his body--together with the chairback at left and the

cat and the daylilies at right--repeat the diagonals above him. The placing of the chair, in fact, seems far more designed to balance the cat and the flowers visually than to support the sitter. And the whole world of the mirror seems an outgrowth of the man's head, which not only divides the bottom edge of the mirror but ruptures its alignment: the right half is slightly higher than the left.

The print as a whole is a triumph of equilibrium in the balance of ascent and descent, flight and rest, darkness and light. The leaping ballerinas raise up their arms to salute the bird in flight across (or within) the adjacent picture, but they are linked--via the downward trajectory of the figures ranged across middle of the mirror--to the seated nude on the mantelpiece and the paralytic child walking on all fours. Gravity thus draws us down to the downward-looking central figure, whose fingertips rest--as if for support--on the lower margin of the print. Even the spray of lilies that arches up over the cat comes to rest here as well. And the figure who exemplifies both the geometry and the gravity of the print as a whole also epitomizes its chiaroscuro. While his pleated shirt gives us the brightest patch of light in the print, his left side sinks into the deepest well of shadow. What we have, then, is a collage that intersects and converges on the mystery of his memories.

Figure 3. Milton, *Points of Departure I: Mary's Turn* (1994). Artist's Collection.

II. Mary's Turn: Cassatt and Degas

To move from Daylilies to Mary's Turn (1994) (figure 3), the first print in Milton's Points of Departure series, is to move from the generic consciousness of memory and age in a single anonymous figure to the dramatized confrontation of two celebrated artists: Mary Cassatt and Edgar Degas. Milton's casting of the two in a billiard game derives from a photograph taken by Gertrude Kasebier in 1908. "A figure of a woman," Milton writes, "is lining up a billiard shot, while the figure of a man, bathed in light, stands dreaming in a doorway. I was first attracted to the image by its mysterious light, but it was the drama of the purposeful woman and the pensive man which soon established the direction Mary's Turn was to take."[21] In this fascination with the mysterious light of the photograph we readily recognize the etcher of Daylilies, but we also begin to see something more: how the photograph of a purposeful woman led him to imagine a dramatic contest in which a woman artist would express her ambition to rival the work of a man, to take her turn in the making of art even as the century itself was about to turn. The pensive man in the doorway will turn out to be someone other than Degas, but since Degas makes his presence strongly felt elsewhere in Mary's Turn, I will focus chiefly on him and Cassatt. "Cassatt and Degas," writes Milton,

> are a wonderful pair for the contemporary gaze: Degas the cantankerous, annoyingly (for a slow worker) prolific, misanthropic master; Cassatt, the young novice who hated likenesses of herself, becoming the grande dame of painters, contemptuous of artistic triflers; the two together--misogynist and new woman, both supreme masters of the balance between the prose of observed fact and the poetry of painterly gesture. What appeals to me is that they're a balance of opposites: male/female, master/student, vituperative/nurturing, European/American. After ten years, their friendship broke up on the shoals of Degas's misanthropy, but they had great deal in common in their old age. They both went blind; they both, in different ways, cut magnificent figures. I love the insurmountable elegance of Cassatt's challenge to men who think women can only be second-rate artists. Degas once said just that when he announced to her that women artists had no style. She stormed to her studio and produced the amazing Young Woman Combing Her Hair (figure 6) now in hanging at the National Gallery in Washington. Degas saw the painting, said, "What style!" and bought it. (CP, p. 22)

The source of Milton's anecdote is Achille Segard, who tells the story a little differently. In his version, published some years before Cassatt's death, Cassatt herself struck the first blow by daring to say in Degas' presence that a great painter who was also a friend of theirs had "no style." When Degas laughed and shrugged his shoulders in a way that questioned her right to judge of style, Cassatt "took offense" and produced the painting that prompted Degas to write of it in a letter to the artist herself, "What

drawing! What style!"[22] Segard's version differs from Milton's in two small but possibly significant ways. Degas' would-be pronouncement was not a gratuitous slur but a wordless gesture prompted by Cassatt's open disparagement of a male artist, and it was to Cassatt herself--and in writing--that Degas expressed his admiration for the style and draughtsmanship of her own work. In its original form, then, this is a story of well-matched antagonists caught up in a contest eventually won by the woman and generously conceded by the man. In fact Degas' words to Mary give us reason to question the charge of misogyny that Milton levels against him.

In making this charge, Milton repeats what was said about Degas in his own time and has since become a commonplace of art history. But the case against this commonplace was first made over twenty years ago by Norma Broude, who has since amplified her critique of it.[23] Broude contends that Degas' work of the 1870s and 1880s--including his brothel monotypes and his bather paintings--reflects the influence of contemporary French feminism, specifically of ideas promulgated by the First International Feminist Congress held in Paris in 1878. While making no claim that Degas was himself a feminist, Broude plausibly suggests that he would have been exposed to feminism through his close friend Diego Martelli, an Italian art critic and journalist who by 1879 had "become a committed supporter of the feminist program of social and legal reform" (Broude, "EDFF," pp. 647-48). Since Martelli published in 1880 an article reiterating the feminist attack on prostitution in all its forms, Broude argues that Degas' brothel monotypes of 1878-89 may well constitute "an indictment of the system of State-regulated and sanctioned prostitution, a system that, from the feminist point of view, numbered among its victims not only the women themselves, but also their 'foolish' clients, and even French society as a whole. . . . These women, officially classified as 'other,' have indeed been debased and commodified by the lives in which they have been economically trapped--they have become what patriarchal society intended them to be used for" (Broude, "EDFF," p. 651). The "bather" compositions that Degas exhibited from 1876 to 1886 serve a different but no less defensible purpose. They are not, Broude contends, pictures of prostitutes offering themselves to "the male gaze," as often thought (even by some of D's contemporaries), but pictures of "respectable" women: "women who are naked for no one but themselves. And therein lay their potential to disturb and repel male audiences. They are among the very few

representations of the female nude by male artists in the Western tradition that challenge (albeit mildly and obliquely from our point of view today) the societal assumption that nude women can exist only for the pleasure and the purposes of dominant males" (Broude, "EDFF," pp. 654-55).

Figure 4. Edgar Degas, *Mary Cassatt at the Louvre: The Paintings Gallery* (1879-80). Boston Museum of Fine Arts , Katherine E. Bullard Fund.

This point has a direct bearing on Mary's Turn (figure 3), which includes among other things a graphic allusion to Degas' print, Mary Cassatt at the Louvre: The Paintings Gallery (1979-80) (figure 4). The female subject of this print is anything but an object of the voyeuristic male gaze. Fully covered in black hat and form-fitting black dress, back slightly arched, head cocked, stiff right arm pointing her tightly furled umbrella like a rapier into the floor, she is herself a viewer of paintings, an assured and judicious appraiser of art. In Mary's Turn, the large painting shown on the wall above the billiard table combines this viewing figure with Degas' Dancers Practicing at the Barre. Mary now becomes a reversed silhouette or shadow of her former self deployed in multiple exposure as she confidently strides past Degas' dancers stretching their legs against the bar to her left. Since the dancers have no frame of their own but seem poised in space above Mary, they hover suggestively between living fellow-creatures of her world and figures in a painting that she views as such. Either way, Milton's composite picture evokes the breadth of Degas' art and its capacity to represent women of all kinds, even women who may themselves be artists and judges of art--whether graphic or terpsichorean. In making Mary a viewer and judge of Degas' own figures, Milton wittily shows Mary exercising a right implicitly--and perhaps unwittingly--granted by Degas himself.

Figure 5. Degas, *Spartan Girls Challenging Boys*, *c.* 1860-1880. London, National Gallery , Courtauld Collection.

Further light on the complexity of Degas' response to women emanates from a painting nowhere depicted in Mary's Turn but nonetheless evoked by its paragonal theme: Spartan Girls Challenging Boys (ca. 1860/80) (figure 5). According to Broude, it epitomizes Degas' response to feminism. First painted around 1860 and then repainted for the Fifth Impressionist Exhibition in April of 1880, this picture of Spartan girls aggressively challenging boys to a race presents the classical figures as "explicitly contemporary Parisian types," thereby reflecting "the active and escalating challenge to male supremacy that was being laid down by the newly radicalized wing of the French feminist movement around 1879-80" (Broude, "EDFF," p. 645). Broude also notes that the vigorously active stance of the young women at left--especially of the girl leaning forward with her outthrust left arm--mimics the stance of the oath-taking men in David's Oath of the Horatii and thus radically reverses the way in which this prototypically neoclassical history painting represents the relation between men and women.[24]

Mary's Turn takes Degas' revision of David one step further. For it is precisely

with a vigorously outthrust left arm that Milton's Mary challenges Degas at the billiard table. If she has entered his own painting of Dancers at the Barre, she has also taken her cue for self-assertion from his painting of Spartan girls. But like her tightly furled umbrella, the cue stick she wields so deftly is of course a figure for the pencil or brush of her art, which is here displayed in rich concentration. The children clustered along the edge of the billiard table and the tea-drinking lady behind them are all drawn from her paintings, and the right half of her Girl Arranging Her Hair (1886) (figure 5) is shown hanging on the wall at left. In this work, which Cassatt painted precisely to show Degas that women could have a sense of style, a white-smocked girl with chin up, mouth half open, and eyes half-closed reaches to the back of her head with her unseen left hand while raising high her sharply bent left elbow and tugging with her right hand at the long thick braid of black hair draped over her right shoulder. Milton's print cuts the painting through the girl's body so that we see just a little wedge of her hair over her forehead. The left elbow stays high, acutely framing the face, but the eyes are fully open, and what they appear to be looking at is the figure of Mary Cassatt herself in the adjacent painting, coolly appraising the work of Degas.

Below, the girl of Mary's painting re-appears at the edge of the billiard table with her head slightly lowered, using her acutely bent left elbow now as a prop to lean on while she intently studies Mary in action. The fixity of her gaze stands out by contrast with the distracted mood of the tea-sipping woman behind her--from Cassatt's own Five O'Clock Tea (1880)--and of the other children, all younger than she. A toddler whose head just reaches the tabletop vainly tries to dislodge her left forearm, and one of the other girls shows a left arm bent to reach behind her own head like the girl in the painting. But unlike the older girl, she looks distractedly away. Only the older girl gives Mary her undivided attention, intently watching her style of play.

Figure 6. Mary Cassatt, *Girl Arranging Her Hair* (1886).
Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art , Chester Dale Collection.

The virtually discipular relation between Mary and the girl in this print evokes another painting by Cassatt--a monumental icon in her struggle for the rights of women. To decorate the South Tympanum of the Women's Building at the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, Mary Cassatt produced a 12-by-58 foot oil painting entitled Modern Woman. This work shows women picking fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. And as Nancy Mathews observes, it also shows women handing down the fruit of knowledge to other women as well as to young girls, forming an unbroken female chain. The mural was a tribute to women's education, in which there had been major advancements, especially on the secondary and college levels, during her lifetime. The mural was also a celebration of her own personal thirst for knowledge that was carried out every day in her studio, brush in hand. But at the same time it was a call to responsibility in that a woman who had plucked the fruits of Knowledge faced expulsion from the safety of her Victorian Eden and would need to chart a new course in unexplored and often hostile territory.[25]

In Mary's Turn, the fruit of knowledge plucked and handed by women to other

women and girls in Mary Cassatt's great mural becomes a cluster of billiard balls adroitly handled by Mary herself for the edification of a young girl plucked from one of Mary's own paintings. The girl is made to focus on something quite different from the elegance of her coiffeur, the traditional sign of female allure. She sees a woman not only demonstrating her art--figuratively speaking--but also challenging a man. And the only other figure in the print who is likewise gripped by Mary's performance is the very man she is challenging: Edgar Degas. He stands looking down at her, but his position of visual dominance is belied by his uneasy response to her proficiency in a game that requires--like drawing--an exquisite sense of touch and hand-eye coordination. Mary's action casts him in a role drawn from his own Spartan Girls. Just as her straight left arm recalls the aggressive thrust of the young women in that picture, his own anxious, beard-stroking, sidelong gaze at Mary recalls the wariness of the young Spartan men being challenged. The wariness of the men, Broude suggests, "may reflect a component of fear and anxiety--not Degas' personal fear of women as later writers have claimed, but rather, his perception of the fears of male society as a whole, as these would have been stimulated and evoked by the growing feminist movement of his period" (Broude, "EDFF," p. 658).

Mary's Turn makes Degas himself a wary onlooker, but given his willingness to recognize Mary's achievements in art as well as to reckon with and represent the force of feminism in contemporary life, he might also be seen as simply an exacting judge. Cassatt herself observed that he was "dreadful" in attacking any work that failed to meet his standards, no matter what the artist's gender.[26] If the severity of his judgments frightened her, she nonetheless prized them. She feared showing him Modern Woman while it was in progress lest he "demolish me so completely that I could never pick myself up in time to finish for the exposition. Still," she wrote, "he is the only man I know whose judgment would be a help to me."[27] On his own side, Degas felt bound to admit--if only obliquely--that Cassatt's achievements punctured his dismissive generalizations about women artists. Her Mother and Child (The Oval Mirror) moved him to call it "the greatest picture of the century" before making a snide quip on its "faults."[28] Louisine Havemayer, an American collector who knew both of them personally, found "always a little dart" in his remarks on Cassatt, but he was surely pointing a dart at the balloon of his own prejudices when he said of Young Women

Picking Fruit (1891), "I will not admit a woman can draw like that!"[29]

In any case, the net effect of Degas' grudging admiration for Cassatt's work was to sharpen the edge of her ambition. When Homer St.-Gaudens bought Young Women Picking Fruit for the Carnegie Institute in 1922, she wrote to him about Degas' double-edged comment on the picture and then observed: "If it has stood the test of time & is well drawn its place in a museum might show the present generation that we worked & learnt our profession, which isn't a bad thing--" (Mathews, CHC, p. 335). The understated tone clearly conveys her self-confidence. She firmly believed in female suffrage and women's rights, but what she prized above all was the right to compete with male artists--including Degas. While she persistently and "absolutely" refused to show her work in women's art exhibitions, she welcomed the chance to have it appear in a New York exhibition of 1915 with paintings not only by Degas but also by such grand old masters as Holbein, Rembrandt, and Vermeer. When Louisine Havemeyer asked her advice about the exhibition, she answered: "I advise you to put a Vermeer of Delft near the Degas and let the public look first at the one and then at the other. It may give them something to think about."[30] Almost a century before, the same impulse had led J.M.W. Turner to direct in his will that two of his seascapes should hang beside two paintings of Claude in London's National Gallery, where they hang today.[31] Cassatt likewise thought that her own work could stand comparison with that of the old masters. While seeming to suggest only that a Degas be juxtaposed with a Vermeer, she fully expected that her own work would be seen--and thought about--in relation to both.

To think about Mary's Turn itself in relation to Daylilies is to see that if the earlier print is dominated by gravity, shadow, and the weight of memory, this one is animated by expectation, buoyancy, and light. Varying in tone (as if in color) from pearl to black and "coaxed into . . . levitation by the sure touch of Mary Cassatt," as Milton says (AN/MT), the billiard balls rise like little balloons or like orbiting spheres in a model of the universe. Sharply outlined in the middle distance, the balls turn blurry in the foreground: bubbles of light that reflect and repeat the balls of light in the chandeliers overhead. The right edge of the billiard table, which divides the lower half of the painting, also blurs as it runs to the foreground and merges with the undulating border of Mary's dress, so that the whole table becomes a part of her, the battlefield where even

now she conquers. Mary's audience of young female admirers includes not just the girl leaning on the table beside her but the two young women seated on the piano behind her. Watching her as intently as the young girl does, they reflect her influence even as their own reflections are infinitely multiplied by facing mirrors--one behind them, the other before them in the viewer's space.[32] Their multiple reflections fittingly appear in shafts of light streaming in through the doors and windows on the right. It is as if Mary's deft touch and taut concentration has illumined their world.

Between them and Mary stands a figure suggested by the "man, bathed in light, [who] stands dreaming in a doorway" in Gertrude Kasebier's photograph (AN/MT). Milton turns this anonymous figure into Ludovic Halevy (1833-1908), librettist to Offenbach and Bizet, whose long friendship with Degas was commemorated by Degas' 1879 painting of him with an umbrella in a composition prefiguring what he does with Cassatt and her umbrella in At the Louvre, painted the same year (AN/MT). Degas proved a fickle friend. When an Alsatian Jewish officer named Alfred Dreyfus was falsely accused of giving information to the Germans and then court-martialed and imprisoned for doing so in 1894, Degas' virulent anti-Semitism led him to spurn Halevy because of his Jewishness.[33] The placement of Halevy at the doorway in Mary's Turn adumbrates this painful event. Marginal and liminal, he is still favored with the company of Degas at the time depicted here (which obviously precedes the Dreyfus affair), but isolated from the other two and already beginning to act out--unconsciously, it seems--his exclusion. Yet to understand Halevy's relation to both of the other two, we should know that Cassatt warmly defended Dreyfus even as Degas reviled him, and that she rejoiced at his eventual vindication in 1906.[34] Perhaps that is the final meaning of Halevy's stance. Backed by shadow, he holds his cue perfectly upright, like a shepherd's staff, and gazes into the light. As it is now Mary's turn, it will one day be Dreyfus's--and Halevy's.

Figure 7. Milton, *Points of Departure II: Nijinsky Variations*, first state (1996). Artist's Collection.

III. Nijinsky Variations: From Painting to Ballet

Moving from Mary's Turn to Nijinksy Variations, first state (1996) (figure 7) is first of all a journey through time. Though Mary's Turn is based on a photograph taken in 1908, the middle-aged appearance of Degas and Cassatt as well as the presence of Halevy suggests the 1880s. By contrast, Nijinksy Variations evokes primarily the years 1912-13, when the Russian-born Vaslav Nijinksy, who learned to dance in St. Petersburg and then moved to Paris, first performed with Diaghilev's Ballet Russe there many of ballet's greatest roles. The print is not bound to these years of Nijinksy's triumph. Besides the white bearded face at lower right, which shows Degas as he would have looked in these years, the print also looks backward to the black-fringed, black-hatted face of the young Degas (just left of the old one) and forward to the old faces of Mary Cassatt and Nijinksy himself. But since the very midpoint of the print is occupied by the supremely confident face of the young Nijinsky in his prime, we may think of that as something like a tonic key.

Or perhaps as simply part of a thread that may guide us through this labyrinth. With its great curving tiers and columns leading up to a stage-like foreground on which

groups of figures sit or stand and gaze or converse, the composition of Nijinsky Variations instantly arrests the viewer. But the profusion of figures and detail here makes instant comprehension of it all impossible--in spite of Milton's own endorsement of a long tradition suggesting the opposite. In the eighteenth century, Joshua Reynolds argued that unlike poetry, painting could not gradually excite the curiosity of the reader and build suspense. "What is done by Painting," he declared, "must be done at one blow; curiosity has received at once all the satisfaction it can ever have" (D, p. 146). Milton concurs. "Unlike music and literature that must move through time," he says, "art can be instantaneous. And one could say that a truly successful visual work provides something of an instant epiphany, where all its paramount information is experienced simultaneously--in a moment seemingly outside time" (CP 28-29). This conception of art is perhaps best exemplified by the "one-shot" perception that Kenneth Noland aimed to excite in the late 1960s with the minimalist, Hard Edge stripes of works such as Coarse Shadow and Stria. "To achieve maximum immediacy," writes Barbara Rose, "Noland was ready to jettison anything interfering with the most instantaneous communication of the image."[35] But Milton's print is a loaded ship. While it may instantly give us a sense of columns and sweeping curves swathed in shadow and points of light, any moment of vision that truly embraces its chief features must be earned by the hard labor of scrutinizing them individually.

Let us then do so. Ranged across the fore and middle grounds are six groups of figures largely based on photographs of known individuals but not always--according to Milton--identifiable with them. The young woman holding a furled umbrella and standing by the column at left, for instance, is based on a photograph of Olga de Meyer, who helped to bring the Ballet Russe to Paris. But this figure, says Milton, "stands in for" Romola Nijinsky, wife of the dancer, whose younger self stands before the column and whose older self sits beside it.[36] Another photograph of Olga de Meyer was Milton's model for the woman seated in profile at lower right and wearing a large plumed hat, and the bespectacled face looking straight out at us from behind the hat is a disguised version of Arnold Newman's photograph of Dame Marie Rambert, whom I shall treat further below. Since Milton could not get permission to use Newman's photograph directly, he says that neither the bespectacled woman nor the woman in the plumed hat represent anyone specific, that they "are just two women being alarmed by the last

dance."[37] Further complicating the question of identities in this group is the young woman seated at left and facing us, who is based on Alfred Eidenstadt's photograph of an unknown woman at La Scala but is supposed to represent the young Mary Cassatt.[38] On the other hand, the head of the young woman at lower right--based on the Baron de Meyer's photograph of an unknown model--may or may not stand in for Olga de Meyer.[39]

The three principal figures represented in the print--Nijinsky, Degas, and Cassatt--each appear at least once as young and old. At left, a young Nijinsky in street clothes (standup collar, necktie, coat and vest) stands beside the seated figure of an old one who looks away to the left. Diagonally to the right below them are the black-hatted, black-bearded young Degas, drawn from a self-portrait of 1857, and the white-haired old one, drawn from a photograph of about 1908. The old Degas faces left--like the old Nijinsky. Strengthening the visual link between these two old men is the repeated figure of the young Nijinksy standing over each in varied postures. While the young Nijinsky at left looks slightly up over the viewer's head, holds his left arm across his chest, and--below the chest--fades into the column behind him, the young Nijinsky at right looks straight at the viewer, holds both arms at his sides with his hands resting on the parapet, and--in his double-breasted jacket--cuts a solid figure against the marble pavement behind him. The diagonal line running from the diaphanous Nijinksy to the opaque one also runs further on to another old Nijinksy: the grinning head in the bottom right corner caught between the forward leaning head of the anonymous young woman and the forward leaning head of Diaghilev--a visual rhyme--donning his shiny black hat.

Beside the seated figure of the young woman representing the young Mary Cassatt is a spectral old one: a figure drawn from a photograph of the nearly blind Mary taken about 1914 and represented here as semi-transparent from the neck down, with the marble stairs and the squares of the pavement showing through her dress. The old Mary looks serenely to our left, like the old Nijinsky (who is likewise semi-transparent from the knees down) and the old Degas; the young Mary, with her chin resting lightly on her right hand and her elbow on her knee, looks almost straight at us, like the the foreground version of the young Nijinsky. Just behind and to the left of this pair stands

Stravinsky in white tie and tails beside yet another young Nijinsky--this time costumed as Petrushka, the title role of the Stravinsky ballet which he first danced at the Theatre du Chatelet in Paris on June 13, 1911.

Figure 8. Milton, *Points of Departure II: Nijinsky Variations*, second state (1996). Artist's Collection.

Beside and above these two figures in the first state of Nijinksy Variations are three near-diaphanous dancers poised in space with butterflies hovering around them. Just above a tilted bentwood chair Nijinsky floats alone with right arm thrown up behind him, back impeccably arched, legs thrust down together, toes pointed, and left arm crossing his chest, like the left arm of the young Nijinsky at left. Above the floating figure flies Nijinsky once more, enfolding from behind with black arms now the extended white arms of a ballerina (perhaps Tamara Karsavina) as they lean back together with her skirt fluttering over her bent legs. In the second state of the print (figure 8), these three airborne dancers--along with the butterflies--are replaced by a flock of crows.

What remains of the most important figures in the fore and middle grounds, therefore, are two versions of Degas (one young, one old), two versions of Mary Cassatt

(one young, one old), and five versions of Nijinsky (two old, three young). Among them are figures of lesser importance. At left a pair of slender young women with upswept hairdos, close-fitting decollete dresses, and black neckbands occupy a corner of the parapet--one leaning over the wide barrier to see what is below, the other turning back to look at her. At right, the bespectacled lady throws up her left arm in horror at the shocking antics of Diaghilev's near-naked Ballet Russe, which is scaring off the full-skirted ballerinas drawn from Degas' canvases and shown decorously leaping away at right. Framed in the the stalls of the fifth tier, looking up at a dancer whose cruciform figure hovers in space more than a tier above them, and--at right--bowing to touch the shiny marble pavement, they perform a new Stravinsky ballet: perhaps The Firebird (premiered 1910) or more likely The Rite of Spring (premiered 1913), whose portrayal of a fertility rite--including a ritual sacrifice--scandalized early audiences.

But the upthrust arm of the bespectacled lady facing us could signify something other than alarm. As already noted, she is a disguised version of Dame Marie Rambert, who danced with Diaghilev's Ballet Russe in 1912-13, founded (in London) the Rambert Ballet School and the Ballet Rambert in the 1920s, and remained a force in British ballet for more than fifty years. By adding spectacles and turning down the corners of her mouth, Milton turns a photograph of this renowned ballet teacher--taken in her nineties--into the picture of a bourgeois matron shocked at the audacity of Stravinksy's art. But her upthrust arm, which is doubled by the black-sleeved arm (and its shadow) of another woman sitting behind the older Mary, parallels the leg of a dancer pointing his or her slippered toe and leaping out of the picture at right. To see the lower body of the bespectacled lady is to see further evidence of the dancer she once was. Only with a very supple torso could she face us squarely with her upper body while her crossed legs and feet point off to the right. Also, the intersection of her legs with the leg of the disappearing dancer allows us to see that the dancer's slippers might still fit her slender feet. It is equally fitting that her upthrust arm comes from a photograph of a ballet teacher seated before a mirror: not Marie Rambert but Marina Semyonova, teacher at the Bolshoi, who raises her arm to guide and inspire the movements of the young Natalia Bessmertnova. The upthrust arms, then, ambiguously signify two antithetical reactions to the new cultural order exemplified by Stravinsky's ballet: the shock of a prim matron or the exaltation of a great ballet teacher saluting a new generation of

dancers.

The older Mary Cassatt's response to the ballet fits neither of these categories. Beside her younger self she sits serenely gazing (perhaps seeing nothing but a blur through her nearly blind eyes) while another version of her younger self--dating from about 1880--works on a canvas in the third and fourth stalls from the left of the second tier down from the top of the picture. According to Milton, she is painting not the group of five sitting two stalls away directly in front of her but rather her sister Lydia, who sits "buried in shadows" that hide her from us.[40] Three stalls beyond the group of five stands what Milton calls a "dashing" young Andre Gide (CP, p. 31), whose figure is repeated two tiers below in the third stall from the right, and the figure barely detectable in the third stall from the left of the bottom tier is, says Milton, "Cocteau . . . disappearing into the Underworld."[41]

Gathering all this information is one thing; grasping its connections and making them generate a comprehensive vision of the picture is another. The task is complicated by the fact that some of what we are asked to see or imagine here is invisible, like Lydia, or--absent the artist's prompting--unrecognizable, like Gide and the would-be young Mary Cassatt seated with the group at right. But some things are unmistakably clear. Like virtually all of Milton's prints, this is a picture of time, and of time running both ways at once. To represent the older selves of Nijinsky, Degas, and Cassatt sitting each by a younger self and gazing off to the left is to suggest that each may be remembering that self, fading away from the present (just as the old figures of Mary and Nijinksy fade into the marble pavement) and turning back to the past. On the other hand, to set the young Nijinksy just behind the old Degas--each based on photographs taken about 1908--denotes a moment of transition and generational change; the graceful ballerinas plucked from the canvasses of Degas are now being routed by the acrobatic performers of Stravinsky's new work, which liberates and discharges the energies of a rising generation.

The new generation includes of course the young Nijinsky, but only the first state of the print displays his dancing form as a variation on the seated and standing ones. While his seated older self takes his place with the seated old Cassatt and the old Degas

as the points of an inverted triangle, this is merely a base from which the young Nijinsky takes flight. His near-transparency signifies not a fading away, as in the seated figures, but the sublimation of his sinuous vitality. Hovering over a bentwood chair that is caught in a falling, multiple-exposure tilt, his arching body repeats the two great sets of curves--one sweeping up, the other down--that confront the vertical thrust of the columns and the lateral lines of the parapet, pavement, and steps. Nijinksy's various forms incorporate the shapes of the surrounding architecture. While his standing young figures repeat the vertical line of the columns and while his seated old figure--head facing left, knees pointed right--aligns itself with the pavement, the bending line of his airborne figure rhymes with the tiers.

Since the elegant arch of this figure seems to epitomize the sublime vitality of the dancer as well as to echo the curve of the tiers, it is startling to find him and the other two dancers wholly erased from the second state of the print (figure 8). This version follows a sequence of intermediate states: first the transparent dancers alone in flight, then the dark birds and at the same time the butterflies, which Milton added, he says, "to tie the birds into the floating dancers." But, he adds, "their metamorphosis now reads in reverse and inadvertently I now have Goya's and Van Gogh's metaphor for madness. The central, leaping Nijinsky, who is becoming transparent, is scattering butterflies. They, in turn, darken, becoming black birds, and move out to circle into the audience" (CP, p. 31).

In the latest version, then, the black crows are all that is left of the aerial dancers. The spirit of Nijinsky as something diaphanous, immaterial, and therefore indestructible dissolves, and with him go the butterflies, who in Christian iconography signify the resurrection.[42] Little remains to signify it now. Except for the cruciform dancer leaping out from the third tier and the bird-shaped flash of light at the top, which Milton calls "an ethereal white dove" (CP, p. 31]), the only things still rising here are black wings splayed against globes and starbursts of light. Milton sees Nijinksy "as a young man inevitably cut down in the full bloom of his power" by schizophrenia (CP, p. 31). So while both states of the print offer us in the center foreground a poignantly commemorative still life of Nijinsky's grave adorned with a rose and his dancing slippers, the second state of the print moves its soaring dancers from light to darkness, from transparency to

opacity, and from inspiration to madness. The flitting little shadows that the butterflies ominously cast around the dancers in the first state grow in the second to a flock of crows slanting down right over the head of the costumed Nijinsky standing by the column. The crows evoke both the dark birds of Van Gogh's desolating Crows in a Wheatfield--an icon of his final derangement--and the flock of owls slanting down over the sleeping figure in Goya's The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters (1799). As the crows loom just over the head of the costumed Nijinsky, the right half of his upper body fades into the column behind him, where the misty face of Diaghilev crowned by a black silk hat looms like an apparition.[43]

The prospect of death--whether psychic or physical--overshadows the theme of generational renewal. If this print shows the old giving way to the new--to the young Nijinsky and the new ballets of Stravinsky--it also marks the period of the first great war, which is signified here by the figure of a soldier in World War I uniform standing three columns behind the lady with the umbrella.[44] Flitting behind the columns are slender silhouettes with upraised arms performing a Dance of Death reminiscent of Ingmar Bergman's Seventh Seal (CP, p. 31). Since the columns grow transparent as they recede from the eye and the intervening spaces turn opaque, the dancing silhouettes seem to enter the columns and become immobilized there, like bas-reliefs on a funerary monument. Thus the regenerative effect of a new ballet, especially of a work such as Rite of Spring, is subtly undermined. And in this dark light, the upthrust arm of Marie Rambert, the disguised nonagenerian, gains a further meaning. Since she herself was dancing with Diaghilev's company in 1913, when Stravinsky's Rite of Spring premiered, and since these young dancers--if alive at all--must "now" at the end of her life be as old as she, the upthrust arm may signify farewell to them as well as to the Degas dancers they displaced, or may simply express a desperate urge to stop the passage of time.

Figure 9. Milton, *Points of Departure III: Twentieth Century Limited* (1997). Artist's Collection.

IV. Twentieth-Century Limited: The End of Art?

According to Milton himself, the chief thing distinguishing Twentieth-Century Limited (figure 9) from its immediate predecessor is the absence of people. "The third print of Points of Departure," he writes, "may well be as devoid of people as the second, Nijinsky, is crowded with them. There was malice aforethought in collecting such a throng for Nijinksy: in the next print the personalities have vanished. There is a huge train wreck in the once glorious--now demolished--Pennsylvania Station" (CP, p. 23).

Milton mentions none of the tiny figures scampering across the foreground to save from imminent destruction various celebrated artworks of the twentieth century. But before scrutinizing the figures and the paintings they rush to preserve, let us consider what Milton presents as his main subject: "a huge train wreck" in Pennsylvania Station. The cluster of great steel arches is based on a photograph of Charles McKim's Pennsylvania Station under construction in about 1910 (CP, p. 23). Besides reversing the photograph so that the arches now stand on the right rather than the left, Milton adds fan vaulting and pointed arches at the top, creating a pattern of intricately interlocking curves reminiscent of Piranesi's Carceri. He also converts a photograph of the station under construction into a print that anticipates its demolition.[45] With the three steel

pillars at left buckling below and dissolving above under the impact of the train that has just struck them, the print evokes both the great constructive power of the twentieth century and the impermanence--the conspicuously limited life--of what it has built. At right, the locomotive belching a vast cloud of smoke seems headed straight into the mess of derailed and mangled trains at left, which (we surmise) have already been struck by the locomotive now thrown on its side. On the side of a ruined passenger car is the name that gives Milton his title: "CENTURY XX LIMITED." As Milton observes, this was a New York Central luxury supertrain that ran between New York and Chicago starting in 1902.[46] Pennsylvania Station was built because the Pennsylvania Railroad Company--headed by Alexander Cassatt, the brother of Mary--needed a suitably grand point of departure for its own supertrain, the Pennsylvania Special, later renamed the Broadway Limited. But here the great monument to twentieth-century technology becomes an emblem of ephemerality. Completed in 1910 and demolished in 1963, it exemplifies in retrospect the restlessness of our century, its impatience with the past, its relentless demand for change.

This almost allegorical story of the train wreck and the doomed station, however, gets more complicated when we consider the figures and the pictures deployed across the foreground. For even as trains rush to their mutual destruction and the station begins to buckle, a myriad of tiny figures scramble to save the most celebrated works of Western art in the twentieth century. Among them are visual jokes and parodies, such as the "Y2K" carried by the ants just to the left of the center foreground. Y2K is computerese for "year 2000," the year that may (or may not) wreak universal havoc with all computer systems programmed to calculate years in just two digits up to 99, the limit of years in the twentieth century if we reckon it as the 1900s. The letter K also alludes, says Milton, to Kafka's "Metamorphosis," the story of a man who woke up as a bug. Since bug is now a well-established metaphor for a defect or breakdown in a computer program (Y2K is the millennium bug), it is singularly apt that the ants should be carrying the picture of a bug, or more precisely--says Milton--"an approximation of an insect version of a quasi Chuck Close" ("Key"). Just as fittingly, the ants carry their would-be painting of a bug, icon of high-tech disaster, directly in front of a downed and wrecked locomotive.

Nearly every other work of art that has been drawn (in every sense) into this print is an icon of abstract expressionism or postmodernism--the two dominant movements in Western art since 1900. With pointed emphasis, Milton writes that "everything in this image--details and architecture--has been drawn by the artist without photo-mechanical or computer aids" ("Key"). Drawing gives him full control over the works of art he represents, which, he says, "were [all] modified and intentionally changed to a lesser or greater degree from the originals" ("Key"). Radical change appears in the lower right corner, where the famous legend that Magritte inscribed beneath his picture of a pipe (Ceci n'est pas une pipe [1926]) is superimposed on a drawing of Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum, a temple of art that has so far survived the twentieth century but that here seems almost to be going up in smoke--like a pipe or like the runaway locomotive heading for disaster behind it. A more subtle synthesis appears in the center foreground, where Milton's version of Andy Warhol's Marilyn Monroe Diptych (1962) is borne at right angles to his version of Marcel Duchamp's LHOOQ (1919). Warhol's two panels are reduced to one, and his five rows of five heads have each been reduced to four rows of three heads each. Conversely, Duchamp's single picture of the mustachioed Mona Lisa has become a Warholian diptych, perhaps implying that Duchamps' title/caption (pronounced letter by letter in French as "Elle a chaud au cul" [she has a hot ass]) could apply as well to Marilyn as to La Giocanda. In any case, Duchamps' defacement of Da Vinci's icon is here shown to have initiated a chain reaction with a twist on the end. While Duchamp makes his painting from a reproduction of Da Vinci's, Milton makes a portion of his print by doubly reproducing Duchamps' painting in the manner of Warhol--except that this would-be photo-mechanical reproduction is hand drawn.

But Duchamp is himself iconized as well as redrawn. If any one figure personifies modern art in this print, it is he. Except for Jackson Pollock, shown leaning over to splash paint between the tracks just right of center foreground, Duchamp is the only painter delineated here. Running beside the passenger car in the center foreground, he carries--as if they were suitcases--a modified portfolio from his "Box in a Valise Series" and a framed rectangle of glass mullioned down the middle and veined with cracks taken from his Large Glass: The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (1915-23, left unfinished), which is being borne off horizontally just to the right. Large Glass appears

bigger than any other work of art represented in the print, including Warhol's Marilyn, actually the larger of the two (82" x 114" vs. 109 1/4" x 69"). But Duchamp is responsible for the smallest as well as the biggest work of art represented in this print. His running figure carries, says Milton, "a little vial of Paris air with which [Duchamp] exemplified an invented category he called infra-mince or sub-tiny." ("Key").

The little vial exemplifies the Lilliputianizing thrust of this print, which turns major works of twentieth century art into infra-mince curiosities. The biggest one hardly exceeds the size of a postage stamp, and the shock of their novelty has shrivelled; in the left foreground an anteater placidly consumes the very letters of the words THE SHOCK OF THE NEW, title of Robert Hughes' well-known book on twentieth century art.[47] At this point Duchamp's art--and his theory of art--tells us a good deal about the peculiar kind of distinction and longevity that modernism seeks. If the vial is so tiny or inconspicuous (tucked into his pocket, perhaps?) as to be invisible, the cracked rectangle of glass dangling from Duchamp's left hand is by contrast a highly visible instance of infra-mince, which could mean not just miniscule but inconsequential, like the energy one expends in giggling or blowing out smoke (Hughes 387). For Duchamp, all such throwaway gestures can be salvaged and perpetuated by art, can even exemplify the inconsequence of art from a practical standpoint. (Da Vinci's lady cannot speak or even sigh; Magritte's would-be pipe cannot be smoked.) The mosaic of cracks that invaded Large Glass after a trucking accident is infra-mince: an increment that mars the glass or subtly enhances it, like the dust that Duchamp allowed to settle on it and then deliberately attached with fixative (Hughes 52).

Since Duchamp seems to have mentally--one might almost say providentially--appropriated the cracks into his design for the work, which he claimed had "nothing spontaneous" (qtd. Hughes, p. 55), Milton's portrayal of Duchamp running away with the cracks is at once suggestive and witty. Does the painter seek--even after loftily accepting the cracks as "art"--to banish them from Large Glass after all? Or in leaving Large Glass to anonymous others while he himself scampers off with the cracked glass, is he telling us that he is more eager to save that? Either way, we are prompted to link both of these glass works--one real and one imaginary--with the square and rectangular windows of the passenger car just behind them.

To make this link, we need not be able to see that behind the fourth and fifth windows from the left end of the car Marcel Duchamp is re-enacting the chess game he played with a naked Eve Babitz, granddaughter of Igor Stravinsky, at the Pasadena Art Museum on October 18, 1963 ("Key").[48] That is a piece of esoterica. But what is most important here can be easily seen and read. In juxtaposing two glass objets d'art with the windows of a passenger train, Milton reminds us that "window" is a figure for art dating back at least to Alberti, who considered the rectangle that he drew to begin his work "an open window through which I see what I want to paint."[49] Alberti's figurative window has now become the cracked glass of modernism, less luminous than the windows of the passenger car at left and no more durable--it seems--than the trucks or trains used to carry it. Yet these are the very instruments that devour our monuments, large and small, architectural and artistic, grand and infra-mince. While the vast cloud of smoke in this print suggests something like apocalyptic destruction, it comes from one of our own machines. A truck accident cracks Large Glass; the gradual displacement of the train by the truck and the automobile in the later twentieth century makes Penn Station obsolete and thereby dooms it to demolition.

At the left edge of the foreground in this print are the first and third panels of Roy Lichtenstein's As I Opened Fire (1964). Aligned with the upraised right arm of the kneeling bomb victim in Picasso's Guernica (1937) just above, the nearly vertical fuselage and guns of Lichtenstein's fighter planes underscore the destructiveness of war machines even as they show what happens to paintings of war in the twentieth century: they shrink from epic canvases into comic strip panels. But in joining two of the panels from Lichtenstein's As I Opened Fire to his Drowning Girl (1963), Milton offers an alternative to war as a metaphor for cultural self-destruction. The paintings carelessly heaped at left and ranged across the foreground to the right might be read as the flotsam and jetsam of a sinking ship, or as images that rush through the mind at the end of the century--like the high-speed movie of their lives that drowning persons are said to see as they go down. Even the glowing points and streaks and crosses of reflected light that lie athwart the tracks evoke a seascape by Claude.

Framing these images of war and drowning is the geometry of modernism. Touching the edge of Jasper Johns' Target with Plaster Casts (1962) and propped just

beneath Albers' Homage to the Square (1954) is Milton's own Homage to Kandinsky, painted the same year. Together, the two paintings not only recall Milton's years at Yale under Albers' tutelage but also suggest an alternative title for this whole print: Homage to Albers. For the whole print is a study in squares and rectangles, from the latticework of mullioned windows at the top to the windows of the passenger cars below and the shapes of the paintings, including a typically rectilinear Mondrian just to the left of the Albers. Squares and rectangles are ambiguous shapes. They may signify stability, containment, enclosure: the frame on which a canvas is stretched, the crate or vault in which paintings may be stored for shipping or safekeeping, the train that might be used to rescue them. But neither crates nor trains in this print can assure the preservation of art. Crammed into a crate just to the right of Warhol's Marilyn is a jumble of Picasso's paintings and metal sculptures that look as if they were being thrown out rather than salvaged. This crate of high modernist junk stands right on the rescue line: on the low diagonal of paintings being carried across the tracks to the intact locomotive and cars in the foreground. But the mangled condition of the trains just behind them, along with the imminent threat of yet another collision to be caused by the oncoming locomotive, sabotage the likelihood that the trains in the foreground are a safe haven for the art of the twentieth century. On the contrary, two or three women plucked from the canvases of Jean DuBuffet can be seen jumping down from the locomotive at lower right--evidently bent on escaping it.[50]

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Since I initially wrote the foregoing words, Peter Milton has not only completed Points of Departure but launched a new series, Hidden Cities, with two spectacularly urban prints.[51] Richly evoking European cityscapes of the earlier twentieth century, the new work gives us fresh reason to conclude that Milton has now taken his turn in the never-ending history of art precisely by re-turning to its past: turning back from the abstract shapes of modernism and the mechanical reproductions of postmodernism to an art of draughtsmanship that is, like Augustine's vision of truth, a pulchritudo tam antiqua et tam nova--a beauty at once ancient and new. Milton's work radiates traditional virtues. It recalls the linear precision of Durer, the sinuosity of Blake, the tenebrosity of Rembrandt, the luminosity of Turner. At the same time, it demonstrates that he has learned as much about the mysteries of light and darkness from photographs as from his great precursors. Who can say, for instance, whether or not the little fireball of light that nearly dissolves one of the buckling stanchions in Twentieth Century Limited owes more to Claude or Turner than to Milton's study of photographic effects? Milton is a twentieth century artist who has never forgotten or

abandoned the lessons of the past. As if to show that his handiwork cannot be vanquished or superseded by photography, as Turner feared, he takes photography as both his model and rival, deliberately emulating its subtleties and evoking above all its mnemonic power, its capacity to fix forever a moment of the past. But his is an art of many moments, an art that turns back to the nineteenth century only in order to return us--with renewed understanding--to the twentieth. Thus he crosses the threshold of the twenty-first.

NOTES

[1]"Prints: Black and White and Layered All Over," Art News 96 (May 1997), p. 107. For extensive help in preparing this essay I thank my research assistant, Gretchen Saegh, and also Peter Milton himself, who has generously answered many questions and granted me full access to his own collection of his work.

[2]Clifford Ackley, "Printmaking and Photography: Modern Marriage," Art New England 18 (Feb.-March 1997), pp.23-25. On the other hand, Milton's work is briefly saluted in by Theodore F. Wolff in "What Links Durer and Milton," The Many Masks of Modern Art (Boston: Christian Science Publishing, 1989), pp. 121-24.

[3]Complete Etchings 1960-1976, ed. Kneeland McNulty (Boston: Impressions Workshop, 1977), pp. 12-13--hereafter cited as CE. Cezanne may be the high priest of organicism in painting, but in literature and literary theory it is generally treated as a concept that S.T. Coleridge derived from A.W. Schlegel. Coleridge defined poetry as "the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities" and adopted Schlegel's distinction between "mechanic" and "organic" form, where the first is superimposed and the second innate, "develop[ing] itself from within." Biographia Literaria, ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 2: 16, 84n.

[4]Complete Prints 1960-1996 (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1996), p. 13--hereafter cited as CP.

[5]Begun in 1969, The Jolly Corner Suite was first published in book form by Aquarius Press (Baltimore and New York) in 1971 and is fully reproduced in CP, pp. 74-94. The nineteen drawings of The Aspern Papers (made 1990-92) were reproduced by David Godine (Boston) in 1993, and also appear in The Primacy of Touch: The Drawings of Peter Milton (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1993), pp. 96-119. The seven etchings of the Interiors suite, begun with Family Reunion (1984) and completed with The Train from Munich (1991), are reproduced in CP, pp. 121-31. For helpful commentary on this suite I am indebted to Irving Finkelstein, "Peter Milton Revisited: A Decade of 'Interiors' Prints," unpublished.

[6]For a more detailed explanation of the difference between resist-ground etching and lift-ground etching (which is what Milton used originally), see CE, pp. 28-30. I should add that Milton usually refines his etched plates with engraving--that is, with cuts made by a burin directly into the plate.

[7]For this and all the other photographs mentioned in this paragraph, see CE, pp. 114-17.

[8]Long before Milton used this photograph in his print, Francis Bacon used it as the model for his painting, Paralytic Child Walking on All Fours (from Muybridge) (1961), repr. Van Deren Coke, The Painter and the Photograph (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1964), p. 170. But while Bacon turns the child into something that can hardly be distinguished from an animal, Milton's drawing preserves the lineaments of the child, and this pathos of the child's condition.

[9]In 1974, he says, "I began to explore the collage potential inherent in the photo-resist approach" (CP, p. 17).

[10]Charles Newton, Photography in Printmaking (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1979) p. 31. Cf. Duchamp's defense of his Fountain (1917), a urinal turned on its side and signed R.Mutt 1817. When it was segregated from all the other works exhibited in the first exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists in the spring of 1917, Duchamp wrote, "Whether Mr. Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article or life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view--created a new thought for that object." Qtd. Amy Conger, "Edward Weston's Toilet," in Perspectives on Photography, ed. Peter Walch and Thomas Barrow (Alburquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), p. 178. Josef Albers--Milton's mentor--defended the mechanical construction of art works (such as his own Homage to the Square) as a legitimate response to a mechanical age. See Prints/ Multiples, p. 13, qtd. Margot Lovejoy, "Innovations in American Printmaking: 1956-1981," The Print Review (1981) No. 13, p. 45.

[11]CE, pp. 116-17. He later discovered that the flower "was not a daylily at all" (CP, p. 28).

[12]In what follows I treat briefly just a few aspects of this history. For more comprehensive analyses, see Coke (cited above) and Aaron Scharf, Art and Photography (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1968).

[13]Qtd. Martin Gasser, "Between 'From Today, Painting is Dead' and 'How the Sun Became a Painter.': A Close Look at Reactions to Photography in Paris 1839-1853," Image 33 (Winter 1990-91), p. 12. About the same time, Jules

Janin wrote of dageurreotype: "The earth or the sky, a cathedral disappearing in a cloud . . . all these things, big or small, which are equal before the sun, engrave themselves instantaneously inside the camera obscura preserving all impressions. Never has the art of the greatest masters produced similar drawings" (qtd. Gasser, p. 12). Janin went on to say also: "Art cannot compete with this new rival anymore." Qtd. Gasser, p. 14.

[14]W.B. Richmond, The Richmond Papers, ed. Stirling (1926), qtd. John Gage, Colour in Turner (New York: Praeger, 1969), p. 121.

[15]"The Salon of 1859" in Selected Writings on Art and Literature, trans. P.E. Charvet (London: Penguin, 1992), p. 297--hereafter cited as SW. Whistler in 1878 wrote likewise: "The imitator is a poor kind of creature. If the man who paints only the tree, or flower, or other surface he sees before him were an artist, the king of artists would be the photographer. It is for the artist to do something beyond this: in portrait painting to put on canvas something more than the face the model wears for that one day; to paint the man, in short, as well as his features; in arrangement of colours to treat a flower as his key, not as his model" (qtd. Scharf, p. 194).

[16]Jacqueline Lichtenstein, The Eloquence of Color: Rhetoric and Painting in the French Classical Age, trans. Emily McVarish (Berkeley: U of California Press, 1993), pp. 3-4.

[17]"The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936) in Illuminations: Essays and Reflections, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 1969), pp. 220-25.

[18]Even in the Soviet Union, artists of the early seventies used mass-produced imagery to create a new kind of aura. Following in the postmodern footsteps of Rauschenberg and Warhol, artists such as Erik Bulatov, Ilya Kabakov, and Eduard Gorokhovsky used propagandistic photographs to signify the ideological aura of political myth-making. One of their works is particularly notable. In One Thousand Four Hundred Forty-Eight Portraits of Lenin (1988), Gorokhovsky uses 1448 variously silkscreened heads of Lenin to compose an extraordinarily unique portrait of Stalin. See Margarita Tupitsyn, "Veil on Photo: Metamorphoses of Supplementary in Soviet Art," Arts Magazine 64 (Nov. 1989), pp. 81, 84.

[19]CE, p. 17. Once again, Milton evokes Coleridge's account of the poet: "He diffuses a tone, and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination" (BL 2:16).

[20]The would-be reflection of the sofa shown just over the man's head, for instance, could not be seen where it is from our straight-on viewpoint unless some part of the actual sofa were also visible in the front of the painting. Milton, by the way, says that the boy with the hat "peers out at us from his interior world" (CE, p. 116). So it seems. Yet if the framed space over the mantelpiece is truly a mirror, wouldn't the boy have to be looking back at his own reflection?

A further problem arises from the little disk in the lower left corner of the mirror. If this disk is itself a small mirror reflected in the big one, it can only reflect what is before the viewer, not what is behind us. Alternatively, if it's simply a small mirror embedded in the large one, it's reflecting something the big mirror doesn't catch. Milton himself says that the little mirror "reflects, in place of our real world, an imaginary world of windows behind windows which produces the light patterns on the left mantel" (CE 116).

Finally, the crowd of figures defined by rectilinear bands can be read as a "painting" reflected in the mirror, and so can the framed group of ballerinas at left. But the three unframed figures deployed between the picture of the ballerinas and the picture of the crowd hover implausibly in space--well above the floor on which the sofa may be presumed to stand.

[21]Author's unpublished, untitled notes to Mary's Turn, hereafter cited as AN/MT.

[22]Achille Segard, Mary Cassatt: Un Peintre des Enfants et des Meres (1913) in Nancy Mowll Mathews, ed. Cassatt: A Retrospective. (China: Hugh Lauter Levin, Associates, Inc., 1996), p. 150--hereafter cited as Mathews, CAR.

[23]See Norma Broude, "Degas's Misogyny," Art Bulletin 59 (1977), pp. 95-107; "Edgar Degas and French Feminism, ca. 1880: 'The Young Spartans,' the Brothel Monotypes, and the Bathers Revisited," Art Bulletin 70 (December 1988), pp. 640-59--hereafter cited as Broude, "EDFF"; and Edgar Degas: Images of Women, Images of Men. New York: Rizzoli, 1993.

[24]Broude, "EDFF," pp. 646-47. Broude here draws on Richard Brettell and S.F. McCullagh, Degas in the Art Institute of Chicago (Chicago, 1984), pp. 34-35.

[25]Nancy Mowll Mathews, Mary Cassatt (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), n.p.--hereafter cited as MC.

[26]"Oh, my dear, he is dreadful!" said Cassatt to Louisine Havemayer. "He dissolves all your will power. . . . Even the painter [Gustave] Moreau said to Degas after years of friendship, that he could no longer stand his attacks." (Mathews, CAR, p. 112).

[27]Letter of 1 December 1892 to Bertha Palmer, president of the Board of Lady Managers of the Women's Building

at the Chicago Exposition (Mathews, CAR, p. 180).

[28]"He went over all the details of the picture with me," Cassatt reportedly said, "and expressed great admiration for it, and then, as if regretting what he had said, he relentlessly added: 'It has all your qualities and all your faults--c'est l'Enfant Jesus et sa bonne anglaise'" ["It's the baby Jesus and his nanny."]. Louisine Havemeyer, Sixteen to Sixty: Memoirs of a Collector (1930), in Mathews, CAR, p. 112.

[29]"A Tribute to Degas and Cassatt" (April 6, 1915) in Mathews, CAR, p. 313. For Cassatt's own account of this episode, see her letter of 28 December 1922 to Homer St.-Gaudens in Cassatt and Her Circle: Selected Letters, ed. Nancy Mowll Mathews (New York: Abbeville Press, 1984), p. 335--hereafter cited as Mathews, CHC.

[30]Havemeyer, "Tribute," in Mathews, CAR, p. 313. On her refusal to let her work appear in women's exhibitions, see her letter of January 22, c. 1898 to Paul Durand-Ruel (Mathews, CAR, p. 238) and Havemeyer, Sixteen in Mathews, CAR, p. 239.

[31]Martin Butlin and Evelyn Joll, The Paintings of J.M.W. Turner, rev. ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984), Text, p. 96.

[32]The figure standing just to the right of the pair is a secondary reflection of the man standing in the doorway, who is first reflected from a mirror in the viewer's space. The door between the man and his reflection makes it impossible to link the two directly.

[33]Referring, presumably, to the mid-1890s, Havemeyer recalls: "Degas was such an anti-Dreyfusard that he wrote to his lifelong friend Halevy, who was a Jew, not to put his place at the table as he could no longer dine with him on Sundays." Sixteen in Mathews, CAR, p. 110.

[34]Havemeyer, Sixteen in Mathews, CAR, p. 239.

[35]"Quality in Louis," Artforum (October 1971), p. 65.

[36]The notestxtd words come from Peter Milton's letter of 23 September 1997 to the author.

[37]Peter Milton to the author, 3 October 1997.

[38]Peter Milton to the author, 3 October 1997.

[39]Peter Milton to the author, 23 September 1997: "Woman [at lower right] is taken from a Baron de Meyer photograph of an unknown model--but I was thinking of the Baron's wife, Olga, who was one of those who got the Ballet Russe to Paris." When I talked with Milton in person two months later, he said that the young woman at lower right represents no one in particular, but the fact that she is based on a photograph by Baron de Meyer obviously allows us to associate her with his wife and her services to the Ballet Russe.

[40]Complete Prints, p. 31, and letter of 23 September 1997 from Peter Milton to the author. Used by Mary Cassatt as the model for a series of paintings shown at the Impressionist Exhibition of 1881, Lydia died of Bright's disease in 1882 (Mathews, MC, n.p.).

[41]CP, p. 31 and letter of 23 September 1997 from Peter Milton to the author.

[42]"The meaning [of the butterfly] is derived from the three stages in its life as represented by the caterpillar, the chrysalis, and the butterfly, which are clearly symbols of life, death, and resurrection." George Ferguson, Signs & Symbols in Christian Art (New York: Oxford, 1961), p. 13.

[43]I must emphasize that this is the latest version I have seen. As of the summer of 1998, Milton is planning yet another version--this one with touches of color.

[44]Milton says that he used "a photographic self-portrait by the German Expressionist Ernst Kirchner posing in his uniform and holding a cigarette. Though he was among the lucky who survived the war, in the end he committed suicide" (CP, p. 31).

[45]Turner does something comparable in Dido Building Carthage (1815), where the unfinished buildings and the fragments of stone around them already begin to resemble the ruins they will become, and thus to negate the high constructive purpose they are supposed to signify. See my Re-Creation of Landscape (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1984), pp. 86-87.

[46]"Key to Sources and Figures [in Twentieth-Century Limited]." Unpublished notes by Peter Milton.

[47]"An aardvark," writes Milton, "having only 'a' vowels, has eaten the first 'e.' He is after the ants and may develop a taste for all the art rescuers" ("Key.")

[48]Beyond reducing Duchamp to a figure that can be read, if at all, only with a magnifying glass, Milton here ties

the central figure of Twentieth-Century Limited to a subsidiary figure of Nijinksy Variations with a thread so infra-mince that perhaps only Duchamp himself could detect it without the artist's help.

[49]On Painting, trans. John R. Spencer. Rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale, 1966), p. 56.

[50]The Dubuffet women are aligned with another Dubuffet item at lower left: a cow plucked from The Cow with the Subtile Nose (1954). Since the cow here appears to be inspecting Robert Motherwell's Elegy to the Spanish Republic 34 (also 1954), Milton is also reminding us of Mark Tansey's The Innocent Eye Test ("Key").

[51]Points of Departure concludes with the elegiac Pavanne (1999), whose title echoes Maurice Ravel's Pavanne for a Dead Princess; in it a lone cellist plays among fallen leaves in a setting based on the Tuileries Gardens of Paris. Hidden Cities I: The Ministry (2003) reconstructs Paris in the spring of 1922, when James Joyce briefly met Marcel Proust shortly after Ulysses was published and shortly before Proust died. At bottom center sits the mature Joyce gazing at a chessboard and brooding like the man at the bottom center of Daylilies; across the rainswept square behind him looms an imaginary building (the Ministry) based on a Dresden villa, while the square itself displays--among other things-- Sylvia Beach lurking in a doorway as as lady of the night, Marcel Duchamp sitting with a young woman at a cafÉ table, Proust and Joyce as boys witnessing a game of hopscotch, and a taxi containing the two of them as men. Hidden Cities II: Embarkation for Cythera (2004) reconfigures Watteau's Embarkation for Cythera as a European cityscape of wide steps descending in gaslit terraces at left and rising at right to a Dresden villa piled on a Palladian edifice; next to that, the Spanish steps of Rome climb to the Trinita del Monte as an onion-domed airship hovers moored beside it.
