

american indifference to art an anachronistic myth

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Americans, like every other people, have relied upon certain myths to sustain their sense of national identity. In order to maintain the belief that they had a uniquely important role in human history, the American people denied, until quite recently, that a real class structure existed in the United States, just as they insisted that every boy had an equal opportunity to rise to the highest political offices in the land. Although we are becoming aware that these and related assertions exemplify an increasingly anachronistic mythology—one that stands in the way of what we define as social justice—no one has yet pointed to the part that our still widely accepted notion of American art history has contributed to that mythology.

A standard lament heard throughout our national history has been that Americans, in their mad scramble for wealth and comfort, fail to show any appreciation for the arts. Editorials in one short-lived Baltimore magazine of 1807 merely phrased more colorfully than is usual the standard refrain to be heard for the next century and a half: “*Of stones it would be easier to raise up children to Abraham, than to inspire a taste for the Arts, where the wharves, the banks, and the markets, are the national museums and the temple of genius.*” One’s only recourse, Eliza Anderson concluded, was to attend a concert, hoping “. . . the distinguished musicians of our city, will combine their harmonious sounds, to banish from our memories that we are here, *in the very Siberia of the arts.*”¹

The accusation seldom occurred, however, until the first years of the nineteenth century. Before the American Revolution critics either failed to appear at all, or, when they did, they took for granted that colonies

shared in the cultural honors of the mother country. Once we had achieved our independence, of course, it followed that American art and culture must stand on their own merits. In the first few years after the conclusion of the War for Independence, cultural nationalists urged the need for a distinctive national taste, prescribed its general character, and viewed the future with unbounded confidence. A very typical piece on the glories of "American Genius" was published in 1787. Citing Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia* as an effective refutation of European theories of degeneration in America, the anonymous author catalogued the fame of American artists and writers to show that, among other virtues, ". . . the Americans appear to be possessed of peculiarly strong talents for painting." Needless to say, he went on, "The age of ultimate refinement in America, is yet to arrive. . . . Some pains ought, therefore, to be taken, to lead the taste of a nation to substitute, instead of the vulgar enjoyments of cock-fighting, gambling, and tavern haunting, pleasures of a more refined and innocent nature." Already, much improvement had been attained, when comparisons were made with conditions before the war; increasing population and wealth would ". . . hereafter, undoubtedly, prove a source and incentive to improvements in music, architecture, gardening, sculpture, and other elegant arts."²

The author of that article and many other magazine writers, orators, newspaper editors and letter writers predicted, called for, begged and demanded the immediate appearance of that "age of ultimate refinement in America." Finding no adequate response, they soon began to grumble about the lack of patronage and the philistinism of Americans.

Scholars have generally found these criticisms to present a true bill, and American civilization generally stands indicted as one peculiarly lacking in aesthetic content. The American people prior to World War II seemed persistently indifferent to matters of taste more sophisticated than the daily newspaper, Currier and Ives prints, and Walt Disney cartoons. The recent "culture boom," testified to and appraised in dramatically different terms by Alvin Toffler, Dwight Macdonald, and Tom Wolfe,³ apparently only reinforces the conventional judgment of American taste that existed before 1945.

In this article I would like to suggest an alternative interpretation of American taste, arguing that there is substantial evidence to indicate that Americans have traditionally shown at least as much interest in the arts as the nations with which they have usually been invidiously compared. Rather than documenting a clear-cut case against Americans for being philistines, it seems to me, the usual story of American indifference to the arts illustrates the persistence of the myth of The American Adam.⁴

Conclusive refutation of the usual condemnation of American tastelessness would require a definitive history of American attitudes and actions relevant to aesthetic topics, and scholars have yet to produce such a history. It should be sufficient here, however, to demonstrate how the

major criticisms are either not based on facts or fail to read those facts correctly.

Probably the most dominant illustration of American indifference to the arts is based on the belief that Americans have more or less consistently ignored their own creative talents, at least until lionization in Europe brought a reluctant response in the United States. Thus, Frank Lloyd Wright received wide recognition throughout Europe by the second decade of this century as a great architect while still finding few commissions and very little national recognition in his homeland. A century earlier the "distinguished amateur" (Benjamin Latrobe?) wrote his blast to the *Observer* enraged by the unresponsiveness of American builders to elegant architecture. "I wanted," he claimed, "to make plain to the eye and the finger of the American *builder*, that nothing was to be left to chance nor choice in composition, as well as in construction; and that grace, beauty and solidity, depend on the forms and proportions . . ." found by leading modern architects and engineers in the ruins of Greece, Rome, and Asia. "But when I recollected that we were in a country where *cheapness* was the only thing considered, . . ." and his projected book would, therefore, be confined to a dozen libraries from which pirating would have been unmerciful, he decided that Americans believed "ignorance is bliss." The aggrieved author consigned himself to resigned silence, ". . . for all that I see around me appears as far as concerns taste, to be condemned to final impenitence."⁵ The sympathetic handful shook their heads in dismay, as they would continue to do until the mid-twentieth century.

Obviously, most Americans most of the time have not attended to matters of taste, but this has probably been a constant in human psychology. The accusation that Americans are indifferent to good taste depends on the argument that they have paid much less time and money and had proportionately far fewer patrons than Great Britain, France, or some other cultured European country. Consequently, they have consistently betrayed their destiny, enunciated by Benjamin Latrobe among many others: ". . . the days of Greece may be revived in the woods of America, and Philadelphia become the Athens of the Western world."⁶

Latrobe, himself, repeatedly suffered from neglect, according to Talbot Hamlin, his biographer, even though he was the first professionally trained architect to practice in America, and, undoubtedly, the leading designer in his generation. Hamlin summed up the theme of this "architectural biography as it should be written":⁷

It is the story of a man ahead of his time . . . of how a country . . . would give to Latrobe's intense aesthetic vision merely the most superficial and grudging admiration. . . . The tragedy of a man devoted to the ideals of imaginative planning in a country where mere improvisation was still the rule.⁸

Latrobe's life, in short, exemplified that of an architectural genius in ". . . a country widely permeated with a kind of basic anti-aestheticism."⁹

For the disinterested reader, Hamlin's lament seems remarkably out of tune with the rapid rise to fame that Latrobe experienced after arriving in Norfolk early in 1796. Before dying of yellow fever in New Orleans in 1820 he had secured his fame with such public structures as the Philadelphia waterworks, the Bank of Pennsylvania, the Catholic Cathedral at Baltimore, and his work on the Capitol and the White House in Washington. Latrobe designed many famous and beautiful homes, the best known being Henry Clay's Ashland, as well as such diverse pieces of engineering as the Delaware and Chesapeake Canal and steamboats in Pittsburgh. Connected through his second wife with the cream of Philadelphia society, he counted among his friends Thomas Jefferson and Dolly Madison. The architect would have achieved fortune as well as fame except for his naively generous impulses that led him to contribute his services all too often and to become ensnared in bankruptcies, because "he never could bring himself to use the important monosyllable—No—when asked for his signature."¹⁰ Latrobe's life, I submit, is a prime example of the disparity between the facts and their misuse by critics alleging America's "anti-aestheticism."

Too often, however, facts are simply not consulted. Alvin Toffler wrote *The Culture Consumers* ". . . to prove that since the end of the last World War a series of astonishing, and on the whole healthy, changes have transformed the social base of the arts in this country." That is to say, "the devotees of art have grown from a lonely handful to an army." He reemphasizes his denigration of pre-1945 American taste by insisting: "The American attitude toward the arts has completed a 180-degree turn since the end of World War II. From one of apathy, indifference, and even hostility, it has become one of eager, if sometimes ignorant, enthusiasm."¹¹ He enthusiastically cited current statistics. Americans spent or donated "a rock-bottom minimum" of \$3 billion in 1960 for culture, exclusive of public funds and business gifts, or 70% more than in 1950. A survey of 21 museums alone showed an aggregate attendance of 19,370,000 in 1958, a figure that climbed to 21,360,000 two years later.¹² In the mass of statistics, however, Toffler did not trouble himself to go further back than the 1930's for comparative figures.

One of Toffler's whipping boys, "the high priest of the art-for-elite ideology . . . that engaging gadfly, Dwight Macdonald,"¹³ lamented the rise of "mass-cult" indicated by statistics such as those enthusiastically quoted by Toffler. Macdonald's perspective in time and space was far greater than Toffler's: "Up to about 1750, art and thought were pretty much the exclusive province of an educated minority. Now that the masses—that is, everybody—are getting into the act and making the scene, the problem of vulgarization has become acute."¹⁴ Most of his account of the rise of the masses since 1750 focuses on Grub Street rather than

Madison Avenue. Macdonald offered to his readers a confusing variety of “turning points” in American cultural development: The Civil War, which marked the destruction of the New England tradition, or, if one preferred, 1900, 1929, or 1945.¹⁵ Nevertheless, he ended up agreeing with Toffler that most of American history had been marked by indifference to the arts by most Americans.

One further example of cultural myopia can be found in the extraordinarily provocative essays by the young, rambunctious Tom Wolfe, collected in his revealingly-titled *Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby*. Where Toffler argued that the people are getting “Culture,” and Macdonald asserted that this is ruining “Culture,” Wolfe wrote vivid, enthusiastic accounts of a new proletarian civilization that includes neon signs as folk art; drag-racing, demolition races and custom-made cars as folk ritual; and Murray the K (disc-jockey on New York’s WINS and American promoter of the Beatles) as folk prophet. Amazingly enough, Wolfe agreed with Macdonald that traditionally the aristocratic few dominated the history of taste, apparently including the United States. He rather brutally summarized the essence of cultural history:

Practically every style recorded in art history is the result of the same thing—a lot of attention to form, plus the money to make monuments to it. . . . But throughout history . . . it has been something the aristocracy has been responsible for. What has happened in the United States since World War II, however has broken that pattern. The war created money. It made massive infusions of money into every level of society. Suddenly classes of people whose styles of life had been practically invisible had the money to build the monuments to their own styles.

This is why he felt justified in calling Las Vegas “the Versailles of America,” built by gangsters who were the “first uneducated, prole-petty-burgher Americans to have enough money to build a monument to their style of life.”¹⁶ The title of his book actually derived from a custom-made car, but it might be used fairly enough to describe the new cultural order that he saw emerging.

Of the thousands of commentators on the contemporary American scene it seems to make little difference whether one identifies with the upper middle class (Toffler wrote part of his *Culture Consumers* as articles in *Fortune Magazine*), the intellectual aristocracy, or the populist public. A gross misunderstanding or misconception of the history of American taste generally prevails. All kinds of evidence come readily to hand if one really wants to find out the facts. James Flexner has effectively argued, for example, that “. . . in the mid-nineteenth century, painting was more popular in America than at any other time in our history.” Furthermore, “the interest was not inspired by the importation from abroad of already famous masters. The rage was for works of living

American masters.” For example, a New York exhibition devoted exclusively to such pictures attracted from 1836 to 1861 an average *annual* attendance equal to 57½ per cent of the city population. By contrast, from 1936 to 1951 the attendance at the Metropolitan Museum was only an annual percentage of 16¼ per cent.¹⁷

In the past few years several books have appeared studying earlier American popular taste, and, frequently, the research has mainly been in readily available books, magazines, and newspapers. Lillian Miller's study of *Patrons and Patriotism*¹⁸ implicitly refuted the contention that patronage was controlled by an aristocratic few. Interest in contemporary American painting and sculpture varied according to social conditions—nationalistic northeasterners being far more eager than states-rights minded southerners—but not according to class or gentility. The wealthiest and most genteel were just as pleased with Mount's genre paintings as were the “great unwashed.” According to Neil Harris' *Artist in American Society*, the growing apologia for American art which, at least by 1860, had legitimized art in America, had to cope primarily with zealous and concerned moralists and nationalists who feared that artistic “luxury” would corrupt republican American “simplicity.” Sheer indifference to matters of taste remained a distinctly minor concern. Again, the divisions amongst patrons, apologists and their opponents presupposed a common interest in the arts, regardless of class or wealth.¹⁹ Another scholar has made the point very clearly:

No matter what it was conventional to proclaim in theory, in practice ‘art’ for most Americans has always meant the kind of values and social function inherent in popular arts and industrial design, and in order to survive and work American painters have had to take account of that fact, by incorporating a high degree of nationalism and popular Realism, and by retaining many traditional functions of communication and entertainment which in Europe were early surrendered to ‘commercial art.’²⁰

As the author, Alan Gowans, goes on to say, nothing but trouble came to artists who refused to comply with those dictates, but this concern will be taken up later.

Documentation showing the misunderstanding of American taste entertained by such people as Toffler, Macdonald, and Wolfe could be continued far beyond the limits of this article. Take up, for example, Margaret Thorp's study of mid-nineteenth century American sculptors,²¹ certainly one of the most poorly-supported groups of American artists, working in one of the least lively media and styles—neo-classical sculpture. It is impossible to find any starving artists in neglected garrets. Larkin Mead, hopeful sculptor clerking in a Brattleboro, Vermont, hardware store, only had to make a snow statue that won headlines, and Nicholas Longworth, the wealthy and generous Cincinnati patron, took him in

hand, sending him to Florence to study.²² One gains the impression that the last thing an American neo-classical sculptor could do was to retain poverty and anonymity.

Allegedly the most barren of all architectural periods in America, immortalized in Lewis Mumford's *Brown Decades*,²³ has finally begun to gain some recognition for its daring, ebullient, and often charming eclecticism. John Maass even argued that, "the truth is that an enormously creative and progressive era produced an enormously creative and progressive architecture."²⁴

Pushed to the wall by such facts, partisans insisting on American tastelessness will deny that it is a matter of money and popularity. Rather, they argue, the whole cultural climate is too stark and severe. Who has not heard or read Hawthorne's plaint in his "Preface" to *The Marble Faun*?

No author, without a trial, can conceive of the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a commonplace prosperity, in broad and simple daylight, as is happily the case with my dear native land. . . . Romance and poetry, ivy, lichens, and wall-flowers, need ruin to make them grow.²⁵

Adapted to fit the various artistic media—the painter must go to Europe to find beautiful landscapes, the sculptor could find only in Italy adequate marble and trained workmen, and so on—Hawthorne's critique has frequently been heard from emotionally or physically expatriated American artists.

Even when such an attitude has become terribly out of fashion, a powerful variation on the theme of incompatible environment has been that, far from being indifferent to the arts, Americans veritably smother their artists with adulation. A classic statement of this position may be found in Henry James' reflective biography of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Considering the social milieu in which the young Hawthorne started out to make a career of literature, James noted that the major difficulty would *not* be lack of recognition, since ". . . literature and the arts have always been held in extreme honor in the American world, and those who practice them are received on easier terms than in other countries." In fact, one of the most salient aspects of American provinciality turns out to be ". . . this matter of the exaggerated homage rendered to authorship." It greatly harmed the artist's work, James concluded, by bringing about ". . . an admiration too indiscriminating to operate as an encouragement to good writing." The artists can scarcely avoid ". . . the suspicion that is mingled with his gratitude, of a want in the public taste of a sense of the proportions of things."²⁶ It almost seems that Americans stand condemned for ignoring their native artists and also for failing to restrain their celebration of them.

It certainly would be excessive pleading to deny that some great American artists have suffered long and lonely years of poverty, obscurity, and even calumny. Both Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright marched through a long, lean desert of years, Sullivan dying in drunken despair, Wright finally achieving lasting fame and prosperity. There were extenuating circumstances, as is usually the case. They and their fellow architectural rebels against what they considered the prevailing corrupt and utterly sterile academicism demanded much of potential clients, too much for most as it turned out. As Alan Gowans put it, they had “. . . so little specific or conscious understanding of what they were ultimately doing, and in consequence presented their ideas with such confusion and inconsistency.” They saw themselves as harbingers and prophets, but

No wonder the ‘rebels’ found acceptance of their views slow and difficult. Who wanted to be associated with such conceited visionaries? . . . In short, considering the contemporary reputations of early modern architects generally, their arrogance seemed to most people at the time not merely inexplicable, but, when not patently ridiculous, unforgivable.²⁷

Americans have certainly had great difficulty accepting artists who claimed for themselves godlike powers of restructuring the whole nation’s way of life. Even today a periodical self-consciously devoted to support American art sometimes finds the latest wave of “rebels” hard to swallow.²⁸

The point at issue, however, is whether Americans have been unusually reluctant to accept the latest wave of artistic creativity. The remarkable fact about the litany chanting American indifference or hostility to matters of taste is that, without exception, the adherents of this view feel no great need to make comparisons between the American record and that of Britain or France or Italy. It is simply taken for granted that the United States has always been uncongenial to art. In other words, like a litany, this attitude is more a ritual than a statement of facts, and the ritual refers to and celebrates an encompassing faith.

In effect, John Kouwenhoven has maintained, the substance of the faith has been directed to “ART,” conceived as a collection of Old Masters worshipfully admired in a museum. Consequently, no attention is given to the new, American aesthetic, combining democracy and industrialism in what Kouwenhoven called the “vernacular tradition,” to be seen in our machinery, jazz, the balloon-frame house, and a thousand other manifestations. Opera and poetic drama are bewailed for their moribund state, while George Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess* is dismissed as “merely” a musical.²⁹ James Jackson Jarves, a century earlier, argued a similar case, dedicated as he was to the elevation of popular taste. Most Americans, he observed, tended to view art as “. . . something above and

apart from themselves.” This and the lack of informed criticism resulted in a deluge of “bad, mechanical work.” Architects foolishly copied the forms of Greek or Gothic buildings without understanding or even caring for the spirit that made them appropriate for their time and place. On the other hand, the demands of merchants and home-owners had produced “. . . a restless, inquiring, experimenting spirit, approaching the inventive in our building. . . .” Already, Jarves could find “. . . solid and handsome blocks of stores, in more or less good taste, appropriate to their purpose, effective as street-architecture, and novel in many of their features.”³⁰

The interpretation of Jarves and Kouwenhoven helps to explain why there has been so much misinformed criticism of American taste, but it fails to get to the root of the matter. We *have* had a vigorous opera- and concert-life in America for a long time,³¹ with many enthusiastic regulars like Walt Whitman. Why has this been so ignored?

It seems to me that the litany of dispraise has functioned as a structural support for what is variously called the myth of the American Adam, our messianic vision of creating “A City On A Hill,”³² or the faith in American innocence. Every American schoolchild knows that the Pilgrims and Puritans (generally thought to be synonymous) and most later immigrants to America came to get away from tyrannical, corrupt, irreligious, and decadent Europe. Daniel Boorstin has made the very important point that American identity has traditionally been defined negatively in relation to Europe: that will be essentially American which is not-European.³³ An obvious part of the European heritage was a richly elaborated artistic tradition. Since Americans aimed to cleanse politics of European tyranny, social life of European decadence, and economic life of the European dichotomy between great wealth for the few and terrible poverty for the many, it seemed irresistible to purify European art. Yet, as Neil Harris so succinctly phrased it: “Art, unlike politics, never became an instrument to cleanse other nations’ corruptions; the physical weight of the European visual heritage and the continued strength of its contemporary achievement proved altogether too intimidating for this form of salvationism.”³⁴ If it could not be detached from its repugnant European affiliations—aristocratic patronage and immoral paintings of nude women, for example—then art must be avoided entirely. The assertion of American indifference to the arts, in short, played a parallel role to the belief that social classes were nonexistent in the United States, or to the rags-to-riches myth. Just as the admission that classes did exist or that poor kids would have a very difficult time making their fortune, so the recognition of a vigorous and extensive support for art would seriously undermine our national vision. Only recently, when the American Adam has died an unnoticed death,³⁵ when our nation has lost its innocence,³⁶ and when we doubt the exportability of the “American way of life,”³⁷ only then could Americans view without

despair our social class structure, our less than perfect economic vertical mobility and our taste for the arts.

The rationale for excluding serious attention to art—or rather, the denial that such attention played any important role in America—achieved clarity within a few years after the Declaration of Independence. John Adams, making notes while touring English country seats with Thomas Jefferson in the spring of 1786, conceded that “Architecture, Painting, Statuary, Poetry are all employed in the Embellishment of these Residences of Greatness and Luxury.” Significantly, however, his next sentence took away any merit this might have had for Americans: “A national Debt of 274 millions sterling accumulated by Jobs, Contracts, Salaries and Pensions in the Course of a Century might easily produce all this magnificence.” Clearly, grandiose architectural monuments were inseparable from corrupt government and society. Far better, Adams concluded, to take pleasure in the natural beauties of our own land;

It will be long, I hope before Ridings, Parks, Pleasure Grounds, Gardens and ornamented Farms grow so much in fashion in America. But Nature has done greater things and furnished nobler Materials there. The Oceans, Islands, Rivers, Mountains, Valleys are all laid out upon a larger scale.³⁸

Soon this refrain would be picked up by authors of American magazine articles.³⁹ It has since provided the basis for the Hudson River School of painting, the widespread backing for creation of parks and even the preservation or creation of wilderness areas.⁴⁰

Americans toured Europe with increasing frequency as the nineteenth century wore on, and the periodicals frequently published their letters for the delectation of those who had to stay home. The tourists paid a great deal of attention to the artistic masterworks on their itinerary. Frequently, this produced converts to artistic culture who returned to America, urging improvements in American taste and art production.⁴¹ For the makers of the myth that Americans were indifferent to art, however, the tourist pilgrimage to European artistic shrines seemed only to be a vacation from everyday American reality. As temporary refuges of culture from the bustling world of urban growth and westward expansion, these places could be enjoyed for a time and then abandoned. Rome was beautiful, of course, but also dirty, politically unstable, and filled with beggars.⁴² The disreputable accoutrements to great art, the argument ended, made it best for Americans to keep clearly in mind the unbridgeable distinction between art in Europe and life in America. This may well account for the seemingly incompatible major themes of American fictionists treating Italy, the innocent American girl exposed to pernicious influences on foreign soil and the Garden of Eden.⁴³ The former served notice on Americans foolishly planning to stay abroad;

the latter represented Italy as a vacation spot. Much as Thomas Jefferson loved the arts and admired the French people, he firmly believed that “. . . every step we take towards the adoption of their manners is a step to perfect misery.” Even to obtain one’s education in Europe hazarded disaster: “It appears to me, then, that an American coming to Europe for education, loses in his knowledge, in his morals, in his health, in his habits, and in his happiness.”⁴⁴

America remained the “land of the free, home of the brave,” where one could enjoy liberty and all the beauties of God’s creation. Ralph Waldo Emerson assured his countrymen: “A work of art is an abstract or epitome of the world. It is the result or expression of nature, in miniature.”⁴⁵ Those last two words, for a people notoriously impressed by sheer size, ought to have served as the kiss of death to his listeners and readers. Henry David Thoreau dismissed as “such trifling” the “monuments of the West and the East.”⁴⁶ Walt Whitman, of course, chimed in with his “barbaric yawp,” singing his “Song of the Open Road.” It is little wonder that commentators and scholars have taken America’s spokesmen at their word, thereby continuing the myth of American indifference to art.

Certainly the myth can not be maintained today. When it is casually taken to be obvious that New York is one of the art capitals of the world, perhaps the most important one,⁴⁷ a re-examination of the role of art in American life is past due. Indeed, the appearance of some of the books cited above, especially those by Gowans, Harris and Miller, evidence (hopefully) an increasing concern to fill in the details pertinent to the history of American taste. But unless we are aware of the lingering power of popular mythology the effort will be in danger of turning into a scholarly sweeping back of the sea. Difficult as it will be to gain sufficient competence in art and cultural history and to stand sufficiently outside prevalent distorting assumptions, students of American civilization must make the effort. We have become, almost willy-nilly, cultural and artistic leaders of the world. Americans must refocus their ideas about themselves if the facts of our cultural life are to be understood in their proper context.

Idaho Bicentennial Commission

footnotes

1. “D.,” “The Fine Arts: Extract of a letter from a distinguished amateur in Philadelphia, January 10, 1807,” *Observer* (February 28, 1807), 131-133; [Eliza Anderson], “Music,” *Ibid.* (May 23, 1807), 333-334.

2. “Thoughts on American Genius,” *The New Haven Gazette and Connecticut Magazine* (February 1, 1787), 380-381; reprinted in *The American Museum or Repository* (March, 1787), 209-211.

3. Alvin Toffler, *The Culture Consumers: Art and Affluence in America* (Baltimore, 1965); Dwight Macdonald, *Against the American Grain: Essays on the Effects of Mass Culture* (New York, 1962); Tom Wolfe, *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby* (New York, 1966).

4. See, for example, R. W. B. Lewis, *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago, 1955).
5. *Observer* (February 28, 1807), 131-133.
6. Benjamin Henry Latrobe, Anniversary Discourse before the Society of Artists, May 8, 1811, printed in *The Port Folio*, V (1811), Appendix.
7. Review by Rexford Newcomb, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, XV, 1 (December, 1956), 29-30.
8. Talbot Hamlin, *Benjamin Henry Latrobe* (New York, 1955), xix.
9. *Ibid.*, 142.
10. *Ibid.*, 338. For a further discussion of Latrobe's professional life, see J. Meredith Neil, "The Precarious Professionalism of Latrobe," *AIA Journal*, LIII, 5 (May, 1970), 67-71.
11. Toffler, *Culture Consumers*, 11, 15, 21.
12. *Ibid.*, 24, 25.
13. *Ibid.*, 13.
14. Macdonald, *Against the American Grain*, ix.
15. *Ibid.*, 34, 36, 53, 58.
16. Wolf, *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby*, xiv, xvi.
17. James T. Flexner, *That Wilder Image: The Painting of America's Native School from Thomas Cole to Winslow Homer* (Boston, 1962), xi.
18. Lillian B. Miller, *Patrons and Patriotism: The Encouragement of the Fine Arts in the United States, 1790-1860* (Chicago, 1966).
19. Neil Harris, *The Artist in American Society: The Formative Years, 1790-1860* (New York, 1966).
20. Alan Gowans, *The Restless Art: A History of Painters and Painting, 1760-1960* (Philadelphia and New York, 1966), 385. Professor Gowans has developed his interpretation in *The Unchanging Arts: New Forms for the Traditional Functions of Art in Society* (Philadelphia and New York, 1971).
21. Margaret F. Thorp, *The Literary Sculptors* (Durham, N.C., 1965).
22. *Ibid.*, 192.
23. Lewis Mumford, *The Brown Decades: A Study of the Arts in America, 1865-1895* (New York, 1955 [1931]).
24. John Maass, *The Gingerbread Age: A View of Victorian America* (New York, 1957), 8.
25. Norman H. Pearson (ed.), *The Complete Novels and Selected Tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (New York, 1937), 590.
26. Henry James, *Hawthorne*, contained in Edmund Wilson, *The Shock of Recognition: The Development of Literature in the United States Recorded by the Men Who Made It* (New York, 1955 [1943]), I, 450.
27. Alan Gowans, *Images of American Living: Four Centuries of Architecture and Furniture as Cultural Expression* (Philadelphia and New York, 1964), 414-417. For an excellent case study, see Leonard K. Eaton, *Two Chicago Architects and Their Clients: Frank Lloyd Wright and Howard Van Doren Shaw* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969).
28. See, for example, Francois Dallegret, "The Future: Desertomania," *Art in America*, LV, 4 (July-August, 1967), 32-39.
29. John A. Kouwenhoven, *Made in America: The Arts in Modern Civilization* (Newton Centre, Mass., 1957 [1948]), especially 267-268.
30. James Jackson Jarves, *The Art-Idea* (edited by Benjamin Rowland, Jr.) (Cambridge, Mass., 1960 [1864]), 152, 154, 240, 242.
31. See, for example, the evidence in O. G. Sonneck, *Early Concert-Life in America (1731-1800)* (New York, 1949).
32. Loren Baritz, *City on a Hill: A History of Ideas and Myths in America* (New York, 1964).
33. Daniel Boorstin, *America and the Image of Europe: Reflections on American Thought* (New York, 1960), 19-39.
34. Harris, *The Artist in American Society*, 24.
35. Lewis, *The American Adam*, 195-198: ". . . the American as Adam has been replaced by the American as Laocoon; the Emersonian figure—the plain old Adam, the simple genuine self—has been frowned quite out of existence."
36. See, for example, Leslie Fiedler, *An End to Innocence: Essays on Culture and Politics* (Boston, 1955); and Henry F. May, *The End of American Innocence: A Study of the First Years of Our Own Time, 1912-1917* (New York, 1959).
37. Daniel Boorstin, *The Genius of American Politics* (Chicago, 1953), Chapter VI: "Our Cultural Hypochondria and How to Cure It," 161-189.
38. John Adams, *Diary and Autobiography* (Cambridge, Mass., 1961), III, 185-186.
39. See, for example, "Philoenthusiasticus," "Reflections on America," *The Massachusetts Magazine, or Monthly Museum* (December, 1795), 559-560; "W.," "The Cynic, No. 5: Rural Felicity," *The Philadelphia Repository and Weekly Register* (July 31, 1802), 300-301; "A.W.," "Reflections on Spring," *Philadelphia Repository* (May 21, 1803), 163-164.

40. Especially interesting is Roderick Nash, "The American Cult of the Primitive," *American Quarterly*, XVIII, 3 (Fall, 1966), 520-537, and his book, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven, 1967).

41. Harris, *The Artist in American Society*, 124-169.

42. Paul Baker, *The Fortunate Pilgrims: Americans in Italy, 1800-1860* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), 198-222. This attitude can be seen throughout Mark Twain's letters that later evolved into *Innocents Abroad*. See Daniel M. McKeithan (ed.), *Traveling with the Innocents Abroad: Mark Twain's Original Reports from Europe and the Holy Land* (Norman, Okla., 1958).

43. Nathalia Wright, *American Novelists in Italy: The Discoverers, Allston to James* (Philadelphia, 1965), 29-33, 250-256.

44. Quoted in Philip Rahv (ed.), *Discovery of Europe: The Story of American Experience in the Old World* (Garden City, N.Y., 1960 [1947]), 57, 59-61.

45. "Nature," in *Selected Prose and Poetry* (edited, with an Introduction by Reginald L. Cook) (New York, 1950), 14.

46. *Walden*, in *Walden and Other Writings* (edited, with an introduction by Brooks Atkinson) (New York, 1950), 52. A similar attitude towards the past may be found in Emerson, "The Poet," in *Selected Prose and Poetry*, 316-340.

47. Merely one of innumerable examples may be found in Edward F. Fry, "Sculpture of the Sixties," *Art in America*, LV, 5 (September-October, 1967), 26-43.