



*From the desk of Pierre Beaudry*



## **BENJAMIN WEST: THE PROMETHEUS OF AMERICAN PAINTING: PART II**



by Pierre Beaudry, 11/7/2008

### **6- THE NOOSPHERE AND THE PRINCIPLE OF PLANETARY INTENTION IN THE UNIVERSE.**

The American genius is always oriented towards thinking what is planetarily useful in character, that is to say, what is useful for the progress of mankind as a whole, and so, from that standpoint, Vladimir I. Vernadsky must be viewed as a great American genius. From the same vantage point, it is necessary to expand on Vernadsky's notion of the planetary noosphere and to include some of the greatest cultural contributions of mankind as part of man's "mighty geological force" of increasing the power of the biosphere. For instance, *The Parthenon* of Pheidias, the *Heart of the Andes* of Frederic Church, and the *Ninth Symphony* of Beethoven all qualify as such universal contributions, but so do several of Benjamin West's works, including most notably his *Benjamin Franklin, Drawing Electricity from the Sky*, 1805. Such "heroic paintings" truly qualify as products of the noosphere in the same sense that Vernadsky spoke of universal democratic ideals as having something in common with elemental geological processes. Vernadsky wrote:

"The historical process is being radically changed under our very eyes. For the first time in the history of mankind the interests of the masses on the one

hand, and the free thought of individuals on the other, determine the course of life of mankind and provide standards for mere ideas of justice. Mankind taken as a whole is becoming a mighty geological force. There arises the problem of the *reconstruction of the biosphere in the interests of freely thinking humanity as a single totality*. This new state of the biosphere, which we approach without our noticing, is the *noösphere*.” [...]

“The noösphere is a new geological phenomenon on our planet. In it for the first time man becomes a *large-scale geological force*. He can and must rebuild the province of his life by his work and thought, rebuild it radically in comparison with the past. Wider and wider creative possibilities open before him. It may be that the generation of our grandchildren will approach their blossoming. [...]

“Now we live in the period of a new geological evolutionary change in the biosphere. We are entering the noösphere. This new elemental geological process is taking place at a stormy time, in the epoch of a destructive world war. But the important fact is that our democratic ideals are in tune with the elemental geological processes, with the law of nature, and with the noösphere. Therefore, we may face the future with confidence. It is in our hands. We will not let it go.”  
(22)

Now, think of Benjamin West’s epistemological portrait of Franklin in that precise meaning of Vernasky’s choice of the term “noösphere” as a new planetary domain and consider the “*geological force of man*” as an expression of human creativity, as a species force of action, but which can only be developed freely and individually. Such individualized species action must now become self-conscious in establishing the noösphere as the highest development of the biosphere, in as much as it reflects what Lyn identified as the actual performance of a discovery of universal physical principle common to both science and classical artistic composition. What then is the actual subject matter of Benjamin West’s portrait of Benjamin Franklin?

In this case, you might think that the form of contribution to the noösphere is the artistic rendering of the discovery of electricity in which Franklin holds the hypothesis in one hand and the proof in the other, a process which also includes a playful reproduction of Franklin’s grandchildren holding the kite while other “adult” children are conducting playful electrical experiments in the background. Now, think again, but this time, look for what is not there. What is visibly missing in that experiment? Observe the painting carefully and try to identify something that should have been apparent and in some manner explicit, but which was obviously omitted in accordance with some deliberate intention. Here, to discover what is missing, one must pay attention to the intention.



Figure 5. Benjamin West, *Benjamin Franklin, Drawing Electricity from the Sky*, c. 1805.

Note how West chose to paint the moment of the electric shock on Franklin's knuckle, but without showing any shocking expression in his face! A mistake? A

paradox? Neither. The clue is that the likeness of the face is not that of the physical Benjamin Franklin. Who's likeness is it? West changed certain physical traits of Franklin's face in order to alert the spectator to the epistemological features of the experiment. The likeness is that of the universal creative human soul.

Indeed, the point West is making is that, contrary to the allegations of Joseph Priestly, the discovery of the *thunderbolt being ordinary electricity* did not come as a surprise to Franklin. On the contrary, Franklin's face shows a determined state of mind and a joyous smile reflecting the calm confirmation of his scientific hypothesis represented on the rolled paper he is holding in his left hand. The portrait shows no jumping around, no waving of hands, no uncertainty; only the self-assured truthfulness of having captured a discovery of principle for the benefit of mankind. This wonderful spark of discovery, which came on a stormy day of June 1752, when West was only 14 years old, demonstrates the three-step-process of a creative discovery of principle: the perplexity of the spectator before the discovery is made, the sublime serenity of Franklin during the discovery, and the joyful and playfulness of his children after the discovery has been made; all three moments demonstrating the Promethean genius of Benjamin West to be in concert with the Promethean Genius of Benjamin Franklin. (23)

So, the subject of the painting is not electricity! That was just a shadow. West has painted the intention of the noösphere: the character of the spiritual content of the universal mind by way of mastering the external physical envelope. West has demonstrated how the observation of the physical expression is conducive to some moral purpose for the benefit of mankind. It is that conductivity that is the true subject of the painting and which expresses the true etherial substance of the universe in tune with the elemental law of nature. Otherwise, the portrait would have been merely informational, ornamental, and would have been without any real merit. Let this be a pedagogical demonstration, for the public record, as to the means of drawing the human figure in its universal moral clothings and of perpetuating for all times the fleeting instant of a discovery of principle with the valuable instructions that come accompanied with its artistic explanation.

Though 30 years younger than Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin West was acquainted with the older scientist, who he probably met at his father's Inn when he was a teenager. His father, John West, was the Inn keeper in Springfield (Swarthmore), Pennsylvania at the time and, as a youth, his son must have become a personal friend of Benjamin Franklin because it is reported that he later became the godfather of West's second son, Franklin. Although there is very little record to be found of their relationship, it was publically known, at the time, that Benjamin Franklin had erected the first lightning conductor on Benjamin West's Inn.



**Figure 6.** Lebreton, *Benjamin Franklin's First Lightning Conductor on Benjamin West's House*, (year?)

Benjamin West had also clearly identified with Franklin's Promethean idea of taking the fire from the Zeus of Olympus in order to bring the wonderful effects of his art into the market of civilized nations. Both the scientist and the artist were of one mind on the fact that Britain was the nation that needed to be civilized the most.

## **7- WILLIAM PENN ADOPTING THE PEACE OF WESTPHALIA IN HIS GREAT TREATY WITH THE INDIANS.**

West was determined to show the British court of George III how Americans understood real economics, and especially how the Pennsylvania Quakers, of which he was a proud descendent, had begun to solve the Indian problem by dealing with them with fair-trade, as opposed to free-trade. This is exemplified by the subject of West's painting, *William Penn Treatise with the Indians*, 1771. This was also the same subject that divided the British Society of Incorporated Artists in 1769, when West resigned from it and formed the Royal Academy "for the advancement of the arts" as opposed to letting "the riches accumulate." It is also useful to note that Thomas Pearson, the maternal grandfather of West, was the founder of the town of Springfield (Swarthmore), Pennsylvania, and had been the "confidential friend" of William Penn. So, the subject of William Penn's economics must have been a regular topic of discussion around the dinner table of the West family.



Figure 7- Benjamin West, *William Penn Treaty with the Indians*, 1771.

The event of the picture represents William Penn offering gifts to the Indians. The chosen moment is not aimed at representing the actual signing of the Treaty itself, but the principle underlying the treaty. Furthermore, Indians would never bring their bows and arrows to the signing of a treaty. The scene is rather a gift offering ceremonial as can be seen in the garments worn by the Indian Chief in the central party and the princess feeding her child in the right corner. The scene is therefore preparatory to the Great Treaty that was later signed under the Elm Tree visible in the background. Note how the tree casts no shade on the ground and is, itself, entirely in the shade of a dark cloud passing overhead. In the left center portion, William Penn is seen welcoming the Indians with open arms while pointing at an open parchment of the Treaty that an assistant, on his right, is holding in his hands.

The Penn Treaty was the first American Peace Treaty based on the principle of the Peace of Westphalia, that is, *for the benefit and the advantage of the other*. Known as the Great Treaty of November 1682, its design was not, as generally portrayed for the purpose of purchasing land from the Indians. That is a fallacy of composition. It's purpose was to create a unique form of American society that would integrate both the American Indians and the American settlers into a unique compact of mutual benefits. This was a genuine replication of the Peace of Westphalia of Cardinal Mazarin in 1648

based on giving. American authors, Peter Stephen Du Ponceau and J. Francis Fisher made very clear the fact that Penn's treaty was in the spirit of the "*benefit of the other*" with the explicit intention of eradicating all future wars. They wrote:

"The true merit of William Penn, that in which he surpasses all the founders of empires whose names are recorded in ancient and modern history, is not in having made treaties with or purchased lands of the Indians, but in the honesty, the integrity, the strict justice with which he constantly treated the Aborigines of the land; in the fairness of all his dealings with them, in his faithful observance of his promises; in the ascendancy which he acquired over their untutored minds; in the feelings of gratitude with which his conduct and his character inspired them, and which they, through successive generations until their final disappearance from our soil, never could nor did forget, and to the last moment kept alive in their memories." (24)

This is a most explicit form of *gratuitousness* as understood and advocated by Francois Rabelais in his *Gargantua*. On the other hand, the British never conducted such business with the American Indians. British Treatises with Indians were always based on free trade looting, never on fair trade. Furthermore, since the Great Treaty parchment has been lost, several reports have been recorded and the most authentic one was reported by the British historian biographer of William Penn, Thomas Clarkson, who indicated that the Treaty stipulated the following nine points:

"Art. 1st. That all William Penn's people or Christians, and all the Indians should be brethren, as the children of one father, joined together as with one heart, one head, and one body.

2nd. That all paths should be open and free to both Christians and Indians.

3rd. That the Doors of the Christians' houses should be open to the Indians, and the houses of the Indians open to the Christians, and that they should make each other welcome as their friends.

4th. That the Christians should not believe any false rumours or reports of the Indians, nor the Indians believe any such rumours or reports of the Christians, but should first come as brethren to inquire of each other; and that both Christians and Indians, when they have any such false reports of their brethren, they should bury them as in a bottomless pit.

5th. That if the Christians heard any ill-news, that may be to the hurt of the Indians, or the Indians hear any such ill- news, that may be to the injury of the Christians, they should acquaint each other with it speedily, as true friends and brethren.

6th. That the Indians should do no manner of harm to the Christians, nor to their Creatures, nor the Christians do any hurt to the Indians, but each treat the other as

brethren 1st. But as there are wicked people in all nations, if either Indians or Christians should do any harm to each other, complaint should be made of it by the persons suffering, that right might be done, and when satisfaction is made, the injury or wrong should be forgot, and be buried as in a bottomless pit

8th. That the Indians should in all things assist the Christians, and the Christians assist the Indians against all wicked people that would disturb them.

9th. And lastly, that both Christians and Indians should acquaint their children with this league and firm chain of friendship made between them, and that it should always be made stronger and stronger, and be kept bright and clean without rust or spot, between our children and children's children while the Creeks and Rivers run, and while the Sun, Moon and Stars endure.” (25)

Once that statement of principle had been accepted by all parties, it was easy to establish business relationships between Indians and Settlers and foster a collaboration and integration of both communities based on mutual economic benefits. Penn signed his treaty known as the Great Treaty with the Delaware Algonquin Indians under an Elm tree, in November of 1682. One can only imagine that following the moment that is represented by Benjamin West in his painting, William Penn, or Miquon as the Algonquins called him, walked over to the Elm Tree with the Indian Algonquin Chief and his retinue to make the following address to the Indians:

“ The Great Spirit, who made him and them, who ruled the Heaven and the Earth, and who knew the innermost thoughts of man, knew that he and his friends had a hearty desire to live in peace and friendship with them, and to serve them to the utmost of their power. It was not their custom to use hostile weapons against their fellow creatures, for which reason they had come unarmed. Their object was not to do injury, and thus provoke the Great Spirit, but to do good. They were then met on the broad pathway of good faith and good will, so that no advantage was to be taken on either side, but all was to be openness, brotherhood, and love. After these and other words, he unrolled the parchment, and by means of the interpreter conveyed to them, article by article, the conditions of purchase, and the words of the compact then made for their eternal union.

“Among other things, they were not to be molested in their lawful pursuits even in the territory they had alienated, for it was to be common to them and the English. They were to have the same liberty to do all things therein relating to the improvement of their grounds, and providing sustenance for their families, which the English had. If any disputes should arise between the two, they should be settled by twelve persons, half of whom should be English and half Indians. He then paid them for the land, and made them many presents besides from the merchandise which had been spread before them.



“Having done this, he laid the roll of parchment on the ground observing again, that the ground should be common to both people. He then added, that he would not do as the Marylanders did, that is, call them children or brothers only; for often parents were apt to whip their children too severely, and brothers sometimes would differ; neither would he compare the friendship between him and them to a chain, for the rain might sometimes rust it, or a tree might fall and break it; but he should consider them as the same flesh and blood with the Christians, and the same, as if one man's body were to be divided in two parts. He then took up the parchment, and presented it to the Sachem who wore the horn in the chaplet, and desired him and the other Sachems to preserve it carefully for three generations, that their children might know what had passed between them, just as if he had remained himself with them to repeat it.” (26)

West confirmed this idea of the Pennsylvania community of principles in his biography by noting:

“In beautiful contrast to the systematic morality of the new inhabitants, was the simplicity of the Indians, who mingled safe and harmless among the [Society of] Friends; and in the annual visit which they were in the practice of paying to the Plantations, they raised their huts in the fields and orchards without asking leave, nor were they ever molested. Voltaire has observed, that the treaty which was concluded between the Indians and William Penn was the first public contract which connected the inhabitants of the Old and New World together, and, though not ratified by oaths, and without invoking the Trinity, is still the only treaty that has never been broken. It may be further said, that Pennsylvania is the first country which has not been subdued by the sword, for the inhabitants were conquered by the force of Christian benevolence.” (27)

This is the context in which a second generation of Americans, after having more time to employ their creative powers in the pursuit of better understanding their fellow man, began to develop a taste for improving each other by reading books and by cultivating the fine arts. West was perfectly conscious that his generation of American colonists was the first in America to be able to develop their creative powers in artistic composition. He reported to Galt the specific historical context out of which his own genius emerged:

“When the great founder of the State marked out the site of Philadelphia in the woods, he allotted a piece of ground for a public library. It was his opinion, that although the labor of clearing the country would long employ the settlers, hours of relaxation would still be requisite; and, with his usual sagacity, he judged that the reading of books was more conducive to good morals and to the formation of just sentiments, than any other species of amusement. The different countries [Colonies] afterwards instituted libraries, which the townships have also imitated: where the population was insufficient to establish a large collection of books, the neighboring families formed themselves into societies for procuring the popular publications. But in these arrangements for cultivating the powers of

the understanding, no provision was made, during the reign of George the Second, for improving the faculties of taste. The works, of which the libraries then consisted, treated of useful and practical subjects. It was the policy of the Quakers to make mankind wiser and better; and they thought that, as the passions are the springs of all moral evil when in a state of excitement, whatever tends to awaken them is unfavorable to that placid tenor of mind which they wished to see diffused throughout the world. This notion is prudent, perhaps judicious; but the works of imagination may be rendered subservient to the same purpose.” (28)

This was crucial, but Galt added that Pennsylvania was the least likely place in the world for the genius in artistic composition to be reared. His conclusion was wrong, but it did raise the interesting question: where else, then, would West’s genius have come from? For both Galt and West, the first proof that artistic genius could never be the result of sense certainty lay in the fact that not even nature, in its poetic beauty and bounty, was sufficient to spur genius in anyone. They argued:

“The idea has probably arisen from the impression which the magnificence of nature makes on persons of cultivated minds, who fall into the mistake of considering the elevated emotions arising in reality from their own associations, as being naturally connected with the objects that excites them. Of all the nations of Europe the Swiss are the least poetical, and yet the scenery of no other country seems so well calculated as that of Switzerland to awaken the imagination; and Shakespear, the greatest of all poets, was brought up in one of the least picturesque district of England.” (29)

For years, West continued to debate this question with Galt, arguing that nothing, in America during his lifetime, was conducive to the awakening of poetry and insisted that not only the scenery, but also the historical events of the Revolution, which occurred after he had left America, were not conducive to genius. West considered that even at the end of his life, in 1820, the events of the American Revolution were too fresh to inspire the hand of the epic poet or of the Universal Historian of Art. Galt recalled the astonishingly frank discussion he had with West on the subject:

“Among some of the Indian tribes a vein of original poetry has, indeed, been discovered; but the riches of the mine are unexplored, and the charge of sterility by the Europeans against the citizens of the United States, still remains unrefuted. Since the period, however, to which these memoirs chiefly refer, events of great importance have occurred, and the recollections connected with them, no doubt, tend to imbue the American climate with the elements of poetical thought; but they are of too recent occurrence for the purpose either of the epic or the tragic muse. The facts of history in America are still seen too much in detail for the imagination to combine them with her own creation. The fields of battle are almost too fresh for the farmer to break the surface; and years must elapse before the ploughshare shall turn up those eroded arms of which the sight will call into poetical existence the sad and dreadful incidents of the civil war.” (30)

Indeed, it was not until the generation after West that the artists of the Hudson River School were able to establish, under the inspiration of James Fenimore Cooper, an artistic connection in association with the American scenery. The answer, therefore, to the question of where genius comes from must be located in the moral disposition of the individual character of a man committed to do a lot of hard work for the improvement of the future generations of mankind. As Benjamin West demonstrated, his genius came from his drawing the moral and social pathways of the Noosphere.

## **8- HOW WEST SHOWED THE IMPOTENCE OF THE FEAR OF DEATH AND CONFRONTED THE BRITISH BEAST.**

During the period of the Revolutionary War, West saw the evil of the British oligarchy real close, and he had the courage to go into their pits in attempting to get some of them out. Like Lyn's address of this question, West went "beyond psychoanalysis" to exorcise the evil that had taken over the leadership of Great Britain, but with no avail. So, much like Goya had done with his series of *Disparates*, West also did a number of paintings in which he identified and denounced British witchcraft and their oligarchical beast of the Seas. See among others, *Pharaoh and his Host Lost in the Red Sea*, 1792; *King Lear: Act III, Scene IV (King Lear in the Storm)*, 1788; *The Beast Riseth out of the Sea*, 1797; and *Death on the Pale Horse*, 1796. This series of paintings was in direct response to the warfare and chaos generated by the British during the American and the French evolutions.

What West did was to inverse the dignity of character of Regulus to show the impotence of the fear of death and the pessimism of irrationality. This is best exemplified in his *Saul and the Witch of Endor*, 1777, which he painted one year after the start of the Revolutionary War. This is the story of an evil king who learns that he will soon be defeated in war and will lose his kingdom and his life. The painting was also a warning to George III before his severe attacks of mental illness began in 1801.

West chose the subject of the fear of death to invoke the impotence and lack of courage induced by terror of the irrational. Instead of being in control of one's destiny as in the case of Regulus, the evil king Saul was being destroyed by the irrationality of his belief in witchcraft. West was depicting precisely the time when British Intelligence had taken control over the freemasonic lodges all over England and Europe and had used witchcraft in recruiting and controlling their members.



Figure 8. Benjamin West, *Saul and the Witch of Endor*, 1777.

Unlike Regulus, king Saul is terrorized out his wits when confronted with the prospect of death, and he prostrates himself before the witch in the hope that she will save him from his madness. Instead of facing the terror of death with love of mankind in his heart, as Regulus did, Saul crawls on all four, bows down to the beast and is willing to go along with anything but death. Here, West emphasized the result of the weak minds of men who have no control over their own destinies and who let themselves be determined by outside powers that they have no control over.

This is precisely the opposite of the willful self-determination of one's own destiny reflected in the American War of Independence. This apocalyptic fear became a regular subject that West developed unevenly in several of his religious paintings from that period until his death. In his best paintings, West emphasized that the most important question of man's life was immortality: is man willing to accept death joyfully in exchange for his contribution to the immortality of mankind?

At the same time, West was also denouncing the false conception of the sublime that had been trumped up by Edmund Burke in his treatise on *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, published in 1757. Burke's British Intelligence concoction was precisely the opposite to Moses Mendelssohn,

Frederick Schiller, and Benjamin West's idea of the sublime, a fallacy of composition based on fear. Erffa and Staley made the point about the evil of Burke's intention:

“This immensely influential treatise [Burke's *Philosophical Inquiry...*) defined sublimity as an aesthetic category equal to beauty but of an opposite nature, growing out of our psychological responses to what we perceive as threatening. It thus legitimized and popularized the evocation of terror and related responses as a goal of a work of art, and led a generation of artists to an obsession with awe, horror, and terror.” (31)

West's intention was also aimed at purging a number of artists from that “obsession” which had been used by British Intelligence as a form of warfare against West's own treatment of the sublime at the Royal Academy. The main British Intelligence artists involved in this perversity were John Hamilton Mortimer, Joseph Wright of Derby, William Blake, and Henry Fuseli. The so-called “aesthetic” experiments that these artists were putting on their canvases were later used by British Intelligence to launch political terror operations such as the Gordon Riots of London, in 1780 and the 1789 Coup of the Bastille in Paris.

#### **CONCLUSION: BENJAMIN WEST POKING FUN AT HIMSELF.**



Figure 9- Benjamin West, *Self-Portrait*, 1770

Finally, a self-portrait of Benjamin West, poking fun at himself. The irony coming out of his piercing eye tells the story of the polemic surrounding the issue of

classical costumes for history paintings. Partly envelopped in a roll of brown costume fabric, West is poking his finger under his silk neckerchief implying that a Greek toga might have been less suitable to sit for this historical picture, but it would have been damned well more comfortable than the stiff protocollar of British tradition.

As he had demonstrated to the court of George III, West changed the art of history painting, forever, by proclaiming that: “The classic dress is certainly picturesque, but by using it, I shall lose in sentiment what I gain in external grace. I want to mark the place, the time, and the people, and to do this I must abide by truth.”

Historian William Dunlap could not explain how West managed to remain friends with George III during the American Revolution, without either being suspected by little people of both sides, either as a spy or as a traitor. But Dunlap’s most inspired insight into the matter is related through a story told by Samuel F. B. Morse:

“One of our best and most intelligent artists, Samuel F. B. Morse, has mentioned to the writer an anecdote connected with this matter. He says, that on one occasion, when he entered into Mr. West’s painting room, long after the death of George the Third, he found the artist engaged in copying a portrait of that king, and as he sat at his work, and talked according to his custom, “this picture,” he said, “is remarkable for one circumstance; the king was sitting to me for it, when a messenger brought him the declaration of American Independence.” It may be supposed that the question “how did he receive the news?” was asked. “He was agitated at first,” said West, “then sat silent and thoughtful,” at length, he said, “Well if they cannot be happy under my government, I hope they may not change it for a worse. I wish them no ill.” If such was George the Third, we find no difficulty in reconciling his attachment to Benjamin West, with the American’s honest love of his native land.” (32)

One last interesting fact, in ending, is the reaction of West when king George III offered him the “honor of knighthood.” West respectfully declined the empty title. The king had no reason to be offended since an artist like West could never shine from the luster of such honors. Benjamin West had been the only artist in history to have declined the alledged dignity. In fact, the only honor that West could boast of, and which is still shining bright today in all of his works, was the pleasant exercise of the creative powers that God gave him for the benefit of uplifting his poor and decrepid fellow Englishmen from the dredges of the British swamps. Benjamin West had no other honor than to be a proud American Quaker, and that was the only badge of honor that he wore during his entire life.

Although the corroding truthfulness of his paintings eventually cost him the patronage of George III and of the British oligarchy generally, West never faltered in his Promethean purpose of high-moral-mindedness that he exhibited in his *Departure of Regulus*, 1769. Benjamin West died on March 10, 1820 and was given a statesmanlike great funeral in St. Paul’s Cathedral where he was buried along side the great architect builder of that church, Sir Christopher Wren. However, West did not deserve the silent

treatment that he was given in America after his death. The offer by Raphael and Benjamin West to repatriate their father's last works to America and sell some to the U. S. Government was rejected by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, in 1826. His heritage, however, lived on and extremely well in the Hudson River School.

During his latter years, West had devised an original way of impacting the public at large by exhibiting his paintings privately, in his own London studio, but without charging admission. During the 1820's, the official publicity for sight seeing tours of the City of London included among others, Westminster Abbey, Saint Paul's Cathedral, the Tower of London, and Benjamin West's Private Gallery on Newman Street. In 1829, when his sons exhibited his last great work, *Christ Rejected*, 1814, the price of admission was one shilling and 240,000 people came to see it! Benjamin West had created the greatest cultural impact that any American born citizen had ever succeeded in achieving by willfully expatriating himself from his native land at the age of twenty one for the purpose of changing mankind. Now, Benjamin West has established a permanent residence in the new cultural domain of the noösphere. (33)

Notes for Part II:

(22) Vladimir I. Vernadsky, *The Biosphere and the Noosphere*, EIR, February 18, 2005.

(23) The following is the foolish Joseph Priestly interpretation of the same shocking moment of Franklin's electricity experiment, but with the additional false claim that the French were the first to carry that experiment.

"The Doctor, having published his method of verifying his hypothesis concerning the sameness of electricity with the matter of lightning, was waiting for the erection of a spire in Philadelphia to carry his views into execution, not imagining that a pointed rod of a moderate height could answer the purpose, when it occurred to him that by means of a common kite he could have better access to the regions of thunder than by any spire whatever. Preparing, therefore, a large silk handkerchief and two cross-sticks of a proper length on which to extend it, he took opportunity of the first approaching thunderstorm to take a walk in the fields, in which there was a shed convenient for his purpose. But, dreading the ridicule which too commonly attends unsuccessful attempts in science, he communicated his intended experiments to nobody but his son who assisted him in raising the kite.

"The kite being raised, a considerable time elapsed before there was any appearance of its being electrified. One very promising cloud had passed over it without any effect, when, at length, just as he was beginning to despair of his contrivance, he observed some loose threads of the hempen string to stand erect and to avoid one another, just as if they had been suspended on a common conductor. Struck with this promising appearance, he immediately presented his knuckle to the key, and (let the reader judge of the exquisite pleasure he must have felt at that very moment) the discovery was complete.

He perceived a very evident electric spark. Others succeeded, even before the string was wet, so as to put the matter past all dispute, and when the rain had wet the string he collected electric fire very copiously. This happened in June 1752, a month after the electricians in France had verified the same theory, but before he heard of anything they had done." (Description of Franklin's famous kite experiment by the English chemist Joseph Priestly in his *History and Present State of Electricity* (1767)

(24) Peter Stephen Du Ponceau and J Francis Fisher, *A Memoir on the History of the Celebrated Treaty Made by William Pen with the Indians, under the Elm tree in Shackamaxon, in the year 1682*, M'carty & Davis, Philadelphia, 1836, p. 7.

(25) Quoted by Peter Stephen Du Ponceau and J Francis Fisher, Op. Cit., pp. 50-51.

(26) Peter Stephen Du Ponceau and J Francis Fisher, Op. Cit., p. 51.

(27) John Galt, *The Life of Benjamin West*, Part I, Scholars' Facsimile & Reprints, Gainesville, Florida, 1960, p. 15.

(28) Galt, Op. Cit., Part I, p. 16.

(29) Galt, Op. Cit., Part I, p. 17.

(30) Galt, Op. Cit., Part I, p. 81.

(31) Helmut von Erffa and Allen Staley, *The Paintings of Benjamin West*, Yale University P'tress, New Haven & London, 1986, p. 82.

(32) William Dunlap. *A History of the Rise and Progres of The Arts of Design in the United States*, Volume I, Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1834, p. 69.

(33) Benjamin West was also the only known genius to have been so frugal in his physical means as to have accepted, as a youth, to make his first paint brush with the hair from the tail of the family black cat.

FIN OF PART II