

*From the desk of Pierre Beaudry  
The Hudson River School Series, Part V*



## **SAMUEL F. B. MORSE: THE LEONARDO OF AMERICA**



by Pierre Beaudry, 10/1/2008

### **1. AMERICAN ARTISTIC CULTURE: A MATTER OF ECONOMICS.**

The Hudson River School of painting was composed of a very diversified group of artists that reflected, in different degrees of advancement, the mastery of classical artistic composition, and represented the coming to maturity of a true American Cultural Renaissance, which defined a new and more mature form of Western Civilization than was reflected in the European romantic entertainment of that time. The financial oligarchy of the British Empire resented that new American impulse and moved to shut this republican school down, because it represented the greatest threat to the very nature of the British Empire.

The issue was not so much a financial question as it was a matter of economics. An American culture based on principles of scientific and artistic creativity, instead of profit making, is the most dangerous form of economics for the survival of the British Empire. Thus, the purpose of the Hudson River School was not only aimed at establishing, on these shores, a creative culture of human progress and development, but, also, to strike a decisive blow to the dominating form of British and French oligarchical counterculture of entertainment and pessimism that was infecting the economy of the world during the nineteenth century. This report will show how, by the middle of the 1870's, this American art movement was sabotaged and destroyed by a combination of British and French imperial free market operations only to be replaced by the pitiful French Barbizon and impressionist counterculture. America has not, to this day, recovered from that humiliating British and French imperial abasement.

It is important, here, to identify the historical specificity of the Hudson River School by connecting it to the larger context of Universal History. There are two seminal sources here that establish the artistic connection between America and Europe.

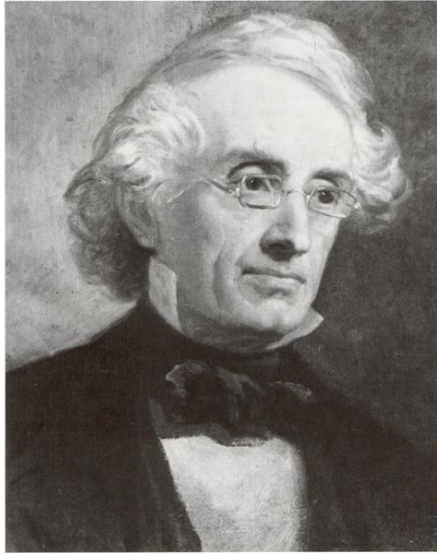
One source is the fact that a significant number of artists in this movement came from Mid-Western and New England families and were reared in rural America with direct ancestry of puritan optimism, as James Fenimore Cooper displayed in his books. This is an important aspect of the cultural character of this movement and of the American character more generally. Exemplary of this is the first puritan period represented by Thomas Cole with his *Landscape Scene from "The Last of the Mohicans"* (1827), and his allegory of *The Voyage of Life* series (1842), both of which attempted to express the uplifting ideas of James Fenimore Cooper, and the dimension of the moral purpose of artistic composition with respect to the American landscape. Art historian, Louise Minsk noted the scope of this first aspect with respect to Cooper:

“Prominent American writers of the period, such as Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, and William Cullen Bryant, all expounded on the virtues of the natural state as the highest state of being. Irving’s “Rip Van Winkle,” Cooper’s *The last of the Mohicans*, and Bryant’s poems helped in shaping an audience ready to receive the same message on canvas...

“In a nation still yearning for an artistic identity of its own, the years 1825 to 1875, defining the Hudson River School, were a period of powerful nationalism in a young America. The earliest, dramatic and uniquely American landscapes of Thomas Cole prompted immediate response from a people restless to discover and claim its own greatness. These sentiments reached their pinnacle in the monumental and inspirational canvases of Frederic Church’s *Niagara* and Albert Bierstadt’s *Yellowstone Falls*.” (Louise Minsk, *The Hudson River School*, Barnes and Noble, New York, 2006, p. 7.)

The second source that Minsk did not mention, but which is essential to put before the high court of history, is the Manifest Destiny connection to Western European Civilization; that is to say, the surviving links to the Art Academy in Dusseldorf, the Louvre in Paris, and the function of Samuel F. B. Morse within National Academy of Design in New York. These were the crucial historical ties that bound together the artists of the Hudson River School through the spirits of James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851) and Samuel Finlay Breese Morse (1791-1872) during a period of fifty years.

Two historical markers established the beginning and the end of this American Cultural Renaissance. It began in 1825 with the creation of the National Academy of Design in New York by Morse, and it closed with the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876. This period of fifty years also opened with the Presidency of John Quincy Adams and represented the high point of American culture at a time when the world needed it the most. This is the reason why the British Empire did everything in its power to destroy the Hudson River School.



**Figure 1.** Samuel F. B. Morse, oil on canvas by Christian Schussele, c. 1862



**Figure 2.** James Fenimore Cooper  
Photography by Mathew Brady.

## **2. THE MORSE-TRUMBULL DEBATE: PRINCIPLES VERSUS STOCKS.**

In 1943, American author, Carleton Mabee, compared Samuel F. B. Morse to the great Renaissance painter, Leonardo da Vinci, because he wanted him to “be known as more than a telegrapher.” (Carleton Mabee, *The American Leonardo, A Life of Samuel F. B. Morse*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1943, p. XVII.) As Leonardo was a universal man, so Morse was an artist, a man of science, an engineer, an inventor, and a political leader. But, the comparison with Leonardo should go an important step further. Both Leonardo and Morse were Renaissance men, and both men were conscious that they were bringing to mankind a contribution that was lifting Western European Civilization to a new cultural level that it had never reached before. Civilization had, in each case, taken a bold new step forward and upward, based on the same collaboration of universal physical principles of science and classical artistic composition. From that vantage point, Leonardo and Morse also had the same enemies, the same Venetian and British types of financial speculators made famous for their littleness and their hatred of creativity.

In 1825, the founders of the Hudson River School, Samuel Morse, Thomas Cole, and Asher Durand, along with a group of about thirty other artists, created the National Academy of Design in New York City. This is the oldest art institution in the United States with the explicit purpose of creating an art school run by American artists whose explicit and deliberate purpose was to culturally pursue the principles of the American Revolution. Thus, the Hudson River School, whose name had been given later in a derogatory manner by a nasty reporter, was, in reality, born from the National Academy of Design, which itself came out of the rubble of the British controlled Academy of Fine

Arts. It was Cooper's closest friend and associate, Morse, who single-handedly destroyed the Academy of Fine Arts because the students refused to become enslaved to the free trade marketers who had control over the school and had no interest in art, whatsoever.

In 1808, the leader of the Grand Lodge of New York, Grand Master Robert R. Livingston, and the former assistant to Benedict Arnold, aristocratic artist, John Trumbull, created the American Academy of Fine Arts, as a for-profit company scheme with the purpose of controlling American artists and the art trade in the United States. As I will show below, the fight to eliminate this British run institution in the cultural heart of the United States, and the fight to save the American system, was one and the same. Aside from a few art teachers, who were shareholders in the company, the rest of the Academy of Fine Arts officials were businessmen and enemy agents whose intention was to prevent the birth of a patriotic American school of art in the United States. The main British free trade enemy agents involved in this subversion of American culture were the top art dealing speculators of the day, Ogden Haggerty, Thomas B. Clarke, and James W. Pinchot

The history of this unique American cultural warfare event has been covered up for over 180 years, but was conserved in the National Academy of Design archives by its first vice-president, William Dunlap, who was also a close friend of both Cooper and Morse. This original archive documentation is a very crucial piece of historical evidence showing the nature of the warfare between the American system and the British system. As the Dunlap account reveals, the Academy of Fine Arts was nothing but a British covert institution aimed at undermining the very principles of the American Revolution. Dunlap wrote:

“The Academy of fine arts was a ‘joint stock company,’ composed of persons of every trade and profession, who thought the privilege of visiting the exhibition an equivalent for twenty fine dollars – such persons were the *electors* of the directors, and entitled to be themselves elected directors. Artists could only share those privileges by purchasing stocks, and might be controlled in everything respecting their profession by those who were ignorant of the arts. Artists had sprung up who might challenge competition with any in the world, and maintain the challenge.” (William Dunlop, *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of design in the United States*, Boston, C. E. Goodspeed & Co., 1918, Vol. III, p. 53.)

This was the setting under which Morse rallied around him a number of artist students in order to fight “*for the promotion of the arts and the assistance of students.*” In 1821, Morse had already created a similar institution called the South Carolina Academy of Fine Arts, with the purpose of exhibiting only new “material of living artists.” The new institution he created inside of the Academy of Fine Arts of New York was called a “drawing association” which met several evenings a week. Each member contributed money, and an actual organized school was created with officers for its administration and management. When Morse began to recruit a significant number of students, such as Frederick S. Agate, Thomas Cole, Thomas Cummings, Moseley

Danforth, William Dunlop, Asher B. Durand, Charles C. Ingham, Henry Inman, Peter Maverick, John L. Morton, Ithiel Town, and Charles C. Wright, the management of the Academy of Fine Arts began to panic and it was proposed that six students of the “drawing association” be elected to become members of the mother Academy, provided they purchased shares that amounted to \$100 to qualify four of them as stockholders. Morse agreed to the new arrangement, but only two students were admitted, Durand and Morse, instead of six. They both resigned immediately.

The compromised arrangement failed, and when a confrontation broke out between the students and John Trumbull, the aristocratic president was forced to shut down the Academy of Fine Arts and the National Academy of Design was born. When the new academy was announced publicly, its first president, Morse, issued the statement that “the National Academy of the Arts of Design is founded on the common-sense principle, that *every profession in society knows best what measures are necessary for its own improvement.*” (Carleton Mabee, Op. Cit., p.106.) That moment represented the true historical beginning of the Hudson River School under the name of the National Academy of Design. As a result of this, Morse, Cole, and Durand, with thirty other students, created the first nation-wide American Art School that set out to promote living American artists through exhibitions and sales and give priority support to American talents.

On January 14, 1826, after a proposal to unify the Academy of Fine Arts and the National Academy of Design had been discussed and had failed, Morse declared: “We this evening assumed a new attitude in the community: our negotiation with the Academy are at an end; our union with it has been frustrated, after every proper effort of our part to accomplish it.” (William Kloss, Op. Cit., p. 100.) What had appeared at first to be a simple internal school quarrel, turned out to be an axiomatic crisis that revealed the fundamental difference between the American system of economics and the British monetarist system. William Dunlop, who attended the public séance, reported on the historical exchange between Trumbull and Morse. Here are some of the minutes of the debate. First, Trumbull established his defense of shareholder values and argued that artists could not survive without free trade. Then, he accused Morse of attempting to steal their property. And lastly, he ended with what could be considered as a typical *shareholder’s prayer*. Trumbull stated:

“It appears to me that the Academy of Design requires the abolition of the stockholders of this academy, as the basis of the negotiation, the *sine qua non*, on their part of a union. You will permit me to state at large the reasons why I regard this basis as utterly inadmissible.

“It has been proved by all experience, and indeed, it is a truism, that the arts cannot flourish without patronage in some form; it is manifest that artists cannot interchangeably purchase the works of each other and prosper; they are necessarily dependent upon the protection of the rich and the great. In this country there is no sovereign who can establish and endow academies, as Louis XIV did in Paris, and in Rome; or as the late George III, did in London; and in case of

want of success in their early efforts, to aid them, as the later monarch did aid the Academy of London, by a gift from the privy purse, to the amount of 5000 pounds, or 25000 pounds.

“The governments, that is, the legislative assemblies of our nation, or the separate states, cannot be looked up to by the arts, with any hope of protection like this; the church offers as little hope as the state; and the fine arts, those arts which polish and adorn society, are, in this country, thrown for protection and support upon the bounty of individuals, and the liberality of the public...”

Then, after going through a nomenclature of the generosity of several shareholders, such as the original founding-president, Freemasonic Chancellor, Robert R. Livingston, and the gifts they gave to the Academy of Fine Arts, such as the one by John Jacob Astor Esq., who had given the institution two marble busts of Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte and the Empress of France by Canova, Trumbull went on to say:

“With such an enumeration of munificent acts of stockholders before us, can there be one among us who can be persuaded to consent to this monstrous act of ingratitude proposed (unity of the two academies), of violating, or attempting to violate the right of suffrage and of property which, by our charter, are vested in those gentlemen? I trust there is not one who can deliberately consent to it. At least, gentlemen, I, whose name stands in your first charter granted in 1808, as one of the original grantees, and first vice-president of the institution, and who have had the honor, during many years to be elected your president, feel myself bound to the most imperious duty to guard vigilantly your interests and your honor. And I do here most deliberately and most solemnly repeat, what I have before said informally, that never, while I live, and have my reason, will I, a stockholder, consent to such a violation of their rights, and of our own duties, as is proposed; and no motive, not even the union of the two academies, will ever weigh with me to change this solemn resolution.” (William Dunlop, Op. Cit., p. 129.)

Amen to the British-god of shareholder value! After listening, at length, to this free trader’s prayer by Trumbull, Morse responded by flanking him, with his own words, and by quoting him extensively on the fact that “the arts cannot flourish without patronage...” Then, Morse ended by giving Trumbull the *coup de grace*:

“All this is as true of *authors* as of *artists*; now let me ask of any author, what kind of patronage he seeks from the *rich* and from the *great*? What sort of *dependence* he has on them for *protection* in this country, since there is no *sovereign* to whom he can look for *protection*, no aristocracy on which he can depend for *patronage*. Is there a man of independent feelings, of whatever profession he may be, who does not feel disgust at language like this? And is it to be supposed that the artists of the country are so behind the sentiments of their countrymen, as not to spurn any *patronage* or *protection* that takes such a shape as this? The artist, poor helpless thing, must learn to *bow* and *bow* in the halls and

antechambers of my Lord, implore his lordship's protection; advertise himself painter to his majesty or his royal highness, boast over his fellows, because he has his grace for his patron, and think himself well off, if he may be permitted to come in at the back door of his patron's gallery.

“If there are artists who desire to be so *protected* and so *dependent*, it is a free country, and there is room for all; every man to his taste; - but artists of the National Academy (of Design) have some sense of character to be deadened, some pride of profession to be humbled, some aspiring after excellence in art to be brought down, some of the independent spirit of their country to lose, before they can be bent to the purpose of such an anti-republican institution (as the Academy of Fine Arts). In making these remarks on the language and sentiments of the address (by Trumbull), I disclaim identifying them with those of the stockholders of the American Academy (of Fine Arts). I know not that there are any who have imbibed such degrading notions of the arts, or such contemptuous opinions of artists; if there are, we wish them to rally round just such a tree as the sentiments of the address would nurture. We believe that our climate is uncongenial to the growth of such an aristocratic plant; and that the public will not be long in deciding whether such an institution, or the National Academy (of Design), is most in harmony with the independent character of the country.” (William Dunlop, *Op. Cit.*, p. 130.)

On that note, Trumbull was forced to resign by popular consent. Thus, Morse had raised the fundamental question of principle and his flanking maneuver was right on target. He identified the true question that Schiller had raised in his lessons on Universal History, that is, the difference between “*studies for bread*” and “*studies for truth*.” What gave the right to vote in the Academy of Fine Arts was *the share in stocks*; but what gave the right to vote in the National Academy of Design was *the share in principles*. This is how the difference between the British system and the American system was established at the National Academy of Design. After the debate, it became clear that the two institutions could never be united because the American system and the British system were based on two irreconcilable principles, that of fair trade and that of free trade. However, the public meeting was not even closed when the British sore losers were already preparing for their revenge. As a commentator of the period put it: “Laocoon's agony was doubled, and Apollo, scowling, seemed to exclaim: ‘Mr. Morse! Mr. Morse! I'll make you sweat for this!’ But Trumbull and his statues writhed in vain.” (Carleton Mabee, *Op. Cit.*, p. 108.)

### **3. THE GALLERY OF THE LOUVRE AND THE GENIUS OF CLASSICAL ARTISTIC COMPOSITION.**

During the early 1820's Morse and Cooper had become close friends, and, no doubt, Cooper supported Morse in his fight for the creation of the National Academy of Design. It was Cooper who helped Morse get the commission to paint the portrait of General Lafayette for the city of New York in 1825. Furthermore, both Cooper and Morse were in Europe together when Lafayette embraced Louis Philippe on the balcony

of the Paris City Hall, as the new King of France in 1830. According to historian James Crawford, Morse befriended Cooper after settling in New York in 1823, and, during that time, they were meeting regularly with “other artists, writers and men of influence at the Bread and Cheese Club. The club was named for the practice of holding up either a piece of bread or cheese when members voted, rather than for any frugality at the dinner table. Here Morse met both patrons for his paintings and later backers for his 'invention,' the telegraph.” (James Crawford, *James Fenimore Cooper and his Family in Samuel Finley Morse's Painting: the Gallery of the Louvre*, Canajoharie Library and Art Gallery, on line, May 2005.)



**Figure 3.** Samuel F. B. Morse, *The Gallery of the Louvre*, 1831-33, (73 ¾” x 108”).

Morse’s choice of subjects for *The Gallery of the Louvre* as a “great picture” was similar to Raphael’s choice of the subjects for the *School of Athens*. The selection of paintings he made for his rendition of the Salon Carré came from different parts of the Louvre Museum, and represented different creative moments in European history like the different philosophers of Raphael’s fresco represented different moments of western philosophical thinking informing his own mind. For Morse, the selection of more than thirty eight different portraits and sceneries reflected the mental gallery of classical artistic compositions that had informed his own mind during his trip to Europe, and represented the most important choices for Americans to adopt as models for the



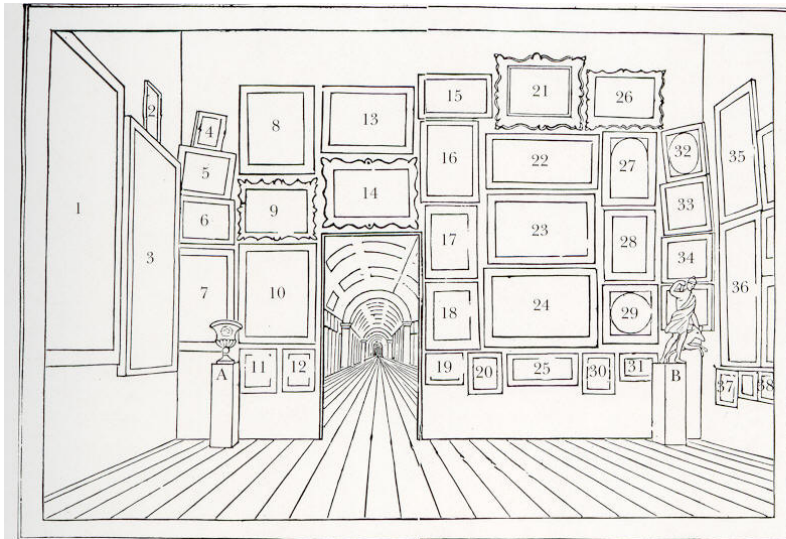
development of the National Academy of Design. Morse's ability to patiently copy the likeness of those great European masterpieces, on location at the Louvre during an entire year, reflects the uniqueness of the American genius of classical artistic composition. No other artist, in the history of mankind had ever attempted to replicate such a diversity of European geniuses, into a single manifold portrait and succeeded, at the same time, in stamping on all, ironically, his own unique republican characteristic. In fact, during the three years of his touring Rome, Venice, and Paris, Morse had done little else but to copy museum portraits that had been commissioned by his American patrons.

From the vantage point of classical artistic composition, *The Gallery of the Louvre* represents a true Western Civilization bridge linking America to its European roots. The gallery not only includes Leonardo, Raphael, Titien, Van Dyck, Rembrandt, and many other classical masters, whose contributions to Western Civilization Morse made the point of displaying as representing a great source of inspiration for a new renaissance of American culture, but the gallery is also most noteworthy emphasizing what is not there. Morse deliberately excluded all of the French artists of the modern school hanging at the Louvre Museum during his visit; such as the son of Talleyrand, the romantics Eugene Delacroix, and Gericault, whose *Raft of the Medusa* was hanging in the Salon Carré at the time Morse composed his painting. In a way, Morse's painting is a political statement against the French romantic school that later degenerated into the Barbizon contemporaries of Morse, such as Theodore Rousseau, Jean Francois Millet, and Camille Jean-Baptiste Corot.

Seated in the center of the gallery, drawing a picture of a scene she is copying in front of her, is Susan Walker Morse, taking a lesson from her father, who is represented standing behind her. *The Gallery of the Louvre* also shows the presence of the James Fenimore Cooper family, on the left side of the gallery, where Susan Fenimore Cooper, another student of Morse, is seen working at an easel, with her mother and father looking over her shoulder. Though Cooper's daughter had died two years before his painting was done, Morse chose to immortalize her in honor of his friendship with the family's writer. According to James Crawford, "James Fenimore Cooper had pledged both financial support and assistance in arranging a tour of the painting once it was completed." (James Crawford, Op. Cit. on line.) Cooper had offered to purchase the work after it had made a tour of the main cities of the United States; however, a turn of events precluded that from happening.

Morse and Cooper understood each other very well, because they had the same American character and the same dedicated purpose for the future of America. Morse clearly identified that beautiful soul when he wrote a letter to his brothers and said of Cooper: "He has a bold, original, independent mind, thoroughly American. He loves his country and her principals most ardently.... He never asks what effect any of his sentiments will have upon the sale of his works; the only question he asks is – 'Are they just and true?' ... He is not a religious man (I wish from my heart he was), yet he is ... a great respecter of religion, and religious men, a man of unblemished moral character... He never compromises the dignity of an American citizen, which he contends is the

highest distinction a man can have in Europe...I admire exceedingly his proud assertion of the rank of an American.” (Morse letter to his brothers, July 18, 1832.)



The foreground figures include his good friend James Fenimore Cooper, whom he seems to have first met in Washington at President Monroe's soiree on February 9, 1824: "I went last night in a carriage with . . . Mr. Cooper, the celebrated author of the popular American novels." He continued the friendship in New York and in Cooperstown before departing for Europe. The Cooper family was in Rome in 1830, where Morse "passed many pleasant hours with them, particularly one beautiful moonlight evening visiting the Coliseum." The Coopers preceded him to Paris, where they and Morse became inseparable. While Morse worked on his large canvas and the small copies, Cooper haunted the Louvre, commenting in his blunt, irrepressible way: "Lay it on here, Samuel . . . more yellow—the nose is too short—the eye too small—damn it, if I had been a painter what a picture I should have painted."

The identifiable figures in the *Gallery of the Louvre* are Cooper, his wife, and his daughter (seated, with palette in hand) in the back left corner and Morse instructing a student (who might possibly be his daughter, Susan, since the figures were added in New York) front and center.

Morse hung "his" gallery with great care, and almost certainly with didactic intent. It rewards close study. While there are many intriguing placements and juxtapositions of paintings, none is more interesting than that of Titian's *Francis I*, virtually in the center of the canvas and above Morse. That the Titian has been made relatively much larger than it is and that the purity of Morse's profile parallels that of Francis suggests that the artist had a point to make.

Since American patronage was one of Morse's central concerns, the central position of Francis I—one of the great Renaissance art patrons—may be a reproof to contemporary patrons. The *Mona Lisa*, which hangs below *Francis I* and behind Morse, entered the royal collections through the patronage of Francis I, whose friendship with Leonardo da Vinci was the stuff of artistic legend. (Apro-

#### Morse's Key to the Pictures

1833. Engraving, 5¼ x 7¾  
The New-York Historical Society, New York

This key was published in Morse's *Descriptive Catalogue for the exhibition of the painting*. The numbers he used were the inventory numbers then in use at the Louvre. They have been replaced with consecutive numbers from 1 to 38, and the sculpture has also been identified. Titles have been changed where necessary to conform to standard usage. Morse omitted all the figures from his key; he may have been reluctant to identify himself and Cooper publicly after receipt of the latter's letter quoted in the text.

1. Veronese, *The Marriage of Cana*
  2. Murillo, *Immaculate Conception*
  3. Jouvenet, *The Descent from the Cross*
  4. Tintoretto, *Self-Portrait*
  5. Poussin, *Winter (The Deluge)*
  6. Caravaggio, *The Fortune Teller*
  7. Titian, *Christ Crowned with Thorns*
  8. Van Dyck, *Venus Entreating Vulcan*
  9. Claude Lorrain, *The Disembarkation of Cleopatra at Tarsus*
  10. Murillo, *The Holy Family*
  11. Teniers the Younger, *The Knife Grinder*
  12. Rembrandt, *The Angel Leaving Tobias and his Family*
  13. Poussin, *Diogenes Casting Away His Cup*
  14. Titian, *Supper at Emmaus*
  15. Huysmans, *Landscape*
  16. Van Dyck, *Portrait of a Lady and Her Daughter*
  17. Titian, *Francis I*
  18. Murillo, *The Young Beggar*
  19. Veronese, *Christ Fallen Under the Cross*
  20. Leonardo da Vinci, *Mona Lisa*
  21. Correggio, *Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine*
  22. Rubens, *The Flight of Lot and His Family from Sodom*
  23. Claude Lorrain, *Seaport, with Setting Sun*
  24. Titian, *Entombment*
  25. Le Sueur, *Christ Bearing the Cross*
  26. Salvator Rosa, *Landscape with Soldiers and Hunters*
  27. Raphael, "*La Belle Jardinière*" (*Madonna and Child with St. John*)
  28. Van Dyck, *Man Dressed in Black*
  29. Guido Reni, *The Union of Design and Color*
  30. Rubens, *Susanna Fournment*
  31. Cantarini, *Rest on the Flight to Egypt*
  32. Rembrandt, *Portrait of an Old Man*
  33. Van Dyck, *The Woman Taken in Adultery*
  34. Joseph Vernet, *A Marine View by Moonlight*
  35. Guido Reni, *Nessus and Dejanira*
  36. Rubens, *Queen Tomiris with the Head of Cyrus*
  37. Mignard, *The Virgin of the Grapes*
  38. Watteau, *Embarcation from Cythera*
- A. Perhaps *The Borghese Vase*, Neo-Attic, Athenian  
B. "*Diane Chasseresse*," Roman copy of Greek original

**Figure 4.** Key to Morse's *The Gallery of the Louvre*. (From William Kloss, *Samuel F. B. Morse*, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, New York, 1988, p. 129.)

It was in November 1832, after having most accurately reproduced the Louvre paintings, and during the course of his trip back to the United States, that Morse conceived of his electric telegraphic system. Morse discussed electricity and electrostatics with a traveling companion on the Sully, Dr. Charles T. Jackson, who claimed that Ben Franklin had passed current through many miles of wire and “observed no difference of time between the touch at one end and the spark at the other.” This is the idea that sparked his discovery. Morse wrote in his notebook: “If this is so, and the presence of electricity can be made visible in any desired part of the circuit, I see no reason why intelligence might not be instantaneously transmitted by electricity to any distance.” (William Kloss, *Op Cit.*, p. 149.) Thus, the discovery of the process of the electrical telegraph was made as an expression of the principle of least action transmission of ideas, but also as an expression of God’s simultaneity of universal action in the universe. As soon as he disembarked in New York harbor, Morse was overwhelmed by the business he had to resume at the National Academy of Design; he began feverishly to fabricate his first experiments in electrical transmissions; and he filled in the missing ten figures in the foreground of *The Gallery of the Louvre*.

Though Cooper had pledged to buy *The Gallery of the Louvre* from Morse, he was not able to find the money for it. On August 9, 1833, after finishing his great picture, Morse wrote to Cooper with complete joyful relief: “My picture, *c’est fini*.” When he first exhibited the painting in the fall, the *New York Mirror* wrote an extraordinary review: “We know not which most to admire in contemplating this magnificent design, the courage which could undertake such a Herculean task, or the perseverance and success with which it has been completed. We have never seen anything of this kind in this country ... This representation of the Louvre... grows in interest at every fresh view...” (William Kloss, *Op. Cit.*, p. 132.)

However, there were no art traders and no buyers in sight. It was as if the word had circulated throughout the New York art crowd whispering: “Mr. Morse! Mr. Morse! I’ll make you sweat for this!” Cooper also cautioned Morse against exhibiting the painting in New York first. Cooper told Morse: “I doubt your success in New York, and would advise you to try Philadelphia. Your intimacy with me has become known, and such is the virulence of my enemies in New York that I have no sort of doubt of their attacking your picture in consequence.” (William Kloss. *Op. Cit.*, p. 130.)

By December 1833, Cooper’s warning had proven to be right. Totally discouraged, Morse wrote back to Cooper: “I have had for three weeks more hopeless despondence in regard to the future, than I have had ever before suffered... [I must] try to live if I can; to last through life, to stifle all aspiring thoughts after an excellence in art, about which I can only dream, an excellence which I see and felt I might attain, but which for 20 years have been within sight but never within grasp.” (William Kloss, *Op. Cit.*, p. 135) By August 1834, Morse was forced to sell his Louvre masterpiece for a mere \$1,300, including the frame, and on credit, to a rich landowner, George Hyde Clarke. The manipulation of the art markets by the British, and the operations of John Trumbull had begun their revenge. Morse’s financial situation was so pitiful that, within a decade, he

was forced to abandon painting altogether. Meanwhile, the ghost of Trumbull had also followed Morse to Washington.

Morse had hoped that after recognizing his talent for reproducing such likeness of the Louvre portraits, the government would give him a commission for painting one of the four remaining spaces of the Capitol Rotunda. But, the political mafia of Trumbull around the art trading business, along with the political corruption in Washington, saw to it that Morse's dream would never materialize. Art historian Klauss rounded diplomatically the doubtful attempt in the following manner: "Unlike the famous John Trumbull, Morse was a young painter whose reputation as a portraitist had only recently been established. He could not expect Congress to commission this painting (*The House of Representatives 1821-23.*); indeed it had taken Trumbull decades to win his Rotunda commissions. Asking only the collaboration of Congress, Morse undertook his task on speculation, in the fond belief that he could not fail to earn a substantial income from the public exhibition of the painting, as Trumbull and others had done. Although it is often assumed that he hoped Congress would purchase the work, there is evidence for this. Certainly he hoped that its success would recommend him to Congress for other federal commissions, such as the remaining four spaces in the Rotunda. In this hope he was to be disappointed, and so began an intermittent, often bitter, campaign by Morse and his supporters that would span twenty-five years." (William Kloss, *Op. Cit.*, p. 74.)

By 1849, Morse wrote to Cooper: "Alas! my dear sir, the very name of pictures produces a sadness in my heart I cannot describe. Painting has been a smiling mistress to some, but she has been a cruel jilt to me. I did not abandon her; she abandoned me. I have taken scarcely any interest in paintings for many years... Except for some family portraits, valuable to me from their likenesses, only I wish that every picture I had painted was destroyed." (James Franklin Beard, *The Letters and Journals of James Fenimore Cooper*, Volume 4, 1960. p. 80.) This was not an idle complaint. During his entire life as a painter, Morse always had to run after portrait commissions, that is, "*studies for food*" as opposed to "*studies for truth.*"

Even though Morse did not succeed in making enough money to survive with his art work, his fight for the defense of intellectual principles in the domain of classical artistic composition made it possible for others to succeed. Thanks to his generous fight for the survival of the National Academy of Design, by the late 1860's, most of the leading artists of the Hudson River School were in possession of their means, and were consciously developing a true American artistic culture in the spirit of Morse, Cooper, Alexander Humboldt, the Dusseldorf Academy of Westphalia, and Frederick Schiller.

Though Morse had to abandon painting as a carrier during the 1830's, his creative process was not arrested by the fact that he had made that choice. Morse later made a tremendous scientific contribution to mankind with his invention of the telegraph. In making that change, Morse had demonstrated why Americans, and not British speculators, have any interest in sparks of creativity. Thus, when, in 1844, he sent his Baltimore sparks in the coded form that reproduced the Biblical words: "What hath God wrought!" to his partner Alfred Vail, located in an exhibition room of the U. S. Supreme

Court in Washington, Morse was sending the greatest message that could ever be sent to all of mankind, and throughout the universe; that is, the message of a discovery of principle of the creative process that God, Himself, had been using in his universal messages, since the beginning of physical-space time!

#### **4. HOW MORSE CAPTURED THE LAFAYETTE PARADOX.**

Morse's 1825 portrait of Lafayette standing, is the greatest American portrait of all times, because, to my knowledge, it represents the highest level ever achieved in an American portrait of the sublime quality of classical artistic composition. However, what is it that characterizes a work of art as a classical artistic composition? If you wanted to find such quality in a painting, what would you look for? In 1998, Lyn best summarized that requirement as follows: "In plastic art, for example, Leonardo da Vinci exemplifies the duality of all Classical Art. This duality is expressed, on the one side as the obligation to subordinate the composition of plastic art to scientific truthfulness. On the other side, truth demands that we recognize the ironies, the metaphors, to which we must be led by any truthful scrutiny of principle of composition." (Lyndon LaRouche Jr., *The Substance of Morality in Science and Statecraft*, EIR, June 26, 1998, p. 40.)

In other words, if you think that a painting belongs to the domain of classical artistic composition and expresses the truth/irony duality under which Lyn suggests we should study them, then, you must ask yourself the following three questions.

- 1) Is the painting doing more than entertaining you by producing a pleasant effect?
- 2) Is the painting reflecting an emotion, an idea, or a state of mind of the artist?
- 3) Is the state of mind of the painting, the reflection of a universal truth benefiting all of mankind?

If you can answer affirmatively these three questions, then, you have before you a classical artistic composition. Now, scrutinize this extraordinary portrait of Lafayette by Samuel F. B. Morse, with these three questions in mind.

First of all, the portrait was not painted in France, but in America, when Lafayette travelled to the United States in 1825. Morse emphasized this towering quality of the subject, by putting the observation level of the spectator slightly below Lafayette's knees, giving the subject additional elevation and dignity above the horizon, thus, increasing his stature with respect to the heavens in the background. From the vantage point of that special effect, Morse had given recognition to Lafayette as the "Hero of the Two Worlds," in accordance with the consecrated American expression of the time.

Furthermore, Morse was also very much knowledgeable of the differences between those two worlds, and of the unresolved political situation in France at that very specific period of time, prior to the July Revolution of 1830. So, Morse was consciously addressing the state of political perplexity that had to be conveyed to the universal spectator as he was looking over Lafayette's shoulder and discovering the dark cloud

moving forward as if to overshadow him. What is the significance of this lurking darkness in the background?



Figure 5. Samuel F. B. Morse, *Marquis de Lafayette*, 1825.

As he seems to be arriving at the top of an invisible flight of stairs leading to an open terrace and scrutinizing the horizon over his right shoulder, Lafayette appears to be in a state of ambiguity. Is he moving forward or is he standing still? His right hand, resting on the third pedestal, which suggests that it might be his own, next to the busts of Washington and Franklin, shows that he is standing still, yet, his right shoulder and his left hand holding back his cape, show that he is in a forward motion. As they say in the military, he cannot stand at attention and be moving his left foot forward at the same time. Every military man knows that. However, if I may be permitted to use the French political metaphor of right and left, as Lafayette and the French revolutionaries instituted it in the room of their first National Assembly in 1789, one might say that Lafayette's right is still while his left is in motion! If that were to be the appropriate metaphor, then Morse might have captured in the body language of Lafayette, a most fascinating political paradox, that is, the opposition of two tendencies which exists in every society between the aristocratic hereditary principle, and the republican democratic principle: one is static, the other is moving forward, and both can only be judged properly by an American. The point to be made here is that only an American artist could have made this portrait.

Biographer William Kloss noted a similar ambiguity in his caption for the same portrait of Lafayette in his book, *Samuel F. B. Morse*. He said it was Frederick Schiller who best described such ambivalence of character in his 1795 appreciation of the Apollo Belvedere, when he wrote: "Celestial mixture of accessibility and severity, benevolence and gravity, majesty and mildness." (William Kloss, *Op. Cit.*, p. 94.) Such ambivalent pairs of intertwined attitudes are, indeed, remarkably similar to the paradoxical character of Marquis de Lafayette, but what of their significance, what do they imply?

Here, it is necessary to open a parenthesis and call upon Universal History in order to identify the historical specificity of this ambiguity as it later showed up in the political events that became the most crucial moments in Lafayette's life, his moments of truth, so to speak, in the political intrigues of the Duke of Orleans July Revolution. Consider, also, that Morse has captured this moment in the simultaneity of eternity. This so-called second French Revolution is also sometimes referred to as "Les Trois Glorieuses," that is, the three "glorious days" of rioting in the streets of Paris, July 27, 28, 29, just before the Orleans Monarchy replaced the Bourbon Monarchy in 1830. However, the glory this revolution celebrated was the cunning of Louis Philippe d'Orleans and reflected the principle of tragedy of French society as a whole.

This was the historical moment when King Charles X, representing the senior branch of the Bourbon family, was literally horsetraded for the Duke Louis-Philippe, who represented the junior branch, namely the Orleans wing of the Bourbon family. Thus, Charles X was forced to abdicate his throne in favor of his cousin. Lafayette was caught in the middle of those power intrigues, and the fate of France was on his shoulders, since he had taken the responsibility to move his nation toward an American Republican nation state. But, he had also been used as the representative of the same principle of tragedy that triggered the advent of Louis-Philippe.

After three days of rioting in the streets of Paris, the population took over City Hall, and a government of sorts was being prepared on its premises, between the orleanists of Louis-Philippe and the republicans of Lafayette. But, let's hear the record speak for itself. Here are the 6 relevant historically documented facts that historian and statesman, Gabriel Hanotaux, deposited before the court of history in 1929.

Fact 1: The Orleanist, Charles Remusat, asked Lafayette at City Hall: "General, if we decide on the Monarchy, the Duke of Orleans will be King; however, if we decide on a republic, you will be President. Are you willing to take responsibility for the Republic?" Lafayette replied in an enigmatic fashion by saying that he required "some guarantees." (Gabriel Hanotaux, *Histoire de la Nation Française*, Tome V, Troisième volume, (de 1804 a 1926), Librairie Plon, Paris, 1929, p. 328.)

Fact 2: A deputation representing the King, including the Duke of Mortemart and Casimir Perrier attempted to get the support of Lafayette who told them: "It is too late." Giving them a note to be delivered to King Charles X, which was nothing short of a death sentence to the Bourbon dynasty, Lafayette told them: "Any reconciliation is impossible; the royal family has ended its reign." (Hanotaux, Op. Cit., p. 325)

Fact 3: Charles X abdicated and asked the Duke of Orleans, Louis Philippe, to accept the Regency during the minority of his legitimate heir, the Duke of Bordeaux. Louis-Philippe accepted and took the function of the Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom.

Fact 4: July 30, 1830, preparations were being made to establish the July Monarchy. Most of the deputies were present at City Hall. The Duke of Orleans had accepted the constitutional monarchy "Charter" which included the words: "He will wear the crown received from the people." At the last minute, those words were changed to read: "The Duke will not pronounce himself, He awaits your wishes," addressing the deputies. (Hanotaux, Op. Cit., p. 327)

Fact 5: July 31, Louis-Philippe arrived at City Hall and addressed a proclamation to the people of Paris: "The deputies of France, at this moment in Paris, have expressed their desire that I come to the capital in order to take up the functions of Lieutenant General of the Kingdom,...The Chambers shall get together and advise as to the means of assuring the rule of law and the upholding of the nation's rights. (No question of Constituent Assembly or appeal to the people). From now on, the Charter will be enforced." (Hanotaux, Op. Cit., p. 328.)

Fact 6: July 31, the Duke of Orleans and Lafayette met semi-privately at City Hall. The government archives stated the following: "This dress rehearsal (at City Hall) was not sufficient for the General: he wanted to know what he could count on. Surrounded by a fired-up youth movement, *by a republican party of his own personal inclinations*, and feeling that he was responsible for the fate of the nation, Lafayette did not wait long to pay a visit to the Duke of Orleans. He had no reason to be unhappy about the promises of the prince:



“You know,” said to him Lafayette, “that I am a republican and that I consider the Constitution of the United States as the most perfect that ever existed.”

“I think as you do,” replied the Duke of Orleans, “It is impossible to have lived two years in the United States and not be of that opinion; but, do you believe that, in the situation that France is in, and following public opinion, it would be right to adopt it?”

“No,” replied Lafayette, “what the French people need today, is a popular monarchy, surrounded by republican institutions, completely republican .”

“That is precisely what I intend to do,” said the prince.” (Hanotaux, Op. Cit., p. 329.)

After that brief exchange, both monarchist and republican leaders appeared together on the balcony of City Hall, where Lafayette had all but crowned Louis-Philippe as the new King of France by stating: “*Here is the King we needed; this is the best of republics.*” This statement was made to quiet down the clamoring of the crowd below, among which the young American activist Samuel Gridley Howe had been shouting enthusiastically: “No more Bourbons! Vive la République! Vive Lafayette!”

Simply from the content and the tone of this archive document, it becomes evident that Lafayette never had any intention of becoming President of France and that he was still following the script that had been agreed upon between Jean Sylvain Bailly, Benjamin Franklin, and himself in June of 1789. The paradox of a “Republican Monarchy” had been instituted in France as the best of all possible republics. This was not merely a personal choice on the part of Lafayette, but was also the expression of a historical necessity across the entire European continent. It was for that precise reason that the American Revolution could only have happened in America and not in Europe.

Two weeks later, on August 15, 1830, James Fenimore Cooper reported the significance of that historical moment in a letter to his wife, Sue, when he wrote to her in Frankfort Germany: “All is quiet in France, and promises to remain so. Lafayette has yielded to necessity, and the Bourbonites have done the same thing. Charles X is nearly forgotten, and Philip Ist seems to be moderate and wise. ..The new Charta, as they call a constitution, is partly republican and if they destroy the descent of the peers, which they talk of, it will be still more so.” (*Correspondence of James Fenimore Cooper*, edited by his grandson James Fenimore Cooper, Volume one, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1922, p. 184.)

Those were the historical circumstances under which James Fenimore Cooper, Samuel Finlay Breese Morse, Horatio Greenough, Edgar Allen Poe, Samuel Gridley Howe, Albert Brisbane, and others helped and advised Lafayette on securing American republican institutions for the benefit of the French nation. It was, therefore, under these very ambiguous and paradoxical circumstances, as the very notion of a “constitutional monarchy” reveals, that Lafayette found himself torn between being what he described

himself to be, an “*American revolutionary at heart and a French royalist by reason.*” I recall here the letter that Lafayette sent to his wife, Adrienne, in 1792: “You know that my heart would have been republican if my reason had not given me a nuance of royalism.” (Lafayette letter to Adrienne, August 21, 1792.)

This is the paradox that Morse was uniquely able to capture in his classical artistic composition of Lafayette. However, as in a classical tragedy, the flaw does not lie in the character of the hero, but in the society that he comes out of. The cultural flaw is not personal but social and it represents a characteristic of all of the people. Similarly, what may appear to reflect, in one glance, the individual character of Lafayette is, in reality, the universal mirror expression of the axiomatic difference between republicanism and oligarchism, the chasm between American society and European society taken together as a whole.

In this context, it is important to recall Lyn’s insight on the question of tragedy and Lafayette with respect to the dangers of a French Revolution type of Jacobin mob in the United States. He wrote:

“Tragedy is when a people and a culture have gone decadent and corrupt, and the culture destroys the very people who want to prevent the tragedy. Schiller’s {*Wallenstein*} trilogy, especially the first play, in {*Wallenstein Camp*}, is a perfect example of this problem. The idiocy of the people and their adopted culture is what destroys them. It is the exceptional individuals who act to screw up the culture, and who can actually survive to do something about it.

“Ideas are the opposite of opinions, because true ideas are conceptions, like physical discoveries. Ideas put into circulation, can crystallize, particularly under a proper leadership. The Marquis de Lafayette is an example of someone who took leadership, but failed, because he could not break from the culture—in his case, the French monarchy of Louis XVI. He organized the Tennis Court Oath, but he failed, at crucial moments, because he was soft on the culture built around the degenerate monarchy.

“We must recognize this cultural mess, and exploit two things:

“First, look for genuine reasons for optimism. This is crucial.

“Second, be prepared when crises arise, to exploit the opportunities they present, immediately. The key is ideas based on reality. We know people are stupid, corrupt and cowardly. So we have to be right all the time.” (Lyndon H. LaRouche, {*The Way to Get Ahead is to Grow One*}, Morning Briefing, Tuesday, September 30, 2008.)

## 5. THE LEGACY OF BENJAMIN WEST AND HIS BRITISH ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS.

On May 3, 1827, in his capacity of president of the National Academy of Design, Samuel F. B. Morse gave a speech before the members of his one-year-old institution. On the occasion of this first anniversary, he took the opportunity to expand on the nature of the new Academy and the role that it had to play to maintain a classical culture alive in the United States. After pointing out that he had considered the entire Academy of arts of Europe. The irony, however, was that of all the European institutions, Morse considered that the most appropriate to follow was the British Royal Academy of Arts, founded by the American patriot and history artist Benjamin West.

Being in a position to make earth shaking changes in the English “taste” for the fine arts, West successfully rallied squabbling English artists together, with or without their snobbish attitude, in founding the Royal Academy of Arts in 1768, with the full support of king George I. In his petition to the king, West proposed the following two objectives: “1<sup>st</sup>. The establishment of a well regulated school, or Academy of Design, for the use of students in the arts; and 2<sup>nd</sup>. An annual Exhibition, open to all artists of distinguished merit, where they may offer their performances to public inspection.” (Samuel F. B. Morse, *1827 Discours before the Academy of Design*, p.16)

The plan of West for the Academy was very simple and included a constitution established on four points. As reported by Morse:

“The First was that “*the entire government of the Academy is entrusted to Artists.*” This was the case for Florence, Venice, Paris, Madrid, and London. The Second point in the constitution is that “*the school is instructed by the most distinguished artists of the country composing the Academy Body.*” The Third point includes *a system of Premiums to incite the students to industry and emulation.* The Fourth feature is *an exhibition of the works of living artists*, thus, giving priority to the recent works of the artists of the day.”

Of course, the most important political point that Morse was making about their newly created institution was the freedom and independence of its artist members. If they were “free and independent” in England, how could they not be so in the United States? Nowhere, in any of the cited European countries, did the artist have to submit to some sort of patronage and all of the expenses of the Academies were paid from the receipts of their exhibitions. Morse noted most emphatically: “In a despotic government, all offices of influence and patronage must be at the disposal of the monarch; and it is not to be supposed that the first offices of an institution of such importance, would be the only situations unoccupied with the favorites and supporters of a despotic court.” (Op. Cit., p.17)

Morse also emphasized “the plan for Exhibitions, as it exists in the English Royal Academy, is that which we have adopted, as better suited to our state of society than

those of the Continental Academies.[...] We have taken the English Royal Academy for our model, as far as the different circumstances of form of government and state of taste will admit.”(Op. Cit., p. 20)

Thus, with the creation of the Academy of Design, Morse had brought to America a model of Academy of Design established by an American patriot exiled in Great Britain who had left a tremendous legacy; if the American people know how to exploit it for the benefit of the world as a whole, as it was intended to be.

The true revolution that Benjamin West had instituted in England, however, was more than a Royal Academy. It was most significantly the implementation of a fundamental change in taste. The aim of West in England, followed by Cooper and Morse in the United States, was to change the public mind by forging the necessity of cultural “taste.” And, the new “American taste” was to replace the old snobbish “oligarchical taste.” A good illustration of the point can be exemplified by studying the difference in “taste” between the respective self-portraits of the first president of the Royal Academy, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and of the second president, Benjamin West. Both self-portraits were obviously painted in a similar pose as if to emphasize the psychological difference between the two minds.



Sir Joshua Reynolds



Benjamin West

Note that the position of Benjamin West is at the level of the spectator while the position of Reynolds is viewed from below, thus emphasizing his higher standing OF Reynolds in English society. An anonymous artist made Reynolds’ higher position more emphatic in this copy of his self-portrait.



“Sir” Joshua Reynolds from the portrait of himself

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