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

HOW BRITISH FREE TRADE AND FRENCH BARBIZON DESTROYED THE HUDSON RIVER SCHOOL

by Pierre Beaudry, 7/30/2008

1. THE BARBIZON DISEASE INSIDE OF THE HUDSON RIVER SCHOOL.

The late 1850's were a great period for Frederick Schiller in America, because there were extraordinary celebrations of his Centennial Birthday Anniversary in New York City, for example, on the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th of November 1859. This was a *schillerzeit* that was also celebrated in Philadelphia, addressed before the Haverford Loganian Society by Thomas Chase, a festival at the Academy of Music and Twelve *Tableaux Vivants* from different works of Schiller, including *Wallenstein's Camp,* were played in New York City, and an Oration delivered at the Schiller festivities on the 10th of November 1859, in the Boston Music Hall by Rev. Frederick Hedge D.D. The spirit of Frederick Schiller was very much present and well represented in America at that time and had long inspired the historical purpose of the Hudson River School of American classical artistic composition. Its purpose was to create an American Cultural Revolution.

As a result of such American developments, a counter-cultural offensive led by the Pre-Raphaelites Victorian Art critic, John Ruskin, and followers of the French Barbizon school of Fontainebleau, was launched against the Hudson River School. The main targets, representing the most important second generation of young and patriotic landscape artists, were Worthington Whittredge, Albert Bierstadt, Frederic Church,

Robert Duncanson, and Sanford Gifford. The reason for the attack was not aimed at preventing American artists from showing the greatness of American sceneries. The aim was to prevent a cultural revolution from taking place in the footsteps of the political revolution of 1776. The issue was that if ever the United-States were to complete the American Revolution by a Cultural Renaissance, then, the American spirit would become unstoppable around the world. So, from the stand point of British imperialism, the Hudson River School had to be stopped in its tracks by all means possible. So, the order of battle was dressed up and the big guns were rolled in.

The British used their best artillery, cavalry, and infantry, which were the art dealers, the controlled press, and the private Tory clubs of New York and New England. This was a time when, as Schiller put it, "*art for bread*" became the enemy of "*art for truth*." The newspapers targeted the minds of the artists and the minds of the general population, while the free trade art dealers, with their private Tory Clubs, targeted the artist's back pockets. At the same time, Barbizon French paintings flooded the United States as a free trade dumping bounty to undermine American-made products. A lot of paintings from The Hudson River School were bought cheap only to be hidden from the public and put into private collections, while others were physically destroyed, even buried underground.

For example, during the 1940's, William Sonntag of Cincinnati, a close collaborator of Robert Scott Duncanson and a follower of James Fenimore Cooper, had painted four major works entitled *The Progress of Civilization*. The paintings reportedly identified the economic and cultural progression from American Indians, to pioneers, to village life, to the modern city development. Like a great watershed, such an avalanche of progress was being designed and ordered by the hand of Western civilization toward its Manifest Destiny. However, so-called philanthropists of the Gilded Age bought all four paintings before photographers could make copies of them, and they have not been seen publicly since. Like the *Great Paintings* of Duncanson, Sonntag's Cincinnati paintings are nowhere to be found today.

The destruction of the Hudson River School began at its inception with the British free trade attacks by British agent artist, John Trumbull, against Samuel F. B. Morse, in 1825 during the founding moments of the National Academy of Design. Then, the school took a vicious turn with the infection of a new French fad called, Barbizon, introduced by the art manager of George Inness, Ogden Haggerty, in the early 1850's, and ended with the bankruptcy of the school by art speculator Thomas B. Clarke and robber baron James W. Pinchot just prior to the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876. It was also the creation of the so-called American Barbizon and luminism fad inside of the Hudson River School which led to its complete demise. Everyone who was anyone on the New York East Side already had a Rousseau, a Daubigny, and a Corot, but the problem was that none of the rich Tory Americans of that period had any American Barbizon-styled painting to hang on their walls. Something had to be done to get an American artist to adopt the new French fad. So, auctioneer and art collector Ogden Haggerty was deployed by the British-led New York Tories to look for an American artist that the speculators were ready to back up.

While John Ruskin and his Pre-Raphaelite British School were launching major attacks against Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902) and Frederick Edwin Church (1826-1900), as I reported earlier in *Albert Bierstadt: The Art of Manifest Destiny, Part II*, the British free-traders of the New York art market were using the Barbizon infection to target Worthington Whittredge (1820-1910), John Frederick Kensett (1816-1872), and Sanford R. Gifford (1823-1880). As I will show below, the period when the Hudson River artists were targeted most viciously was especially intense just prior to the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, because this was the most important moment for the revolutionary new form of American art to be put before the world. The 1876 Centennial was also a unique opportunity for the artists to make sales and to promote, internationally, the successful American Cultural Revolution they had created during the previous 50 years. The Barbizon political operation was, therefore, deployed precisely to prevent this from happening.

Though the National Academy of Design and the Hudson River School were suffering from major financial difficulties, there was much more than shareholder value involved in their demise. British intelligence plans involved a more profound attack at the cultural level. The plan was to find an American artist who would be willing to become a mole inside of the Hudson River School, to publicly denounce the principles of the school, and to introduce, shamelessly, an existentialist mood within the American school, especially with the appearance of being "Made in America." British imperialists are experts at convincing people into forging their own mental chains by making them believe they are fighting for their own personal interest. The new "American fad" became known as "luminism," that is, a synthetic method of inducing a passive existentialist tendency in American arts, as it had been done, successfully, in France. The British intention was to destroy all rigorous classical standards and avoid, by all means possible, the Cooper conception of creativity which was using ironies of classical drama to educate the spectator as opposed to appealing to his popular habits and popular culture.

The chosen artist had to be totally self-centered, preoccupied only with his own personal moods and feelings, almost mystical about his talents, without any scruples about not appealing to the intellect or to morality, and having no ability to discover what goes on in someone else's mind. The details of his paintings should not be too precise, but only elaborated enough to give *an impression* of what the artist wishes to convey. That artist also had to accept to be paid a monthly salary to do this work, provided that he gave all of his paintings to the art dealers, and had to produce small pictures of rural impressions, almost in industrial quantities. This artist was not allowed to do any portraits, not even self-portraits that might suggest ironies of the creative process. This required that he painted quickly and produce hundreds of pictures a year, sometimes one a day, in a systematic fashion, according to a prescribed quasi-mechanical method. Meanwhile the art dealers and the press would take care of making a name for him and guarantee his fame as the greatest landscape artist that ever lived. In 1851, just after Cooper died, art speculator, Ogden Haggerty, found the individual that would fit perfectly this profile and would adhere to this game plan. George Inness was his man.

2. GEORGE INNESS: THE SOPHISTRY OF "TICKLING" EMOTIONS.

George Inness (1825-1894) was not a real member of the Hudson River School: he was a Barbizon plant who became entirely the synthetic creature of the Boston Tory art dealers who used him to destroy the spirit of Cooper and of Morse in the Hudson River School. George Inness was the free trade revenge of John Trumbull, of the Tory Clubs of New York City, and of Boston that included such speculators as financier and steamship owner Marshal O. Roberts, railroad man and banker George I. Seney, N.Y department store owner Benjamin Altman, Ohio coal mine owner and banker James W. Elsworth, and financier art collector Richard H. Halsted. Later, the control of the Inness operation was put into the hands of the foremost American art collector, Thomas B. Clarke with his Boston art sales firms, Williams & Everett and Doll & Richards. Those were only a few of the rich art trade patrons behind George Inness and who were the sworn enemies of the Hudson River School. Before going into the works of Inness, let's have a look at what Barbizon was all about.

The Barbizon style of painting was introduced in the Hudson River School by Inness and was used to infect primarily Whittredge and Gifford, but also others such as John Kensett and John Casilear. Barbizon is the name of the village located next to the forest of Fontainebleau in France, from where the two founders of the school, Theodore Rousseau and Jean-Francois Millet, crawled out. Their trademark, and that of their followers, was to use art for the purpose of expressing anti-industrial and anti-science tendencies. In short, it was a British-French existentialist counter-cultural operation that was introduced in the United States with the purpose of stamping out the Cooper Cultural Revolution. Barbizon was also called "pre-impressionism" in France and "luminism" in the United States. The "luminist" style was a term invented by some New York Art critics in order to distinguish the French style from the one "Made in America." The new French style created tendencies among the Hudson River School painters and pitted them against each other on matters of method and purpose. The aim was to target the older and more mature members of the school, and use luminism as tactical psychological warfare against the American revival of the classical artistic form of composition.

As a painting style, Barbizon "luminism" is nothing but a form of sophistry that became a mannerist fad expressing different existentialist moods, and its counter-cultural purpose was to literally induce the impression of dreaminess and melancholy in artists as well as in the general population. It was used systematically to entertain the intellectual elite of America and make them feel good and drowsy. It was also made to impress the rich and powerful who enjoyed a refined touch of foggy mystification and false grandeur. The most popular French artists in the United States and most popular with this method were Jean-Baptist-Camille Corot and Charles-Francois Daubigny.

The main counter-cultural function of Barbizon was to destroy the rigor of the classical artistic composition that came out of the classical Dusseldorf Academy from Westphalia, Germany, and out of the National Academy of Design in New York

established by Samuel F. B. Morse; that is, by emphasizing sense perception as opposed to the creative powers of the mind. The pictorial aim was to eliminate the method of expressing ironies and paradoxes in a painted landscape, and replace them by an overdose of light impressionistic effects as the replacements of the actual subject matter. Luminism and impressionism, thus, became the two most important fallacies of composition that ultimately took over the Hudson River School and destroyed it completely during the late 1870's.

In reality, this so-called "luminist" style is simply a finishing technique, which helps hide brush strokes and eliminates strong delineation of objects. And that is all that it should be used for: a very useful device to be used to enhance a state of mind in a portrait. Leonardo da Vinci called this technique "sfumato" and used it to express faint differences in the internal state of mind of his subjects, for example, the differences between the two versions of the *Virgin of the Rocks*. Every landscape artist has to use some kind of finishing technique in order to give a more or less dense consistency to the atmosphere, smoothing over strong shadows that strongly delineate the contour of objects, depending on the overriding intention of the subject. The subject of the painting is never a thing, but a state of mind. However, when this method is used otherwise than as a finishing technique, it becomes sophistry.

As Inness put it: "Details in the picture must be elaborated only enough fully to reproduce the impression that the artist wishes to reproduce. When more than this is done, the impression is weakened or lost, and we see simply an array of external things which may be very cleverly painted, and may look very real, but which do not make an artistic painting." (Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., Michael Quick, *GEORGE INNESS*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1986, p. 205.) This prescription by Inness describes precisely how his fallacy of composition replaced classical artistic composition. The sensual effect was replacing the creative intention of the mind. The same thing happens when rhetoric replaces the moral intention in speaking language. If one abuses this technique, it will ultimately erase the form of objects and all that will be left will be an impression of the subjective feeling of the artist. That is how the fakery of Barbizon came to replace the creative principle of artistic composition as the subject matter of art. The same form of sophistry was also applied to music during the same period.

Art historian Charley Parker succinctly identified how George Inness began his career as a student of the Hudson River School, and became opposed to the school's principles right after he returned from his first trip to France in 1854. Even though he was not a member of the school, Inness, nonetheless, always wanted to be identified with the Hudson River School, regardless of his opposition and of the school's opposition to him. Parker wrote as per a prescribed biographical script written for art dealers:

> "At a time when his fellow Hudson River painters were searching for the most wild, untamed and dramatic landscape subjects they could find (or sometimes combine and invent, in the case of Frederic Church), George Inness chose to paint settled and cultivated lands, the farms and fields in which both God and man had made their mark.

"Inness started his career painting in a style in keeping with the other Hudson River School artists, but his trips to Europe exposed him to the artists of the Barbizon School of France, which changed his palette. Inness eventually eclipsed the Hudson River School painters and was regarded as the finest American landscape artist.

"In his later career, he was exposed to an influence of another kind that also changed his painting dramatically. He became enthralled with the theological philosophy of Emanuel Swedenborg, a Swedish scientist, philosopher and Christian mystic who believed (among other things) in a direct relationship between the natural and spiritual worlds. Inness took Swedenborg's model of "as above, so below" to heart as a belief that the divine could be revealed by contemplation of the natural world, and attempted to convey that divine essence in his paintings." www.linesandcolors.com/2006/12/20/george-inness/

Figure 1. George Inness, *Gray, Lowery Day*, c. 1877.

Gray, Lowery Day, is considered to be Inness's greatest masterpiece. If this is what eclipsed the rest of the Hudson River School artists, then, I have a bridge to sell you. What Parker does not say, however, is that "the finest American landscape artist" was an invention of the *New York Times*, and that Swedenborg was a freemasonic cult figure of the Martinist Synarchy variety. I make the point, here, of choosing the best work of any artist, because some of the last paintings of Inness are truly from the Twilight

Zone. Though Inness dimmed the lights significantly in this picture, it is easy to see that this was for the intention of controlling spectators. It is that synthetic aspect of the Inness method that reveals most vividly that you are dealing with a psychological warfare operation from the top down. As his son, George Inness Jr., put it, the trip of his father to the Barbizon School in France "opened up new fields of vision and new avenues of thought. They took him out of the narrow confines of the Hudson River School, and placed him in the rarer atmosphere of the masters of the world." (George Inness Jr., *Life, Art, and Letters of George Inness,* New York, The Century Company, 1917, p. 29.) His son never knew how right he was (or may be he did, only too well). Here is how George Inness Jr., naively explained this synthetic Barbizon method in the very words of his father:

> " 'There A ---, slam in a thunder-cloud in the right hand corner; and you, B -- , rush a battery of light down in that middle distance; and C – keep hammering away at the foreground. Never mind if you are out of tone, we'll get a harmony when we put a glaze over the whole thing and then with a little tickling up here and there with pigment we will have finished the greatest landscape that ever was painted.' And this is not at all imaginary, for that was one of my father's pet theories. He thought he could direct any man or group of men to paint in this way, and produce as great a picture as he could paint himself. At times, he seemed to be obsessed with the idea that painting a picture was purely mechanical, needing only the master brain to direct." (George Inness Jr., Op. Cit., p. 76.)

There you have it, all in grayish greens. *Gray, Lowery Day* is, in point of fact, the proof of the synthetic method of Inness described by his son: The method of *tickling emotions*. This is like painting by numbers for the poor folks of the Gilded Age. Inness told art collector Thomas B. Clarke, that *Gray, Lowery Day* would be exactly done according to his theory, and was going to be a masterpiece. But, what was his principle behind the composition? Indeed, how can so much "*tickling*" result in some sort of unity of composition? The answer is simple, simplistic even. The artist is attempting to convey the emotional depression state that conforms to the condition of living in a Malthusian swampy area. This is no exaggeration. This is how Inness explained his own purpose.

> "What is it that the painter tries to do? Simply to reproduce in other minds the impression which a scene has made upon him. A work of art does not appeal to the intellect. It does not appeal to the moral sense. Its aim is not to instruct, not to edify, but to awaken an emotion." (George Inness, *A Painter on Painting*, Harper's New Monthly Magazine, # 56, February 1878, pp. 458-61.)

When Clarke saw the psychological effect and the implications of this existentialist method of *tickling emotions*, he bought *Gray, Lowery Day* from Inness for $2,000 and took over management of his paintings. First, Haggerty had Boston art dealers, Williams & Everett, selling all of his Inness works, especially to rich New York patrons. Then, when Haggerty died in 1875, Clarke replaced him as the manager of Inness. Suddenly, the works of Inness grew in value, simply because they belonged to the greatest American Art Dealer, Thomas B. Clarke.

After Williams & Everett suffered major losses during the Boston fire of 1872, Inness started painting for another art dealer firm, Doll & Richards. Doll revealed the true nature of their business relationship with Inness. In the biography of his father, George Inness Jr. reported that Doll once said to an art collector, Mr. Maynard, that he had "a knife in Inness and could twist it at any time." (George Inness Jr., Op. Cit., p. 87.) Doll owned everything Inness had. For the last 16 years of Inness's life, it was Thomas B. Clarke who managed Inness's paintings through Doll & Richards. Clarke was a lace and linen manufacturer from New York who had become the nation's foremost art collector at the end of the nineteenth century. Among his other art patronage functions, Clarke was also the treasurer of the National Society of Art and chairman of the Union League Club's art committee. His dream was to get Inness to become president of the National Academy of Design, the founding institution of the Hudson River School. Thus, during all of his life as an artist, George Inness was kept on the short leash of free trade art dealers.

After the painting was made public at a few selected exhibitions, and after the *New York Times* had promoted *Gray, Lowery Day* as the "greatest" American scenery ever painted, the famous Thomas B. Clarke auction of February 1899 confirmed the veracity of the fallacy of composition. This was the ultimate proof of how the *tickling* method of Inness worked as a successful Barbizon fraud. On that day, and in its usual inimitable compositional style, the *New York Times* article stated: "The bidding on Inness's '*Gray, Lowery Day*,' which selling for $10,150 broke not only the record of the sale, but of all previous auction sales of American pictures, was most lively and exciting." (*New York Times*, Feb. 17, 1899.) During that auction, Clark sold 35 out of 39 of his Inness paintings.

Just in case anyone had any doubts, this is how the fad of American Barbizon was sold to rich New Yorkers as a fraud upon artistic composition. After three nights of bidding, the 1899 Clarke auction sold for a total of $165, 315 worth of paintings, a record of sales for those days. All of the higher-priced pictures were from George Inness. In point of fact, it was purely Clarke's ownership of Inness's paintings that had established the fame and value of the Inness paintings before and after his death.

3. JAMES PINCHOT AND THE DEMISE OF WORTHINGTON WHITTREDGE.

Ever since 1853, when he first attempted to join the famous Morse National Academy of Design, George Inness wanted to become a member of the academy, but most of the artists of that institution refused to recognize Inness as more than a mere "associate" with a French synthetic pedigree. Inness's patrons finally succeeded in getting Inness a membership in 1868, and then got him to become president of the most important art institution in the United States. This promotion of Inness was timed to coincide with the preparatory selection phase for American artwork to be submitted at the 1876 Centennial Exposition of Philadelphia. Inness became president of the National Academy of Design in 1873. That was to be the crowning of his efforts of imposing the Barbizon disease on the Hudson River School.

Within a year, in a desperate attempt to save the institution, the members of the Academy chose Worthington Whittredge to replace Inness as president of the National Academy of Design in 1874 and 75. For Whittredge, this was a last ditch effort to sell some of the school's work and save it from subversion and bankruptcy. This fight was so intense that Whittredge went onto a severe state of depression, from which he never truly recovered. Regardless, during those two years, Whittredge's mission was to save the Academy, which was going under financially right at the time it was needed the most. Whittredge saved the institution but spent more time fighting against private clubs and the art traders, than promoting the works of the Hudson River School. In the end of his second year, exhausted, Whittredge was forced to resign for health reasons. Then, it was Sanford Gifford who took on the challenge of the presidency of the Academy of Design. Again, the fight against the private clubs and the art dealers was so nasty and unfair that by the end of 1876, it was Sanford Gifford's turn to resign, exhausted, after only one year.

Then, in May of 1876, the fight waged by the Tory clubs art dealers against the National Academy of Design reached a climax. Weak as he was, and still in a depressed state, Whittredge accepted to be in charge of the committee of American Art for the Centennial celebrations in Philadelphia. As former president of the National Academy, he attempted to get the works of most of his closest associates from the Hudson River School into the exhibit, but without success. The majority of the good hanging spots for the exposition went to the American Barbizon artists. This became a major bone of contention. The choice of individuals to serve on the Centennial hanging committee was made with the explicit purpose of dispersing or eliminating the works of the Hudson River School. This committee was made up of the New York engraver, James David Smillie, Hudson River School senior artist, Worthington Whittredge, Philadelphia engraver, James Sartain, and William Perkins of Boston.

On May 3, 1876, when the committee met to discuss the choice of works that would be the most representative of America, a virtual war broke out over the Barbizon American painters versus the Cooper-Morse movement of the Hudson River School and their National Academy of Design. Everybody on the committee nearly resigned because Sartain would not compromise on his choice of the Barbizon school of artists reflecting the "new American art." The advocates of the Cooper and Morse school were forced to retreat, while the private Tory clubs, their art dealers, and the controlled press moved in for the kill with money and propaganda to impose the Barbizon art faction on the United States at its own Centennial anniversary. Barbizon became the cultural smallpox of the Philadelphia Centennial. By the end of May, the fight had reached a fever pitch within the clubs against the Hudson River School, and the Barbizon school of shareholder value won the day. Whittredge recalled that this was "the gravest crisis" for the Hudson River School and the worst disaster of his life.

To highlight a few salient points about the financial situation of that period, on September 21, 1871, Whittredge had warned his financial advisor and "art collector," James W. Pinchot about his own difficult financial situation and that of the Academy. Pinchot recommended that Whittredge take a holiday to Europe. Whittredge replied to

him that he had become ambiguous about returning to Europe in order to resolve the crisis he was going through. Whittredge knew he was being pushed to a crisis point beyond which the National Academy of Design and the Hudson River School might not survive, but he did not realize that the man he was writing to was precisely the one who was orchestrating his demise and that of these art institutions.

With amazing lucidity and frankness about the Barbizon school, on September 21, 1871, Whittredge wrote to James Pinchot: "For all I care about Europe is its art and artists and what they are doing. I am forced to admire it while I don't like it. I admire their knowledge *but* despise their *souls* if one can speak so." (Worthington Whittredge letter to James W. Pinchot, Sept. 21, 1871.)

Then, two years later, on September 19, 1873, speculators hit Wall Street with a "Black Friday" and Whittredge lost most of his investments in that stock market crash. From that moment on, he was at the breaking point, both financially and psychologically. A year later, on February 15, 1874, still unaware that Pinchot was undermining his lifework, Whittredge sent him another letter in which he identified that the markets were rigged against the Hudson River School and that he should do something about the dumping of foreign paintings into the United States. Whittredge wrote: "Immense numbers of pictures however are imported and seem to find sale, some at enormous prices, while the Bierstadts, the Churches, the Giffords and Johnsons, are not sold or even wanted. Some better disposition must be shown by the public for at least our good artists, or art here and our art institutions must die out. It now became, I think, a little too much the custom to depreciate everything produced here, and over estimate everything brought from abroad." (Whittredge letter to Pinchot, Feb. 15, 1874.)

Finally, it appears that Whittredge may have never discovered that it was Pinchot, personally, who had been sabotaging his own art sales and had been behind the operation to destroy the National Academy of Design and the Hudson River School. American publisher and art essayist, William C. Brownell captured the after effect of the free trade operation after the 1876 Exposition, when he wrote: "The year 1876-77, may be said to mark the beginning of a new epoch… Before that year, we had what was called, at any rate, an American school of painting, and now, the American school seems to have disappeared. We are beginning to paint as other people paint." William C. Brownell, *Young Painters in America, Scribner's Monthly* 20, 1 (May 1880): 1-15; (July 1880): 321-35. Quoted from Thurman Wilkins, *Thomas Moran: Artist of the Mountain*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1998, p. 146.)

By the time he became 65, in 1885, Whittredge was bankrupt. On March 9, 1887, he was forced to auction over seventy of his remaining paintings at the *Ortgies' Art Galleries* of New York City for which he only got a pittance. Three years later, in February of 1900, nineteen of Whittredge's paintings were auctioned for an average of $40.00 each. All of this was done under the patronage of art collector, James W. Pinchot.

Ultimately, the free trade stockholder warfare and the Barbizon infection took over the entire Hudson River School, as if a plague had hit the American Cultural

Revolution in the heart. Almost all of its artists had caught the disease, including prominently Worthington Whittredge, Sanford Gifford, John Kensett, Jervis McEntee, and John Casilear. Art historian, Anthony F. Janson, identified clearly the disease that caused the tragedy. "By the time he stepped down as its president (of the National Academy of Design), Whittredge had saved the Academy from ruin, but he could not restore its luster. Nor was he able to stem the tide of Barbizon that soon engulfed the Hudson River School and transformed his own work as well." (Anthony F. Janson, *Worthington Whittredge*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1989, p. 153.)

4. SANFORD GIFFORD: BARBIZON VERSUS COOPER IN THE CATSKILLS.

Sanford Robinson Gifford (1823-1880) had traveled extensively with Bierstadt and Whittredge across Europe, and was originally influenced by the Dusseldorf Academy. However, he also became a victim of the French Barbizon fad, and as soon as he was able to establish a studio at the Tenth Street Building, in New York City, where Bierstadt and Church had their own studios, he introduced the Barbizon infection that he had caught from George Inness. Gifford quickly abandoned the Dusseldorf method and adopted the popular French Barbizon luminist manner as a sort of compromise between popular opinion and truth. The question is: can there be a saddle between those two horses?

The best example of how Gifford expressed this "luminist" technique is illustrated in his most famous painting, *A Gorge in the Mountain* (*Kauterskill Clove),* 1862 of which he made no less than five studies and copies, all taken from the same viewpoint that were diversely called *Kaaterskill, Kauterskill, Kaatskill, or Catskill*. That subject had become a sort of test case for Gifford's luminist method of painting. No doubt, these were also the paintings he cherished the most because they reflected the silent internal fight he was waging between the Barbizon method and the Cooper method. At any rate, they were his most popular pictures. The Catskills were also one of the favorite subjects of the Cooper school of manifest destiny, and represented, similarly, a sort of test case for Cooper's own method of creative irony.

On the one hand, though they both made a claim to the Barbizon method, there is no doubt that Gifford's pictures are highly superior to any of Inness's mechanical, or mystico-existential sophistries. A close study of his different distillations of *A Gorge in the Mountain* (*Kauterskill Clove)* clearly shows that Gifford is not interested in Inness's fraudulent method of "*tickling emotions,"* and that he demonstrated a definite and much superior mastery of his means. But, on the other hand, Gifford lacked the dimension of classical artistic composition, and also lacked the rigor of Church and Bierstadt in their appeal to the development of the human mind, though he had the potential to achieve such greatness. The point is that he refused to take on the responsibility of the manifest destiny mission, and his paintings made that explicit. It is for that reason that Gifford's style became *art for bread* rather than *art for truth*. In essence, it was Gifford's patronage that defined his orientation, not his orientation that determined his patronage. Gifford was determined entirely by the popular culture imposed on him by his elitist patrons.

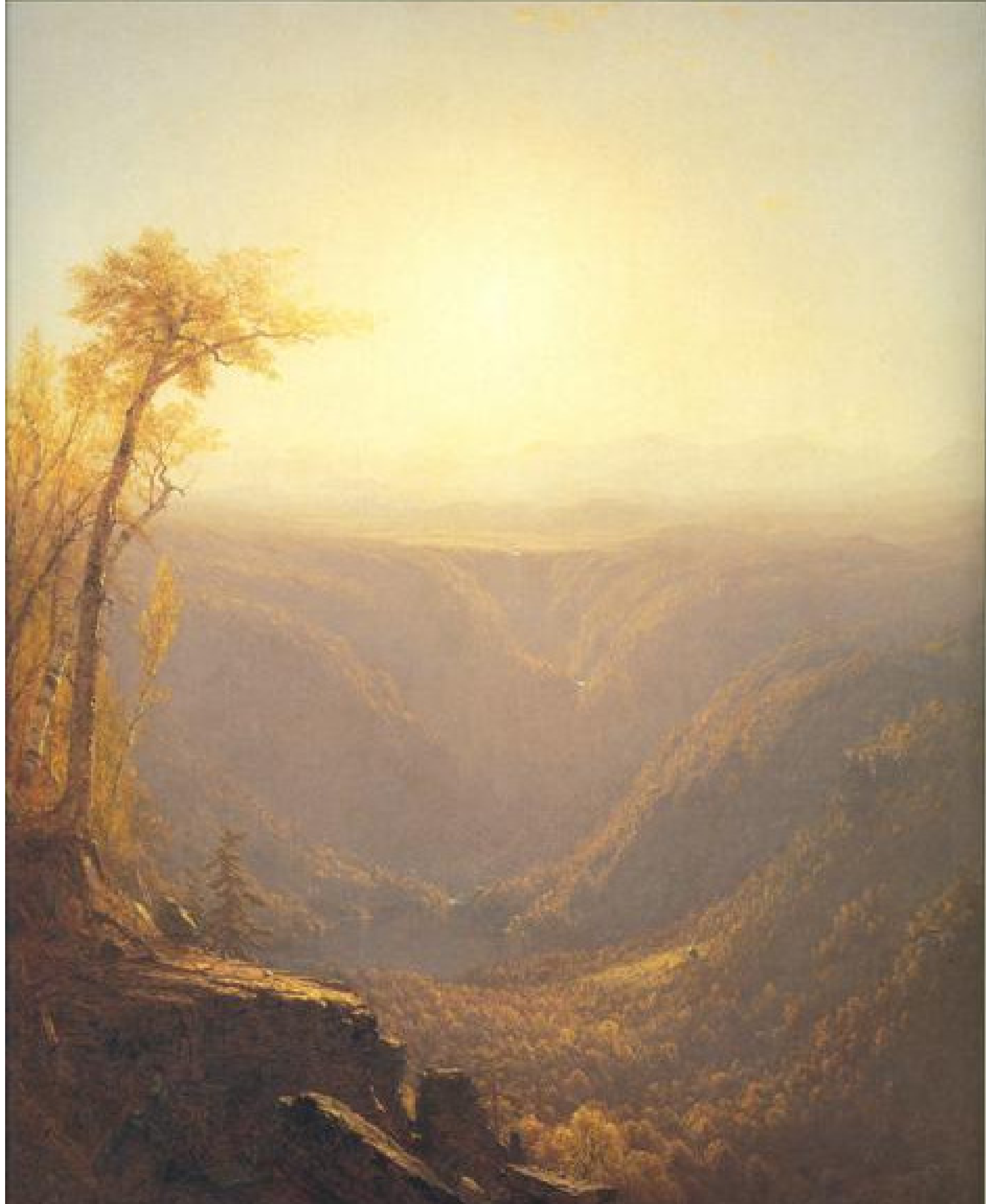

Figure 2. Sanford R. Gifford, *A Gorge in the Mountains (Kauterskill Clove)*, 1862.

Gifford chose the method called luminism which permeates everything with a misty diffused foggy light, or hides things in shadows like, in this case, a hunter and his dog. He made that choice because his primary subject was no longer scenery, but atmospherics of scenery. He painted the air as perceived by sense perception rather than what Leonardo had called the "purpose in the minds." For that very reason, this form of impressionism stands historically in direct and explicit opposition to classical artistic composition. For example, in *A Gorge in the Mountain*, *(Kauterskill Clove)*, from the foreground to the background, sensual luminism creates an increasing density of the

atmosphere with a humid and languid sunlight that ultimately overwhelms the subject and the spectator with passivity, as it takes over the actual subject matter of the scenery itself. The subject of the Catskills is no longer lit by the truth of ironies, as it was with the Cooper artists discussed before, but by the obstruction of light itself. Here, it is clear that luminism was so powerfully used as a field perspective "technique" that it actually swallowed the mountains themselves with the horizon, including the three cloves of Haines Falls (Kauterskill Falls), which the spectator would have missed entirely unless a thoroughly fine scrutiny of the composition were to prevail over their hidden presence. But, why go to all this trouble just to hide a waterfall? Let's see how Gifford, himself, answered this question, nine years later.

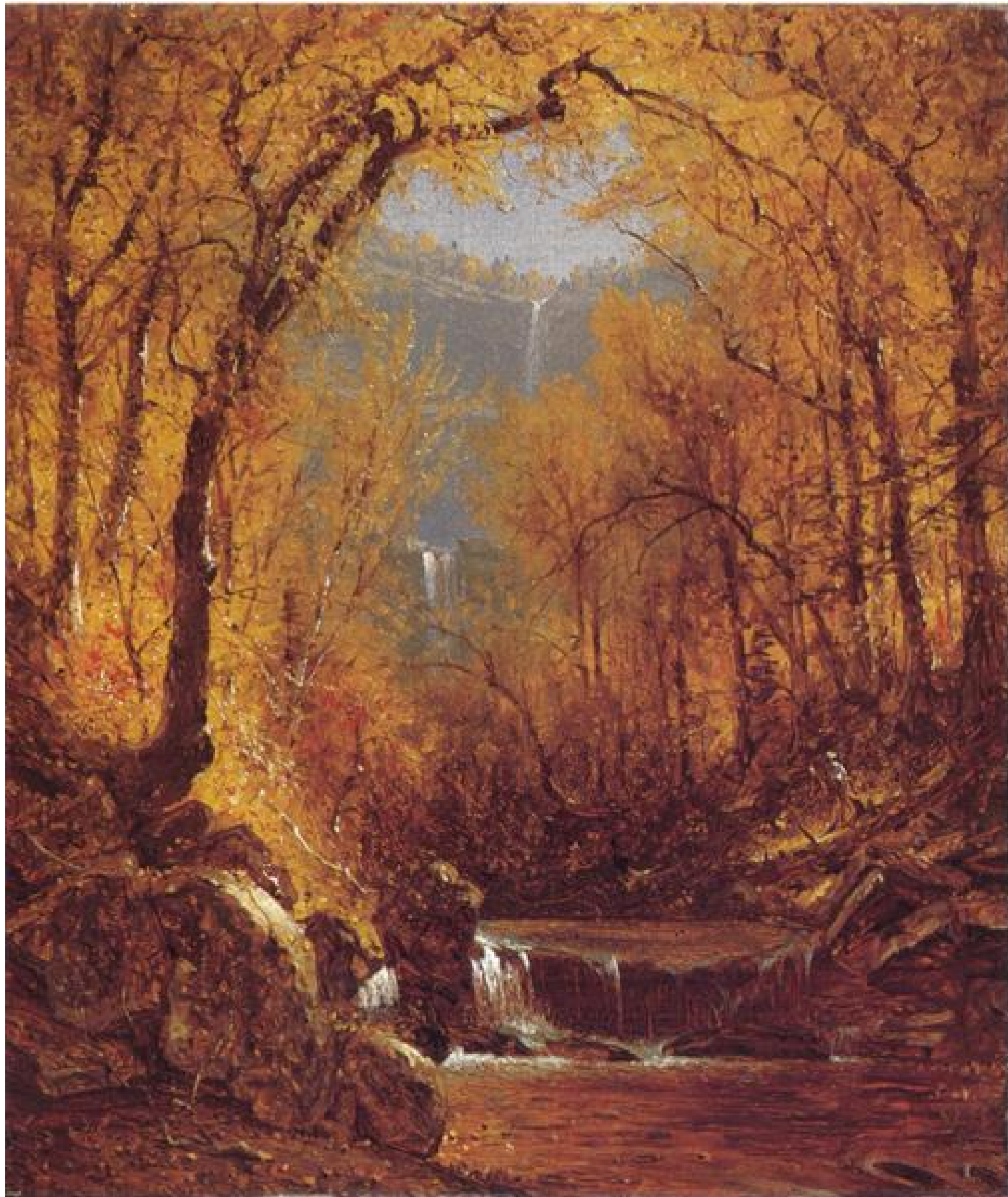

Figure 3. Sanford R. Gifford, *Kauterskill Falls*, 1871

Compare *A Gorge in the Mountain* (*Kauterskill Clove),* 1862 with *Kauterskill Falls,* 1871. In the latter picture, the fog has been lifted and Gifford replaced luminosity by clarity! What does that difference mean? The subject is the same Catskills in the Fall, but treated by means of two completely different methods. In the latter, Gifford is indicating a different idea, similar to that of Whittredge's *Old Hunting Grounds*, however, as if he were saying goodbye to the Cooper school and method.

In *A Gorge in the Mountain* (*Kauterskill Clove),* the falls are viewed from above and have been swallowed up by an overpowering sky into a luminist perspective that makes them insignificant; in *Kauterskill Falls*, the same falls are viewed from below, without a view of the sky, and are constructed with a focus along the lines of James Fenimore Cooper's idea of a *living spirit* striving to escape the narrow restriction of the different cloves toward the broader freedom of the valley below. *Kauterskill Falls* makes you discover at close range precisely what *A Gorge in the Mountain,*(*Kauterskill Clove)* had been hiding in a dreamy haze from afar. Here Gifford's reference to Cooper is explicit, including the duality of the ponds and the metaphor of the "cleft hoof of a deer." Gifford painted exactly what Cooper had described through the voice of his character, Leatherstocking, in his 1923 novel *The Pioneers*:

> " Why, there's a fall in the hills where the water of two little ponds that lie near each other breaks out of their bounds, and runs over the rocks into the valley…There the water comes crooking and winding among the rocks, first so slow that a trout could swim in it, and then starting and running like a creature that wanted to make a far spring, till it gets to where the mountain divides, like the cleft hoof of a deer, leaving a deep hollow for the brook to tumble into. The first pitch is night two hundred feet, and the water looks like flakes of driven snow, afore it touches the bottom; and there the stream gathers together again for a new start, and maybe flutters over fifty feet of flat –rock, before it falls for another hundred, when it jumps about from shelf to shelf, first turning this-way and then turning that-way, striving to get out of the hollow, till it finally comes to the plain." (James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, quoted by Kevin J. Avery and Franklin Kelly, *Hudson River School Visions, the Landscapes of Sanford R, Gifford*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2003, p. 201.)

Therein lies the truth of the creative artistic function that Cooper described as the metaphorical fight that water must wage in tackling the paradox of freedom and necessity between itself and its maker; by gathering its strength through different planes and hollows and by losing itself again, as it pauses before descending one more time, to rain over all obstacles freely toward its destiny in the valley below. As Cooper put it in describing the fate and fight of American manifest destiny in *The Last of the Mohicans*: "After the water has been suffered to have its will, for a time, like a headstrong man, it is gathered together by the hand that made it, and a few rods below you may see it all, flowing on steadily toward the sea, as was foreordained from the first foundation of the 'arth!' " (James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*, New American Library, 1980, p. 64.)

But, Gifford resisted this foreordained universal physical principle and revolted against manifest destiny whose freedom cleavages he found too restrictive. Accepting such necessity meant that he would have had to fight, for the rest of his life, against popular opinion. And since the great temptation of an artist is to seek acceptance, and nourish the hope that his work will become popular, Gifford chose to adapt to the prevailing trend of the day, Barbizon. As most people do, he made the wrong choice.

Gifford shifted away from the Hudson River School and made a conscious choice to work for a different social circle that was associated with the Gilded Age free-trade speculators such as J. P. Morgan, Robert M. Olyphant, John Jacob Astor, Thomas B. Clarke, and William H. Vanderbilt, to name but a few of his top patrons. As Eleanor Jones Harvey showed in her study, Sanford Gifford was painting for the rich and famous. She wrote: "That shift coincided with the transition from the Hudson River School era – epitomized by the works of Thomas Cole – to the Gilded Age, typified by an international preference favoring the Barbizon-inflected (sic) landscapes of Corot." (Eleanor Jones Harvey, *Tastes in Transition: Gifford's Patrons*, in *Hudson River School Vision, The Landscapes of Sanford R. Gifford,* New York, Yale University Press, 2004, p. 75.) But, at the lower end of this classy patronage group were to be found art collector, James W. Pinchot, and writer novelist, Elizabeth Drew Barstow Stoddard. I singled out those two, from among many others, because they both represented, to a significant degree, how they had come to gain control over Gifford.

First briefly, Elizabeth Stoddard had made a special cult of the New England landscapes in conscious opposition to the Puritan outlook and to James Fenimore Cooper. Gifford also never hid the fact that he disliked new Englanders. She provided Gifford with the excuse of her existentialist ideology, and identified it with Gifford's obscuring luminism in a quasi-mystical manner. She wrote: "New England life in which self-reliance, isolation, and strangeness are synonymous with the landscape itself." (Eleanor Jones Harvey, Op. Cit., p. 78) That was the formula that Gifford endorsed. In return, Stoddard dedicated her novel, *Temple House*, to Gifford. As Inness had singled out the motivation behind his own sophistry by avoiding giving too much details of execution, just enough to *make an impression*, so Gifford adopted the same new popular Barbizon method of comforting and entertaining the spectator. "In the French landscape," wrote Gifford, " everything like finish and elaboration of detail is sacrificed to the unity of the effect to be produced. Every "prettiness" of execution is ignored utterly. Nothing is allowed to interfere with that unity." (Isa Weiss, *Poetic Landscape: The Art and Experience of Sanford R. Gifford*, Associated University Press, 1987, p. 38.)

For Gifford, the purpose of painting was no longer to make the spectator think and improve his culture, but to draw from him an emotional response. Harvey, summarized accurately how Gifford targeted his patronage and why he chose the French Barbizon technique over the Hudson River School method of ironies. "The underlying reasons for Corot's popularity help explain Gifford's appeal to the same group of collectors. In focusing on the idea rather than on the detail of the execution, Gifford, like Corot, placed as much emphasis on the viewer's emotional response to the work as on his

appreciation of its nominal subject." (Eleanor Jones Harvey, Op. Cit., p. 86.) Notably, this was also the escape door to hell that Inness had also taken: the "feel good" door. The mistake, here, is not that artists are using the wrong method. The mistake is that they are subjecting themselves to the same cultural fads that the British have concocted for centuries in order to control populations by means of making the method of composition inaccessible to the mind of the viewer. It is the acceptance of such cultural popular influences that is the mistake.

However, one word of caution: on the one hand, one must be reminded that those who would primarily concentrate on the mistakes of great men and women are no longer capable of discovering the greatness in them. On the other hand, those who concentrate primarily on their positive work can still find compassion for their mistakes. Gifford's *Hunter Mountain, Twilight* is a case in point.

5. GIFFORD'S AMERICAN PARADOX BEHIND *HUNTER MOUNTAIN, TWILIGHT*.

Now, look at Gifford's *Hunter Mountain, Twilight*, 1866. Here, clinically speaking, the truth of the full romantic aspect of Gifford's life stands out like a sore thumb. Gifford forces the spectator to jump, for a moment, from one end of the romantic spectrum to the other; that is, from the sedated passivity of *A Gorge in the Mountain, (Kauterskill Clove)* to the sudden shock of *Hunter Mountain, Twilight*. There is no irony, here, like there was in Duncanson's *Land of the Lotus Eaters.* Why not? What is the difference?

Figure 3. Sanford R. Gifford, *Hunter Mountain, Twilight*, 1866.

While I was examining the complete works of Gifford, I was looking for a truthful singularity, an extraordinary landscape, with the mark of a paradox, or an anomaly, an irony, something provocative that would reflect the fact that Gifford had the same intention as Cooper, Morse, Whittredge, Bierstadt, Church, or Duncanson. There seemed to be no such anomaly among Gifford's numerous works. Then, suddenly there was: *Hunter Mountain, Twilight*. Was that the exception I was looking for?

There was a moment of hesitation, here. At first, I thought this was, doubtless, the most unusual and empty landscape that Gifford had ever painted, because it excluded what was expected to be there: atmospheric effects, luminism, and fuzzy trees. This appeared as the opposite of luminism. But, this was merely an apparent paradox. I was looking at the other end of the same romantic spectrum. There was none of that soft romantic "vaporous obscurity," as the *New York Daily Tribune* of April 30, 1864, put it, about Gifford's, *A Twilight in the Catskills*, 1861. Here, everything was precise, delineated, and brutal, almost in accordance with the Ruskin code. So, I was perplexed. Was there some universal truth being revealed here that Gifford was provoking the spectator to discover? If so, what truth was it? What is this "terrible beauty" all about?

Figure 4. Worthington Whittredge, *Hunter Mountain*, 1866.

I asked myself: why would Sanford Gifford, a prominent and popular artist of the Hudson River School, paint *Hunter Mountain, Twilight* as a desolate moonscape covered with tree stumps and overcast by a heavy acidic-like Saturn yellow twilight over a denuded hill? What could have prompted Gifford to abandon his luminist Barbizon method and paint this most unappealing landscape of the Catskills instead? Why such depressing reddish slash and burnt tones? Was he going through a melancholic phase that usually accompanies the Barbizon disease? Similarly, why would his close friend, Whittredge, also paint the same desolated scene, from the very same spot, and at the very same time? Two artists do not usually paint the same thing, from the same perspective, unless there is an important reason to do so.

But, then again, could this not be simply a war remembrance landscape? Though the two paintings were done shortly after the end of the American Civil War, and Gifford had himself played his part in it, Hunter Mountain happens to be near the Hudson River and Kauterskill Falls. It is nowhere near any of the battlegrounds. And, besides, that painting shows no signs reflecting the worst human conflict in American history. So, what did Gifford and Whittredge see on that mountain that would call for such a crude rendering of a desolated scene to be set on two separate and similar canvases? Were they warning the general public against some impending catastrophe? Even more intriguing was the question: why was that unusual Gifford painting hidden from the general public for more than 90 years?

The more I was asking questions, the more I was getting perplexed. So, I decided to consult Lyn, and see what he might have to say about what appeared to be the result of some sort of a multiple manifold tragedy. I looked into Lyn's insight on immortality and what he said on July 3, 2008 on the subject of the *principle of tragedy*:

> "The creative faculty, as expressed by the discovery of efficient universal physical principles, or by kindred discoveries in the domain of Classical artistic composition, is the only known case in which a member of a living species has an efficient form of willful role in changing the future which he or she, in death, may contribute to change the future of mankind, or bring to life the completion of the uncompleted work of someone who has passed on before the present time." (Lyndon H. LaRouche Jr., *From Shakespear's Principle of Tragedy: Ambrose Evans Pritchard*, Jul. 11, 2008, EIR.)

Here, I thought this applied very well to Gifford because of the fact that he was contributing to change the future of mankind by identifying some sort of truthful tragic force that set the stage for the doom of the Hudson River School. But, it appeared that he had not been able to prove it. Therefore, if such a tragic force were to have been present in *Hunter Mountain, Twilight*, then, his work definitly required to be completed, and the truth of his contribution to mankind still had to be told. So, I committed myself to that task.

I reorganized my thoughts again, around Lyn's idea that the uncompleted work of Gifford had to be completed. But, how? I looked at those two twilight paintings again, and again, with the idea that Gifford and Whittredge were doing more than simply appealing to an extreme form of romanticism. Both of them were in the middle of a crisis. They were serious, deadly serious, and they were calling for help.

Strictly viewed from a clinical vantage point, Gifford was doing more than appealing to the ugly side of romanticism. A paradox was staring the spectator in the face: *why was that ugly painting beautiful*? Where was the beauty of *Hunter Mountain, Twilight* as Lyn had defined "beauty" as a necessary feature of any classical artistic composition? With these two last questions, I began to realize that it was not what Gifford had painted that was beautiful. Neither was it the subject of the painting, as such, which reflected the creative process, but how the subject of the painting was treated with regards to epistemological truthfulness. As a matter of fact the visual effect of what Gifford had painted was pretty ugly. I was stunned and perplexed. I had to discover what was not there. There were three manifolds of things missing.

On one level, Gifford was warning the public about the fact that Hunter Mountain had become deforested and destroyed by the lumber policy of the Pinchot family. That was what first appeared to be missing. Robber barons had chopped down every tree on that mountain. And, the man responsible for this state of affair was also the most important "friend" and patron of the Hudson River School: Pinchot had befriended Whittredge and Gifford exclusively for his own personal financial benefit. It was that fight for the truth that made the painting beautiful at that first level. As far as I know, this painting is the only picture on record depicting a so-called "environmental disaster," a sort of scenery equivalent to Bierstadt's *The Last of the Buffalo*. However, this ecological deforestation may have been a stupid idea, but it was not a tragedy.

Nevertheless, there was a second level of the painting that reflected a tragedy. The revelation of this deforestation was covering up a more sinister crime: the "*Twilight*" of the Hudson River School itself. Pinchot's free trade operation was profiteering from both ends of the American scenery: the trees and the pictures of the trees. At first, this is how the tragic irony of Gifford began to emerge, but as if there were several levels of a drama that required to be peeled like an onion, layer after layer. *Hunter Mountain, Twilight* turned out to be a palimpsest. The painting had a second level of motivation and meaningfulness which seemed to be for the purpose of hiding the painting, reminiscent of the hidden cloves of *A Gorge in the Mountain*, *(Kauterskill Clove)*; but this time with the added feature of hiding a dirty little secret. Perhaps Gifford was saying to Pinchot: "This is just between you and I, this is going to be our secret. You and I know the truth of what this is all about, but it doesn't mean that others need to know." Gifford may have discovered that not only was the Pinchot family wielding that slash and burn British free trade policy in America, but that James Pinchot, personally, was also burying hundreds of works of art from the Hudson River School in the basement of his home. This is when the tragic Gifford paradox began to materialize itself outside of the romantic manifold of Barbizon and luminism, and started to pierce through the fog of free trade sophistry.

Moreover, there was also a third and more ominous level, even more devastating than the twilight of the Hudson River School, which was for Gifford, literally all-consuming. There was a deeper torment that Gifford was incapable of appeasing, a sense of being trapped in the tragedy that the entire culture of the nation was caught into, a trap that the whole American population was incapable of escaping, a catch 22: damned if you do, and damned if you don't. This was a crisis of creativity that was shaking America to its very foundation, and it required the truthfulness of classical artistic composition to reveal it; that is to say, a truth that involved the revolutionary nature of the relationship between the artist and the spectator. Just as during the Renaissance, Leonardo instituted a dramatic form of art that required the spectator to change, so was the new art form in America also committed to do: create a social change. The very nature of the American experiment required that change.

In a deeper sense, therefore, it was as if Gifford was confronted between telling the truth and losing his patrons or shutting up and denying the higher principle that made him an artist, in the first place. This paradox was a reflection of the general tragedy that the entirety of the United States was going through since the beginning of the American Revolution, and is still going through today.

Will Americans perpetuate the European form of oligarchical propitiation and lies, or will they commit their society to the true nature of a creative self-government? In a sense, this paradox could be called, by default, the *American Paradox*, simply because every other nation in the world had found themselves incapable of resolving it. It was Lyn who best illustrated this paradox when he said: "*You cannot look someone in the eye and lick his ass at the same time*!" Gifford began to realize that he was not going to be able to avoid this tragic state of affairs because, as an artist, he was caught in the web of public opinion, and he was living the torment of the Schiller choice: either *painting for bread* or *painting for truth*.

At one point, Gifford must have made the decision that despite the fact that he might lose this battle; he had to fight it no matter what. He did not know what the outcome was going to be, but at a certain point he must have told Pinchot that he was going to expose this piece of truthfulness before the general public, and he did. So, because he did paint that painting, and he did expose it to the general public, Gifford had lifted the French fog of luminism, for a brief moment, just enough to provide the proof of principle of classical artistic insight behind *Hunter Mountain, Twilight.* That moment was sufficient to create something beautiful in accordance with the meaning of beauty of classical artistic composition. Though a painting might be considered offensive or ugly by visual standards, the fact that such a painting were to develop the creative insights of the viewer's ability to change the world makes it inherently beautiful, simply because it reflects the creative powers of God in the universe. These are the three overlaid manifolds of motivation and meaningfulness that characterize *Hunter Mountain, Twilight* as a true palimpsest of classical artistic composition.

There is another reason why *Hunter Mountain, Twilight* is beautiful, in the sense that Lyn developed in the above quoted paper. As Lyn showed, beauty also reflects the

task of completing the work of past creative minds so that future generations might better understand their increased responsibility toward perpetuating the universality of mankind's immortality. That is the power of expressing truthfulness in the "Simultaneity of Eternity," as shown by Raphael in *The School of Athens*, and as Samuel F. B. Morse had also replicated in *The Gallery of the Louvre*. Lyn wrote:

> "Once you have held yourself accountable for a part in the outcome of the life's work of those departed persons before you, and also the future you shall not see directly, your personal sense of self-interest as a human being is defined in a new way. What past generations have a right to expect from us, and what future generations have a right to expect from us now, become an enlarged sense of one's personal self-interest. Since we are human, it is not sufficient that we afford the likeness of animal comforts to past and future members of our species. We have a vital interest in the role of those powers of creativity which are typified, in their expression, by the discovery of universal physical principles, as Johannes Kepler did (for example), and in the realization of the incompletely realized work of similar qualities of discovery of those who have preceded us.
>
> "Most essential is that conception of beauty which subsumes both such cases: to do something good because it is beautiful in the sense that the creative insight is the inherently true nature of what should be perceived as beauty. The nature of the relevant quality of beauty associated with individual human creativity, as such, is still largely obscured from us, but not entirely." (Lyndon H. LaRouche Jr., Op. Cit., p. 11.)

That was the beauty that Gifford made visible at a triple-manifold glimpse in *Hunter Mountain, Twilight*, and, because of what he had done, for a brief moment, he was able to escape the trap in which *the more you move, the more you sink,* and thus extracted himself from the tragic quicksand of popular acceptance. However, because he did not completely break outside of the axiomatic domain of romanticism in most of his works, Gifford remained caught most of his life within the boundary conditions of the principle of tragedy.

6. THE PINCHOT GRAVEYARD OF THE HUDSON RIVER SCHOOL

In 1815, James W. Pinchot's father Cyrille and his grandfather, Constantine, were both Napoleon Bonaparte imperial assets living in Breteuil, France waiting for the return of their Emperor from the Island of Elba. Napoleon came back and after his disastrous Waterloo defeat in 1815, the "White Terror" of the Bourbon Restoration hunted down Constantine and Cyrille Pinchot and forced them into exile. In 1816, denounced as Bonaparte agents by a cousin, Constantine, his wife Maria, and his son Cyrille Pinchot escaped to England, and from there, to the United States. The Pinchot family biographer, Char Miller, reported gleefully: "This was not the last time that a Pinchot would pay the price for deeply-held political beliefs […] Profits not purity guided their actions and

defined their ambition." (Char Miller, *All in the Family: The Pinchots of Milford*, Trinity University on line, P. 120.)

In the U.S., after establishing themselves as successful merchants and traders running a Milford Pa. general store, Constantine and Cyrille Pinchot began speculating in land, especially forested land to exploit for maximum profit in New York and Pennsylvania. The cyclical idea that made the Pinchot fortune was to set up temporary saw mills during the winter, process the lumber, secure the logs on rivers in the spring, and market the wood, during the summer and the fall, into the ports of Boston, New York, and Baltimore, then, the next year, start all over again, somewhere else. Miller made the point clearly:

> "The environmental consequences of this cycle, so emblematic of the pre-industrial pattern of lumber development, were considerable. Unregulated by anything but the market demand, lumber entrepreneurs cut a swath through the American wilderness, leaving behind denuded hills eroded terrain, and silted rivers." (Char Miller, Op. Cit., p. 122.)

During the first half of the 19th century, thanks to this cyclical method, the Pinchots became the most powerful slash and burn lumber profiteers on the East Coast of the United States, and the irony is that it was Gifford Pinchot, the grandson of Cyrille, who would later become the father of the conservation movement in America. The irony may be a bit simplistic, but people believed it: *If you cannot have it by slashing it, then, control it by conserving it.* Either way, you succeed in stopping scientific progress and Imperial British free trade remains on top of American forestry.

Anton Chaitkin's' *Treason in America* showed how, before becoming the first head of the Forest Service in America, Gifford Pinchot had gone to England to study under Queen Victoria's India and Burma chief of the British Forest Service, Sir Dietrich Brandis. It was from Brandis that Pinchot conceived of the idea of *conservation*. Chaitkin noted: "Actually, the word had been lifted from the term "conservancy" designating an administrative regional unit of the British forest service in India." (Anton Chaitkin, *Treason in America*, New Benjamin Franklin House, New York, 1985, p. 391.) Chaitkin had also found two delicious quotes by Gifford Pinchot in this regard. After searching for a new name for his policy of forestry control, Gifford Pinchot admitted:

> " Both Overton [Price] and I knew that large organized areas of Government forest lands in British India were named conservancies, and the foresters in charge of them Conservators. After many suggestions and long discussions, either Price or I (I'm not sure which…) proposed that we apply a new meaning to a word already in the dictionary, and christen the new policy Conservation.
>
> During one of our rides I put that name up to TR, and he approved it instantly…
>
> Today, when it would be hard to find an intelligent man in the United States who hasn't at least some conception of what Conservation means, its seems

incredible that the very word, in the sense in which we use it now, was unknown less than forty years ago." (Gifford Pinchot, *Breaking New Ground*, Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York, 1947, p. 326, quoted from Anton Chaitkin, Op. Cit., p. 494.)

Regarding the connection to Lord Brandis, Pinchot recalled:

> "Long before my training in Europe was over, it had become my chief ambition, timid at first but determined later on, to tread in the footsteps of Dr. Brandis. Thus I might hope to do for the public forests of the United States some part of what he had done for the forests of Burma and India." (Gifford Pinchot, Op. Cit., p. 293, quoted by Chaitkin, Op. Cit., p. 496.)

The American reader must savor these two quotes, because, it is not everyday that a high level government civil servant admits publicly of being a British Imperial agent. Meanwhile, at the time that he began to exploit the Hudson River School artists, his father, James W. Pinchot, admitted to the same by joining the New York Free Trade Club of William Cullen Bryant, the American Trojan horse club for American artists who had embraced the British East India Company looting policy of art trading in the United states.

However, Conservation was not the only imperialist mission of Gifford Pinchot. He and his father, both, were chosen by their British masters to become the undertakers of the Hudson River School. This new purpose of James Pinchot began when he bought Gifford's picture, *Hunter Mountain, Twilight*, and put it up on his living room mantle piece, in order to hide it, forever, from the general public. The picture was also used there as an educational *Damocles sword* for his new born son, in memory of his grandfather Cyrille.

The same year that Gifford began to work on that painting, Pinchot's wife bore him a son who was baptized with the Christian name of "Gifford," after the artist who had painted that ominous scene that a contemporary critic was to later identify as a "terrible beauty." That "terrible beauty" was meant to be a sort of evil bonding between Gifford and Pinchot. Uniting the two names together, "*Gifford and Pinchot*" was meant to reflect some sort of conspiracy with respect to the capturing of nature for a future environmentalist agenda. In order to show his friendship and his personal interest with the Hudson River School, James Pinchot had even gone as far as making Sanford Gifford the godfather of his son.

Regardless, since Sanford Gifford wanted the truth to come out, he told Pinchot that he wanted the picture to be exhibited at the National Academy of Design in New York City, which he did in 1866. Pinchot must have been very upset, but had to agree, for fear that the whole truth might come out in the open, in some other more ugly way. The picture created a furor, especially among the students of the academy, but none of the official newspaper critics, who recognized the message of the painting, dared to come out with the story and touch the reputation of such a respected citizen as James W. Pinchot.

Though an article of the *New York Evening Post* of February 27, 1866 reported on the academy's exposition, the newspaper chose to speak of every other thing except *Hunter Mountain, Twilight*. Art critic Eugene "Sordello" Benson saw right through the landscape but held back from telling the truth: "If Mr. Gifford's picture were less complete in rendering of his theme," Benson wrote, "we might write more about it; but because it is so entirely so, it is difficult to give it another expression, that is, transpose it into language…the picture is complete, and in art an accomplished fact, and it renders futile any new expression." (Franklin Kelly, *Nature Distilled: Gifford's Vision of Landscape*, in *Hudson River School Visions, the Landscapes of Sanford R, Gifford*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2003, p. 4.) As for the nasty pre-Raphaelite *New York Daily Tribune* critic, Clarence Cook, he gloated over the fact that he was happy to see Gifford responding to the *credo* of John Ruskin with a "true to nature" landscape.

A year later, Gifford's picture was chosen to be exhibited at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867. One more time, the painting was a smashing success in Paris, and soon became the talk of art lovers everywhere around the world. But, again, it seems that all historical records about this exceptional painting having been exposed in Europe had also disappeared. Reportedly, at the Paris exposition, only one British critic responded by saying, tongue in cheek, "from the nature of the subject…[that it had] a more somber character than the majority of Mr. Gifford's pictures. There is a fine feeling of the mystery of twilight in it…" ("*Fine Arts, National Academy of Design, II*," The Albion 44. No. 19 (May 12, 1866), p. 225.) Indeed, "the mystery of twilight" had kept its secret sealed because critics had kept the minds of the people shut. Gifford must have been convinced that the art critics of the world were entirely controlled by *vox populi*.

When he saw that most of the astute critics were pointing at the truth of the painting, but that none had the courage to tell the truth of the matter, Gifford gave in, and stopped asking Pinchot for further exhibition of his picture. From the moment the painting returned to the United States, Gifford was never to lift the fog over the truth of such a paradox again, and would continue to cover his paintings with the dreamy haze that is so appealing to the romantic soul of the rich and powerful American Tory elite, but so repulsive to the creative intellect of the young American patriotic tradition. The account that follows merely serves to substantiate the historically specific circumstance of that truth.

After the picture returned from Paris, *Hunter Mountain, Twilight* was never to be seen in public, again, for another 90 years. According to one account, Pinchot nailed it on the wall of his house at 1615 Rhode Island Avenue in Washington D. C., permanently, never to be removed again until the house was demolished in 1946. Reportedly, during the years, the Pinchots increased their private collection by adding numerous other works of the Hudson River School, also for the purpose of preserving them from public viewing. The irony is that the so-called authorities on Gifford, Kevin J. Avery and Franklin Kelly, spent no less than ten pages in attempting to cover up the truth about *Hunter Mountain, Twilight* by making believe that the intention of the picture was to express memories of the Civil War with what they called, euphemistically, "postbellum

overtones." (Kevin J. Avery and Franklin Kelly, *Hudson River School Visions, the Landscapes of Sanford R, Gifford*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2003, p. 4; 42-46; 175-178.)

Moreover, since slashing and burning American forests was not going to be very popular with public opinion, James Pinchot resolved to officialize his activities by creating the Yale University School of Forestry. Both of James W's sons, Gifford and James, later became members of the Skull and Bones secret Masonic society of Yale, along with William Vanderbilt. Gifford grew up to become its most notorious environmentalist, and became the personal landscaper of Vanderbilt's castle in North Carolina. Skull and Bones may have been the specific nesting place of British agents who were directly involved in the demise of the American Cultural Revolution. Gifford also later became Governor of Pennsylvania for two terms. It was quite an irony that, in collusion with the kooky grand daddy of environmentalism, John Muir, Gifford Pinchot, was to become the first director of the United States Forest Service under the Presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, and the most prominent conservationist in America. The Pinchots had become the controllers of slash and burn as well as conservation in the United States.

So, *Hunter Mountain, Twilight* had been a hidden "smoking gun" until the painting was retrieved after the death of Gifford Pinchot in 1946, and was later exposed in Chicago's Terra Museum of American Art, where it now hangs. But that is not the whole truth of the matter. According to an investigative reporter, Jim Lane, over 200 works of the Hudson River School had disappeared at the personal hands of James W. Pinchot and his son, just like *Hunter Mountain, Twilight* did, and were found hidden, almost a century later, in the basement of the Pinchot residence. However, those paintings did not enjoy the same recovery, as did Gifford's *Hunter Mountain, Twilight*. Lane reported the truth of what happened to those 200 paintings. He wrote:

> "Pinchot family members believe they may have simply been left there in the basement of the house were they were stored and been bulldozed over when the structure was demolished and the area reforested. Today, such nineteenth century Hudson River School paintings bring five and six figure bids at auction. Thus, in the greatest irony of all, valuable art was likely sacrificed in the name of conservation." (Jim Lane, *Hunter Mountain, Twilight* for humanitiesweb.org.)

What Lane did not say, however, was that this deliberate destruction of works of art was part of a British free-trade operation aimed at the destruction of the Hudson River School. However, Lane did add an interesting comment about this tragic irony. He said:

> "Today, photos of Hunter Mountain show a rich, vibrant, reforested green. The small farms have been abandoned; the Adirondacks have become a woodland recreation area. Large scale lumbering has largely moved to Muir's backyard where, ironically, Pinchot's forest management philosophy prevails - a shifting from art to science. And just as ironically, Muir's pristine wilderness ideals now dominate the area just north of New York where the city has been buying up thousands of woodland acres to protect its natural water supply and avoid the cost

of large filtration plants. And in doing so, it has necessarily placed these areas off-limits to hiking, camping, and other forms of human encroachment." (Jim Lane, Op. Cit. humanitiesweb.org.)

Another report from the *New York Times,* confirmed the dissapearance of the 200 paintings, but this time at a later date and from the Pinchot *Grey Towers* summer home in Melford, Pennsylvania. The article whitewashed the Pinchot family by putting the onus on some obliging Forest Service worker who did not know what to do with the hidden paintings. The article reported:

> "One of the enduring family mysteries, though, is what happened to about 200 other paintings that Forest Service workers found in the basement of the Pennsylvania home during its renovation in the early 1960's. All the family knows comes from a memo, which later turned up in government files, written by a member of the renovation team asking what should be done with the art trove.
>
> No reply to the memo has been found, and Pinchot family members said they feared, and suspected, that the paintings might simply have been dumped into a hole on the property and buried. Hudson River art, which has risen sharply in value over the last 25 years, was out of fashion then. Family members said they still recalled the appraisers from the New York art auction houses who said after Mrs. Pinchot's death that 19th-century landscapes were worth nothing more than the canvases they were painted on." (Kirk Johnson, *From a Woodland Elegy, A Rhapsody in Green; Hunter Mountain Painting Spurred Recovery*, in *New York Times*, June 7, 2001.

Just as other great paingings of the Hudson River School had demonstrated, the truth of Gifford's paradox of *Hunter Mountain, Twilight* had been an efficient form of truthful alarm that put a spotlight on the evil of the art trade control in America, and therefore, was to stand before the court of history as a contribution to American classical artistic composition, a testimony to the great fight that American patriotic artists had to wage against British free trade attempts to destroy them.

CONCLUSION

Not only did the nineteenth century British free trade financial warfare against the Hudson River School succeed in burying and hiding into private collections hundreds of pictures of the American school of classical artistic composition during the life-time of its artists, but the British-controlled American art traders made sure that, after their deaths, the majority of the extant works of Morse, Whittredge, Bierstadt, Church, Duncanson, Gifford, and others remained inaccessible to the public for more than a century after the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. In other words, from 1876 to 1987, all of the surviving pictures of the private collections were kept away from the general public and hidden for 111 years, until they were made visible, again, in a retrospective of the school, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York City, under the sophistical titled: *American Paradise: The World of the Hudson River School.*

Even then, the Hudson River School was not revived out of its own merit and for the benefit of its own creative principle. It was brought out of its tomb dressed up as the ghost of a forgotten romantic past. The school was revived in order to coincide with the environmentalist concerns of the 1980's and to serve the opportunistic purpose of the anti-science and anti-technology ideology that still persists to this day in America. The exhibition of *American paradise* had reduced this American Cultural Revolution to a pitiful sophistry in which the pictures served as a showcase for back-to-nature freaks. The dual name of "Gifford" and "Pinchot" was meant to consecrate forever that subversive environmentalist sophism. This is how the foolish art historian, Louise Minks, dubbed the revival of the Hudson River School as an anti-technology fallacy of composition: "In an American society dominated by technology, the remaining landscape is again regarded as a repository of "high and holy meaning," and an "oasis." As the protection of the natural world from destruction is now of national concern, the reverence for nature embodied in early American landscape art reminds us of ideals relevant today." (Louise Minks, *The Hundson River School*, Barnes & Noble, New York, 2006, p. 18.)

This sort of sophistry, once again, merely serves to perpetuate British control over American public opinion and to divert the intention of art away into still another popular opinion fad, rather than to establish the only true purpose for which art has ever been in existence; that is, for the ironic truth of developing creativity as a social process of change by way of a discovery of principle. Therefore, it should not surprise you to find that in the year 2008, that is, 183 years after the birth of the Hudson River School, the respect due to the creative process that Samuel F. B. Morse had instituted in the National Academy of Design, in 1825, with the great paintings of the *Gallery of the Louvre* and *Marquis de Lafayette*, is still wanting, and will continue to be wanting, until the moment comes when the Anglo-Dutch *shareholder value system* is finally replaced by the American *principleholder value system*.

Now that the true matter of the destruction of the Hudson River School stands before Universal History, and that the personality of its culture has also been identified as a true American Cultural Renaissance in classical artistic composition, there remains a matter of the behavior of the American people with respect to that forgotten heritage, today. If the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876 had been a total success in terms of exposing American scientific creativity before the world, as was demonstrated in the fields of electricity and railroads, it had also been a complete disaster in terms of representing true American artistic creativity. The task of reviving American artistic creativity must be completed today.

As Lyn demonstrated, for the American Revolution to be completed, the two domains of arts and science had to be unified under the same principle of scientific creativity. This is where things stand in America today. We have reached the boundary condition of an American Cultural Revolution. Science and Art are a reflection of man acting to change both the physical universe and human behavior, and those are the two forces that must be reunited, as it was by Leonardo da Vinci during the Great Italian Renaissance of Nicholas of Cusa, in order to resist the self-destructive influences of

British controlled popular culture. The question is: will Americans today correct the mistakes of having hidden this Cultural Revolution for a period of almost two centuries, and revive the principle of creativity that the greatest artists of the Hudson River School had developed for the world? The time has come for us to finish that uncompleted task.

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