

Thomas Cole: An Exegesis of Time
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being present Thomas Cole identity temporality slippage

The painter Thomas Cole inaugurated the first indigenous American school of painting: the Hudson River School. Cole observed that the consumer market already favored scenes of the American landscape. Cole's canvases introduced the natural landscape (particularly the Hudson River environs) in conflation with allegory and metaphysics in the service of codifying a national propaganda. In fact, public taste was being guided by the New York elite in the rhetorical media, the political sphere, in commerce and in literature.¹ These men, veterans of the Revolution, were avidly aware of distinguishing American identity, particularly in counterpoint to that of Europe.² However, this codification of American identity is problematic. The affirmation of American identity through its mimetic American scenery was contemporaneously challenged by a land and time increasingly subsumed by industrial capitalism.

Scholars have well assessed the nationalistic, Christian, emblematic, byronic, and allegorical elements in Cole's paintings. However, the branding of America through a deliberate transcendence of time and place through the reflexive works of Thomas Cole into a perpetual present remains for consideration. This paper examines that being present occurs in the post-structuralist slippage between the tension of nature and civilization.³ As Cole's painting series *The Course of the Empire* (as his subsequent series, *The Voyage of Life*) is bipartite in its assessment of idealism and reality according to the content and the sequential installation of the paintings, this paper will culminate in a consideration of the slippage between the collective and individual identity within the American context.

America was first and foremost a concept. As such, it existed first as language. Language, formulated in the intellect, creates signification representative of ideas. Ideas invoke related eidetic visions (ideas associated with meaning or content). In this series of five paintings, the universal ideals of liberty, justice and success according to merit were conflated metaphorically with visions of the pristine, virgin landscape of America. The PostStructuralist theorist Roland Barthes asserts that language, as mythic speech, can transform socially circulated ideas and their social facticity into seemingly natural facts. Thomas Cole's *The Course of the Empire* visually nuanced and concretized America's Manifest Destiny into a new parable. Cole's moralization attempted to make natural a new virtue: the recuperation of the American identity and historical arc in the face of increasingly systematized time for the individual in the service of commercial industrialism.

Martin Bruegel, writing in *The Journal of Social History*, investigates the systematization of time in the mid-Hudson Valley between 1790 and 1860. Bruegel reflects upon the proliferation of individual time pieces as moving time away from an established "concept of time that dated back to the waning middle ages."⁴ The sun's movement marked time, with noon announcing half of a work day.⁵ Bruegel indicates this new "time consciousness" as "the distance that separated [the watch owner] from an existence governed by natural rhythms. Its very artificiality summed up the assertion of a man's independence from ... nature's dictates. The watch combined symbols of both status and bourgeois exactitude."⁶ As American capitalism progressed, the American individual was distanced not only from that which made the American experience unique (Manifest Destiny: the moment of encounter with the unspoiled wilderness that was integral to and metaphorical of forging American identity) yet also from an authentic collective unity that was being ever eclipsed by class accoutrements. Watches as status markers reflected the *capitalist* consumer culture (as opposed to the blood aristocracy of Europe) that ideally reflected a culture of merit. The mythic, American, democratic collective was noticeably being fractured into an increasingly delineated social hierarchy. The return to nature in American landscape painting aimed to recuperate the original American cosmogony. This new awareness of time with the advent of the individual time piece was thus an awareness of individual purpose.

Thomas Cole's series *The Course of the Empire* is clearly temporal. The five canvases chronicle the establishment, the rise and the fall of a civilization, framed by the American narratives of Manifest Destiny, liberty, and capitulation. Poetry, particularly lyric poetry, and the novel were popular forms of text during the nineteenth century culture in England,⁷ and in America. Cole wrote foundational essays for each work before committing paint to the canvas, particularly so for *Course of the Empire*.⁸ Cole authored or included poems as pendant text to his paintings: exhibition wall text, catalogs, newspapers. Cole maintained a friendship with the critically respected poet and

editor of *The New York Evening Post*, William Cullen Bryant.⁹ Bryant taught himself to virtuosity the English Romantic model and mode of poetry. When Bryant's poem "Thanatopsis" was blindly submitted to the Harvard University English faculty, these American eminence grises assessed the work as written by the school of Alexander Pope himself.¹⁰ Cole, born and educated in England during the height of the Romantics, enjoyed regular proximity to Bryant and to the New York men of letters. This included James Fenimore Cooper and Washington Irving. Cole's painting, *The Last of the Mohicans* (Figure 1), was a tacit collaboration with Cooper's similarly titled novel. Cole's acculturation to and primary experience of established poetic literary forms, content and context is evident.

Cole produced text in the form of poetry to accompany his paintings, catalogue text, letters, some of which were reproduced in *The New York Mirror* and in the publications of the *National Academy of Design*. The paintings themselves are also texts, as the pictorial language of the canvases eidetically fill the subjective narrative, or interpretation, of the viewer. *The Course of the Empire* of 1836 includes: *The Savage Stage* (Figure 2), *The Pastoral or Arcadian State* (Figure 3), *The Consummation of the Empire* (Figure 4), *Destruction* (Figure 5), and *Desolation* (Figure 6). Cole guides the viewer through a moralizing narrative in these five sequential canvases. This arc of civilization chronicles: nature as yet inflected by human ingenuity; the interstice of the cultivated, Edenic garden; the apex of man's technological and ergonomic application of reason that dominates nature; the apocalypse; the preternatural wake of man's folly. Ultimately, an eidetic blur between Cole's paintings and the viewer's memory and application of the themes and American virtues evident in *Course of the Empire* (visually and through the pendant text) occurs.

The Cole scholarship has at length assessed the didactic Christian narrative evident in *The Course of the Empire*, and its collusion with the emblem book tradition (which is also Christian in content). Yet, I suggest that narrative form orders a specific temporal reception. David Carr (a scholar of nineteenth and twentieth century philosophy, Husserl, and the philosophy of history) argues that the everyday human experience is indeed ordered. To wit: it is ordered by narrative structure (narrative creates relationships between events in time and in space through form and content). Cole's paintings, both as eidetic images and circulating signs, guide the experience of the viewer through the meta-structure of narrative. Carr writes, "the events addressed by historiography are already narrative in character; and this indeed means that they display not only the character of events narrated, but also the element of narration itself."¹¹ History, collective and individual, is codified according to the values (or signs) operating within the event (this is the character) while placed into relationships with things, facts, values, personages and ultimately the subjective individual. In other words, history is codified according to particularized narratives.

History and its organizing narratives necessitate chronology: they necessitate time. These relationships have meaning "only in terms of the temporality of the discourse--that is, of Dasein [i.e., of being] in general--[where we can] clarify how 'signification' 'arises' and make the possibility of concept-formation ontologically intelligible."¹² Monique Morgan (an English scholar of theory, romanticism, Victorian and nineteenth century literature) assesses the narrative poem, the lyric poem, and the conflation of both forms of popular literature in nineteenth century England.¹³ Morgan examines Byron's *Don Juan*, arguing that narrative and lyric forms are tactfully employed together:

narrative requires temporal progression and sequentiality, lyric is a suspended moment that stops the time of narrative and focuses on the 'now' of composition and reception. Within this moment of suspended time, the poet can give free play to thought and emotion, associating ideas and images that would not be linked by the chains of cause and effect that typically govern narrative ... [and thus] linger on the formal and figurative aspects of language, thus calling attention to it as language.¹⁴

Narrative is authorship in time while the lyric convention accounts for suspended self-reflexivity, a meditative pause in authorship, within the narrative. There are several authors at work in *Course of the Empire*. There is the authorship of Cole, the authorship of various histories (English, American, revolutionary, Enlightenment, et cetera), and there is the authorship of the viewer. Roland Barthes calls this the "production" of the reader. It is equally the "production" of the viewer. It is the viewer's subjective contextualization and interpretation of the plurality of available and latent narratives.

There is lyric convention embedded in the *Course of the Empire* series' within the master narrative, allowing for the viewer's production in a state of being present. It is a suspension of action, hence it suspends chronology (teleology) during a meditative process that creates signs, signification, meaning and content. According to Morgan, the viewer contemplates without a destination in mind (the narrative must unfold: the paying audience relies on the conceit of the series). *Don Juan*'s "destination at the end of each episode does not carry any special weight or

importance. Rather, the mere fact that he is thrown into another adventure, that he and the story remain moving, is of primary importance.”¹⁵ *Course of the Empire* creates five distinct, episodic “adventures” (there are five canvases) within the “story.” Cole’s moralizing of the rise and fall of civilization remains propels the viewer toward the next canvas as his / her American experience is given pause by each canvas, within each episode, forming a frame frame of reference beyond the exhibition.

Each “adventure” is a suspended moment. Each “adventure” is an open play of signification, of frames of reference. The text as eidetic imagery fills the signifier (for example, the landscape, or, nature). The signified begins with the slippage between the static poles of “nature” (the American wilderness) and “civilization” (as experienced by the producer. the viewer in the exhibition hall). This moves the signification away from indexation to the limitless sign. Barthes writes:

the index has an origin, the sign does not: to shift from index to sign is to abolish the last (or first) limit, the origin, the basis, the prop, to enter into the limitless process of equivalences, representations that nothing will ever stop, orient, fix, sanction ... in the sign, which establishes an order of representation (and no longer of determination, of creation, as does the index), the two elements interchange, signified and signifier revolving in an endless process ...¹⁶

The absolute classification of Cole’s work as either “nature” or “civilization” is not the right one. It begins with the fact of “nature” and the fact of “civilization” and moves to representation: nature as Edenic, nature as forging the American character, nature as created by God, et cetera. Civilization as progress, as having a latency to corruption, as being intrusive, et cetera. The index of Manifest Destiny is replaced by the plural signification of presence. Presence occurs in the viewer’s self-reflexive processual progress through the series. The lyric form is a post-structuralist form that engenders a conceptual space: “the reader is led to concentrate on the paradigmatic rather than the syntagmatic axis. He or she focuses on a realm of multiple possibilities for a given narrative opening, considered out of time, rather than the progression in time from one selected possibility to another.”¹⁷ It fills the viewer with a preconceived narrative, or content. Each painting’s episodic adventure provokes ideation in the viewer.

Cole’s narrative in *Course of the Empire* engenders an eidetic and intellectual exegesis of time in another manner. The series hinges time between the past and the future. It hinges time on the present moment within the central canvas of the series, *The Consummation*.¹⁸ This canvas is a representation of America’s contemporaneous (i.e., present) state, illustrating the contemporaneous culmination of in America’s historic, economic, productive, spiritual, creative and intellectual arc. The viewer is meant to self-identify (i.e. to understand himself or herself) as part of an American phenomenology (and as individually American) within the present culmination of Manifest Destiny. Integral to the operation of Manifest Destiny within the culture is its origin, its past foundational accomplishments that have culminated in the now, and in the anticipation of what will become. Heidegger writes in his seminal text *Being and Time*:

Understanding is grounded primarily in the future (whether in anticipation or in awaiting). States-of-mind temporalize themselves primarily in having been (whether in repetition or forgotten) ... understanding is in every case a Present [whether in making-present or in the moment of vision] which ‘is in the process of having been’ ... one’s state-of-mind temporalizes itself as a future which is ‘making present.’¹⁹

In *The Course of the Empire*, the progressive past (what has been) is represented by *The Savage Stage* (Figure 2) and *The Pastoral or Arcadian State* (Figure 3). The anticipated future, while foregrounded in the *Destruction* (Figure 5), and *Desolation* (Figure 6) canvases, does not compromise the viewer’s condition of being present. On the contrary, it constitutes part of the phenomenology of presence. The lyric form and the open signification occurring in the state of presence provokes the slippage between the “ideal” (*The Savage Stage*, Fig. 2 and *The Pastoral or Arcadian State*, Fig. 3) and the “real” (*The Consummation of the Empire*, Figure 4). This is augmented by the not yet of potentiality: the *Destruction* (Figure 5), and *Desolation* (Figure 6) canvases. With subsequent retrospection, the “having been” occurs when remembering the series as a whole, as the viewer mediates on the now, or is being present.

Being present thus hinges on the individual reception as it is the individual who replenishes the transitorily empty sign. The individual fills the signification of the American character and purpose reiterated and proposed in the mimetic American landscape. Cole’s series was inflected with the Christian divine, especially its eschatology. An elision was equally made with the idea of Manifest Destiny and the ideas of the Sublime interpreted through the lens of the English Romantic poets. God was evident in the miracle of the mythic, untouched Eden that became

America. Gideon Goosen (a philosopher and theologian at the Australian Catholic University and Chair of the Theological Commission of the New South Wales Ecumenical Council), writing in *Spacetime and Theology in Dialogue*, discusses liturgical time as redemptive and as freeing the individual from linear time.²⁰ Further, he argues that being in the eternal now is being in eternal life:²¹ “Resurrection is an eschatological gift, but its sacramental figure is now ... In this way the balance between the ‘not yet’ and the ‘already now’ can be sustained.”²² Being present within Cole’s *Course of the Empire*, as is being American, is as being within the godly in that God simply is. The divine perspective is not limited by the past nor the future as God is always now.²³ God simply is, as America should simply remain within this present pinnacle to preclude an eschatological fall.

As human perception is limited by the conception of the self and its purposes, the individual determines significance based on his or her own frame of reference.²⁴ As God’s being has no time, one can infer that a Godly created being transcends human corruptibility when removed from the quantification of narrative (of measured time and place). The need and search for transcendence and being present overcomes mortality (temporality) into the Christian eternity. Thus, the propagandist call for a practical encounter with God. The conflation of God, America, the people, the individual, and the eschatological allegory of *Course of the Empire* with the provocation of being present attempts to make natural a new virtue. This is the recuperation of an authentic American identity in the face of systematized time in the service of commercial industrialism. *Course of the Empire* becomes a parable.

Barbara Novak (an art historian specializing in nineteenth century American art) demonstrates that Cole’s intended reception by the audiences was slightly off. Although a large majority of the public chose to pay and see *Course of the Empire*, “that public seemed unaware that the pictures’ didacticism could apply to them. *Course of the Empire* was a fantasy about imperial pagan ambition. America, a Christian nation, could not succumb to a similar fate.”²⁵ The audience and the press didn’t view *Course of the Empire* as an admonition for themselves, that of America following Europe’s historical arc. The press, particularly *The New York Mirror*, considered the series an assertion of the American meritocracy.²⁶

As interviews with the exhibition attendees are virtually non-existent, the Cole scholarship discusses at length the public frame of mind as parallel to the reception of the Diorama and Panorama light show installations that were a popular form of entertainment. Novak discusses that public expectation of such exhibits was of enlightenment coupled with entertainment. The public draw to the exhibition of *Course of the Empire* was the elision with the Diorama’s and Panorama’s immersive experience of the senses. Thus clearly with a sense of removal from the quotidian, one must consider the installation of the series directed by Cole. Ellwood Comly Parry (an Americanist and Thomas Cole scholar) writes in his 1970 dissertation treating *Course of the Empire*, “Cole planned to hang *The Savage State* directly above *The Pastoral State*, so that the turbulence of one would complement the stability of the the other. Likewise, the stormy and dramatic fourth picture, *Destruction*, was designed to be hung directly above *Desolation*, the last of the set, which remains serene and beautiful (if somewhat melancholic) in effect.”²⁷ Cole installed *The Consummation* canvas independently, between the two pairs.²⁸ This would have invited particular consideration of this canvas, which also is the largest canvas of the series.

Whether or not the press, the critics and the public correctly understood Cole’s admonitory parable of America, a transient state of mind, removed from the quotidian, was invoked. The physical evidence of *The Consummation* argues for this pause: its comparatively larger size, its situation between two pendant pairs, and its integration “with authentic details ... to force the viewer to savor the golden age of civilization for a moment longer.”²⁹ If the viewer stepped back to consider the entire installation, the psychological stillness of the lower *The Pastoral or Arcadian State* and *Desolation* canvases would relieve the eye (equally the intellect and the psyche) from the dynamic *The Savage State* and *Destruction* canvases. *The Consummation*, the locus of the slippage between nature and civilization, America and Europe, ideal versus real, is where the viewer’s eye would naturally rest between the diagonals of the installation, configured as an “X.”

This “X” configuration parallels Barthes’ assessment of the narrator’s position, which he codes as “mediation (Figure 7).”³⁰ Mediation, or slippage, is the interlocution of meaning. As mediation ruptures the static model of binary opposition, it creates a surplus of meaning,³¹ opening the play of signification. As the viewer’s eye is naturally drawn to the center of the installation, *The Consummation*, the binaries of nature and civilization, America and Europe, ideal versus real rupture. Meditation on the present American historical moment is created. The Cole scholarship iterates that the viewer would have indeed conflated *The Consummation* with contemporaneous America. This meditation allows for the subjective (individual) contextualization within the meta-structure of American identity. Thomas Cole himself wrote, “the elements of space are mental, or affections or motions of the

mind--as moved by material nature."³² Parry interprets Cole's statement with respect to the Sublime and the Beautiful in his canvases.

This paper suggests an additional reading. Cole's intellectual (i.e. "mental") conception of space also parallels that of Barthes' conceptual mapping of signification. Based on the eidetic images that are transferred from the canvases in the viewer's ideation, the image transfer across space and time mirrors the spatial conception and interpolation of the collective and the individual self. According to Jean-Marie Benoist, a structuralist colleague of Claude Levi-Strauss, "identity ... [is] constitutive of the self, twice: first by the abyss written in the heart of the semantic relationship between self-love--love of the species itself--and its finite, self-esteem"³³ The duality of a person's subjectivity is the acculturated desire to belong bipartite to America in opposition and to a self-interest whose awareness and subsequent action is framed by the ever constant, temporal march toward death. One could say that belonging to America assures a legacy for the individual--that the individual's psyche and arc is interwoven into the tapestry of the age. Subjective identity with national identity foregrounds the relative insignificance of the quotidian. One of America's greatest virtues is democratic capitulation.

Poststructuralist deferral is grounded in the structuralist construction of the sign. Thus, it is possible to invoke another parenthetical binary that foregrounds an exponential signification. This new binary is ruptured by the temporal break of being present before *Course of the Empire*, as discussed thus far. It is the slippage between national identity and individual identity provoked by a consideration of the Other. The Other instantly recognized by the viewer in the *Course of the Empire*, as chronicled in reviews in *The New York Mirror*, was of course Europe. This simplified elision is what Benoist would term "a rough and immediate identity, a superficial identity [that] must give way to a search of deep structures that shape identity in its relational aspect: the question of the Other appears as constitutive of identity."³⁴ The viewer's American identity was made distinct in a general (Platonic) manner by immediately coding the *Course of the Empire* as resulting from Europe's corrupt character. Yet, as Cole's 1836 series became a popular American cultural ritual for the duration of its exhibition, *Course of the Empire* enforced American identity in a subtler manner.

The Other could also refer to the individual's praxis of American culture in virtue (i.e., the public self), or the Other could refer to the individual as Other in his / her existential quest for individual relevance (economically, socially, et cetera). The basic discourse of identity and the Other is problematized by Carolyn d'Cruz,³⁵ a scholar of identity politics and a semiotician. For Cruz, the Other doesn't always occur as exoticized or alien. Cruz claims parity in the relationships incurred or broken through poststructuralism's deconstruction. Collective experience, for example,

like consciousness-raising, where individuals are encouraged to reflect on their habitual and repetitious interpellations as particular forms of subjects [as American, as a factory worker, as an educator, and so on and so forth] that acquire a certain coherence. The emphasis within consciousness-raising in relating lived experience to power relations continues to inform identity movements' goals for social transformation.³⁶

Cruz asserts that, as public rituals are a source of knowledge (i.e. a source of knowledge of the self),³⁷ the resultant invocation of the Other is beneficial in redressing developing Foucaultian imbalances of power. In the case of Cole and his anti-Jacksonian patrons,³⁸ it is the recuperation of the balanced interstice of the American *Pastoral or Arcadian State* before the current apex of *Consummation* eschatologically self-fulfills based on the temporally measured, increasingly commercial national character. Cole's allegorical landscape paintings are thus consciousness-raising.

The slippage that incurs the paradox of the revolving signification of the collective self and the individual self is elaborated by Jacques Derrida, writing in *The Truth in Painting*. The individual as presented with the sublime (which Cole conscientiously provoked in the *Course of the Empire*) projects his / her inadequacy into perfect (i.e. divine, neutral, static, whole) nature.³⁹ It is not that nature anthropomorphically overwhelms the person (i.e. with purpose), it is that the individual's fallibility is reflected. Further, the individual can no longer conflate the signified of infinite nature (of infinity) with the signifier of identity. It is limited (i.e. subjective) identity that is removed in the sublime.⁴⁰ This provokes being present in a manner that is highly subjective, yet, is also experienced collectively as ritual before the *Course of the Empire* series.

The sublime, according to Derrida, returns us to Barthes' mediation that extends the sign into excess,⁴¹ or into the production of the narrator. This production occurs within a state of being present provoked by the installation of the *Course of the Empire* series, the awareness of participating in an American, public ritual and the momentary

sublation of the individual's political (i.e. selfish) desire. Being present within this context invoked liturgical time which collapsed temporality. Identity collapsed and was reconstituted. Thomas Cole's *Course of the Empire* functioned not only as propaganda, but as a reconstitution of the American people into a neutral, static, ever being, ever becoming.

Biography

Lorena Morales received a B.A. in Art History from Fairfield University while managing a contemporary art gallery in Southport, Connecticut for over five years. With an M.A. in Modern and Contemporary Art History, Criticism and Theory from SUNY Purchase College, she also became a Neuberger Museum Curatorial Fellow, curating and authoring the catalogue for *American Gothic* featuring works by Andy Warhol, Robert Motherwell, Melvin Edwards, Ronald Gonzalez, Larry Rivers, Isamu Noguchi, Richard Estes, and Hans Richter. Research interests in art history include modern and contemporary American and European art, identity narratives, propaganda, as well as Aztec culture and the art of the Mexican diaspora.



Figure 1. Thomas Cole, *Scene from "The Last of the Mohicans:" Cora Kneeling at the Feet of Tamenund*, 1827, Oil on Canvas, 25 3/8 x 35 1/16 inches, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut.



Figure 2. Thomas Cole, *The Course of the Empire: The Savage State*, 1834, Oil on Canvas, 39 1/4 x 63 1/4 inches, The New York Historical Society, New York, NY.



Figure 3. Thomas Cole, *The Course of the Empire: The Pastoral or Arcadian State*, 1834, Oil on Canvas, 39 1/4 x 63 1/4 inches, The New York Historical Society, New York, NY.

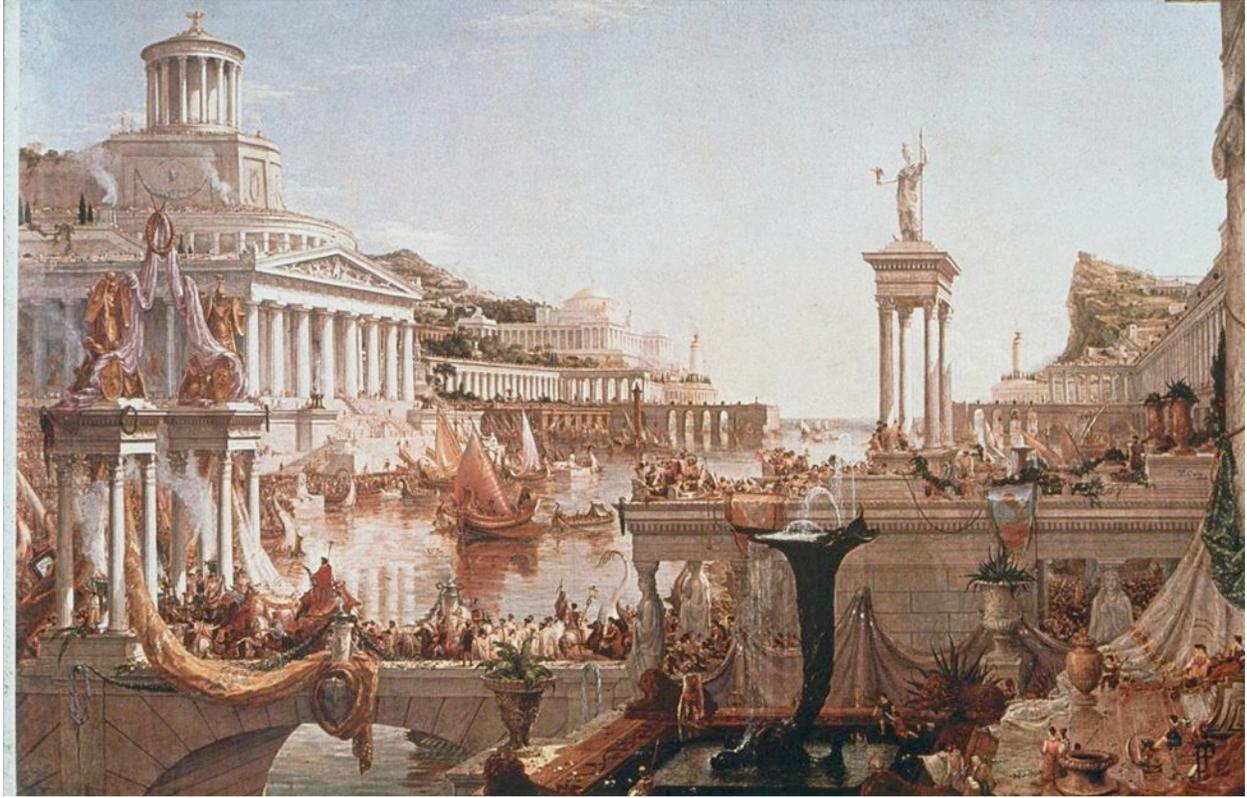


Figure 4. Thomas Cole, *The Course of the Empire: The Consummation of the Empire*, 1835-36, Oil on Canvas, 51 1/4 x 76 inches, The New York Historical Society, New York, NY.



Figure 5. Thomas Cole, *The Course of the Empire: Destruction*, 1836, Oil on Canvas, 33 1/4 x 63 1/4 inches, The New York Historical Society, New York, NY.



Figure 6. Thomas Cole, *The Course of the Empire: Desolation*, 1836, Oil on Canvas, 39 1/4 x 63 1/4 inches, The New York Historical Society, New York, NY.

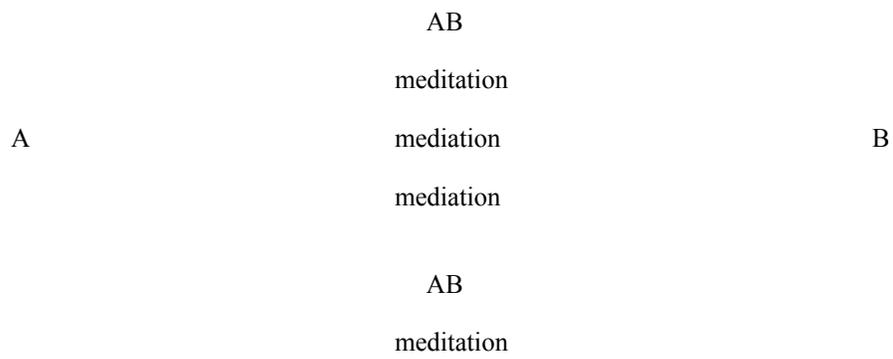


Figure 7. Roland Barthes. *S/Z*. 28.

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Endnotes

- ¹ James Thomas Flexner, *That Wilder Image* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1962), 12.
- ² Flexner, 12.
- ³ Barbara Novak, *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting 1825-1875* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- ⁴ Martin Bruegel, "Time That Can Be Relied Upon. The Evolution of Time Consciousness in the Mid-Hudson Valley, 1790-1860," *The Journal of Social History* 28: 3 (Spring 1995), 548.
- ⁵ Bruegel, 547, 548, 561.
- ⁶ Bruegel, 551.
- ⁷ Monique R. Morgan, *Narrative Means, Lyric Ends: Temporality in the Nineteenth Century British Long Poem* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2009), 2, 3.
- ⁸ Ellwood Comly Parry, "Thomas Cole's 'The Course of the Empire' A Study in Serial Imagery" (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 1970), 33, 34, 41, 130.
- ⁹ Asher B. Durand's painting, *Kindred Spirits*, was painted as an elegy to the recently deceased Cole. The painting features Thomas Cole and William Cullen Bryant together at Kaaterskill Falls in the Catskills.
- ¹⁰ Parke Godwin, *A Biography of William Cullen Bryant, with Extracts from His Correspondence* Vol. I (Breiningsville: General Books, 2010), 92-98.
- ¹¹ David Carr, *Time, Narrative and History* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 46.
- ¹² Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 2008), 401.
- ¹³ Morgan cites Alexander Pope as establishing the division between lyric and narrative poetry. Monique R. Morgan, *Narrative Means, Lyric Ends: Temporality in the Nineteenth Century British Long Poem* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2009), 5.
- ¹⁴ Morgan, 36.
- ¹⁵ Morgan, 55.
- ¹⁶ Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), 40.
- ¹⁷ Morgan, 42.
- ¹⁸ Ellwood Comly Parry notes that Cole painted all five canvases in near simultaneity. It took Cole nearly a year to complete *The Consummation*, making several revisions to the canvas during the process. Ellwood Comly Parry, "Thomas Cole's 'The Course of the Empire' A Study in Serial Imagery" (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 1970).
- ¹⁹ Heidegger, 350.
- ²⁰ Gideon Goosen, *Spacetime and Theology in Dialogue* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2008), 90.
- ²¹ Goosen, 91.
- ²² Goosen, 92.
- ²³ Goosen, 93.
- ²⁴ Goosen, 95.
- ²⁵ Novak, 141, 142.
- ²⁶ Alan Wallach, "Thomas Cole: Landscape and the Course of American Empire," in *Thomas Cole: Landscape into History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 93.

²⁷ Parry, 77.

²⁸ Wallach, 94.

²⁹ Parry, 112.

³⁰ Barthes, 28.

³¹ Barthes, 28.

³² Parry, 71.

³³ Jean-Marie Benoist “L’Identité” in *L’Identité*, ed. Claude Levi-Strauss (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1977), 21.

³⁴ Benoist, 17.

³⁵ Cruz is a La Trobe University professor and scholar whose research interests include identity and diversity, continental philosophy, life writing, theory and practice, democracy, representation, semiotics and textual analysis.

³⁶ Carolyn D’Cruz, *Identity Politics in Deconstruction*, (), 31.

³⁷ Cruz, 32.

³⁸ William H. Truettener and Alan Wallach, eds. *Thomas Cole: Landscape into History* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 35-42, 90.

³⁹ Jacques Derrida. *The Truth in Painting*. Translated by Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 132.

⁴⁰ Derrida, 132-133.

⁴¹ Derrida, 133.