

Teddy Roosevelt, whose spiritual sprout today is Britain's Prince Philip, who says he aspires to be reborn as a deadly virus in order to control population growth. James Lovelock's Gaia movement is in this satanic tradition. Lovelock first propounded the Gaia thesis in the 1960s. Noting the apparently unique position of life on Earth, he proposed to treat the Earth as a living being, a being to be worshiped in place of God. As an active environmentalist, Lovelock subscribes to the axiomatic belief that the human population must be limited in order to protect the environment.

Lovelock likes to describe himself as a quiet scientist who works in the isolation of his Devonshire, England, country home, in touch with Gaia. However, he is part of an organized fellowship, Lindisfarne, that actively organizes and promotes its Gaia ideology. As Lovelock describes it in an interview: "There is a community of thinkers called the Lindisfarne organization affiliated with St. John the Divine in New York. Both Lynn Margulis and I belong, but also a number of other people who are not scientists. . . . They include priests, economists, and environmentalists—a kind of community of scholars one might call it—and they are embracing the idea and using it as part of their philosophy."

Although anti-Christian, Gaia is housed, along with the Temple of Understanding and a gaggle of other pagan organizations, in the basement of the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine on West 110th Street in New York City. The Gaia Institute, according to Priscilla Peterson, the director of the Temple of Understanding, aims to create "mother goddess" cults throughout the West. Peterson describes Gaia as "a religion that values nature as well as valuing women. Wicca is one branch of this."

Satan, the consummate pragmatist

This book is indeed the realization of the Secular Humanist program which was first issued in 1973. When we see the degeneration of Western, and in particular American, culture over that period—and now this book, an open endorsement of satanism by a combination of the Secular Humanists and the Justice Department—it is clear that we cannot merely dismiss this book as trash. There is more need than ever for an anti-Satan resistance movement today, but one that recognizes the soldiers of Satan's army whether they openly flaunt the emblems of their master, or wear the disguise of a professor like Paul Kurtz, a "political consultant" like Henry Kissinger, or a "pragmatic" military man.

Satan is the consummate pragmatist—the individual for whom morality is merely a relative matter of convenience. The political concomitant of satanism today is *administrative fascism*, the rule over countries such as the United States by bureaucratic cliques who are interested in their own survival rather than national interest, and who are morally neutral. In practice this means that they will countenance the commission of any crime rather than risk their careers. Such pragmatists are the U.S. military personnel, who—without apparent

compunction, in a replay of the coverup of the My Lai massacre in Vietnam—supported Gen. "Mad Max" Thurman when he ordered the saturation bombing of the civilian population of Panama this past December.

Rembrandt drawings, a feast for the mind

by Nora Hamerman

Rembrandt's Landscapes: Drawings and Prints

by Cynthia P. Schneider, with Boudewijn Bakker, Nancy Ash, and Shelley Fletcher
Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1990
302 pages, paperbound \$29.95; hardbound distributed by Bullfinch Press, Little, Brown and Co., \$75.00.

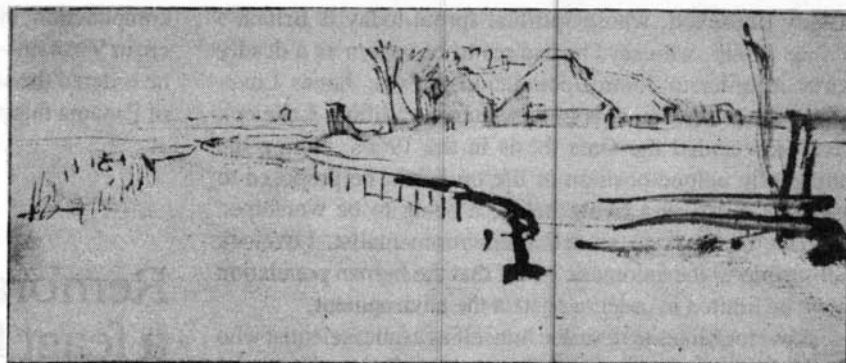
The Drawings by Rembrandt and His School in the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen

by Jeroen Giltraij, translated by Patricia Wardle
Thames and Hudson, New York, 1990
367 pages hardbound, \$60.00

Until May 20, an extraordinary exhibition will be on view in the U.S. capital, at the National Gallery of Art, featuring more than 100 drawings and prints of landscapes by the 17th-century Dutch artist Rembrandt. The present review of the catalogue, a beautiful and informative book, is not intended to substitute for urging every reader who may have the opportunity, to go see these works first-hand. Because of the fragility of these little masterpieces on paper, Washington, D.C. is the only venue for the show. And only by looking at the real thing, can you fully appreciate how Rembrandt exploited the color and texture of the paper as part of the expressive means in drawing and etchings, where you are otherwise confined to black and white (or brown and white).

Meanwhile, the long-awaited catalogue of one of the most important collections of Rembrandt's drawings, in his native land, has finally been published with the financial assistance of the J. Paul Getty Fund. The book is directed more to the specialist than to the general reader, yet what cultured person can fail to be interested in Rembrandt? It not

Rembrandt's *Winter Landscape*, c. 1648-50, Harvard University, Fogg Art Museum, currently on exhibit at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., shows the "least action" principle in art, where space is conveyed by a few strokes and a lot of white paper.



Courtesy National Gallery of Art

only fully catalogues all the drawings in that collection, but gives useful background information. I was interested to learn that the Boymans-van Beuningen Museum, the most important museum in Rotterdam, is a relatively recent phenomenon in its present form. The Rembrandt drawings are nearly all from the collection of a German businessman, Koenigs, who had placed his enormous collection on loan to the Boymans Museum in 1935. In 1940 they were threatened with sequestration under the Nazi Occupation, and to save them, D.G. van Beuningen bought a large group of the drawings and presented them *en bloc* to the Boymans Foundation.

Least action principle

Rembrandt was one of the great draftsmen of all time. He was also a great collector, who knew the Italian Renaissance principally through his ownership of many engravings and etchings by or after the major masters, as well as some drawings—such as the Titian “Landscape with a Riderless Horse,” which appears in the current Washington exhibit side-by-side with a copy executed by Rembrandt. This, together with the example of an etching by Hercules Segers (a Dutch artist deeply admired by Rembrandt) where Rembrandt actually went in and *re-worked* the copper plate to produce a very different final result, help to demonstrate how important his own art collection was to Rembrandt, who did not travel abroad. (It also indicates the vicious intent of Rembrandt’s enemies in driving him to bankruptcy so that this precious collection had to be liquidated.)

The comparison between these two drawings is a remarkable lesson. It shows how Rembrandt—never afraid to be a student at any age—worked to assimilate the refinement of Titian’s landscape style, yet transformed it into his own distinctive, blunt manner of drawing. One of the elements of Rembrandt’s drawing style which makes him distinct from every Italian, indeed from almost every previous artist, is his ability to create the impression of curves by an accumulation of *angular* lines.

Anyone who has ever tried to draw must hold Rembrandt in total awe for what art historians like to call his “economy of means”—the ability to convey a multiple vision of space,

atmosphere, and form, with a minimum of lines or brushstrokes.

This reveals a searching scientific mind. The German scientist and philosopher Gottfried Leibniz—born in 1646, at a time Rembrandt’s activity as a landscapist was at its height—was later to hypothesize a “principle of least action” to refer to the universal law by which nature seeks the most “economical” path to self-development—most often, of course, not lying on a straight line! Perhaps Leibniz, who spent time in the Netherlands, was familiar with Rembrandt’s drawings, etchings, and paintings, which explore that “least action” notion to an astonishing degree.

Rembrandt, in turn, was surely familiar with the advances in optical science, for which mid-17th-century Netherlands was a center. His mastery of portraying light and shadow, unequaled since Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), whose probing of the deepest secrets of physical reality reminds us so much of Rembrandt’s, gives proof of that. And then there is chemistry, another frontier of physical science in that era. One of the revelations of the NGA show, is that Rembrandt used, much more extensively than previously believed, a technique called “sulfur tinting” which employs a rather sophisticated chemistry, in order to get soft shading in his etchings, similar to the effect of a wash (watercolor) in drawings.

Innovations

In the drawing and print media, Rembrandt followed in the footsteps of the Italian Renaissance artists, but there are two very important novelties in his prolific production. First, whereas *most* Italian master drawings, especially before the 16th century, are made as a step in the process leading to a final painting, engraving, tapestry, or other object, on the contrary a very large proportion of Rembrandt’s drawings were created as finished works in their own right.

Second, Holland was the first country to give full independence to landscape as a genre of painting and drawing. Especially after the Netherlands became an independent state in 1609, Dutch landscapes grew up as an expression of patriotism. The “walking tour of Amsterdam” was innovated by

artists working in the early decades of the century. Both of these novelties—the independence of drawing and the independence of the landscape genre—evolved with the new economic circumstances of artists, who did not depend on princely or church patronage as in the Italian Renaissance, but had to make their living by selling to a largely middle-class market.

Rembrandt did not specialize in landscape, yet he made the greatest breakthroughs of anyone in this domain. Cynthia Schneider, an assistant professor at Georgetown University who put the Washington show together, asserts that the much-loved painting of “The Mill” hanging in the NGA’s permanent collection is indeed by Rembrandt, and not by a follower or imitator as many experts in the past believed. Her arguments are featured in a brand-new book issued by Yale University Press, *Rembrandt’s Landscapes*, (\$50, 289 pages hardbound).

Her collaborator in the Washington catalogue Amsterdam city archivist Boudewijn Bakker, takes us in Rembrandt’s footsteps around Amsterdam and into the surrounding countryside, identifying many of the sites where Rembrandt sketched on paper, or in some cases, directly etched the copper plates which he completed in the studio, and providing interesting information about the differing types of land and economic activities practiced on it, which are faithfully recorded by Rembrandt.

Rembrandt’s students

Although some of the landscape drawings now on view in Washington are from the Rotterdam museum, the Boymans-van Beuningen catalogue covers a vaster field of endeavor, including drawings by Rembrandt that range from chalk and pen studies of particular figures or parts of figures, to landscape scenes, to compositional sketches preparatory for paintings. A large share of the catalogue is devoted to the School, presenting 20 of the 60 (!) artists whose names are known who are regarded as Rembrandt’s pupils.

In his heyday, Rembrandt had an exceptionally large number of pupils, ranging from assistants whose work he sold to add to his own income, to children of wealthy families who wanted to learn drawing as a part of a cultured education. This catalogue even has an example of a drawing by a pupil which has been corrected by Rembrandt. To realize that many of the paintings hanging in museums under the Rembrandt label, may actually be by such personalities as Nicolas Maes, Gerbrandt von der Eeckhout, or Carel Fabritius, is not to detract from Rembrandt, but rather to realize the enormously fruitful influence his ideas exerted over an entire generation that included many fine artists.

A drama of divine justice

I have chosen to illustrate here one of the Rotterdam drawings that is definitely by Rembrandt, which depicts a story which was a great favorite of Rembrandt and his school,

and the 17th century in general. This is the late-1650s’ “Jacob Is Shown Joseph’s Bloodstained Coat.” It is based on the story of Joseph (Genesis 37) in which his ten older brothers, insanely envious of their father Jacob’s preference for Joseph, sell the boy into slavery in Egypt. They present Jacob with his coat of many colors, a gift from his father, which they have stained with the blood of a kid and lie that he was killed by a lion. In Rembrandt’s drawing, Jacob swoons in the foreground, surrounded by several of the hypocritical brothers, while the old blind Isaac is brought in through a door in the background.

According to the Bible story, Jacob’s father Isaac would have been long dead at the time. But Rembrandt seems to have closely followed the description of the old, blind grandfather in the play *Joseph in Dothan* by Joost van den Vondel, Holland’s leading playwright of the era, which is quoted in the catalogue. The play was presented in Amsterdam in 1640. In the Introduction, J. Giltaij writes of such drawings, “The striking thing about the compositions is that they invariably depict a particularly crucial moment in a story, not only as a result of the selection of a moment from it, but also because attention is focused on the nub of the event by the way in which it is drawn and by the facial expressions and poses of the figures. . . . His aim appears to have been to express what was most fundamental in a motif or story as naturally as possible and although the drawings were actually done with great thought and consideration, they give the impression of being rapid records of a fleeting moment.”

The story of Joseph is one of the greatest epics of the workings of divine justice to overcome human injustice. In Egypt, Joseph overcame his brothers’ plot and rose from slavery to become the administrator of the household of Potiphar, the chief minister of the Pharaoh. He was disgraced when Potiphar’s wife tried to seduce him, and in rage at Joseph’s refusal, lied that Joseph had tried to get her to bed. While in prison, Joseph became famous for his divinely inspired ability to interpret dreams. Eventually he is called upon to interpret the Pharaoh’s dream, which all the court magicians are unable to understand. The Pharaoh dreamed of seven fat cows and seven lean cows. Joseph said that these forecast seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine, and advised the Pharaoh to stockpile grain for the coming lean years. As a result of his wise counsel, he rose to become the Pharaoh’s closest adviser, finally rescuing his own family from the famine and bringing his brothers to Egypt. He showed mercy and not retribution for their sins against him, and was reunited with his old father.

Today we are fascinated by this story, where a political prisoner is first enslaved and then unjustly confined, the victim of invidious liars, and finally liberated because of his economic policy, whence he comes to save his own nation; it reminds us of the case of the imprisoned American statesmen and economist Lyndon LaRouche today. Rembrandt, who not only personally experienced injustice but watched in pain as the



Rotterdam, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen

Rembrandt's drawing of Joseph's Bloodstained Coat Presented to Jacob, focuses on the grief of the collapsing father and the women, echoed by the blind grandfather who enters at the back. Blind people were often represented by Rembrandt as having a superior kind of moral vision.

Velázquez's painting of the same Old Testament story of injustice, concentrates on the rhetorical mendacity of Joseph's brothers and the horror evinced by Jacob. The faithful little dog, shown barking obstreperously at this fraud, is a frequent "witness" in both Rembrandt's and Velázquez's works to truths hidden by (and to) human beings.



Madrid, Museo del Prado

Dutch Republic came to be ruled by the Anglo-Dutch-Venetian oligarchy, treated the Story of Joseph many times. He painted the scene of "Potiphar's Wife Accusing Joseph" twice (Berlin, Washington NGA) and also made a very explicit etching of the attempted seduction by Potiphar's wife.

Recently we saw in America the painting of the same story, "Jacob Shown the Bloodstained Coat of Joseph" by Rembrandt's Spanish contemporary and peer, Velázquez (exhibited last fall in New York): In this version of ca. 1631, the

emphasis is on the rhetorical gestures of the lying brothers, ironically juxtaposed to the barking little dog (who knows the truth) and the stunned father. The Velázquez painting also gives the strong impression of having been based on a drama, although such a play in Spain is not known to this writer. Rembrandt's drawing was presumably in preparation for a painting or etching, but that final product, if it ever existed, is not known today. Too bad. How interesting it would be, if we could set the two final compositions side by side.