Strange Bodies: Hybrid, Text, and the Human Form. Prints from the Sheldon Museum of Art

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Hybrid, Text, and the Human Form

Prints from the Sheldon Museum of Art

Edited by Alison G. Stewart
This exhibition offers a view into the ways printed works of art on paper (mostly woodcuts, engravings, and etchings) showcase bodies in various contexts, as seen in the Sheldon’s exhibition “Strange Bodies: Hybrid, Text, and the Human Form” (November 30–December 31, 2016). The prints were made both by well-known artists, including Albrecht Dürer and William Hogarth, and by a variety of anonymous designers, engravers, and printers who produced as many printed copies, or impressions, onto the fairly new material, called paper, as the market would bear during the Early Modern period. Each print offers a different understanding or take on the body. Some are grounded in the physical and social aspects of humanity, while others present the body as a site for fantastic imagination and performance. Still others reference the printed page as a “body.” Whether fish, fowl, or human, the body as seen in these prints continues to intrigue us across the centuries and show that even though times change, people and their concerns do not. With contributions from John-David Richardson, Grant Potter, Grace Short, Taylor Wismer, Stephanie Wright, Claire Kilgore, Nikita Lenzo, Bryon Hartley, Ian Karss, Danley Walkington, and Taylor Stobbe.

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STRANGE BODIES: HYBRID, TEXT, AND THE HUMAN FORM
Strange Bodies
Hybrid, Text, and the Human Form

Prints from the Sheldon Museum of Art

An Exhibition
Focus Gallery, Sheldon Museum of Art
Lincoln, Nebraska
November 30—December 31, 2016

Edited by
Alison G. Stewart

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INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This collection of works explores how bodies and images changed over the course of the Early Modern period in Europe (1500–1800) from the time of the advent of printing on paper to the Industrial Revolution and beyond through little-seen printed masterpieces from the Sheldon Museum of Art’s collection. Today, “print” continues to endure even as new forms of digital publications transform our world in previously unimaginable ways, just as printing did centuries ago.

This exhibition offers a view into the ways printed works of art on paper (mostly woodcuts, engravings, and etchings) showcase bodies in various contexts, as seen in the Sheldon’s exhibition “Strange Bodies: Hybrid, Text, and the Human Form” (November 30–December 31, 2016). The prints were made by both well-known artists, including Albrecht Dürer and William Hogarth, and a variety of anonymous designers, engravers, and printers who produced as many printed copies, or impressions, onto the fairly new material, called paper, as the market would bear during the Early Modern period.

Each print offers a different understanding or take on the body. Some are grounded in the physical and social aspects of humanity, while others present the body as a site for fantastic imagination and performance. Still others reference the printed page as a “body.” Whether fish, fowl, or human, the body as seen in these prints continues to intrigue us across the centuries and show that even though times change, people and their concerns do not.

The exhibition’s organization was determined by the prints selected by the eleven students in Professor Alison Stewart’s “History of Prints: New Media of the Renaissance” class during the fall semester of 2016 in the School of Art, Art History, & Design at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

An expression repeatedly heard during the class was “times change, people don’t.” We leave it to the viewer to determine the ways in which this expression still holds sway for bodies, universal values, truths, and experiences seen in these prints.

This exhibition and the corresponding catalogue and ebook originated in Hixson-Lied Professor Alison G. Stewart’s “History of Prints: New Media of the Renaissance” class during the fall semester of 2016 in the School of Art, Art History & Design. It was prepared in collaboration with Paul Royster, Coordinator of Scholarly Communications, University of Nebraska–Lincoln Libraries; Ashley Hussnan, Assistant Curator of Exhibitions at the Sheldon Museum of Art; and Carrie Morgan, Curator of Academic Programs, also at the Sheldon Museum. This exhibition of prints is the third exhibition of its kind, begun in 2011, in what will hopefully be a long series of such collaborations at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, designed to give faculty and students the opportunity to work intimately with the Sheldon’s rich collections and share their discoveries with the university community and the world.

We are grateful for the support of our colleagues in the School of Art, Art History, & Design and at the Sheldon, especially Genevieve Ellerbee, Associate Registrar at the Sheldon, and Robert Derr, Director of the School of Art, Art History, & Design. Thanks and congratulations to the students whose scholarship fills these pages.

Alison G. Stewart
With the innovation of moveable metal type and the printing press around 1450, early printed books called incunables continued to retain the feel and design of earlier handwritten manuscripts. Techniques from the production of manuscripts held fast into this new age of printing, as scribes producing manuscripts incorporated their techniques and professions into the printing houses.

The scribes of the Middle Ages saw their livelihoods in jeopardy when printing technology made inroads and established itself during the second half of the fifteenth century. Scribes were forced to translate their skills into the new printed world. While some scribes established their own shops, others took on supplemental duties in print shops as illuminators, who painted borders and other decorations, and as rubricators, who highlighted important parts in red. These supplemental duties continued to draw inspiration from illuminated manuscripts as did margin sizes and the addition of gold leaf, known as gilding. While rubrications guided the reader by emphasizing certain areas, gold leaf was used as a way to draw in the reader through its beauty, elegance, and preciousness.

These techniques are exhibited in the book page shown here where rubrics are used sparingly and thoughtfully throughout the whole page. Wide margins assist the reader and ease the eye. Illumination and gold leaf are used to enhance the page, add vibrancy, and draw attention. The gold leaf behind and around the scribe at the top of the page, along with the gold leaf in the coat of arms with a fish at the bottom, embellish the page brilliantly. The vibrant shine achieved by the burnished gold leaf and the added detailed pattern attained by tooling—decorating the surface through a metal hand tool or stamp, brought to the printed book page from manuscripts—produced for the reader of printed books a viewing and reading experience both enjoyable and memorable, far more so than if the page contained only black ink lettering.

Danley Walkington
De exceptionibus

Si de iure adaequatio munimini et lan
cum fuerit gladiator, necesse fuit eum
quod probaretur se habere elici

tendit

Sed quidem

Enique

Causa ex demum

Est enim eum

Cebistos et demum

Est enim eum

Cebistos et demum

Est enim eum
A late medieval conduct book, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, joins a popular fourteenth-century literary genre aimed at providing moral instruction to young women. The original French text, written in 1371 by a knight, Sir Geoffrey de la Tour Landry, also inspired English and German translations. This woodcut illustration belongs to a series of images assumed to have been designed by a young Albrecht Dürer for a German edition of the text, translated by an aristocrat, Marquard vom Stein, and printed in Basel by Michael Furter for Johann Bergmann von Olpe in 1493.

The accompanying text which continues on the page’s reverse tells the story of an elderly, dying woman who amassed a great treasure kept locked in a tower. No one knows the extent of her wealth. Instead she leads others, including her daughter and neighbors, to believe that she could not spare any money in her poverty. All are surprised to discover the fortune after her death. However, the fortune is not spent well. The daughter similarly spends no money on prayers or observances for her mother’s soul. This pattern of greed forms the core warning note for the text, concluding with an admonition to the audience to beware in similar circumstances. It is better to donate one’s money and be generous to the poor than for wealth to be squandered, especially if this jeopardizes one’s piety after death.

Sir Geoffrey’s male authorship influences his text. He introduces each story to his daughters, the book’s audience, narrating the various lessons. Although women factor prominently throughout the book in both positive and negative examples of behavior, they do not tell their own stories. In contrast, French noblewoman Christine de Pizan’s *Book of the Three Virtues* from the same time period, is not only written by a woman but also narrated by female personifications of the virtues of Reason, Rectitude, and Justice. *The Book of the Knight of the Tower* lacks these innovations, conforming to a traditional, paternalistic method. Despite the lack of narrative agency, the depiction of women throughout the woodcuts emphasizes their diverse and complicated roles within the text. The hand-coloration of *A Sick Woman on Her Deathbed* uses gold detailing around the heads of the old woman and her daughter to draw the viewer’s eye to the female figures, providing an additional connection between word and image.

Claire Kilgore
In ander exempl will sich sagen, von einer riicken medz

tigen Frowen. Die eyns Freyen herren wyd gewesen wunnd

lang 3yt eyn wywe was. Vnnd hatt nit meer das eyn eyn-
ge dochter, die was eynem grossen herren vernahlet. Sa

nun die selb wyrwe an je rodeter kam, Lyes e j j aus der mamba

sin für die thure eyns thurns, da j de gnit jinnen hast. Und

lies je die schlüssel zu der selben thuren in eynem nick un-
der jeclenden legen. Und als hem tod nachet hast, je gesehe jedigs gegen

der selben thuren lernend, und wolt nit geslatten, das sich jeman zu der thur

nachere. Das, nun verschiden was kam je tochter zu je. Und frage je die

thur, oher jener munter und ob je keys gut verhalte oder synder je gelassen hetet

Hs fs / Hs da mit, e eren beslatten und je re chriensliche recht shun möchte

Antwarten je die liet, je weisen nicht. Es wert dann das, das etwas hetet in

dem thurn voode, vnd pagan, je wie das, je nit berte lyden wählen, 

das den yeman an rüre / auch wie schlüssel unter je legen. Also lyes je die

dochter von der lemen und fand die schlüssel wie man je sagt. Sien am eon

ferung vnd schloß vff den thurn. Vnnd fand das nun ob brydlich es helfen

stuck golds vnd silber gebhers / auch anders hauers an maßen vill,

Sprach die tochter, je renn truwen das, das nit vermeynt hetet das je ob
Albrecht Dürer
Germany, 1471–1528

Hrotswitha of Gandersheim Presenting Her Comedies to Emperor Otto I
(from Opera Hrosvite, Nuremberg, Germany, 1501)

Hand colored woodcut on cream laid paper, 1501
8 5∕8 × 5 7∕8 inches
Sheldon Museum of Art, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Anna R. and Frank M. Hall Charitable Trust, H-774.1962

Albrecht Dürer, one of the best-known artists of the German Renaissance, was the son of a Hungarian goldsmith and the godson of Anton Koberger, the printer and publisher of the ambitious book Nuremberg Chronicle. Dürer’s Apocalypse book of 1498, a series of fifteen woodcut prints depicting the revelations of St. John, with text printed on the back of each print, constituted his first body of work printed in book form, a development that allowed additional access to his prints.

Roswitha of Gandersheim was a medieval German canoness of the Gandersheim Abbey, and a poet, who is known today as the first female dramatist. Roswitha’s works include eight legends, six plays, and a set of epic poems, one based on the successes of the family of Ottos from the Ottonian period of German history and another on the history of the Gandersheim Abbey. Roswitha’s plays were based on the work of the Roman dramatist Terence and featured female characters tested for their devotion to the Christian faith. In addition to writing plays featuring a lead female role, Roswitha wanted to confront the negative portrayal of women in Terence’s work by having the female protagonist conquer the adversaries of Christian-themed stories. In Dürer’s time Conrad Celtis, the German humanist, scholar, and poet, discovered in 1493 a codex containing the tenth-century works of Roswitha at Regensburg, Germany, in the Emmeram Monastery. A few years later, in 1501, Celtis published the known legends, plays, and poems written by Roswitha as the Opera Hrosvitea, which included full-page woodcut illustrations by Dürer.

The woodcut here depicts Roswitha kneeling before Holy Roman Emperor Otto the Great and presenting her epic poem, Gesta Ottonis (The Deeds of Otto). This poem included the earliest comprehensive knowledge of the Ottonian family and celebrated its role in building and funding the convent Gandersheim Abbey.

John-David Richardson
François Desprez  
France, 16th century  
*Walking Fish* (from *The Droll Dreams of Pantagruel*)  
Woodcut, 1565  
6 ½ × 4 ¾ inches  
University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Anna R. and Frank M. Hall Charitable Trust, H-768.1962

*Walking Fish* belonged to a northern European fascination with wildly absurd hybrid creatures during the sixteenth century. This figure, along with an additional 119 equally bizarre woodcut illustrations, appeared in the book titled *The Droll Dreams of Pantagruel*. Its subject is a character from an earlier well-known book written by the French Renaissance writer François Rabelais. The book, titled *Pantagruel*, is an inventive fictional account concerning a family of giants. Rabelais, a monk, medical practitioner, and humanist, has been implicated as the creator of the illustrations in the book, which in its entirety is titled *The Droll Dreams of Pantagruel Which Include Several Invented Figures by Master François Rabelais*. However, François Desprez, to whom the book is presently attributed, designed the woodcut prints intentionally to capitalize on the popularity in France of Rabelais’s fame at the time of this publication.

Although Rabelais the writer undoubtedly did not serve as the designer of the figures in *The Droll Dreams*, his connection to the book nonetheless offers insights into how this imagery could have been understood by a sixteenth-century audience. Scholars have studied the hybrid creatures of artists who probably influenced Desprez (including Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel) and have formulated theories about the nature of fantastic imagery. One theory proposes that the illustrations constituted a type of visual language for a humanistically educated elite. This society embraced an individualistic spirit and united secular and religious concerns. Literature had become extremely influential for humanists and satire a favorite genre.

Rabelais and his comic masterpiece offer meaningful associations for understanding the print shown here—his literary techniques such as satire, textual absurdity, mock epic, slapstick, and scatology, as well as his position within the humanist society. In *Pantagruel*, churchmen, peasants, and the whole of society are subject to ridicule. Similarly, comical references to the military, clergy, and the like are present in the dress and demeanor of *The Droll Dreams of Pantagruel* characters. Influenced by the satirical nature of Bosch and Bruegel, Desprez created images which in turn inspired later artists, thus his hybrid creatures fascinated readers and viewers and lived on and inspired copies into the nineteenth century.

Grace Short
Robert Vaughan
England, circa 1600–circa 1663
Illustration from The Generall Historie of Virginia, 1624
Engraving
5 × 3 7∕8 inches
University of Nebraska–Lincoln, gift of Mary Riepma Ross, ex-32, U-719.1970

Robert Vaughan, an engraver originally from Wales, is perhaps better known for his portraiture and heraldic works than prints. Vaughan was enlisted to create only one large illustration for the two books of Captain John Smith’s The Generall Historie of Virginia. Smith, ever an endeavoring man, took it upon himself to self-publish his account of the trials, hardships, and opportunities to be found in the Virginia and other American colonies.

The Sheldon’s print is a fragment of a larger two-page illustration found between books one and two. This larger cinematic illustration depicts seven pivotal moments during Captain Smith’s stay in the Virginia colony. The historical narrative most notably shows scenes of his interactions with the Powhatan people, an Algonquian-speaking Native American tribe. The print became a significant part of American history and lore for it contains the first depiction of John Smith being rescued by Pocahontas.

In the two scenes included in the Sheldon fragment, Vaughan depicts the Native Americans in a style openly borrowed from the somewhat earlier Flemish artist and engraver Theodoor de Bry, after the illustrations and watercolors by former colonial governor and artist John White. Shown above: In the winter of 1607 near Jamestown, Smith explored the headwaters of the Chickahominy River in hopes of finding access to the Pacific Ocean. There his group came under attack from a Powhatan hunting party. Smith, having bound his indigenous guide to his arm to keep him from fleeing the attack, retreated and eventually found himself stuck in a swamp as he attempted to escape. Shown below: Two years later, Smith narrowly avoided an ambush by Native Americans and disgruntled settlers. Avoiding the forty or so men, Smith happened upon their leader and charged him with nothing but his sword. Smith grabbed the much larger Paspahegh King and took him hostage after nearly drowning in the river. Once again Smith narrowly escaped death in the New World.

Ian Karss
C. Smith takes the king of Patahegh prisoner. A.D. 1607.
Wenceslaus Hollar
Prague, Bohemia (Czech Republic) 1607–London, England 1677
Plate 13 from *Ornatus Muliebris Anglicanus or The Several Habits of English Women, from the Nobilitie to the Country Woman, As They Are in These Times*, London, 1640
Etching, 1639
Image: 5 ¼ × 2 ¼ inches (13.33 × 6.98 cm)
Sheet: 6 ¼ × 3 ⅛ inches
Sheldon Museum of Art, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Anna R. and Frank M. Hall Charitable Trust, H-1946.1974

Wenceslaus Hollar, a master etcher born in Prague, keenly observed the world around him. His subjects ranged from insects, buildings, and architecture to fashion and costume studies. *Ornatus Muliebrus Anglicanus* etc., a book with twenty-six prints, shows women from seventeenth-century England in their everyday apparel. The focus of these prints is the clothing the women wear; their faces and bodies appear slightly smaller than their costumes. The print shown here is number thirteen in the series and presents a woman in a long dress who is wearing a mask and holding a muff. Her shoulder-length curly hair is adorned with a bow pinned at the side of her head. Hollar uses cross-hatching to emphasize shadows and wiry thin lines to depict the texture of hair.

Women, and men, living in the seventeenth century were expected to dress daily according to specific rules and standards, including statutes requiring them to dress according to their positions in society. Only duchesses, countesses, and marquises could wear gold or fur on their skirts or gowns, while the lower classes, including apprentices and servants, were permitted to wear short gowns of specific colors. Breaking these rules and statutes was immensely frowned upon and sometimes considered illegal, punishable by imprisonment and fines.

This series accurately depicts women’s fashion of the seventeenth century and shows how women carried themselves in that era. Hollar’s documentation of these subjects is essential when studying English society of that time.

Taylor Wismer
Karel Dujardin  
Holland, 1622–1678  
*The Battlefield*, 1652  
Etching and drypoint on cream laid paper  
6 ¼ × 7 ⅛ inches  
University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Anna R. and Frank M. Hall Charitable Trust, H-1552.

Born at Amsterdam in 1622, Karel Dujardin is featured among the second generation of seventeenth-century Dutch landscape painters who employed the Italianate style. This trend among northern European artists idealized Italy’s rural culture and landscape. Somewhat earlier, at the turn of the seventeenth century, Rome was viewed as a center of artistic tradition and innovation. Most Dutch painters were encouraged by their predecessors to travel to Italy and immerse themselves in that rich artistic culture and learn from the tradition of Italian landscape painting. Dujardin is considered a pupil of Nicolaes Berchem, a first-generation master of Dutch painting credited with bringing Dujardin to Italy and influencing his fifty-three etchings produced after his return from Rome in 1652.

These etchings feature the Italianate style and focus on tranquil pastoral scenes of peasants and livestock. But *The Battlefield* is unique for the series by presenting the aftermath of war. A corpse (?) lies on the field as soldiers look on. The Italianate influence, seen in the abundance of white or negative space within the figures, implies a bright, sunlit scene typical of the romanticized representation of the Italian countryside. The injured or dead body in the foreground is laid out horizontally, responding to the uneven bundle of fabric beneath it and referencing the rolling hills of the landscape in the background. The print dates four years after the end of the Thirty Years’ War when the Netherlands revolted against the Catholic reign of their Spanish king, Philip II. Although designed and rendered to exude the influence of the Italianate approach to landscape painting, the subject matter here may refer to more local conditions and political unrest in Europe at the time.

Stephanie Wright
Artist unknown
England, publisher Richard Blome (1635–1705)
Fowling (from The Gentleman’s Recreation, 1686)
Engraving, 1686
Image: 14 ¾ × 8 7∕8 inches
Sheet: 15 ¼ × 9 ¼ inches
University of Nebraska–Lincoln, University Collection, U-4495

Fowling is one of many illustrations created by an unknown printmaker for publisher and cartographer Richard Blome for The Gentleman’s Recreation, a set of two books containing information for seventeenth-century men, particularly those of the gentry or noble class. Subjects in The Gentleman’s Recreation ranged from the sciences to the arts and sporting, all presented in meticulous encyclopedic fashion. Like many prints in that book, a textual description of the art of fowling is found enclosed within the oval design, surrounded by images of various fowling and hunting methods including gun, trap or dog.

Fowling’s purpose was to familiarize the reader with these sports by identifying Europe’s various landfowl and waterfowl by habitat, size, and the appropriate methods for hunting them. The term “fowling” was commonly used in eastern England and was an abbreviation for the term “wildfowling.” Some birds such as the dabchick, eighth on the list at top, also known as the little grebe (Tachybaptus ruficollis), a diving bird, are found only in the Eastern Hemisphere. The same is true of “Heath Cocks” in the third list from the top; it is an older name for the black grouse (Tetrao tetrix). This terminology not only dates the print but also helps distinguish its region of origin.

Of notable interest is the dedication found in the upper left corner of Fowling. Such dedications were common in Blome’s work and indicated that he consulted members of the gentry concerning information contained in his publications. In exchange for their expertise, Blome would dedicate prints to these nobles and occasionally add their family coat of arms, as seen on the upper right corner of Fowling. Here the coat of arms represents the Howard family, and the page is dedicated to Henry Howard, 7th Duke of Norfolk, in office from 1684 until his death in 1701.

Grant Potter
William Hogarth was a renowned eighteenth-century English painter, cartoonist, editor, printmaker, and pictorial satirist active in London. His family struggled to make ends meet with the meager earnings of his father. As a result, William worked extremely hard and dreamed of both making a considerable amount of money and extending his hand to the needy. His passion for art began in 1720 when he produced engravings and portraits that earned him a few coins. Hogarth grew to be one of the greatest artists of his time and attracted the world of politics depicted in his works.

Here Hogarth’s *Beer Street* shows the consumption of beer in a print of 1751 that, along with its companion *Gin Lane*, supported the British Government’s attempts to pass various taxes to reduce the consumption of alcohol and its negative effects on society. In *Beer Street* life and work continue apace while folks in London drink beer. City residents appear well fed, happy, and productive. The painter paints, fish are delivered, and work on a building continues in the background. In the foreground, men take well-deserved breaks from their jobs and morale appears high, except for the pawnbroker at the right who has no customers.

However, in *Gin Lane* work stops and a scrawny gin-addicted woman drops her baby. This print reveals the views of government officials and clergy that gin produced a variety of evil effects (sloth, crimes, addiction) that negatively effected the economy. Londoners were concerned that gin made its imbibers forget their daily responsibilities. As a result, communities and unions organized to investigate the causes of increasing crime and to find a solution. The result: the implementation of laws between 1729 and 1751.

Hogarth made the two prints, *Beer Street* and *Gin Lane*, to support the establishment of the Gin Act of 1751. Writer Henry Fielding, Hogarth’s friend, published his book *Inquiry in to the Late Increase in Robbers* in the same year. Together, these publications continued a movement termed “Industry and Idleness” that depicted the problems of crime and poverty in the society of Hogarth’s time.

Bryon Hartley

Hogarth, *Gin Lane*
etching and engraving, 1751
British Museum, London
James Gillray
London, England, 1756–1815

_A Duet_

Hand-colored etching, 1792

Image: 12 11/16 × 9 1/2 inches

Sheet: 14 3/4 × 11 3/4 inches

University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Anna R. and Frank M. Hall Charitable Trust, H-1624.1972

Inspired by William Hogarth, his countryman artist of a generation earlier, James Gillray was a British caricaturist and printmaker known for his social and political satires, who was active in London around 1800. Crowds would flock to storefronts to view Gillray’s commentary on the latest political flap or social scandal. _A Duet_ is thought to reference such a contemporary event. The short, fat man, believed to be the city of London’s pastry cook, Captain Rolling Pin, gropes a thin, high-waisted woman. Gillray exaggerated the bodies, particularly the contrasting heights and weights and the roundness of both the Captain’s belly and the woman’s petticoat-covered backside. Gillray used dainty shapes for the female figure; her shoes, waist, and arms are all significantly thinner than her robust bottom half. When one looks at the male figure, his feet are dramatically larger, as are his arms, stomach, and head compared to those of the female figure.

Gillray’s prints display how bodies served as a metaphor for the anxieties of upper class society or swayed how members of other races and nationalities were perceived. While the woman’s facial expression and raised hand suggest her revulsion at the man’s groping, the highly fashionable attire of both figures, standard in works by Gillray, imbued them with a sense of propriety. Although Gillray never specifically named who formed the subject of the print, the contemporary reference was most likely obvious to viewers based on the latest social or political scandal.

These humorous and exaggerated caricatures continued to push the boundaries of cultural norms in regard to personal attacks, raising the question how such offensive materials became published without being suppressed. Caricature during this time had an almost unique immunity from prosecution by the government because of the volatile aesthetic and ideological makeup of such prints. The embarrassment created by Gillray’s prints deterred any serious threats of prosecution that might result in the caricatured individuals being laughed out of the courtroom.

Taylor Stobbe
"Turn fair Clora, turn, ah cruel, turn again."
Käthe Kollwitz
Königsberg, Germany (Kaliningrad, Russia) 1867–Moritzburg, Germany 1945

Aus Vielen Wunden Blutest Du, Oh Volk (The People Bleed From Many Wounds), 1896
Etching and aquatint
$4\frac{13}{16} \times 12\frac{7}{8}$ inches (12.22 × 32.7 cm)
University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Anna R. and Frank M. Hall Charitable Trust, H-672.1961

Käthe Kollwitz has been identified as a humanitarian despite perpetually being labeled a socialist. Her father was a puritanical preacher and her husband a doctor who practiced in the slums of northern Berlin. Kollwitz passionately depicted illness, hunger, war, death, and countless other challenging aspects of the life of the working class. Her works divulge subtle expressions of anger, misery, and desperation. Kollwitz bore witness to both World Wars and the loss of her son, Peter, to the first. Although her subject matter is heavy and her aesthetic not conventionally appealing, audiences have responded to her universal themes. Hitler banned her work and deemed it degenerate, yet she continued to create protest posters. She wanted to stress the essentials—purity, boldness, simplicity, strength.

Kollwitz intended Aus Vielen Wunden Blutest Du, Oh Volk to be the final plate in her series entitled Revolt of the Weavers. The six prints were inspired by Gerhart Hauptmann’s play of 1892, The Weavers, centered around a revolt of Silesian weavers during the 1840s. The plot concentrated on the proletariats’ strife for basic rights during the Industrial Revolution.

The two nude women bound in the Sheldon’s print represent mothers who are powerless and vulnerable to the whims of the state. A figure lies supine at center who represents sons who have perished in war. At the same time, the cross included on the sword of the priest and the central figure resting on a bed of thorns points to an underlying religious meaning. The central figure appears to refer also to Christ, a universal synonym for suffering. The priest with the sword is believed to represent an avenger. Critics at the time accused Hauptmann’s play of being too pessimistic because the revolutionaries were oppressed by military forces. Kollwitz’s central figure offers hope that someone might rise from the blood of the weavers to liberate the people from their anguish.

Nikita Lenzo
How the devil tempteth many a one of the sin where as he findeth them most willing and ready to.

Chapter Cxxxv

An example I shall rehearse to you of a great lady who was lady to a baron. This lady was a long time in the state of widowhood, and she had but one daughter, who was married to a great lord. She then became sick, and as she lay in her deathbed she had the chest where her treasure was stored sealed, and the key brought to her, which she put in a linen cloth under her back. As death approached her, who had always thought of her treasure, she lifted her hand making signs that none should approach her or come to her back. And thus she did until she died and rendered her soul out of her body. Then came her daughter, who was a great lady, and demanded of them that were at her death if she had any treasure. They answered that they knew of none, but thought that she had some, and that if she had any, it was hid somewhere about her bed. They told her the manner of her mother, and how that she would not suffer that anybody should come by her, and also how she made a chest to be sealed, and the key of it brought to her, which key she kept ever under her back. The corpse was moved and turned, and the key found; and then her daughter went into a tower where the chest was, and opened it; wherein she found, in coin as well as in plate, more than thirty thousand pounds, but the gold was found in cloths and balls of thread and wool, and in other things; whereof all that they knew and saw the manner of it were marvelled and abashed. The daughter then made a cross, and said, that in good faith she held her not so rich by the twenty-fifth part as she was, wherefore she marvelled much and was sore abashed. And yet she said how of late she and her lord also came to her, and prayed her to help and lend to them some of her goods until a certain time that they should render it and pay it to her again, and that she swore and made great oaths to them that she had no money, nor silver, but such plate as they saw abroad, and that was but a cup and a piece only; and therefore was she much marvelled to find there so great a treasure. Then said the folk which were with her, “Madame, be not ye marvelled, for we be thereof more marvelled than you; for if she would send on a message, or else as she had some other thing to do, she borrowed some money of our servants, and said that she had no money, by her faith.” The daughter took all these goods with her, and went her way toward her lord, to whom she was welcome; and of all this treasure was never given a halfpenny for the soul of their mother, but soon they forgot her. For it is not yet a long time gone that I was where she was buried, and demanded and asked of the monks of the abbey where she lay, and why she had no tomb on her, or some token of her. And they answered me that, since she was interred there, no Mass, nor no service at all, nor none other good there had been done for her. By this example may ye know how the devil is subtle to tempt the folk of the sin where he seeth them most attached, and so fast he holdeth them in it, that they may not leave it, without to be thereof confessed; and maketh them his servants, as he did the aforesaid lady. For he did so much that she was subject and servant to her gold, in such wise that she darest not take of it to do her any good. And therefore, my fair daughters, here is a good example of that, if it befall that God of his grace send you any great good, that ye depart largely of it to the poor folk, in the worship of God and for the love of him, and specially to your poor parents and neighbors; and leave it not to be departed by the hands of your heirs; as did this lady, for whom, after her death, was never Mass nor none other good done for her, as ye have heard before.
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