

## The Virtual Museum of Guilt (theme)

Mount proportional reproductions or thumbnail sketches of each entire image.

Curator Jane Doe

Catalog Entry # 1/5      Date the eternal present

### Alternative Image #1:

Title: **Pandora's Box**

Artist: **Rackham, Arthur, 1867-1939**

Date: **c.1900**

Medium: **Pen line with muted water color**

Image Source: <http://www.midnight-muse.com/1rackham.htm>



### Alternative Image #2:

Title: **Crime and Punishment**

Artist: **Grant, Duncan, 1885-1978**

Date: **1909**

Medium: **Oil on Canvas**

Image Source: <http://library.artstor.org>

(Image search: **Crime and Punishment “Duncan”**)



### Selected Image

Title: **Expulsion from the Garden of Eden**

Artist: **Cole, Thomas, 1801-1848**

Date: **1827-1828**

Medium: **Oil on Canvas**

Size: **99 x 137.2 cm**

Style: **Romantic Landscape**

Location: **Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**

Image Source: <http://library.artstor.org>

(Image search: **Expulsion from the Garden of Eden “Cole”**)



## **Selected Image** (continued)

### **Concise Description of Subject Matter and placement**

In the middle left of the image are Adam and Eve. In the upper right-hand corner is the Garden of Eden which is filled with edged with palm trees, water, and flowers that all fade into this bright pulsing light in the sky "God." In the bottom left-hand corner there is some sort of predator eating its prey. Volcanoes, fire and lightning are in the distant background of the upper left-hand corner. There is the entrance to the Garden of Eden, represented by a jagged rock tunnel in the middle of the image. There is a huge waterfall behind the ledge that Adam and Eve are on, and a dark pit along the bottom right of the image. There are also bright rays of light protruding from the gateway to Eden, implying the presence of a cherub or angel.

### **Salient Characteristics/Structure of Expressive Form**

**Emphasis and Subordination/Focal Points:** The most crucial point of the image is the small section where the two great directional lines cross. It is the middle-left side of the image where Adam and Eve are solemnly leaving the garden. Since it contains the only concrete reference to the narrative it is vital to the piece.

**Value Pattern:** There is an intense focus on the upper right-hand corner, drastically contrasting to the rest of the image which is relatively dark. There is a soft spotlight in the upper left-hand corner. A bright burst of light pierces the middle of the image and shines slightly down and toward the left side, dimly highlighting the features along the edge of the image.

**Color:** The Garden in the picture is a combination of bright whites, pale yellows, and soft greens. The remaining area of the image consists of dark, muted, combinations of brown, orange, red, and purple contrasting strongly with the other half.

**Spatial Organization:** The foreground of the image consists of the ledge in the bottom left corner, and the cliffs in the bottom right. The middle-ground includes Adam and Eve, the entrance to the Garden of Eden, and the plants and flowers in the garden. The Background consists of the volcanoes in the upper left hand corner and the bright light/sky in the upper right.

**Directional Forces/Implied Lines:** There is a definite vertical line on the left-hand side of the image, beginning with the volcano and going almost straight down the path of the waterfall. There is also a definite horizontal line that moves diagonally from the surge of light in the upper left-hand corner across the ledge with Adam and Eve, to the mid left side of the image.

**Rhythm and Repetition:** There are many tall, thin, and jagged triangles throughout the image.

### **Concise Description of Narrative and/or Context (historical, religious, biographical, mythological)**

The image depicts the Biblical story of Adam and Eve being banished from the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were the first man and women God created. Adam and Eve lived in paradise with God in His perfect garden. In the Garden there were two special trees, the tree of life, and the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil. One day Satan, disguised as a serpent, tricked Eve into eating fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, something God had forbidden. Eve gave the fruit to Adam who also ate it. God knew He couldn't let them stay in the garden and eat of the tree of life causing them, and their sin, to live forever. So He drove them out of the Garden of Eden, into the world, which was already dying from the Evil they had unleashed. Then God stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword at the entrance of the Garden of Eden, to guard the way to the tree of life.

## **Selected Image** (continued)

## **Research Sources Consulted:**

### **Style/Artist Cross Checks:**

With **Textbook** (chapter title and subheading, page number)

Preble's Art forms:

Chapter 20 – Late Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,

Romanticism                      pg. 355

With **Art Reference Book** (MLA citation)

Davies, Denny, ET. al. Janson's History of Art. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc. 2004:836

### **General Background Sources for relevant Narrative, Style, Context, Mythology, History, Artist Biography, etc.**

Google: Garden of Eden

Wikipedia: guilt, Adam and Eve, Expulsion

### **Other Authoritative Sources** (MLA citations)

The Lockman Foundation, Classic Reference Bible, New American Standard Bible – Updated Edition. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan 1999:2-4

## **Identifiable Iconography**

The volcano in the background causes an almost immediate assumption/reference to death, hell, depravity, and danger. The palm trees on the water in the Garden of Eden are symbols of paradise.

## **Special Signifiers**

### **1) Important Personal Associations**

Adam and Eve chose to sin and as a result they experienced separation from God. I think this image perfectly depicts the contrast of life with and without God. As the picture represents, to be with God is to be safe, in paradise; and to be separated from God is the most vulnerable, and scary reality imaginable.

### **2) Important Researched Associations**

Thomas Cole first started painting landscapes in 1825, and at first they were based on European landscape conventions that gave very little attention to details. This greatly contrasts with "Expulsion from the Garden of Eden," in which the viewer is nearly overwhelmed by the vast information and specific details etched into the landscape. As time went on Thomas Cole's works became more and more specific and less formulaic.

## **Four to Five concise descriptions using complete sentences describing specific interactions of Subject Matter, Form, Narrative/Context, and Iconography: evidence from both personal observation and research**

1. Thomas Cole considered nature as the undeniable hand of God. He was described as regarding the wilderness as something to be feared. Therefore in this image, consistent with his usual style, he creates a powerful, vast, and detailed, landscape that all but drowns out the two tiny, simplistic human figures. Their fear and vulnerability are shown to be extreme and daunting by their humble size in the image, and their weary and distressed stature. You can almost feel their anguish as they are overwhelmed by endless guilt.

2. The predator eating his prey hides in the shadows in the bottom-right hand corner of the image, almost an embodiment of the unforeseen trials and pain that not only them, but all of mankind would face because of their disobedience.

## **Selected Image** (continued)

### **Concise descriptions** (continued)

3. From within the rocky gateway from paradise come jagged rays of light also in long, triangular shapes. They push outward, their points like the sword of fire, driving Adam and Eve further into the stormy darkness of the wilderness.

4. The palm trees on the right and left hand sides of the image contrast the weather and elements within and outside the garden. The palm trees within the garden (on the right) look perfectly healthy, right on the water, in the sunshine. The trees on the left, however, are placed on the edge of a cliff, in the middle of a storm; being bent so far by the wind they look like they could snap at any moment.

5. The Garden of Eden in this picture has a very centered and unmoving feel to it. It seems to be stably focused around the light. Everywhere outside of the garden however, there is a great gravitational downward pull. From the lava that flows down the volcano, to the source of the storms, and all the way down the waterfall, to the rigid cliffs, everything pulls/points to the dark, void/pit. It's as if the Garden is frozen in a state of eternal, unshakable peace, while the rest of the world is crumbling and falling downward.

### **Unify the evidence above using complete sentences. Develop a complex and complete description of what this image and its context now suggests to you about the essence of or an aspect of your theme.**

Guilt is, in the essence of "Expulsion from the Garden of Eden," experiencing the aftermath of your wrong choices. Adam and Eve's once perfect world is withering around them in the death and sin they unleashed. The undefined darkness that engulfs most of the image shows the consuming pressure and effect guilt can have on our lives. The small dimensions of Adam and Eve are shameful in contrast to the overpowering engulfing landscape. Sometimes the repercussions of our mistakes are so massive and detrimental that in our guilt we are nearly crushed by them. The finality of the blocked entrance to the garden and perfection are perfect representations of how sometimes once we've made a choice there is no way of going back, no way of taking back the words, or removing the guilt, what's done is done, and what's lost is lost forever.

### **One sentence summary: a claim about your theme based upon 1) essential aspects of the form, and (2) researched and relevant content**

Adam and Eve's small size and shamed gestures in context with the dark engulfing landscape suggest that the humility, remorse, and vulnerability of their guilt is in the loss of the light and warmth of the Garden of Eden.





