

George Van Cleve Speer

# Things of the Spirit

---

ART AND HEALING  
IN THE AMERICAN BODY POLITIC,  
1929–1941



---

LITERATURE AND THE VISUAL ARTS  
NEW FOUNDATIONS

In the 1930s, the crises brought about by the Depression, climatic devastation, and the rearmament of Europe led Americans from all walks of life to believe that capitalism and technology had synthesized into a monstrous force that threatened the human race. And yet, this chaotic decade also witnessed an unprecedented level of support, both rhetorical and institutional, for the importance of art in the lives of everyday Americans. This book investigates that paradox, asking why, when simple survival presented its own obstacles, our historically pragmatic culture began to define art as a necessity rather than a luxury. To answer this question, the book traces the symbolism of the embattled and recuperative body across a broad spectrum of American culture in the Machine Age. The book situates this symbolism within the commentary of artists, novelists, critics, and educators who trusted in the power of artistic expression and the experience of art to restore the health of the body politic.

**George Van Cleve Speer** received his doctoral degree from Washington University in St. Louis. After serving as Curator of the Luce Foundation Center for American Art at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Dr. Speer came to Northern Arizona University, where he is Assistant Professor of Art History in the Department of Comparative Cultural Studies and Director of the NAU Art Museum.

# Things of the Spirit

# Literature and the Visual Arts

## New Foundations

Ernest B. Gilman  
*General Editor*

Vol. 17



PETER LANG

New York • Washington, D.C./Baltimore • Bern  
Frankfurt • Berlin • Brussels • Vienna • Oxford

George Van Cleve Speer

# Things of the Spirit

ART AND HEALING  
IN THE AMERICAN BODY POLITIC,  
1929–1941



PETER LANG

New York • Washington, D.C./Baltimore • Bern  
Frankfurt • Berlin • Brussels • Vienna • Oxford

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Speer, George V.  
Things of the spirit: art and healing in the American body politic, 1929–1941 /  
George Van Cleve Speer.  
p. cm. — (Literature and the visual arts; v. 17)  
Includes bibliographical references and index.  
1. Art and society—United States—History—20th century.  
2. Art—Political aspects—United States—History—20th century.  
3. Art, American—20th century—Themes, motives. I. Title.  
N72.S6S666 701'.0309730904—dc23 2012000741  
ISBN 978-1-4331-1568-4 (hardcover)  
ISBN 978-1-4539-0225-7 (e-book)  
ISSN 0888-3890

Bibliographic information published by **Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek**.  
**Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek** lists this publication in the “Deutsche  
Nationalbibliografie”; detailed bibliographic data is available  
on the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de/>.

The paper in this book meets the guidelines for permanence and durability  
of the Committee on Production Guidelines for Book Longevity  
of the Council of Library Resources.



© 2012 Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., New York  
29 Broadway, 18th floor, New York, NY 10006  
[www.peterlang.com](http://www.peterlang.com)

All rights reserved.  
Reprint or reproduction, even partially, in all forms such as microfilm,  
xerography, microfiche, microcard, and offset strictly prohibited.

Printed in Germany

## Dedication

This book represents the contributions and unflagging support of many individuals. I am very grateful to Caitlin Lavelle and Sarah Stack at Peter Lang Publishing for their support of this project and for patiently shepherding me through the process of bringing the manuscript to press.

I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to two stalwart friends and mentors, Dr. Eleanor Harvey of the Smithsonian American Art Museum and Dr. Angela Miller of Washington University in St. Louis. For technical help, hand-holding and dark humor, I thank my friends Patricia Lynagh (former Research Librarian at SAAM) and Andrew Thomas at the National Gallery of Art.

I would like to recognize Dr. Alexander Nemerov of Yale University, whose work has taught me that art history must be eloquent and imaginative as well as archival.

This project would not have got off the ground without the generous suggestions of Dr. Casey Blake, Columbia University, and Dr. Howard Brick, University of Michigan, both of whom helped to define this book as an exercise in American culture studies.

Early and much-appreciated support for the book came from the Patricia and Phillip Frost Fellowship in American art and visual culture at SAAM. I take this opportunity, as well, to offer profound thanks to my colleagues in the Department of Comparative Cultural Studies at Northern Arizona University for their enthusiasm and encouragement over the last five years. And, I express my deepest gratitude to Dean Michael Vincent and the College of Arts and Letters at NAU for innumerable contributions of institutional support. I hope this book will reflect well upon the university and will redeem the trust of so many who have invested in it.





## Acknowledgments

- Figure 1 Winslow Homer  
*Old Mill (The Morning Bell)*  
*Morning Bell*  
Yale University Art Gallery  
Bequest of Stephen Carlton Clark,  
B.A. 1903
- Figure 2 Winslow Homer  
*The Veteran in a New Field*  
Bequest of Miss Adelaide Milton de Groot  
(1876–1967), 1967
- Figure 3 Thomas Pollock Anshutz, 1851–1912  
*The Ironworkers' Noontime*, 1880  
Oil on canvas, 17 x 23 7/8 in. (43.2 x 60.6cm)  
Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco,  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd.,  
1979.7.4
- Figure 7 Joseph Stella  
*Voice of the City of New York Interpreted (detail,*  
*The Brooklyn Bridge (The Bridge)*  
1920–22  
Oil and tempera on canvas  
Purchase 1937 Felix Fuld Bequest Fund  
37.288
- Figure 10 *General Motors–Futurama–Visitors in*  
*Moving Chairs Viewing Exhibit*  
New York World's Fair 1939–1940 Records,  
Manuscripts and Archives Division,  
The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox  
and Tilden Foundations

- Figure 16      Henry Billings, American, 1901–1987  
*Men and Machines*, 1941  
Lithograph  
35.9 x 40 cm (14 1/8 x 15 3/4 in.)  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston  
Fund in memory of  
Horatio Greenough Curtis  
2002.662
- Figure 20      Douglass Crockwell  
*Paper Workers*  
1964.1.152  
Smithsonian American Art Museum,  
Transfer from the U.S. Department  
of Labor
- Figure 28      Charles Sheeler  
*Steam Turbine*  
1939  
Oil on canvas  
Collection of The Butler Institute  
of American Art  
Youngstown, Ohio
- Figure 29      Charles Sheeler  
*Suspended Power*, 1939  
Oil on canvas  
Overall: 33 x 26 x 2 in. (83.82 x 66.04 x 5.08 cm)  
Framed dimensions: 39 3/8 x 32 1/4 x 2 1/4 in.  
(100 x 81.915 x 5.7 cm)  
Dallas Museum of Art, gift of Edmund J. Kahn
- Figure 30      Alexandre Hogue  
*Erosion No. 2—Mother Earth Laid Bare*, 1936  
Museum purchase, 1946.4  
© 2012 Philbrook Museum of Art, Inc.,  
Tulsa, Oklahoma

- Figure 32      Allan Thomas  
*Extending the Frontier in  
Northwest Territory*  
1938, oil on canvas  
Photograph © 1980,  
Dirk Bakker
- Figure 33      Xavier Gonzalez  
*Pioneer Saga*  
1941, oil on canvas  
Photograph courtesy of  
Barbara Melosh
- Figure 34      Seymour Fogel  
*People of the Soil*  
1940, oil on canvas  
Photograph courtesy of  
Barbara Melosh
- Figure 42      Xavier Gonzalez  
*Tennessee Valley Authority*  
1937, oil on canvas  
Photograph courtesy of  
Barbara Melosh
- Figure 43      Mural Study  
*Scenes of American Life, 1937*  
Produced for Department of  
Interior Building competition,  
Washington, DC, organized by  
Section of Painting and Sculpture  
Treasury Department (unrealized)  
New York  
Oil on canvas  
30 3/4 x 55 7/8 inches (78.1 x 141.9 cm)  
The Wolfsonian–Florida International  
University, Miami Beach, Florida,

The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection  
87.1137.5.1 Photo: Bruce White

- Figs. 45–46     Diego Rivera  
*Detroit Industry*, 1932–33, fresco  
Photographs © Bridgeman Art  
Library International
- Figure 48     Diego Rivera  
*Detroit Industry* (detail), 1932–33, fresco  
Photograph © Bridgeman Art  
Library International
- Figure 49     Diego Rivera  
*The Making of a Fresco Showing the  
Building of a City*, 1931, fresco,  
271 x 357 in (6.95 x 9.15 m),  
San Francisco Art Institute
- Figs. 50–51     Gilbert Wilson  
*Liberation*, 1935,  
chalk mural, two panels  
Photograph © Dale Bernstein
- Figure 53     Hugo Gellert  
*Pieces of Silver*, 1936, 1994.56  
Collection of the Swope Art Museum
- Figure 54     Lamar Baker  
*Religion*, 1936  
1998.115.4  
Smithsonian American Art Museum,  
Gift by exchange from The Columbus  
Museum, Georgia

- Figure 55      Lucienne Bloch  
*Land of Plenty*, 1936  
Woodblock Cut by Lucienne Bloch  
(1909–1999)  
Courtesy Old Stage Studios  
[www.luciennebloch.com](http://www.luciennebloch.com)
- Figure 57      Stuart Davis (American, 1892–1964)  
*Salt Shaker*  
1931. Oil on canvas, 49 7/8 x 32"  
(126.5 x 81.2 cm).  
Gift of Edith Gregor Halpert  
543.1954  
<http://www.moma.org>  
Art © Estate of Stuart Davis/  
Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY
- Figure 58      Stuart Davis (American, 1892–1964)  
*ITLKSEZ*  
1921  
watercolor/collage  
Art © Estate of Stuart Davis/  
Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY
- Cover Art      Grant Wood  
*Spring in Town*  
1942  
oil on masonite  
Collection of the Swope Art Museum  
Art © Figge Art Museum, successors to  
the Estate of Nan Wood Graham/  
Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY



## Table of Contents

Prologue	1
Chapter One: We Have Good News and Bad News: Fascist Contagion and American Antibodies	19
Chapter Two: Back to the Garden: Regionalism, Manly Men, and the Madonna of the Meadow	69
Chapter Three: Gentle Persuasion: <i>Detroit Industry</i> and the Labor of Art	121
Chapter Four: 'Good Art is Life-Giving': Activism, Abstraction, and the Sociality of Art	167
Epilogue	209
Bibliography	215
Index	225





## Prologue

Winslow Homer's *The Morning Bell* (Figure 1) from 1866 records the dutiful journey of a factory girl from the light and warmth of the out-of-doors to the confinement of a New England mill. This canvas and Homer's *Veteran in a New Field* of 1865 (Figure 2) evoke a return to work and to the ordinary after the Civil War. The overt symbolism of the dark, hulking structure echoes in more subtle details: The young woman appears right of center, not fully committed to that half of the painting dominated by the mill; the tilt of her bonnet directs the viewer's eye up and away from the mill, as if to suggest a reluctance, an inward drawing back from her destination. The roughly constructed boardwalk evokes a gangplank or a seesaw that threatens to spill her into the airless, noisy factory as she reaches the tipping point. At the particular moment Homer has pictured, the girl might decide to turn truant, veering left, down the slatted ramp and into the grass and flowers.



Fig.1 Winslow Homer, *Old Mill (The Morning Bell)*, 1866, o/c

But the tipping point is not just hers; this painting reflects a moment when the nation was on the brink of redefining itself as a modern, industrialized state very different from the agrarian, individualistic America of *Veteran in a New Field*.<sup>1</sup> In the earlier work, Homer positioned the returned soldier at the very center of the image, in the heart of his fields. The strong vertical of the figure, contrasting so sharply with the horizontal planes that predominate, suggests a spiritual uprightness, a return to generational responsibilities of farm and family. The man casts aside his canteen and army-issue jacket and wades into the wheat, swinging the scythe with long, powerful strokes as if determined to put the war and its crushing moral confusion behind him. Effulgent sunlight, shining on the veteran and coaxing the grain out of the earth, infuses the image with clarity of purpose.



Fig.2 Winslow Homer, (1836–1910). *The Veteran in a New Field*. 1865. Oil on canvas, 24 1/8 x 38 1/8 in. (61.3 x 96.8 cm). Bequest of Miss Adelaide Milton de Groot (1876–1967), 1967 (67.187.131). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, U.S.A. Image copyright © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY

The man and woman in these works embody conflicting expectations for America that did not arise, suddenly, after the war, but had

contended with one another from the earliest days of the republic. From the colonial period onward, technology was associated with thrift, hard work, and physical and spiritual health. Through technology, the colonies established their material independence from Britain, while the ability of machines to reduce the burden of labor was seen as a republican virtue of lessening oppression and suffering.

American goods did not carry the “contagion” of European luxury, which fed unhealthy appetites that threatened our discipline and sense of duty. Tench Coxe, an important figure in the cotton business as well as an office-holder in Jefferson’s administration, regarded the taste for expensive foreign goods as “a malignant and alarming symptom, threatening convulsions and dissolution to the political body.” Enthusiastic early American industrialists saw technological unemployment (the elimination of as many workers as possible from factory processes) as a means of freeing able-bodied men for work in the fields. In 1830, the Philadelphia publisher Mathew Carey asserted that technological progress in the United States was necessary to the health of the nation, whose physical and spiritual condition would otherwise suffer. In the factory town of Lowell, Massachusetts, women, the elderly, and children—the “lesser” bodies within the body politic—were expected to adopt the qualities of “order, regularity and industry” manifested in the machinery they attended. In turn, the moral and physical health of these citizens, embodied a generation later in Homer’s mill-girl, would help build a nation.

In 1855, Herman Melville’s short story “The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids” described an hallucinatory visit to a paper mill in the shadow of “Woedolor Mountain.” The narrator, a seed vendor hoping to secure supplies from the mill, discovers “rows of blank-looking girls...all blankly folding blank paper” taken from the “iron animals” whom they serve “mutely and cringingly as the slave serves the Sultan.”<sup>2</sup> Melville imagined the paper presses as living beings and, moreover, as rebellious servants, expressing two of the principal anxieties that accompanied our embrace of the “machine in the garden” well into the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> *Veteran in a New Field* and *The Morning Bell* belong to a range of images related to Melville’s, a symbolic territory of the laboring body and the body politic whose futures would be determined by that embrace.

The veteran, the mill-girl and Melville's seed-man share the loss or inversion of identities and destinies. The veteran was taken from his farm and husbandry and obliged to kill his countrymen; in the next fifteen or twenty years, he will perhaps be displaced again as technology takes farming out of his hands. For as long as she works at the mill, the young girl will not be permitted to marry and create a home as distant generations of women had done. Instead, she will be her own breadwinner, tending to spools and bobbins rather than her own children. Melville's narrator, who boasted that he would scatter his seed to the frontiers of the virgin wilderness, discovers at Woedolor Mountain that his sexual power has been preempted. Within the paper mill, giant pistons pump great streams of white fluid to the chambers where women press and mold the mass into reams of blank paper. The spectacle un-mans the narrator, who finds himself as pale and faint as the silent girls who fold and carry, fold and carry.

In *The Morning Bell*, the girl's face is shadowed by her bonnet in a manner that allows us to think of her as *all* of the factory girls who found themselves in her predicament. She represents a mode of nineteenth-century American experience, a specific culture and way of life. Homer's men and women often turn their faces from the viewer, thwarting our desire to know precisely how they feel or how they complete the story; in a similar sense, the Lowell women relieved the monotony of their jobs by cultivating the ability to perform their tasks while indulging in fantasies beyond the surveillance of foremen. Looking at *The Morning Bell*, we, too, are free to imagine different narratives. Is the apparent narrative the only one, or is it possible that the girl is asleep and dreaming of the routine that awaits her in the morning? Or is she already in the factory at her loom, breathing in rag fibers that will destroy her lungs before she is thirty but, just at this moment, remembering the fine morning she left behind?

Underpaid millworkers quickly grew familiar with the insidious effects of the machine. At Lowell, many rebelled against the system, protesting against the machine-driven "monster" of greed "drawing his fatal folds around us as a nation." The agitators warned of the emergence of a corrupted race that would one day fill the hospitals "with worn-out operatives and colored slaves." The women spoke of themselves not as human beings, but as "operatives," employing the

technical language of the shop; this neutrality disappeared instantly, however, pushed aside by the most damning comparison the women could make, with the slave race of their day. Resisting the colonizing of their bodies and minds by the machine, the factory workers revealed its true extent by presenting themselves as the “Voice of Industry.”<sup>4</sup>



Fig.3 Thomas Anshutz, *The Ironworkers' Noontime*, 1880, o/c

By 1880, when Thomas Anshutz painted *Ironworkers' Noontime* (Figure 3), technology had profoundly complicated the self-awareness of Americans. *Ironworkers' Noontime* is encoded with ethnic and class distinctions as well as the tension between a workingman's autonomy and the demands of modern industry. Like Homer in *The Morning Bell*, Anshutz makes the human labor that powers the mill visible to us. And, as in the earlier painting, another bell will summon these men to their places on the line.

The theme of the painting and bright sunlight suggest an escape from the oppressive interior of the mill, but everywhere Anshutz signals that the respite is temporary. The varied postures and groupings,

the virility and rambunctiousness of the men violate the regularized production process that Anshutz implies through the repetition of smokestacks and windows. At the same time, however, the group of figures describes a triangular footprint whose point rests along the perpendicular right leg of the foremost worker. The men are compositionally contained by the same geometry that governs the truss work inside the mill. Their freedom is incomplete and conditional. Noon is that moment when the sun is directly overhead, the hinge of the daylight hours, which Anshutz has faithfully represented. But *noontime* is mandated by the factory and is perhaps the only opportunity these men have to be outdoors. They flex, roughhouse, wash the grime from their necks and take in the fresh air, but they are still trapped by the time clock that regulates their days. Cart tracks beneath six of the figures suggest that if they tarry, the ironworkers will be run down by more equipment on the move.

The array of poses dignifies each figure; physical capability radiates from sinewed torsos and three of the men look boldly towards the viewer. A closer look, however, complicates our understanding of the image. All of these men appear to have the light skin of northern Europeans; glimpses of light-brown or red hair suggest that the ironworkers might have come to America in one of the great waves of immigration. Anshutz has depicted a group of men who were twice marginalized, for their suspicious ethnicity and for their caste, as laborers.<sup>5</sup>

From the perspective of the time, the “otherness” of these men was apparent in the narrative and sealed by their transgressive nudity. In the nineteenth century, as in the twenty-first, foreign workers coming to the United States fueled mistrust among Anglo-Saxon Americans and among those who controlled a vast proportion of the nation’s wealth. Additionally, among the Germans, Irish, Italians and Poles, cultural and nationalist prejudices rooted in centuries of European history translated to the United States. In 1857, John Roebling—an enormously successful German emigre’ who would go on to design the Brooklyn Bridge—fired all of the Irishmen laboring on his Cincinnati span for having demanded higher pay. Writing from a city defined by its immigrant citizenry, Roebling wrote to his son, Washington, “the Germans about here are mostly loyal, the Irish alone are

disloyal." For good measure, the engineer declared that Democrats who claimed to speak for the working class also could not be trusted.

With a steely, almost frightening self-discipline and a grasp of modern engineering that was both intuitive and objectively rigorous, Roebling embodied progress. But Roebling's investment in modernity was as much spiritual as material. Educated by Hegel, he believed that the infrastructure of the western world—its bridges, railroads, ships and communications—was the authentic expression of those who created it and could belong to no other time. His anger at the Irish laborers had as much to do with their failure to recognize the *symbolic* value of the Cincinnati bridge, its emblematic modernity and promise of communities knitted together. It was not enough that a structure be sound and sturdy, it must serve a common good. Roebling regarded his engineering work as a form of communion, for "Human reason is the work of God and He gave it to us so that we can recognize him."<sup>6</sup>

If the men who controlled the money and politics behind the nation's great projects regarded themselves as distinct from common laborers, Thomas Anshutz's viewpoint was similarly distanced from the community pictured in *The Ironworkers' Noontime*. On the one hand, Anshutz ennobled the ironworkers, taking the Parthenon pediment, laying it on its face, and populating it with working-class Apollos; but the static quality of his figures and regularity of "type" suggest the painter's awareness of the limitations in his subjects' lives. Read from one margin to the other, *Ironworkers' Noontime* describes a full turn of the human figure and variations from supine to erect. So far, so good—a subtle and methodical chart of male physicality with an implication of phallic power. But in the "gear and girder" era of the 1880s, "charting" human kinetics quickly led to an understanding of human labor as a mechanical process of consuming and producing energy.<sup>7</sup> Anshutz's rationalizing gaze transforms the men into what Randall Griffin has described as "cogs of a picturesque and sublime machine."<sup>8</sup> Anticipating motion studies, efficiency experts, and Henry Ford's assembly line, the artist sees the future of the class and, to an extent, colludes in its fate.

Thomas Jefferson's yeoman farmer, whose independence and work ethic would define the republic—and whom Homer honored in



*Veteran in a New Field*—was not extinct by 1880. Out of a population of fifty million Americans, more than twenty-two million still farmed.

Nevertheless, the decade would see the introduction of mechanized binding, horse-drawn combines and gasoline tractors. Agriculture, by 1889, would account for seventy-six percent of America's exports, a figure that would grow as machinery reduced the man-hours it took to plant, nurture, and harvest. Farming would become industry, subsumed into ideologies of technological progress and new prospects for the nation's future.

But along with standardization came exaltation of a new kind. Walt Whitman turned from the "blacken'd, mutilated corpses" that populated his memory of the Civil War. He praised, instead, the public works of his age and the men who made them possible, "...thy undaunted armies, Engineering!/ Thy pennants, Labor, loosen'd to the breeze!"<sup>9</sup>

"Lo, soul!" Whitman entreated, "seest thou not God's purpose from the first?/The earth to be spann'ed, connected by net-work,... The races, neighbors, to marry and be given in marriage,...You, not for trade or transportation only,/But in God's name, and for thy sake, O soul."<sup>10</sup> For Whitman, America must take its place among the righteous nations, redeeming the sins of slavery and fratricide through its beneficent technology. The association of technology and mythic titanism did not begin with Whitman, but the robust poet introduced the passionate language through which subsequent generations celebrated, or trembled before, our great works. In 1870, the English critic Anne Gilchrist wrote that Whitman embodied the promise of America, for "only a young giant of a nation could produce this kind of greatness, so full of the ardour...the joyousness, the audacity of youth."<sup>11</sup> America, Whitman, even progress itself stood incarnate on the nation's horizons.

At the Philadelphia Exposition marking America's centennial, the great Corliss Engine (Figure 4) stupefied the fair's visitors with its scale and rumbling power. The Corliss evoked a new species, brought to life with steam instead of blood in its veins. Author and critic William Dean Howells related in *The Atlantic Monthly* that "Now and then [the engineer]...climbers up one of the stairways...and touches some irritated spot on the giant's body with a drop of oil...he is like



some potent enchanter there.”<sup>12</sup> Technology was magic, and in the next century, Howells’ idea of the engineer as a wizard or alchemist would become a powerfully persuasive tool among America’s technocratic elite and the industrialists who supported them.

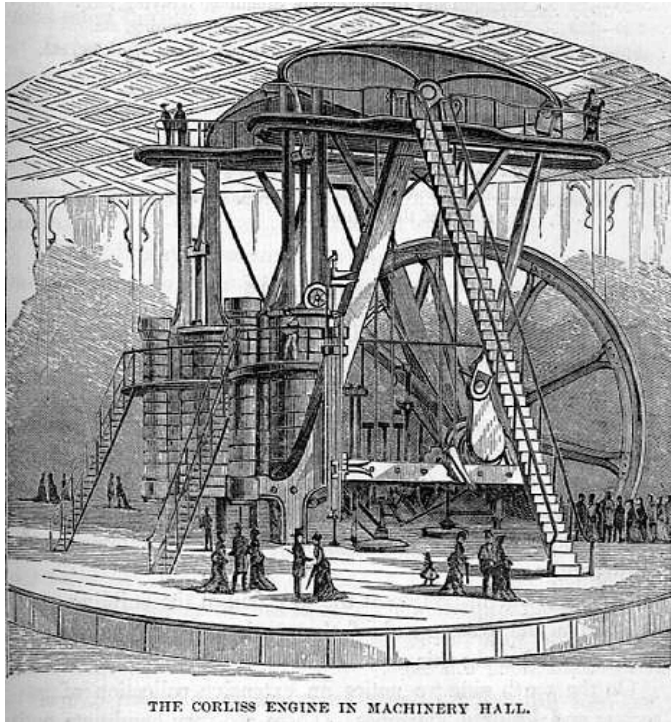


Fig.4 Corliss Engine, engraving, c.1876

The Brooklyn Bridge—one of the greatest technological achievements of the nineteenth century—opened to the public on May 24, 1883. An engraving (Figure 5) deployed classical and religious allegory to commemorate the event: The dawn of a new day rises over the East River. Goddesses of Manhattan and Brooklyn greet one another like housewives over a fence. The scale of the bridge is heightened by the microscopic landscape of Brooklyn below, while overhead, putti unfurl a banner to celebrate the achievement much as painters of the past had announced the triumph of the Church.

For the press and for the project’s supporters, the bridge embodied the “technological sublime” as a new source of transcendence in a

“desacralized” world.<sup>13</sup> Images of our modern inventions as both marvelous machines and creatures of a new race resonated in the nearly thirty-year effort to erect the Brooklyn Bridge. The project survived the venality of politics and contracting largely through the determined vision of John Roebling and his son, Washington. From the now iconic gothic towers to the smallest wires and couplings, every detail was imagined, created, and sent out to survive or fail.



Fig.5 “Finis Coronat Opus,” Cover of *The Daily Graphic*, 1883

Much was accomplished on intuition and faith, as if to prove John Roebling’s belief that mathematics and engineering were modes of spiritual communion. Favorable newspapers urged the public to remain steadfast, particularly when the bridge began to claim victims.

The towers rose out of the East River like dripping giants, but not without cost. John Roebling died of tetanus after an accident on the girders; Irishmen like those whom Roebling had dismissed in Cincinnati worked in the caissons, many suffering horribly from “the