## 5. Garden Agon

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## He who makes a garden, his own unmaking makes.

A garden is the wresting of form from nature. In this sense, making a garden is synonymous with work, in that it intervenes in nature, and more particularly with art as a kind of work, in that it produces form. Making a garden, like making other works of art and unlike practicing agriculture, involves producing form for its own sake. One might harvest the garden, but to do so or not to do so will not determine the status of the space as a garden. In making a garden one composes with living things, intervening in and contextualizing, and thus changing, their form without determining all aspects of their development or end. The garden thereby is linked to other means of ordering life: codifying and ritualizing social time and space and creating political orders and social hierarchies-including the organization of military order, or structures of force. In this latter feature resides the long-standing connection between making gardens and making war. The garden has, by definition, an articulated boundary. That boundary must be held or defended against wilderness on one side and interiority or an excess of subjective will on the other. The garden can only be used to pursue an agenda of organic growth by maintaining a posture of defense.1 Yet war is as well the antithesis of the garden, for the ends of war are the destruction of life and the undoing of order. Gardens and war share a teleology of death, but the garden promises cyclical time in which living things might extend beyond their makers and death remains in its season. In the garden, death becomes the seedbed of birth. If natural history repeats itself, then that is the nature of more than human history. War short-circuits nature; it is the outcome of acts of human will that risk the destruction of human time and, increasingly in this century, the destruction of Nature herself. The harvest of war

is early death; the garden as "lachrymae musarum" is dedicated to the shepherd, hunter, and poet stricken by war.

Any work, including the work of art, is subject to contingency; in the garden contingency is dominated by the indeterminacy of weather. A garden involves composition with living things; it can also involve composition with inert matter-walls, rocks, stones, bricks, gravel, walkways, statues, urns, and other material artifacts. But such inert matter is thereby made meaningful by its juxtaposition to living forms. When we find the encroachment of moss on a brick or thyme on a rock appealing, we are pleased by the contrast between the fixity of the inert and the mutability of its natural frame. When we find an obelisk in a field of weeds or, as with Wallace Stevens's jar in Tennessee, we place a fixed form in a wilderness, an analogous pleasure arises from the opposite relation of figure to ground. Stone will endure; the sundial will orient us in time and space—this is the sensibility of the Enlightenment and the cult of order. Water will wear stone away; all the fixed world will decay-this is the sensibility of the Romantic and the cult of ruin. Such issues of work, form, mutability, and contingency have been for almost thirty years the focus of the Scottish poet Ian Hamilton Finlay. Born in 1925 in the Bahamas, Finlay served from 1944 to 1947 with the Royal Army Supply Corps and was sent to Germany, where he was witness to the fighting at the end of the war. On his return he worked for a period as a shepherd on the Orkney Islands. Since 1966 he has made his garden an important aspect of his life and work—a garden he has built around himself with the help of his wife Sue Finlay and many collaborators.2 Extending across a four-and-one-half acre site in the Pentland foothills at Dunsyre, Lanarkshire, approximately twenty-five miles southwest of Edinburgh, the garden stands where there was originally a farm croft called Stonypath that was part of a larger estate belonging to Sue Finlay's family. The garden was renamed Little Sparta in 1983 when it was twice the scene of struggles with the Strathclyde regional government over the status of a building at the site called the "Garden Temple." Since 1978 the artist has wanted the building rated as a religious building; the local authorities considered it to be a gallery and decided to seize a number of Finlay's artworks on February 4, 1983, as payment for back taxes. Finlay and his supporters staged a resistance to the seizure that was both symbolic and real. Armed with water pistols, garden hoses, Finlay's old horse,3 and what has been described as the world's longest string-and-tin-can telephone system, the group, calling themselves the Saint-Just Vigilantes, met the police and authorities while members of the press served as witnesses. 4 Finlay's group flew a flag of Apollo's lyre (for inwardness) juxtaposed with an oerlikon gun (for action)—the gun substituting for the god's usual bow.5 The sheriff officer was not successful in confiscating works. Finlay struck a commemorative medal of the battle and installed a monument at the entrance to "the battlefield." On March 15 the sheriff officer returned and removed works from the Garden Temple. Some of these belonged to Finlay, but many had been commissioned by, or sold to, other individuals and institutions. The works were placed in a bank vault and most were never recovered. Finlay closed Little Sparta for a year. In 1984



Figure 1. Protest group of Finlay supporters at the Scotlish Arts Council, 1983. Image courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Museum.

the Vigilantes removed two of Finlay's neoclassical stone reliefs from Scottish Arts Council headquarters and installed them in the Garden Temple as war spoils; the garden was again opened.<sup>6</sup>

The two "Little Sparta Wars" were only the first of several "battles" Finlay has had with the arts establishment and the state. Before the 1983 wars, Finlay had conducted a mail campaign to discredit the Fulcrum Press after it published one of his works as a first edition; the work had, in fact, already appeared seven years before in a first edition and had been reprinted in a second edition. The "Follies Battle" of 1987 was another quarrel conducted by pamphleteering and through postcards and posters; in this case, the argument centered on a planned National Trust Book of Follies, which included an inauthentic description of the garden at Stonypath. The book was criticized by many artists and scholars for its inaccuracies and careless categorization of monuments. But perhaps the most difficult struggle in which Finlay has been engaged was his loss of a commission he had been given by the French government in April 1987. This commission was to install a garden commemorating the Declaration of the Rights of Man on the site of the Assembly Hall in Versailles. Finlay was a more likely choice for this commission than might be at first evident, for throughout the 1980s his art had been concerned with issues of neoclassicism and the French Revolution. But

within a few months of the culture ministry's announcement, an editor of the Paris magazine Art Press, Catherine Millet, led a public campaign to have Finlay denied the commission after she saw that he had used the Nazi SS sign, or lightning image, in his work OSSO. This work was on display in an unrelated exhibition at the gallery ARC in Paris during the same period. The ministry withdrew the commission in March 1988, announcing that "the detestable climate of opinion created by a campaign led by certain personalities and organs of the press" made it impossible to pursue the Finlay project. Finlay eventually won a libel suit in the French courts against his detractors and was awarded a symbolic one franc in restitution.8

These events, replete with contention and multiple rhetorical frameworks, might be seen not so much as interruptions in Finlay's career, but as integral aspects of his dialectical art. We are reminded of all the meanings accruing around the term agona place of games, lists, courses; a national assembly of contests; a struggle for life and death; a battle; an action at law or trial; the argument of a speech; agony or anguish of the mind; the contest of the rhapsode; the struggle to assert oneself.9 Finlay has not designed or intended the specific shape such battles will take. And certainly the cancellation of the Versailles commission was a catastrophe for him, as it was for contemporary art more generally. But as Finlay's body of work has developed, the issue of strife and the pursuit of strife are key elements to his aesthetic. His work explores, in an open-ended and speculative way, the relations between art, thought, law, and war-the garden is quite literally a defense of poetry, a memory and vatic exercise at once on the meaning of war and on the meaning of making and unmaking more generally. There is an element of isolation, defensiveness, and misinterpretation deriving from the circumstances of his method of producing art that would seem to lead inevitably to trouble. The difficult rhetorical task of moving a public audience to ethical action, the inevitable stress involved in collaborative work and the recognition of individual ego, the harsh conditions under which the garden has been built-all are factors that make Finlay's art simultaneously intransigent and sublime.

### The garden is not about nature, but is rather a transformation of nature.

The theme of Finlay's garden is not nature. In this Finlay follows closely the worldview of the pre-Socratics: "In front of man stands not Nature, but the power of the
gods, and they intervene as easily in the natural world as in the life of men." 10 As
Anaximander linked seasonal repetition or periodicity to a law of time, so does Finlay
link the reappearance of phenomena in history to the periodicity of the garden. Finlay
called a series of works he made with Nicholas Sloan and David Paterson in 1980
Nature Over Again after Poussin, inverting Cézanne's dictum "Poussin over again after
nature." When Finlay strategically places inscribed stone signatures in the garden
landscape—as he has with Dürer's AD beside the temple pool, evoking Dürer's Great
Piece of Turf (Das Grosse Rasenstuck), and the names of Poussin, Claude (Lorrain),
Friedrich, and Corot elsewhere in the garden—he reminds us that our perception of

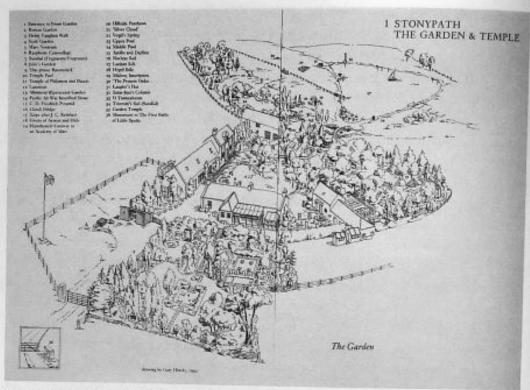


Figure 2. Ian Hamilton Finlay. Map of Stoneypath/Little Sparta 1992. Drawing by Gary Hincks. Image courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Museum.

the landscape is framed historically.<sup>11</sup> Although the garden is very much bound up with issues of pictorialism and framing more generally, we do not derive from it a picture of, or story about, nature that is separable from an account of human nature. More specifically, we find history presented as both an expression of human nature and the sister of memory. The viewer of the garden is confronted with the realization that all space here has been made *semantic* space—the garden speaks the gardener's intention; there is no "background" or "backdrop" per se; there is the imposition of boundary, which is a task constantly reimposed on the viewer.

The Pentland Hills are within the edge of Roman dominion, between the walls of Hadrian and Antoninus, 12 yet they also are a particularly hostile, northern environment for the revival of neoclassical ideals that Finlay proposes. Finlay follows, within an agenda of what might be called "neo" neoclassicism, the project of the Enlightenment's revival of classical order, a revival already both hampered and enabled by its distance from, and incommensurability with, the classical world. The *tone* of Finlay's use of allusion continually fluctuates between fervent idealism and the ironic distance of parody—a layering that results in multiple, yet specific, interpretations. In Finlay's account, historical events are simultaneously tragedy and farce; this is not a matter of the relativity of points of view—indeed it is directly opposed to such relativism. Rather, to see both tragedy and farce is an outcome of a sustained and moral meditation on history.

The overall structure of the garden is articulated by the heavily bounded and hedged front garden before the house; the large middle garden behind the house, with



Figure 3. The Garden Temple, Little Sparta, 1982. Image courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Museum.

a pond and water plants and the Garden Temple; and the woodland area beyond with its many small glades and groves and eventual vistas over the larger ponds. One's progress through the garden mirrors the historical progress of the making of the garden: with significant exceptions, one moves temporally from older to newer projects, spatially from density to wilderness, and thematically from interiority to public forms. This tripled and dialectical structure appears as well in the architecture of the Garden Temple: a Main Room designed as an homage to the classical and pastoral themes of the French Revolution, the "idyll of Rousseau"; an Intermediary Room of themes of Virtue, Terror, and Revolution; and a Dark Room, used in 1984 to store the stone reliefs conceived as war trophies. 13

The plants in Finlay's garden include rowans, ash, conifers, wild cherries, yellow elderberry, varieties of cornus, and ground plants such as geraniums, strawberries, lamium, ajuga, alchemilla, astilbes, brunnera, campanulas, hellebores, hostas, nepeta, saxifrages, sedums, and thymes; flowering plants include lilies, lupines, irises, astrantia, foxgloves, verbenas, yellow water iris and bulrush, soft rush, reeds and kingcups, and water lilies. Finlay uses cherries as emblems of Rousseau, citing a famous passage in the philosopher's autobiography, and he uses birches, which are difficult to grow at the site, as emblems of both extinction and discipline—"Bring back the birch" reads a stone inscription planted in a little grove of birches. But with these exceptions, the plants are not allegorical; they are, as Finlay explains, "whatever will grow." This philosophy of planting might be compared to a constructivist—or, more simply put, abstract—practice in painting, for plants are chosen on the basis of their



Figure 4. Obelisk, Little Sparta, upper pool, 1982, with Nicolas Sloan inscription "Il Riposo do Claudio." Photograph by David Patterson. Used by permission of Ian Hamilton Finlay.



Figure 5. Buried Capital, Little Sparta (on path to upper pool), n.d. Photograph by Peter Davenport, Used by permission of lan Hamilton Finlay.

horizontal and vertical relation to the overall composition, for textural reasons that are not engaged with celebrating the specificity of site. The plants are employed within a dialectic of shade and light, conifer versus perennial, that is associated with issues of the geometry of time. In the catalog for a 1984 exhibit, *Talismans and Signifiers* at the Graeme Murray Gallery in Edinburgh, Finlay cited Proclus on Euclid: "We should also accept what the followers of Apollonius say, that we have the idea of line when we ask only for a measurement of length, as of a road or a wall. And we can get a visual perception of line if we look at the middle division separating light from shaded areas, whether on the moon or on the earth." The "site" of Little Sparta is the descent of Western culture from the classical world. More specifically, the garden is built upon layers of allusion to the history of gardens, from the Gardens of the Hesperides to Blenheim, in juxtaposition to the history of revolutions and war.

## The garden is a product of mind. Nature has no interest in the garden.

Underlying the landscape of Finlay's garden is the allusion to Arcadia, the domain of Pan, Apollo, fauns, nymphs, and dryads. Described by Polybius in his *Historiae* as a "poor bare, rocky, chilly country," Arcadia is gradually, through the writings of Virgil,

transfigured from this "bleak and chilly district of Greece . . . into an imaginary realm of perfect bliss."16 Apollo and Pan rule over Little Sparta as the gods of law and play, as Apollo was the tutelary god of the Spartan legislator-prince Lycurgus and the object of worship of the mythical people of a northern paradise, the Hyperboreans. 17 When Finlay links the lyre of Apollo with a weapon, he is following Heraclitus, who contended that "they do not apprehend how being at variance it agrees with itself: there is a connection working in both directions, as in the bow and the lyre."18 Renato Poggioli explains in his book on pastoral that the qualities of Apollo and Pan are both separate and interwoven: "Apollo is a very human deity, and this explains why he is the patron of shepherds; far more so than Pan, who lives in Arcadia as a symbol rather than as a tutelar god. It is just for being a dreamland that Arcadia cannot be the land of myth. . . . When Arcadia ceases being pastoral, it turns into wild and reckless nature."19 Virgil's model of the transformation of site through text, through inscription and reading, is an important prototype for Finlay's work at Little Sparta, but Finlay goes on to take up the Apollonian theme in its later manifestations as well: the tradition of Dürer as an Apollo who brought classical light to the North, of Saint-Just as the Apollo of the French Revolution, of Walter Pater's "Apollo in Picardy," 20 and, not least significant, the contemporary Apollo missile. The inscription over the entrance to the Garden Temple reads: "To Apollo, His Music, His Missiles, His Muses." Finlay's Apollo carries an oerlikon gun, the World War I weapon that in fact helped destroy

Edinburgh's eighteenth- and nineteenth-century efforts to style itself as the "Athens of the North" culminated in the plans made in the 1820s for a monument to commemorate the Scottish dead of the Napoleonic Wars. The National Monument on Calton Hill was designed to be a reproduction of the Parthenon. The citation to ancient Athens was intended to symbolize the victory of democracy over tyranny. The monument was never finished and therefore, ironically, appears as a strangely recent ruin, its melancholy aspect gracing many prints and postcards as if it had been a place of worship for ancient Scots. Little Sparta—sited in a geographical relation to the "Athens of the North" as ancient Sparta was to ancient Athens—corrects the facile allegory of the National Monument by providing the prehistory of Napoleon's rise to power: the garden presses upon us a memory of the violence preceding, underlying, and resulting from the classical ideal.

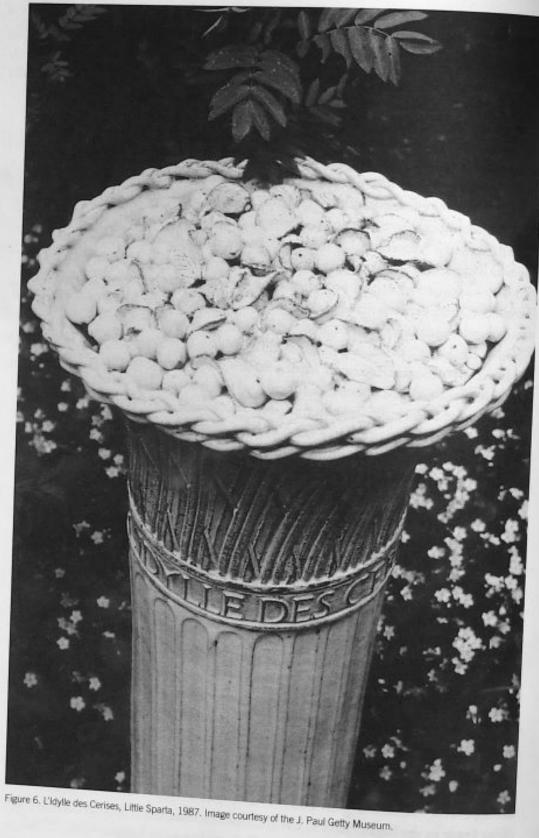
In his concern with these themes, Finlay has many predecessors, and the garden itself becomes a living repository of the history of gardens in their poetic and philosophical aspects. We might consider Hadrian's architectural reconstructions and models at his rural retreat outside of Rome when we see Finlay's pyramid, grotto, bridges, pantheon, columns, temple, and model of the Abbé Laugier's hut. And Marvell had described in "Upon Appleton House" how Thomas Fairfax laid out his flower garden like a fortress that would recall his military career: "when retired here to Peace / His Figure of a Fort." Like Pope's "Twickenham," Little Sparta gives the poet "a place to

stand."<sup>22</sup> Pope's "The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated," with its celebration of virtue and translation of the martial into garden images, provides an additional gloss on Little Sparta: "And HE, whose lightning pierc'd th'Iberian Lines, / Now forms my Quincunx, and now ranks my Vines."<sup>23</sup> The garden's earthworks resemble battlements, yet Peterborough in retirement is seen as pursuing a purer, more virtuous, form of action.

The themes of justice and virtue extend from classical literature to seventeenth-century meditation to the great English philosophy gardens of the eighteenth-century that, in addition to Twickenham, have so influenced Little Sparta: Shenstone's The Leasowes, Stowe under Lord Cobham and William Kent, and Stourhead as it developed in the mid-eighteenth century. Significant also is the nearby garden of Sir John Clerk at Penicuik, constructed in the 1730s, an early Scottish instance of the use of poetic and historical allusion to shape a landscape. By contrasting a pastoral landscape with the dark, tortuous, and horrid entrance to a grotto at the Cave of Hurley, at Penicuik, Clerk purposely recalled the Cumaean Sibyl's cave near Naples, and by allusion suggested Aeneas's quest for a new country.

In scale Little Sparta follows William Shenstone's ferme ornée, The Leasowes. Shenstone ornamented his small grazing farm with views meant to copy the land-scapes of Claude, Salvator Rosa, and Poussin. With his use of inscriptions and dedicated statuary, Shenstone juxtaposed his own era to the Gothic and classical past. He created a steep wooded ascent to a Temple of Pan designed to be followed by a descent into Virgil's Grove and a seat dedicated to the memory of James Thomson. Following Shenstone's "Unconnected Thoughts on Gardening," Finlay has put together a series of Unconnected Sentences on Gardening, More Detached Sentences on Gardening in the Manner of Shenstone, and several other series of detached sentences about pebbles, stiles, and friendship. Among Finlay's garden aphorisms are "A garden is not an object but a process" and "Certain gardens are described as retreats when they are really attacks."

As the garden at Stourhead in Wiltshire developed over thirty years in the middle of the eighteenth century (approximately 1740–70), the River Stour was used to form a series of ponds, including eventually a large lake designed to be seen from a high prospect. Around the lake were placed a sequence of buildings, including a Temple of Flora, a grotto with a circular domed chamber that included springs channeled to cascade beneath a sleeping nymph, and a river god's cave that included a copy of the figure of Tiber in Salvator Rosa's painting *The Dream of Aeneas*. Inscriptions at the grotto entrance and on the Temple of Flora refer to the *Aeneid*. Other buildings include a Pantheon built in 1754—a domed rotunda with a recessed portico within which are placed Michael Rysbrack's *Hercules*, a five-arched bridge, and a Temple of Apollo built in 1765. Henry Hoare's original intention at Stourhead was to honor the source of the River Stour in the pagan manner. The younger Pliny had described such a situation at Clitumnus in Umbria, a place Hoare may have visited in his travels. <sup>26</sup> One of Finlay's early inscribed works for the garden is a large stone reading "HIC JACET PARVULUM



QUODDAM EX AQUA LONGIORE EXCERPTUM."27 Finlay's inscription marks the consequence of the flow of time rather than its origins. The idea of the pond as "excerpt" links it to the aphoristic and fragmented quality of the garden's "parts" and adds to the elegiac quality of the garden as a whole.

Another important influence upon Little Sparta is the seventeenth-century garden at Stowe in Buckinghamshire, revised by Richard Temple, Lord Cobham (1675–1749), after his alienation from the court of George II and opposition to Walpole resulted in his dismissal from the army.<sup>28</sup> Cobham, with his architect Sir John Vanbrugh, decorated the garden with temples and other architectural furniture, making a pun on the family motto "Templa quam dilecta."<sup>29</sup> With consequent help from William Kent, Capability Brown, and others, Cobham laid out a little valley called the Elysian Fields, which includes a Temple of Ancient Virtue and a "Grecian valley." The Temple of Ancient Virtue contains four niches with full-length statues of Lycurgus, Socrates, Homer, and Epaminondas, each inscribed with a Latin motto praising its subject's achievements. This temple is contrasted to the Temple of British Worthies, containing busts of sixteen British luminaries. The effect, as John Dixon Hunt has noted, following William Gilpin's contemporary description, is to juxtapose a handsome classical building, representing the antique, with a deliberately ruined structure containing truncated or abbreviated forms, representing the modern.<sup>30</sup>

These philosophy gardens are replete with literary allusions and devices of memory. They are private spaces addressing a public audience; each has a discursive trajectory, designed to lead the visitor through prospects and commentaries as surely as a well-crafted speech uses rhetoric to conduct the listener to right opinions. If the contrast between ancient and contemporary virtue at Stowe borders on the ironic, it nevertheless proposes clear models of conduct. Little Sparta borrows the philosophy garden's techniques of allusion and rhetoric, but it presents a more complex and dialectical picture of reference, questioning assumptions of historical knowledge as a model for virtuous action as it asserts the necessity of historical knowledge as a model for virtuous action.

# Nature, as the manifestation of a contingent will that cannot be known to us, is a source of terror.

If we return to OSSO, the work that prompted the campaign for the revocation of Finlay's Versailles commission, we find a stark exploration of this very point. Osso, the Italian word for bone, out of the Latin os, is here inscribed on stone fragments emphasizing the palindromic aspect of the word. The central s's are written in a calligraphy that reproduces the lightning symbol of the SS—the Nazi Schutzstaffel, Hitler's elite troops. Finlay constructs an allegory in which the long s's of the eighteenth century, a symbol of civilized script, are transformed into the runic double-lightning stroke of SS uniforms and banners as culture devolves into barbarism.<sup>31</sup> He traces the lightning symbol from the pre-Socratics to eighteenth-century law to twentieth-century terror: fire in

the philosophy of Heraclitus is the "thunderbolt" steering all things and associated with the possibility of human wisdom; the French word for lightning, eclair, is part of the etymology of Enlightenment; and the Nazi symbolism of lightning evokes the link between Nazi ideology and German Romanticism. Yet, given the dialectical impulse of his thought, Finlay's allegory reminds us of the synonymity of law and terror in the absence of moral reason. We find here, of course, a continuation of the simultaneous promotion and critique of Enlightenment undertaken by the Frankfurt School. In Finlay's 1989 work with Keith Brookwell and Andrew Townsend, Adorno's Hut, a direct allusion is made to this philosophy regarding the terrible consequences of technological thought. But Finlay is drawing on a related, iconographical, genealogy of lightning as well: lightning appears throughout the history of Western art and literature as a kind of literal emblem of the eruption of contingency—nature and death—against which human culture is motivated to protect and create itself.

In the iconography of the French Revolution, the symbol of the law is often the round-headed tablet and, by the time of the Terror, the law is associated with the biblical notion of law as retributive. The guillotine as the "ax of the law," with its diagonal blade, comes to be associated with the swiftness of lightning, and a number of revolutionary prints employ lightning imagery. A print by Louis-Jean Allais commemorating the Constitution of 1793 displays a caption that says, "The republican constitution, like the tablets of Moses, comes from the heart of the mountain in the midst of thunder and lightning." A color print by Pierre-Michel Alix shows "a pair of fiery tablets sending down bolts of lightning against the enemies of the Revolution while members of a patriotic crowd dance around a liberty tree." 32

Aeneas and Dido first consummate their love in a cave as they flee a thunderstorm, an event Finlay commemorates in his Grotto of Aeneas and Dido with its monogram rhyming Dürer's signature at the Temple pond. In the most popular poem in English of the eighteenth century, James Thomson's The Seasons, the spectacular account of a thunderstorm in "Summer" describes "th'unconquerable" lightning that shatters trees and "blasts" cattle as they stand in the open fields. Here we find the "blasted tree" that Wordsworth would use in the immortality ode to symbolize the Terror's destruction of the liberty tree and the ancient oak ruined by lightning that serves as a central symbol of doomed technology in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein.33 Thomson's account of the storm builds to the story of the happy lovers Celadon and Amelia caught in its violence. Just as Celadon assures Amelia that "Tis safety to be near thee sure," Amelia is struck "a blacken'd corpse" to the ground.34 The bone turned to ash and the figure turned to stone are found as well in Poussin's Landscape with Pyramus and Thisbe, with its prone body of Pyramus, his arms outstretched in death. Here shepherds and herd pursue a line of flight paralleling the bolt of lightning still evident in the sky.35 And in J. M. W. Turner's well-known painting of Stonehenge in a storm, we witness the devastation of a shepherd and his flock by lightning on Salisbury Plain.

In his use of these allusions, Finlay draws a continuous and cumulative relation

between the terror of primitive man in the presence of nature, the terror of the Greeks and Romans in the presence of their gods, the terror of the French Republic in the presence of a self-inflicted violence, and the terror of the victims of the Nazi regime in the presence of its machinery of death. Walter Benjamin's important aphorism on the mutuality of civilization and barbarism provides a gloss on this genealogy, as does Giambattista Vico's cyclical theory of history. Like Milton, Finlay is a master of the serious pun: thus when he links the regime of the demonic Pan with the German panzer tank we are meant to remember both terms at once and to consider the historical course of the implication.

# The imitation of nature is an attempt to master terror. Art and war are imitations of nature: the first an imitation of nature's making; the second an imitation of nature's destruction.

The related defensive methods of containment and reversibility are central to many of the modes of Finlay's art. Finlay's garden is imagined as a kind of island of history in a vast sea of contemporary life and as itself a sea within which objects appear to a viewer on a horizon alternately near and distant. One is constantly aware of the relation between placement, position, and movement. What is rooted is also growing; what is in motion is seen from a position that is itself in motion; what is inscribed will be reordered; what is unintelligible will become increasingly clear.

If we trace this iconography, we find it has myriad dimensions. First, Finlay has used, since his early days as a concrete poet, imagery of the inland garden as a sea. A model of the atomic submarine, USS Nautilus, emerges from a stand of firs as if from the ocean. At the edge of the garden a solitary ash tree is inscribed with the name Mare Nostrum, the Roman tag for the Mediterranean, in order to emphasize the sound of wind in the tree in its echo of the sound of wind on the sea.36 The front garden includes a sequence of diamond-shaped paving stones, each inscribed with the names of kinds and parts of boats such as brig, keel, schooner, and ketch. In Silver Cloud, an homage to sailing ships is inscribed in a marble monument on an island Finlay made in the Top Pond in 1973. The garden as a representation of the sea is not merely, however, a theme; this representation takes the most sublime, the most violent and unencompassable, of nature's phenomena and contains it within a knowable boundary. Unlike a painting of the sea, the garden/sea is in motion and is an image of nature made by nature. As Finlay uses the mirror effects of clouds and inscriptions viewed by means of their reflections in water,37 containment and reversibility are devices of multiplication and difficulty as well as comprehension. And by extension, the garden encompassing an image of the sea is analogous to the garden encompassing an image of war-for war as the harnessing and unleashing of nature's forces is the only activity within human scale comparable to the dimensions of the sea's power.

After 1971, the contemporary warship began to replace the small boat in Finlay's iconography. Parallel to Finlay's imagery of the sea and World War II is a set of associations he makes with the Field of Mars. These link the Roman Campus Martius and

the French Champs de Mars as scenes of festivity and violence. Finlay has placed a Hypothetical Gateway to an Academy of Mars at the entrance to the upper area of the garden. The gateway consists of piers topped with grenadelike capitals. The notion of the Field of Mars reminds us that once the Bastille was razed, a Field of Nature was created in its place.38 After the Massacre of the Champs de Mars of 1791 when a Republican demonstration was broken up,39 pastoral revolutionary festivals were held there. Parades were held in which "animals of warfare were excluded, with only peaceful cows and doves permitted." As Ronald Paulson has pointed out in his study of revolutionary imagery, "in the depths of the Terror the dream was held by Girondin and Jacobin alike of a peaceful island in the midst of the stormy sea, and the festivals represented places for refreshment and rest in the navigations of life."40 Finlay has continued this iconography in his references to Rousseau's original burial place, surrounded by poplars, on the "Ile des peupliers" at Ermenonville. 41 Close to the bank of the garden's Lochan Eck, Finlay has made a small island with a stone memorial to Rousseau, and he would have emphasized this connection with an homage to Rousseau in plantings of poplars and cherries in the Versailles project.

The sudden terror of lightning spurred, according to Vico, the creation of metaphors of explanation and so the beginning of cultural work on the part of early forest dwellers. In Little Sparta, the answer or response to terror is the creation of sheltersthe grotto, cave, or hut that is the site of creative rebirth: the cave where Aeneas receives advice from the Cumaean Sibyl, the grotto where Aeneas and Dido hide from the storm, and the hut where society begins to take form. Following Vitruvius and Rousseau in constructing a genealogy of dwellings, Abbé Laugier wrote that men were driven from caves and compelled to make dwellings because of their need for sight: "man wishes to make himself a dwelling that covers him without burying him." 42 The amalgam of buildings and spaces at Little Sparta reminds us of the cyclical and dialectical structure of this tradition of architectural history: early man, frightened by tempests, seeks shelter in the forest; when the forest does not offer adequate protection, he retreats to the cave; when the cave proves dark and unhealthy, he builds a roofed structure; when this structure proves vulnerable to the elements, he builds a hut within which the family and, eventually, extended social relations develop; as society takes shape, buildings become institutional and monumental. Gradually structures to differentiate and contain social elements are created; these institutional structures become imprisoning-created under the implied threat of force, they themselves evoke violence in response. They are torn down, as in the case of the Bastille; the garden on the site of the destroyed prison becomes a return to nature, but one now deeply inflected by human history.43

Containment and reversibility are also implicit in Finlay's use of anagrams, puns, and rhymes. Here alternatives to a given form of order are concealed within the order itself; this Hegelian idea shows that the outcome of reading or interpretation will be both preservation and cancellation. Perhaps nowhere is this point made more vividly than in Finlay's monumental stone inscription made with Nicholas Sloan of the

words of Saint-Just: "The present order is the disorder of the future." The words, including the name of Saint-Just, are inscribed individually on stones, each weighing approximately a ton. Anagrams reveal a concealed interpretation. Puns and rhymes show semantic and aural simultaneity in both conflict and harmony. Finlay's inscription "curfew/curlew" on a sea boulder placed in the moorland by the upper pond links the bird's evening song with the transformation of light at day's end.44 A shell, inscribed "goddess" and "caddis," hides a hose that animates the water at Temple Pond. The shell commemorates both the birth of Aphrodite and the shell of the larva of the caddis-fly that lives in the pond. The caddis shell is composed of tiny pieces of stone and grit and seems to glisten like gold in the water. 45 Carp within, and models of submarines around, the Temple Pool remind the viewer that both are bottom feeders. The drum of the martyred boy revolutionary Joseph Barra, commemorated by David, reappears in allusions to neoclassical column drums. The shell of a tortoise is visually and verbally linked to the helmet of the German panzer, in turn linking Pan to both pansy and pensée. The French Revolutionary calendar month Arrosoir reappears as a literal watering can and as the flight of Apollo's arrow at evening.

The genres of the pastoral, the eclogue, and idyll are created as well through articulating a boundary and reordering time. Renato Poggioli explains that Virgil's *Eclogues* are "excerpts, in the original sense," and Theocritus's *Idylls* are "little pictures." The idyll is *eidos*'s diminutive. He diminutive appears constantly as a rhetorical form in Finlay's work. His correspondence, his drawings, and his writings make frequent use of the Scottish adjective "wee," for example, and he makes extensive use of models and toys. One of his earliest exhibitions was a display of toys, and he has often made models of World War II airplanes and ships from the stock available at Woolworth's. When we play at war, war counts in a different way; the boundary between the game and the world is absolute. But as time passes, we might recreate, in order to contain, what was once real, and in the future the reapplication of the game may turn serious: what seemed to be only a game might turn out to be a form of practice, as it is when real armies play war games. He Temporality and an exaggeration of scale can create transformations both desired and unwanted. By an ongoing practice of modeling war, Finlay constantly reminds us of the permeability of event and memory.

Garden-making, an activity of art and war, is a kind of work. Yet because such work is not subsumed by utility, it is as well a transformative process of play. The work of the garden is the cultural work of the trope.

The Temple of British Worthies at Stowe divides its venerable figures into those who followed a life of contemplation, who "sought Virtue in her Retirement," and those who followed a life of action, "who left Retirement to the cool Philosopher, entered into the Bustle of Mankind and pursued Virtue in the dazling Light in which she appears to Patriots and Heroes. Inspired by every generous Sentiment, these gallant Spirits founded Constitutions, stemmed the Torrent of Corruption, battled for the State,

ventured their Lives in the Defence of their Country, and gloriously bled in the Cause of Liberty."49

This separation between the vita activa and the vita contemplativa that formed such an important part of Renaissance, baroque, and Enlightenment aesthetics finds its resolution in the garden form. The garden as retirement from the field of war proposes contemplation as both the consequence of action and as the prerequisite of virtuous action in the public realm. And the experience of the garden visitor, who must traverse the "work," both moving and thinking at the same time, recapitulates this dialectic. Contemplative gardens have a theatrical aspect, requiring the viewer to see them as an intended scene, yet this aspect as well is characterized by the scene as site of future action. The viewer is asked to both reflect upon and project human action. 50

Finlay's Little Sparta specifically evokes the relation between contemplation and action in his use of inscription embedded within scenes of natural transformation. Gavin Keeney has insightfully described this tension in Finlay's proposal for the Versailles project as "the vegetative veil of sorts covering and softening the 'gravitas' of the more assertive (emphatic) mineral forms." The grotesque in its original connection to the grotto is important here. As Paulson has described the use of the grotesque in the imagery of the French Revolution:

[The grotesque] was a perfect revolutionary paradigm in that, based on the decorative patterns of metamorphosing plant and human forms, it showed either the human emerging triumphantly from nature or the human subsiding or regressing into nature—or ambiguously doing both. Similar transitions or sequences involve the movement from dark to light, but as the grotesque is all in all the dominant aesthetic mode of the period the movement tends to be cyclic and repetitive, toward undifferentiation.<sup>52</sup>

Yet the grotesque as mutation is the counterpart of the inscribed stasis of the law. As the organic moves toward lack of differentiation, the mineral inscription moves toward articulation and universality.

Finlay's inscriptions are for the most part in English, with some use of Latin, German, and French. Although over his career many forms of calligraphy have been used, the recent work emphasizes Roman lettering style, recalling not just eighteenth-century classicism, but a particular static quality in the Latin style itself. Finlay draws on this tradition of nature-inscription descended from the votive or commemorative epigram. It is a tradition long linked to burial inscription, but by the eighteenth century the graveyard is as well a major scene of nature sentiment and nature is itself a kind of graveyard<sup>53</sup>—aphorisms stemming from pastoral themes such as those of Gray's "Elegy," the flowering of archaeology, and a new awareness of the transitory fortunes of civilizations.

The inscription is fixed; one must go to it and one must leave it. It speaks with the authority of the universal, the aphoristic, or the genius of place and not with the particularity of subjective voice. When Finlay quotes a particular source, as in the allusions to Saint-Just, it is the ideology of Saint-Just that bears his name, and not his person: Saint-Just, who proclaimed, "La nature est le point de justesse et de verité dans les rapports des choses, ou leur moralité" and "La nature finit ou la convention commence,"54 is for Finlay, as he was for his contemporaries, the embodiment of Apollo. Finlay's statuary images of the revolutionary cite with heavy irony the romanticized picture presented in Nesta Webster's notoriously xenophobic and anti-Semitic narrative, The French Revolution: A Study in Democracy: "St. Just [sic] alone retained his habitual calm. The voluminous cravat was gone, leaving his neck bare for execution, but the delicate chamois-coloured coat still remained unspotted, the wide expanse of white waistcoat still fresh and uncrumpled, whilst in his buttonhole there glowed a red carnation. So with head erect St. Just, that strange enigma of the Terror, passed to his death, a marble statue to the last."55 By citing Webster, a so-called enthusiast of "democracy" who also promoted a form of paranoia throughout the 1920s, Finlay undermines any idealization of the Apollonian. And Finlay recounts how Saint-Just himself as well embodies the Terror's paradoxical adaptation of Rousseau. Saint-Just's Virgilian motto "Une charrue, un champ, une chaumière . . . voila le bonheur" envisages a pastoral republic, yet one where every dimension of life is under state control. The brutal contradictions inherent in the name Saint-Just, in the ideas attached to Saint-Just, in the images under which the figure is made visible, invite his words as laws to be reviewed and not simply absorbed.

This hermeneutic of suspicion, rooted in Enlightenment rationality, is here applied to Enlightenment rationality. In order to create such a hermeneutic Finlay has reached back to the didactic, yet unresolvable, form of the emblem. We might see the emblem at work most clearly if we focus on a particular example. Finlay has constructed several works based on the Battle of the Midway of June 1942. In a 1977 exhibition on the subject, fruit trees were meant to represent the Pacific and seven Renaissance-style beehives represented aircraft carriers as an "actual emblem." In the actual Battle of the Midway the fleets never saw each other. The fighting was done by Japanese carrier-based flights and American land- and carrier-based flights. The American ships, the Hornet, the Enterprise, and the Yorktown, are contrasted to the Japanese carriers, Akagi, Kaga, Soryu, and Hiryu. Finlay envisaged honey spilling out of the hive doors as representing the spilling gasoline—just as smoke drives bees from the hive, so do the ships in flames send out their planes. The history of emblems has displayed the bee as a symbol of industriousness and enterprise; the hornet is a warrior bee, but industriousness here also plays on the linking of industry, technology, and the horror of war.

These connections are already complex, but further meanings can be read in Finlay's Midway emblem. The Midway Inscription, a large slate medallion made with Michael Harvey at Little Sparta, reads "Through A Dark Wood / Midway." Finlay thereby links the Battle of the Midway to the famous "middle" theme of the opening of Dante's Divine Comedy, where midway in life the poet finds himself in a dark wood with Virgil as his guide. The Horatian imperative of "in medias res" also holds: a dialectical art would have to begin in the middle. But further, the Enterprise's nickname,

the "Big E," comes into full play as well. Plutarch's Moralia contains in its fifth volume a discussion of "the E at Delphi." Among the inscriptions at Delphi there was a representation of the fifth letter of the Greek alphabet, epsilon (E), which in its written form denotes the number five and is also both the word for "if" and the word for the second person singular of the verb "to be": "Thou art." Plutarch explores the meaning of these three referents ("five," "if," and "thou art") and concludes that the letter became associated with the rites of Apollo at Delphi: one approached the god, using "if" to ask what might happen and, at the same time, addressing the god in terms of the certainty of his being: "thou art." He traces the number five to Pythagorean symbolism: "Five is a 'Marriage' on the ground that it was produced by the association of the first male number and the first female number [and] there is also a sense in which it has been called 'Nature,' since by being multiplied into itself it ends in itself again." As the epsilon compels the pilgrim to Delphi to address Apollo, "Thou art," so does another inscription compel the god to welcome the pilgrim with the message "Know thyself." Plutarch writes that "everything of a mortal nature is at some stage between coming into existence and passing away and presents only a dim and uncertain semblance and appearance of itself,"57 and continues, "And if Nature, when it is measured, is subject to the same processes as is the agent that measures it, then there is nothing in Nature that has permanence or even existence, but all things are in the process of creation or destruction according to their relative distribution with respect to time."58 We of course by now remember that IF is the monogram as well of Ian Finlay.

Against the fixity of the inscription and the material stasis of the emblem form are the play and transformation of interpretation—the work of the trope. The trope is celebrated in Finlay's ongoing homage to Ovid, whom he calls the poet of camouflage. In a 1989 letter to Mary Ann Caws, Finlay wrote: "Dryads are traditionally represented in terms of metamorphosis, leaves for fingers, skin turning into tree-bark and so on. For our time (age) it seems preferable to dress the dryad in a camouflage smock." Finlay sought to critique the contemporary picture of a benevolent nature with a view of "nature as something formidable." He quotes Heraclitus: "Nature loves to hide," an aphorism implying the strategy of concealment, surprise, and mutability implicit in all his garden works.<sup>59</sup> The garden's most prominent citation to Ovid is the Temple of Philemon and Baucis. Philemon and Baucis in their old age find that the visitation of the gods results in their small hut being changed into a temple-marble columns take the place of wooden supports, the thatch yellows into gold. In Ovid's version of their story, "It is not only their hospitality but the very purity of their souls that earns for Philemon and Baucis the grace of the gods. Jupiter and Mercury will grant them their wish, which is to die at the same time, and will change them into two trees, with mutually supporting trunks and interwoven branches."60 The two become one and the one is two, preserved and canceled by the miracle of simultaneity. Nature transformed into culture, culture transformed into nature: this is the Ovidian dialectic, the imaginative reworking of history. Yet it is typical of Finlay's rigorous relation to cultural allusion that he does not stop with this version of the story. In part 2 of

Goethe's Faust the story is rewritten out of Ovid and eerily forecasts the brutality of the Nazi regime: Philemon and Baucis refuse to exchange their poor plot for the rich farm that Faust offers. He wants to remove the old couple from the marshland he plans to reclaim for his own sake as well as for what he purports to be the benefit of the human race. When Faust's henchmen try to evict them forcibly, Philemon and Baucis die together in the blaze of their hut, victims of Faust's will to power.<sup>61</sup>

## Work and death are the objects of memory.

Death is a Reaper, a folding card Finlay made in 1991 with Gary Hincks, presents images of a scythe with a blade that progressively turns into the Nazi lightning bolt. These images are placed next to a quote from Abraham a Santa Clara: "I have seen that Death is a Reaper, who cuts down with his scythe not only the lowly clover, but also the grass that grows tall; I have seen that Death is a Gardener, who does away with the climbing larkspur as well as the violets that creep along the earth; I have seen that Death is a Player, and indeed a naughty one, for he knocks down the skittles and does not set them up again, and he takes the king as well as the pawns; I have seen that Death is a thunderbolt that strikes not only the tumble-down straw huts, but also the splendid houses of monarchs." <sup>62</sup> If the Ovidian story changes the pastoral hut into the golden temple and so narrates an account of virtue rewarded, it is contrasted in Finlay's work to Sebastien Chamfort's revolutionary pronouncement of 1789: "Guerre aux chateau, paix aux chaumières!" <sup>63</sup> Wherever there is resolution into law, there is also the seed of the corruption of the law; wherever there is peace there will inevitably be war, as Heraclitus had claimed in his aphorism, "War is father of all and king of all." <sup>64</sup>

In following Poussin, Finlay practices a particular method of historical reference. As he paints Arcadia, Poussin follows the Roman tradition of Arcadia as an immemorial past, a kind of spiritual landscape derived from ideals rather than any historical antecedents. Yet he emphasizes that such scenes are temporally distant. 65 Finlay's most extensive quotation from Poussin has been in his many reworkings of Et in Arcadia Ego-Poussin's two paintings on Arcadia and mortality. These paintings have an important antecedent in Guercino's work on the same theme. In Guercino's work, two Arcadian shepherds are halted in their wanderings by the sight of a human skull on a moldering piece of masonry, accompanied by a fly and a mouse, popular symbols of mortality. One of the Poussin paintings is in the Devonshire collection at Chatsworth, the other in the Louvre. Erwin Panofsky's famous essay on the paintings, "Et in Arcadia Ego: Poussin and the Elegiac Tradition," explores the tension between two interpretations of the Latin phrase: "I, too, lived in Arcady," and "I [Death] am as well in Arcady." Panofsky contends that the latter translation, more accurately conforming to Latin syntax and made famous by an ad hoc interpretation provided by George III of a painting with the same inscription by Joshua Reynolds, was originally what Guercino and Poussin, in his early work, had in mind. Yet by the time of the meditative classicism of the Louvre version, Poussin was thinking of the more particular meaning, "The person buried in this tomb has lived in Arcady," so that "what had been a menace has become a remembrance." Finlay appropriates the images of the shepherds reading the inscription but, through a series of substitutions and permutations, arrives at a German tank in the place of the tomb, thus placing a menace that is also a remembrance into Arcadia.

Finlay plays on Marvell's "mower" as well as the folk theme of "the grim reaper" in his concrete poem "Mower is less." The allusion is to the ax of Robespierre, the guillotine, but it also refers back to the theme of lightning and the depiction of Cromwell in Marvell's "Horatian Ode": "like the three fork'd Lightning, first / Breaking the Clouds where it was nurst, / Did thorough his own Side / His fiery way divide." As Geoffrey Hartman has explained, "a 'bleeding Head' is once again and ironically the prerequisite for the body politic's wholeness. . . . The new order is forced to unify by the sword, by division, by a rape of time." Apollo as musician sends forth his messages of music; as "far-shooting archer," his messages of death.

#### Virtue and justice are the objects of making.

Military metaphors and the rhetoric of moral philosophy, from Laurence Sterne's Uncle Toby to Samuel Johnson's Stourbridge school poem "Festina Lente," were inseparable in the eighteenth century,69 and Finlay has evoked in the neo-neoclassicism of Little Sparta many of the connections between military metaphors and ethics. Among his garden inscriptions, he includes a 1977 stone plant trough inscribed "Semper Festina Lente" 70 and accompanied by a relief of a minesweeper. The same warning is translated into German, "Achtung Minen," in Finlay's New Arcadian Dictionary.71 Yet the yoking of a militaristic ethical rhetoric to imagery of the garden has an even older genealogy. The golden apples of the Hesperides were the ornament and reward of Hercules' virtue, a virtue that was made evident not by Hercules' nature, but by his actions-his choice of the right path. The Norman invasion of Sicily produced the tradition of rewarding French kings with orange cuttings, the "storied reward of Herculean might."72 In the sixteenth century the Villa d'Este used the story of Hercules' choice at the crossroads to structure the paths and fountains in their dedication to "honest pleasure," and Cosimo de' Medici's Castello showed Hercules subduing Antaeus in an enclosed garden bounded by the four seasons and lined with emblems of the virtues of the Medici.73 Finlay inadvertently, and then markedly, made an allusion to the Villa d'Este when he inscribed on the bases of stone representations of aircraft carriers at Stonypath, "Homage to the Villa d'Este." Later, he learned of the avenue of stone ships at the villa and came to consider this coincidence to be evidence of the classical tradition as an enduring, if not always conscious, experience.74

Sir Thomas Browne's 1658 treatise The Garden of Cyrus or the quincuncial, lozenge, or network plantations of the ancients, artificially, naturally, mystically considered is another key text for understanding Little Sparta. <sup>75</sup> Browne, who admits in his opening paragraphs that he is not a gardener, traces the importance of order in the gardener's



Figure 7. Aircraft Carrier, Bird Table, and the Temple Pool, Little Sparta, 1972. Photograph by David Patterson. Used by permission of lan Hamilton Finlay.

art. "Disposing his trees like his armies in regular ordination," the Persian king Cyrus came to be known as "the splendid and regular planter" (141). Browne links the quincuncial form of Cyrus's planting to the Greek letter X and to the crosses and crucifixion of Christian iconology and the anointing of Hebrew priests in the form of an X (142-43). Although unmentioned, the relation to Hercules at the crossroads also emerges.76 Browne does mention that Aristotle uses a singular expression concerning the order of vines, delivered by a military term representing the orders of soldiers, and that the Roman battalia, too, was ordered by means of an alternating form of groups of five and four horizontally arranged. He concludes with a discussion of the appearance of quincuncial forms in nature and with "the ancient conceit of five, surnamed the number of justice, as justly dividing between the digits, and hanging in the centre of nine described by square numeration . . . [in] that common game among us wherein the fifth place is sovereign and carrieth the chief intention—the ancients wisely instructing youth, even in their recreations, unto virtue, that is early to drive at the middle point and central seat of justice" (183-84). Browne emphasizes only the order, or what might be called the poetic justice, of the analogy between the garden and war. A relentless structuralist, the poet sees the quincunx wherever he looks and, like the pre-Socratics, finds nature yoked to laws like those that bind human nature. But the purer and more abstract the rule of law, the more insistently does the particular make itself apparent; what has been unified begins to split. The trope falls back into its elements; the materiality of history asserts itself against the periodicity of history.

### He who makes a garden, his own remembering makes.

Finlay's three occupations—soldier, shepherd, and poet—are completely bound up with the forms of knowledge Little Sparta proposes. Although he finds little value in biographical and autobiographical interpretation, Finlay has written of the particular relation between Little Sparta and World War II:

In wartime the British were encouraged to grow their own food ("DIG FOR VICTORY"), and the phrase Wartime Garden was almost certainly used to denote the purposes the garden might then serve. My work, then, treats the garden, not as an idyll or pastoral, but as a kind of model for the Heraclitean or Hegelian understanding. . . . in the same way . . . I have treated the French Revolution as a pastoral or idyll: "The French Revolution is a pastoral whose Virgil was Rousseau."

At Little Sparta the family clothesline is called the "Siegfried Line," in memory of the British song from World War II: "We're going to hang out our washing on the Siegfried Line. / Have you any dirty washing, Mother dear?"

In a garden of sublime, yet sinister, images, the Nuclear Sail, a stone monument designed to look like a nuclear conning tower protruding by Little Sparta's Lochan Eck, the large pond named after one of Finlay's children, starkly calls to mind the horrific potential of instruments of war and not simply their past. The U.S. Polaris sub-

marine base is at Holy Loch, Scotland, on the other side of Glasgow,<sup>78</sup> and Finlay's garden is in a strategic part of the country frequently crossed by Royal Air Force Phantom jets on maneuvers.<sup>79</sup> In deflating the naive and ultimately narcissistic optimism of evolutionary thought, Finlay asks us to consider the moral framework and potential consequences of any historical idea. In tracing the tension between order and disorder through the pre-Socratics to Nietzsche and Hegel, he has presented a relentlessly dialectical context for thinking about the relations between human culture and nature. Finlay's garden as a paradise of philosophy constantly reminds us of the agon between forms of thought, the simplemindedness of monumentality, and the fragile boundary between art and war. Little Sparta is a work, both made and evolving, that explores the dangers of facile apprehension and ready enthusiasm. The garden refuses to allow the viewer to identify naively with its individual themes and symbols; Finlay argues that when individuals pursue an unthinking identification with power and sentimental ideals, terror and catastrophe ensue.

In 1995–96, a further conflict with the Strathclyde regional government compelled Finlay to close the garden once again. More recently, the regional government itself was dissolved by the state.

#### Notes

1. For an introduction to these issues, see James Fenton, "War in the Garden," New York Review of Books 40, no. 12 (June 24, 1993): 23–26. James Elkins has provided an overview of the paradigms of garden scholarship in his essay "On the Conceptual Analysis of Gardens," Journal of Garden History 13, no. 4 (winter 1993): 189–98. Craig Clunas's recent work on Chinese gardens suggests important cultural and historical variations in the tensions between agricultural and aesthetic functions of gardens: Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China (London: Reaktion Books, 1996).

2. In providing an account of the garden I have noted sources whenever relevant. Any unattributed details are from my notes and sketches made during a visit to Little Sparta on June 20, 1993. Much of the material for this essay was gathered from the Ian Hamilton Finlay archives at the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, Santa Monica, California. All photographs are courtesy of the Getty Center archives. I am grateful to Mr. Finlay for making possible my tour of the garden and for his ensuing conversation and correspondence, although I do not believe he will concur with every argument I have made here. I also thank the Getty Center for extensive support in May and June 1995, during my tenure there as a visiting scholar.

3. In 1962 Finlay founded the journal *Poor. Old. Tired. Horse*, published by the press he had founded with Jessie McGuffie in 1961, Wild Hawthorn Press.

4. See "A Bridge Too Far: The First Battle of Little Sparta," Poetry Nation Review,

February 4, 1983.

5. See Finlay, "Reflections on the French Revolution," Getty MSS, box 18. Although the media coverage of this event emphasized its "mock" quality, Finlay has written that "a very delicate, and dangerous, line was established; it was a case of a real rather than imaginary garden with very real police. The wonder was that we were not in prison." Correspondence, November 29, 1995.

6. Yves Abrioux, Ian Hamilton Finlay: A Visual Primer, with introductory notes and commentaries by Stephen Bann (London: Reaktion Books, 1992), 7-13. This is the second edition. much expanded and revised from a first edition in 1985. Abrioux's work and the essays of Stephen Bann, the latter following Finlay's career closely and providing an ongoing commentary on developments in his art, are the most important and extensive introductions to Finlay's work. Gavin Keeney's "Noble Truths, Beautiful Lies, and Landscape Architecture" (master's thesis, Department of Landscape Architecture, Cornell University, January 1993) provides an interpretive discussion of Finlay's 1988 Un jardin revolutionnaire proposal and locates this project within the fuller context of Finlay's work. I am grateful to Mr. Keeney for sending me a copy of his essay and for his more general comments on Finlay's work offered in correspondence.

 Alan Powers, "Neo-Classical Rearmament," Spectator, September 12, 1987, 39–40. For a collection of critiques of the National Trust Book of Follies, see "Blast Folly, Bless Arcadia," ed.

Patrick Eyres, New Arcadians' Journal, no. 24 (Winter 1986).

8. See Patrick Marnham, "Up the Garden Path," Independent Magazine, August 8, 1992, 19-25, and Peter Day, "Ian Hamilton Finlay: The Bicentennial Proposal: The French War: The War of the Letter," pamphlet (Toronto, Canada: Art Metropole, 1989). The most considered account of Finlay's loss of the Bicentennial Commission is by Yves Abrioux, "Vichy Revisited: The Cancellation of a Public Commission to Celebrate the Bicentenary of the French Revolution and the Declaration of the Rights of Man" (talk given at the Sorbonne, photocopy).

9. A Greek-English Lexicon, compiled by Henry Liddell and Robert Scott, 9th ed., vol. 1

(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940).

10. Quoted from Charles H. Kahn, "Anaximander's Fragment: The Universe Governed by Law," in The Pre-Socratics: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Alexander P. D. Mourlatos (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1974), 99-117.

11. See the discussion in Claude Gintz, "Neoclassical Rearmament," Art in America, February 1987, 110-13.

12. Stephen Bann, "A Description of Stonypath," Journal of Garden History 1, no. 2 (1981): 113-44, at 133.

13. Abrioux, Finlay, 13.

14. The plant list is partial, gathered from my notes and from plants listed in Graham Rose, "The Garden of Unrest," Observer color supplement, 1986, 55 (no further date or pages; see materials in Getty MSS, box 21).

15. "L'Idylle des cerises," described in pamphlet from the Wild Hawthorn Press by Finlay and Michael Harvey (Getty MSS, box 24): "gean, a grove of gean or wild cherry trees. On a small fluted column among the trees is a bronze or stone basket of cherries with the words l'idylle des cerises." The phrase is inspired by Finlay's reading of the following passage from Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Confessions, as cited in Renato Poggioli, The Oaten Flute (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 14, 273: "I climbed into a cherry tree, and threw bunches of cherries down to the girls, who then returned the cherry stones through the branches. Seeing one of the girls holding out her apron and tilting her head, I took such good aim that I dropped a bunch into her bosom. 'Why are my lips not cherries,' I thought, 'How gladly I would throw them there, too!""

16. Quotes from 297-300 of Erwin Panofsky's account of the development of the Arcadian concept in "Et in Arcadia Ego: Poussin and the Elegiac Tradition," in Meaning in the Visual Arts: Papers in and on Art History by Erwin Panofsky (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1955), 295-320.

17. The Hyperboreans ("those who carry over") wrapped their offerings in wheat straw and requested their neighbors to pass them from nation to nation until they arrived at Delos.

Their home is a region beyond the north wind, a paradise like the Elysian plains, which cannot be reached by land or sea.

18. Heraclitus: The Cosmic Fragments, ed. G. S. Kirk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), quote at 203, discussion at 214–15.

19. Poggioli, Oaten Flute, 238.

20. Walter Pater, "Apollo in Picardy," in Miscellaneous Studies (London: Macmillan, 1910), 142-71; see Stephen Bann, "Ian Hamilton Finlay: An Imaginary Portrait," in Ian Hamilton Finlay, exhibition catalog (London: Serpentine Gallery, 1977), n.p., and Finlay's 1986 card with photography by Marius Alexander, "Apollo in Strathclyde," with its inscription: "The winedark sea, the turnip-marbled field. / The Hyperborean Apollo of Walter Pater's Apollo in Picardy. / In Little Sparta he is identified with Saint-Just."

21. Bann, "Finlay," n.p.

22. See Maynard Mack, The Garden and the City (Toronto: University of Toronto Press;

London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 232.

23. Alexander Pope, "The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated," in Pope, Poetical Works, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 340-45. See John Dixon Hunt, The Figure in the Landscape: Poetry, Painting, and Gardening during the Eighteenth Century (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 77-78, for a discussion of Pope's grotto at Twickenham in relation to this passage. Dixon Hunt explains that "the grotto at Twickenham was linked to Egeria, wife of a legendary philosopher-king Numa to make this connection explicit: for according to both Livy and Plutarch, Numa and Egeria 'entertained familiar conversation with the Muses [in their grotto] to whose teaching [Numa] ascribed the greatest part of his revelations." (77). In Broken Tablets: The Cult of the Law in French Art from David to Delacroix (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), Jonathan Ribner mentions that the same legend was influential in French revolutionary thought: "The divinely inspired legislator played a large role in late eighteenth and nineteenth century French culture. That the Spartan Lycurgus enjoyed the blessings of Apollo and that Numa, the legendary second king of Rome, gained legislative wisdom from conversing with the nymph Egeria was known from Plutarch's Parallel Lives-a work firmly integrated into the French tradition by Jacques Amyot's classic translation (1559)" (4).

24. See Marjorie Williams, William Shenstone: A Chapter in Eighteenth Century Taste (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, 1935), 37-39, and E. Monro Purkis, William Shenstone, Poet

and Landscape Gardener (Woverhampton: Whitehead Brothers, 1931).

25. William Shenstone, "Unconnected Thoughts on Gardening," in The Works in Verse and Prose of William Shenstone. 3 vols. (London: J. Dodsley, 1791), 2:111-31. For selections from Finlay, see Abrioux, Finlay, 40.

26. Kenneth Woodbridge, The Stourhead Landscape (Plaistow: National Trust, 1978), 5. See also two pamphlets: Stourhead (Plaistow: National Trust, 1971) and Stourhead/Wiltshire (London: Country Life Limited, 1952).

27. "This little pool is excerpted from the longer water."

28. Stowe, text by G. B. Clarke (St. Ives: Photo Precision, 1971), 11.

29. "What pretty temples!"

30. John Dixon Hunt, "Ut Pictura Poesis, ut Pictura Hortus, and the Picturesque," Word and Image 1, no. 1 (January-March 1985): 87-197, at 92-93: "It is as if that Temple of British Worthies, elaborately provided with inscriptions, is offered in only partial competition with its classical counterpart across the river of death." See also William Gilpin, A Dialogue upon the Gardens at Stowe (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, 1976), Augustan Reprint Society, no. 176. For an additional eighteenth-century account of Stowe, see George Bickham, The Beauties of Stow (1750) (Augustan Reprint Society,

1977), publication nos. 185-86 (William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of

California, Los Angeles).

31. See the booklet titled SF, printed at Finlay's Wild Hawthorn Press with George L. Thomson in 1978, Finlay archives, Getty Center (see Abrioux, Finlay, 283, for a reproduction of the relevant page); and Christopher McIntosh, Coincidence in the Work of Ian Hamilton Finlay, exhibition catalog (Edinburgh: Graeme Murray Gallery, 1980), n.p.

32. These examples are from Ribner, Broken Tablets, 13-15. For further discussion of issues of unusual weather and tempests in Revolutionary iconography, see Ronald Paulson, Representations of Revolution (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1983), 5, 8, 44 n. 19, 69, 75.

33. Mary Shelley, Frankenstein (New York: Signet, 1965), 40: "as the dazzling light vanished, the oak had disappeared, and nothing remained but a blasted stump. . . . It was not splintered by the shock, but entirely reduced to thin ribbons of wood. I never beheld anything so utterly destroyed." See also 153, Victor Frankenstein after the disaster of his experiments: "But I am a blasted tree; the bolt has entered my soul."

34. The Seasons by James Thomson with The Life of the Author by Dr. Samuel Johnson

(Philadelphia: H. Taylor, 1790), 90-94, lines 1083-1231.

35. See Sheila McTighe, "Nicholas Poussin's Representations of Storms and Libertinage in the Mid-Seventeenth Century," Word and Image 5, no. 4 (October-December 1989): 333-61, at 350. This essay provides an illuminating discussion of Poussin's paintings as representations of his political and moral philosophy, especially his ideas regarding nature and fate. In Nicolas Poussin: A New Approach (New York: Abrams, 1966), Walter Friedlaender discusses Poussin's stoicism, especially the influence of Seneca regarding the necessity of a resolution to resist accidents of fortune and death.

36. See Bann, "Description of Stonypath," 123, 126. Finlay's use of vegetative background in light and shade to evoke the sea might also be linked to the "staging" of mythological scenes by means of classical sculptures in a sea of vegetation in the gardens of the Villa Medici, now the French Academy, in Rome.

- 37. See two of Finlay's pieces in particular: Cloud Board, an early work from 1968 in which a bisected tub was set into the ground with one side reflecting clouds as they passed by and the other planted with aquatic plants such as waterlilies designed to imitate the form of the passing clouds, and Angelique et Medor, an inscription of the names of the lovers from Ariosto's Orlando Furioso, designed to be read in the water of a pond. Their story, set in the context of Charlemagne's wars, includes an account of their honeymoon in the woods; when Orlando, who has been enamored of Angelica, comes upon their retreat by chance and learns she has married the Moor Medoro, he is seized with madness. Orlando runs naked through the country, destroying whatever he encounters, and returns to Charlemagne's camp. As in Finlay's complex re-creations of painted landscapes, both following and critiquing eighteenthcentury conventions of the re-created picture, here he presents a fictional story in what could be its real setting, but reminds us of our doubled relation to the mutually implicated fictional and real by showing us the names in a mirror.
- 38. Eventually, in 1793, in the empty space where the prison had been, an enormous statue of Nature in the form of a Sphinx was erected. See Paulson, Representations, 41.
  - 39. See ibid., 17.
  - 40. Ibid., 75.
- 41. Rousseau's remains were removed in 1794 to Sainte-Genevieve in Paris. Finlay has also made a series of prints with Gary Hincks, Tombeau de Rousseau au Pantheon, which juxtaposes the original neoclassical design with its torch of Truth and an arm holding a machine gun protruding from the tomb door, representing Action or Nature. See Abrioux, Finlay, 297. The Marquis de Girardin's tribute to Rousseau is itself an "island" of English taste in the French

gardening tradition. See Day, "Finlay: Bicentennial Proposal," 15: "In successfully blending aesthetics, politics, Arcady and Husbandry, the English created a highly successful and at the same time individual form of garden that had little in common with the mathematical, pleasure and water-gardens of eighteenth-century French court life. As such, the English political garden is as foreign to French eighteenth-century life as the French garden itself differs from the English. The English political garden was alien to the nature and conception of French garden design and thinking, except in the noteworthy case of the Marquis de Girardin, the late

eighteenth-century anglophile gardenist."

42. See Anthony Vidler, The Writing of the Walls: Architectural Theory in the Late Enlightenment (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Architectural Press, 1987), 18, and Wolfgang Herrmann, Laugier and Eighteenth-Century French Theory (London: Zwemmer, 1962). Herrmann writes, "The story of primitive man and his hut may have appealed to the average reader because of the then fashionable interest in the life of the savage, but Laugier had undoubtedly chosen it for a different reason: he thus traced the architectural lineage back as closely as was possible to nature itself. He calls the hut 'a rough sketch which nature offers us'" (from Laugier's Essai 2: 12 and 1: 10, quoted in Herrmann, Laugier, 43). See also the discussion of the hut as both picturesque and "a center of concentrated solitude" in Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 31-32.

43. A connection between the neoclassicism of the French Revolution and the destruction of the Bastille is made as well in Finlay's references to the neoclassicism expressed in the

pastoral and prison etchings of Piranesi.

44. See Bann, "Description of Stonypath," 138.

45. Ibid., 128.

46. Poggioli, Oaten Flute, 3. See also Geoffrey Hartman, "'The Nymph Complaining for the Death of Her Faun': A Brief Allegory," in Beyond Formalism: Literary Essays, 1958-1970 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1970), 173-92, at 177-78: "Those acquainted with the poetry of the Pleiade will remember the impact of the Anacreonta and the Greek Anthology (mediated by the Neo-Latin poets) on Ronsard, Du Bellay, and Belleau, who began to develop an alternate tradition to the high style of the great ode which had been their main object of imitation. Not odes but odelettes, not epics and large elegies but little descriptive domestic or rural poems. . . . A strange riot of diminutives and diminutive forms begins. The word idyll in fact was commonly etymologized as a diminutive of eidos, a little picture" (177).

47. See Abrioux, Finlay, 2: "Exhibition of toys [in 1963] at the home of the publisher John Calder." Finlay's model-making is discussed in Day, "Finlay: The Bicentennial Proposal," 19.

48. See, for example, H. G. Wells, Little Wars: A Game for Boys from Twelve Years of Age to 150 and for That More Intelligent Sort of Girls Who Like Boys' Games and Books; with an Appendix on Kriegspiel (London: Frank Palmer, 1913). Miles Orvell, "Poe and the Poetics of Pacific," in Ian Hamilton Finlay: Collaborations (Cambridge: Kettle's Yard Gallery, 1977), 17-22, describes "Pacific," a war game like draughts that Finlay invented, involving the progress of airplane and carrier models across a board. Finlay has also studied, and based a concrete poem ("little fields / long horizons") upon, the prison garden of Albert Speer at Spandau, contending that the Nazi architect's assemblage of concrete, debris, and plants there—far from being a benign hobby—was a re-creation of his memories of party rally scenes such as the Zeppelinfield. See Graham Rose, "The Garden of Unrest," Getty MSS, box 21, and Stephen Bann's commentary "The Speer Project," in Abrioux, Finlay, 288-89.

49. Gilpin, Dialogue upon the Gardens at Stowe, 29-30.

50. See Dixon Hunt's discussion of theatricality in the perspectival garden scene in "Ut Pictura Poesis," 93.

51. Keeney, "Noble Truths," 163.

52. Paulson, Representations, 7.

53. See Hartman, "Wordsworth, Inscriptions, and Romantic Nature Poetry," in Beyond Formalism, 206–30, at 210–11.

54. See Louis-Antoine de Saint-Just, Théorie politique: Textes établis et commentes par

Alain Lienard (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1976), 139-40.

- 55. Nesta H. Webster, The French Revolution: A Study in Democracy (New York: Dutton, n.d.). See also Webster's Secret Societies and Subversive Movements (London: Boswell, n.d.), The Socialist Network (London: Boswell, 1926), and World Revolution: The Plot Against Civilization (London: Constable, 1921). For a brief discussion of Webster's influence on this "classic paranoid anti-semitism" as yoked to French modernism, see Louis Menand's review of Anthony Julius's T. S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism, and Literary Form (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) in "Eliot and the Jews," New York Review of Books 43, no. 10 (June 6, 1996): 34-41. In a continuation of the anti-Semitic and anti-Freemason conspiratorial speculations of the eighteenth-century Jesuit Abbé Augustin Barruel, Webster constantly argues that the Terror is the root of all later anarchic and subversive social movements. (See the discussion of French anti-Semitism during the Enlightenment by Leon Poliakov, The History of Anti-Semitism, trans. Miriam Kochan [New York: Vanguard/Routledge, 1975], 3:70-156.) Webster's mode of "history" writing insinuates that the "other" (here Jews and revolutionaries) is the hidden cause of whatever is to be designated as a "problem." There is no end to the growth of the irrational attribution that ensues; Webster's elaborately manic taxonomies, graphs, and lists of names horribly anticipate the Nazi bureaucracy and the McCarthy era. Paranoia is the method of such anti-Semitism, as it is today in neo-Nazi and other extreme right movements.
- 56. In a letter of January 29, 1975, to Michael Harvey on his plans for a Battle of the Midway emblem, Finlay explains: "Obviously, the emblem or medallion or impresa form appeals to me because it conjoins words and pictures. It also makes something of an issue of brevity. But perhaps even more relevant is the element of wit."
- 57. Finlay plays on the duality of the Greek word χαιρε, meaning both "hail" and "farewell" in the sense of a salute to the dead, particularly in his one-word poem "WAVE/ave."
- 58. See "The E at Delphi," in *Plutarch's Moralia in Sixteen Volumes*, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt, vol. 5 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 253.
  - 59. Personal letter to Mary Ann Caws, April 30, 1989, 3, Getty MSS, box 7.
- 60. Quoted from Poggioli, Oaten Flute, 12. In this theme of a simultaneity that will reveal the couple as in fact one, we find Finlay's interest in recording the names of pairs of lovers: Aeneas and Dido, Apollo and Daphne, Angelica and Medoro, and others who are brought together or torn apart by strife and in their separation are yet joined by time or dissolved into nature, as Dido is into fire or Daphne is into wood.
  - 61. See Poggioli, Oaten Flute, 30.
  - 62. Quoted in Abrioux, Finlay, 291.
- 63. Maurice Pellisson, Chamfort: Étude sur sa vie, son caractère, et ses écrits (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1970; reprint of 1895 Paris edition), 218.
  - 64. Heraclitus, Cosmic Fragments, 245.
- 65. See David Carrier, Poussin's Paintings: A Study in Art-Historical Methodology (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 171–72.
- 66. Panofsky's final revision of the essay is in Meaning in the Visual Arts, 295–320; see 316–17. The paintings are in fact a kind of emblem of art history scholarship, posing a number of conflicts in interpretation. See, for example, Carrier, Poussin's Paintings, 30–174, which surveys the competing versions of Panofsky's essay in light of larger considerations of Poussin's landscapes; Louis Marin, "Towards a Theory of Reading in the Visual Arts: Poussin's The Arcadian Shepherds," in Calligrams, ed. Norman Bryson (Cambridge: Cambridge University

Press, 1988), which uses the deictic aspect of the Louvre painting to propose a theory of reading in painting; and Jean-Louis Schefer, "Thanatography, Skiagraphy (from Espèce de chose melancolie)," trans. Paul Smith, Word and Image 1, no. 2 (April–June 1985): 191–96, which sees the painting as a kind of allegory of reading more generally, where the painting represents the onset of interpretation made possible by the loss of the body as a lived relation.

67. Hartman, "'Nymph Complaining," 191.

68. Letter from the philosopher Edward Hussey to Finlay in 1977, quoted in Bann, "a Description of Stonypath," 134.

69. See Paul Fussell, The Rhetorical World of Augustan Humanism, Ethics, and Imagery from Swift to Burke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 143.

70. Abrioux, Finlay, 224.

71. Excerpts from A New Arcadian Dictionary are reprinted in McIntosh, Coincidence, n.p.

72. Terry Comito, The Idea of the Garden in the Renaissance (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1978), 9–12.

73. Ibid., 14-15.

74. See McIntosh, Coincidence, n.p. (p. 3 of text).

75. Sir Thomas Browne, Religio Medici, Hydriotaphia, and the Garden of Cyrus, ed. R. H. A. Robbins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972). All page numbers in parentheses refer to this edition, although I have also consulted Hydriotaphia, Urne-Buriall; or, A Discourse of the Sepulchrall Urnes lately found in Norfolk. Together with The Garden of Cyrus, or the Quincunciall, Lozenge, or Net-work [p]lantations of the Ancients, Artificially, Naturally, Mystically Considered. With Sundry Observations, by Thomas Browne, D. of Physick (London: printed for Hen. Brome at the Signe of the Gun in Ivy-lane, 1658).

76. Susan Howe, in an early essay on Finlay's concrete poetry, "The End of Art," Archives of American Art Journal 14, no. 4 (1974): 2–6, discusses Finlay's use of the cruciform in works like "Fisherman's Cross," a concrete poem where eight clusters of the word seas surround a central "ease": "again the cruciform, icon of redemption in continuity—... a poem whose visible form is identical to its structure." Howe quotes Henry Vaughn, "Death is a Crosse, to which many waies leade, some direct, and others winding, but all meet in one center."

77. Letter to Mary Ann Caws, April 30, 1989, 3.

78. See G. G. Giarchi, Between McAlpine and Polaris (London: Routledge, 1984).

79. See Day, "Finlay: Bicentennial Proposal," 18.