

2: Nature and Nature's God

A. Getting our Bearings

1. Class title 1 (Turner: *Kilchorn Castle*)
2. Constable/Cole comparison

“Nature and Nature’s God”—the phrase comes from the **Declaration of Independence**, but that was the subject of last week’s class, which was essentially a lecture and mainly American. Today, I want to give at least equal time to Britain, to leave politics aside, and to build as much of the class as possible around comparisons, where you do the work. Starting with the pair I put on the syllabus page: *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows* (1831) by the Englishman **John Constable** (1776–1837), and *View from Mount Holyoke, Northampton, Massachusetts, after a Thunderstorm* (1836), commonly called *The Oxbow*, by the founder of the Hudson River School **Thomas Cole** (1801–48), who was also born in England, but who emigrated to the United States with his family when he was 17. I’ll show each picture complete, then pan over them, then return to the full picture. [Some of you will have seen these before in other classes; these are subjects I have touched on several times before. But I will try to keep repeat material to the minimum in this class, and to approach the old stuff in new ways. Such as this comparison.] I hope to use it to winkle out topics for the rest of the class.

3. Constable: *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows* (1831, London Tate)
4. Cole: *View from Mount Holyoke... after a Thunderstorm* (1836, NY Met)
5. Constable/Cole comparison

Tell me what you notice. Perhaps the first question to ask is “When is a landscape more than a simple record of a place?” Do either of these pictures have a purpose? Both pictures have striking skies; does the artist mean anything by the weather?

6. Constable: *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows* (1831, London Tate)
7. Cole: *View from Mount Holyoke... after a Thunderstorm* (1836, NY Met)
8. Cole: detail with name of Noah

Many of you will probably know this, but do you see what is clear-cut into the forest above the Oxbow? It is the name NOAH in Hebrew. Why? Because Cole saw America as a second chance at Eden. The bow of the river stands in for the rainbow of God’s covenant with Noah, and the cultivated fields to the right are the fruit of that covenant. **GOD IN NATURE** will be the first topic we explore during the class.

9. Cole with title

One further detail: Cole appears to be painting himself (or arguably some other artist) painting; his parasol and haversack are set up on a rock, and he himself has set up his easel just below it. But the figures are tiny; man as an individual hardly features in this painting at all.

10. Constable *Salisbury Cathedral* comparison
11. Constable: *Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's Grounds* (1823, London V&A)
12. Constable: *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows* (1831, London Tate), detail with title

One more comparison. Constable had painted Salisbury Cathedral at least once before; he was friends with the Bishop, and he and his wife stayed with them on several occasions. So compare his version from 1823 with the one from 1831. Look first at the people; which picture is the more inhabited? Clearly it is the later one; the earlier painting has a couple of well-to-do visitors admiring the view, but the three people and the dog in the later one are locals just doing what locals do. Hence the title of my second major part, **MAN IN NATURE**.

However, this later picture is also about Man in a more immediate way. Compare the skies in the two pictures. Is the greater activity in the later one merely an evolution in Constable's style, or is he using it to express something else? I am probably guilty of biographical hindsight here. Two and a half years before the date of the later picture, Maria Constable died, and John was devastated. Is it possible to read the thunderstorm and rainbow in the later painting as representing a psychological turning-point, as he pulled himself out of his depression? The return to the figures of local farm-folk which had populated his earlier paintings of his native East Anglia would support this. If so, the thundercloud and rainbow have much the same significance as in Thomas Cole's painting—with one significant difference: "Man" in Cole's painting has a capital M, or a capital A: Americans as the new Chosen People; "man" in the Constable is the troubled soul of a single individual.

13. Cole: detail of left-hand side with title.

Back to the Cole. If the cultivated area on the right of the picture represent the lands that Americans have already brought under the plough, surely the wilderness to the left represents the Western Frontier that has still to be conquered. The phrase "Manifest Destiny" had not yet been coined, and it would be a quarter-century before Albert Bierstadt visited the Rockies, but conquest of the West seems also implied in God's promise to his American Noahs. **NATURE IN THE WILD** will be our topic after the break, where I shall attempt to compare the American West to Scotland!

B. God in Nature

14. Section title B (as slide 9 above)
15. **All Things Bright and Beautiful** (St. Mary-le-Tower, Ipswich)
16. Cecil Frances Alexander

The most straightforward equation of God to Nature, I think, comes in the children's hymn "All Things Bright and Beautiful," written in 1848 by **Cecil Frances Alexander** (1818–95) whose husband would become Bishop of Derry in my home country of Northern Ireland. She also wrote "There is a green hill far away" and the carol "Once in Royal David's City." But actually there is virtually no other music and surprisingly little nineteenth-century painting dealing explicitly with God in Nature.

17. Palmer: *After the Service* and *A Hilly Scene* (both 1830, London Tate)

The only English painter who was anything like that explicit, I think, was **Samuel Palmer** (1805–81), a follower of William Blake. Working at **Shoreham** in Kent, he produced a number of small jewel-like paintings in intense colors, showing landscapes that seem impossibly rich even for that fertile area.

18. Palmer: *Psalm 65*

19. Palmer: *Garden in Shoreham* and *The Magic Apple Tree*

The key to his approach can be found in his more explicit Biblical illustrations. The hills and meadows of **Psalm 65**, for instance, are as packed as the altar displays for a harvest festival, and even those paintings with no obvious religious quality share a similar bounty.

20. Cole: *The Garden of Eden* (1828, Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth)

Cole also painted pictures with explicit religious content, as in this fantasy of *The Garden of Eden* from 1828. We would not see anything similar again until Bierstadt came back from the Rockies in 1870. But it is one thing to paint a fantasy, as he did in several of his paintings near the start of his career. It is quite another to take a real landscape and endow it with a similar spirituality, as he was to do with *The Oxbow* eight years later. I wonder how important it is that he came to America almost as an adult; would he have seen it as another Eden if he had grown up here?

21. Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley

Yet if you look at the giants of English Romantic poetry, such as **William Wordsworth** (1770–1850), **Samuel Taylor Coleridge** (1772–1834), and the younger but shorter lived **Percy Bysshe Shelley** (1792–1822), you will find a curious ambivalence about the presence of God in Nature. Let's compare these two sonnets by Wordsworth, both written in 1802. In the first, he has gone over to France to visit a former lover, Annette Vallon, and is walking on the beach at Calais with their nine-year-old daughter Caroline. The second has no such biographical content; its immediate spur appears to be the Industrial Revolution

22. Wordsworth: *It is a beauteous evening* (Benedict Cumberbatch)

23. Wordsworth: *The world is too much with us* (John Reads Poetry)

24. — texts of the above

Judging just from these two sonnets, what would you say is the nature of Wordsworth's God and his relationship to the natural world? There is a Christian faith of a kind in there somewhere; he uses Christian imagery in the first sonnet, and bemoans the loss of faith in the second. But it is really hard to pin down, isn't it?

25. Turner: *Mer de Glace in the Valley of Chamouni* (1803, Yale)

Most of the Romantic poets and painters made tours to continental Europe whenever conditions with Napoleonic France allowed. And they were stunned by the Alps. It wasn't just that they had to get across them; they sought out the most terrifying views to give them a first-hand experience of the Sublime.

This is something we'll come back to after the break, but I can't help thinking that, at some level, they felt they were coming into direct touch with God. So here is yet another picture by **JMW Turner** (1775–1851), whom you may have noticed creeping in from time to time. Against it, I want to set two poems, written essentially at the same spot. The first is by **Coleridge**, who was an avowed Christian, and even became a lay preacher. The other, 14 years later, is by **Shelley**, a noted atheist. The contrast is striking.

26. Coleridge: *Hymn Before Sunrise* (1803), excerpt

27. Shelley: *Mont Blanc* (1816), final stanza

Anybody care to comment on those?

28. Asher Durand: *Kindred Spirits* (1849, NYPL)

This picture, by American artist **Asher Durand** (1796–1886), a celebrated landscape painter himself, is called *Kindred Spirits*. Painted as a tribute to **Thomas Cole** a year after his death, it shows the painter with his friend, poet **William Cullen Bryant** (1794–1878) somewhere in the Catskill Mountains. I don't have time for a complete poem by him now, but I'd like to compare the opening and closing stanzas of his "To a Waterfall" with a short complete poem by **Waldo Ralph Emerson** (1803–82), a leading figure of the slightly later Transcendentalists. How would you characterize their religious belief?

29. Bryant: *To a Waterfowl* (1815), first and last stanzas

30. Emerson: *The Rhodora* (read by T. Schaberg)

31. Emerson: *The Rhodora* (1834), text

32. Bryant: *To a Waterfowl*, repeat

What did you find? What is the difference between them? Both seem to take a position somewhere between Coleridge's and Shelley's: belief in a non-specific Creator present in all aspects of Nature. The difference is while that Bryant's God takes an active part in leading his steps aright, Emerson's Power simply *is*. Emerson in fact was an ordained Congregational minister, but resigned not long after, feeling that the doctrines of the church were too restrictive to match his broad concept of the divine.

Note incidentally that the dates of these poems are 1815 and 1834, whereas the English Romantics I quoted were somewhere between 1800 and 1816. It is much the same with painting; in order to get an approximately contemporaneous comparison the start the class, I had to go with a very late Constable and relatively early Cole. For the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century at least, you will find that such comparisons that can be made involve a **time-shift** of 15 to 20 years between the two countries.

C. Man in Nature

33. Section title C (Constable detail)

Let's try another comparison. Two artists we have seen before: **John Constable** and **Asher Durand**. Two very similar scenes. I have added a blow-up to each full-size picture so you can see some of the detail.

- 34. The two pictures below
- 35. Constable: *The Cornfield* (1826, London NG)
- 36. Durand: *The Beeches* (1845, NY Met)

However you understand the terms, which painting looks the more old-fashioned and which the more modern? Does this necessarily reflect the period at which each was painted? Are both artists equally skilled, and what are the specific skills of each? How does each artist use the people in the picture? How does each treat the distance? Does either picture seem to have a religious message?

37. Constable: *The Hay Wain* (1821, London NG)

To me, the striking thing about the Constable is that it is both **personal** and **particular**. There is absolutely nothing generic about his picture; he could have told you how to walk to that precise spot; he probably knew the shepherd and his boy by name. Look at his most famous picture, *The Hay Wain* (1821). The house belongs to a neighbor, **Willy Lott**. The river is the **Stour**, where his father owned a mill; he knew its sounds and smells. The picture represents a particular hour (noon) on a particular day; in a few minutes, we know, the light will have changed; the clouds will have moved across the sky. Constable's emphasis on the particular made him fascinated by clouds, and his notebooks are filled with rapid studies. A few years ago for another class, I put a few of them together with some English music from roughly Constable's time, the *Fifth Symphony* (1836) by **William Sterndale Bennett** (1816–75).

38. Constable: *Cloud Studies*, with Sterndale Bennett *Symphony #5*

39. George Stubbs: *Horse Frightened by a Lion* (1770, Liverpool) — pause at start

Let's jump back 50 years. Here is a landscape by another English artist, **George Stubbs** (1724–1806). It is the background to a subject that I have temporarily covered by a black blob, but I have a question: what mood does the landscape convey to you on its own? For me, its threatening quality is the perfect expression of the terror felt by the horse on suddenly seeing a lion (no, not in England; Stubbs' original inspiration probably came from a trip to Morocco). And why should we be interested in the feelings of a horse? Because we see it as a noble animal, intelligent but instinctive, whose reactions totally bypass the thought processes of the Age of Reason.

40. Fuseli: *Nightmare* (1781) and Friedrich: *Wanderer* (1817)

I mentioned in the first class that Americans needed to define a national identity because they were a new country, but that Britons were centuries old and knew perfectly well who they were. For ordinary people, that might be true, but not for artists and poets. All over Europe, they were feeling the first stirrings of the **Romantic spirit**, which looked at people as **individuals**, and not as part of some ordered group, and individuals are constantly redefining themselves. Paintings, poems, and songs increasingly dealt with inner thoughts and feelings, not with outward behaviors. None of the English Romantics were quite so blatant as Swiss-born **Henry Fuseli** (1741–1825) in depicting a *Nightmare* or German **Caspar David Friedrich** (1774–1840) in setting a solitary *Wanderer against a Sea of Cloud*. But the spirit was there. When Constable worked through his process of recovery from grief in terms of a thunderstorm, he was indeed being particular and personal, but also in tune with the new Romantic spirit.

41. Lewis: *Harvest in Herefordshire* (1816, London Tate)

Of course, the theme of Man in Nature should not be confined to the painters and poets looking on from afar. It should include the people who actually work in the fields, as in this splendid painting by the less-well-known **George Robert Lewis** (1782–1871), whose depictions of farm scenes in the West of England are remarkable for their descriptions of rural life. Lewis of course was a professional artist, but let me use his picture as background to a snatch of an autobiographical poem by a man who really did work the fields: **John Clare** (1793–1864). The son of an agricultural laborer, and entirely self-taught, he worked as a farm laborer himself from childhood on, until he found success with his collection *The Village Minstrel* in the early 1820. You will see that, in his simple faith, that *God in Nature* and *Man in Nature* become virtually the same thing. I'll read the first poem myself, then go to a professional reading of a second one, *The Wren*.

42. Clare: *The Peasant Poet*

43. Clare: *The Wren*, read by Simon Loekle

44. Epping Forest and quotation from Dr. Matthew Allen

Alas, Clare's young story did not have a happy ending. He became an alcoholic and started suffering from delusions, believing for example that he was Byron. In 1838, he committed himself to a private mental asylum in Epping Forest run by a forward-looking doctor named **Matthew Allen**, and remained nearly constantly under care in one hospital or another from then until his death. Yet Allen was not entirely right. There are a few powerful poems in which Clare is acutely aware of his condition, such as the one titled "Written in the Northampton County Asylum," or simply "I Am." Here it is read by someone with the pseudonym **Tom O'Bedlam**; the choice of images is also his.

45. Clare: *Written in the Northampton County Asylum*, read by Tom O'Bedlam

46. John Clare, the Peasant Poet

In his depiction of country living, Clare was a Romantic only in the more limited English sense, but his awareness of inner turmoil makes him a universal one.

47. Canning: *Fantasy on a Hymn Tune by Justin Morgan* — pause at start

I'll end this section back in America with a work called *Fantasy on a Hymn Tune by Justin Morgan* by **Thomas Canning** (1911–81). Although modern, there is virtually nothing in this piece that could not have been written in the nineteenth, and the hymn tune he uses was published in 1787 by **Justin Morgan** (1747–98), a part-time composer who is perhaps more famous as the original breeder of the Morgan Horses. Whoever put this video together has collected a number of paintings, engravings, and watercolors by members of the **Hudson River School**, beginning I think with a couple by Cole himself. Whether intentional or not, the sequence tells another story of Man in Nature, the gradual taming of wild places until they become pleasant destinations for the weekend sailor!

48. Class title 2 (John William Casilear: *Lake George*, 1857)

D. Nature in the Wild

49. Section title D (Cole: *The Oxbow*, left-hand side)

Let's start this section with another comparison: two paintings from exactly the same year, 1864. No prizes for guessing which is American and which British!

50. The two pictures below

51. Horatio McCulloch: *Glencoe* (1864, Glasgow Kelvingrove)

52. Albert Bierstadt: *Valley of the Yosemite* (1864, Boston MFA)

Whether in Scotland or California, both pictures show mountains; how has each artist treated them? What is the role of the light, and of the sky? If you didn't know the real places, would you think that either was exaggerated? And if you do know? What is the message that each artist conveys? The artists are **Horatio McCulloch** (1805–67) and **Albert Bierstadt** (1830–1902).

53. Albert Bierstadt: *A Storm in the Rocky Mountains, Mount Rosalie* (1868, Brooklyn)

To me, the difference is that while both are awe-inspiring, Bierstadt is also Edenic. Even when he is painting mountain storms, there is still this quality of a magical promised land in Bierstadt. I mentioned how I think it important that Thomas Cole came to America only in his late teens; had he been raised here, I doubt he'd have had the same sense of discovery, or the same awareness of American as another Eden. Bierstadt, though German by birth, *was* raised here, but the landscapes of the American West *were* new discoveries.

54. Horatio McCulloch: *Loch Lomond* (not dated, Glasgow City Life Museum)

From the perspective of London, Scotland was also remote, but it was part of the same United Kingdom, and from the Eighteenth Century at least people did visit it; Horatio McCulloch's view of Loch Lomond—the gateway to the Highlands, and nowadays the terminus of a suburban train from Glasgow—could almost be used for a travel brochure. But nineteenth-century tourists were not looking for a northern equivalent of the sunny Italian lakes; they were looking for cliff and cataract, and a frisson of terror.

55. George Romney: *James Macpherson, with some lines from Ossian*

This fashion was sparked by this man, **James Macpherson** (1736–96), who stunned the literary world in 1761 by his discovery of some lost poems by the semi-mythical Scots bard Ossian, which he published in his own translation. More followed. For almost half a century, Ossian was the talk of Europe; Napoleon was especially taken with his heroic stanzas. But others, starting almost immediately with Doctor Johnson, began to question and eventually realized that Macpherson was writing the stuff himself. It was first a controversy and then a scandal—but I don't see why it should have been for Macpherson, whether as translator or outright author—clearly had a feeling for the appetite of the time. I made a video for another course, with me declaiming to a background of Mendelssohn.

56. Macpherson: *Ossian* (reading to Mendelssohn music)

57. Turner: views of Scotland

One artist who made several visits to Scotland was **JMW Turner**, clearly looking for the Ossianic world. In 1832, he made the boat trip to visit one of the iconic Ossianic sites, Fingal's Cave on the Isle of Staffa. As so often happens, though, the water was too rough for their boat to get it, so he contented himself with painting the sea and the rain. And in the very same year, **Felix Mendelssohn** (1809–47) made the same frustrating excursion, and put *his* reactions into music. I thought it would be fun to put the two works together; this is from a class last year.

58. Mendelssohn: *Fingal's Cave* (opening)

59. Turner: *Staffa, Fingal's Cave* (1832, Yale)

Yes, Mendelssohn was German, but he made ten visits to Britain, spending a total of almost two years (out of a total of only 38) there. He was a guest of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, he wrote several pieces for British orchestras, and edited important editions of Handel and Bach for British publishers. So I think he qualifies as an honorary Briton, and enables me to play a movement of his so-called *Scottish Symphony* (1842); although the tune is probably original, it is also very much in the style of Scottish folk music: a melody that could be played entirely on the black keys, and a characteristic “Scotch snap” rhythm. It is quite infectious, and a lot more cheerful than *Fingal's Cave*. It gets more stormy after its folklike opening, so I'll fade out at that point. Adding to the international mix, the conductor is **Andrés Orozco-Estrada**, a Colombian-born Austrian citizen conducting the **hr-Symphony Orchestra** of Frankfurt.

60. Mendelssohn: *Scottish Symphony* (opening of the scherzo)

61. Raeburn: *Sir Walter Scott and his Dogs* (1820s)

Anyone who has been to Edinburgh will remember how Princes Street is dominated by a huge monument to **Sir Walter Scott** (1771–1832), one of Scotland's greatest poets and unquestionably her most influential novelist. Scott fashioned a repertoire of Scottish myth, not by cutting it out of whole cloth as Macpherson had done, but by diving deep into Scottish history and telling stories that are closely tied to the place-names and landscape of the country around him. We can hear this in his poem *Rosabelle*, which is a section of his long *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805). The eponymous heroine is drowned crossing the Firth of Forth for her marriage to Lindsay Saint Clair of Rosslyn. The reader once again is Tom O'Bedlam. I have added pictures by Turner and various other artists, showing Ravenscraig Castle (called Ravensheuch in the poem) on the north bank of the Forth at the beginning, and Rosslyn Castle on the south bank near Edinburgh for the rest. Both are now largely in ruins, though Rosslyn Chapel survives.

62. Scott: *Rosabelle*, with various paintings (reading by Tom O'Bedlam)

63. Alexander Nasmyth: *Robert Burns* (detail, Edinburgh NGS)

The tiny man in the lower picture is the poet **Robert Burns** (1759–96), visiting the ruins at Rosslyn; both it and the picture above were painted by another Scottish artist, **Alexander Nasmyth** (1758–1840). I said that Scott was *one* of Scotland's leading poets, but without a doubt that title goes to Burns, whose more than 350 songs and poems have made him literally a household name. The popular image is of a self-taught countryman, wandering rural ways and inditing his rustic ditties. But in fact he was well

educated, spoke excellent French, and had a good knowledge of the literature and music of his time, in continental Europe as well as Great Britain. He paired many of his songs to pre-existing tunes, but that's not the whole story. He played the violin and often described himself as a composer. Many tunes were in fact written by him, and those he adapted often changed their character significantly. And so far as I know, once he married a tune to a text, the result was to divorce both text and tune from any other combinations. And although Burns did not live into the 19th century, he fits into this class because so many of his songs rely upon their settings in Nature. Here is his "Banks and Braes of Bonnie Doon" sung by **Kenneth McKellar**. The text I used is slightly Anglicized; you will find that McKellar substitutes Scottish words for the English ones here and there. What would you say is the song's dominant mood?

64. Burns: *Banks o'Doon* (Kenneth McKellar)

65. Mackenzie: *Second Scottish Rhapsody*, cover

So what would you say is the song's dominant mood? To me, it is nostalgia, even regret. We saw a degree of nostalgia in Constable's landscape painting—indeed I wonder if nostalgia is not a quality in 19th-century landscape in general—but for the Scots, it is stronger and more personal. They are fiercely proud of their landscape, their language, their traditions, and yet so much of their history is one of loss: the failure of Bonnie Prince Charlie to restore the Stuart line, the mass expulsions during the Highland Clearances, the worldwide Scottish diaspora. It is not incidental that the statue of Robert Burns here is in Winthrop Square, Boston. Scottish music and Scottish art so often seem about preserving a legacy before it disappears. I'm going to end this short section by playing the latter half of the middle movement of the *Second Scottish Rhapsody* (1880) by Scottish composer **Alexander Mackenzie** (1847–1935). Each of its three movements is based on a Burns song, so let's hear a bit of the one he used for this one, "She's faire and fause." Again, Burns is mourning the loss of a love, but this time he is bitter rather than nostalgic. After that, I'll go immediately to the Mackenzie; I am struck by the way his simple setting of the tune turns into an evocation of landscape when orchestrated and developed. This time I have used views of Scotland from a foreigner, the French artist **Gustave Doré** (1832–83), who visited Scotland in 1873 and 1874, so they are appropriate as to time.

66. Burns: "She's faire and fause," first stanza

67. Mackenzie: *Second Scottish Rhapsody*, slow movement

68. Albert Bierstadt: *Indians Spear Fishing* (1862, Houston MFA)

I know I kind of implied that I would give equal time to Scotland and the American West. But in fact the story of the opening of the West, and especially the White treatment of Native Americans, belongs to Class 7 on **Empire**; I promise a lot more Bierstadt then. But I do feel there is a match between the awesome grandeur of the Scottish landscape (especially as extolled by Macpherson's Ossian) and the wonder felt by 19th-century Americans as they moved westward into their own continent. And for sheer awe they needn't go any further than Niagara. Imagine coming through the woods as Thomas Cole must have done, hearing the sound grow to a frightening intensity, then seeing the waters without boats, without buildings, without promenades and observation platforms, and above all without tourists.

69. Cole: *Distant View of Niagara Falls* (1830, Chicago), animation — pause at the start

70. — still from the above

Niagara inspired numerous other painters, of varying quality, and hundreds of poets, mainly bad. However, I thought it would be fun to take two fragments of 19th-century verse—fragments, because poets of the period tend to apostrophize Niagara at length—and compare their attitudes. I know nothing about either poet, **Lydia Huntley Sigourney** and **Henry Howard Brownell**. One passage is the opening of the poem; the other is a closing. The background painting is *Blue Niagara* (1884, Boston MFA) by **George Inness** (1825–94).

71. **Lydia Huntley Sigourney: *Niagara* (1835), opening**

72. **Henry Howard Brownell: *Niagara* (1847), closing**

Do you see the difference? **Sigourney** is definitely a “God in Nature” kind of person. Her Niagara is proof of God’s existence and almost a command to praise Him. **Brownell** is equally awestruck but never mentions God once in the entire poem. His focus is on Man—but Man as entirely insignificant, who will have vanished long before the Falls cease to flow. The difference between them is almost an exact parallel of that between **Coleridge** and **Shelley** contemplating Mont Blanc.

73. **Church: *Niagara* (1867 Edinburgh), with portraits of Heinrich and Fry**

This picture of Niagara is by another Hudson River School artist, **Frederic Edwin Church** (1826–1900); serendipitously, this is in the National Gallery of Scotland in Edinburgh; we will see his grandest depiction of Niagara in a moment. The two portraits are of the first two composers of symphonic music in America: Bohemian-born **Anthony Philip Heinrich** (1781–1861) and **William Henry Fry** (1813–64) from Philadelphia. When I say “symphonic,” I mean writing for a large orchestra; the works of both composers could better be described as **tone poems**; there is no attempt at symphonic form. In 1845, Heinrich wrote *The War of the Elements and the Thundering of Niagara*, calling it a *Capriccio Grande*. It has a rather striking opening, which I’ll play. I’ll then cut to where he gets to Niagara; he begins rather effectively, with woodwinds representing the turbulent water and thunder in the brass; but then he doesn’t know where to go except to have one brass cadence followed by another, and another, so I’ll fade out. The paintings are all by **Albert Bierstadt**, who I find curiously restrained compared with his Rocky Mountain works.

74. **Heinrich: *The War of the Elements and the Thundering of Niagara* (1845), excerpts**

75. **Frederic Edwin Church: *Niagara Falls* (1857, Washington NGA)**

Against this, let’s end with an excerpt from **William Henry Fry**, who composed his *Niagara Symphony* in 1854 for **PT Barnum’s** “Monster Concert”; it required 11 tympani to make the sound of the falls. But despite its circus associations, I find it rather good. I don’t recall if I made this video or found it; the painting is the masterpiece by **Church**.

76. **William Henry Fry: *Niagara Symphony* (opening)**

77. **Class title 3 (Bierstadt)**