A CURRENT ATTITUDE IN REGIONALISM

A Thesis

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by
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1986
Dedicated to
my father and mother,
Harlan and Jewel Massey
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I wish to express much appreciation to my three committee members:

• Charles Massey, Jr., who would never take "I can't" for an answer.

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PREFACE

It is the depth and intensity of the artist's experience that are of the first importance in art. More often than not, however, a preponderance of a man's significant experience is rooted to a certain region. In this way, a particular environment becomes important to his art.1

-- Grant Wood
INTRODUCTION

Welcome to my region; a storied place with the legends of men and women who, through their commonness, pursue a righteous existence during their stay on this earth. There is something quite unique in my region. It is a sense of learning that continues through one's lifetime, a learning that comes by way of an attempt to understand the simplicities of life. Learned knowledge is not commonplace for the people of my region. But they can exist with peace of mind by working through a certain situation and then applying it to their needs.

Roots are deep in my region, with a force that is sometimes demanding of an insensible recognition. I have thrust myself beyond that incognizant state to find that I must understand what I have recognized.

The demands never end; history never dies.
I. MY REGION

As my artistic endeavors continue to develop, there will always be a constant concern for human nature, namely my own. The big question in my life is the importance of my beliefs and how they fit in with the general philosophy of today's society. Within the big question are little questions: how I see myself; how I see myself in relation to others; and how I see myself in relation to my environment.

I am beginning to approach these questions through art, with the remembrances of a life already passed, a sense of regional glorification, and the lessons, values, and morals that come from these things. These remembrances are built upon a foundation of the history of my elders, and of their land, of their beliefs, and the stories and fables they tell. More and more I am finding a life of old dictating a life yet to come.

The nature of my region refers to reverence and religion, work and play, honoring ones mother and father, what children do and how they learn, and doing a right thing and a wrong thing and knowing the difference, and similarities, between the two, among other things. In particular
and subtle ways this region deals harshly with progress. Things are slow to catch on. I am caught between two, an almost overwhelming tradition and a new world.

In life, as in art, one must recognize the need for adjustment. As new and unknown circumstances present themselves it is necessary to accommodate old values with new ideas. I sometimes see myself as a mediator or transitional character between the old and the new, bringing values of the past into a new age, while also attempting to introduce new ideas to the elders of my region. I am in part an observer of my region, but I still reserve bias for it by keeping it close in my heart. I am very much still a participant.

I was born and raised in East Tennessee and have lived there for all but two years of my life, up to now. I grew up in a small rural community just outside of Knoxville, called Seven Islands, where the rolling hills suddenly turn to staggering mountains. I became aware of the environment and the animals there, the little paths worn down through the hay fields and woods by dogs. It was there that I learned to recognize the rich character of the natives, who talk as slow as molasses dripping off a plate. Although we never farmed on a grand scale, my father has planted a large vegetable garden every spring. From time to time cattle graze our land, which requires cutting hay and storing it. I have been a participant in these chores for most of my
life, not always voluntarily. I was reared in the church, and was baptized at an early age on the shores of the French Broad River. My parents sang in a quartet, along with my uncle Taylor Massey, and they would take me and my sister along to the churches they sang at, again not always voluntarily. We visited over 100 churches in that area. Although I feel an internal frustration with the church, my faith is deep.

The land is beautiful and the people are friendly. Most of them are quite similar to my parents. Just like my father, I would see them go to their jobs during the day and return to quietly continue their work at home, which more often than not was more like relaxation than work.

But all is not calm and serene in my homeland these days. The Baptists are split between the Fundamentalists and the Moderates. The members of Seven Islands Missionary Baptist Church are concerned. The worst drought in Tennessee history has hit the land. My mothers says the yard crunches when she walks on it. The Government is buying out most of the dairy farmers. Technology, computers and robots, are creeping into the work places. These are people used to working with their hands.

If anything is as strong as religion there, it is the work ethic. The people take pride in using their hands, their senses, in building. I think this is one of the occurrences that founded my interests in art. I enjoyed the
satisfaction of creating something of my own accord in my first art classes. As my studies continued I became interested in making statements through art; this evolved into a serious attitude toward visual imagery.

I owe the nurturing of this interest to Byron Mc Keeby, who was, at that time, my adviser and the head of printmaking at the University of Tennessee. Although the work ethic I was familiar with was always utilitarian in purpose, such as in houses and furniture, he was patient with my limited understanding of art as a communicating medium. As he slowly fed me a discipline of technique in printmaking he also encouraged me to go beyond mere creation of anything, be it a house, furniture, or a visual image, into asking why that object is important to society, aside from a physical purpose. Mc Keeby once said "Great art concerns itself not with ART, but with awakening the human consciousness to itself. It consists of a universal alphabet . . ." He helped me learn to spell a new way, and I feel that it was his influence that assisted my introspection in recent work.

I know for certain that I was drawn to printmaking as a primary image-making and problem-solving medium from the pride of work ethic and the desire to see the process of building or creating. In the work my father does, he derives as much pleasure in building something as he does in having the final product. I have the same feeling for printmaking, and realized this when I first began my studies
in intaglio and lithography at the University of Tennessee. I see printmaking as being similar to building a house. Before achieving a final product one must have a basic structure or a framework to build upon. A house is in need of a foundation, just as printmaking requires a fundamental knowledge of process. A house is built around a carefully measured framework, just as a systematic approach is used for a printed image to be fully realized. Scraping and burnishing and the use of specific etches for intaglio is an example.

I come from a long heritage in working with wood. Just about all the elders of my region have dealt with wood in some way. In my recollection it all started back with Grandpa Massey, who used to work at a lumber yard making slats used in wooden floors. He ran a sawmill, along with my father and uncle Taylor, for the old Mr. Trundell. Grandpa was also a very accomplished carpenter, having a hand in many of the structures in the community. My uncle Taylor logged and ran a sawmill of his own up until a couple of years ago, when he retired. I can remember when he had to use two old mules to drag the logs down off the mountain. I would be getting ready for school and could hear and see him driving that team up the road toward the logging site, disappearing into the morning fog.

My father is continually building things with wood. His interest in woodwork is usually utilitarian with a flair
for unique design. His true desire is to live in his workshop with a stack of lumber and twenty different saws.

We all used to pitch in at the sawmill. As a boy I would help offbear the slabs and cut lumber, also not always voluntarily. When we built our barn, my father and I cut the trees and hauled them off the mountain to the sawmill to be cut for lumber. We used to sit with uncle Taylor while he told stories about the sawmill and about logging. He told of the dangers of working in the woods, of big limbs being stretched back by a fallen tree, only to spring back up to slap him in the face. He told of broken ribs and of driving fully loaded trucks down steep mountains.

From this heritage came a new interest for me in using wood as an artistic medium. For the past year I have been concentrating on woodcuts, working mostly in color reduction. Woodcuts allow me to work in a more expressive marking style. It is a medium flexible enough to use either a hard edge or a soft, undefined quality, yet the wood sometimes reserves a quality of uncontrolability through irregular grain, knots, and splintering.

Of late I have begun working in a high relief, almost sculptural, format, which I call wood relief constructions. They are wall pieces, yet have a physical depth. In these works I have used mostly discarded old lumber and old woodcut blocks, and some poplar plywood. I manipulate the wood by carving into it, cutting it into representational
shapes, painting it, and carving some more. The works consist of an outer frame containing two dimensional imagery displayed in a three dimensional format. They are from four to eight inches deep, with pieces of the imagery layered from back to front.

Another aspect of the region is stories. Stories are used to entertain and have provided a way to learn; I have always retained an interest in them. I have received stories from a variety of sources. My father used to say things like, "You know, I used to swing on those pines up on the knob as a boy." He would also tell me parables from the Bible at an early age. Uncle Taylor told, from time to time, of the snakes he has killed in his house. I even like to hear those "I used to walk three miles to school in the snow" stories.

Over the years telling stories has been passed on to me as an oral tradition. I have chosen to present my version of the traditions through visual imagery. Stories act as a derivative background for my work in art and help me to express the concerns I have about who I am and where I came from. The following are two stories that have some importance as they relate to the art I have produced.
II. THE STORIES

Preface
All my people are larger bodies than mine, quiet, with voices gentle and meaningless like the voices of sleeping birds. One is an artist, he is living at home. One is a musician, he is living at home. One is my mother, who is good to me. One is my father, who is good to me. By some chance, here they are, all on this earth.3

-- James Agee, "Knoxville: 1915"
The Trick

Now, this is just one of them times when the exuberance and imagination of youth is dealt a disheartening blow, only to learn something and every thing turns out ok.

I am certain that several times in my childhood I should have thanked the great God above for blessing me with parents whose power of knowledge and understanding were beyond mere mortals, at least to me. Maw and Paw were, and still are, common folk doing common things. But there were flashing, brilliant moments when they seemed to possess the adeptness of a wizard. Paw especially was always entertaining me and the neighbor kids with little tricks and mind boggles. Sometimes he would walk off into the woods and come back minutes later with a handful of wooden whistles, just like some little elf gave them to him. I figured that all these things were hereditary, and that in time I would be able to do things and people would think I was some kind of wizard. It would just come to me in the night and the next day I would effortlessly do these tricks.

Well, there was this one trick that Paw did I couldn't figure to save myself. We would all gather in the kitchen, where Paw had several objects spread out on the table. There was usually a fork, a spoon, a knife, a pencil, and some kind of coin laying in a row. Me, sister, Maw, and anyone else present would observe all the objects, making sure they were all right and proper. Now, he would look at me and say, "I'm not going to watch; I want you to touch one of them objects, it don't matter which one. Make sure you don't move it. Then step back and I'll pick out which one was touched." I would follow through his instructions. Let's see, I'll touch the fork. Make sure he's not looking, no mirrors or reflective things to be found, carefully touch so as not to move. I would move back and give Paw the go-ahead. Immediately his eyes would dart from one object to another, then up to me. He would pick up each objects and smell it from one end to the other. After he examined every object he would go back to the spoon. "Not this one," he would say, and would put it down. Next was the knife, "No, not this one." Then he'd pick up the fork and smell it till it was half way up his nose. "This is it," he would pronounce, and we'd all hoot and holler as if the blind was made to see. Paw would carry on about how it was Indian blood that helps him do the trick. That would get me all the more excited; not only would I be a wizard, but an Indian too! Well, it didn't matter what I touched, he'd always know. We would all look at each other and smile, and evoke much warmth and happiness. I could always see his enjoyment in being able to entertain.
As I became older I began to sense something peculiar about the trick, something not right. I guess it came from how age and wisdom breeds skepticism. I noticed that every time Paw did the trick Maw was present. And every time he began picking objects she would do something particular. One day I voiced my suspicions and asked them to reveal the mystery of the trick to me. I guess they figured I was old enough or something because they told me. They explained that years ago, when they married, they collaborated in finding ways to entertain friends and relatives. They could not host lavish parties; times were hard and money was just too scarce for those kinds of things. By making up tricks to perform they could invite friends home for coffee and pie after church on Sunday nights and have fun for hours. Maw and Paw would secretly work together to do the trick. When he would pick up the right object she would make some kind of gesture to signal. Then he would continue to investigate the rest of the objects, just to increase the drama. Well, afterwards everyone would gather around the old piano and sing into the wee hours of the night. Then the guests would leave with a smile and everyone felt good.

At first I was disappointed. There was to be no inherited wizardry; I wasn't even going to be an Indian. My parents had let me down by being the common people that they were. But as I began to consider my folks as common people I could see that there really was a trick that they had mastered. Between them was a sense of love and cooperation which made their special bonding even more close. There was trust in knowing they could rely on one another; two people working as one.

Somehow I don't see these things in many people today. Personally, I fear the day that I cannot find cooperation and trust in another person. There is optimism; I have been taught a trick and it is easy to share. Thanks, Maw and Paw.
Of Certain Men And Japanese Nails

There was a certain man, and he had a certain son. Let us not be concerned with who this man was, but let us consider what he believed. This certain man believed that the world in itself was good, that it was the people who lived there who were misguided by some elusive grandeur. And he believed that his beliefs were fundamental, that his daily habits were relative to his own existence. And he believed that Bible stuff about building a firm foundation. And he liked to build . . . very much. Let us not dwell on what he built; instead let us think on how he built.

The certain man would build with wood, because it was natural and of the earth, and nails, because they were cheap and didn't take much time to use. He would build by hammering a nail into the wood, but half way down the nail would bend; for it was a Japanese nail, and Japanese nails are cheap. Now, the certain man would continue to hammer, knowing full well that the Japanese nail was bending. It would bend and buckle and he would hammer until it was bent flat against the wood. He would then step back, look, and think, "Well, no one looks at the details; it's the 'big picture' that counts." But then he would remember that his foundation must be firm, so he would pull that crooked Japanese nail and replace it with a strong straight nail. Now, the certain man's certain son saw these things and remembered them well in his mind and heart.

Years of pulling bent nails and replacing them with strong nails pass, and the certain man dies. His certain son now becomes the second certain man, and he has a certain son. Let us not be concerned with who this certain man is, but let us consider what he believes. This certain man also believes that the world in itself is good, and that he can co-exist with the misguided people. He remembers how to build a firm foundation. He believes that he can build for the misguided people and plow their gardens for money, but usually he will do it for free and only secretly wish they would pay him. And he also likes to build . . . very much.

This certain man builds with wood, because it is natural, and nails, because they are cheap and he has very little money. Now, he also uses Japanese nails, only he knows that if he is firm and determined with his hammer the Japanese nails will sometimes go in strong and straight. If not, this certain man doesn't hesitate to pull and replace them immediately, for he remembers from his mind and heart about the Bible stuff and what his father did about a firm foundation. His certain son sees these things and tries to remember, in between eating ice cream and watching cartoons.
Years pass by quickly, and the new certain son becomes older. And he doesn't eat as much ice cream or watch as many cartoons. Now, let us not dwell on who this new certain son is, but let us consider how he felt and what he saw. He had seen the world and thought it was mostly good and he understood how there were misguided people everywhere. The new certain son wondered how he was different from the misguided people, and if they individually considered others to be misguided. He had gone to learning places, which sometimes interfered with what he tried to remember in his mind and heart. One thing remained the same; the new certain son liked to build . . . very much. Let us not dwell on what he built, but on how he built. The new certain son built things to look at and to think about. He would use wood, because it was natural, of the earth, and it sometimes smelled good. And he would use nails because they were cheap, and he could usually borrow them from his father, which made them real cheap. The certain son would hammer on a nail and see it bend. He would think to himself, "Now that's an aesthetic Japanese nail. Does it fit into the 'big picture'? What does the learning place say about this, what does the father say?" He touches the wood and it falls apart. The new certain son pulls the bent aesthetic Japanese nail and replaces it with a strong straight nail. Somehow he remembered in his mind and heart about the firm foundation.
III. THE WORK

I am encouraged in my attempt of using storied imagery as an approach in art by two writers: William Faulkner, who was adept at capturing a regional attitude; and James Agee, whose moralistic writings portrayed his own internal struggle for righteousness. Just as they were successful at creating verbally a mental mood, I wish to spark emotion through the visual element. My writings are used as representatives of the variations found in working from a highly narrative, storied situation.

The image derived from "The Trick" is an example of a conscious attempt at working with a specific event and time. The Trick, (plate 1), a black and white intaglio print, depicts four figures around a table within an interior space. As an objective to depict the emotional quality of the story the image falls short. It does not carry the feeling that these were caring people who enjoyed pleasing others. The composition, enclosing the figures in a house shape, is more symbolic of a specific event in which only the four characters depicted are involved. The enclosing shape speaks more of an intimate situation, as does the small scale of the image for the viewer. Yet, the broad
narrative quality of the image does present a sense of mystery that is open to interpretation. It captures the magic and the feeling that these people are somewhat uncommon, from the fore figure, who strangely points to something on the table, to the two middle ground figures, of which one is blindfolded and the other bends over behind him to apparently whisper in his ear, and finally to the background figures, who casually enjoys the activities.

The Trick eludes to my feelings or perceptions of myself in relation to other people. Although this instance is of a family situation, the implications of lessons learned in a broader sense are well received. By leaving the place I knew and lived all my life, and interrelating with people through common experience, I have found a sometimes hidden dignity in most of mankind. I also found that the lessons on acknowledging those dignities were of great value. My parents tried to teach me as best they could, by example and observation, in watching and dealing with others. What I saw was two people treating others honestly and with courtesy, never with a superior or inferior demeanor. The importance of this print lies in its effect of reaching a common ground of experience with its viewer. If someone sees the image and thinks, "I remember when . . .", I feel it is successful.

"Of Certain Men and Japanese Nails" is more in relation to a parable, as it deals with a broader notion of
experience rather than identifying a specific event. The story acts as a thoughtful account of how I see myself and on what I base my conclusions. Two of my visual works closely follow the essence of the story.

"A Certain Man Hammers" (plate 2), a color reduction woodcut, was an experimental piece, blocking out portions of the wood to allow printing in a second color scheme. Color reduction allows the multi-printing of one block, using a wide range of analogous colors, such as yellow, blue, and green. The blocking out of areas with mylar stencils allows the introduction of the complimentary color, red, to the composition. The print depicts a figure, inside a partially enclosed space, hammering a nail. It does not carry the fullness of the story, but evokes a sense of concentration and determination to drive the nail 'strong and straight' through enclosing the figure in a space somewhat void of activity or distracting elements. The landscape beyond the enclosure is symbolic of where the "misguided people" might be. The door is open to them, but the enclosure acts as a separation, possibly in attitudes. Amidst an unfolding world the man is dedicated to the belief that his works must be worthy of the tradition bestowed upon him. The house shapes at the top are symbolic of that tradition, of past achievements. In some respects my choice to work with wood could be of the same belief.
Generation (plate 3), is a pastel drawing of three figures standing in a landscape, and follows somewhat the evolution of the three characters of the story. As in most of my color work, this piece is composed mostly of properties of red and green. One might refer to them as local color, or possibly it is my recollection of the environment and atmosphere in my region. I consider the colors to be psychological in a sense that, by being complements of each other, they create a lushness and a contrast all at once, making an image interesting to look at physically.

I felt that the image needed a strength in size to allow a recognizable difference in all three figures. It would have been difficult to accommodate the scale through any of the printing mediums, hence the image became a drawing. Through the overlaying of marks and a somewhat linear composition in the lower half of Generation, there is a suggestion of movement that allows gradual transference from one figure to another. Also in the lower half is two boards: one with straight nails, one with bent nails. This is symbolic of two ways that we can choose to build our structures, our lives. There is a feeling that the two boards are presented on the little boy's behalf. The image deviates from the story in respect to the little boy, who looks away from the activity, and it is not known if he will ever build, or if he has acknowledged the activity and is just now turning his attention toward something beyond.
There is an uncertainty of communication between the figures, an unnerving silence, the silence of things never spoken and never fully understood.

My attempt in this image was to visualize the tradition of ideas and feelings being passed on from one person to another. The little boy could be symbolic of one that finds new paths to take, yet retains a respect for the traditions of the elders by standing close to them. Going to college was my new path, but I could still see the satisfaction my father had in building something and doing it right. To this day his ulterior motives have never been spoken.

In relation to my own family, "Of Certain Men . . ." is partly myth. I never really knew my Grandpa Massey; he died when I was two. This creates a gap in my education of self. I piece things together through the stories my father tells about him. In real life my father tells me about his own activities, and I listen. But, sometimes I wonder about the things never spoken: why he loves to build; why his religion is so deep; what are the ulterior motives? Maybe I did not listen well enough, or maybe he just never told me.

Much of the symbolism used within my images are of an environmental concern or are in relation to my self image in the environment. The symbolic elements refer to the physical nature of my region and the feelings evoked from those things. House shapes, like the ones in The Trick and A Certain Man Hammers, appear in all of my work of the past
year. Structures are a very prominent feature of the region, in the form of homes, barns, churches, outhouses, workshops, sheds, silos, and others. Although they are man-made, they become as much a part of the environment as grass and trees. Old structures lean and sway, like trees in the wind, through age and the decay of time. They speak of enclosed memories, of closeness of families, and are often distant, empty and dark, void of inner activity, much like the distance and decline of families that occur through the passing of time.

Legend (plate 4), a wood relief construction, presents two house shapes containing two separate memories. The houses are connected to create a singular symbolic statement. The left house contains a figure holding a knife and walking through a darkened landscape. It is symbolic of a conjecturable incident, in which I remember an unknown dark looking man. The right house contains a dog sitting in a landscape with three dead chickens hovering above. The image is in reference to the times I would help my Grandpa Simmons catch chickens, of which some would be slaughtered for food. The work as a whole is symbolic of our use and sometimes abuse of the environment. My purpose was to evoke a sense of danger in exceeding the necessity of use of our resources. The figure thus is symbolic of greed, the chickens are symbolic of nature as a resource on itself. The dog is symbolic of restraint, of guarding against abuse.
In the same manner that I felt threatened by the man I also felt sorrow for the chickens, although I understood that it was necessary to kill them. Grandpa used to say, "You only kill what you need." Thus, the objective is of need instead of want.

My choice of wood as a medium for Legend takes on a symbolic gesture of recycling resources taken from nature by using old woodcut blocks as a material. Much in the same way, my father and I would go into the woods every autumn to take our winter's wood from what nature had discarded, cutting the crooked trees and fallen trees.

I felt that the physical nature of my statement in Legend provided a good opportunity to expand from the flatness of two dimensional imagery, while still using the wall to limit the access that three dimensional works provide in terms of viewing in the round. The aspect of coming 'off the wall' presented a challenge for me to breathe a certain kind of life into the work that is not necessarily required in a print or drawing, much like a comparison of an actual person to a drawing of a person.

Guardians Fable (plate 5), a color reduction woodcut, can be seen as a concluding statement for Legend. Again, there is a dog sitting beneath a group of dead chickens. The dog presents a feeling of calmness while sitting in a serene landscape. Yet, there is still a feeling of tension, as if another dark character could appear at any time. The
bottom half of the image has a somewhat linear quality that flows upward to the chickens, who take on a sense of motion while hanging on a clothesline.

There is a great respect for dogs and the qualities they possess in my region; dogs who herd the cattle, watch for strangers, and are always ready for an evening walk. As a symbolic reference in art, dogs have been seen as thieves in Eastern cultures, and have represented loyalty and security in Western civilizations. For me, dogs take on a sense of mystery and sometimes confusion. By using dogs symbolically, I wish to portray the human qualities they possess and, in a way, allow them to represent humans themselves. Sometimes I am the dog, or possibly I just wish to be.

The symbolic nature of my work adds much to my narrative approach, allowing a broader choice of appraisal of the work than would a mere illustration of events. Thus, my imagery does not wish to clarify, or even fully explain my region, but to comment on, or give an account of my interpretation of what it means to me.
IV. CONCLUSION

Something troubled him which he had done or had left undone, some failure of the soul or default of the heart which he could not now quite remember or perhaps foresee, he was empty and idle, in some way he had failed. Yet he was also filled to overflowing with a reverent and marveling peace and thankfulness. My cup runneth over, something whispered within him, yet what he saw in his mind's eye was a dry chalice, an empty Grail. 

-- James Agee, "The Morning Watch"

There is a sense of urgency, a dilemma I am faced with in my work and in my life. It is a fear that people will decide that all the things I cherish and learned from my region and my past are not important to remember for adults who lead complicated lives. In time a new society might disregard old values and lessons and the sayings of wise old men. If my father heard me say this he would look stern at me and say "Now, don't be scared of what's in front of you. Just stand up like you was ten feet tall and look straight at what you got to do, and do it the best you can. That's good enough, and nobody can fault you for doing your best." But, there is also a fear in the thought of new circumstances requiring a whole new way of thinking, and that sometimes the old ethics cannot completely answer the questions of the future.
Well, I am optimistic in the resolving statement in my work in art at this time, that the old values do have an importance for the future, as long as they are approached with the experience of new ideas and new cultures.

The stories and symbolisms I have used up to this point have helped in the search of my concerns for my region and for selfness. At this time there is still a need to identify and understand my region in order to confront my ideas. But, my imagery will not come to full fruition until I begin to address the issues of the present and future in relation to the past. Yet, I feel that time is soon at hand to move forward.

The richness and deepness of my region is just the same for anyone else's region. As Grant Wood once stated, "As for my own region . . . its material seems to me to be more sincere and honest, and to gain in depth by having to be hunted for." I expound on that by saying that, once found, it must be examined and understood. The binding elements of region are the morals, the values placed upon us, even if they do somehow escape our understanding or if we are uncomfortable with them. I feel that it is our responsibility to analyze past experiences, good or bad, to either use them in the future, to readjust them, or to find they are no longer relevant. Why? So that we can get on with the business of what to do with the rest of our lives and how to approach productively and honestly.
So we can use what we have learned positively.

So others can profit from our successes and failures.

So that we can exist in righteousness and peace of mind.

My summation may be found in this William Faulkner statement:

The artist, whether or not he wishes it, discovers with the passage of time that he has come to pursue a single path, a single objective, from which he cannot deviate. That is, he must strive with all the means and all the talents he possesses -- his imagination, his experience, his powers of observation -- to put into more lasting form than his own frail instant of life -- in painting, sculpture, music, or in a book -- what he has known first-hand during his brief period of existence; the passion and the hope, the beauty, the tragedy, the comedy of man, weak and frail but unconquerable; man who struggles and suffers and triumphs amid conflicts of the human heart, the human condition. It is not his to resolve the contention nor expect to survive it, except in the form and meaning -- and the memories they represent and evoke -- of marble, canvas, music, and the ordered words which some day he must leave as his testament.6

There is still work to do.
PLATE 1. The Trick
PLATE 2. A Certain Man Hammers
PLATE 3. Generation
PLATE 4. Legend
PLATE 5. Guardians Fable
FOOTNOTES


6 William Faulkner, Acceptance Speech for the Andrews Bellow Award, El Universal, Caracas, April 7, 1961, p. 5; quoted in A Faulkner Miscellany, ed. James B. Meriwether (Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi, 1974), pp. 164-166.
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