1. Artemisia Gentileschi, *Susanna and the Elders,* 1610. Pommersfelden, Schloss Weissenstein, Collection Dr. Karl Graf von Schönborn (*Brooklyn Museum*).

8
Artemisia and Susanna

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When the large exhibition *Women Artists, 1550–1950* was seen in several American cities in 1977,[1] American viewers were treated to the spectacle of six paintings by Artemisia Gentileschi, more than are normally found in any single city in the world. The rarest sight among these for Gentileschi scholars was the painting of *Susanna and the Elders* [1], a work long hidden from the public eye in a private collection in Pommersfelden, Germany, and a problematic picture in the Gentileschi *oeuvre*.[2] In response to the stimulus of the exhibition, I have attempted here to resolve the attribution and dating problems connected with this painting, offering new evidence in support of Artemisia's authorship. I shall demonstrate as well that part of that evidence, namely, the painting's unorthodox interpretation of the biblical theme of Susanna and the Elders, is of wider significance, for both Artemisia's art and her life.

Although the painting bears the prominent inscription "ARTEMITIA/GENTILESCHI F./1610" on the step at the lower left [2], scholars have been divided in their attribution of the work between Artemisia and her father Orazio Gentileschi. Orazio was proposed as the artist, first by Longhi, then by others,[3] on the grounds that 1610 was impossibly early for the daughter, who was presumed to have been only thirteen years old in that year. In 1968, Ward Bissell established Artemisia's correct birthdate as 1593 rather than 1597, and sustained the attribution of the *Susanna* to her on stylistic grounds.[4] He suggested, however, following an idea earlier advanced by Voss,[5] that the date on the canvas should be read as 1619, when Artemisia's artistic maturity would have more nearly matched the technical sophistication of the painting. In her catalogue entry of the Los Angeles exhibition, Ann Sutherland Harris supported the attribution to Artemisia and reaffirmed the probable date as 1610, following a reading of the inscription offered by the curator of the collection.[6] When the painting arrived in Los Angeles in January 1977, and was available in the original for the first time to Artemisia scholars, close inspection confirmed that the date indeed reads 1610.

Still, the possibility remained that the signature and/or date had been altered or added

2. Gentileschi, *Susanna and the Elders,* detail. Pommersfelden, Schloss Weissenstein, Collection Dr. Karl Graf von Schönborn (*Brooklyn Museum*).

later. When the exhibition moved to the Brooklyn Museum in October 1977, I took the opportunity to consult the museum's chief conservator, Susanne P. Sack, who, with the generous cooperation of the owner, Dr. Karl G. Schönborn, subjected to laboratory analysis the inscribed portion of the painting [2]. Ultraviolet photography revealed no overpainting of a previous date or signature, and in Mrs. Sack's opinion, the character of the pigment, the structure of the lettering and its conformity with the internal lighting of the painting, and the craquelure of the surface all strongly indicate that the signature and date formed an original part of the picture.[7] All technical evidence points, therefore, to the authenticity of the signature and date, and consequently, to the authenticity of the *Susanna and the Elders* as the earliest preserved painting of Artemisia Gentileschi.

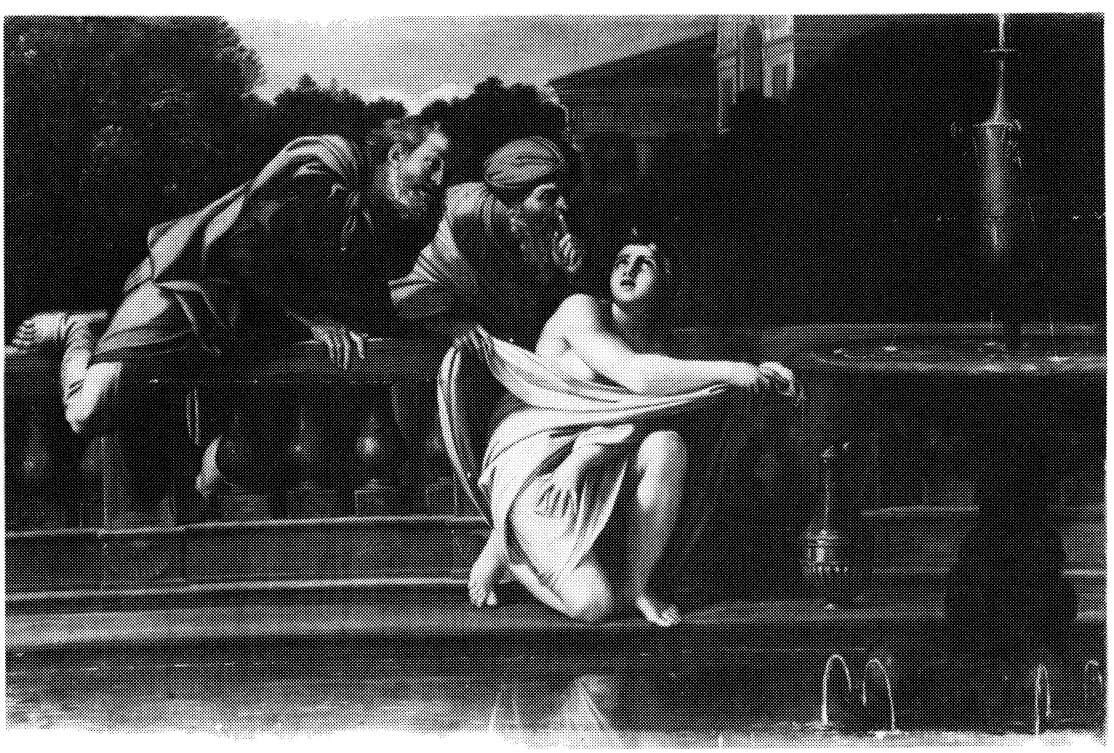
Even with the advancing of Artemisia's age from thirteen to seventeen, however, the picture still confronts us with an unusually accomplished technical performance by a young artist who in 1610 had, by her father's account, only been painting about a year.[8] A logical explanation, one advanced by Moir,[9] is that Orazio helped his daughter-pupil extensively in the planning and execution of the work. This view differs only in degree from Longhi's opinion that Orazio essentially painted the picture and put Artemisia's name on it.[10] From an exclusively stylistic point of view, this is an irrefutable argument, since the early works of Artemisia are very similar to those of Orazio in formal conception and color harmony. On the other hand, if we take into account the expressive character of the painting, we can distinguish between the two artists even at this early point in Artemisia's career. Surprisingly, no scholarly attention has yet been devoted to the single most exceptional aspect of this painting, which is its treatment of the theme.

Like most versions of the Susanna theme, the Schönborn painting presents the central confrontation between the principal characters, the moment when the two Elders return to Joachim's garden to seduce Joachim's wife Susanna. As Ann Sutherland Harris has noted, the Gentileschi *Susanna* belongs in the general context of a group of Susanna paintings and prints from the Carracci circle, a group that includes Annibale's print of ca. 1590 [3], and a painting by Annibale of around 1601–02, now lost but known in a copy or variant by another artist, who was probably Domenichino [4].[11] Yet granting a family resemblance among these works, a direct comparison of them with the Schönborn picture serves principally to establish its essential difference from the others. While Susanna's legs correspond generally in pose with those in Annibale's print, the position of the arms has been decisively changed, and her image accordingly revised, from that of a sexually available and responsive female to an emotionally distressed young women, whose vulnerability is emphasized in the awkward twisting of her body. The artist has also eliminated the sexually allusive garden setting, replacing the lush foliage, spurting fountain and sculptured satyr heads that appear in the Carracci circle works with an austere rec-

tilinear stone balustrade that subtly reinforces our sense of Susanna's discomfort. The expressive core of this picture is the heroine's plight, not the villains' anticipated pleasure. And while one might well expect this to be the case, since Susanna's chastity and moral rectitude were, after all, the point of the Apocryphal story, it is in fact the Carracci circle pictures, and not Artemisia's work, that represent the more usual treatment of the Susanna theme in Western art.

Few artistic themes have offered so satisfying an opportunity for legitimized voyeurism as Susanna and the Elders. The subject was taken up with relish by artists from the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries[12] as an opportunity to display the female nude, in much the same spirit that such themes as Danae or Lucretia were approached, but with the added advantage that the nude's erotic

3. Annibale Carracci, *Susanna and the Elders,* etching, ca. 1590. Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund (*National Gallery*).

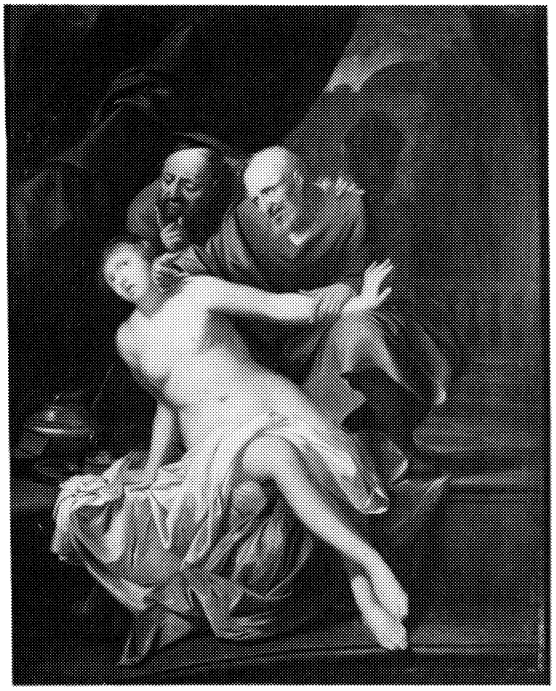


4. Domenichino (?), *Susanna and the Elders.* Rome, Palazzo Doria-Pamphilj (*Gabinetto Fotografico Nazionale*).

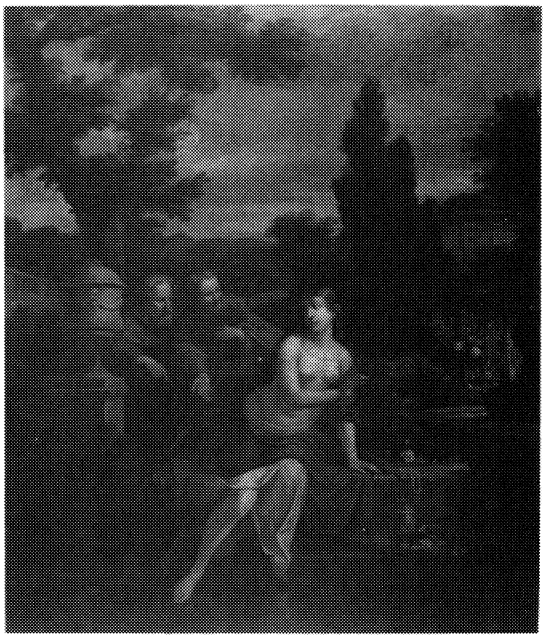
5. Tintoretto, *Susanna and the Elders,* 1555–56. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (*Kunsthistorisches Museum*).

appeal could be heightened by the presence of two lecherous old men, whose inclusion was both iconographically justified and pornographically effective. It is a remarkable testament to the indomitable male ego that a biblical theme holding forth an exemplum of female chastity should have become in painting a celebration of sexual opportunity, or, as Max Rooses enthusiastically described Rubens's version, a "gallant enterprise mounted by two bold adventurers."[13] Tintoretto, whose adventurers stage their advance in a manner more sneaky than bold [5], nonetheless offers a representative depiction of the theme in his emphasis upon Susanna's voluptuous body and upon the Elders' ingenuity in getting a closer look at it. Even when a painter attempted to convey some rhetorical distress on Susanna's part, as did the eighteenth-century Dutch painter Adriaan van der Berg [6], he was apt to offset it with a graceful pose whose chief effect was the display of a beautiful nude. Because the Susanna theme was particularly prevalent in Venice, two Venetian examples, one an anonymous painting of the early sixteenth century [7], and the other of the eighteenth century, by Sebastiano Ricci [8], may suffice to demonstrate that the prevailing pictorial treatment of the theme typically included an erotically suggestive garden setting and a partly nude Susanna, whose body is prominent and alluring, and whose expressive range runs from protest of a largely rhetorical nature to the hint of outright acquiescence.

In the sense that the imagined consequence



6. Adriaan van der Burg, *Susanna and the Elders,* 18th century. Toulouse, Musée des Augustins (*Courtauld Institute*).



7. Anonymous artist, *Susanna and the Elders,* early 16th century. The Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement, Devonshire Collection (*Courtauld Institute*).

8. Sebastiano Ricci, *Susanna and the Elders.* The Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement, Devonshire Collection (*Courtauld Institute*).

of the action is possession of a woman who has firmly said "No," the covert subject of the Susanna theme in Western art is not seduction but rape, imagined by artists—and presumably also by their patrons and customers—as a daring and noble adventure. That rape should have been glorified in art is not surprising, considering the heroic position it has occupied in mythic tradition, serving as the pivotal event in such epics of colonization as the rape of Helen by Paris or the rape of the Sabines, not to mention the inventively diverse forms of sexual conquest performed by Zeus and Apollo, all inevitably sanitized in description as "abductions."[14] And yet "abduction," a word defined as the taking away of women, "with or without their consent," is precisely accurate. Language has conveniently not distinguished between willing and unwilling women, since it is not at all clear what were the attitudes of Europa, Io, Helen, or the Daughters of Leucippus toward their abductors. Those artists who have glamorized the act of rape, deemphasizing or leaving undeveloped the reaction of the victim, have at least acted in consonance with the masculine bias of the creators of the Greek myths.[15] Susanna, however, as a potential rape victim who emphatically halted the proceedings, is a rare heroine in biblical mythology—her extremism in defense of virtue is topped only by that of Lucretia—and Susanna's unusually well-defined resistance throws into bold relief the extent to which she has been distorted into a half-willing participant in post-Renaissance art.

The biblical Susanna was distorted in a different direction in the patristic literature of the Early Christian Church. A recent writer, Mark Leach, has described the exegetical comparisons between the temptation of Susanna and the temptation of Eve that were drawn by Hippolytus, the third-century bishop and martyr; St. John Chrysostom; and the fourth-century bishop St. Asterius of Amasus.[16] Hippolytus explains: "For as of old the Devil was concealed in the serpent in the garden, so now too, the Devil, concealed in the Elders, fired them with his own lust that he might a second time corrupt Eve."[17] Rubens alludes to this tradition in his Munich *Susanna* [9], as Leach has shown, by including an apple tree in the garden instead of the oak or mastic called for in the story. Susanna, who is also associated for Hippolytus with the Church, successfully resists this "supreme temptation involving the essence of human volition" (Leach's phrase), and thus prefigures the Church's redemption of original sin. But the extraordinary underlying assumption on the part of both Hippolytus and Leach is that Susanna-Eve should have found the pair of old lechers as tempting as they found her! Indeed, the Apocryphal account of Susanna and the Elders effectively eliminates the potentially distracting issue of mutual temptation by casting the male assailants as Elders, thus rendering their lust reprehensible and Susanna's voluntary acquiescence unthinkable, in order to concentrate dramatic attention upon the story's climax and denouement, in which Daniel successfully differentiates between her true account and their false ones.[18]

As an Old Testament parable, the Susanna story represents a contest between good and evil, or virtue and vice, mediated by wise judgment. Susanna herself is a personification of the good Israelite wife, whose sexuality was her husband's exclusive property,[19] and Susanna's total fidelity to Joachim is demonstrated in her willingness to accept death rather than dishonor him by yielding to the Elders. Her resistance is heroic because she faces danger; it is not complicated by any conflict of feeling toward her oppressors, and she is crucial to the story, flat character that she is, in the absoluteness of her resolve, her virtue and her honesty. Renaissance and Baroque artists, however, like the early church fathers, ignored the fundamental moral point concerning the discovery of truth and the ex-

9. Peter Paul Rubens, *Susanna and the Elders,* 1636–40. Munich, Alte Pinakothek (*Bayerischen Staatsgemäldesammlungen*).

ecution of justice, to focus instead upon the secondary plot devices of temptation, seduction, and the erotic escapades of the Elders. (Tellingly, many more depictions of Susanna and the Elders exist than of either the Judgment of Daniel or the Stoning of the Elders.)[20] Both the patristic and the artistic conceptions of Susanna, whether as an Eve triumphant over her own impulses or as a voluptuous sex object who may not bother to resist, are linked by the same erroneous assumption: that Susanna's dilemma was whether or not to give in to her sexual instincts. In art, a sexually exploitative and morally meaningless interpretation of the theme has prevailed, most simply, because most artists and patrons have been men, drawn by instinct to identify more with the villains than with the heroine.

There have appeared occasionally versions of the Susanna theme that place some emphasis upon her character and her personal anguish. In Rembrandt's *Susanna* of 1647 in Berlin [10], one of the most sympathetic treatments of the biblical heroine, we find a concern with her youth, innocence, and vulnerability that is thoroughly characteristic of the artist. Yet even Rembrandt implants in the pose of Susanna, whose arms reach to cover her breasts and genitals, the memory of the Medici Venus, a classical model that was virtually synonymous with female sexuality.[21] In the Carracci, Domenichino and Rubens *Susannas,* the classical model is the crouching

10. Rembrandt, *Susanna and the Elders,* 1647. Berlin (West), Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz (*Jörg P. Anders*).

Venus Anadyomene, a type known in numerous variants, whose association with the bath connects her with Susanna on a luxurious and erotic level.[22] The frequent echo of these antique prototypes in paintings of the Susanna theme underlines their use as a device to evoke erotic recollections, in the classic formulation of having it both ways: adhering superficially to the requirement that Susanna be chaste, while appealing subliminally to the memory of the Venus archetype, whose gestures of modesty call attention to what she conceals.

In the Gentileschi *Susanna,* the Venus model has been conspicuously avoided. Instead, the artist, evidently as aware as the Carracci circle artists of the possibilities of *double entendre* through classical allusion, replaces the crouching Venus with an unmistakable reference to a different antique prototype. The dramatic defensive gesture of Susanna's upper body is taken from a figure on a Roman Orestes sarcophagus, the figure of Orestes' nurse [11], who memorably conveys the anguished response of Orestes to the advent of the Furies. This sarcophagus was

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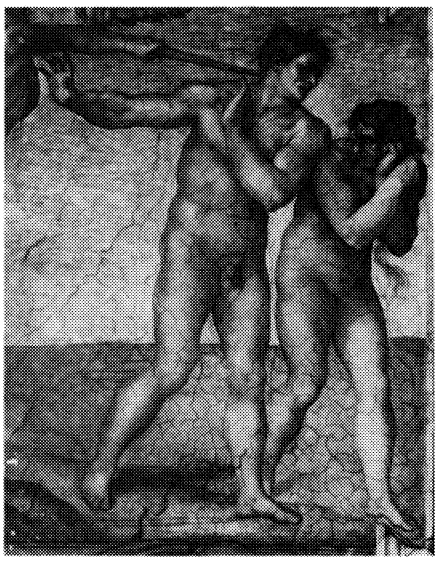

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11. Roman sarcophagus, *Orestes Slaying Clytemnestra and Aegisthus,* detail. Rome, Museo Profano Lateranense (*Alinari*).

12. Michelangelo, *Expulsion of Adam and Eve,* 1508–11. Rome, Vatican Palace, Sistine Chapel ceiling (*Alinari*).

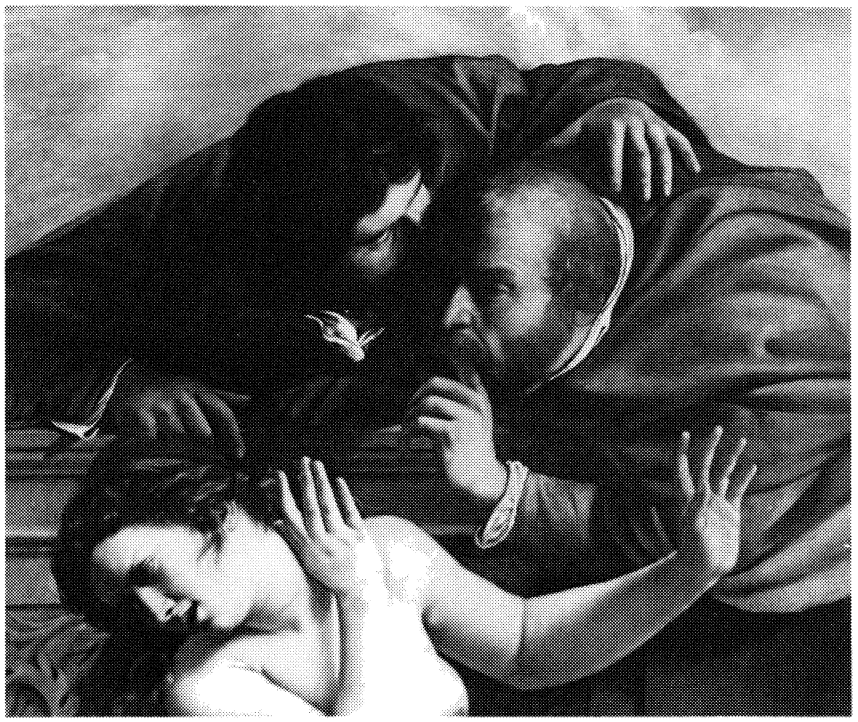
known in Rome in at least three variant versions, in the Lateran, the Vatican and the Giustiniani Palace, and was the source of numerous borrowings by artists in the Renaissance.[23] One of the most prominent quotations of the nurse's pose is found on the Sistine Ceiling, where it is used in reverse by Michelangelo for the figure of Adam in the *Expulsion* [12].[24] The artist of the Schönborn painting, by incorporating a gesture that carried associations with antique and Renaissance works of epic proportions and tragic overtones, restored to the Susanna theme the tone of high seriousness that it surely deserves.[25]

The Schönborn *Susanna* carries over from its antique prototype the suggestion that a sympathetic character is being hounded on a psychological level, and the painting differs in this respect from the *Expulsion of Adam and Eve,* where the relationship between the punished Adam and the moral authority, Gabriel, is direct and physical. At the same time, and unlike Michelangelo's straightforward narrative, the painter of the *Susanna* sustains a certain ambiguity about guilt and

punishment, right and wrong, that is present in the relief as well. Orestes' action was not a clear-cut instance either of just vengeance or of unjustified murder, and the figure of the nurse effectively sets the expressive tone in the relief; through her gesture of pushing away a thing she cannot face, she establishes a psychological dimension that indirectly recalls the complexity of Orestes' feelings about the deed.[26] Similarly, if we read the Gentileschi picture naively, the figure of Susanna appears, in her position and gestural response, to react to some judgment from the two men who loom high over her. Such ambiguity is brilliantly suited to the Susanna theme, reminding the viewer simultaneously of the Elders' false accusation of the woman and their threat to expose and punish her, and—a subtler echo—of the just punishment that came to the Elders when their own genuine guilt was exposed by Daniel.

13. Orazio Gentileschi, *David and Goliath,* ca. 1605–10. Dublin, National Gallery of Ireland (*National Gallery of Ireland*).

The painter of *Susanna and the Elders,* then, rejected traditional allusions to Venus and drew an alternative expressive vocabulary from the Orestes sarcophagus to suggest both the anguish of the heroine and the punitive consequences of the event. Certainly by now, the reader will have anticipated the conclusion that it must have been the female Artemisia Gentileschi, rather than the male Orazio, who made such an artistic decision. While I believe that the evidence of the sarcophagus quotation does support that conclusion, the problem is complicated by the fact that Orazio Gentileschi also borrowed from the Orestes sarcophagus a pose for the figure of David in his Dublin *David and Goliath* [13], a picture that is close in date to the *Susanna.*[27] Does this mean that Orazio, who unquestionably painted the *David,* must also have painted the *Susanna?* Or that he brought the sarcophagus to the attention of his daughter who, in incorporating a pose from it in her *Susanna,* was reflecting her father's interests rather than her own? Neither, I think, if we examine closely the nature of the borrowing in each case. Evidently, the swashbuckling pose of the male hero, Orestes, and his interaction with fallen bodies, were the elements that interested Orazio and shaped his conception of this active version of the David theme, a version that is sharply contrasted with the contemplative *Davids* (Spada, Berlin-Dahlem) of the same period, which were built upon different classical prototypes.[28] In the Dublin *David,* Orazio incorporated part of the nurse's gesture in the hero's left hand, in order to develop a more energetic and gracefully balanced figure than the Orestes of the sarcophagus. This transplanted gesture differs markedly from its counterpart in the *Susanna,* where it is what we might call functional rather than decorative, serving by its pivotal placement to inter-

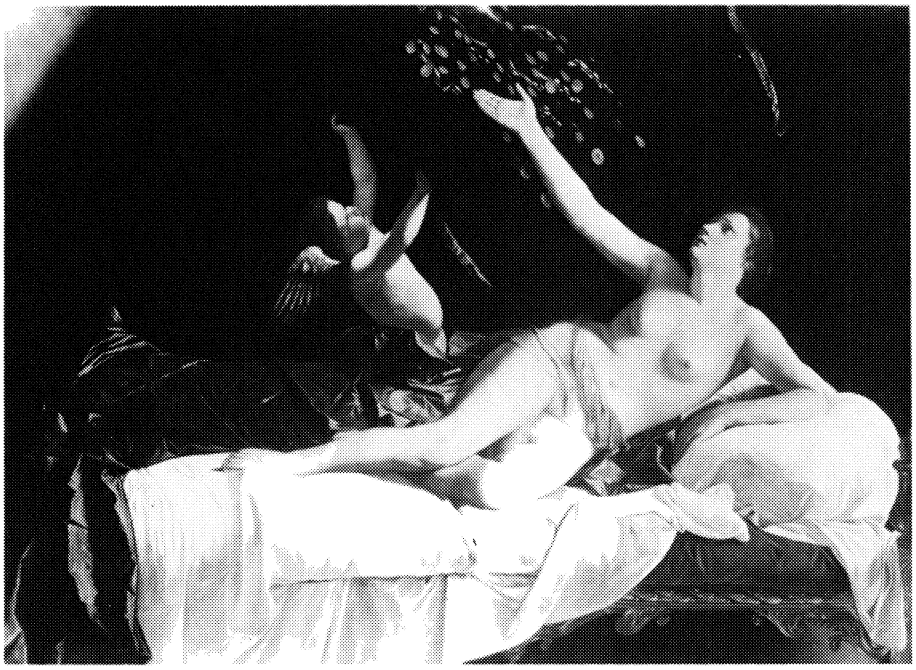


14. Artemisia Gentileschi, *Susanna and the Elders,* detail. Pommersfelden, Schloss Weissenstein, Collection Dr. Karl Graf von Schönborn-Wiesentheid (*Brooklyn Museum*).

rupt the compositional flow and to convey intense inner feeling.

It is very unlikely that Orazio would make of a single antique prototype two such entirely different expressive uses as are made of the nurse in the *Susanna* and the Dublin *David,* and particularly not during a single brief period of his career. Orazio's use of the Orestes sarcophagus may have directed Artemisia's attention to it, but the difference between the pictorial derivations establishes beyond doubt that it is Artemisia's creative imagination we see at work in the *Susanna.* Looking at the sarcophagus with different eyes, female eyes, she saw the gesture of the nurse as of central, not peripheral, importance, and chose it to form the expressive core of the *Susanna.*

The conception of the figure of Susanna involves, of course, more than a fortuitous classical quotation, since the rudimentary gesture has been developed into a fully realized female nude, and set in a new pictorial context. As an almost totally nude figure, Susanna would not be a complete anomaly in either artist's work, but another point in favor of Artemisia's authorship is the figure's uncompromising naturalism, since as a woman she had access only to female nude models, while male artists in general during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries usually worked from male models, improvising their transformation into women where required.[29] Susanna's body is persuasively composed of flesh; it is articulated by specific touches of realism that are unflattering by conventional standards of beauty, such as the groin wrinkle, the crow's foot wrinkles at the top of her right arm, and the lines in her neck [14]. The naturalistically pendant breast, the recognizably feminine abdomen, and the awkwardly proportioned legs further attest that this figure was closely studied from life. By contrast, Orazio Gentileschi's relatively rare nude and



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partly nude females, for example, his *Danae* [15] in Cleveland of 1621–22, and his Vienna *Magdalene* of the late 1620s, are more idealized, with inorganic, molded breasts and little anatomical articulation.

The difference between Artemisia's and Orazio's treatment of female figures is more fundamental, however, than their approaches to anatomical drawing. While women figure prominently in Orazio's paintings, in such themes as Judith and Holofernes, Lot and His Daughters, the Rest on the Flight into Egypt, or St. Cecilia (perhaps significantly, no Susannas are known), their range of expression is basically passive. Orazio, whose general preference was for quiet and meditative themes, portrayed even his most active female characters, Judith and her maidservant [16], in a moment of watching and waiting, suggesting through the women's anxious glances in two directions the existence of a pervasive outside force more powerful than the heroines. By contrast, Artemisia's Detroit and Pitti *Judiths* [17] react to a specific danger from a single direction, indicating that the threat is both life-sized and local.[30]

The Schönborn Susanna behaves more like Artemisia's Judiths than Orazio's, in her physically active resistance of her oppressors and in her expressive intensity. She conveys through her awkward pose and her nudity the full range of feelings of anxiety, fear and shame felt by a victimized woman faced with a choice between rape and slanderous public denouncement. As a pictorial conception, Susanna presents an image rare in art, of a three-dimensional female character who is heroic in the classical sense. For in her struggle against forces ultimately beyond her control, she exhibits a spectrum of human emotions that move us, as with Oedipus or Achilles, both to pity and to awe.

The uniqueness of Artemisia's interpretation is further confirmed by the existence of two examples of the Susanna theme that are based in part upon her version. The first [18] is a painting by Simone Cantarini in the Pinacoteca, Bologna, dating from 1640–42.[31]

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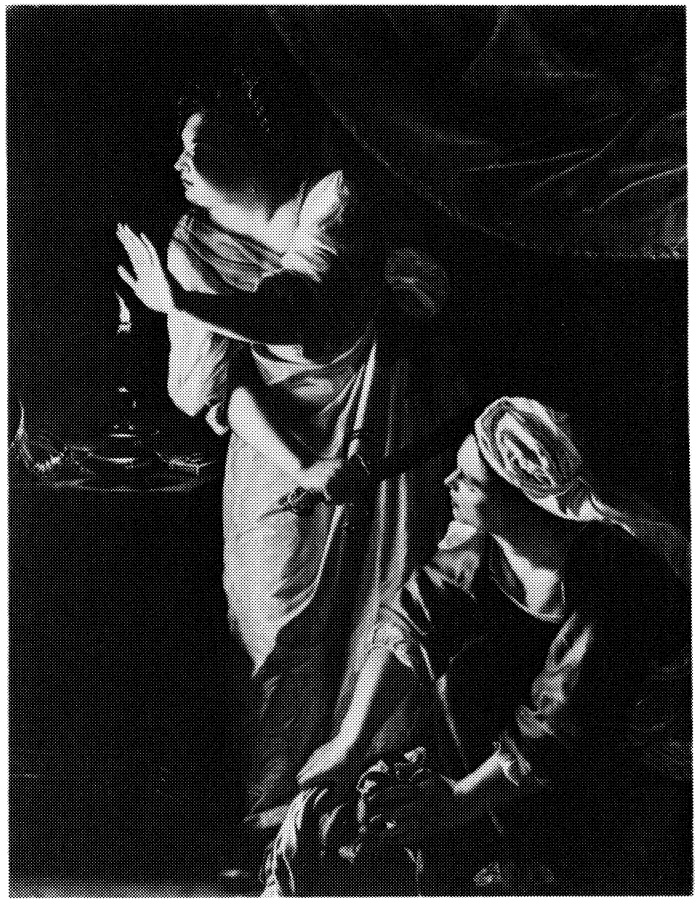
15. Orazio Gentileschi, *Danae,* 1621–22. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Purchase, Leonard C. Hanna, Jr. Bequest (photo: *Cleveland Museum of Art*).

16. Orazio Gentileschi, *Judith and Her Maidservant,* ca. 1610–12. Hartford, Wadsworth Atheneum (*Wadsworth Atheneum*).

17. Artemisia Gentileschi, *Judith and Her Maidservant,* ca. 1625. The Detroit Institute of Arts (*Detroit Institute*).



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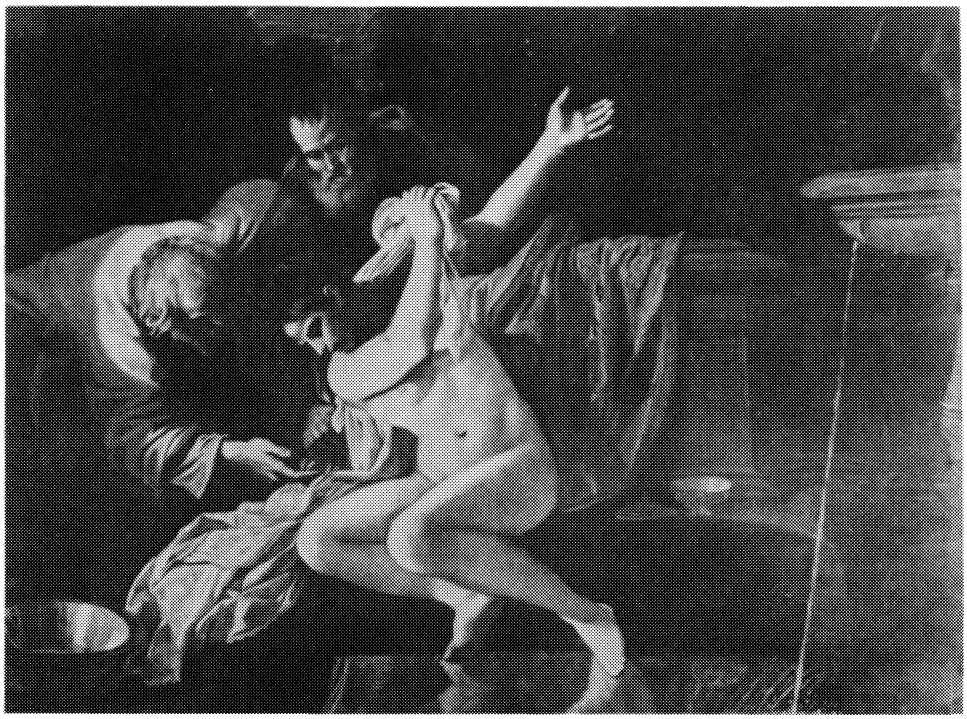

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Susanna in this picture repeats Artemisia's pose histrionically and without inner motivation, while the relocation of the Elders makes Susanna's gesture pointless. The picture is a classic instance of an artist borrowing a pose without understanding its expressive function. The second picture, in the Palazzo Corsini, Rome [19], by an anonymous Bolognese artist of the seventeenth century, presents a Susanna whose gesture is more faithful in spirit both to Artemisia and the Orestes sarcophagus, with a more dignified sense of measure and of physical bulk than is seen in Cantarini's flyaway figure. Yet here too the sympathetic treatment of the Elders and the subliminal sexual message suggested through the spotlighted earring betray an essentially masculine conception of the theme. Through their own internal inconsistencies, these paintings reveal their derivative nature, and they demonstrate as well that a portrayal of Susanna from the heroine's viewpoint was a rare achievement indeed in Renaissance and Baroque art, unattainable even by imitators of such a model.

One must acknowledge that in differentiating between Orazio and Artemisia Gentileschi, and then between Artemisia and her male imitators, on the grounds of their respective treatments of a female character, one runs the risk of oversimplification. Yet it is rare that we know anything so categoric about two artists' psyches as we do about Artemisia and her father, distinguished as they are by sex, and consequently by attitude and experience. Particularly in view of what we today would call the feminist cast of much of Artemisia's subsequent work,[32] it is reasonable to propose in this instance that the consideration of temperamental probability may be as valid as connoisseurship of style in solving the attribution problem.

And the Susanna problem is not an isolated one. Women artists in history are now being rediscovered in increasing numbers, and because their artistic identities have so often

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18. Simone Cantarini, *Susanna and the Elders,* 1640–42. Bologna, Pinacoteca (*Frick Art Reference Library*).

19. Anonymous artist, *Susanna and the Elders,* 17th century. Rome, Palazzo Corsini (*Gabinetto Fotografico Nazionale*).

been subsumed under the names of their fathers and husbands, it is important to have reliable bases for distinguishing the women's work. Stylistic considerations are often of limited value since, as we have seen with Artemisia and Orazio, the pupil was usually an eager disciple in the master's style. Yet if Morelli's hypothesis may be applied here, the artist functioning on an unconscious level betrays personal traits—traits in this case happily more interesting than Morellian earlobes and fingernails—that offer rich evidence for discovering his or her identity. This is not to insist that all art by women bears some inevitable stamp of femininity; women have been as talented as men in learning the common denominators of style and expression in specific cultures. It is, however, to suggest that the definitive assignment of sex roles in history has created fundamental differences between the sexes in their perception, experience and expectations of the world, differences that cannot help but have been carried over into the creative process, where they have sometimes left their tracks. We need not decide whether sex-role differentiation has been a good thing, or whether art has been the richer or poorer for it, to observe that the sow's ear of sexism has given us at least one silk purse: an art historical tool for distinguishing between male and female artistic identities.

These considerations apply in the case of another *Susanna and the Elders* that has been connected with the Gentileschi. A picture in the collection of the Marquess of Exeter, at Burghley House [20], was formerly exhibited as a work of Orazio and is presently ascribed to Artemisia.[33] No scholar has vigorously defended the Artemisia attribution; Bissell and Harris both merely consider it "possible," with Harris suggesting a date in the 1620s.[34] If Artemisia were the artist, the concreteness of detail, the firmness of contour and the large scale of figures in relation to format would indeed mandate a dating in the 1620s or early

20. Anonymous artist, *Susanna and the Elders,* 17th century. Burghley House, Collection of the Marquess of Exeter (*Courtauld Institute*).

1630s, since Artemisia's later paintings of the 1640s differ appreciably in style from the Burghley House picture, offering smaller, more fluidly painted, and less solid figures. Yet this English *Susanna* is totally inconsistent with Artemisia's treatment of female characters in the earlier period. The work shows no interpretative continuity with the Schönborn picture, but reverts instead to the Carracci and Domenichino prototypes, reintroducing a seductive, Venus pudica pose and upturned eyes, and an environment swelling with Cupids and spurting fountains. It is inconceivable that the Burghley House *Susanna,* as an Artemisia Gentileschi, could be contemporary with the heroic and anti-romantic *Judith and Holofernes* in Detroit. Other typological differences, such as the broad noses of the three characters in this picture that contrast markedly with Artemisia's preferred narrow, pointed nose type, merely serve to confirm one's instinctive reaction to reject this attribution because its expressive character would have been alien to the young Artemisia. But while we should also reject Orazio as the artist on similar formal grounds—the faces and the female anatomy, in particular, do not correspond to his usual types—it would be difficult to assert with the same confidence as with Artemisia that the nature of expression is sharply out of character for the artist.

The simple fact that Artemisia Gentileschi was female is sufficient to explain her uniquely sympathetic treatment of the Susanna theme. Yet one important event in Artemisia's personal history provides a parallel between art and life that is too extraordinary to be passed over. In the spring of 1611 Artemisia was allegedly raped by Agostino Tassi, Orazio's colleague whom Orazio had hired to teach Artemisia perspective. Orazio brought suit, and after a trial that lasted five months, Tassi, who had earlier been convicted of ar-

ranging his wife's murder, was sentenced to eight months in prison. He was subsequently acquitted, while Artemisia, whose testimony was put to the test of torture by thumbscrew, acquired a reputation as a licentious woman that has persisted to this day. Not only does the Susanna theme correspond to the real incident in its components of sexual assault, public trial, conflicting testimony and punishment, but this particular picture corresponds as well in its emphasis upon the girl's personal anguish, and in certain telling details.

In no other version of the subject known to me are the Elders shown whispering to one another. The motif heightens the conspiratorial character of their act, and suggests allusively the whispering campaign that was the Elders' specific threat, to ruin Susanna's reputation through slander. Artemisia's reputation figured prominently in her rape experience, a fact attested by Orazio's speedy arrangement of her marriage to a Florentine shortly after the trial to spare her the glare of publicity in Rome.[35] Artemisia, moreover, like Susanna, had two assailants. Orazio mentioned in the proceedings of the trial that Tassi had an accomplice, a certain Cosimo Quorli, who joined him in the rape; Orazio's statement was corroborated by Tutia, Artemisia's guardian, who independently implicated Quorli in the affair.[36] With exact biographic correspondences such as these, one is tempted to interpret as an echo of personal experience the peculiarly concrete Elder on the left [14], whose depiction as a thick-haired younger man is, as far as I can determine, completely unique in Susanna pictures.

The most logical explanation for the unusual iconographic character of the Schönborn *Susanna* is that it reflects the real situation in which the young Artemisia found herself. Yet the date, now authenticated, clearly reads 1610, while the rape occurred a few days after Easter, 1611.[37] But can the manifest connections between the painting and Artemisia's experience really be coincidental? In order to understand what happened, we must look more closely at the circumstances surrounding the rape, an event which has remained controversial despite the fact that Tassi was convicted of the crime.

The truth of Orazio's testimony at the trial has consistently been doubted by the scholars, predominantly male, who have touched on the subject of Artemisia's rape. For them, her innocence is compromised by the fact that while Orazio claimed at the trial that she was a minor when the rape occurred, she was actually seventeen at the time; and they also see as contradictory and incriminating his claim that she had been raped "many, many times."[38] A fuller consideration of rape reminds us, however, that sexual coercion can take a range of forms. Artemisia was very clear in her own trial testimony about her experience and her subsequent expectations. She alleged that Tassi had planned to seduce her, but instead took an opportunity when she was painting alone to assault her sexually, an assault she resisted vigorously, to the point of wounding him.[39] After the rape, Tassi promised to marry her to quiet her. For that reason, she said, she considered herself subsequently to be his wife, but when he didn't keep his word, she revealed the incident to her father, who then filed charges against Tassi. That marriage was the expected outcome is further illustrated in Artemisia's gallows-humor outburst at Tassi when she was tortured with thumbscrews: "This is the ring you give me, and these the promises!"[40]

Implicit in Artemisia's admission that she thought of herself as Tassi's wife following the rape is the probability that she continued to have sexual relations with him, but the reality of this experience must be understood in the context of law and custom. In seventeenth-century Italy, as in biblical times, and in Sicily even today, a raped woman was considered damaged property, spoiled for marriage to anyone other than her violator.[41] Hence there was strong social pressure for

the rapist to marry her. After being raped, Artemisia's best chance for salvaging her honor would have been to go along with the sexual demands of the rapist, since that would have been her only leverage for getting him to marry her. Orazio's accusation, that Tassi raped her many times, was perhaps not far off the mark.

Tassi's gambit for escaping his obligation was to cloud the issue of who had deflowered Artemisia. His erstwhile friend G. B. Stiattesi testified on March 24 that while Tassi loved Artemisia, he could not marry her because Cosimo Quorli had already taken advantage of her.[42] Five days after that, Tassi accused Stiattesi of having raped her himself, then added two days later that a Modenese painter Gironimo had raped her, and that he (Tassi) had helped to beat him up.[43] All of this "evidence" is too patently self-serving to the cause of the accused Tassi to be taken seriously, yet it exposes the underlying issue in the trial, which was to determine whether or not Tassi was personally guilty of having damaged the legal property of Orazio Gentileschi. Orazio himself made this explicit in his initial appeal, describing the rape as an ugly act which brought grave and enormous damage to—none other than himself, the "*povero oratore.*"[44]

Artemisia's personal sexual feelings were no more relevant to these strictly legal proceedings than were Susanna's toward the Elders, yet historians have dealt with Artemisia in the same way that Susanna was treated by artists and theologians: she has been the butt of one long historical dirty joke. R. Ward Bissell and Richard Spear, scholars who have written perceptively and objectively about Artemisia's life, nevertheless have each inserted a note of irrelevant skepticism by putting the word "rape" in quotation marks.[45] In his popularized *Lives of the Painters,* John Canaday speaks of the "unsavory—or savory, as you wish—lawsuit," and, hinting broadly that Artemisia's experience with Tassi may not have been "introductory," offers the gratuitous information that "she demonstrated until her death . . . an enduring enthusiasm for the art of love that paralleled her very great talent as a painter."[46] Although Artemisia's reputation as a sexual libertine flourished in the eighteenth century, when she was described by an English commentator as "famous all over Europe for her amours as for her painting,"[47] this legend appears to have been based upon little other than Tassi's self-protective charge of her promiscuity and the scandal of the trial.[48] Wittkower caught the bitter irony of the fact that Tassi, whose "escapades" included "rape, incest, sodomy, lechery, and possibly homicide," was remembered by biographers as a competent painter liked for his good humor and wit, who eventually even made up with his old friend Orazio Gentileschi.[49] Yet Wittkower parallels this observation with the extraordinary description of Artemisia as "a lascivious and precocious girl," levying once again upon Artemisia the undeserved defamation of character that Tassi undeservingly escaped. If twentieth-century scholars can unthinkingly perpetuate such chauvinist attitudes, one can only imagine what Artemisia's male contemporaries had to say. Orazio may have redeemed her honor through the arranged marriage, but he could not protect her ultimate reputation from the undying masculine assumption that, if a woman is raped, she must have asked for it.

Looked at from this perspective, the painting of *Susanna and the Elders* may literally document Artemisia's innocence and honest testimony in the trial. Susanna, like Artemisia, endured sexual persecution at the hands of two men for the sake of preserving her respectability. As it turned out, Artemisia's protestation of innocence, like Susanna's, was not accepted at face value, and it took a trial to establish that she had indeed been assaulted. And while each woman was eventually vindicated, both were permanently stig-

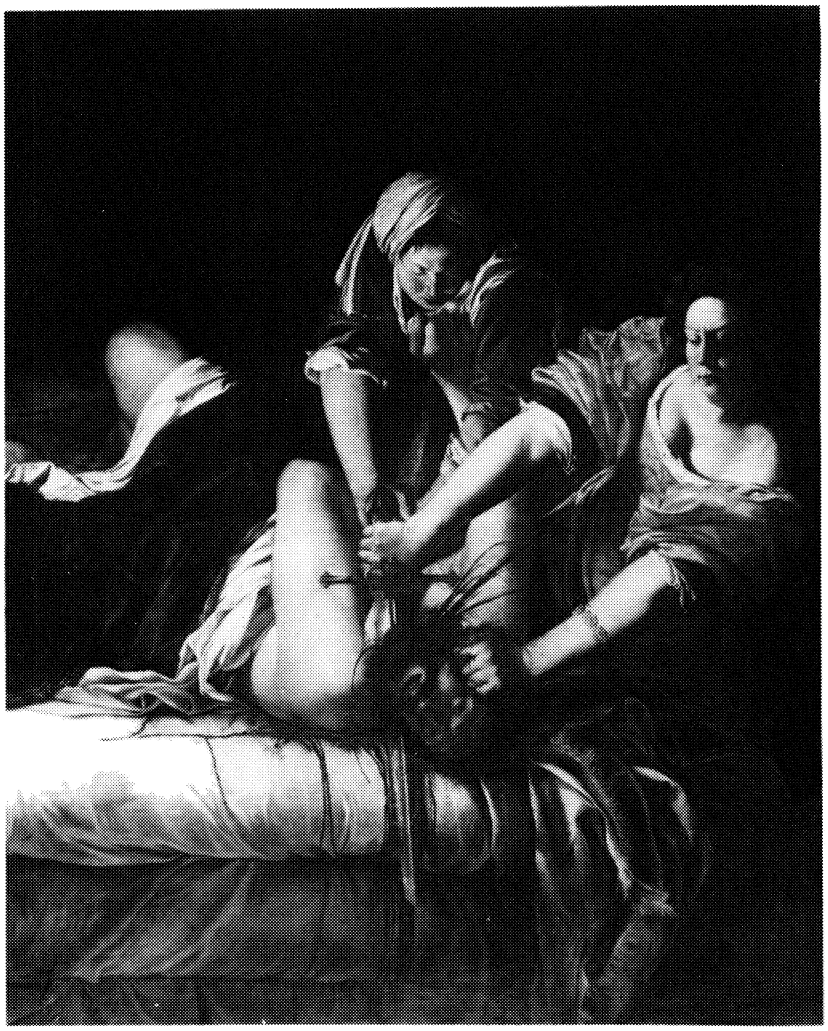
matized as primarily sexual creatures as a result of sexual acts imposed upon them by others. Artemisia's choice of the Susanna theme and her unorthodox treatment of it formed a perfect vehicle for the expression of the sexual victim's point of view, even though she may well have carried out such a personal statement on a deeply unconscious level.

But how are we to account for the discrepancy between the date on the painting, 1610, and the date of the rape, 1611? One possible explanation is that the picture was painted shortly after the rape, but falsely inscribed with the date 1610, a decision that would undoubtedly have been that of Orazio, for the dual purpose of establishing his daughter's early competence as a painter—which he is known to have wanted to do[50]—and of concealing the direct and potentially embarrassing relation between the picture's content and the artist's personal trauma. Such a purpose would have been served by the conspicuous addition of the earlier date beneath Artemisia's name. Moreover, if Orazio were willing to falsify her age at the trial, one presumes he would not have hesitated to falsify a date on a painting.

A more likely solution, however, is one that does not call for the hypothesis of a deception. Artemisia may well have experienced sexual harassment for some time before the rape actually occurred. She suggests as much in her trial testimony, in which she describes the efforts of Tassi to seduce her.[51] Tassi, who had come to Rome in 1610, and whose friendship with Orazio must have developed in that year,[52] was a frequent visitor to the Gentileschi household. According to Artemisia's testimony, Tassi and his friend Cosimo Quorli pressured her for sexual favors with the taunt that she had already given them to a household servant. Although Artemisia fixed the period of Tassi's attentions to her as shortly before the rape itself—that is, in the spring of 1611—it is by no means certain from the trial evidence exactly when Tassi's acquaintance with Artemisia began. Moreover, the innuendoes about her promiscuity made by Tassi and Quorli, and her defensive responses to them, suggest that the question of her sexual availability had been of interest to several men in her immediate environment, perhaps for a long while.

What the painting gives us then is a reflection, not of the rape itself, but rather of how the young woman artist felt about her own sexual vulnerability in the year 1610. It is significant that the *Susanna* does not express the violence of rape, but the intimidating pressure of the threat of rape. Artemisia's response to the rape itself is expressed in the dark and bloody *Judith Decapitating Holofernes* in the Uffizi [21] painted shortly after her marriage and move to Florence, in which—as even the most conservative writers have realized—Judith's decapitation of Holofernes appears to provide a pictorial equivalent for the punishment of Agostino Tassi. Once we acknowledge, as we must, that Artemisia Gentileschi's early pictures are vehicles of personal expression to an extraordinary degree, we can trace the progress of her experience, first as the victim of sexual intimidation, and then of rape—two phases of a continuous sequence that find their pictorial counterparts in the *Susanna* and the Uffizi *Judith* respectively.

Artemisia's continuing personal interest in the Susanna theme is measured by the fact that, the Burghley House picture aside, there are four other recorded paintings of Susanna and the Elders by her.[53] One of these, painted the year before the artist died, is likely to have been her last picture,[54] and thus the subject effectively brackets her entire career. The late dates of these paintings suggest that none is likely to have equaled the Schönborn picture in originality and in the intensity of personal expression. Rather, Artemisia's incipient social challenge represented in her earliest known picture was developed in the sequence of *Judiths* of the late teens and



21. Artemisia Gentileschi, *Judith Decapitating Holofernes,* ca. 1614–20. Florence, Uffizi (*Alinari*).

twenties. Ironically, Artemisia's *Judiths* are routinely characterized as "castrating" and "violent," while the early *Susanna* has, we may assume from critical silence, been regarded as expressively benign. Writers and lecturers who respond with acute sensitivity to a scene in which violence is done to men, have passed over a picture that gives full expression to an equivalent female fear, the menace of rape, an event that is no less menacing because the act is not shown.[55] Seen metaphorically, Artemisia's *Susanna and the Elders* differs significantly from her *Judiths,* however, in offering not one woman's fantasy revenge, but a sober expression of the broader situation which gives rise to that extreme solution: the reality of women's confined and vulnerable position in a society whose rules are made by men.

Manifestly, a seventeen-year-old girl brought up in an unquestioned patriarchal world could not have consciously intended all this. But as all great artists are those who can convert unconscious emotions into palpable

form without intervention of the socialized brain—and we accept this in a Michelangelo, a Rembrandt or a Goya as the explanation for their articulation of more deeply human values than those espoused by the cultures in which they functioned—it is more than possible that the young Artemisia Gentileschi, the victim of a traumatic sexual experience and the later-to-be defiant advocate of female capability, should have drawn subconsciously from the wellspring of her female identity and experience to humanize the treatment of a biblical theme that men had distorted almost beyond recognition.

NOTES

Author's note: I am grateful to the American Association of University Women Educational Foundation for a fellowship awarded me in 1978–79, which made it possible for me to write this essay during that academic year. Special thanks are also due to Norma Broude, whose incisive suggestions helped to strengthen this study in many ways.

1. See Ann Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin, *Women Artists: 1550–1950,* Los Angeles County Museum of Art; New York, 1976. The exhibition opened in Los Angeles, December 1976, and traveled to Austin, Texas; Pittsburgh; and Brooklyn.

2. The painting has been in the family collection of Dr. Karl Graf von Schönborn, Pommersfelden, Schloss Weissenstein, at least since the early eighteenth century. A reference of 1715 in the family archive mentions the painting of *Susanna* as a work of Orazio Gentileschi. I am grateful to Dr. Schönborn for generously supplying information on the picture. The *Susanna and the Elders* measures 67 by 47⅝ inches and is painted in oil on canvas.

3. R. Longhi, "Ultimi studi sul Caravaggio e la sua cerchia," *Proporzioni,* I (1943), p. 47, n. 38. See also A. Emiliani, "Orazio Gentileschi: nuove proposte per il viaggio marchigiano," *Paragone,* 9, no. 102 (1958), p. 42.

4. R. Ward Bissell, "Artemisia Gentileschi—A New Documented Chronology," *The Art Bulletin,* 50, June 1968, pp. 153ff., especially p. 157.

5. H. Voss, *Die Malerei des Barock in Rom,* Berlin, 1925, p. 463.

6. Harris and Nochlin, p. 120.

7. The conservator pointed out that the white highlights visible on the left portion of the signature fade as the inscription passes into the shadow cast by Susanna's right leg, a carefully thought-out detail that appears to have been part of the original conception. Some damages in this passage have been repaired by restorers, but these are easily distinguished from the original pigment. Mrs. Sack confirmed that surface cracks run through the lettering, and this can be seen indistinctly in Figure 2. In her opinion, the picture is in unusually good condition, with much of the freshness of the original color still preserved.

8. In a deposition of 1612, Orazio declared that Artemisia had been painting for three years. See Bissell, p. 154. By this, Orazio probably meant (as Norma Broude suggested to me) that she had been painting independently for three years, since her apprenticeship would undoubtedly have begun before the age of sixteen.

9. A. Moir, *The Italian Followers of Caravaggio,* Cambridge, Mass., 1967, Vol. I, p. 100.

10. Longhi, p. 47, no. 38. Bissell, in his doctoral dissertation (*The Baroque Painter Orazio Gentileschi: His Career in Italy,* University of Michigan, 1966, Vol. II, p. 262), aptly questions why Orazio would have wanted the name of his young daughter on one of his own paintings.

11. The *Susanna* in the Doria-Pamphilj Gallery is thought to be by Domenichino by Richard Spear (*Caravaggio and His Followers,* Cleveland, 1967, p. 54) and by Ann Harris (Harris and Nochlin, p. 120). D. Posner, *Annibale Carracci: A Study in the Reform of Italian Painting Around 1590,* London, 1971, Vol. II, nos. 57 and 131A, has published the painting as possibly by Lanfranco, after Annibale's lost original. For literature on Annibale's print of ca. 1590, see D. Bohlin, *Prints and Related Drawings by the Carracci Family,* Nation-

al Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1979, p. 444.

12. Most versions of the Susanna theme date from this period, with only occasional examples from before the sixteenth century and after the eighteenth. See L. Reau, *L'iconographie de l'art chrétien,* Paris, 1957, Vol. II, pp. 393ff., and A. Pigler, *Barockthemen,* Budapest, 1956, Vol. I, pp. 218ff.

13. Speaking of Rubens's several depictions of the Susanna theme, Rooses remarks: "Il est permis de croire que, pour lui, le charme du sujet n'était pas tant la chasteté de l'héroïne biblique que l'occasion de montrer une belle femme nue, deux audacieux qui tentent une enterprise galante et les émotions fort diverses qui en résultent pour chacun des personnages"—M. Rooses, *L'Oeuvre de P. P. Rubens,* Antwerp, 1886, Vol. I, p. 171.

14. In her recent study of rape, Susan Brownmiller offers a graphic parallel from military history. Examining rape as an acceptable corollary of wartime conquest, she observes that in a situation in which killing is viewed as "heroic behavior sanctioned by one's government or cause," other forms of violence acquire part of that heroic luster—S. Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape,* New York, 1975, pp. 31ff.

15. S. B. Pomeroy, in *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity,* New York, 1975, p. 12, comments upon the "passivity of the woman [who] never enticed or seduced the god but was instead the victim of his spontaneous lust," in the "endless catalogue of rape in Greek myth."

16. M. C. Leach, "Rubens' *Susanna and the Elders* in Munich and Some Early Copies," *Print Review,* 5 (1976), pp. 120–27, especially p. 125. Useful further bibliography on the Susanna theme is given by Leach, p. 121, n. 8. Despite its theological popularity, the Susanna theme was only rarely treated in medieval art; see K. Künstle, *Ikonographie der Christlichen Kunst,* Freiburg-im-Breisgau, 1928, Vol. I, pp. 302–03, and Reau, *L'iconographie,* Vol. II, p. 395, for a few examples.

17. Leach, p. 125.

18. The story of Susanna and the Elders is believed by some scholars to have been based upon a legend that symbolized a struggle between the Pharisees and Saducees over laws concerning false accusation and false testimony, the Pharisees having instituted as reforms over laxer Saducee practices the thorough examination of witnesses and the severe punishment of false witnesses. See W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Books of the Apocrypha,* London, 1915, pp. 391ff. An alternative view is represented by scholars who argued that the Susanna story derives from a combination of folklore and myth. See P. F. Casey, *The Susanna Theme in German Literature,* Bonn, 1976, pp. 21ff. Scholars generally agree that the story was written in Hebrew during the reign of Alexander Jannaeus (102–75 B.C.). The story was appended to the Book of Daniel, although the two Daniels are historically unrelated, and acquired its present position as chapter 13 in that book in 1547, as decreed by the Council of Trent.

19. See Phyllis Bird, "Images of Women in the Old Testament," in *Religion and Sexism,* ed. by Rosemary R. Ruether, New York, 1974, pp. 48ff., especially p. 51.

20. Reau, *L'iconographie,* vol. II, pp. 396–98, lists as many Susannas at the Bath as he does Stonings or Judgments combined; Pigler, *Barockthemen,* pp. 218ff., gives nearly eight times as many Susannas at the Bath as Judgments, and lists no Stonings.

21. A study in the Louvre connects Rembrandt's Berlin *Susanna* with a painting of 1614 by Pieter Lastman that is also in the Dahlem Museum (see H. Gerson, *Rembrandt Paintings,* Amsterdam, 1968, illus. p. 94 and fig. a, p. 327), but Rembrandt deviates from Lastman in repeating the Medici Venus pose for Susanna that he used in his 1637 *Susanna* in The Hague.

22. The connection between Rubens's Susanna figure and the famous antique model has been observed by a number of writers; see Leach, p. 123, n. 14. Leach himself attempts to distinguish the expressive character of Rubens's Susanna in the Munich painting from that seen in several copies of the picture by other artists, suggesting that the copyists mistakenly converted a "carefully selected gesture of modesty" into a "coy and inviting gesture." In my view, Leach attaches too much importance to an inconspicuous detail added by the copyists, Susanna's grasping of a lock of her hair (surely an Aphrodite Anadyomene reference with its bath-sea-fertility associations, and not a Vanitas, as Leach suggests), and too little importance to the overtly seductive facial expression in Rubens's original *Susanna*—an expression that surpasses the

copies in coyness (not fear), and countermands whatever modesty the "closed-composition" pose may convey.

23. See C. Robert, *Die Antike Sarcophagreliefs im auftrage des kaiserlich deutschen archaeologischen Instituts,* Berlin, 1890–1919, Vol. II, pp. 155, 157, and 171. Raphael drew a number of the figures seen in the Loggia frescoes from this sarcophagus, as Robert notes. Titian also used poses taken from the Orestes sarcophagus, e.g., the figure of Bacchus in the London *Bacchus and Ariadne,* which is based upon Orestes, and the figure of Goliath in the S. M. della Salute *David and Goliath,* which is based upon the fallen Aegisthus. See O. Brendel, "Borrowings from Ancient Art in Titian," *The Art Bulletin,* 37 (1955), p. 118 and n. 19, and p. 121. The defensive gesture of the nurse also appears in Sebastiano del Piombo's *Raising of Lazarus* (National Gallery, London), in the Giulio/Raphael *Repulse of Attila* in the Vatican Sala di Costantino, and in the eighteenth century in Fuseli's *Oedipus Curses his Son Polynices* (Paul Mellon Collection).

24. See C. de Tolnay, *Michelangelo,* Princeton, N.J., 1945, Vol. II, p. 134, and fig. 304, which illustrates the Orestes sarcophagus in reverse. Tolnay credits Walther Horn for first observing the connection between Adam's gesture and the Orestes sarcophagus.

25. It is unlikely that the specific subject of the Orestes sarcophagus was known in either Michelangelo's or Artemisia's time, inasmuch as two learned early writers betrayed their own ignorance of the theme in their descriptions of the sarcophagi. In his Naples diary, Cassiano dal Pozzo identified a sarcophagus in the house of the Duke of Bracciano as having the same theme as the Vatican and Giustiniani sarcophagi with the note that a certain painter, Micheli, who worked for the duke had some information about what its subject might be (T. Schreiber, ed., *Unedirte römische Fundberichte aus italiënischen Archiven und Bibliotheken,* Leipzig, 1885, Vol. III, p. 37, no. 54). And when the Giustiniani sarcophagus was published in P. S. Bartoli's *Admiranda Romanorum antiquitatum* of 1693, Bellori, who wrote the notes that accompanied the engravings, resorted to a literal description of the action without identifying the characters, although nearly every other monument in the album is named by subject. Montfaucon, in the eighteenth century, supposed that the relief commemorated one of the grandest deeds of antiquity, but admitted he did not know which one. It was apparently Winckelmann who first identified the subject of these celebrated sarcophagi as the story of Orestes avenging his father's death by slaying his mother Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus (J. J. Winckelmann, *Monuments inédits de l'antiquité,* Paris, 1809, Vol. III, pp. 26ff.; see also Robert, Vol. II, p. 130).

But if the early writers could not pinpoint the relief's theme, some at least understood the action generally to involve punishment. This is made explicit in a description of the Giustiniani sarcophagus written in 1550 by Fabricius, who names it as "this image in which some figures are punished. . . ." ("servilium suppliciorum (simulachra) in quibus alii capite plectuntur, aliis brachium saxo impositum alio saxo frangitur. . . ," G. Fabricius, *Roma,* 1550, p. 177, in J. Lipsius, *Roma illustrata sive Antiquitatum romanarum breviarium,* Amsterdam, 1689).

26. It may suffice to recall the intricate interplay of moral forces in Aeschylus' *Oresteia* through one critic's observation that while Orestes in the Odyssey kills his father's assassins "without a qualm of conscience" and is "completely successful and completely in the right," Aeschylus' Orestes is "right and wrong, his father's avenger and a guilty matricide and more, the vortex where the Furies and the gods converge with fresh intensity and effect"—W. B. Stanford, intro., *Aeschylus: The Oresteia,* trans. by R. Fagles, London, 1976, p. 42.

27. Bissell, *Orazio Gentileschi,* Vol. II, pp. 77ff., dates this *David* in the period between 1605–10. Moir, p. 70, places the picture in the second decade.

28. The pose assumed by Orazio's contemplative Davids is a familiar one in antique art, seen in depictions of the contest between Poseidon and Athena (e.g., the cameo in Naples upon which one of the fifteenth-century relief tondos in the Medici Palace cortile is based; see *Il tesoro di Lorenzo il Magnifico,* eds. N. Dacos, A. Giuliano, and U. Pannuti, Florence, 1973, Vol I, pl. ix, fig. 81, and cat. 6), and seen also in the *Odysseus Before Telemachus* in the Villa Albani; see Winckelmann, *Monuments inédits de l'antiquité,* Paris, 1809, Vol. III, no. 157.

29. In a paper delivered in a recent symposium,

The Carracci and Italian Art around 1600, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., April 7, 1979, Carl Goldstein observed that the use of a female studio model was rare before the nineteenth century, as a result of the prevalent attitude that women had uglier bodies than men. Occasional specific mention of female models in contemporary descriptions of seventeenth-century Roman art academies indicates that these were unusual practices; see N. Pevsner, *Academies of Art, Past and Present,* Cambridge, Engl., 1940, pp. 73 and 77.

30. The Detroit *Judith* dates from the mid-1620s. See Bissell, *Orazio Gentileschi,* Vol. II, pp. 95ff. and 102ff., for a clarifying discussion of the several versions of the Judith theme by Orazio and Artemisia. See also Bissell's recent monograph, *Orazio Gentileschi and the Poetic Tradition in Caravaggesque Painting,* University Park, Pa., 1981, pp. 153–56.

31. See the exhibition catalogue compiled by C. Gnudi, *Nuove Acquisizioni per i Musei dello Stato, 1966–71,* Palazzo dell'Archiginnasio, Bologna, Sept. 28–Oct. 24, 1971, pp. 62–63. In his catalogue entry, Andrea Emiliani suggests these dates for the painting, connecting it with Cantarini's Roman journey. Emiliani considers Cantarini's *Susanna* to be a development of an idea first stated by the artist in a drawing of Ariadne (Brera, inv. 509). While I have not seen this drawing, Emiliani's statement that it shows the influence of Annibale Carracci's print of 1592 suggests that Ariadne's pose may not be especially similar to that of Cantarini's *Susanna.*

32. Although a thorough iconographic study of Artemisia's heroic female characters remains to be made, Ann Sutherland Harris has briefly discussed the artist's proto-feminist statements and has emphasized her preference for subjects with heroines; see Harris and Nochlin, pp. 118ff. See also M. D. Garrard, "Artemisia Gentileschi's Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting," *The Art Bulletin,* 62, March 1980, pp. 97–112.

33. See Bissell, p. 167.

34. Harris and Nochlin, p. 121, n. 18; Harris sees the influence of Guercino in the background and the color scheme.

35. See Bissell, p. 154, for a fuller account of Artemisia's marriage to Pietro Antonio di Vincenzo Stiattesi, who may, as Moir suggests (p. 99, n. 101), have been related to the G. B. Stiattesi who testified on Tassi's behalf at the trial.

36. A. Bertolotti, "Agostino Tasso; suoi scolari e compagni pittori in Roma," *Giornale di Erudizione Artistica,* V. fasc. VII and VIII, July–August 1876, p. 200. Bertolotti's article contains a reduced transcription of the trial proceedings that are preserved in the Archivio di Stato, Rome. See Bissell, p. 153, no. 2, and p. 155.

37. Bissell, p. 154. In 1611, Easter fell on April 3.

38. See, for example, Bissell, p. 153, and also T. Pugliatti, *Agostino Tassi fra conformismo e libertà,* Rome, 1977, pp. 24 and 167.

39. Bertolotti, p. 201.

40. Bertolotti, p. 195, quoting from Passeri's biography of Tassi.

41. I am grateful to Malcolm Campbell for calling to my attention the modern vestiges of older practices concerning rape. On the traditions under which rape was seen as an offense against property, see in particular P. Bird, "Images of Women in the Old Testament," in *Religion and Sexism,* R. R. Reuther, ed., New York, 1974, pp. 51–52; and L. M. G. Clark and D. J. Lewis, *Rape: the Price of Coercive Sexuality,* Toronto, 1977, pp. 115ff.

42. Bertolotti, p. 202. See also Moir, p. 99, n. 101.

43. Bertolotti, p. 203. See also R. Wittkower, *Born Under Saturn,* New York, 1963, p. 163.

44. Bertolotti, p. 201.

45. Bissell, p. 153; Spear, p. 96.

46. J. Canaday, *The Lives of the Painters,* London, 1969, Vol. II, pp. 364 and 366.

47. From an anonymous note on Artemisia added to the English edition of Roger de Piles's *The Art of Painting,* London, 1754, p. 376.

48. Moir, Vol. I, p. 100, observes that these were the chief factors that conditioned reports of her reputation, mentioning in addition two scarcely damning bits of information: one, that she may have had some relationship with one of her roomers, and, two, that she had a reputation for writing good love letters. That Artemisia was defined in sexual terms even when not specifically accused of promiscuity is also shown in Baldinucci's anecdote concerning the portrait painted of her by G. F. Romanelli and the subsequent jealousy of his wife (F. Baldinucci, *Delle Notizie de' Professori del Disegno,* Florence, 1772, Vol. XII, pp. 9–13). Em-

phasis upon the artist's love life was sustained in a fictional romance about her, *Artemisia,* by Lucia Longhi Lopresti (pseud. Anna Banti), Florence, 1947.

49. Wittkower, p. 164.

50. Evidence that Orazio was anxious to publicize his daughter's precociousness is given by Bissell, p. 154. In any event, the picture would not have been painted later than 1614, since by then Artemisia was settled in Florence and consistently signed pictures with her Tuscan family name, Lomi. Also, the light and color arrangement of the Susanna, with its somewhat Venetian combination of blue, violet, red and olive green, is close to Orazio's color of the first decade, and differs markedly from the more intense chiaroscuro in the paintings of the early twenties.

51. Bertolotti, p. 201. The full text of the trial, which has just been published, came into my hands too late for me to be able to include sections of it here. See *Artemisia Gentileschi/Agostino Tassi: Atti di un processo per stupro,* E. Menzio, ed., Milan, 1981.

52. T. Pugliatti, *Agostino Tassi fra conformismo e libertà,* Rome, 1977, p. 19.

53. These include (1) a painting in England in the collection of Charles I, mentioned in Van der Doort's inventory as being in Henrietta Maria's chamber at Whitehall (*Walpole Society,* 37 [1960], p. 177); (2) a *Susanna* of the 1640s in the house of Dott. Luigi Romeo, Baron of S. Luigi, Naples, said to have been a pendant to the *Bathsheba* in Columbus, Ohio (see Bissell, p. 163, n. 82); (3) a signed *Susanna* in Brünn, Czechoslovakia, a heavily damaged and overpainted work, whose design, however, is said to resemble that of the Schönborn *Susanna* (see Bissell, p. 164); and (4) a *Susanna* signed and dated 1652, known only from the citations of Da Morrona and Lanzi that it was in the collection of Averardo de' Medici (see Bissell, p. 164). In addition to these, Longhi, *L'Arte,* 19 (1916), p. 299, attributed to Artemisia a *Susanna* in the Pinacoteca, Naples, that was previously ascribed to Stanzioni, and more recently, to F. Guarino.

54. See note 53 above, item (4), and Bissell, p. 164.

55. Cf. Germaine Greer: "The fear of sexual assault is a special fear: its intensity in women can best be likened to the male fear of castration"—G. Greer, "Seduction Is a Four Letter Word," in L. G. Schultz, ed., *Rape Victimology,* Springfield, Ill., 1975, p. 376. See also Greer's sound treatment of Artemisia Gentileschi in general and her discussion of the *Susanna* in particular in *The Obstacle Race: The Fortunes of Women Painters and Their Work,* New York, 1979, especially pp. 191–93. Greer's conclusions, published after this essay was written, accord with my own in several points.