Jared French's State Park: A Contextual Study

Emily Sachar

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Jared French’s *State Park:*
A Contextual Study

by

Emily Sachar

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts, Art History, Hunter College
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Jared French’s State Park: A Contextual Study

By Emily Sachar
Fall, 2017
Dedication

This master’s thesis is dedicated to the memory of my mother, Nancy Adler Sachar (1933-2017), who encouraged me to start on the path of art history and was herself a St. Louis Art Museum docent.
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Acknowledgments

This thesis would never have been possible without the help and encouragement of a select group of scholars, friends and colleagues. To Mark Cole, the seminal scholar on Jared French and now both a mentor and a friend, I owe the deepest of thanks. Not only did Mark, the curator of American art at the esteemed Cleveland Museum of Art, encourage my work and my interest in Jared French from my first initiation of contact, he supplied from his archives a number of art reviews contemporaneous with the period under study here that I did not know existed. Several of these are from British newspapers and added a new layer of depth to my consideration of French’s work, especially to my analysis of his murals. A great number of details on Jared French’s early biography also come from Cole’s University of Delaware PhD dissertation, which is cited extensively in the pages that follow.

For helping me launch this project by reading the initial outlines, and for providing a sounding board at various points in the process, I am deeply grateful to my longtime mentor Lisa Vergara, one of my first professors at Hunter more than a decade ago. Before I found a thesis sponsor at Hunter, she listened to my ideas and gave me advice and encouragement that helped me to move forward. I am most grateful for all I learned under her tutelage over the course of twelve years.

My adventures in art history would never have begun without the encouragement of another mentor, Elinor Richter, whom I met in 2005 when I was a docent at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and who encouraged me to apply to Hunter College to begin the most joyful intellectual journey of my life. Elinor’s scholarship in the Renaissance was extremely important to this project, given Jared French’s interest in the Quattrocento and his adoption of painterly techniques and subject matter therefrom. Elinor lent me several important books on Piero della Francesca and assisted me in the art-historical reading of his work and a better understanding of his techniques. Before I found a thesis adviser, Elinor also read a very early draft of a portion of this thesis and advised on several notable points for improvement.

Without the work of a little-known newspaper archivist, Tom Tryniski, I would not have been able to consult, let alone find, a number of reviews of Jared French’s work. Tryniski has catalogued the entire New York Sun, the work of whose critic, Henry McBride, is essential to any study of the mid-century American art world. He has also made available the work of Emily Genauer, critic for the New York World, the New York World Telegram and the New York Herald Tribune. Tom is now scanning approximately 250,000 pages of New York State and New York City newspapers per month, and American history research will never be the same. For guiding me to Tryniski’s web site, FultonHistory.org, I am indebted to another longtime friend, independent scholar and architectural historian Francis Morrone, whose fabulous walking tours and NYU courses continue to inspire me in my journey through art history.

Francis also indirectly introduced me to my husband, Joel Gordin, and it was Joel, in the fall of 2014, who encouraged me in the most gentle of ways to leave a lucrative but unsatisfying career in the corporate sector so that I might, once and for all, complete my coursework at Hunter, study for the comprehensive exam and attempt to master a foreign language; Joel is a gift in my world and my dearest man-friend ever.
I am also so grateful for the Kossak Grant that allowed me to travel throughout the Eastern United States in the summer of 2016 viewing Jared French’s murals at close hand.

It is the rare student who is able, in the same breath, to thank her mother and her daughters for inspiration. Shortly after my grueling divorce, my mother suggested I compete to become a docent at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Five years later, my daughter, Amy, now an orthopedic surgeon at NYU, was a freshman at Princeton University when I enrolled for my first undergraduate course at Hunter. It was such fun to share notes about our freshman-year experiences. And my daughter, Caroline, was beginning graduate work at NYU when I launched the research for this thesis. Nothing has given me more joy than anticipating my accomplished daughters and possibly my grandson on hand as I collect my MA in art history just before I cross my sixtieth birthday.

Professors Susanna Cole and Howard Singerman offered myriad ideas for improvement of this thesis upon their readings of the first draft, and I am deeply indebted to both for their thoughtful, careful and encouraging guidance.

Lastly, to my students writ-large, thank you. If I have been lucky enough to teach you art history, you have taught me something and continued to remind me that my true calling will always be as your teacher. Every one of you has touched my soul.
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Jared French’s *State Park*:
A Contextual Study

**Introduction**

When the Whitney Museum of American Art reopened in May 2015 in its new downtown New York City location, the inaugural exhibition, “America is Hard to See,” featured six hundred works in a vast range of mediums. No painting in the show seemed to fit the exhibition title better than a work by an understudied artist, *State Park* (1946) by Jared French (Fig. 1). Although the label at the time mused on the calm mood of the picture, it said nothing of the motifs that seemed so disparate and isolating: a family group, no member of which interacts with the others, under a bright pink umbrella; a stern lifeguard in profile guarding the beach; a pugilist tucked neatly into the background, conspicuous by his raised fists and the unreal, death-like pallor of his skin. There was something indescribable about the scene that indeed seemed “hard to see:” unlike other works in the exhibition that were disturbing in explicit terms, *State Park* was enigmatic and mysterious for features that were hard to apprehend.

Still, the pleasing summer colors, expert draftsmanship, and exquisitely balanced composition were compelling. No less intriguing was the way in which the work is painted: no visible brush strokes; a matte surface; and such minute details as a tattoo on the fighter’s bicep only discernible with the aid of a magnifying glass. The peculiarities of the work begged many questions, at the heart of which were instincts that the biographical, sociological and personal contexts for the work must be understood to make possible an adequate art-historical reading. First though, we consider the painting as an object and image, the crucial entry points for inquiry and the touchstone throughout this thesis.
*State Park* is a 24.5 x 24.5-inch square, painted in egg-yolk tempera on composition board. A figure painting with a beach setting, it depicts two individual men and a family of three, all situated on a bluish-grey wooden boardwalk or deck on a bright, clear day. Behind them lies a stretch of perfectly smooth, nearly white sand, and beyond that a tranquil strip of cerulean blue sea, with tiny white marks, the sparkle of sunlight on water. The horizon is low, only about a third of the way up the picture. The large expanse of blue sky is lighter at the horizon, where we see thin, horizontal clouds.

The composition has a strikingly rigorous formality, with the five figures overlapping a succession of horizontals made by the boardwalk, a railing (on which French signed his name in pale blue at right), and the meeting of sand and water, water and sky. In the foreground at far left, forming a strongly contrasting vertical that spans the height of the painting, stands a large lifeguard in profile, facing right, like a sentinel. Behind him, at the far edge of the deck, next to the railing, is another standing man in profile, this time facing left, in opposition to the position of the lifeguard. Just to the right of the men, a family—mother, father, young adolescent boy—sit in their bathing suits on a round bench underneath an umbrella painted a bright, unexpected shade of pink. Their skin is shaded a uniform grey from the shadow cast by the umbrella’s canopy. They form a tight group, but each looks out in a different direction.

The edges of all the forms are crisp, the composition is painstakingly balanced, and the tempera paint is applied smoothly in clear colors. The scene has a preternatural stillness that soon creates a feeling of unease. Add to this a mix of realistic and unrealistic poses, stylized clouds that bear no resemblance to fact, and unnatural skin colors, and we see a picture that for all its superficial charm, is deeply unsettling for anyone expecting a conventional summer day at the beach.

The painting’s overall stillness extends particularly to the lifeguard, a towering figure in relation to the others. The figure is unmistakably derived from the archaic Greek *kouros* type, as
is his pose: left foot slightly in front of the right, feet firmly planted on the deck (Figs. 2 and 3). In fact, he looks much like a painted statue; the adjective “wooden” comes to mind.\(^1\) Bronzed by the sun, barefoot, and with chiseled muscles, he wears tight, form-fitting blue swim trunks. His large, protruding eye staring straight ahead also harks back to archaic Greece, but his downturned mouth and head shaven below the top depart from archaic figural conventions. The figure of the lifeguard is very compact; his left arm, partly glimpsed, hangs nearly straight, close to his body, while his near, right arm makes a right angle as he extends it forward. He holds an upright bully stick, and around his neck a whistle hangs from a thin chain. All the figures exhibit French’s interest in the human form. In the lifeguard, French has peculiarly blended naturalism—the anatomically exact body, the contemporary hairstyle—with the feeling of an ancient ceremonial sculpture.

Behind the lifeguard, at the back left of the platform, and depicted at a scale much smaller than the perspective would warrant, is the second standing man who faces left. Older than the lifeguard, his body type is muscled but leaner, and he wears short, clinging swim trunks in a mustard-brown hue. With forearms raised and fists clenched, his pose is that of a fighter, an identification strengthened by his cauliflower ear, determined grimace, and nose that looks as if it has been broken in the past. Like the lifeguard, the fighter is reminiscent of sculpture, but now marble-like in his “chiseled” body, stilled action pose and impossibly white-grey skin. He wears simple, ankle-high, grey-green shoes, but instead of being firmly planted on the deck as his movement would require, he hovers. On his visible left bicep, we can make out a tattoo, the face of a woman wearing red lipstick and smoking a cigarette.

French has recorded each of the three figures in the family group in a carefully observed pose. The mother receives the most attention, and among the members of the little family, hers is

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\(^1\) The object label for State Park at the Whitney Museum of American Art references this connection. So do several scholars who have written about French’s art, among them Nancy Grimes. See, for instance, her short 1993 monograph, Jared French’s Myths (Pomegranate Books).
the only whose face we see. Although the mother’s face is in perfect left profile, she is otherwise oriented slightly to the left but more towards the viewer. She wears a shiny, red, two-piece bathing suit with conical cups on the bra-top, complemented at her neck by a matching, red fabric choker. Her short, frizzed red hair, neatly primped, peaks out in front from a light purple scarf tied under her chin. Her feet, shod in reddish-brown sandals, are perched on tiptoe; the bench is sized better for her longer-legged husband. Despite the fact that she sits in the shade, shiny elements magically stand out: her bathing suit, neatly red-painted toenails, bright red lipstick, sparkly diamond ring on her wedding finger, and a double-strand bracelet. The realistic drawing of her body and attire contrasts with her physiognomy, which perfectly conforms to the Archaic Greek stereotype that appears on statues and countless vases (Figs. 4-5-6).

Sitting on the right side of the round bench is the father, lean and well built, just beginning to bald. His arms are folded across his chest, as if he might be chilled in the shade of the umbrella, or just supporting himself as he rests. He turns his head a little and gazes toward the sea. The toes of his right foot overlap the shadow of the umbrella, and we see in the bright light that his skin is fair. To the left of the mother is the son, with a thin, boyish body. His legs are spread wide and his feet, too short to reach the deck, dangle. He seems to be looking at the fighter in back, but since his face is in lost profile, we cannot be sure that the man is the object of his gaze. And indeed, each person focuses on something different. Interestingly, French has used one-point perspective, with the vanishing point just above the father’s right shoulder. The orthogonals constitute an “unseen,” “silent” way of bringing the feet of the standing men, and French’s signature just into the orbit of the family, suggesting an unspoken relationship.

Only one study for *State Park* survives (Fig. 7), published in 2010 by the Italian scholar Alfonso Panzetta. ² It is very close to the painting’s final composition, but allows us to see some

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² Following the death of French’s last lover, Robert Giannotta, portions, though by no means all, of the artist’s extant personal narrative were made available to Italian architectural and art historian Alfonso Panzetta. The study for *State Park* appears in his *Jared French on Jared French* (Rome: Umberto
significant changes. French clearly thought carefully about how to portray the individual figures. In the finished work the fighter goes from a youthful, much fuller figure with a more classical profile, to a slightly hunched, balding, and much older man, with his formerly firm stance changed to create the effect that he’s floating. The lifeguard shows fewer changes, but his smile is turned into a scowl, and his head is now partially shaved. The mother, though, becomes much more fully articulated, gaining the smile, scarf, choker, jewelry, and sandals, thus becoming more dressed up, and her neck is made more graceful; that is, French draws special attention to her in the finished painting. He also draws the family group closer to the older man by making the boy’s leg overlap the fighter’s now-extended back leg. And the clouds that form diagonals above in the study, are now aligned with the horizon in small, calm shapes. The sketchiness of the drawing, moreover, disappears in the smooth, flat painting with its neat, enclosing contours. Everything becomes, so to speak, crystallized and still. Compared to the drawing, that is, the painting further cultivates mystery, encouraging questions. Something portentous is built into the composition through the hieratic figures, the archaism, and the unusual medium of tempera on board; all these features signal the world made strange.

This study frames the painting within several intersecting contexts, beginning with a biographical chapter about what little we know of the dynamics of French’s family relationships; his marriage to Margaret Hoening; his early and long-lasting relationship with the painter Paul Cadmus; his education as an artist; the sociological strictures of the day; and the broad outlines of the artist’s career. Chapter One explores the key personal relationships in French’s life.

Chapter Two explores some of the historical, legal, psychiatric and social contexts of State Park. This chapter also examines other works by the artist in 1946, arguably the most productive of his career, and ascribes Jungian interpretations to some of these.

Allemandi, 2010). Giannotta and French lived in Rome from 1961, and they were still a couple when French died there in 1988.
Chapters Three and Four then shift to some key artistic contexts for *State Park*, including the male nude as a traditional site of both artistic mastery and of sexual, including same-sex, desire; French’s earlier mural projects; and a conceptual scheme for his art that he called *Aspects of Man*.

Chapter Five examines French’s artistic circle as a context for the painting, in particular works by Cadmus and George Tooker.

Chapter Six offers interpretations for the work, with attention to mood, iconography and a broader narrative that is partly psychological in nature.
Chapter 1: Personal Contexts for *State Park*: Family and Friends

This thesis proposes that *State Park* constitutes, in part, French’s personal artistic meditation on his experience of homosexuality. As such, biographical information is important, and will be cited throughout in grappling with the interpretation of the painting.\(^3\) French (Fig. 8) was born in Ossining, New York in 1905 to a comfortably middle-class family. His father, Henry Redfield French, was a salesman whose career required the family to move around New Jersey every few years, so it was not an altogether settled life. His mother, Mary, an amateur artist who was also deeply religious, was a homemaker who took care of French and his sisters, one younger and one older. French did not get along well with his father, who, unlike his mother, never encouraged his son’s artistic proclivities. Later, throughout his children’s teenage years, French’s father took to overdrinking, causing conflict in the family. French was close to his mother, at least during childhood. That connection weakened, however, as French grew older and his homosexuality became obvious to his parents, although we have no record of their open discussion of the topic.\(^4\) Mary French insisted on her children’s weekly Sunday attendance at her Episcopalian church. It’s not unreasonable to assume that French's sexuality was a source of familial tension, such as that suggested in *State Park*.

French left New Jersey to attend Amherst College, receiving his degree in 1925. Significantly, his love of poetry, literature, music and art were remarked upon by friends and in yearbooks. When he came to live in New York, his broad interests and knowledge gained him entry into an important, select group of luminaries in the arts. French had come to New York by

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\(^3\) The vast majority of the biographical information discussed here comes from the PhD dissertation of Mark Cole, now curator of American art at the Cleveland Museum of Art. Other sources include Nancy Grimes’ short 1993 monograph, *Jared French’s Myths*, as well as brief discussions in books about Paul Cadmus, such as Lincoln Kirstein’s 1984 biography, *Paul Cadmus*.

way of a clerk’s job on Wall Street. Meanwhile, he found time immediately upon graduating from Amherst to enroll in part-time courses at the Art Students League to pursue his long-held love of drawing. The next year, in 1926, French’s personal and professional life was to change forever when, in a drawing class, he met Paul Cadmus (Figs. 9 and 10). The two artists would become lovers for the next quarter-century. Cadmus and French moved in together in 1931, and soon thereafter travelled throughout Europe together for two years, until 1933. Their relationship continued even when French went on to marry Margaret Hoening in 1937; he had met her at the Art Students League as well. And we will see that Margaret makes several significant appearances in French’s art, and she is likely the model for the mother figure in State Park. The daughter of a wealthy father, Margaret did not need to earn her own living; indeed, she was able to support both herself and her husband. So, she subsumed her own professional artistic aspirations to create a home for “Jerry,” as he was called by friends. Throughout French’s life, even after their separation in 1961 and after the artist had moved to Rome to live with his partner Robert Gianotta, Margaret personally paid almost all the household bills as well as her husband’s studio costs and travel. Clearly, the relationship was of great importance to both, but we have few documents to round out the picture of their marriage and friendship.

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6 Details about French’s early relationship with Cadmus are related in Cole’s dissertation, wherein Cole’s oral interviews with Cadmus are referenced.
7 Cole, Jared French, 1905-1988, 86.
8 We might imagine that, by monogamist conventions, Cadmus would have been jealous, even intolerant, of the marriage between French and Margaret. But the opposite might well have been the case; the couple’s friend, novelist Glenway Wescott in his book, Continual Lessons: The Journals of Glenway Wescott, argues that traditional concepts of sexuality viewed men who have sex with women as more masculine. Thus, to Cadmus, French’s apparent bisexuality might have made him seem more manly. Michael Ross, in his 1983 book, Homosexuality and Social Sex Roles, argues that the idea that a same-sex relationship hinges on one partner being more masculine than the other was a common attitude during the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century and was based on traditional sex and gender roles in heterosexual relationships. In other words, French’s relationship with Margaret might have been another source of Cadmus’s attraction to him.
In 1931, when French was twenty-six, Cadmus painted a small, intimate picture of his lover, Jerry (Fig. 11). This was around the time when the two left for their extended European grand tour. This decision to travel, and to do so together, angered French’s parents, who saw the plan as a deliberate renunciation of their authority, despite the fact that he had reached his maturity some eight years previously. It must have been clear to them that French was living a homosexual lifestyle, which could not have pleased the devout Episcopalian Mary French or her husband. Indeed, upon her son’s departure, she threatened to cut off all contact with her son, a decision she recanted shortly afterward. Further details about French’s relationship with his parents is lacking.

Homoerotic, even pornographic, content surfaces in French’s drawings and paintings from the European trip. In France, French made his first sexually explicit ink drawings, one depicting a partially aroused young man and another showing two men engaging in oral sex. Another work, Beach Scene with Nudes, depicts three unclothed young men on a piece of sandy beach enclosed by reeds, in what Jared French scholar Mark Cole described as “a hidden natural paradise.” (Fig. 12). The painting Monk’s Dream (Fig. 13), completed in Germany, presents a dramatic scene of furtive behavior in a charged monastic context. Even though the precise details of the narrative are debatable, the scene includes one naked man bathing in the background of a dimly lit downstairs room, while another man, the main figure, seems to be racing to leave the scene as he draws up his black cowl around his genital area. A third man at the top of the staircase seems emotionally caught up in the drama below. And a fourth man, wearing an alb and seated at far right, appears to be in a state of sexual ecstasy or arousal; his right hand rests on his

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9 Cole, Jared French, 1905-1988, 47.
10 Cole, Jared French, 1905-1988, 47.
11 Photographic reproductions of these unlocated drawings are in the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender and Reproduction in Bloomington, Indiana.
These early works suggest French’s interest in ruminating on homosexuality and same-sex desire in a variety of contexts early in his development as an artist.

French’s decision to marry Margaret Hoening several years after his return from Europe, and his frequent representations of women who, visual analysis suggests, are modeled on her, raise many unanswerable questions, requiring some informed speculation. Very little has been written about this relationship, and French’s representations of Margaret or Margaret-like women merits a special study. Cole reports that opportunities to interview Margaret French dried up as she was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease and suffered debilitating memory loss near the end of her life. She died in 1973.\textsuperscript{13} And unfortunately, the personal papers and journals that Margaret maintained during her lifetime have been lost.\textsuperscript{14} French and his wife seem to have been close friends and were surely artistic partners; her long-standing financial support was likely critical as well. In addition, the marriage likely helped French in innumerable ways, including giving him some social respectability in heterosexual contexts. At times, as we shall see, French also presents a sensuous Margaret to the viewer, as in a photograph discussed below.

Only one independent portrait by French of his wife survives (Fig. 14). It was likely made for a show at the Museum of Modern Art, attesting to its importance. The painting is small, only 5 ½ inches across, but the sitter, staring straight ahead with wide-open blue eyes, has considerable presence. French depicts only Margaret’s face and a little of her neck, perfectly centered on the vertical line of bisection. Her blond hair, neatly swept back in two loose coils, is parted in the middle along this line. In other words, French gives her face a commanding


\textsuperscript{14} Cole, \textit{Jared French, 1905-1988}, 4-5.
centrality. She smiles ever so slightly. The blue background, and white clouds indicated with white brushstrokes, place her outside in the open air, which ties in with the beach as a place of gathering for her, French, and Cadmus. Her symmetrical face, long nose, and large eyes cannot help but remind us of the mother in *State Park*. Select images that, interesting in themselves as manifestations of French’s artistic thinking, may also shed light on the woman represented in *State Park*.

Among these images are photographs that make up part of the extraordinary PaJaMa project, launched in 1937.\(^\text{15}\) The goals for this project were diverse, centering on erotic impulses leading to output for private contemplation, on the one hand, and creative gestures allowing French to work out ideas for paintings that were to have a public debut, on the other. The photos offer myriad lenses through which to consider French’s work and career, showcasing suggestive moments between French and Cadmus; between French, Cadmus and other male lovers in their circle; and between French, Cadmus and Margaret. The PaJaMa works also make evident the importance of carefully choreographed imagery to French’s artistic practice in the late 1930s and 1940s, a form of “study” quite distinct from the Renaissance studies that French so admired among the Quattrocento artists.

In 1937, Cadmus, Jared, and Margaret began vacationing together at Fire Island and at Provincetown, Massachusetts. Meanwhile they maintained a living and working arrangement in Greenwich Village. The acronym for the photo project, PaJaMa, was formed by joining the first two letters of Paul (Cadmus), Jared (French), and Margaret (French). The PaJaMa trio, and especially French as the prime photographer of the group, used the medium both to experiment with homoerotic images and to stage ideas for paintings. Sitters for the PaJaMa works included

\(^\text{15}\) For a full treatment of the history of the PaJaMa project, including several dozen photos in a bound volume, consult Paul Cadmus, Margaret French and Jared French. *Collaboration: The Photographs of Paul Cadmus, Margaret French and Jared French*. Santa Fe: Twelvetrees Press, 1992.
Tooker, nearly a generation younger than French and, for a time in the 1940s, Cadmus’s lover; the painter Bernard Perlin; the fashion photographer George Platt Lynes; Monroe Wheeler, a Museum of Modern Art curator; and Fidelma Cadmus, artist, sister of Cadmus and wife of Lincoln Kirstein, a founder of the New York City Ballet. Nature has a leading role in the PaJaMa pictures, with sand dunes, rock formations, tree branches, driftwood, wooden planks, almost anything at hand in a beach environment, showing up as props.

Indeed, it was in the arena of photography that French established his most ambitious artistic works outside of painting. It is important to note that these images, and the practice of creating them, served as a private project. But more than any written documentation available, the series offers the most compelling information currently available from which to coalesce ideas about the artistic community of which French was a part. It was likely that the sexual content, whether implied or overt, compelled the artists to keep these works far from public view until years after they were created, in some cases to bequeath them to scientists or cultural historians. This instinct to shield private truths also holds for French’s public persona and his artistic practice throughout his life. In the decade around the time he painted *State Park*—and this includes the PaJaMa project—French’s seeming desire to hide his sexuality from the larger public led him to develop veiled imagery, the codes and signals of which were not, and still are not, readily interpreted. This is a series of recurring motifs and pictorial devices that cast light on *State Park*.

For instance, in an exquisitely stylish PaJaMa photograph by French that features Cadmus and Margaret (Fig. 15), Cadmus is naked, looking at the sea, his back to the camera, and his body framed erotically by some tall branches strategically planted in the sand. Margaret, here, is the dominant figure. In contrast to the nude Cadmus, she is fully clothed in a long skirt.
Her left arm gestures in Cadmus’ direction at right, but her face is in profile looking to the left, almost exactly in the manner of the female figure in *State Park* that French was to paint five years later. (Her hair is coiled to frame her face in a manner that recalls the drawing for the painting.) By showing Margaret with her face in “remote” profile and modestly dressed opposite the erotic male nude, French seems to suggest that she understands and accepts that sexual desire in this little circle excludes her, that desire is between French and Cadmus. She cedes her role as an intimate companion to her husband while maintaining a prominent position in a collective artistic project that broaches ideas and impulses essential to her husband, eroticism and experimentation among them. Compositionally, the peaceful beach setting and the detached but subtly linked figures whose relationships elude definition, bear some resemblance to the presentation of figures in *State Park* of some five years later.

In some photos, French creates allusions to erotic heterosexual coupling. For instance, in another PaJaMa image (Fig. 16), this time a stunning color photograph shot the same year that French completed *State Park*, French shows Cadmus and Margaret with a wide space between them, separate, but in the same plane and linked by her outstretched arm, with her hand now resting on his shoulder. In the color photograph, the naked Cadmus kneels, back to the viewer, a thick, large white towel draped over his left shoulder. Margaret also stands with her back to the viewer, with a similar white towel wrapped and tied loosely about her waist to reveal the curve of her right hip. She holds a stylish umbrella with striking black-and-white concentric stripes. Clearly, these two people were of great importance to French, and he depicts both of them as similarly youthful, graceful, and beautiful. Moreover, his use of Kodachrome film dramatizes their tanned, smooth skin against the brilliant white of the towels and the deep blue of the sky, adding to the sensuousness of the image.
The same tightly staged impulses that French arranged in the PaJaMa images inform the choreographed tableaux that he establishes for his paintings of this period. For instance, in *Summer’s Ending* (Fig. 17), the foreground of the beach scene is dominated by two figures. The woman at right is standing, facing out. She wears either a transparent or flesh-colored strapless garment, likely a bathing suit, with a heavy orange cloak wrapped over her head, draped across her back and held at her waist. A little behind this figure, to the left, is a woman seated on the sand wearing a striped dress and brown cardigan; she looks up, facing the standing woman, her right hand blocking the sun, and resembles Margaret. The standing figure has a symmetrical face, and could also be based on Margaret, who appears as similarly statuesque in the PaJaMa photos. In any case, French systematically opposes the two women (standing/seated; glowing/in shadow, etc.), as if they are two different aspects of his complex consideration of his wife. Thinking of *State Park*, we should note that the seated woman’s curled locks emerging from a tight head scarf looks ahead to the female figure in that painting.

*Summer’s Ending* also muses on notions of exclusion and leaves unresolved the degree to which these hinge on gender; consider the Margaret-like female figure in the deep background of this painting. The woman here forms part of an evenly-spaced group of four figures, the others consisting of a trio of men clad in bathing suits to the left of her, perhaps referring to Cadmus, French and one of their friends. The Margaret-like figure is distinct from the others because of her gender and her street clothing: a long skirt (as we see in the first PaJaMa photo discussed above), short-sleeved shirt, and shoes. She appears to be walking away from the men, her skirt swaying in the beach breeze, her head down, and her hands clasped. She clearly is not shown as the sexual partner of any of the men. At the same time, she in some ways echoes the man at far left, who also walks away with his head down. There is a feeling of exclusion in these two
figures. Walking away, summer ending, the heavy clouds over the horizon, even the still life of half-buried and discarded objects in the foreground, underscore the theme of summer ending, and makes us wonder if another kind of parting or ending was also on French’s mind. That is, the mysteries of the painting seem tied up with private personal feelings, a pattern that becomes even more oblique in State Park.

Also relevant to an exploration of the French-Margaret-Cadmus threesome is a painting by Cadmus, *The Shower* that suggests the important but sexually detached role that Margaret evidently played (Fig. 18). Here again, a clothed woman is presented, set apart from two nude men, identified by scholars as French and Cadmus.16 One of them, standing in an outdoor shower cleansing his body, wipes his right buttock under dancing streams of white water. On the opposite side of the shower wall leans the other nude man, sitting, one leg outstretched on a wooden deck and the other bent, in a pose of lassitude. The cascading, “electrified” water might also allude to semen as it escapes from the shower along the deck boards toward the male figure outside, as if connecting the two men in a sexual allegory. The standing woman here again looks like Margaret, her hair in a coil around her head as in the small portrait. Cadmus has rendered her as a study in white, next to a tall, bleached wooden stake. The stake is attached by a taut rope at the top to brown pole next to the shower, and Margaret passes almost ceremoniously underneath. Rendered ethereally and apart, she is separated from the sexual relationship implicit between the male figures, but, gazing in the men’s direction, she is still somehow in their company. That both French and Cadmus, during this period, were experimenting with ways of presenting Margaret’s isolation vis-à-vis their own relationship, is an essential point for understanding the female figure in State Park. And the way that Cadmus has portrayed this “Margaret” as ghostly white relates to

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the chalky pugilist in *State Park*, a figure relevant but distant, present but not quite real. Still, *The Shower* also illustrates through contrast some of the peculiar features of French’s art as it moved toward *State Park*. Cadmus elongates the figures and puts them in expressive poses that join them in a legible narrative: an obvious sexual relationship between the two males, and Margaret gazing in the general direction of the shower, with a benign, accepting look on her face. Given the artists’ engagement with the allegorical, the clothed Margaret and nude French or Cadmus almost suggest a Titian’s version of *Sacred and Profane Love* (Gallery Borghese, 1514). In contrast, we see no such an explicit and comprehensible narrative thread in French’s comparable works, where the figures are always less sociable and the narrative line elusive. Also in line with this contrast, Cadmus renders the beach setting in a summary style as free as that of his figural representations: the rolling dunes, the beach grasses bent in different directions, the wing-like mauve clouds racing above. French is much “tidier,” more formal, more reserved. His beach settings are beautiful in themselves: the neat but varied cloud formations, the mudflats in clear horizontals, the proportions of land to sky. French treats the beach with a kind of aesthetic reverence that speaks to its importance in the staging of his oblique yet highly charged dramas.

Another work, *Figures on a Beach*, also explores a puzzling array of relationships (Fig. 19). This beach scene depicts a sleeping Margaret figure lying on her right side, facing the viewer, wearing a pink strapless bathing suit and draped in a blue towel, clothing that recalls the standing woman in *Summer’s Ending*. A man kneels beside her and looks down, as he either wraps or unwraps a white towel about his waist and shoulders. One feels a relationship between the two, given their proximity to one another. Behind them at a distance is another young man, dressed in tight white underwear and t-shirt, this time facing frontally but looking at no one, and holding between his outstretched hands a tattered rope, a common motif of binding and
unbinding in French’s work. The painting is confoundingly opaque, like so much of French’s oeuvre, again with figures at a distance from one another and the relationships sexually suggestive but inscrutable. Still, the fact that the woman is prominent yet asleep, unconscious of the two men, suggests some degree of Margaret’s importance yet exclusion from their world, dwelling within her own private dream space.

At the same time that PaJaMa was orchestrating highly staged images that would serve as dress rehearsals for French’s paintings, the work of commercial photographer George Platt Lynes was similarly training the lens on the spare imagery that would be so crucial to French’s aesthetic. Lynes was most widely known during his lifetime for his high-fashion model shoots for *Harper’s Bazaar, Town and Country*, and *Vogue* and for the documentary images he was commissioned to shoot of dancers in the nascent American Ballet Company (now New York City Ballet). And to be clear, Lynes took dozens of artful and suggestive images of the men in his circle, including, in 1938, of French and Cadmus. Both Lynes and French inscribe homosexual identity and desire in their photographic work, albeit Lynes more explicitly than French. In an excellent example of this impulse (Fig. 20), willed upon his death in 1955 to the Kinsey Institute for Sex, Gender and Reproduction,17 we see Cadmus and French both prone, separated by a concrete staircase, facing one another. Cadmus lies on a wall and looks down over it, in the direction of French whose back is against the staircase edge, his body leaning slightly on the downward tilt. Both men are nude but for white undershirts. As Cadmus looks at his lover below, he lifts French’s t-shirt to expose his pubic region in erotic gesture.

Of most relevance to this study, though, is the artistic impulse behind Lynes’ work, which so closely mirrors that of PaJaMa. It seems certain that French and Lynes discussed

techniques and staging ideas, for their images share uncanny similarities: a modern aesthetic, tight cropping, and use of simple props. Lynes, in fact, sometimes shot photos for the PaJaMa project.

Like some of the work of PaJaMa, Lynes’s photos afforded opportunities for Cadmus, French and others in their orbit to display their deeply felt homosexual identities and to do so in the elegantly staged tableaux French favored. Notable among the intimate PaJaMa images is a photograph of the nude, smiling Cadmus walking through shallow ocean water towards his lover in the foreground, who stands about twelve to fifteen feet away and waits with his hands at his sides (Fig. 21). French, whose body is cropped above the knees, is partially shielded by thin branches planted in the sand as a foreground prop, as in the photograph of Margaret and Cadmus discussed above. Here, too, the set-up reveals the careful staging of the image, and by implication, a purpose to that staging. Such attentive orchestration of physical space, shadows and gestures shows itself in paintings by French that follow the genesis of the PaJaMa project, including State Park.

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In addition to the importance of the PaJaMa project for approaching State Park, it is essential to understand French’s sexuality within the context of 1940s America and, more specifically, against ideologies of repression, sexual and otherwise, in the world at large. Many of French’s interests, whether in literature, photography, evening entertainments or vacationing, were intricately bound up with his sexuality. French found intellectual and affective kinship in modernist literature and essays that insinuated or suggested alternative ways of seeing and viewing the world. James Joyce's Ulysses and D.H. Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover, both
banned in the United States, were among his favorite books.\(^\text{18}\) He also embraced essays and philosophies that suggested that artists must be independent of limiting societal norms and that all men, from all societies and epochs, shared common motivations.

Josephine Gear has argued that erotic and free-spirited scenes in the novels French enjoyed must have validated his homosexual lifestyle and given French a cultural context in which to work. Gear writes that French “realized that freedom of sexual choice was an integral part of a larger struggle for individual freedom … the need for this struggle confirmed the essential isolation of the human condition.”\(^\text{19}\)

French was especially enamored of the work of the British novelist, E.M. Forster, whose novel, *A Passage to India*, Cadmus and French read aloud to one another while on their European trip in the early 1930s.\(^\text{20}\) Later, in 1947, Forster vacationed with French, Cadmus and Margaret in Provincetown, Massachusetts, and on a return visit from England in 1949 as well.\(^\text{21}\) French’s relationship with Forster included not only friendship but also professional assistance, as when French in 1949 published a press run of 1,200 copies of the author’s 1941 essay, “The New Disorder,” in the United States. This fourteen-page essay, a response to the notion of The New Order articulated by Adolf Hitler, also in 1941, argues for the importance of artists in a civilized society and argues that a work of art can promote internal harmony and order, “something which has often been promised by society but always delusively.”\(^\text{22}\) In an allusion not just to creative freedom but perhaps also to individual freedom, Forster argues that artists must be unconcerned with how they are perceived, as they are fundamentally different from

\(^{18}\) Grimes, *Jared French’s Myths*, XIII.


“average” people, words that must have comforted French, in part because his work routinely received negative reviews during the 1940s. Another thread of Forster’s essay focuses on the admonition that artists should “attempt detachment,” words that see their visual correlate in works like State Park, where not only the figures are detached one from another but where the artist seems to have detached himself from any mandate to present a recognizable or even readable message. It seems plausible, as well, that, coming as they did from a homosexual literary figure and friend, Forster’s words must have inspired French.

French was also likely familiar with a stirring political, as well as highly personal, manifesto of 1938 by Forster entitled “What I Believe.” The essay is about liberal individualism embodied in the imperfect but best available form, Democracy, seen as one bulwark against totalitarianism. Forster wrote his essay just before the outbreak of WWII, and confronts the horrors already committed in the service of Hitler’s agenda, as well as the fear of what lay on the immediate horizon.

In 1947, the year after State Park, Cadmus produced a painting whose title he took from Forster’s essay (Fig. 22). That same year, George Platt Lynes took a photograph of French, Tooker, and Cadmus (Fig. 23); in it, we see Cadmus at work on What I Believe. It seems safe to assume that French had read Forster’s essay with as much interest as his lover.

Cadmus’s painting visualizes several of Forster’s themes. The essay, which is identified in the picture in the title of an open book being read by a naked man on the ground, possibly a portrait of Cadmus, is about liberal individualism in the face of totalitarianism. In it, Forster lauds an “aristocracy of the sensitive,” which some scholars have interpreted to be a veiled

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23 The critical reviews, among them those by the late Emily Genauer of the New York World and New York Herald Tribune and Parker Tyler, who wrote for a variety of art publications on both sides of the Atlantic, focused both on the content of French’s work — some attacked what they considered the veiled homosexuality — as well as on the form of the work, such as the wooden figures of much of French’s oeuvre.
Although the essay does not explicitly denote sexual or racial types, to Forster, no person of any race or sexual orientation should be ashamed of their individuality. He writes:

The above are the reflections of an individualist and a liberal who has found liberalism crumbling beneath him and at first felt ashamed. Then, looking around, he decided there was no special reason for shame, since other people, whatever they felt, were equally insecure. And as for individualism - there seems no way of getting off this, even if one wanted to. The dictator-hero can grind down his citizens till they are all alike, but he cannot melt them into a single man. That is beyond his power. He can order them to merge, he can incite them to mass-antics, but they are obliged to be born separately, and to die separately, and, owing to these unavoidable termini, will always be running off the totalitarian rails.

The left side of What I Believe depicts a surrealist Parnassus of individual expression and coveted artistic freedoms. Many of these figures can be identified as the members of French’s cultural circle discussed above. Among the groupings in the foreground is a foursome, located just left of center on the “sunny” side of the painting, where we see Cadmus drawing, while the fair-skinned French wraps an arm around his back. Margaret rests her hand on French’s shoulder. Next to her, wearing only a banner across his chest, is Forster himself. In front of this group, lying asleep on the grass, is surely French and Cadmus’s close friend, the novelist Glenway Wescott, known for his blond, androgynous beauty. Behind and to the left is Lincoln Kirstein, sitting and playing a flute. On one of his thighs his wife Fidelma, who was Cadmus’s sister and a painter, rests her head; on the other thigh, a black woman does the same. Cadmus visualizes here

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26 In his biography of Wescott, Jerry Rosco describes Wescott’s blond appeal to heterosexuals and homosexuals alike. See, for instance, page 28 of Glenway Wescott Personally: A Biography (University of Wisconsin Press: 2010).
Forster’s concept of an aristocracy of the sensitive; all the identifiable portraits are indeed of
creative people in the arts, whom Forster saw as a force against authoritarian brutality. Another
such force, in Forster’s view, was personal relationships. Again, the relationships that Forster
had with this enlightened group surely gave him confidence in his identity as both an artist and a
homosexual despite the bigotry and oppressive force of the larger society.27

French also noted his interest in the writings of British political philosopher and essayist
Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, for whose estate Forster was the literary executor and
biographer.28 Dickinson is most widely known for his philosophical writings promoting a League
of Nations in the early years of World War I. A pacifist and scholar of ancient Greece fascinated
with Plato, Dickinson wrote a memoir that Forster was initially retained to publish but that he
instead recrafted into a biography, in which Dickinson waxes eloquently about his foot fetish and
obsession with boys.29 Perhaps of most interest to French would have been Dickinson’s book,
*The Greek View of Life* (1896), which illustrates its author’s fascination with ancient Greece, a
golden age of homoeroticism. The book alludes, for instance, to Socrates’s homoerotic attraction
and allure, and in a chapter on the individual, Dickinson quotes the allegory of the charioteer in
Plato’s *Phaedrus* and suggests that ultimate harmony is achieved not by the complete eradication
of desire, or by abstinence, but by subordinating it to higher principles.30 French also would
likely have reveled in Forster’s biography of Dickinson, who detailed the elements of

27 The whole program of this complex painting is beyond the scope of this thesis. Katz argues for reading
the work as a division between a certain homosexual Arcadia on the left half and a gluttonous
heterosexuality on the right. Other plausible and contradictory interpretations emerge, as well. For Katz’
interpretation, consult the opening essay of *Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture*, p.
32-33.
29 Dickinson’s autobiography was not published until 1972, forty years after his death, likely because its
many references to homosexuality and interest in young boys would have been literary suicide in 1932.
30 An excellent short summary of Dickinson’s writings is by Nickolai Endres,
homosocial coupling at Cambridge. “As Cambridge filled up with friends it acquired a magic quality,” the book recounts.31 “People and books reinforced one another, intelligence joined hands with affection, speculation became a passion and discussion was made profound by love.”

French’s literary interests surely informed his world view, perhaps comforting him, and bear relevance for a close reading of his art; at the same time, drawing causal relationships is unwise and would be misleading because French so clearly avoided direct presentation on canvas of topics that would lead to ostracism.

Also important to French was the seminal study of male sexuality published in 1948 by sex researcher Alfred Kinsey. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* articulated for the first time the premise that homosexuality was not a disease and was, in fact, much more common in the American population than previously thought. Kinsey met French and Cadmus in 1949, but it seems plausible that the three were in touch earlier, possibly before *State Park*.32 Kinsey was so intrigued by the photographs of the PaJaMa trio, and especially by the images of French and Cadmus in various stages of undress and foreplay, that he asked the two men to provide copies of fourteen PaJaMa images, most from the late 1930s, for his developing archive of erotic materials that could be used in homosexual masturbation exercises (Figs. 24 and 25).33

Operating in a country that banned homosexuality in every aspect of life, including behind closed doors, French found refuge in a tight New York City circle of gay and bisexual friends, many of whom supported his art emotionally and financially. Fire Island, as noted above, also offered comfort, companionship and community; the first gay “Cherry Grovers” came of

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31 This quote is from Endres, p. 4.
32 I discussed French’s connection with Kinsey during a September 2016 trip to visit Mark Cole, curator of American art at the Cleveland Museum of Art. He broached the notion that the three may have been in touch by the time *State Park* was painted, an idea that provided some additional justification for considering the sexual allusions in the work and others of the same period.
age in the 1920s and 1930s, and many were, like both French and Cadmus initially, graphic designers, theater lovers or actors. At the far margins of metropolitan city life and its strictures on conformity, the Cadmus-Tooker-French circle found opportunities on Fire Island for social and sexual escape as well as a soothing place to work and to explore ideas for paintings.\textsuperscript{34} Indeed, A. Hyatt Mayor, former curator of prints at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, coined the term “Fire Island School” to identify French, Tooker and Cadmus, whom he noted were linked by style and iconographies and had “shared interests in exploring homoerotic themes.”\textsuperscript{35} Some of these relationships also had professional overtones beyond those noted above. Bisexual writer, art critic and ballet impresario Kirstein, one of French’s patrons, commissioned French to design the stage backdrops and twenty-one costumes for his new 1938 ballet, \textit{Billy the Kid}, still extant and visible in the archives of the Museum of Modern Art (Figs. 26 and 27). Another artistic luminary, Tennessee Williams, honored a request by French to pose nude for a series of photographs in French’s studio (Fig. 28).\textsuperscript{36} And Monroe Wheeler, Wescott’s longtime partner, was also important, arranging French’s first solo exhibition in 1939, at the Julien Levy Gallery, and including French in two prestigious MoMA exhibitions organized under his supervision. Meanwhile, Wescott lobbied for a federal grant for French. And Lynes, in addition to his photographs for the PaJaMa group and his 1939 nude series with French and Cadmus, participated in other projects with the artist. French painted a trio of full-length nude portraits of his friends Wheeler, Wescott and Lynes (Fig. 29). These alliances, linking professional and


\textsuperscript{36} Jared French, 1905-1988, 112.
personal interests, were certainly a great boon to French’s morale and to the artistic opportunities he sought and procured.

French in the 1930s and early 1940s had given birth to an innovative project in PaJaMa that would allow him to work out ideas for paintings while satisfying some of his erotic needs; he had found emotional support through literature and social networks for his physical and emotional bonds with men; and he had found ways, still not entirely understood, to love both Cadmus and to partner with Margaret Hoening — all factors that factor into his painting, State Park. Outside this circle, as we shall see in more detail in Chapter 2, lay, on one hand, a hostile, homophobic world and, as well, new magazines that celebrated the male physique in ways that must have reassured French.
Chapter 2: Legal, Psychiatric and Social Contexts for State Park

*State Park* must be interpreted against the backdrop of a series of pressures and interests that, together, deeply influenced French. Most important among these were the societal and legal strictures against homosexuality. At the same time, the appearance in the United States in the 1930s of several works by Carl Jung, the Swiss psychiatrist, as well as early interpretations and explanations of Jung’s work by others in the years leading up to *State Park*, are likely to have played an important role in French’s works of the 1940s. The first part of this chapter explores the former group of influences. The second part turns to the relevance of Jung to two works painted by French, one in 1943 and another in 1946, arguably the most productive period of the artist’s career and the latter the same year as *State Park*.

As we have seen, in the later 1930s and 1940s, French was successful in integrating himself within a culturally advanced circle of friends and associates who also identified and lived as homosexuals. And no doubt this mutual support and fellowship was crucial for French as an artist. But at the time he set out to become an artist, the hostility in America towards homosexuality cannot be overestimated. From a purely legal perspective, prior to 1962, homosexuality was essentially illegal because sodomy was a felony in every state, punished by a lengthy term of imprisonment and/or hard labor. In that year, the Model Penal Code (MPC), developed by the American Law Institute to promote uniformity among the states as they modernized their statutes, struck a compromise that removed consensual sodomy from its criminal code while making it a crime to solicit for sodomy. Illinois moved first in 1962 to remove criminal penalties for consensual sodomy. Only by 2002 had thirty-six states repealed their sodomy laws or their courts overturned them. The harshest penalties remained in Idaho,
where a person convicted of sodomy could earn a life sentence. Indeed, not until 2003 did the U.S. Supreme Court in Lawrence v. Texas strike down the Texas same-sex sodomy law, ruling that this private sexual conduct is protected by the liberty rights implicit in the due process clause of the United States Constitution.\(^{37}\)

Individual municipalities, including New York, had an array of ways to punish homosexuals. And sometimes, even small communities took private actions against them. Indeed, an incident at Saltaire on Fire Island might have provided some of the impetus for the scene in State Park. According to an account relayed in 1981 to Rutgers University art historian Jeffrey Wechsler by Wescott, the novelist and Jared French’s sponsor for many years, a number of “middle class, prim and bourgeois” landowners, who had seen private land at Saltaire converted to public land and did not wish to associate with French’s circle of homosexual artists and authors, hired security guards to keep the beach safe.\(^{38}\) The undesirable “type of people” were artists and writers who might wish to bathe in the nude, or be (by the residents’ standards) too rowdy or of inappropriate sexual preference.\(^{39}\) This incident occurred just before French conceived the idea for State Park.

The painting does not literally illustrate the incident. The lifeguard is not a security guard; the pugilist in the background has no characteristic suggesting that he is homosexual; and the family does not seem to be in the least bit disturbed by the presence of the two men. But in interpreting the painting, we will need to keep in mind the ways in which homosexual society


\(^{38}\) This incident was related by Wescott to Wechsler in 1981.

\(^{39}\) This information is provided in Greta Berman and Jeffrey Wechsler, Realism and Realities: The Other Side of American Painting, 1940-1960, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1981, 26 and in footnote 62 on page 179.
was shunned by the mainstream regime, and what that might have meant for French when he conceived of the scene during his Saltaire period, which spanned a decade from the late 1930s.

On the larger world stage, persecution of homosexuals in Nazi Germany included imprisonment, castrations, purges of gay clubs and bars in Berlin and sometimes, as within the Nazi party, murder. Gay men and, to a lesser extent, lesbians, were two of the numerous groups targeted by the Nazis and were ultimately among the Holocaust victims. Beginning in 1933, gay organizations were banned, scholarly books about homosexuality, and sexuality in general, were burned, and homosexuals within the Nazi Party itself were murdered. Thousands of homosexuals were incarcerated in Nazi concentration camps. The death rate of homosexuals in the camps may have been as high as 60 percent.\[40\] This is worth mentioning because French would certainly have heard news reports of the atrocities by 1937.\[41\] In the concentration camps, homosexuals were identified by badges in the form of pink triangles, to which French alludes with his coded motif of pink triangles made by the ribs of the umbrella in State Park; World War II had ended just one year prior to the completion of State Park.\[42\]

Coincident with legal proscriptions against homosexuality were psychiatric and medical diagnoses that viewed it as a “sexual illness” or disease to be eliminated. The American Psychiatric Association did not remove homosexuality from its official Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) until 1973. Especially in the United States, the

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\[42\] Richard Plant. The Pink Triangle: The Nazi War Against Homosexuals. New York: Henry Holt, 1988, 175. Plant notes that historians of the Holocaust estimate that during the Third Reich at least ninety thousand homosexuals were arrested, more than fifty thousand were sent to prison and between ten and fifteen thousand ended up in concentration camps, where they were identified by pink triangles.
idea that some forms of homosexuality were caused by hormonal imbalances was widely accepted before World War II. To “cure” homosexuality, some physicians gave rectal injections to change hormones and practiced aversion therapies involving electroshock, castrations, lobotomies, and torture drugs.43 This, too, was part of the world in which Jared French lived, and which made the situation of gay men so fraught. Such anxieties undoubtedly contributed to the orchestrated strangeness of State Park.

Alongside the medical demonization and victimization of homosexuality, there were other currents that provided some validation of same-sex love. Among these were homoerotic photographs in magazines and other publications, which underwent a slow evolution in the twentieth century. In the 1920s, magazines such as Physical Culture, highlighting what was called physique photography, grew dramatically in popularity (Fig. 30). And, in 1945, just one year before State Park was finished, gay filmmaker and photographer pioneer Bob Mizer founded Athletic Model Guild (AMG) and published the first so-called “beefcake” magazine with mostly-nude, all-male photographs. These magazines, at the time of State Park’s completion, used the pretense of exercise and fitness as their raison d’etre. They included images that positioned the gazing viewer at the crotch or backside of a muscular male. Such magazines highlighted men at the beach, and also often depicted men boxing, wrestling and engaged in other pugilistic poses (Figs. 31-33). In a popular form, then, the homosexual desire that is artfully enacted in some of the PaJaMa photographs began to receive popular currency in such magazines. And in State Park, with the inclusion of both the lean pugilist and the beefy lifeguard, both of whom are at the ready to take on hidden antagonists, French possibly alludes, albeit obliquely, to the phenomenon. Yet the publication of male nudes in magazines was illegal

at mid-century. Not until 1962 in *MANual Enterprises v. Day* did the U.S. Supreme Court rule that magazines consisting largely of photographs of nude or near-nude male models were no longer to be considered obscene within the meaning of federal postal statutes.

All of this raises the question of censorship of homoerotic themes in art at the time. We must keep in mind that there is a very clear line between public works, to be examined in the next chapter, and private works, like the Lynes’ photographs or the work of PaJaMa, made for friends and networks of friends. Cadmus’s tenderly wrought portrait of French, *Jerry*, is a perfect example of the latter (Fig. 11).44 It depicts French from above, in bed, in a half-length close-up, with a friendly, somewhat inquisitive expression directed upward towards the viewer. Cadmus conveys delight in the physical beauty of his subject, with his handsome, pleasant face; lean, muscular build; long, elegant fingers; tanned skin; light reddish hair; relaxed pose; and the academic perfection of the drawing. Surrounding the figure in the sheets’ soft-looking, ample folds adds to the image’s sensuality, and the tight cropping augments its intimacy. Between the fingers of his left hand, Jerry holds the place in his book, clearly identified as James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. Besides referring to his friend’s love of books, the then-outlawed status of the book may also allude to the subject’s sexual freedom.

The portrait was not published until 1984, fifty-three years after its creation, in line with French’s insistence on keeping the nature of his relationship with Cadmus private. Cadmus honored that wish for decades after the men had split up in 1961.45 That French was open to the creation of the picture in the first place and simultaneously insisted that it be shielded from public view suggests that while he felt privately comfortable with his sexuality, he was

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44 The first authorized American edition of James Joyce’s *Ulysses* was published by Random House in January 1934.
45 *Jerry* was first reproduced in Lincoln Kirstein, *Paul Cadmus* (New York: Rizzoli, 1984), 11.
concerned about maintaining a respectable, safe place in a larger society that deemed his sexuality and behavior sick, criminal, and taboo.

Art such as this portrait became a means of asserting identity and liberation, as well as friendship and exceptional trust. It became a kind of currency among friends, lovers, and supporters, describing a community. This pertains as well to the daring and erotic beach photography of the PaJaMa project, and to the series of homoerotic pictures of Cadmus and French, discussed earlier, that were shot by George Platt Lynes in the late 1930s. Notably, popular magazines such as Life and Town and Country published images of Cadmus in the 1930s, but he was always clothed. Lynes’ most erotic photographs of the two artists, so “driven by the phallic passion,” to quote their friend Wescott, would not be publicly exhibited until 1993 in a show of painted and photographic portraits of Cadmus called “The Artist as Subject” in New York.46

While the psychiatric community in America, writ large, was pathologizing homosexuality, the work of the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung took a more nuanced view. Jung did not write at any length about homosexuality, but he did not consider homosexuality an aberrant behavioral issue worthy of diagnosis; rather, he averred that same-sex love developed when one identified more closely with the parent of the opposite sex and hence had less desire for union with that known emotional type. Such an individual would have more interest in connecting with the “unknown other,” which in such a case would be a member of the same sex.47 Jung’s ideas would come to greatly influence French in such later works as Animus/Anima (Fig. 34) from 1968-69. This and other drawings directly utilize the terminology of Jung; as important, in their

47 An excellent explanation of the ideas of the “unknown other” can be found in Chapter 3 of Jungian Psychology Unplugged: My Life as an Elephant (Studies in Jungian Psychology by Jungian Analysts), by Darryl Sharp, Toronto: Inner City Books, 1988.
melding of Surrealist iconography with homoerotic fantasy, they are a sure-footed foray by the artist into his most primal and honest impulses. Indeed, the notions of anima/animus as the underpinning of healthy psychological development – namely, every woman has an unconscious masculine side, the *animus*, and vice versa, the *anima* in men – must have been both comforting and fascinating to French.

In 1977, in an interview, French is said to have stated, “it’s all in Jung” when asked for an explanation of the imagery in his art. In connection with this rare recorded statement, two issues must be broached at the outset. The first concerns when, and the degree to which, French had access to the ideas of Jung. The full twenty-one volume *Collected Works* of Jung were not published in America until 1959, but several of his early works were published in the 1930s, and Jungian analysts were working in New York then, too. Jackson Pollock, for example, was among the artists treated by Jungian analysts – Pollock visited analyst Joseph Henderson for eighteen months between 1939 and 1940. *Archetypes* was first published in America in 1939, as part of *The Integration of the Personality*, and it seems likely that French would have read the essays in this book. Several other works by Jung and interpretations of his theories by colleagues close to him were also available to French. So, the answer to this basic consideration is that yes, French could well have had access to Jung’s ideas in English.

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48 This story is related in Footnotes 143 and 148 in Wechsler, *Realism and Realities*, but the collector is not identified. The date of the conversation is given as August 18, 1977. Cole argues that the collector likely was referring to French’s late works, which are anthropomorphic abstractions.


The second issue concerns whether Jung was important to French by the 1940s. The answer to this is very difficult to determine, given the absence of more complete statements by the artist or those in his circle who knew French well, and the difficulties of correlating the often opaque imagery and words of Jung and French. A worthy project then, but one well outside the purview of this thesis, would be a focused attempt at aligning imagery in the full corpus of French’s oeuvre with Jungian ideas potentially available to him, in order to see if persuasive connections can be made.

Not surprisingly, scholars disagree as to whether Jung was relevant to French at mid-century. Cole, by far the most thorough scholar of French, states in his PhD dissertation that he does not believe Jung’s ideas were important for the subject matter of French’s works at mid-century. Cole finds the ascription of the relevance of such ideas to all of French’s works irresponsible and thinks that the statement referred only to late works, or even to a single, late work. However, Cole does not thoroughly explore the influence of Jung specifically on French’s imagery. Nancy Grimes, meanwhile, writes that in 1940, French began to read “in depth” the writings of Jung, whose Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, she asserts, “had a profound impact on [French’s] work.” Yet Grimes cites no source for her bold and seemingly conclusive assertion.

It is critical, in studying the potential for Jungian influence in French’s works, to consider only Jungian theories published in America by mid-century, which is by no means anywhere in addition to authoring numerous essays and books that likely made their way to French, Jung was an artist, and he illustrated a number of his writings with diagrams and sometimes with figurative drawings and paintings. Despite being nominated as the central work in Jung’s oeuvre, his Red Book, created in calligraphic pen, multicolored ink and gouache paint, was not published or made otherwise accessible for study until 2009.

Cole dispenses with the idea of Jungian influence in French’s mid-century works on pages 275-278 of his PhD dissertation, noting that several authors who have ascribed this influence have not applied the ideas to specific works analyzed first-hand.

See Nancy Grimes, Jared French’s Myths, pp. XIII-XIV.
near the full corpus of Jung available today. This thesis here considers application of Jungian ideas to several mid-century pictures and returns to Jung’s relevance to *State Park* in Chapter 5. The first work that suggests Jungian connections is *Music*, a 1943 picture in egg tempera on panel, set, like so many of French’s works, at the beach (Fig. 35). At left, a blond woman in footless blue tights, presented in profile, plays a blue flute. She kneels, facing a metal stanchion that holds vertical yellow strings supporting a graph-like pattern of opposing yellow strings. Her arms block her breasts, which would otherwise be visible, as she wears no top. Opposite her is a dark-skinned man, back to the viewer. He kneels in a crouching frog-like pose before a cylindrical vat, behind which appears another stanchion with strings, to each of which is tied a white seashell. The centerpiece for the Jungian interpretation is the figure between them, a standing man whose skin, hair, and skin-tight shirt, just long enough to cover his genitals, are entirely cast in bright yellow tones. He holds two shining objects, seashells again, on strings: one is a round shape that alludes to vaginal or womb-like forms, the other is cylindrical and long, like a phallus. In the alchemical philosophy that Jung described and likened to modern-day psychoanalysis, yellowness, or the gold phase, is the one of the four major stages of personal transformation. In his scheme, Citrinitas or yellowness stands for a type of dawning of the solar light inherent in one’s being, a type of serene internal balance (to be sure, Jung affiliated Citrinitas with the wise old man or woman archetype, and this man is not old). Two other phases, arguably alluded to in *Music*, are the nigredo phase, or shadow, possibly represented by the dark-skinned man, and the albedo phase, representing whiteness, and seen in the blond-toned woman. Also present in the image is the Jungian *animus/anima* concept, described above, in which male tendencies are present in all females and female tendencies present in all males: in *Music*, the man interacts with an open vessel, a metaphor Jungians might read for the womb, while the
woman plays the phallic-like flute. Both individuals reveal the integration of sexual opposites. So, while the subject matter of the picture in the image is music, a topic of universal relevance and widespread interest, and while the image also alludes to the individual freedoms posited by such authors as Forster, the much more private iconography suggests Jung.  

Another work from 1943, *Homesickness* (Fig. 36), also carries a Jungian thrust, this one exploring the most foundational of all of Jung’s ideas, that of the collective unconscious. Just as man has evolved in his physical self, so, Jung argues, is his emotional evolution dependent on archaic roots shared by all human beings. Jung explained the idea in a straightforward way in 1933:

> By this term I designate an unconscious psychic activity present in all human beings which not only gives rise to symbolical pictures today, but was the source of all similar products of the past. Such pictures spring from—and satisfy—a natural need. It is as if, through these pictures, we bring to expression that part of the psyche which reaches back into the primitive past and reconcile it with present-day consciousness, thus mitigating its disturbing effects upon the latter.

In *Homesickness*, another beach scene, a tanned man with white hair, skin-tight pants rolled down at the waist and up from the knees, stares into a light maroon sky; far in the distance sit a series of stylized white pyramids in white clouds. The man’s arms reach out in the shape of a cross, fingers spread wide. He has taken a small step forward. The imagery suggests a yearning for the past in the allusion to Ancient Egypt. The sea itself is also, in Jung, a metaphor for the unconscious mind.

Also strongly Jungian in presentation is a 1946 work by French, *The Sea* (Fig. 27), that alludes to the idea of the “shadow,” which Jung described as a disowned subpersonality hidden away from consciousness. Along the surface of calm blue water is a gently smiling and strongly muscled white man, his hands and feet propped in poses that suggest a highly stylized form of...
swimming. He looks directly at the viewer, wide-eyed but calm. In the water below him is another man, who shares the same red hair and facial structure, but is now dark-skinned, black, his hands and feet flat, his face expressing terror. This man, whose right thumb is propped in the position of an erect penis but who otherwise seems to lack genitals, seems suspended in the cerulean sea. He stares at the viewer wide-eyed and panicked. Both men are naked. The “shadow” surfaces in dreams, Jung argued, where it appears sinister and threatening, the same sex as the dreamer, usually a member of a different nation, color or race. Jung considered the shadow to be alien and hostile and to possess qualities opposite to those of the persona; the persona balanced the antisocial characteristics of the shadow. But the shadow also holds tremendous creative potential, Jung argued. The man beneath the surface of the water bears all the hallmarks of the “shadow.” Once again, then, while the subject matter and the title of the work, The Sea, carry universal relevance, the iconography and imagery can be interpreted as specifically Jungian, a private visual interpretation that French created to apply the ideas of a thinker he admired to a theme, the swimmer, that was known to all.

Relevant to a Jungian interpretation of The Sea is a direct quote from Jung’s Psychology and Religion, published in the United States in 1938 and surely available to French. Here, Jung invokes the metaphor of ascent and descent from the sea, not referencing the shadow per se, but commending to the reader the need for individual development to enhance the societal collective. Jung writes:

In as much as collectivities are mere accumulations of individuals, their problems are also accumulations of individual problems. One set of people identifies itself with the superior man and cannot descend, and the other set identifies itself with the inferior man and wants to reach to the surface. Such problems are never solved by legislation or tricks. They are solved only by a general change of attitude. And this change does not begin

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with propaganda or mass meetings, or with violence. It begins with a change in the individual himself. It will continue as a transformation of the individual’s personal likes and dislikes, of his outlooks on life and of his values, and only the accumulation of such individual changes will produce a collective solution.57 (emphasis added)

Surrounded at mid-century on the one hand by the hate of homophobia but on the other by the embrace of the male body for public consumption in the new genre of “beefcake” magazine, French absorbed all manner of stimuli to express a world view in State Park. He plumbed a variety of sources to shape and accommodate his philosophy, among them writers who opaquely broached tricky sociological conundrums like homosexuality as well as thinkers like Jung, on the world stage wrestling with grand endeavors like the interpretation of the human psyche. French had, a decade earlier, confirmed his deep interest in Old Masters, concretized in his works as a muralist for the federal Works Progress Administration and to American Scene pictures. To these endeavors, we turn now to understand just how important was the classical male nude and its homoerotic expression to French’s conception of State Park.

Chapter 3: Artistic Contexts for *State Park I: Mural Projects*

Jared French was among the most circumspect painters of the 20th century. He never publicly articulated any kind of program or statement for his art. He never granted a press interview about his work or intentions. In one of only two brief statements that he made about his artistic output, he noted simply, in 1943, at the age of thirty-eight, that he could not remember a time when “I haven’t drawn and painted.”58 (See Appendix for the full text of both statements).

Absent from this simple, declarative comment is the equally important but unstated message that surfaces from any reading of French’s oeuvre in the run-up to the painting of *State Park*: namely, that paintings of men, especially men in erotically-charged poses, always constituted a running thread in his art. It will be essential, therefore, to examine *State Park* in this context through some of the artistic explorations and works of art leading up to it. At the same time, as we see in this chapter, French’s art underwent certain marked changes in the later 1930s that also throw light on the painting.

The link between homosexual desire and the long academic tradition of painting beautiful male nudes was of certain interest to French. During his two-year sojourn in Europe with Cadmus from 1931 to 1933, for instance, French found many such models in the Old Masters, and he both sketched these directly so he might create paintings that borrow from them stylistically. Specifically, French devoted himself attentively to the male nude in Quattrocento painting. French found a particularly worthy source of inspiration in the art of Piero della Francesca. From Francesca’s fresco cycle *The History of the True Cross* in the church of San Francesco in Arezzo, French quoted a figure from the *Death of Adam* (Fig. 38) in a small pencil and ink drawing of 1927, which he titled *Back View, Nude Leaning on a Pole* (Fig. 39). In

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selecting this figure, French reveals his attraction to the ideal male nude in a pose that both echoed classical models and suggested same-sex desire. French would also find stylistic inspiration from Piero in the subject matter of his first painting in the Quattrocento medium of egg-yolk tempera on panel, Washing the White Blood off Daniel Boone (Fig. 40), a subject to which we will turn shortly.

In his projects of the mid-1930s, French continued to stake out an interest in the classicizing male nude, often with homosocial overtones, that allowed the artist to explore the intersectionality of nudity and his own sexual identity. This topic bears upon State Park because it acts as an early indicator of the artist’s unstated but interior sexual truths. Soon after his return from Europe, French and Cadmus signed on to paint murals for U.S. post offices through the Mural and Easel Painting Section of the Public Works of Art Project initiated by the Department of the Treasury in 1933.

One cannot underestimate the importance of so-called “Section” projects to artists in the years of the New Deal, when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was compelled to revitalize the nation in the wake of the Great Depression. Between 1934 and 1943, more than twelve hundred original works of art were installed in post offices nationwide.59 In Pennsylvania alone, one of the states for which French competed successfully for mural work, eighty-eight works were completed, placing that state second only to New York in its number of Post Office murals. The walls of the thousands of public works projects undertaken during the New Deal might easily have gone blank but for the lobbying efforts of Philadelphia artist George Biddle, a friend and former Groton School classmate of Roosevelt.

The Section’s guidelines for commissions were straightforward. Marxist points of view were not to be tolerated. Rather, artists were to paint in the so-called “American Scene” style. Section administrators did not clearly define the term. But they forbade abstract and European-style modernism and championed Midwestern regionalists Grant Wood, Thomas Hart Benton and John Steuart Curry. The topic of “work” itself was a highly desirable subject; so were images depicting architectural progress, economic growth and history of the nation. Taboo were topics of civil unrest such as strikes, uprisings and warfare, although there was one notable exception to the latter: wars or skirmishes involving Native Americans. Women were not specifically mentioned as desirable or undesirable, and occasionally, we see do women as heroines of historic events. Mural images were expected to have local appeal and thus to earn endorsement at the study stage by key leaders in the communities where they were to be displayed.

Pennsylvania had a number of favorite sons who had already offered the public examples of art regarded as ideal in terms of subjects and aesthetics. Some of the most enduring images of the Commonwealth’s history—William Penn’s treaty with the Indians, George Washington crossing the Delaware River, and the delegates’ signing of the United States Constitution in Philadelphia—were created by artists who had lived or worked in Pennsylvania. Folk artists such as Edward Hicks a century earlier had created charming farmstead scenes recalling nineteenth-century Pennsylvania. Two generations earlier, Thomas Eakins, considered by many

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60 A December 2015 paperback, Women, Art and the New Deal, by Katherine Adams and Michael Keene promises a survey of thousands of women artists who worked for the U.S. government during the WPA era. But the few scant reviews of the work consider it a thin treatment that does not sufficiently focus on murals or painters, instead looking at a much wider swath of “artists” such as composers, journalists, dramatists and choreographers. See, for instance, Heather Slania’s May 2016 review in Art Libraries Society of North America. [https://www.arlisna.org/publications/reviews/920-women-art-and-the-new-deal](https://www.arlisna.org/publications/reviews/920-women-art-and-the-new-deal), accessed September 1, 2017.

at the time to be America’s greatest painter, had been an instructor at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia. Eakins had exhorted his students to “study their own country and to portray its life and types.”

It is against this backdrop of the Section’s guidelines and one aspect of the country’s artistic heritage, then, that one may consider how bold a homosocial statement was French’s 1938 mural for the Plymouth, Pennsylvania post office, *Lunchtime with the Early Coal Miners* (Fig. 41). The mural offers a seemingly innocent depiction of miners lunching at a stream. But we notice immediately its articulation of the sculpted male physique and the mannered poses that have nothing to do with the work’s title. In a landscape format, four handsome, fair-skinned, well-built young men are shown tightly packed into the front and center of the pictorial space. Three of them are bare from the waist up, and the fourth wears an open shirt. They reveal taut chests, firm backs and muscled arms. Each Michelangelesque figure holds a prop – a towel, a hunk of bologna, a vessel to be washed in the stream – all of which seem pretexts for the artful display of their bodies. The luscious pastel color palette is reminiscent of Renaissance frescoes and adds to the sensuous, pleasurable, highly aestheticized look of the image. Nothing in the painting suggests the hard work of coal mining.

In the background are three more bare-chested men, two working, and one nude standing unselfconsciously in a coal barge in the deep background (Fig. 42). This last figure has no reason for being in the scene other than to defy the Section proscriptions on nudity and to signal the artist’s love of the naked male physique. Needless to say, Section authorities would have been enraged by the nude had they known. Section Director Edward Bruce was emphatic that nudity was never to be allowed in a government mural. Bruce’s officials were quick to advise artists to

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remove or tone down anything that might be deemed risqué. “Anybody who wanted to paint a nude ought to have his head examined!” he declared. In fact, rules for Section projects were fluid. For instance, after allowing non-U.S. citizens to participate -- Arshile Gorky was one of the most successful artists in the Federal Art Project -- the U.S. government in 1937 announced that all WPA workers had to be legal citizens. The norms on nudity, too, were to some extent subject to the interpretation and opinion of local officials.

Evidently, French could not resist testing the implied boundaries, and he made his surreptitious move with deft political skill. The nude boat pilot at the right rear of the work went undetected because the offending image appeared too small to be noticed in the final eight-by-ten-inch photographic studies French sent off for approval. Hence, Lunchtime became the only example of full-frontal nudity in a United States post office. The Section did not demand a redo or a touchup; indeed, it seems likely the Section failed to see it, even in the finished mural.

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64 In fact, certain kinds of nudes were acceptable. In her book, Wall-to-Wall America: A Cultural History of Post-Office Murals in the Great Depression (University of Minnesota Press: 1982), Karal Ann Marling, on pages 249-259, offers a detailed presentation of the controversy around the vast canvas, Dangers of the Mail, by Frank Mechau. This canvas includes faceless, nude women being scalped by Native-Americans, including one naked woman down on all fours, a barely clothed Indian man standing over her, grasping her hair and yanking back her head. The mural was ultimately deemed acceptable, Marling recounts, largely because the woman is faceless. The mural has been moved from its original location in a Washington, D.C. post office to an office of the Environmental Protection Agency and is today challenged primarily for its depiction of native-Americans.

65 My attempts to locate a specific set of written rules for WPA mural projects have not been successful. Community and Postal Service review at the design phase of each mural project was a key component of the approval process, and as Marling’s book makes clear, most concerns were worked out in the ensuing back-and-forth for each project. A series of anecdotes that explore the guidelines on nudity can be found in Chapter 5 of Marling’s book, 242-292. This chapter makes clear that nudity could occasionally be included in ancillary and background figures as long as they were not described in a specific way.

66 Lembeck, “Rediscovering the People's Art: New Deal Murals in Pennsylvania’s Post Offices.” Paragraph 22. Other examples of nudity can be found in post office murals, however they tend to be stylized figures.
Nothing in the government record about this mural suggests otherwise.\footnote{For this thesis, I reviewed the file on the Plymouth mural and found no mention of the nude barge pilot.} And, in her 1982 book, \textit{Wall-to-wall America}, Karal Ann Marling notes that when mural projects in Richmond, Virginia were under discussion – Richmond was to be French’s next mural project – French “had a blameless record so far.”\footnote{Marling, page 283.} On the other hand, Cadmus, Marlin writes, “always bore watching, even though he had promised to behave.”\footnote{Marling, page 283.} 

The community, in fact, embraced the mural, according to correspondence Cole cites written by the local Postmaster to French, a letter that the artist described as his “first real piece of fan mail.”\footnote{Cole, \textit{Jared French}, quoting “Jared French to Edward Rowan, 13 March 1938, record group 121, entry 133, box 10, Records of the Public Buildings Service, NA.” Footnote 35, page 165.} Of note, the mural’s bold statement about male beauty and the beauty of art is now a source of great pride in the town of Plymouth. There evidently has been neither need nor wish to see beyond that general appreciation of well-composed, large-scale figurative art in a classicizing vein applied to seemingly homespun American subjects, a widespread sensibility that French must have understood.

Nevertheless, French was impelled from his earliest years as a painter to signal to a different kind of knowing audience that he was both observant of, and inspired by, the sexualized male physique is clear from another mural, \textit{Cavalrymen Crossing the River (Stuart’s Raiders at the Swollen Ford)}, this one in the Parcel Post Building in Richmond, Virginia (Fig. 43). Of the Richmond mural, at the time of its creation, French merely stated, “I have tried to give the sense of danger, suspense and courage that must have attended the event. I believe there is nothing in the sketch to offend either northern or southern sentiment.”\footnote{The letters between French and Edward Rowan, Superintendent for the Treasury Section of Painting and Sculpture, are reprinted on pages 440-441 of Richard Meyer’s essay, “On Queer American Art and}
mention is made of the artist’s description of the physical beauty and attraction of the young cavalrymen.

The subject of the Richmond mural is Confederate soldiers preparing to cross a stream to flee advancing Union forces, the climax of an historic event featuring an attempt to literally encircle McClellan’s Union Army. The historic record French likely consulted proved that the daring maneuver had nearly been aborted at the raging Chickahominy River. Their mission in jeopardy, the desperate troops apparently peeled off their uniforms and swam their horses to safety. There seems little doubt that French, a student of history as well as of painting, could have found any number of opportunities to paint Civil War events connected to Richmond and could have described the McClellan event without recourse to nudity. But in a preparatory sketch, he depicted the soldiers in various states of undress (Fig. 44), and in the finished mural great attention is paid to the men’s physiques, many of them being bare-chested and most of the costumes tight and revealing. He could, of course, had in mind any number of civic projects from the canon conjoining the male nude and military heroism in the classical tradition, and used that as justification for his choice of an aspect of the story to represent, as well as the figural style. Consider, for instance, Jacques-Louis David’s Leonidas at Thermopylae (Fig. 45) or his Patroclus (Fig. 46).  

In the preliminary sketch, French proposed at the center of the canvas a completely nude full-length man, seen in a three-quarter view from behind, hands at his waist, head turned to face three of his compatriots behind him. Other nudes move vigorously through the water in the background. Adding a further homoerotic slant to the project, French also created a triptych with

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72 Other classical and academic presentations of the nude might also be adduced, among them: Antonio Del Pollaiuolo’s engraving, Battle of the Nudes (1465-76) or his oil picture, Martyrdom of St. Sebastian (1475, National Gallery, London); or Anne-Louis Girodet’s Sleep of Endymion (1791, The Louvre).
two thin vertical panels to left and right of the main one (Figs. 47 A-B). Depicted on the left panel is the protagonist of the planned reconnaissance, J.E.B. Stuart, kneeling on one leg and with an intense gaze seemingly directed at the nude and his companions. On the right is a standing Confederate cavalry officer, John Pelham, in profile, right hand on right knee, staring once again directly into the central panel from the other direction.

Although it was standard academic procedure to work up a group of figures from the nude to the clothed, the Section of the Treasury supervising the project issued a stern admonition to French that the figures in the final image must be clothed. The supervisor might have felt the need to issue this warning precisely because of the nude figure in the foreground of French’s preliminary drawing and the nudes in the water, especially since the subject matter did not expressly warrant nudity. While the incident depicted in the mural was deemed acceptable, “there unquestionably would be offense to the emphasis of the nudes,” Edward Beatty Rowan, assistant chief of the Fine Arts Section, wrote to French. “You have painted enough nudes in your life so that the painting of several more or less should not matter in your artistic career.”73 French capitulated and the cavalry put on their pants. But he still managed to reveal the men’s bodies in ways that strike us today, at least, as more explicit than the subject required. He even included his own full-length self-portrait, the thin mustache a giveaway, and included his lover’s half-length image in the middle ground, this time the flat-top haircut sealing the likeness to Paul Cadmus.74 The addition of clothing, in fact, does not remove hints of homoeroticism in the work. However, without the nudity, the foreground is notably toned down.

One additional mural project of seven panels, sadly all now lost, show further French’s dedication to the male physique during his mural career, in which he often supported his

73 This incident is described, albeit with different emphasis, in Marling, 283-286. Marling cites the letter in Footnote 109, p. 292 of her book, as Rowan to French, April 13, 1938.
74 Lembeck. “Rediscovering the People's Art: New Deal Murals in Pennsylvania’s Post Offices.”
presentation of the classical figure with props that heighten the sexual dimension of his presentations. The panel project is also important for a reading of State Park; bold for his time against societal norms, critics heavily maligned the series by attacking what they perceived as homosexual content, and as a result French likely felt an even greater need to hide his sexual orientation.

The panels were created under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration’s Federal Art Project, New York City branch, for the New York State Vocational Institution in West Coxsackie, New York. Coxsackie operated as a reformatory prison for delinquent teenage males from 1935 through the 1970s. French titled the series, “The Origins of Food,” and the panels were intended to be hung in the dining hall. The prison for young men was designed on progressive principles, and it also served a reformatory function, providing inmates with a program of academic and vocational education, including industrial training in such fields as agriculture. Hence, the program for the project fit the penal premise of the institution itself. The panels included The Sea (1936-37), The Orchard (1937), The Far West (Fig. 49), The Tropics I (1938), The Farm (Fig. 48), The Tropics II (1938), and The Middle West (1938-39). All that remains of the series are black-and-white archival images of six of the seven panels, three of which were used in brochure copy for an exhibition.

But a two-pronged controversy surrounded the work. First, there was the question of their homoeroticism. Disturbing to some reviewers who saw the murals before their intended

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75 The facility now is a maximum-security prison for 900 inmates; its earlier reformatory principles have been abandoned.
77 Julian Levy exhibition catalogue, page 3.
78 At DC Moore Gallery, which manages a portion of the artistic estate of Jared French, including the portion that covers the 1930s thru 1950s, I was given permission in mid-August 2016 to pore through the Jared French archive for four hours, but none of these images surfaced.
installation when they debuted at French’s first solo exhibition, at the Julien Levy Gallery in early 1939, was the proximity of sexualized men to one another in panel after panel. This can be seen in *The Farm (Vegetables)*, for example, with its three farmhands, two of them bare-chested and one in a skimpy undershirt. “Mr. French’s American male types will possess much more the ensemble gaze of a brothel than a brotherhood,” remarked Parker Tyler in the London Bulletin.\(^7^9\) Especially harsh was Emily Genauer, an art critic and editor for the *New York World Telegram*, who not only maligned the murals but attacked the Americanist interpretation for the works given by Wescott in an essay for the Levy Gallery exhibition catalogue.\(^8^0\) And as Cole points out, representations of subjects such as agriculture and the sea are traditionally represented by female figures, but the male “gender specificity of the murals” is insistent.\(^8^1\) Jonathan Weinberg argues that the murals also may have had another purpose: making homoerotic desire visible to a knowing audience.\(^8^2\) This bold and confident embrace of the male nude, rendered with sensitivity and authenticity, would have been deeply appreciated by French’s circle. Moreover, the murals further provide access to French’s sense of his sexuality that seems to imbue his conception of State Park.

Even so, observation of one or two of the murals is instructive. To quote Weinberg in his essay on male desire and the image of the worker in American art of the 1930s, *The Farm* is “outrageous” in its sexual connotations.\(^8^3\) The viewer is confronted with three young, muscled farmhands against a wood-shingled wall, filling the foreground of the shallow space. The shirtless, broad-chested, deeply tanned man, standing tallest at center and wearing a large, broad-
brimmed straw hat, dominates. His pose is swaggering and designed to show off his magnificent physique. He gazes downward at an ear of corn around which his right hand is tightly wrapped; for an attuned audience, the sexual connotation is clear. The man at left drapes his arm over the central farmhand’s shoulder in what Weinberg reads as a sign of sexual acquiescence. The third farmhand, shirt off, kneels down, tilting his head toward the central farmhand, his eyes almost closed, his face suggesting surrender to intense sensations as he holds up a bunch of small carrots.

On another, seemingly ironic level, The Farm brings to mind the kind of Quattrocento religious art that French saw in Italy. Indeed, the artist’s sincerity of desire to elevate the content of his work through formal parallels to religious works renders hollow any suggestion that the murals be relegated to the pornographic. The large round brim of the central farmhand’s straw hat forms a halo, and the long-handled rake in his left hand recalls countless images of John the Baptist holding a long, thin cross, and who also often appeared as eroticized. The other two men are like flanking devotional figures that one sees in sacra conversazioni. This play on sacred images suggests that French intended the shock value and somewhat outlaw humor in this blatantly same-sex icon, as if he were both tempting and mocking the censors. And with such inter-pictorial references, he reveals his understanding that even in some of the most highly-regarded religious art, there are abundant sexual overtones. As we will see in the case of State Park, French’s adoption of another figural type from art history, the Archaic Greek kouros, provides another reference that allowed him to create an expanded array of associations.

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84 Weinberg, 132.
85 As one precedent, Velazquez had referred to religious painting in his masterpiece, The Triumph of Bacchus (Fig. 50), with its homoerotic overtones and joking challenge to censorious artistic enemies – that is, a case of épater les bourgeois.
Meanwhile, in *The Far West*, another painting for the series, a trio of handsome, seductive cowboys relaxes at a corral. This time the star of the picture is the cowboy at right twirling a lasso over his head; again, the pose is meant for sexual display. At left, a cowboy seen from behind leans against a fence, his hip jutting out provocatively and recalling the nude that French copied from Piero della Francesco’s *Death of Adam* (Figs. 38 and 39). The cowboy at center of the group, meanwhile, kneels like a supplicant, looking up at the lasso-twirler with a gaze of adoration that, again, we frequently encounter in religious paintings.

Only two of French’s murals were displayed at exhibition, and reviews of that 1939 show at the Julien Levy Gallery were scant and largely unkind. “As a student, Jared French ran the whole gamut of drawing the human figure with the most deliberate accuracy. And he hasn’t gotten over it yet,” wrote Jerome Klein for the *New York Post*. “That’s the trouble with [the] government murals he is showing… The fullness of his execution wins respect, but the figures look painfully posed, like groups in a high school historical tableau. Plenty of muscle, and no action.”86 Klein’s commentary is a good example of a viewer preferring to evade the homosexual overtones and revert to neutral but hackneyed criticism about lack of action.

However, perhaps the most important reviewer of the day, the quietly gay Henry McBride, rejoiced at the series, taking it upon himself in a measure of sincere grandiosity to announce French as the important new artist in town, “a pearl of a muralist from a quiet American oyster shell.” McBride boldly suggested that French should be tapped to decorate the then-bare studio wall at Radio City Music Hall where conductor Arturo Toscanini aired nationwide broadcasts, and he averred that French’s murals were a crucial distraction in a bleak week in the impending run-up to the onset of World War II in Europe. “There is going to be a

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howl of protest when these paintings are carried off… and the demand will follow to have Mr. French get instantly busy painting something nice for us,” McBride gushed. French’s high-placed friends, McBride advised, “must get their heads together and decide upon some marvelous and very American subject and choose the building to be decorated.” In the case of both Klein and McBride, there is evasion of the matter of the images’ sexual content. We might speculate that both grasped it to some extent, resulting in a negative review in one case and a positive one in the other.

As rare as reviews of French’s work were, several critics understood the gist of French’s motivation with the mural projects and considered his depictions a ruse. An example is a lengthy, harsh rebuke by the gay British author, Parker Tyler, who, in a review in the Surrealist-aligned *London Bulletin* in 1939, seems intent on outing and humiliating French. First, of French’s figures, he writes, “What, as a whole, are these figures depicted as doing, in the moral rather than the physical sense? Besides working, they are undressing, lounging or apparently just standing on a street corner. Many of them, meaty and muscular – too full to be in the Remington tradition of the spare-limbed cowboy and too soft to be in the Eakins and Remington tradition of angular athleticism – might be idling around a ballet studio, for their bulkiness is of the type produced in the ballet dancer and professional gymnast.” Tyler continues: “The murals cease to be historic and geographic pageants and become formal expressions of certain sentiments and emotional obsessions, not to be detected by innocent students and burghers.” French’s “vitamin B-1 farm boys,” he then adds, “possess much more the ensemble gaze of a brothel than a brotherhood…. In many of the young faces, we see that almost a-mental tractability of sexual sentiment, socially

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87 Henry McBride, “Jared French, a New Muralist: His Wall Paintings Recall Stephen Foster and They Make a Hit,” *The New York Sun*. I located this review on Fultonhistory.org, and the page number and date are not visible.
classifiable, which is a total remove from the virile literary dress of the subjects.”

Tyler then stomps on the exhibition brochure essay by Wescott, the novelist and patron of French’s, saying his “pseudo-proper-minded commentary is revealed as the unholy frost it is.”

Tyler’s reaction, far from that of “innocent students and burghers,” stands out among negative criticisms of French’s work as coming from a knowing insider who doesn’t mince words. Even Tyler, though, cannot come out, so to speak, and use the terms homoerotic or homosexual; instead we get such likely well-understood code phrases as “their bulkiness is of the type produced in the ballet dancer and professional gymnast,” “Vitamin B-1 farm boys” (the vitamin most essential to body building), “brothel,” “sexual sentiment, socially classifiable” and the opposite of “virile.” Relevant to his commentary on French’s work, Tyler was co-author of *The Young and Evil* (1933), which according to Juan Antonio Suárez, “combined experimental modernism with the camp idiom of gay street culture.”

A case, then, of “it takes one to know one,” and of the self-hatred implied by many stigmatized homosexuals when under siege.

Important for the interpretation of *State Park* is the phenomenon of homosexual men adopting some of the loathing almost universally directed against them, and the idea that even among sophisticated people in the arts, homosexuality was almost inevitably cause of strongly ambivalent feelings. Understandable, then, that French, who for the most part—the Vocational Institute series aside—adopted in his art a serious tone, as did his lover Cadmus, felt forced to go visually underground after his mural works of the late 1930s, as he does in *State Park*.

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But soon, things were to change dramatically in French’s art, in his style, technique, and subject matter. The transformation began in 1939 with *Washing the White Blood Off Daniel Boone* (Fig. 40), when French adopted the challenging medium of egg tempera on panel. As Cole has discussed, French was inspired to adopt this archaic medium as a direct result of his close study of early Italian Renaissance panel painters.\(^90\) Egg-yolk tempera is even more demanding than egg tempera; it is less fluid and requires greater control in its preparation and application. To learn the technique, French turned to a book of 1936 that outlined recipes and procedures for working with the medium.\(^91\) The author notes in the introduction that he is attempting to paraphrase for modern audiences the fifteenth-century treatise *Il libro dell’arte* by Cennino d’Andrea Cennini.\(^92\)

With the help of egg tempera, French was to create a certain look – flat, still, hermetic, with clear contours and an emphasis on mythical narratives that would mark his art until his death. *Boone* is his last work that could be even remotely classified as American Scene painting, and in its mysteriousness, it looks ahead to *State Park* and other works of the 1940s. Ultimately, Cadmus was so inspired by the particular pictorial advantages that French found in working with this medium that he, too, adopted it, and soon after, under their tutelage, so did Tooker.

In palette, setting, composition, and the centrality of its main figure, *Washing the White Blood off Daniel Boone* bears similarities to Piero’s *Baptism of Christ* (Fig. 51). Like Piero’s panel, *Washing the White Blood* is painted in tempera (on modern Masonite, not wood, however). Here French substitutes sexualized male figures for religious acolytes, and the lily-white Boone, surrounded by American Indians, replaces Jesus. Compared to the murals French

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\(^90\) Cole, *Jared French*, p. 204.
\(^92\) Daniel V. Thompson, Jr., *The Practice of Tempera Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936), v-vi.
had painted in the decade prior, *Boone* is less obviously sexualized. All six Shawnee depicted are bald-headed and unclothed except for revealing underpants and loincloths. Boone himself wears a low-slung, pale pink loincloth. Notably, the relatively unfamiliar story from Boone’s life that French depicts usually places women in the role of cleansing Boone, but French substitutes beautiful, muscled men. All the Indians look the same, and the washing looks like a sacred ceremony. Not surprisingly, *Washing the White Blood* has been read as the initiation rite of a white homosexual man.\(^{93}\) But here we see French moving ever further away from clear narrative and a male pin-up aesthetic into a kind of Symbolism, a magical, veiled world. As Nancy Grimes has written, “French’s balanced, static system of proportions imbues his figures with a godlike quality that is reinforced by their frontal, immobile poses.”\(^{94}\) Possibly, the washing of the “white blood” indicates a washing away of heterosexual “innocence” into a more primal sexual realm, playing on the perception that indigenous tribes were less fettered by more “civilized” European sexual norms. That is, the depiction of nearly nude men in such close proximity to one another, all engaged in an act of gentle physical touching, suggests indoctrination into a homoerotic club of sorts, a homosexual tribe. The close allusion to a religious work confers legitimacy on French’s effort. No matter French’s intent in his interpretation of the subject, *Washing the White Blood off Daniel Boone* is a clear exploration of exquisite male physiques.

It is important to mention here that French’s use of the nude male figure echoes the practice of a long line of artists in whose works a dedication to classicizing male nudes is

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\(^{93}\) See, for instance, the entry on Jared French in *The Queer Encyclopedia of the Visual Arts*, by Claude Summers, New York: Simon and Schuster. 2012, 145, which describes Boone’s metamorphosis as a “sexual awakening. Surrounded by incredibly muscular, nearly nude male Indians, he stands in the middle of the canvas, arms outstretched, wearing obtusively feminine underwear.” Also consider the description in *ArtNews*, Volume 89, No. 7, September 1990, 159. Nancy Grimes writes: “Washing as sexual initiation is also the subject of French’s rather bizarre *Washing the White Blood from Daniel Boone* (1939) – which conflates homosexuality with themes of exploration, heroism and purification.”

\(^{94}\) Grimes, *Jared French’s Myths*, XII.
inscribed with homosexual desire. The sexual overtones in these works have invariably been overlooked because the underlying subject matter was deemed acceptable. To take just one instance, Thomas Eakins’s *The Swimming Hole* (Fig. 52) was widely heralded as one of the finest American pictures then painted, in large measure because, despite its display of male nudity, it depicted a subject, the local swimming hole, that was so acceptably American.95

One reason for French’s attraction to Quattrocento art might well have been the abundance of classicizing male nudes in the works of some of the foremost artists of the period, nudes that took their place in the sacred settings of churches, to be admired by all, and shielded from reproach through both style and religious context. For example, in presenting myriad superb views of classicized male nudes in his famous *Last Judgment* fresco series in Orvieto, Luca Signorelli barely concealed the testicles of one figure and showed groupings of men, some with effeminate faces, in close physical interactions that would seem to have little to do with resurrecting bodies. One of Signorelli’s threesomes recalls the Three Graces (*Resurrection of the Flesh*, Fig. 53-55). These images from the Western canon are as sexual and homoerotic as almost any in French’s painted oeuvre.

Chapter 4: Artistic Contexts for State Park II: The “Aspects of Man” Series

Within months of completing *Washing the White Blood Off Daniel Boone* (Fig. 50), French embarked on a decades-long project that to this day defines the way the artist is known. In 1940, one year after he made the shift from oil on canvas to egg-yolk tempera on composition-board panels, French also made a dramatic alteration in the way he presented the human figure. Although abandoning American Scene portrayals entirely, he continued to favor still figures engaged in only a modicum of physical effort; he continued, that is, to eschew action, especially in the main figures situated near the picture plane. But while he continued to use as his main characters males with gracefully proportioned, idealized physiques, he stepped back from portraying bodies imbued with feeling and gesture, from characters in identifiable settings, from faces with emotive expressions, and from subjects explicable through recourse to known narratives or time-honored iconography. The artist proceeded to strip away his figures’ most lifelike, expressive qualities in favor of more remote, crystallized presentations, and he now set virtually every situation at a preternaturally still beach. These characteristics and the resulting effects contributed to French being dubbed a Magic Realist, and they have important implications for *State Park*.

The definition of Magic Realism has been fluid for more than seventy years. Alfred Barr first applied the term in the United States to a group of American artists in the 1943 Museum of Modern Art exhibition entitled “American Realists and Magic Realists.” Magic Realism, Barr wrote, is “the work of painters who by means of an exact realistic technique try to make plausible and convincing their improbable, dreamlike or fantastic visions.” The works have a

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96 The term Magic Realism was first used by German art critic Franz Roh in 1926 to refer to works of the Neue Sachlichkeit movement.
hyper-realistic quality that some consider photorealistic, but the situations are hard to imagine in photographs. Of course, Surrealists can lay claim to the same general definition as Magic Realists. A more specific and nuanced definition came in 1985 from art historian and curator Jeffrey Wechsler, who wrote that Magic Realists “transform everyday experience into strangeness…. Magic realism does not invent a new order of things (as, for example, Surrealism does), it simply reorders reality to make it seem alien. Magic Realism is an art of the implausible, not the impossible; it is imaginative, not imaginary.” Of note, French never identified himself as a Magic Realist. But like most such designations, it is useful in categorizing a recognizable trend, and a number of the other artists thus categorized, including Tooker and Cadmus, were close friends of French. Like French, many of the artists labeled Magic Realists selected egg-yolk tempera as their chosen medium. This was a particularly noteworthy choice amidst the growth of gestural abstraction in American art and a fascinating change for French given his previous work at a scale not workable for egg tempera, namely murals. Egg tempera is an especially refractory medium that demands the utmost patience and dexterity. It would have appealed to a certain perfectionist tendency in a certain type of artist as well as to one seeking to revisit and revive the technique of early masters, as we’ve seen French was wont to do.

99 Another description of Magic Realism, but not American Magic Realism, comes from H.H. Arnason, History of Modern Art: First Edition, New York: Abrams, 1968, 368. Magic realists, he writes, “create mystery and the marvelous through juxtapositions that are disturbing even when it is difficult to say why…. [they] are interested in translating everyday experience into strangeness.” The fourth edition of this text, updated by Marla Prather in 1998, modifies the definition considerably, defining the magic realism of the Neue Sachlichkeit period as “a mode of representation that takes on an aura of the fantastic because commonplace objects are presented with unexpectedly exaggerated and detailed forthrightness.” See p. 287. With reference to American mid-century artists, the term magic realism is defined in the 4th edition text as “an art that produces bizarre effects through the depiction of reality.” See p. 424. French is not discussed in either edition, nor are Paul Cadmus, George Tooker, or Henry Koerner.
Of course, the significance of technique is determined by the use to which it is put. The vehicle French adopted for his new style was an ambitious series of paintings he labeled “Aspects of Man.” Begun in 1940, the series – intended to comprise forty-nine images, seven images in each of seven categories (Figs. 56 and 57) -- ended more than two decades later when French seems to have tired of the tight boundaries he had laid down for the subject matter. The vast majority of paintings in the “Aspects of Man” series feature stiff, simple, mannequin-like figures. The scenes in which they appear are coded and symbolic in the service of positing a universal language of what Cole calls “timeless, elemental concepts.” The settings in the paintings are at the seaside, although no particular beach, sea or body of water can be identified. The paintings are not exactly surrealistic -- they would not be entirely impossible to stage -- but they are not realistic, either.

A look at several of the works completed in or around the same year as State Park establishes some of the themes and the peculiar iconography then important to French. For instance, in Elemental Play (Fig. 58), which French assigned to the Play category, one woman lies comfortably in a boat cocked at a precarious 90-degree angle on a beach that suddenly ends. The right hand of another woman in the same image is almost as long as her shin. In Learning (Fig. 59), assigned to the Work category, a series of human heads stacked one atop the other in totem pole-style emerges untethered to the earth above a most peculiar mountain range; on the opposite side of the picture, in seeming dialogue with the human heads, an array of identically drawn male torsos in perspective marches back into the painting and into the mountains. In Music (Fig. 35), as we saw in Chapter Two, the central figure, a man wearing a canary-colored tunic is painted entirely in shades of bright yellow; French assigned this picture to the Creation
category. In *Strange Man*, two figures hold another white, open-mouthed figure horizontally, in mid-air (Fig. 60); this picture does not show up on French’s inventories.

The core pictorial language used in “Aspects of Man” shifted over the twenty-three years on which French worked on the series. Focusing for this thesis on the style used for the series in the 1940s, the decade in which *State Park* was painted, the style of figures is especially homogenized. The artist presents men and women in various states of undress, usually gazing at nothing in particular. They stand, sit, swim or walk in controlled, geometrically organized frontal and profile poses against backgrounds of deserted beach, clear skies or flat colors. The settings may be familiar, but there is an “otherness,” a sense of the unworldly and often the uncanny, pervading the scenes. Shifting from realistic skin tones beautifully modulated and shaded in murals such as *Lunchtime with Early Miners*, each of French’s 1940s “Aspects of Man” figures is almost monochromatic. From faces with personality and motivation, French adopts characters who betray automaticity. They have no past and no future, and they do not interact except to execute poses. The skin of the figures in French’s works of this period assumes a flawless, buffed quality that, in the eyes of art historian Grimes, “suggests they are made from a dense, synthetic material combining the characteristics of flesh and marble.”¹⁰⁰ In fact, both the skin of the figures, and more importantly, the gestures they express suggest manufacture in a mannequin factory, not the finely wrought artisan work or breathy feel we associate with Old Master marbles.

When props appear in “Aspects of Man” paintings, they are, like the figures, spare in presentation. As noted earlier, French seems to have worked out some of his ideas for utilizing props in the PaJaMa photographs, in which driftwood, blankets, fishing nets, umbrellas, towels

¹⁰⁰ Grimes, *Jared French’s Myths*, XI.
and other simple items appear as means for breaking up space and framing figures. The photos also presage the use in these paintings of static tableaux of human figures “responding in a self-consciously aesthetic way to the austere landscape.”

The “Aspects” project, Cole argues, was conceived as nothing less than an all-encompassing chronicle of humanity, “a complete visual record of biological and cultural phenomena that typify human existence.” French intended a total of forty-nine paintings—one painting for each of seven topics within seven broad categories: Body, Functions, Work, Man, Play, Nature and Creation. Among the subtopics French laid out were diurnal activities such as learning, sleeping, defecating, and breathing, as well as broad activities and themes: games, poetry, philosophy and music. Sex is listed—it is item number six under “Functions”—but sexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality are not. It seems French never painted a panel instantiating “Sex.” Of the forty-nine intended paintings, twenty-one were completed, and French executed preparatory sketches for another eighteen. Hieratic and theatrical, the representations make specific reference to the classical and archaic, and appear de-eroticized compared to the murals, and to other realisms. French ceased working on the project in 1963.

All this does not mean, however, that French no longer meditated on the human male as a sexual being. He clearly did, as evidenced by the way he portrays men, beautifully contoured and artful in many works Elemental Play (Fig. 58) is a superb example. Both men are engaged in feats of physical exertion that display bodily strength, agility, determination and flexibility (the two women appear somewhat ungainly, contorted and out of proportion, their bodies more Mannerist in style).

101 Cole, Jared French, 1905-198, 133.
102 Cole, 223.
103 Cole, 231 and 233.
French, then, did not abandon his insistent investment in the male physique but clearly broke with the way he presented men on canvas, by pulling back on overt sexuality while adding more nudity. French did so to work through his new personal philosophy of “man” writ-large, a philosophy that caused him to subsume homosexuality in the service of explaining a grander universal plan. Thanks to the continuing financial support of his wealthy wife, Margaret Hoening, whom he had married three years before he embarked on “Aspects of Man,” French was in a position to explore new iconography and new subject matter without undue concern for selling or marketing his art. The availability of generous funds makes puzzling French’s decision to abandon what surely must have been a joyful ritual in the 1930s – articulating one enticing male figure after another. Yet he clearly had a higher purpose in mind, and he set to it with energy and focus.

Scholars disagree about the inspiration for French’s organizational scheme for “Aspects of Man.” Grimes suggests that it was influenced by William Butler Yeats’ *A Vision*, an esoteric, mystical treatise originally published in 1925 that is said to have been read by the artist and distributed to his friends. If not the ideas, then surely the grand scope of the project came from a desire to imitate Yeats. Cole attributes the scheme to the work of cultural anthropologists, especially Carl Warden, whose *The Emergence of Human Culture* (1936), articulated nine categories of human universals. These were understood as innate human impulses rooted in a common biology shared by humans. Cole’s theory is the most tightly argued, but there is, as yet, no evidence that French read Warden’s work, and French did not follow the lists Warden outlined. Still others, as noted earlier, suggest Jung as the defining influence, but they are vague.

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104 Grimes, Jared French’s Myths, XV.
as to the organizational significance for the Aspects of Man project, neglecting to identify whether it is the plastic iconography of the figures in Aspects of Man for which they see Jungian relevance or the topics of the paintings themselves. These oversights by such historians as Grimes make it impossible to lean on their supposition and demand close independent reading of Jung. Even if the impetus for the organizational scheme cannot be determined with certainty, French clearly sought to articulate an elaborate, comprehensive, and fluid philosophy about the human condition.

Something of the same impulse, I believe, is behind the creation of State Park. It was painted when French was hard-at-work on the series; indeed, the artist had an especially productive period in 1946, completing five distinct works he assigned to “Aspects of Man.” Nevertheless, it differs markedly in some respects from other works around the same date. For instance, as unsettling as the painting is, there is nothing improbable about its core presentation: a lifeguard, a family, and a fighter practicing on a pier. Second, while the lifeguard and the mother both wear archaic smiles, the mother, the family under the umbrella is closely observed, unlike so many cipher-like figures in “Aspects of Man,” and each one is individualized. In addition, the props are of this world and make situational sense, unlike the shells on yellow strings in Music or the mahogany desk and magic box at the beach in Business (Fig. 61). The primary reason for the modest, but significant, disparities between State Park and other “Aspects of Man” paintings may be that State Park was not initially intended to be in the series in the first place. In the six lists that have been published of the Aspects schema, State Park does not show up on the early plans. It is not clear why French inserted it.

106 In 1946, the most productive year of the series, French completed Learning, Help, Elemental Play, The Sea and State Park.
107 See Panzetta. The three plans are presented on pages 30, 33 and 34. The latest schema seems to be the one on page 33, where State Park is first mentioned.
Given the secretiveness of French about everything in his artistic practice, from the reasons for his working methods and materials to his choice of subject matter and iconography, it is imperative to look at the work around 1946 of the artist’s closest colleagues, Tooker and lover Cadmus. In studying the issues and themes with which they were grappling, we may find topics likely to have intrigued or influenced French, or vice versa. While their specific motives and practice are surely not dispositive of the same for French, and asserting a causal link one way or the other would be naïve, there is no doubt that all were thinking about ways to treat homosexuality as a conundrum of the world. Ideas of isolation, alienation and discrimination were on the minds of all three men, and is to these themes that we turn now.
Chapter 5: The Works of Cadmus and Tooker as Context for *State Park*

By 1946 two of the artists in French’s circle, his lover Cadmus and his protégé Tooker, had adopted distinct styles for depicting the human figure, and each used the human figure to grapple with homosexual themes. While the motivations of the others in his circle is not dispositive of French’s motivations for *State Park*, it certainly lends further support to the argument that French sought in *State Park* to explore homosexuality, that he was meditating on these themes privately and with friends, and that he was considering their proper place in his art.

Taking a slice of that single year, 1946, Cadmus created, for instance, *Fantasia on a Theme by Dr. S.* (Fig. 62). According to scholars, the painting sets up a contrast of the three body types articulated by psychologist William Herbert Sheldon, the Dr. S in the painting’s title. Sheldon defined these body types as endomorph, mesomorph and ectomorph, and Cadmus represented these types in exaggerated fashion, verging on the grotesque, as obese, muscular and thin. The scene, set on the front porch of a shabby, squalid-looking beach house, is thought to depict the scrutiny by the endomorph and the ectomorph of the super-hero muscled sailor who dominates the foreground.\(^{108}\) Suggesting, in Cadmus’s typically satirical and sardonic way, that the men are worthy of self-critique, he gives the nearly emaciated youth daintily pointed feet and the boy holds a red pen like a cigarette in long, delicate, “feminine” fingers; the obese man behind holds a hot dog, a phallic symbol. Meanwhile, small phallic ornaments on the porch piers “point” at the muscular sailor. Further, Cadmus renames the painting, “JUST A MERE CAMP,” posting these words in reverse on a weathervane atop the beach hut roof. The phrase may allude to the self-derisive actions taken by overtly gay men “who camp” or poke fun of themselves.\(^{109}\)

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\(^{109}\) The Oxford English Dictionary published the first print citation of camp as “ostentatious, exaggerated, affected, theatrical; effeminate or homosexual; ostentatious, exaggerated, affected, theatrical; effeminate
As Weinberg explains, “When queers in private call each other by female names or behave with exaggerated lewdness toward a hyper-masculine man, they are, in essence, turning the language of homophobia on its head through parody and humor.”\textsuperscript{110} The situation that Cadmus envisions certainly pokes fun of gays as he holds up the proverbial, satirical mirror. And it is derisive insofar as it centers on caricatures and stereotypes. The approach is far from the refined, highly aestheticized PaJaMa photos of same-sex attraction, and reveals a sensibility that we never find in French’s work.

Cadmus at this time also explored scenarios of same-sex desire. In Chapter 1, this thesis explored Cadmus’s \textit{The Shower}. In \textit{Point o’ View} (Fig. 64), a domestic scene in an identical palette, Cadmus portrays two men, likely again a reference to himself and French, at a beach house in late afternoon. The viewer looks up into the tightly cropped scene. We see the side of the wooden house and, out front, a rickety wooden deck, on which a muscular, fair, red-haired man lies nude on his right side, sound asleep, a blue towel underneath him. The other man, set much farther back, sits on the front step of the house. Blond, strongly muscled, and tanned a deep bronze, like Cadmus, he wears a pair of tight swimming trunks and stares outward, seemingly deep in thought. The scene is quiet and calm, and as the boards of the deck cast long shadows across the sand below, we feel that the day is waning. The figures are linked by their proximity, by the deck space they share, and by their nudity, which suggests their partnership, and yet the separation between the two conveys a certain poignancy.

In \textit{Playground} (Fig. 64), Cadmus delivers yet a different portrayal of homosexuality within the fraught dynamics of a motley assortment of teenagers. At left, a heterosexual pair is erotically entwined, the girl wearing a tight red sweater and the boy locking his legs around hers.

\textsuperscript{110} Weinberg, “Tooker and Company…” in \textit{George Tooker}, 47.
A skinny, solitary, redheaded boy stares at a baseball bat, surely a phallic symbol, which he balances on his index finger. A man bares his chest and shoulder while holding a cigarette in his left hand, while in his right hand, in his pocket, he grasps something outwardly protruding. In the distance, two bare-chested men wrestle one another. In the right the middle-ground, three males flirt with one another, one of them with a baseball bat emerging from between his legs. In the top right of the painting, another bare-chested youth flies alongside the fence, his body stretched out Superman-style, as his shirt, wrapped about his neck, takes the place of a cape. He seems to embody a perilous yearning for sexual freedom and release. Dominating the foreground, though, is the protagonist, a blond, bare-chested teen who looks beseechingly at us. His hands reach back into his pants, open at the fly, revealing his hips and white underwear. His expression seems to implore us to empathize with his budding and burdensome sexuality. Does he represent Cadmus looking back at his own youthful bewilderment? The painting as a whole offers a gritty, unidealized catalogue of youthful sexuality trying to find its way.

In 1946, Tooker also explored a certain vision of homosexuality explicitly. *Children and Spastics* (Fig. 65) depicts three thin, exaggeratedly effeminate men being taunted by children in the corner of a starkly urban, cement backyard. The children form a small army: two of the five, in fact, look like little men; the heads of two others are covered with paper-bag masks with small cutouts for eyeholes; and another creeps forward under a partial covering of brown wrapping paper. One of the boys wears an upside-down cooking pan fashioned into a helmet, and three of them carry makeshift lances, images whose absurd charge seems explicitly drawn from Hieronymous Bosch. A black dog nips at the boot of one of the spastics. Tooker mocks both the children and their targets, showing both of them as grotesque. In interpreting Tooker as poking

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111 The Superman character was created by two high school students in Cleveland, Ohio in 1933 and was bought by Detective Comics, the future DC Comics, in 1938. For more information on the background of Superman, consult *Comic Books: How the Industry Works*, by Shirrel Rhoades. Peter Lang: 2008.
fun of the spastics, Weinberg writes: “My guess is that he intended the three figures to stand not for all homosexuals, but rather for a kind of outlandish behavior that was anathema to his own sense of decorum.”\textsuperscript{112} In Weinberg’s reading, the outlandish behavior lies in the mannered, angled, “spastic” poses that draw unwanted attention. This is reminiscent of the mocking approach that we saw in the first of Cadmus’s paintings described here, \textit{Fantasia on a Theme by Dr. S.}

Another work by Tooker, \textit{A Game of Chess} (Fig. 66), from the same year as \textit{State Park}, creates a peculiar scene of a young man forced into a chess date with a girl whose overbearing mother looks on. This time, in a tight domestic space, Tooker creates a frightful “dance” for the man whose facial features suggest he is a surrogate for the artist. The man seems terrified of conventional coupling, with the game a metaphor for a type of competition to which the young man cannot submit. Opposite him sits a young woman at a chess table, her breasts unnaturally pert and well-defined beneath her clingy, diaphanous blouse. Her face is a kind of grotesque formulation of a sexy blond. She looks at the young man with arched eyebrows while pressing a red chess piece, shaped like an erect phallus, between her raised thumb and forefinger; her long fingernails are claw-like. She seems to challenge him to the heterosexual interaction of which he clearly wants no part. Behind her, an over-sized, overbearing older woman with a plain, grim visage and clothing to match, is equally challenging as she looks askance at the man. In the deep background, two women eye the young man through an outside window. The young man seems taken aback, with the fingers of both hands splayed open, one hand in front of him as if to protect

himself from the young woman. It is an image of fear and loathing in the face of a heterosexual game that will deny the young man his innate sexuality.

That French was consumed by issues surrounding his sexuality while working on *State Park* seems certain, considering his immersion in homosexual culture, the explicit thematization of homosexuality explored by his two closest artist friends, and the intensely personal, self-conscious depiction of sexuality that surfaces in *Evasion* (Fig. 67). Indeed, as 1946 came to a close, French was preparing to start work on this, one of the masterpieces of his career. According to Cole, who acquired the work for Cleveland in 2012, *Evasion* depicts a figure “in denial of the physical self and, by implication, the sexual self.”¹¹³ In this work, French creates what seems, in part, to be an allegory of homosexual shame – evasion by turning one’s back to the viewer, evasion by covering one’s genitalia, evasion by running into hallways or low closets. The painting depicts the same man, seven times, variously naked and clothed in a royal blue jumpsuit, possibly an allusion to prison garb. At far left, the naked full-length figure seen from behind faces a mirror and bows his head, his left hand at his forehead a sign of worry or concern. Just to his right, his double now faces the viewer but covers his genitals, head again bowed. On the far right, the same man, clothed in the blue jumpsuit, kneels in prayer or supplication, but it is not clear to what or whom he appeals. Above him is a piece of blank white paper.

Meanwhile, a tall, narrow doorway is cut into the wall between the naked pair of standing men at left and the kneeling blue-clad man in supplication at right. Four steps lead up to the portal, and immediately beyond the to step we see a shallow corridor with a very low door cut out on each side. A naked man and a blue-clothed man bend down a little, back to back, and enter these low doorways; their bent heads have already passed through. It is not possible to

¹¹³ Cole, 269–270.
discern what the far leg of each of these men is doing, nor is it clear what exists beyond the short doorways. The men would not be able to stand if the space they enter is as narrow as the doors; indeed, they seem to be stuck in impossible spaces, yet they entered, evidently, willingly. In none of the figures in *Evasion* is a face visible. “All three figures are in postures of shame and supplication as if apologizing for their homosexuality,” writes art historian and critic Rodney Edgecombe in a journal article that seeks to reassess the symbolism of several paintings by French.  

Two aspects of the painting, though, suggest that shame is not, for French, the automatic correlate of the evasion of the painting’s title. First, the blank white paper on the wall is for Cole a symbol and implies “that the figure’s devotional supplication is made to nothingness and therefore his rejection of his sexual self is groundless.” Also, the images of the male nude here are idealized and beautiful, so different from the three adult male figures in *State Park*. There seems, that is, to be an adulation of the body accompanying the purported shame. The prevalence of ambivalence, so typical of French’s works of the mid-1940s, is irrefutable here, as is the painting’s formal beauty and sleek modernism. Moreover, unlike the men depicted in *State Park*, the figures in *Evasion* feel intimate to the viewer, in their unstated communication with one another, as if they are bound together in a private identity quest. The bold stance of the lifeguard figure in *State Park* is gone; veiled references to homosexuality, and the tortured challenges it created at mid-century, are not.

Against this critical set of circumstances – the pariah status of homosexuals at mid-century, French’s own misgivings about his sexuality, the episode of homophobia at Saltaire, and

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115 Cole, 270.
the impact that French must have felt from the works of Cadmus and Tooker – we will interpret

*State Park.*
Chapter 6: Interpreting *State Park*

After first confronting *State Park* at the Whitney Museum, the intrigued viewer seeks explanations that seem within reach. A narrative premise or two come to mind, and iconography—say, the shape of the lifeguard’s whistle, or his kouros pose—suggest the artist is intrigued with the male physique and visual puns. Alas, as soon as one starts to dig, be it for sociological explanations or biographical ones, the work takes on increasingly elusive and enigmatic qualities that come to define it far more than any hint of a hypothesis as to its raison d’etre. That does not mean, however, that some degree of art-historical sense cannot be made of the painting. That is what this thesis attempts to do.

The external narrative for the picture, discussed by Wechsler and outlined here earlier: namely, that the scene was sparked and shaped by an incident in which “middle-class, prim, bourgeois” beachside landowners, disturbed by the gay presence at Saltaire, requested policing of the beach.\(^\text{116}\) This background narrative could explain the exceptionally large, emphatically modeled lifeguard who so dramatically anchors the painting at left, and the nuclear family positioned under the pink umbrella at right. Some ten years after *State Park* was created, French, in his “Aspects of Man” project, assigned the work to the subcategory of “Arbitration, Government,” under the broad category, “Man.”\(^\text{117}\) Such a categorization implies that French was eager to fill in the hole on his grid for this subcategory, and it also aligns the lifeguard with an enforcement role. As discussed earlier, there is no evidence that lifeguards were the intended enforcement officers instead of an actual security patrol, but the billy club he clutches in his

\(^{116}\) This description is noted in Berman and Wechsler, *Realism and Realities*, 26. It is first referenced from a 1981 interview Wechsler conducted with Glenway Wescott (see footnote 62 in *Realism and Realities*).

\(^{117}\) Panzetta in *Jared French by Jared French*, 600 opere inedite dal fondo italiano dell’artista. Italy, Umberto Allemandi, 2010, presents three “Aspects of Man” grids, each completed at different dates. The grid that lists *State Park* was completed in 1956.
enormous hand, not a normal accouterment of a lifeguard, suggests a policing role for him. His super-vigilant eye and frowning mouth make him seem even more formidable. But the incident does not explain the lack of any visible threat to the nuclear family in the scene, unless their calm is the result of the requested enforcement. It leaves us with the mysterious presence of the pugilist; the archaic features of the lifeguard and mother; and the tense mood injected into such a calm beach scene. In other words, this external narrative only goes so far in shedding light on the imagery, which includes too many unnatural elements to be considered a traditional narrative painting. That leaves us to probe in a speculative but informed way French’s motivations for his iconographic choices.

As I have reiterated, one aspect of State Park’s enigmatic nature plausibly lies in French’s desire, explored earlier, to keep his homosexuality hidden except among his trusted circle of friends. Likewise, his imagery in general became increasingly opaque in the 1940s. State Park was created at a mid-twentieth century moment when, as argued by art historian Richard Meyer, such artists as Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns and Agnes Martin developed visual codes to signify homosexuality in clandestine ways.118 In State Park, such components as the phallic shape of the whistle, the presence of a bully stick, a phallic symbol and an enforcement tool (Fig. 68), and the bright pink color of the umbrella can be read as coded indicators of homosexuality and homoeroticism. Yet it is nearly impossible to discern in these elements a specific, unambiguous narrative that takes homosexuality as its theme, as we shall see below.

The enigma of the painting depends, as well, on the medium, egg tempera on panel, which provided French with a means of including fine details, many of which he almost hid from the viewer. We need a magnifying glass to reveal that one of the charms on the mother’s bracelet

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is in the shape of a man’s genitals (Fig. 69). Similarly, the tattoo of the head of a woman smoking a cigarette inside an arrowed heart on the pugilist’s left arm can only be read with magnification (Fig. 70). Such iconographic components are among the nearly hidden clues to an interest in sexuality that French included in State Park. Like other important characteristics of the painting, these miniature images are unique among the artist’s pictures of the 1940s.

Uniqueness, deviation from patterns in his art, makes the painting harder to interpret, and suggests that it was a private allegory. Private allegory: although beyond the scope of this thesis, French’s beautiful painting Evasion of the following year also fits this rubric (Fig. 67). The aesthetic of Evasion is quite new and removed from State Park, as if working against that painting’s remaining rootedness in everyday life. The rigorous composition of Evasion—its stunningly restricted color scheme, repetition of rectangles playing against the lovingly modeled male body, and the juxtaposition of mirror, portals and the white square on the wall—all suggest a new kind of meditation, as well, on the nature of the pictorial realism to which French dedicated himself, and a brief foray into formalism.

Evasion, though, relates to French in the 1940s, and the question that he, along with Cadmus, Tooker, and others, faced as figurative artists: how to maintain their dedication to the human figure and to certain Renaissance techniques and pictorial illusions while being in tune with modernism. Surrealism and DeChirico’s metaphysical painting, scuola metafisica, had paved the way for the puzzle that is State Park by reviving traditional figuration in the service of promoting the enigmatic as an artistic value through its focus on dreams, the subconscious, alienation, fear, and the distant past as a common hereditary link among people. Certainly, the mysterious nature of the imagery and tone of State Park was shaped, and validated, by the Surrealist trend in art, of which Magic Realism was a close cousin. In the case of State Park, we
see Magic Realist impulses in the streaky clouds, which recall paintings by the Belgian
surrealists Paul Delvaux and René Magritte; in the unnatural light and palette; in the crystalline
depiction of the aquamarine sea and the unadulterated sand, which evoke Salvador Dali; and in
the marmoreal color of the pugilist’s skin, which summons the sense of a dream world closely
associated with Surrealism. Moreover, French’s use of Greek kouros type as a model for the
lifeguard’s face and pose, and of a kore type for the mother’s face, also lends a definite unreal
quality to the picture that links it to Magic Realism.

French certainly wasn’t alone in painting works with deliberately enigmatic, unnatural,
imagery. Tooker also created hermetically sealed, mysterious environments, such as The Subway
(Fig. 71) and Government Bureau (Fig. 72).¹¹⁹ Artists such as Henry Koerner also focused on
isolation, projecting a world of tenuous connections. And like French, Delvaux included ancient
symbols such as Greek temples in his art; Delvaux, in fact, debuted The Great Sirens (Fig. 73)
the year after State Park.

Additionally, the sparsely populated beaches of Fire Island in the 1940s provided an ideal
American topography for representing the theme of isolation and the accompanying moods of
melancholy and nostalgia.¹²⁰ Josephine Gear writes: “It was not easy to be gay in America in
those years, and the works of the three artists [Cadmus, Tooker and French] stressed aloneness,
separation, and depression, and criticized intolerance and conventional family life—all in

¹¹⁹ A. Hyatt Mayor former, curator of prints at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, coined the term “Fire
Island School” to identify French, Tooker and Cadmus, who he noted were linked by style and
iconographies and had “shared interests in exploring homoerotic themes.” See Carol Ockman in American
Dreams: American Art to 1950 in the Williams College Museum of Art, New York: Hudson Hills Press,
Inc, 2001, 181. Also, Josephine Gear in Cadmus, French and Tooker: The Early Years, 1990, the
brochure for an exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art.
¹²⁰ Gear, French, Cadmus and Tooker: The Early Years.
https://archive.org/stream/cadmusfrenchtook00cadm/cadmusfrenchtook00cadm_djvu.txt
imagery that stood sharply against the aesthetic trends of the times.”¹²¹ This was a world in which homosexual men often lived the “double life,” a term coined in the 1920s. French surely felt compelled, in daring to explore gay themes in his paintings, to nevertheless use coded motifs to avoid alienating himself entirely from the heterosexual world that, by virtue of his marriage to Margaret, he acceded to publicly accept.¹²² In addition, French publicly accepted the dominant culture and the expectations laid down daily within, with specific ramifications for individuals who wanted to be recognized as artists and to show their work. One could argue that French’s marriage to Margaret was a shield from the gaze of the heterosexual world, both because of pretense and the reality of their coupledom, and because of the financial support she offered.

Gear’s statement that Cadmus, Tooker and French “criticized intolerance and conventional family life” does not entirely apply to State Park, even though the individuals in the nuclear family here are individually isolated, because there is no implicit or explicit suggestion here of family group-think or intolerance.

French’s pictures at mid-century, State Park among them, are not direct representations of an observed world, but rather the artist’s take on the spiritual and psychic. Indeed, these forces were made real in the writings of the Swiss psychologist Carl Jung who, as noted in Chapter 2, influenced the imagery of French’s works at mid-century. While further study is needed to link specific drawings and paintings by French to Jung’s ideas, the concept of the archaic is especially relevant to State Park.¹²³ Indeed, Jung devotes an entire chapter of Archetypes of the

¹²¹ Gear. French, Cadmus and Tooker: The Early Years.
https://archive.org/stream/cadmusfrenchtook00cadm/cadmusfrenchtook00cadm_djvu.txt
¹²² This point is also elucidated by Mark Cole in his PhD dissertation.
¹²³ For purposes of this thesis, I consulted several sources on Jung. First were works Jung authored, among them the Collected Works, specifically Volumes V, VI and IX. I also spent several hours interviewing Diane Fremont, a New York City-based Jungian analyst recommended by the Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism, also in New York City. I also interviewed Jungian analyst Melissa Daum, a Brooklyn-based therapist who examines the nexus between Jung and art. Also helpful, for its
Collective Unconscious, translated into English and published in 1939, to “The Psychological Aspects of the Kore.”

It would be a stretch to argue that French, in State Park, is illustrating Jung’s ideas, but he is undoubtedly applying some of the language of Jung to define figural types in personal ways that also link up with his intellectual interest in the psychoanalyst’s ideas.

First, though, a bit more about Jung’s theory of the “collective unconscious,” the idea for which he is most widely known and understood in popular culture. Jung defined the collective unconscious as the deepest level of the self that exists beneath the conscious personality and the subconscious. Jung hypothesized that all people possess this collective unconscious through the mediation of “archaic” human ancestors who helped shape in us a common psychic heritage. Jung further theorized that this collective unconscious had a variety of functional units, which he called archetypes. Archetypes are “identical psychic structures common to all” that together constitute “the archaic heritage of humanity.”

Jung felt that every civilized human being, however high his conscious development, is still an “archaic man” at the deeper levels of his psyche. Jung liberally used the word “archaic” in his writings to refer to the primitive parts of the psyche.

Jung posited eight psychological types distinct from his explanation of archetypes, one of which was the extraverted feeling type. This type invokes “first and foremost, a peculiar kind of thinking, a thinking that is infantile, archaic, negative.” These sorts of feelers adopt...
worldviews that are narrow, coarse and cynical.\textsuperscript{128} Might the lifeguard be a stand-in for a narrow, extroverted, feeling world that, sensing danger, rejects alternate ways of sexual coupling and openness to more liberal ideas generally? This way of thinking was shunned, as we have seen, in “What I Believe,” the essay by E.M. Forster that occupied Cadmus, and surely French too, in the early 1940s. But it is hard to accept that the lifeguard is simply a negative other. This thesis proposes that the lifeguard represents complex feelings on French’s part, and that this dominating figure is one of the artist’s psychic surrogates in the painting, a kind of deep-level “archaic man.” As with other pictures adduced earlier, the sea in \textit{State Park} also signals French’s embrace of the importance of the unconscious.

In Chapter 2 the Jungian concept of the “shadow” was discussed in relation to French’s \textit{The Sea}. To some extent, the lifeguard in \textit{State Park}, proposed as a manifestation of the artist, recalls this notion. Jung considered the shadow to be a complex or cluster of traits representative of an individual’s dark side, those aspects of one’s self that are socially undesirable and that an individual subconsciously disowns.\textsuperscript{129} People are usually effective at repressing and ignoring their shadow, Jung argued, but in dreams the shadow tends to appear as a sinister or threatening figure possessing the same sex as the dreamer, and is not infrequently a member of a different nation, color or race. “There is usually something alien or hostile about [the shadow], which gives rise to powerful feelings of distrust, anger or fear.”\textsuperscript{130} The lifeguard is bronze-toned, unlike the fair-skinned French, and thus a type of opposite that would align with the shadow complex, as articulated by Jung. The family, too, could be read as a “shadow,” for they are, both literally

\begin{footnotesize}
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  \item \textsuperscript{128} Stevens, Anthony. \textit{Jung: A Very Short Introduction}, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 94. Anthony Stevens, 84, is a British Jungian analyst and psychiatrist who has written extensively on psychotherapy and psychology. Stevens has two degrees in psychology and a doctorate in medicine from Oxford University. He is a member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and a senior member of the Independent Group of Analytical Psychologists.
  \item \textsuperscript{129} Stevens, p. 64.
  \item \textsuperscript{130} Stevens, p. 65.
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and then figuratively, within shadow in the picture. The family here would represent a shadow of the artist himself: his dark side, the side that wishes to talk him out of his innate sexual impulse, for one.

French has fashioned the lifeguard as a multivalent figure. The lifeguard seems alien and hostile, with his billy club and frown, a figure of mysterious expressive charge. His great size and muscularity, the suggestion of stiff movement in his stance, combined with the exaggerated rigidity of his neck and his strangely bulging eye, makes him seem robotic, and in that sense, threatening, and not fully human. Facial expressions, though—and perhaps especially intrinsically unnatural looking expressions such as the lifeguard wears—are notoriously difficult to interpret. One might also see on the lifeguard’s face a kind of wariness or fear, a projection of the artist’s fear of his own shadow self.

The “lifeguard shadow” could also be interpreted as pushing against French’s bisexuality or against the exclusively homosexual lifestyle he would adopt a decade later. At the same time, it could be that French saw his shadow as a heterosexual influence, threatening his innate homosexual impulses. The lifeguard, in other words, seems to embody, in general, French’s ambivalence about his sexuality. If the shadow surfaces in dreams, then dreams as applied to French’s Magic Realism might allow us to say that it also surfaces here in his art. And, to reiterate, Jung argued that despite the antisocial characteristics of the shadow, it held tremendous creative potential. One can see how that concept might appeal to the artist.

The shadow develops, Jung posited, by cultural indoctrination and familial repression. “The cultural source includes all that one has been taught politically about out-groups considered to be hostile to one’s in-group (i.e. nation, tribe, or band),” Stevens explains.131 An individual’s

131 Stevens, p. 65.
outer persona, Jung argued, compensates for the antisocial characteristics of the shadow. Humans keep their shadow out of sight, but it functions as a sort of inner watchdog. Deep within the shadow, Jung postulated, is not fear of castration, as Freud suggested, but fear of being abandoned by the mother for being unacceptable.\textsuperscript{132} We know that French struggled with this very issue and sought to keep his mother close when she initially broke contact with him after he announced his 1931 sojourn with Cadmus to Europe.

We are still left with the vexing problem of explaining the pugilist. This figure underwent substantial restyling between the study for \textit{State Park} and the final painting, changing from a much younger, highly muscled Mr. America type to a sunken, elderly, stony presentation. He gains shoes and a distended belly, loses a full head of hair as well as muscle tone throughout his torso, and stands in a different pose, right leg back, that is less obviously aggressive than the earlier drawing. In the final picture, French allies the pugilist with heterosexuality, painting on his left bicep the cartoon tattoo, the face of a woman smoking a cigarette inside a heart (Fig. 69). These changes, showing that French was not himself certain about the figure while conceiving \textit{State Park}, ties in with the ambiguity of the pugilist.

One can reach for an interpretation of the pugilist that is Jungian in influence. The totally unnatural pallor of his skin, excised from the corporeal world of the present, suggests that his ontological status might be as dream figure. It should be said that Jung, unlike Freud, did not think dreams needed to be interpreted to perform their function, nor did he believe that dream formation was the product of the discharge of tabooed sexual impulses. One could also reasonably postulate that the pugilist in \textit{State Park} represents an image from one of French’s dreams or that he is meant to look like he hails from a dream, more generally. The fact that the

\textsuperscript{132} Stevens, p. 64.
boy in the nuclear family under the umbrella looks directly at the pugilist suggests a connection between these two figures. The boy may represent French himself as a child at an age at which he already suspects that he is homosexual. One could argue that what the child sees in the pugilist is his own future. A reading of the work centered on age as subject matter also makes some sense.

*State Park*, indeed, with its unusual inclusion of a family group, shows that French was musing on his own personal relationships vis-à-vis the family and on his own sexual identity. One year before *State Park*, he completed a drawing, *The Four Ages, No. 1* (Fig. 73) that is the only other extant image of a family scene in his entire œuvre, much as the numeration of “No. 1” tantalizingly suggests that French might have explored the theme in additional drawings. Never realized as a painting, *The Four Ages* depicts a beach scene comprising an elderly couple at left and pushed back in space, and by two couples in front at right. One of these couples, a young mother and middle-aged man, are linked to one another through a toddling male infant, who holds a towel in each hand between them. In the drawing, the middle-aged male figure, bearing a remarkable resemblance to French, looks directly at the viewer. This drawing represents heterosexual coupling. The drawing implies that French could imagine himself in a heterosexual, fatherly role. A related interpretation suggests age as the subject matter. We know from *The Four Ages* that French was contemplating the passage of time, concretized in the representation of individuals at different ages. In *State Park*, the transformation from boy to a *Physique Pictorial* specimen in the lifeguard to an aging man in the pugilist may suggest a triangulation of this aging process.\(^{133}\)

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\(^{133}\) *Physique Pictorial* was the first all-nude and all-male magazine developed by photographer and filmmaker Bob Mizer after he founded Athletic Model Guild (AMG) in 1945 to appeal to the underground homosexual community in the guise of health and fitness. The 1998 documentary film *Beefcake* documents Mizer’s work and includes clips of his films.
State Park, too, carries a message about family that goes beyond the obvious narrative premise of families’ perceived need for protection against homosexuals on Saltaire. In her 1990 exhibition brochure, Gear argues that every one of State Park’s figures is engaged in a fusillade of opposition to homosexuality. She states that the style of the picture is “high camp” and she argues that French “uses the ridiculous to vent his pent-up spleen against ‘the family,’ which he believed to be the source of American prejudice.” She describes each of the members of the nuclear family as “glowering, bolt-upright” who represent a “moral police force absurdly rigid with righteous indignation – and fear of encountering threatening figures.”

Gear, in my opinion, offers a troubling misreading of the picture. The picture is not ‘camp;’ French styles the figures but does not unduly exaggerate sexual characteristics or personality mannerisms, and there is little of the playful, theatrical or kitsch as described by Susan Sontag in her 1964 essay defining this visual sensibility. French does not slight content; he embraces it, studies it and wrestles with it. Moreover, none of the figures under the umbrella is ‘glowering;’ the faces of the boy and the father cannot even be seen, and the mother slightly smiles. Nor do the members of the family sit bolt-upright. The mother slouches just a bit, the ripples of her belly and the relaxed posture of her arms a testament to her calm. Rather, the members of the family are engaged with their surroundings: the boy watching the fighter, the father turning his head to look out to sea, and the mother gazing with open-eyed attention to something unseen by us.

As Gear stated, however, the family may indeed be construed as a source of prejudice against homosexuals. But one could also argue differently about the family under the umbrella,

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positing that French places that grouping in a more nuanced dialogue of their difference in relation to the pugilist and the lifeguard. Thus, we might ask whether this pictorial dialogue, or better, conversation, might represent the grown artist reminiscently wishing that his own family had accepted him and his budding homosexual self? Wishing, perhaps, that they could have all shared the comforting shade of the pink umbrella? We surmise that French’s father never accepted his son’s homosexuality, though we have only circumstantial evidence for this supposition. His mother, as we’ve seen, remained close to him, even though she only reluctantly accepted his homosexuality.

One critic, Rodney Edgecombe, has made much of the fact that the toes of the father’s right foot escape the shade of the umbrella. He asserts that the father strays from normative heterosexuality. Edgecombe has written, “It is no doubt significant that French has allowed the toes of the father’s right foot to stray beyond the boundary of shade, giving him a faint connection to the more abrasive potentiality of the relationship outside the shelter.”

Edgecombe does not articulate the potential relationship he has in mind: that of the pugilist and lifeguard with one another, that of the father with one of the men outside, or, yet another possibility, a relationship the father may have with others outside the image, per se. By “abrasive,” though, Edgecombe must be suggesting the frisson of a heterosexual father figure entangling himself with another man.

I disagree, and conclude that Edgecombe infers meaning from the father’s toes that French did not intend. There is nothing in the presentation of the father to suggest that he is inclined to stray from his role as the normative father. He looks at neither the lifeguard nor the pugilist, and his arms are crossed about him, a sign that he is comfortable enough where he is,

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aligned with his family under the umbrella. Indeed, one might note the cleverness and precision
with which French shows each family member’s feet: the boy’s dangling, the mother’s on tip-
toe, the father’s larger feet, at the end of longer legs, protruding beyond the confines of the
shade. We must never lose sight of, and can certainly take pleasure in, the artistry, the sheer
representational skill, of this serious and highly skilled figure painter.

Meanwhile, the lifeguard has connections to the family, even though he seems to look
past them. As the lifeguard and the mother share archaic Greek facial features, the artist creates a
bond between them even though they have no visual or physical contact in the picture. This may
explain why the mother is the figure most oriented toward the lifeguard, who, in the kind of
shifting identities that occur in dreams, might be seen as a symbolic son. Trying to relate Jung’s
views of the “psychological aspects of the mother archetype,” the “mother complex of the son,”
and the “psychological aspects of the kore,” a project that should be attempted at some future
date, may help us to understand French’s thinking and the artistic choices he made in linking the
lifeguard with the mother figure in this way. Clearly, the mother held special meaning for
French. From the preparatory drawing to the painting, as we have observed, she is highlighted
through her shiny bathing suit, sandals and glittering bracelet.

It is possible that the mother figure in State Park has a dual identity. French seems to
have modeled her, in part, on his wife Margaret. Margaret is seen in striking profile in several of
paintings and photographs of the 1940s in which the setting is a beach (see Chapter 1). In them,
her nose and chin do not protrude to the same degree as in the archaized face of the mother
figure, but there is indeed a resemblance. In a PaJaMa photograph of Margaret and Cadmus on
Nantucket, for example, her body is similarly frontal, her face in profile, and she wears a

137 These topics are covered in Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Volume 9 (Part 1): Archetypes and the
edition was available to French, published in the United States in 1939.
kerchief on her head (Fig. 71). Like the artist’s mother, Margaret was an artist. Both women supported Jared—Margaret to a remarkable degree, but his mother as well. In the unconscious made conscious in art, French might well have elided his supportive mother with Margaret in the pleasant, benign figure of the mother beneath the umbrella. The painting suggests, moreover, that the artist may have wanted to create an empathic alliance between the mother figure and the lifeguard. This makes sense through the Jungian concept of animus/anima, insofar as French felt kinship and affinity between himself and two heterosexual female artists, his mother and Margaret. In this scenario, French made the father figure in the painting a surrogate for his own father who, it seems likely, was unable to reconcile or to accept French’s bisexual identity or the homosocial playground of Saltaire.

State Park, then, must be read both as a narrative response to a real situation of tension between mainstream heterosexuality and homosexuality, and as the artist’s coded and private meditation on this tension. French asserts his reading of Jung as meaningful by creating visual allusions to the ideas of Jung that attracted him. At the same time, with this enigmatic painting, he takes his place within the modern aesthetic espoused by the Surrealists and Magic Realists. We may never know the association that the pugilist held for French or the relationships French envisioned between the family members the lifeguard, but we can feel secure in arguing that the artist meant to contemplate the social and psychological space he occupied as a gay man in 1946.
Bibliography


(Exhibition catalogue for exhibition at the Columbus Museum from February 8-April 11, 2004, University of Georgia Press). 7-70


McBride, Henry. “Jared French, A New Muralist: His Wall Paintings Recall Stephen Foster and They Make a Hit,” *The New York Sun* (from Fultonhistory.org, date and page number not available).


P.B. Jr., “Carnegie Presents True Cross-Section of Current American Art,” *Art Digest*, Volume 22, October 15, 1947, 9. (Note: Neither I, nor several American Art historians and librarians, have been able to identify the first and last names of this critic).


Appendix I

Statements by Jared French About His Art

Jared French gave no formal interviews during his life and wrote only two brief statements about his work. They appear below.

“I can’t remember when I haven’t drawn and painted. In 1925, I graduated from college, where I drew pretty girls in a variety of costumes – the kind the other boys liked: girls in feathers or white hair or bare shoulders or football helmets, and sick with ennui. The next year, Boardman Robinson gave me some idea of the importance of art. In 1931-33 I was in Majorca with Paul Cadmus, where for the first time I worked intensively. Since then I have lived in New York. In 1937, I married Margaret Hoening. During the past few years I have been reading E.M. Forster and G.L. Dickinson. I would like to call attention to their books.” (Jared French, American Realists and Magic Realists, 1943, exhibition catalogue at the Museum of Modern Art.)

The second statement comes some fifty years later, in 1993, five years after French died. “My work has long been concerned with the representation of diverse aspects of man and his universe. At first, it was mainly concerned with his physical aspect and his physical universe. Gradually, I began to represent aspects of his psyche until in The Sea (1946) and Evasion (1947), I showed quite clearly my interest in man’s inner reality. In 1964, without conscious prevision, I began a series of sketches that led to my present work. It may seem at first sight that this work marks a break with what went before. But it is in reality a development and a further clarification. This development has resulted in my relegating other aspects of my work to
It has been asserted that art at the present time has become only a marginal activity. If this is so, the artist can hardly be held to account. The artist presents. Society decides what it wants to accept; and whether it wants art near the center of its world.”

CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF JARED BLANDFORD FRENCH
Note: This timeline includes only works by French, Cadmus and Tooker that are mentioned in the thesis.

1904
Paul Cadmus is born.

1905
Jared Blandford French is born on January 4 in Ossining, New York.

1906
Margaret French is born.

1917
French enrolls in Asbury Park High School, New Jersey as a high school freshman.

1920
George Tooker is born.

1921
French enters Amherst College in Amherst, Massachusetts.

1925
French graduates from Amherst College, returns home to Rutherford, New Jersey, and secures a part-time position as a clerk for a stockbroker on Wall Street.

1925-27
French studies part-time at the Art Students League. Among his teachers are Boardman Robinson, Allen Lewis, and Thomas Hart Benton. French meets Paul Cadmus at the League in 1926. The two will become lovers for a quarter century.

1927
French draws Back View, Nude Learning on a Pole.

1927-28
French travels through Spain, France and Italy with friends from Amherst.

1931-33
French travels to Europe with his lover, Paul Cadmus.

1931
Paul Cadmus paints Jerry, a portrait of Jared French.

1933
French paints Monk’s Dream and Beach Scene with Nudes. The Nazi Party bans gay organizations and scholarly books about homosexuality. Reports of the murder of homosexuals within the Nazi Party are published. Carl Jung’s Modern Man in Search of a Soul is published in America. French secures employment in the Mural and Easel Painting Section of the Public Works of Art Project, the first of the large-scale New Deal art programs.

1937
French marries Margaret Hoening. Paul Cadmus, Jared French, and Margaret French combine the first two letters of their respective first names to create the title of their photographic collective, PaJaMa. They stage photos for the next decade on the beaches of Fire Island, and Provincetown and Nantucket, Massachusetts.
1938

1939

1940
French begins work on “Aspects of Man,” an intended series of 49 pictures. French paints a triptych of his three friends, Glen Wescott, Monroe Wheeler and George Platt Lynes, all nude.

1941
French paints *Figures on a Beach* and *Woman*.

1942
Robert Mizer’s earliest black-and-white photographs of homoerotic males appear.

1943

1944
French paints *Shelter*. French also paints his only portrait of his wife, Margaret.

1945
Mizer establishes the influential studio, the *Athletic Model Guild* (AMG), for his project of photographing male models. Cadmus paints *Point o’ View*. World War II ends with the liberation of Europe.

1946
French paints *Learning, Elemental Play, Help, The Sea*, and *State Park*. Cadmus paints *Fantasia on a Theme by Dr. S*. Tooker paints *Children and Spastics* and *A Game of Chess* (1946-47).
1947  E.M. Forster vacations with the Frenches and Cadmus in Provinceton, Massachusetts. French paints *Evasion*. Mizer is convicted of the unlawful distribution of obscene material, bodybuilders wearing posing straps, through the U.S. mail. He serves nine months at a California work camp.


1959-61  French paints *Business*.

1961  French moves to Rome to live with Robert Giannotta. The two will be partners until the end of French’s life.

1962  The first state statutes to remove consensual sodomy from criminal codes are passed. The U.S. Supreme Court, in *MANual Enterprises v. Day*, legalizes mail distribution of male pornography.

1968-69  French paints *Animus, Anima*.

1973  The American Psychiatric Association removes homosexuality from its official *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM).

1981  In an interview with Rutgers University historian Jeffrey Wechsler, Glen Wescott suggests that the impetus for State Park was an incident on Saltaire, Fire Island in which landowners requested guards to patrol the beaches for undesirable people.

1988  French dies in Rome, Italy.

1998  Margaret Hoening French dies in New York City.


2011  George Tooker dies in Vermont.
Illustrations

Figure 1

Tempera on composition board
24 7/16 x 24 1/2 inches
Kouros of Tenea, Glyptothek, Munich, Germany, 575-550 BC
Marble, 63 x 16.8 x 15.1 inches
Figure 3

Met Kouros, 590-580 BC
Marble, 76 5/8 inch
Figure 4

*Peplos Kore*, Acropolis Museum, Athens, 530 BC
Marble, 46 1/2 inches
Figure 5

Peplos Kore, 530 BC, Side view, Acropolis Museum
Figure 6

Peplos Kore, Detail, and paint reconstruction
Figure 8

Jared French. Photograph by George Platt Lynes, 1938.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Paul Cadmus, Photograph by Carl Van Vechten, 1937.
Brooklyn Museum, Oil on canvas, 16 x 12 1/8 in.
Figure 11

Paul Cadmus, *Jerry*, 1931, Toledo Museum of Art, Oil on canvas, 20 x 24 inches
Beach Scene with Nudes, c. 1933, Oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, private collection.
Figure 13

Jared French. *Monk’s Dream*, 1933, Private collection, oil on canvas, 29 ½ x 14 ¼ inches.
Jared French, *Portrait of Margaret French*, c. 1944
Tempera on board 4½ x 5½ in., Private collection.
Margaret French and Paul Cadmus, Fire Island, 1941
PaJaMa Photo, Vintage Silver Print, 9 x 6 ¼ inches
Midtown Payson Galleries, New York
Figure 16

Jared French, PaJaMa, 1946, Private Collection
Figures on a Beach, 1940, Egg tempera on gesso on linen mounted on panel. 21-1/2” x 33-3/8”. Private collection. Courtesy D. C. Moore Gallery.
Paul Cadmus and Jared French. Photograph by George Platt Lynes, 1937. Courtesy Kinsey Institute for Sex, Gender and Reproduction, Bloomington, Indiana
Figure 21

Figure 23

Paul Cadmus, George Tooker, Jared French, 1939, by Photograph by George Platt Lynes.
Figure 24

Paul Cadmus and Jared French. Photograph by George Platt Lynes, 1937. Courtesy Kinsey Institute for Sex, Gender and Reproduction, Bloomington, Indiana
Jared French, *Billy's Last Act. Costume design for the ballet Billy the Kid*, 1938
Museum of Modern Art
Watercolor and pencil on printed paper on cardboard with ink and pencil
17 ½ x 8 5/8 inches
Jared French, *Costume design (Billy—Full Costume), for the ballet Billy the Kid*, 1938
Museum of Modern Art
Watercolor on paper on cardboard, 17 ½ x 8 ½ inches
Figure 28

Tennessee Williams. Photograph by Jared French, 1943.
From https://www.pinterest.com/pin/493003490437150217/
Jared French. *Portraits of Glenway Wescott, George Platt Lynes and Monroe Wheeler* (three images), 1940
Egg-yolk tempera on canvas mounted to board, 16 ¼ x 7 ¼ inches
Private Collection
Physical Culture Magazine cover and interior image. March 1934 issue
Figure 31

Young Boaters, circa 1940s, vintage “beefcake” photo
Figure 32

Tony Sansone, frontal nude
Earle Forbes, Sold by Swann Auction Galleries, Lot 183, 2008, New York City
Figure 33

Jack Conant, 1940s Early Vintage Mizer photo, Tattooed Classic Beefcake
Egg Tempera on gesso panel
23 ½ x 36 inches
Private collection
Jared French, *Music*, 1943
Formerly Collection of Donald Windham, New York
Current location unknown
Egg-yolk tempera on canvas mounted to board, 9 1/8 x 14 inches
Jared French, *Homesickness*, 1942
Egg tempera on gesso panel
11 ½ x 17 ½ inches
Collection of Donald Windham
Jared French, *The Sea*, 1946, Private Collection
Egg-yolk tempera on board, 24 ½ x 36 inches
Piero della Francesca

*Death of Adam*, detail from

*The History of the True Cross*

Basilica of San Francesco in Arezzo

Fresco, 1452-1466
Figure 39

Jared French, *Washing the White Blood off Daniel Boone*, 1939
Private collection, Egg-yolk tempera on board, 28 1/2 x 32 inches
Jared French, *Lunchtime with the Early Coal Miners*, 1936-38
U.S. Post Office Building, Plymouth, Pennsylvania
Oil and egg tempera on canvas, 48 x 126 inches
Jared French
Detail of nude man, *Lunchtime with the Early Coal Miners*, 1936-38
Jared French. *Cavalrymen Crossing the River* (Stuart’s Raiders at the Swollen Food), 1939
Mural, Parcel Post Building, Richmond, Virginia
Oil and egg tempera on canvas, 82 ½ x 167 ½ inches
Jacques-Louis David, *Leonidas at Thermopylae*, 1814, oil on canvas 395 x 531 cm, Musée du Louvre
Jacques-Louis David, Academic figure of a man called 'Patroclus', 1780, oil on canvas, 122 x 170 cm, Musée Thomas Henry (Cherbourg, France)
Figures 47A and 47B

Left and right wings of *Cavalrymen Crossing a Swollen Ford*
Photographs by Emily Sachar
Jared French, *The Farm (Vegetables)*, c. 1938.
Mural for NY State Vocational Institute, West Coxsackie, NY. Location unknown.
Photo courtesy of DC Moore Gallery, New York.
Oil and tempera on canvas
Jared French, *The Far West*, 1937-38,
Mural for NY State Vocational Institute, West Coxsackie, NY. Location unknown.
Photo courtesy of DC Moore Gallery, New York
Oil and tempera on canvas
Figure 50

Oil on canvas, 5’5” x 7’5”
Figure 51

66 x 46 inches
Thomas Eakins, *The Swimming Hole*, 1885
Oil on canvas, 69.5 x 92.4 cm
Amon Carter Museum of Art, Fort Worth, Texas
Figure 53

Luca Signorelli, *Resurrection of the Flesh*, 1499-1504
Fresco, 14.3 x 11.8 x 14 meters, Cathedral, San Brizio Chapel, Orvieto
Luca Signorelli, Detail: *Resurrection of the Flesh*, 1499-1504
Fresco, 14.3 x 11.8 x 14 meters, Cathedral, San Brizio Chapel, Orvieto
Luca Signorelli, Detail: *Resurrection of the Flesh*, 1499-1504
Fresco, 14.3 x 11.8 x 14 meters, Cathedral, San Brizio Chapel, Orvieto
Figure 56

Schema for Aspects of Man, First of Five Grids, Undated
Figure 57

Schema for Aspects of Man, Second of Five Grids, Undated
Jared French. *Elemental Play*, 1946
Private Collection
Egg yolk tempera on board, 27 x 37 ½ inches
Egg tempera on gesso panel, 61.6 x 58.4 cm.
Jared French, *Strange Man*, 1943, Private collection of Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Janeway, Darien, Connecticut
Egg-yolk tempera on canvas mounted to board
12 3/8 x 13 ¼ inches
Jared French, *Business*, 1959-61
Egg tempera on gesso panel, 30 x 43 inches
The collection of Philip J. and Suzanne Schiller,
Paul Cadmus. *Fantasia on a Theme by Dr. S*, 1946
Egg tempera on composition board, 13 × 13 in. (.02 x 33.02 cm).
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
Paul Cadmus, *Point o' View*, 1945, Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, Massachusetts, Egg tempera on panel, 18 1/2 x 15 3/16 in.
Paul Cadmus, *Playground*, 1948, Georgia Museum of Art, Athens, Georgia
Egg tempera on panel, 23.5 x 17.5 in.
Figure 67

Jared French, *Evasion*, 1947, Cleveland Museum of Art
Tempera on canvas mounted to panel,
21 7/16 x 11 7/16 inches.
Jared French, Detail of whistle, *State Park*, 1946
Figure 69

Jared French, Detail of mother’s bracelet, State Park, 1946
Jared French, Detail of fighter’s tattoo, from *State Park*, 1946
George Tooker, *Government Bureau*, 1956
Metropolitan Museum of Art,
Egg tempera on wood
19 5/8 x 29 5/8 in. (49.8 x 75.2 cm)
Figure 73

Oil on masonite, 79 ½ x 122 inches
Figure 75

Jared French (for PaJaMa)
Margaret French and Paul Cadmus
1946, Nantucket
Private Collection
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