

I saw that I myself was not . . . greatly changed. I had form and drew, and moved at will, and experienced sensations of great pleasure and, above all, of magnificent health.

Beautiful, too, I suppose we shall be, every one. We shall find them (our bodies) vastly convenient.

Given: a pure heart, perfect health . . . the elimination from . . . life of anxiety and separation.⁴⁴

Phelps's Heaven serves as the third site of the representation of the dead in antebellum America. In all three the dead appear in a family/home setting, and in each the dead are defined by the moral values of innocence, purity, and sincerity that were dear to the middle-class home. In each case the dead, as represented, are kept alive in the home/cemetery/Heaven, as if the beleaguered middle-class home at mid-century, isolated from its rural roots and separated from the world of commerce, could not afford to let any of its members, and especially the young innocent dead, go, lest the home become more vulnerable to the amoral world of commerce that lurked just beyond the parlor door, and which had already, perhaps surreptitiously, penetrated the parlor and begun the long process of wresting control of the domesticated dead from their various morally protected havens.

PART TWO:

THE DYING OF DEATH: CASKETS, EMBALMING, AND THE LAWN PARK CEMETERIES

The exile of the dead began when the family began to put the dead under the control of the world of commerce, which had been barred from the middle-class home. As soon as a daguerreotypist entered the parlor of the bourgeois home to "shoot" a dead person, a contest for control of the dead body and how it would be represented, between the home and the world of commerce, had begun. It was a contest that the home and family could not win.

Over the last four decades of the nineteenth century funeral professionals took increasing control of the body and the ways in which it could be shown. Funeral directors and cemetery managers as well as casket manufacturers and florists, symbolically or literally entered the parlor of the bourgeois home and transformed the scene of death, increasing the dis-

tance between the living and the dead, rendering memorial portraits, rural cemeteries, and consolation literature obsolete. These professionals took control of the rural cemetery and "rationalized" it, wresting control from families, turning an unprofitable if lovely site of mourning into an orderly and profitable, if less appealing, abode for the dead. The professionalization of death also led to a lessening of sentimentality. The object that had been a beloved family member worthy to be kept safe in the parlor in a photographic image, and which had had a post-mortem career in Heaven, was now taken away by professionals, embalmed and made up, and placed in a huge casket, immobilized rather than invigorated by death, prized loose entirely from its homely setting and reinserted in a funerary scene from which it could no longer emerge into a new life.

The Civil War marked a watershed in the contest over who would control representations of death. For the first time a major war was photographed. Matthew Brady and his assistants pictured camps, supply trains, arms depots, and battlefields. In the last category of images were pictures of what battles left behind—the corpses of the dead.

Hegel, in his *Lectures on Aesthetics*, wrote that Greek classical art was foreclosed as an aesthetic option by the crucifixion of Jesus.⁴⁵ The image of his once-beautiful, near-naked body twisted and bloody on the Cross redefined the simple appeal of the classical male nude, and indicated that Jesus's tortured body was trying to express a meaning too grand for any body in classical repose to express. Classical bodies, Hegel argued, are the last Western example of beauty in art in which there is a fit between the body represented and the idea it is required to express because in classical art the body perfectly and fully expressed what the ancients understood about the human soul and how it can inhabit bodies.

Something analogous to the death of classical art happened to post-mortem photographic portraits after the Civil War. The terrible images of battlefield death, in which the bodies of men were depicted sprawled in public, possibly rendered memorial portraits a cultural impossibility, as the twisted body of Christ rendered serene classical representations of the body impossible. Memorial photography survived the war, but after 1860 photographs of the dead were no longer portraits.

The second effect of the Civil War on representations of the dead had to do with how the war dead were deployed in graveyards. In 1855 the Cincinnati rural cemetery, Spring Grove, had hired Adolph Strauch, a German landscape architect, as its new director. Strauch found the rural cemetery far too disorderly a place. The variety of monuments, whose size and shape each family controlled, the plethora of different chapels and crypts and statues, sprawled across a landscape heavily planted with any number of different trees and shrubs, suggested to Strauch both a lack of