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Author(s): Estella Lauter

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... one who must bear witness for those who foundered; try to tell how and why it was they, also worthy of life, did not survive. And pass on ways of surviving; and tell our chancy luck, our special circumstances.

TILLIE OLSEN, *Silences*, 1979

Leonor Fini: Preparing to Meet The Strangers of the New World

ESTELLA LAUTER

In an extraordinary series of three paintings completed in the years 1969-1971, *Capital Punishment (La Peine Capitale)*, *The Sending (L'Envoi)*, and *The Strangers (Les Étrangères)*, (Figs. 1-3), Léonor Fini shows a naked, red-haired goddess accompanied by priestesses receiving a sacrifice, wrapping and tying a child-sized cocoon-shaped bundle, and peering into a large bowl of human body parts. Seen by themselves, the paintings are horrifying, belonging as they do to a pre- or post-Christian idea of approximate activities for gods. Even within the context of Fini's *oeuvre*, they are mysterious and jolting, bespeaking destruction in a way that her earlier goddess figures do not. Through her earlier work, however, we can begin to understand Fini's visionary meaning. By tracing the development of her images, I hope to show how the paintings prepare us to meet the strangers of the new world presently under construction by feminist thought—a world no longer based upon the principle of sacrificial love.

Although Fini is little known outside the small circle of art collectors in the United States,¹ the quality of her painting needs no defense. Always independent in her life and work, she nonetheless participated in the important surrealist exhibitions and received acclaim from European artists and intellectuals throughout her career. She is one of the most talented and productive of our artist survivors.

Fini was born in Buenos Aires² of a cosmopolitan mother and a Latin father, whose tyrannical behavior soon sent Léonor and her mother to the home of her maternal grandparents in Trieste, where they remained despite her father's attempts to kidnap her. Although she drew from age five, she received no special training in art.³ After a bout with rheumatic conjunctivitis in her teens, her eyes were bandaged for two months and

pictures flooded her mind. She made drawings, paintings, sculptures, and marionettes so obsessively that her mother conceded to her desire to be an artist.⁴ Expelled from school at fifteen,⁵ she was subsequently self-educated in the rich environment provided by her mother's family and friends. As a child, she had searched the Adriatic coast for skulls and skeletons and as an adolescent drew cadavers at the morgue. She was fascinated by the pre-Raphaelites, Gustav Klimt and 15th century German and Flemish painters. At seventeen, she participated in her first show in Milan and received her first commissions for portraits. After moving to Paris in the mid-1930s⁶, she became associated with the Surrealists, showing her work with them in New York at the Julian Levy Gallery in 1937, and in Paris the following year. In the mid-1940s, when she left Paris for the island of Giglio and then Rome, she illustrated books. The first of many monographs, *Léonor Fini*, was published in Rome (Editions Sansoni) in 1945. A few years later, after returning to Paris to form a commune, she began to design costumes and scenery for the ballet and theater. A film based upon her work was produced in 1951, and in the next few years she added costumes for films to her long list of credits. In the mid-1950s, while participating in another communal living situation near Anzio, Italy, she began her paintings of the now famous female "guardians." Her works continued to be exhibited in Paris, London, New York, Brussels, Lausanne, Hamburg and other cities. In 1972, a retrospective of 100 works was shown in Japan, while fakes of her paintings began to appear on the streets in Paris.⁷

In a 1979 interview with Nina Winter, Fini commented that she understood at an early age that she would have to "revolt" in order to live as she wanted, that it would be better to make her own money than to

depend upon someone else, and that she could not live with just one person,⁸ or in just one place. Since the early 1970s, she has divided her time among homes in Paris, Corsica and the Loire valley.

Paul Eluard, Jean G enet, Giorgio de Chirico and Max Ernst were among her sponsors.⁹ It is a measure of her originality that her *oeuvre* resists all labels. For example, in a public letter to Fini, Gen et complimented her on her perfect draughtsmanship and advised her to take her place in the Louvre alongside D urer, Cranach, and Holbein by becoming a classical portrait painter. In the final paragraphs of his letter, he praises her portraits of shaven convicts (whom he sees as possible projections of what he would have liked to become) for their "cruel kindness," their embodiment of the "deep melancholy of men for whom nothing is left but to organize as a f ete a life which stands on the far side of despair."¹⁰ Gen et was a powerful writer and an influential critic, but Fini did not take his advice. Instead she created her series of guardian figures, scarcely human in their demeanor, who reverse Gen et's expectations in their explicit presentation of women in connection with the symbols of rebirth.¹¹

Neither Gen et nor any other of Fini's admirers succeeded in containing her feminist vision. Gloria Orenstein has shown how she departed from the idea of woman held by the male Surrealists, and Silvio Gaggi effectively demolished the wishful positions of Marcel Brion and Constantine Jelenski that her work is feminine but not feminist.¹² Nevertheless, in his oblique way, Gen et understood the tensions in Fini's work:

If you hold so fast to the bridle of the fabulous and misshapen animal that breaks out in your work and perhaps in your person, it seems to me, Mademoiselle, that you are highly afraid of letting yourself be carried away by savagery. You go to the masked ball, masked with a cat's muzzle, but dressed like a Roman cardinal— you cling to appearances lest you be invaded by the rump of the sphinx and driven by wings and claws. Wise prudence: you seem on the brink of metamorphosis (emphasis mine)¹³

She was indeed on the brink of metamorphosis in 1950 and as she penetrated the world of appearances in three distinct stages of her painting over the next two decades, went well beyond the kind of savagery Gen et had in mind.

Silvio Gaggi claims that the women who dominate the paintings of Fini's first and most derivative and surrealist phase (1937-1952) are protagonists in unexplained ritual activities, while the men are passive, even asleep.¹⁴ Several of the figures (for example, *Small Guardian Sphinx*, *Petit sphinx gardien*, 1948), belong to an easily identifiable tradition of goddesses who presided over animal life and were often represented as animals. "The Lady of the Beasts," as Erich Neumann calls her, was a goddess of a matriarchal and instinctual era who symbolized a purposeful, active ordering of multiple drives.¹⁵ She stands between the "Manna" figure, who dominates Fini's work in the mid-1950s, and the chthonic

figures (goddesses of darkness, night, water and earth) who also appear in the first phase of her work (notably in *Chthonian Deity Espying the Slumber of a Young Man*, *Divinit e chthonienne guettant le sommeil d'un jeune homme*, 1947).

The lifegiving quality of the earlier vegetative goddess is epitomized in the swamp, while her permanence is symbolized in stone.¹⁶ Thus *Sphinx Regina* (1946), which shows a decaying marsh, and *The Ceremony* (*La C er emonie*, 1938) where two young women tend a stone altar or oven, belong to goddess worship in its earliest phase. They are tributes to fertility with little consciousness of human concerns.

The paintings of the sphinxes are different in that they are images of the emerging power of consciousness. In *The Shepherdess of the Sphinxes* (*La Berg ere des Sphinxes*, 1942), the beautiful but dependent sphinxes are herded by a woman who has risen above them. In *Small Guardian Sphinx*, however, the sphinx is a powerful figure in her own right, surrounded by symbols of the Great Goddess (the tree, the triangle, the sistrum and so on), regal and proud. As the self-portrait *The Ideal Life* (*La Vie Id eale*, 1950) makes clear, Fini imagined that she was assuming some of the powers and responsibilities of the Goddess herself. In that painting, now familiar from Karen Peterson and J. J. Wilson's *Woman Artists: Recognition and Reappraisal*,¹⁷ she wears the horned headdress of Hathor/Isis (later identified with Demeter and, by extension, Aphrodite) and is attended by cats. The dark circular image behind her was 12 radii or branches, suggesting the tree of life from which both the sun and the phoenix are born in Egyptian myths concerning Hathor. If it is true, as Fini told both Gloria Orenstein and Nina Winter, that she always works directly from the unconscious without conscious thought of symbols, then the first stage of her painting is a remarkable testimony to Neumann's idea that an individual may recapitulate human history in her personal development. For Fini seems to emerge from the realm of the goddesses who supported human life in the agricultural and hunting eras of pre-civilization to a psychological realm dominated by the goddesses of spiritual transformation who immediately preceded the Christian era. The transitional figures of 1949-1952 are the psychological portraits that Gen et valued so highly.

From 1952 to 1958, in her second stage of imagery change, Fini was preoccupied with bald priestesses. These figures assume positions of authority within the pictorial space as manifestations of Isis/Demeter/Ceres—guardians of the egg and the phoenix, bearers of human life, spinners, seamstress, and custodians of the veil of illusion. A painting of *C er es* (1954) is the only one that shows the female with hair; it is like corn silk, long enough to reach the floor and thick enough to cover most of Ceres' body. The bald figures are priestesses enacting various dimensions of Demetrian power. They are not androgynous figures, as Orenstein suggests.¹⁸ The feminine symbols are too pervasive, and the lack of hair too

easily understood as evidence of their dedication to the principle they represent. Rather, they are embodiments of the ancient ideal of the virgin, that is, the female in this period of Fini's work is clearly "the woman who belongs to herself."¹⁹ She is not entirely human, any more than was her sphinx counterpart: her skin is too smooth, her face too expressionless, her breasts nippleless. She is distant, controlled, and unrelated to any specific time or place, yet she performs the tasks we associate with nurturance. Although attached to nature, particularly when she appears in the form of a mermaid (in *The Veil, Le Voile*, 1956), her frequent appearance with wings, or winglike garments, marks her as a spiritual figure.

The Thinker (La Penserosa, 1954) is an important painting in the series, partly because our cultural vision of a female thinker is so undeveloped and partly because the dark body in leotards seems more butterfly than human under the irridescent winglike cloak and train, which is surely the many-colored robe of Isis. Her face is hidden from view; her hands form a cup that resembles the traditional headdress of Isis. Creator, mother, protectress, Isis was also Knowledge or Wisdom—"the innate, inherent capacity to follow the nature of things both in their present form and in their inevitable development in relation to each other."²⁰ The image responds to Yeats' famous question in "Leda and the Swan" ("Did she put on his knowledge with his power")²¹ by giving us a figure who has both knowledge and power without being violated sexually to attain it. Fini's images of this embodiment of manna are notable achievements, entirely consonant with the aims of modern feminism in that they reveal the feminine roots of our civilization; but they are not yet "savage," precisely because the civilization has managed to confine the Great Goddess's power and knowledge.

In 1958, the last of these goddess figures appears in *The Friendship (L'Amitié)*, where she is shown sleeping, with her head resting on the knee of a conventional skeletal figure of Death. In *Love Without Condition (L'Amour Sans Condition*, 1958), a vaguely similar female recedes into darkness as the skeleton figure fixes his gaze upon her. Fini's biography and paintings suggest that a momentous transformation occurred in her life at this time. After 1956, she began a series of drawings featuring sorceresses, each with their own devil and death's-head; the artist was heard uttering raucous cries upon their completion.²² After she began underwater diving in 1957, her technique and style of painting underwent a significant transformation; she moved from highly polished to rough granular surfaces made of the substances of her new themes: webs, vegetal pulp, animal cells and membranes.²³ From 1958-1963, Fini abandoned the stately priestess/goddess and turned to the forms of earth itself, forms which mysteriously contain humanoid faces and shapes. The central ritual is no longer the tending of an altar as it was in the *The Ceremony* (1939); instead, it is her own gathering together of animal, plant and min-

eral forms, as in the painting from 1960 also titled *The Ceremony*.

This crucial third stage of Fini's development (Gaggi calls it a watershed²⁴) began auspiciously, in spite of the figures of death that preceded it. In addition to *Place of Birth (Lieu de Naissance*, 1958), which Gaggi interprets as an image of chthonian metamorphosis rife with death and life,²⁵ Fini produced an image of two partially human forms with expressive female faces and hair, emerging from eggs or egg sacs in a desert landscape (*The Emerging Ones, Les Devenants*, 1958). Now, instead of emerging herself from the marshy ground of the maternal sphere, Fini envisions *other* forms emerging. Her work then took an infernal turn. *Geological Memory (La Mémoire Géologique*, 1959), with its fiery color, humanoid forms, and stalagmite-shapes on the floor of a cave, suggests a scene in hell. *The Threat (La Menace*, 1960), takes place in a lush green landscape but features two grotesque bulbous forms, one orange and decaying, the other pink-turning-purple; the reality of metamorphosis is grim. In *The Fermented Earth* (1961) the fiery earth sends up shoots which may result in the dense green vegetation at the edge of the picture space, but the image suggests a lot of fire for a little warmth. In *Chimera (Chimere*, 1961), a sooty, black face peers from a hole surrounded with brilliant red. The image is vaginal, and the appearance of a tiny head at the bottom of the hole suggests a birth image. A chimera can be either a daydream or a monster, perhaps both, and during this period Fini may well have wondered if her dreams would produce only monsters. They did not. After 1961, the mood of her painting changed dramatically, becoming more beautiful without losing vitality. Daylight and lush blue and green vegetation dominate her canvases until 1964; the earth shadows, water, and flowers give birth to human forms. Markedly different from the human woman who emerges from the water in *World's End (Le Bout du Monde*, 1949) to assume conscious life, the beings in the later series of paintings are partly unformed, partly vegetative, one step from being flowers or dew drops. The human head in *The Awakening of the Flowers (Le Reveil des Fleurs*, 1962) seems to be pushing a huge oriental poppy. We are witness to the birth of a new race of human beings. The process is profoundly irrational,²⁶ "savage" in the sense of being totally uncivilized. Unlike the earlier works, these paintings are *not* susceptible to symbolic decoding.

In *Fire and Ashes (Feux et Cendres*, 1963), a distinctly female form becomes upright. In *The Sun Meal (Le Déjeuner de Soleil*, 1964), a fattened version of this woman receives a diaphanous covering and a floral hat, some version of which will recur through the 1970s, alternating with Fini's visions of nude women with brilliant red hair. One curious exception to this pattern is the image of a rigid, red-haired reclining woman enveloped in a dress of fiery shades of red with animal shapes and textures. Called *The Useless Dress (La Toilette Inutil*, 1964), it may be less related to Fini's love of costumes

than to her need to explore the forms of her "new" woman.

In *Héliodora* (1964) a new goddess has emerged. Fini's comment that the painting was "about" the disappearance and return of her cat may indicate that the red-headed vision was related to her previous images of Isis/Demeter.²⁷ The prominence of flower, fruit, and vessel imagery in her later work suggests a Demetrian presence. Fini had undergone a Persephone-like journey herself in the previous six years, and the appearance of a strawberry blonde called *Hécate* in 1965 (who recurs as a death angel and *la belle dame sans merci*) supports the notion that Fini was exploring new forms of the familiar goddess's energy. Fini's experience was more momentous than a rediscovery of Demeter: the titles and images of her paintings in 1964-1965 indicate a significant "break-through." A room is unsealed. Beings from "the other side" are seen in silhouette. That which has been absent returns. A pair of floating female figures in blue appear through a window of a bygone summer. A secret feast is celebrated. Finally, the redhead comes out of a life-size keyhole, steps off a mysterious evening train, or "guards" the multicolored, floral-shaped stemmed glassware said to be the "source." The discovery of *Héliodora* marks another shift in Fini's style (and the fourth stage of her painting). She returns to the distinct rendering of figures but incorporates the rich texture and lush color of her third stage into her new work, which now features interior dream landscapes *Héliodora* is, likewise, a figure that incorporates earlier visions, yet transcends them.

While there is no precise mythological predecessor for *Héliodora*, Fini may have in mind her own version of the sun god, Helios. Without losing any of her feminine taste or demeanor, the goddess has taken on the masculine (sun-like) as well as the feminine (moon-like) power. Explicitly, she now assumes a warlike stance.²⁸ That she is a goddess becomes apparent in the early 1970s, particularly in the three paintings illustrated, where she assumes power over the transition to life and death.

Fini's paintings after 1964 have a ritual character somewhat like that of her first stage. Often a female appears out of an unlikely place, watches over either a prone male body or a symbol of female fertility. Still, the differences are crucial. The beautiful young male (called Phébus, another name for Apollo, a sun god) whom the woman watches now has a feminine face and demeanor and is clothed in a dancer's costume (leotards with a loose, diaphanous shirt). He may indeed represent the young man that Fini prefers,²⁹ but he is still visited by the death angel (*Il s'agit sans doute d'Azraël*, 1967). The attitude of Fini's women toward their "guardian" tasks has changed; they are capable of a coldness that did not appear in the first stage. In explaining *The Accomplished Fact* (*Le Fait Accompli*, 1967), Fini said, "in a cafe full of girls, the outline of a man is drawn on the ground in chalk in the same way that police mark

out the position of a dead body. It is in this outline that the witch rebels against the social opacity of men."³⁰ Indeed, in *The Anatomy Lesson* (*Leçon d'Anatomie*, 1966), a group of four young women look with total dispassion at a blue male cadaver. In *The Treatment* (*Le Traitement*, 1972), however, Hecate seems to be giving a manicure to a deformed man whose head is enclosed in a glass box. Not only is Fini a feminist, but in the late 1960s she became the kind of feminist who tolerates only feminine males, or males under female power. Moreover, her modern version of a matriarchy differs from the version she offered 20 years earlier in its degree of sympathy for "masculine" men.

Fini's world after 1963 *seems* more related to ordinary social reality because she portrays explicit interior spaces, but it remains a visionary world nonetheless. It is indeed a modern or future (not prehistoric) world where women and beauty predominate, but Fini's vision is startlingly new.

Fini's women experience "a separate reality;" they are in touch with forces beyond themselves in a space which lies beyond the windows, doors, and screens that figure so prominently in Fini's backgrounds. Perhaps their shared awareness accounts in part for their self-assured nudity (or partial nudity), for it is as common for them to be unclothed as elegantly clothed and hatted. They seem to exist in a "liminal" reality, in a realm where they set the rules.³¹ Despite the elegance of their surroundings, the tasks they perform are not entirely pleasant. For example, *L'Essayage* (*The Fitting*, 1966) shows a tall armless blonde being wrapped and bound to an easel with string by another woman while a third looks on. *The Beautiful Lady Without Mercy* (*La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, 1969) disdainfully carries her tray of potions past a woman whose blackened foot is distorted out of shape in a soaking solution. These women talk with each other (*The Return of the Absent*, *La Retour des absents*, 1965) and they may even be lovers (*The White Train*, *Le Train Blanc*, 1966), but their attention is fixed on something besides human camaraderie. If these women are involved in a ritual of rebirth, as the Demetrian imagery suggests, it is not the human pregnancy imaged in *La Dame Ovale* (1959).

In *Capital Punishment* (*La Peine Capitale*, 1969; Fig. 1), a dead goose is about to be beheaded by a kneeling woman in leotards and short dress who looks reverently at the red-haired goddess, naked except for blue stockings, with legs spread to reveal brilliant pubic hair. A standing woman in an elaborate white dress and hat holds the knife. The setting is bare apart from a tablecloth on the goddess's table/seat. This is the first separation of woman from animals to occur in Fini's *oeuvre*, and it marks the difference between the Great Goddess of her first two stages and this goddess who exacts capital punishment of the symbolic goose. She is no longer the protectress of the old natural order, which is already as dead as the goose before the sacrificial knife touches its



FIG. 1. Léonor Fini, *Capital Punishment* (1969). Courtesy of the artist.

neck. In fact, the "sacrifice" seems cruel and meaningless because the goddess's attention is focused elsewhere.

In *The Sending* (*L'Envoi*, 1970; Fig. 2), the goddess and her *guerilleres*³² are seen again in an interior space defined only by a table two-thirds the length of an adult. They wear matching wrist bracelets and the red-haired goddess wears an arm bracelet as well. Totally absorbed in their work, they are wrapping a bulky, child-sized object in shiny translucent material. The strange being is being tied in the same way that the tall woman in *The Fitting* was tied. Fini offers no way to know the content of the bundle, allowing us either to refer back to cultures that sent their unwanted children or aged citizens away to die, or to interpret the somewhat phallic image visually. As Fini's most compelling image of women working together, *L'Envoi* is an important work. Both leader and warriors are ready for action, and no viewer, however mystified, escapes the sense of purposefulness they project. Fini neither criticizes nor glorifies the protagonists in these paintings. She merely presents her dreams as if they were fact.

The Strangers (*Les Étrangères*, 1971; Fig. 3), is probably the most disturbing of Fini's paintings. Here the braceleted goddess leans over and prepares to stir a large glass bowl containing body parts. Two women stand by, one ready with a spoon, the other turned away from the mixture; two others walk through a distant, barren landscape carrying overturned baskets on their heads. The painting is full of activity, but the gestures do not embody the same degree of confidence found in *L'Envoi*. The new goddess seems less sure creating than she was

discarding life. She is "savage" in a way that Genêt did not foresee. In his letter to Fini, he implied that the artist was holding back (clinging to fantastic images) from fear of being consumed by animal (sexual) instinct. The "wings and claws" lurking behind the paintings were part of his sense of man's degradation—the knowledge of which would show through in Fini's portraits and make her a great existentialist painter. He hoped she would abandon the appearance of civility and steep herself in the "primitive" in order to revitalize civility. But Fini's dreams took her beyond ordinary encounters with instinctual life into the realm of goddesses whose order preceded our own, out of whose partial destruction and partial transformation our civilization grew. Her dreams took her into nonhuman vegetative and mineral realms from which human life evolved before there was civilization. And finally (remembering that Fini, now in her sixties, may dare to go further), her dreams brought her to a vision of life whose basic mythic principle is not love, but energy. As she explained, "All my painting is an incantatory autobiography of affirmation expressing the throbbing aspect of being; the true question is to transpose onto canvas the sense of play."³³ The women and girls in Fini's dream world of the late 1960s and early 1970s are not asexual (as the virgin goddess/priestess of the 1950s may have been apart from childbearing), but they are not essentially loving, even toward other women, as Fini's comment on *The White Train* makes clear:

... there are two girls, alone; one is like a beautiful cow, very white and sleepy, whereas the other, much more alive, much more alert, pulls the window-shade. She does not know what she will do next, if she will kill the other or make love to her.³⁴

Fini's repeated statements of her interest in sorcery and her profoundly antisocial stance suggest that her paintings are not a critique of present day western society or an effort to establish models for a new society. Instead, they are visions of the profound change in "human nature" that is required by a collective feminist dream of female power. They are visions of a world where beautiful women are not obliged to be merciful and protecting. Indeed, the new human being over which Heliodora watches may be a collection of parts waiting to come to life. Fini's "savagery" is nothing less than a revolutionary vision of woman. Her process of seeing, and her incantatory affirmation of what she has seen, prepare us to meet the strangers of this new world. •

1. Fini's work has received little critical attention in this country. It is known mainly through the following articles and books: Silvio Gaggi, "Leonor Fini: A Mythology of the Feminine," *Art International*, 23 (September 1979), 34-8, 49; Ann Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin, *Women Artists: 1550-1950* (New York: Knopf, 1976), 329-31; Gloria Orenstein, "Women of Surrealism," *Feminist Art Journal* (Spring 1973), 1, 15-21; Karen Petersen and J. J. Wilson, *Women Artists: Recognition and Reappraisal* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), 132-33; Nina Winter, "Leonor Fini," in *Interview With the Muse* (Berkeley: Moon Books, 1979), 48-59.
2. Her birth date is given as 1908 by Nochlin, 329, but the *International Who's Who* lists August 30, 1918.

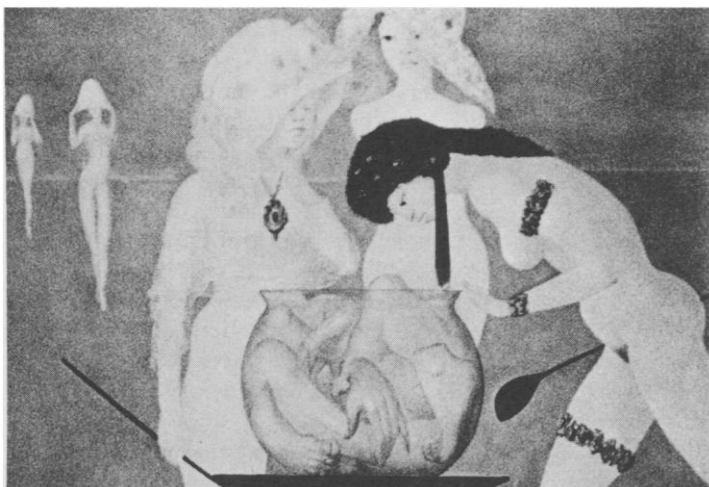


FIG. 2. Léonor Fini, *The Sending* (1970). Courtesy of the artist.

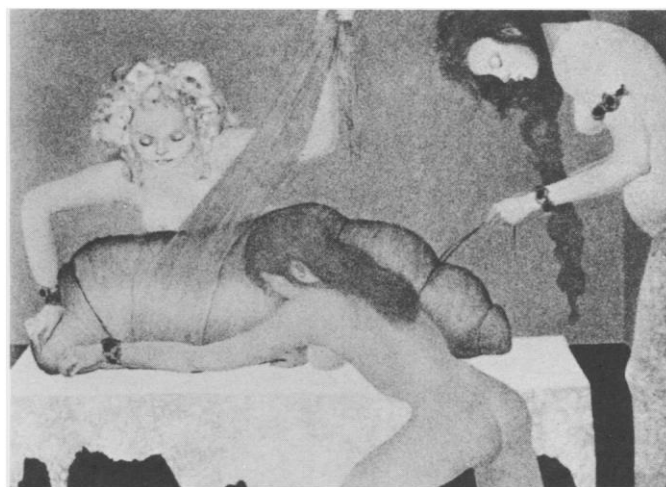


FIG. 3. Léonor Fini, *The Strangers* (1971). Courtesy of the artist.

3. Xavière Gauthier, *Leonor Fini* (Paris: Le Musée de Poche, 1973), 88. Her biographical account of Fini is by far the most complete, and I rely upon it heavily. In turn, Gauthier relies on Marcel Brion, *Leonor Fini et son Oeuvre* (Paris: J. J. Pauvert, 1955).
4. Winter, 55.
5. Gauthier, 88. Apparently Fini was more rebellious than her interview with Winter implies.
6. Nochlin estimates that she arrived in Paris as early as 1932; both Gauthier and Winter say that it was 1937.
7. Gauthier, 133.
8. Winter, 57-8.
9. In the theater, she did scenery or costumes for works written or produced by Balanchine, Anouilh, Britten, Audiberti, Menotti, Genêt and many others. Eluard, Genêt, Cocteau, Ernst and Audiberti published essays, poems and comments on her work, and de Chirico and Eluard sponsored an exhibit in New York as early as 1937. The critics Edmund Wilson and Mario Praz wrote about her in the mid-1940s. In the 1950s and 1960s, she illustrated Genêt, Baudelaire and Poe.
10. "Mademoiselle: A Letter to Léonor Fini," trans. Bernard Frechtman, *Nimbus*, 3 (1955), 37. This essay was originally published as *Lettre à Leonor Fini* (Paris: Loyeau, 1950).
11. Orenstein, 6.
12. Orenstein, 156; Gaggi, 38.
13. Genêt, 35.
14. Gaggi, 34.
15. Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* (Princeton: Bollingen, 1956), 275. Marcel Brion repeated his well-known statement that Fini's subject is "the realm of the mothers" as late as 1964 in *Leonor Fini*, the catalogue of the Eighteenth Belgian Summer Festival (unpaginated). The comment is accurate in a general way, but recent interest in scholarship concerning the goddesses encourages us to be more precise.
16. Neumann, 260.
17. Petersen and Wilson, 141.
18. Orenstein, 16.
19. Mary Esther Harding, *Women's Mysteries: Ancient and Modern* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 117-26.
20. Harding 184.
21. W. B. Yeats, *Collected Poems* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), 211-12.
22. Gauthier, 118.
23. Gauthier, 118-19. Silvio Gaggi, 35, provides the following (incomplete) translation of Victor Brauner's description of Fini's artistic process, cited in Constantine Jelenski; *Léonor Fini* (Lausanne: La Guilde du Livre et Clairefontaine, 1963), 28: On the white surface of the canvas, you throw colours by apparent chance. They are guided by an unconscious automatism that begins to establish the material kinship of your props. Next you

see the emergence of the first home ports of the construction, and they are still nebulae of an infinitely transformable kind, like so many crossroads where the imagination can hang its selection of what is to be. We are present at the birth of a chaos of colours, of a giddy chemical-mineral swirl. . . . The whole thing slowly takes the form of a tragic royal personage, forcefully manifesting a contortion, seized in time and yet changing. On its body or its envelope, the tiny forms of unknown matter grow, inventions, sometimes precious stones, sometimes life-giving liquors, or molten metals, changing to tears, drops of blood or of dew. . . . This painting is the story of matter and life beyond the present and the past.

Jelenski identifies the painting Brauner saw as *Verperthilia*, dated 1960 in Jelenski's table of illustrations. Thus the description pertains to Fini's creative process in what I call her third stage.

24. Gaggi, 35.
25. Gaggi, 38.
26. Gaggi to the contrary, 38.
27. Gauthier, 124.
28. See Monique Wittig, *Les Guerilleres*, trans. David Le Vay (New York: Avon Books, 1969), 27, for another reference to a sun goddess by a contemporary French writer. The vision of a woman "clothed with the sun" is biblical (*The Revelation of St. John*, 12, 1-6). Images of a sun goddess appear in contemporary American poetry as well and deserve further study. See my "Diane Wakoski: Poet Naturalist As Daughter Moon," unpublished essay presented at the National Women's Studies Association Conference, June 1979.
29. Gaggi, 38.
30. In Jelenski, 14-15.
31. Victor Turner's analysis of "liminal" or threshold experience has been applied to the subject of goddesses and goddess religions by Paul Friedrich, *The Meaning of Aphrodite* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 132-49.
32. Gauthier, 126, uses the term "guerilleres" for all the women in Fini's fourth stage.
33. Gauthier, 130.
34. Quoted by Jelenski, 37.

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ESTELLA LAUTER is Associate Professor of Communication and the Arts, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. Her essays on Willem de Kooning, Anne Sexton, Käthe Kollwitz and Remedios Varo have appeared in *Soundings*, *Anima* and *Spring*. She has been instrumental in establishing the Special Collection on Wisconsin Women Artists at the Golda Meir Library, UW-Milwaukee.