THE MORALS OF MARC CHAGALL

by

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A Thesis Submitted in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in Art History

at

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

December 2013

ABSTRACT

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The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2013
Under the Supervision of Professor Kenneth Bendiner

This exhibition catalog presents a selection of illustrated book suites by Marc Chagall, a twentieth-century European artist. In presenting the print suites *Dead Souls*, *The Fables of La Fontaine*, and *The Story of the Exodus*, this exhibition highlights the subject of morality as defined by the images and experiences of Marc Chagall. The three texts comment overtly on morality in various ways, and Chagall's attitude regarding the morality depicted in these texts displays both personal and historical experiences. The themes and iconography chosen by Chagall for each illustrated book also reflect the experiences of his life. Chagall's intention in depicting each text was to show the moral stature of each character, and not to dictate morality or correct immoral behavior. In the end, it was not "moral" versus "immoral" that Chagall was interested in depicting, but the essentials of the human experience.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to thank both my advisor Professor Kenneth Bendiner and second reader Professor Rachel Baum for all of their insight and leadership. Their input has been vital to the development of this exhibition.

Special thanks to Steven M. Brondino and Barbie Blutstein of Blutstein Brondino Fine Art for donating funds and for providing moral support throughout the development of *The Morals of Marc Chagall*.

Thank you to Joel Berkowitz of the Sam & Helen Stahl Center for Jewish Studies for kindly donating funds for the exhibition.

Thanks to Max Yela of the UWM Golda Meir Library Special Collections for kindly lending *The Story of the Exodus* lithographs.

Special thanks to Linda Brazeau and Christa Story for the tireless hours spent working with me in the gallery. Thank you to Kate Negri for always taking the time to answer my endless questions.

Thank you to my friends and family for always encouraging my efforts in school, work, and life. I truly could not have gotten this far without their guidance.

Introduction

The importance of the graphic media, particularly etching and lithography, cannot be overstated when speaking of the career of Marc Chagall, a twentieth-century European artist. In fact, many years of Chagall's life were dedicated to creating suites of prints illustrating particular texts of his choosing. *The Morals of Marc Chagall* explores three of these illustrative print series by placing them within the context of Chagall's career and in the context of the social/historical milieu in which they were created. This exhibition highlights the graphic suites *Dead Souls* (1923-1927), *The Fables of La Fontaine* (1927-1930), and *The Story of the Exodus* (1966).

Grouping these three series together chronologically allows the viewer to clearly see three of the major iconographical subjects that interest Chagall: Russia, France, and Judaism. Furthermore, these three texts comment overtly on morality in various ways, and Chagall's attitude regarding the morality depicted in these texts displays both personal and historical experiences. The themes and iconography chosen by Chagall for each illustrated book reflect the experiences of his life. Chagall's intention in depicting each text was to show the moral stature of each character, and not to dictate morality or correct immoral behavior. In the end, it was not "moral" versus "immoral" that Chagall was interested in depicting, but the essentials of the human experience.

Early Russian Life

In 1887, Marc Chagall was born to Chasidic Jewish parents in the Russian city, Vitebsk. The Jews of Russia were confined to an area known as the "Pale of Settlement," and Vitebsk was located within the Pale.[1] Chagall was heavily influenced by his early life spent in what has been referred to as an "exclusively Jewish milieu."[2] Beyond being exclusively Jewish, Chagall's early environment was specifically Chasidic. Chasidism is a branch of Judaism in which the formalistic academicism of Rabbinical Judaism was abandoned for the purpose of developing a personal spiritual connection with God.[3] Followers of Chasidism are known for celebrating faith with generous exuberance and charity. Chagall's early artistic output was a genuine expression of his Russian/Chasidic surroundings as he had never experienced a world outside of the Russian Pale. His images relied on overtly Russian landscapes and villages describing Chasidic society and events. Although as an adult Chagall chose not to practice the Jewish religion of his ancestors in any form, he was constantly aware of his identity as a Jewish artist and acknowledged the title with both pride and nostalgia in his art and career aspirations.[4]

In 1910, Chagall left Russia for the first time and moved to Paris for a short while. Chagall was infinitely influenced by his experience in Paris, which was clearly reflected in his artistic output.[5] Not only did French themes and landscapes penetrate Chagall's imagery, but his color palette and sense of pictorial space were affected by his time in the modern Paris milieu. In 1914, Chagall returned home to Vitebsk for what he thought would be a short stay; however, the unexpected onslaught of World War I confined him there.

Commissar of Arts

The Russian Revolution (1917–1924) began while Chagall was still restricted to his hometown. Ultimately, the Russian Tsarist autocracy was dismantled and replaced by the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, and a fully socialist government was established. Happily, the new socialist leadership supported the avant-garde agenda of modern artists like Chagall.[6] The progressive new government was also a welcome development for the Jews of the Russian Pale: the Revolution allowed them full citizenship for the first time.[7] Although Chagall remained politically aloof during the Russian Revolution, he was also easily swept up by the contagious revolutionary spirit.[8] In 1918, against the warning of his wife, Chagall became a government official by accepting the position of commissar of arts for Vitebsk.[9] Chagall's duties as commissar included: the founding of an art college and museums, holding artistic conferences, and organizing any art related events throughout Vitebsk.[10]

During Chagall's time as commissar of arts, his public events were consistently received with ambivalence; while many people who had never experienced modern art loved the grandeur of the events, others, who believed public art should be propagandistic, criticized the events harshly.[11] Chagall achieved his ultimate goal as commissar when he opened the Vitebsk People's Art College in 1919.[12] As an artist and teacher, Chagall believed in individual artistic expression. He taught a "free studio" class in which each student could choose his/her own media and style to achieve a distinctive artistic manifestation. In the same vein of freedom, Chagall staffed the college with artists from all different movements and media. One of the professors, Kasimir Malevich

(1879-1935), believed that Russian Suprematism was the only true artistic expression, and began to inundate his students with Suprematist dogma.[13] Malevich's attitude and dictation were in direct contradiction to the environment that Chagall was trying to cultivate at his college. The atmosphere at the college became increasingly hostile and less inclusive. The Suprematist teachers and students began to work behind closed doors that demanded "Outsiders Keep Out."[14]

The standoff between the Suprematist artists and those who supported Chagall finally ended in all-out mutiny: Chagall was returning from a successful trip to Germany when he found the inscription of "Free Academy" had been replaced by "Suprematist Academy."[15] In Chagall's absence, Malevich had fired all non-Suprematist members of the faculty, and had simply taken over the school. Chagall described this moment of betrayal in his autobiography:

> One day when I was away, trying as usual to get bread, paints and money for them, all those professors rebelled and drew my pupils into their rebellion… Backed by those whom I had procured for them, and now assured of bread and employment, they posted a notice, expelling me from the school within twenty-four hours. As soon as I left, they immediately calmed down. There was no one left to fight with. After taking over all the school property, even to pictures I had bought from them on behalf of the State with the intention of founding a museum in Vitebsk, they scattered, abandoning school and pupils to the hazards of fate… My town is dead. The Vitebsk course is run![16]

By 1923, the Vitebsk People's Art College had become a second-rate college of applied arts.[17] Consequently, Chagall left Russia and never returned to his homeland again. Although Chagall left Russia under unfortunate circumstances, he was actually fortunate to have fled in 1920 as very quickly, "revolutionary liberation evaporated into bureaucratic control and then repression."[18] By Vladimir Lenin's (1870-1924) death, all

modern art had been ousted and replaced by the art of the proletariat or socialist realism.[19] In fact, the display of Chagall's art was outlawed in Russia during Joseph Stalin's (1878-1953) rule beginning in 1929. The ban continued into the 1970s.[20]

After leaving Russia, Chagall worked briefly in Berlin where he spent time writing and illustrating the aforementioned autobiography, *Mein Leben* or *My Life* (1922). *Mein Leben* was Chagall's first foray into the process of printmaking – the technique of etching was used exclusively for its illustrations. After completing the text, Chagall quickly moved his small family to Paris, which remained "a kind of second birthplace" for Chagall.[21]

Dead Souls

Soon after arriving in Paris, Chagall met Ambroise Vollard (1866-1939): publisher, collector and Chagall's art dealer. Intent on fame, Vollard initially developed his career as a dealer in paintings and prints. However, another of Vollard's ambitions was to become a "great publisher of books."[22] He soon began to commission and publish illustrated books, and commissioned Chagall to illustrate a novel using etching as the medium. Vollard initially suggested that Chagall illustrate *General Durakin*, a children's book written by the Countess of Ségur (1799-1874).[23] Due to his recent experience in Russia, Chagall proposed *Dead Souls* by the nineteenth-century Russian novelist Nikolai Gogol (1809-1852), and Vollard agreed.[24] By illustrating a text with a strong Russian setting and theme, Chagall could comfortably maintain the "iconographical content" of his earlier Russian influences.[25]

Dead Souls, published in 1842, is considered a *comédie humaine*; the term refers to a text that presents an array of exaggerated human conditions.[26] The *Dead Souls* text details a vivid rural Russian setting in which each of the many characters of the novel has no moral standard or ethical integrity. The main character or "hero" of the story, Pavel Ivanovich Chichikov, created an elaborate plot in order to swindle several Russian landowners and government officials, who were easily persuaded by the charlatan into selling him their dead serfs, otherwise known as souls.[27] The dead souls that had not been taken off of the census list were purchased by Chichikov as *living* souls, so that, unbeknownst to the sellers, Chichikov could mortgage the souls to the state bank and receive a hefty sum of money. Chichikov's actions throughout the novel revealed "the

hideous moral ulcer that a society founded on slavery can never hide or heal."[28]

By creating the one-hundred and seven etchings that make up the *Dead Souls* suite in an exacting manner, Chagall was able to comment on the moral degradation that he believed took hold of Russia during his recent experience in the Russian Revolution, which first embraced the artist but ultimately forced him into an indefinite exile.[29] Chagall felt he understood the corrupt Russian mores presented throughout the text of *Dead Souls*. He felt as though Gogol was describing *his* Russia – "namely his initial triumph and subsequent disappointment in the years of the revolution, the broadness and narrowness, the extravagant idealism and paltry meanness of the Russian world."[30] And rightly so, Gogol and Chagall's Russian experiences had been equally laden with artistic success and disappointing failure, although separated by almost a century. Gogol was satisfyingly allowing Chagall a platform to portray Russia as morally corrupt and continuously fraudulent throughout the prints of *Dead Souls*.

While the experience that prompted the creation of these etchings was generally negative for Chagall, the experience of the creation of the illustrations did not reflect this negativity. On the contrary, the joys of the production of *Dead Souls* were described by Chagall's long-time friend, poet, and playwright, Ivan Goll (1891-1950):

> His wife, who ministers to his art as a nurse ministers to a sick man's fever, reads the chapter aloud to him. They keep on laughing. Ida, their seven-year-old daughter, jumps down from the piano and wants to hear the story as well, and now the fantastic situations are re-created to the accompaniment of laughter by a strange family, with all the humor and tragedy of Russia.[31]

Although the creation of the *Dead Souls* suite was a fanciful family event, Chagall was soon left frustrated by the procrastination of Vollard: the etchings remained

unpublished.[32] Although it is not certain why Vollard did not publish the *Dead Souls* suite, some speculations exist. According to the scholar Una E. Johnson, the most likely reason was that Vollard had much less financial success publishing prints, illustrated books, and bronzes, but continued to rapidly commission these items "due to the impractical measure of love he had for this work."[33] Furthermore, Vollard was infinitely picky when printing works of this nature; *Dead Souls* was printed several times after completion, but was never approved for publication by Vollard. Ultimately, the book was printed and ready to be issued but "because of some caprice of temperament or a lingering dissatisfaction with the final result," it remained as "stock not for sale" in Vollard's storage.[34] *Dead Souls* was finally purchased by Tériade Éditeur, a Parisian publishing firm, and published in 1948.[35]

Accumulatively, the etchings of *Dead Souls* depict each player as crude, unsophisticated, and vulgar. Each character has been given a positive quality or two – like the agreeable Manilov – however, the quality has been taken to such an extreme that agreeableness becomes indiscriminate indifference and imprudence. Similarly, the setting and perspective of the etchings are consistently disconcerting or chaotic, and gives the viewer a distinct feeling of anxiety. In *Farewell to Manilov from Chichikov* (fig. 1), the space of the room in which Manilov and Chichikov stand is defined by a few simple lines that do not correlate with perspectival reality. The unsettling perspective is amplified by the manner in which the players are cast: Manilov (on the left) has a shrunken, ineffectual head and Chichikov (on the right) seems to be floating with the joy of his first successful purchase of dead souls. Manilov's wife, who appears through a

door in the background, is the only grounding facet of the scene. The abruptly upturned perspective of the room, and the miniscule size of his head, reflect Manilov's feeling of futility when trying to understand Chichikov's request to purchase dead souls. Although the text states that Manilov was initially suspicious of Chichikov's request, and spent several silent minutes trying to understand the consequences of this deal, he simply could not understand the request and acquiesced.[36] After Chichikov departed, Manilov spent hours contemplating the deal, still trying to make sense of the request. However, the thought refused to be "digested in his head; no matter how he turned it over and over in his mind, he could not make it clear to himself."[37] Manilov, an agreeable man by nature, wanted the approval of Chichikov even at the cost of his own opinion. His comprehensive submissiveness allowed Chichikov's polite dictatorship to run rampant – undoubtedly reminiscent of Chagall's experience at the Vitebsk People's Art College. Both Manilov's humorous dimwittedness and easy subordination, and Chichikov's courteous tyranny, are precisely the types of social immoralities that Chagall was interested in portraying throughout his *Dead Souls* suite.

Unfortunately, many of Chichikov's subsequent dead souls deals were much less amiable. During both dinner and the negotiation of the sale of dead souls, Chichikov learned of the landowner Sobakevich's avaricious nature. Chagall illustrated Sobakevich's dinner table, *The Groaning Table* (fig. 2), directly from the text. Sobakevich boasts: "If it's pork I want, I order the whole swine to be served at table; if it's mutton, drag in the whole ram; if a goose, the whole goose! Better for me if I eat but two courses, but eat a goodly enough portion of each, as the soul craves."[38] Chagall represented the extreme

gluttonousness of Sobakevich as dictated by Gogol and depicted a dinner table that only served fully formed, un-butchered animals on platters.

Moreover, during the negotiation of the sale of dead souls, Sobakevich threatened to inform the authorities of Chichikov's undoubtedly dishonest dealings if he did not pay a certain price for each dead soul.[39] Although the men finally agreed upon a price, the drafting of the sales receipt and subsequent payment were equally difficult for the covetous Sobakevich and our excessively opportunistic hero to carry out. The *Signing of the Agreement* (fig. 3) illustrates the scene in which this exchange occurred. Gogol's text dictated that Sobakevich (on the left) refused to release the receipt for his dead souls until the money was in-hand. Similarly, Chichikov (on the right) refused to release the money to Sobakevich until the receipt was fully executed.[40] Chagall's choice to depict a scene that so overtly, yet humorously, exposed the moral character of both men as greedy, opportunistic, and untrusting, reveals Chagall's intention in illustrating *Dead Souls* – his emphasis was consistently on portraying the immoral character of each player in the novel. Unsurprisingly, both Chichikov and Sobakevich are equally incriminated by author and artist alike.

Although women do not play a significant role throughout the *Dead Souls* text, and primarily remain marginal to the male landowners, government officials, and serfs, some scenes are dedicated to portraying the moral stature of the women of rural Russia. In *The Gossiping Ladies* (fig. 4), Chagall illustrated two women who excitedly salivate over invented dramas related to Chichikov's mysterious plot to purchase dead souls. Stereotypically, the women are unfoundedly convinced that Chichikov's purchases are

simply meant to distract the townspeople from a dramatic love affair taking place between himself and the governor's daughter.[41] The gossiping women spread this idea throughout the town, and eventually, every man in town dispensed the news regarding Chichikov's purchase of dead souls, and every woman in town dispensed the news regarding the completely fabricated love affair.[42] Chagall overtly detailed the moral degradation of the Russian character, while likely describing a societal ill that affected his time spent as commissar of arts in Vitebsk. Like Gogol, Chagall did not portray these scenes with moral righteousness, but with humor and satire.

The Fables of La Fontaine

From 1668 through 1694, the French poet and moralist, Jean de La Fontaine (1621-1695), created his literary masterpiece known today as *The Fables of La Fontaine*.[43] La Fontaine's *Fables* belong to a long oral tradition of moral fables. Like those of Aesop (ca. 620-560 BCE), the atmosphere and lyrical formation of *The Fables of La Fontaine* ultimately stem from oriental legends and folktales. La Fontaine describes the goal of his tales in the lyrics that open his first book: "I sing those heroes, Aesop's progeny, / Whose tales, fictitious though indeed they be, / Contain much truth. Herein, endowed with speech – / Even the fish! – will all my creatures teach / With human voice; for animals I choose / To proffer lessons that we all might use."[44] Thus, the *Fables* are meant to be moralizing and to instruct the reader on how to lead a moral life.

Soon after publication, the *Fables* grew to be a symbol of French national pride; therefore, when Vollard commissioned the Russian-born Chagall to create an etching suite to illustrate *The Fables of La Fontaine*, many in French society disapproved. Vollard was quick to retort: the *Fables* remain "eternal and supra-national."[45] Furthermore, the *Fables* had been adopted by many nationalities and cultures throughout the years. In fact, "the famous Russian fabulist Krylov (1769-1844), whose fables are known to every Russian child and whose lines have become household words, had translated La Fontaine's fables."[46] Vollard recognized that Chagall was quite familiar with the *Fables* before approving the subject of the commission, and also believed that Chagall's whimsical and romantic nature would allow him to create images very similar to the aesthetic of La Fontaine.[47] The subject of *The Fables of La Fontaine* also allowed Chagall

an avenue to engage with specifically French themes and settings, and develop an iconography beyond his earlier Russian/Chasidic influences. After all, Chagall's "second French period," as it has been called, was like a new beginning for the artist.[48] In 1927, the year that Chagall began the illustrations of *The Fables of La Fontaine*, he explained: "For me, Paris has been a living school, with its air, its lights, its atmosphere. And it is in France that I have been reborn."[49]

Initially, Vollard commissioned Chagall to create one-hundred colored etchings – each would be a reproduction of an original gouache painting.[50] A colored etching would retain the color of the original gouache but, unlike the gouache, the etching could be mass-produced and experienced as an accompaniment to the well-known text. However, the colors in Chagall's gouaches were simply too complex and could not be properly translated across media.[51] Vollard decided to abandon the idea of colored etchings, and instead commissioned a set of black-and-white etchings. Due to the fact that these etchings were still reproductions of highly colored gouaches, these etchings maintain a much more painterly quality than the etchings of *Dead Souls*, which preserve a very linear quality. Chagall was able to successfully create an image "comparable to the building up of the color structure in a painting."[52] Moreover, eighty-five editions of the etchings of *The Fables of La Fontaine*, including the edition highlighted in this exhibition, were hand-colored by Chagall, allowing the viewer a glimpse of the impressively colored original gouaches.

Vollard, the ultimate procrastinator, similarly failed to publish *The Fables of La Fontaine* suite after the commission was completed. In a letter to his close friend Pavel

Ettinger, Chagall wrote: “Concerning my books, i.e., the engravings I did for the publisher Vollard, they sleep their sweet sleep without waking – in his storage… I don’t know how to shake him up to publish it.”[53] Again, Vollard made numerous attempts to print the illustrations, but for reasons speculated earlier, the work was never issued or sold by Vollard. While Chagall was slowly becoming more irritated by the procrastination of Vollard, he continued to work with him for numerous reasons. One reason was that Vollard was what Chagall referred to as “a great precursor,” meaning that great art followed the leadership of Vollard.[54] After all, Vollard was art dealer to some of the most famous of the modern Parisian artists including Paul Gauguin (1848-1903), Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), and Pablo Picasso (1881-1973). Furthermore, Chagall maintained a friendship with Vollard, who consistently provided engaging work, started new projects even before earlier commissions were completed, and provided financial support for the artist.[55] Much like *Dead Souls*, *The Fables of La Fontaine* was purchased and published by Tériade Éditeur in 1952.[56]

Similar to the *Dead Souls* etchings before, and *The Story of the Exodus* lithographs after, Chagall chose not to illustrate the climax of *The Fables of La Fontaine*, or the moral punch-line, but instead illustrated scenes that offered the greatest pictorial impact. As the scholar Jean Leymarie eloquently stated, the illustrations “reveal less of the allegorical and moralizing message of each tale than they do of deep familiarity with the animal kingdom and its links with Man.”[57] Actually, Chagall purposefully ignored the moralizing messages of the fables: during the creation of the gouaches, Chagall’s wife, Bella, would read the *Fables* aloud to him. Whenever Bella would approach the

moralizing ending of a fable, Chagall would stop her and say, "That, that's not for me."[58] Chagall was not expressly concerned with the morals found in *The Fables of La Fontaine*, but instead created a magical world of mischievous creatures in a French pastoral setting. Although no known reason exists for Chagall's playful attitude in ignoring the moral of each fable, one can speculate that Chagall was simply not interested in teaching or instructing the viewer in the way of La Fontaine. As concluded by Chagall's son-in-law, Franz Meyer: "In the manner of their telling and the harmony of their approach, Chagall's illustrations most accurately reflect the spirit of the text. For it is not the instructive aspect, but the fantastic features of these little stories, in which human beings and animals are assimilated, that interest Chagall."[59] Like the *Dead Souls* illustrations, Chagall was describing the essentials of the human experience which includes moral stature, whether virtuous or wicked, rather than trying to dictate an acceptable moral code.

Interestingly, one of the previously discussed *Dead Souls* etchings provided a visual template for one of the etchings of *The Fables of La Fontaine*: *Women and Secrets* (fig. 5) visually reflects the previously discussed *The Gossiping Ladies*. The two images largely resemble one another because they are depicting the same subject of two gossiping women. In the fable *Women and Secrets*, a man tested the secret-keeping ability of his wife: he pretended to lay an egg and swore his wife to secrecy. True to her "female constitution," the wife gossiped about the embarrassing incident to the neighbor.[60] The neighbor, also sworn to secrecy, told another neighbor but exaggerated the situation from one egg to three. The rumor continued to spread throughout town

until the end of the day, by which time the number had grown to one-hundred eggs.[61] While the typical moral lesson at the end of this fable is essentially non-existent, the moral of the story remains quite obvious: one should not believe or spread gossip as it rarely consists of truth. As stated above, Chagall strove to depict the scene of each fable that offered the greatest pictorial interest and not the moral message of the tale; therefore he depicted the incorrigible scene of the two women gossiping. In this image, with a very familiar subject, Chagall demonstrated a clear narrative to illustrate the moral stature of the women in the fable regardless of his ambivalence about depicting the moral lesson of each tale.

Chagall's lack of interest in the moral lesson of each fable is exemplified in the *Cat Metamorphosed into a Woman* (fig. 6). This fable tells of a man who was enamored of his cat and awoke one day to find that she had turned into a woman. The man was so enthralled with the cat-turned-woman, that he married her immediately.[62] During their wedding night, the woman saw a mouse and could not dismiss her cat instincts to hunt. The moral of the story states:

> Our nature has such power, such strength / That, once the twig is bent, at length, / Despite the years, it follows its due course, / Mocking, quite, all our vain attempts by force / To alter it: flail though you may / With lash and pitchfork, you will never / Change it in any way whatever, / Nor could your cudgels win the day. / Habit will not be held at bay: / Slam shut the door: without ado, it / Opens a window and climbs through it.[63]

Chagall chose not to illustrate the woman hunting and pouncing on the mouse in order to ruin her wedding night. Instead, Chagall portrayed the moment when the cat was transformed into the woman – a part of the fable that receives no verbal description. Chagall depicted a woman sitting on a chair; her head is in the process of transforming

from cat to woman. The shape of the woman's head is an apple, like the head of a cat, but her nose is elongated like a human. Again, in choosing to depict this particular scene of the fable, Chagall does not wish to instruct, but to fascinate the audience who are already familiar with the tale.

In the etching of *The Charlatan* (fig. 7), Chagall depicted a man preaching on the right side of the print. An ass dressed in a fine suit is seen in the distance. The fable tells the story of a charlatan who claims to have the skill to make an ass speak – not only speak but orate. A king heard the rant of the charlatan and accepted his proposition: the charlatan promised that in ten years, the donkey would be a great orator.[64] If he did not succeed, he pledged that the king could sever his head. When asked how he planned to execute the impossible task, the charlatan stated that he did not even intend to try: "Reasons the fraud: 'King, ass or even I – / One of us three – is like to die / Before the end, when all is done and said!' / And he was right, for Death demands his due. / Let's eat and drink! In ten years, one or two / Of any three of us might well be dead."[65] In the illustration, Chagall explicitly and humorously detailed the moral stature of the charlatan. The viewer is instinctively aware that the charlatan is preaching in this image; however, the viewer is also immediately aware that the message is not one to heed. The donkey is prepared to be taught by the charlatan as his elite clothing and sophisticated posture help to falsely civilize the ass. However, instead of acquiring the gift of speech, the ass silently disengages from the rant of the charlatan in the distance. This etching also reveals Chagall's lackadaisical attitude regarding the moral lesson of the *Fables*; it is only the ending of the fable that divulges the charlatan's plan not to teach the ass at all, but

simply to collect the money from the king and let nature take its course.

One of the many images from the *Fables* suite that captures the painterly quality of the original gouache is *The Two Parrots, the King and his Son* (fig. 8). The original gouache depicts a parrot with exuberantly colored feathers (fig. 9). The colors of the bird are reflected in the face of the biblical-looking king. In order to exaggerate the colors of the bird, the original gouache relied heavily upon a dark, opaque background which was translated brilliantly into etching by Chagall. The figures within both the gouache and etching seem to be illuminated from within as darkness literally and figuratively consumes them. Although the hand-colored etching lost most of its original color, the delicate balance between opaque blacks, dazzling whites, and each gradation between helps the viewer to understand the complex color structure of the original gouaches.

Similar to previous depictions, Chagall paid little attention to the instructive moral theme of this fable, which implies that absence cures both hatred and love, and simply illustrated the players of this tale who successfully retain the pictorial impact he was interested in depicting. The king and his spectacular parrot take up the majority of the etching's surface while the prince and his parrot (the progeny of the king's parrot) are subtly depicted on the left side of the print. The moral stature of each character can be understood by analyzing the facial expressions of the characters. The king shows a kind and compassionate facial expression, which is reflected in the narrative of the fable.[66] Although the prince's face is obscured by the concentrated darkness of the etching (perhaps foreshadowing the plot), the original gouache shows the prince intensely staring at the elder parrot. This stare is appropriate as the elder bird eventually

pecked out the eyes of the prince after a series of unfortunate events led to the death of the younger parrot.[67] In the end, each party of the fable is left in utter loneliness: the prince is blinded and no longer has a companion, the king is left longing for his old companion, and the elder parrot can never return to the king for fear of retribution.[68] The illustration includes each of the elements required to structure the narrative of *The Two Parrots, the King and his Son*, but without prior knowledge of the fable, or its moral lesson, the viewer is metaphorically left in the same darkness that consumes the characters of this tale.

The Story of the Exodus

The twenty-four lithographs that illustrate *The Story of the Exodus* were created after Chagall completed a commission from Vollard to produce a suite of etchings to illustrate passages from the Bible. As many of the lithographs from *The Story of the Exodus* are direct quotations of the original *Bible* etchings (1932-1956), this suite can also be vicariously linked to Ambroise Vollard. As previously stated, although Vollard was an integral part of the creation of each illustrative series discussed, it was ultimately Chagall who suggested each of the texts that was illustrated and then decided how to visually translate the text.[69] Chagall was intensely influenced by the text of the Bible both as a young child and an adult. He was interested in the Bible "not only as poetry and myth, but as a revelation of essential humanity."[70] In an essay written by Chagall in 1951, "To Israel," Chagall described how the Bible had influenced his art as a whole:

> My art is connected to the books I saw on the desks and cabinets in the synagogues, touched them with pale hands. All my colors – are the coloring of my parents. Pink, violet, green and blue – the colors that touched me so deeply when I watched my Bella and her girlfriends from near and far. Their skin and color are perhaps the same as Rachel's, Rebecca's, and Leah's.[71]

The importance of the Bible cannot be overstated when speaking of the art of Chagall, who considered the text to be "the greatest source of poetry of all time."[72]

Chagall's original *Bible* etchings were started in 1932 (fig. 10), after completing another round of preliminary gouaches for Vollard.[73] However, the publication of Chagall's etchings was delayed for a third time: Vollard was forced to cancel the commission after forty etchings had been completed because of an intense financial

crisis consuming France in 1934.[74] Although Chagall had maintained a relatively positive relationship with the "Christian Vollard" in the past, a letter from Chagall to his friend Yosef Opatoshu (1886-1954) indicated that both Christian and Jewish publishers alike were refusing to publish his modern *Bible* etchings.[75] In 1936, just three years before Vollard's untimely death, Chagall wrote that he finally wanted "to finish with Vollard."[76] Although Chagall continued to create etchings for the suite without a publisher, the project was again halted during the upheaval of World War II. The suite remained unfinished until after the war.[77] In 1956, Tériade Éditeur again picked up where Vollard left off, and published the illustrations upon completion.[78]

World War II officially began when France and England declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939.[79] The declaration of war was brought on by the German invasion of Poland two days earlier; however, by this time, the Nazis had already annexed the nation of Austria, taken the Republic of Czechoslovakia by non-violent force, and had begun the mass genocide of European Jews known as the Holocaust. On May 12, 1940, Germany responded to the declaration and invaded France.[80] Just one month later, Paris fell to the Nazis who now occupied three fourths of the nation. The citizens of France reacted with panic and fled south in astonishing numbers, away from the Nazi occupation. Unwilling to accept the danger around them, the Chagall family stayed in France but similarly fled south.[81] On October 3, 1940 the French Vichy Government (run by Nazi collaborators) passed antisemitic laws ousting Jews from positions of public and academic life. This telling act finally awoke Chagall and his small family to the dangers of the Nazi occupation; by the time they understood that they must flee Europe completely,

the Chagalls were stuck in France and could not afford the passage to America.[82]

However, in America, organizations were set up to help save those under threat in Europe – the most famous of which was the Emergency Rescue Committee.[83] Luckily, Varian Fry (1907-1967), one of the leaders of the Emergency Rescue Committee, made Chagall a priority. In January 1941, American visas were secured for both Chagall and Bella.[84] However, their daughter, Ida, had not yet received her visa, which made leaving France almost impossible for the tight-knit family.[85] On April 9, 1940, the hotels in Marseilles that housed Chagall – and many other Jewish refugees – were targeted by the Nazis: Chagall was rounded up with the other Jewish men at the hotel and arrested. To the relief of Bella and Ida, the Emergency Rescue Committee managed the release of Chagall; unfortunately they could not help the dozens of other Jews being persecuted. Now frantically aware of the danger they faced, Chagall and Bella were forced to leave France for America on May 7, 1940.[86] Chagall and Bella ambivalently left Ida, Chagall's art, and Paris behind – unsure if they would ever see any of them again. Although Chagall was officially out of danger in America, news of the devastation in Russia during World War II left him feeling continuously anxious. His and Bella's families were still living in Russia and there would be no word of their safety. Some of his fears could finally be quelled when Ida and her husband (at the time) finally joined him in America.[87] The Chagall family spent the remainder of World War II safely in America.

On August 26, 1944, Chagall received news that Paris had been freed from Nazi invasion and sought a hasty return to Paris. Before they could depart, Bella unexpectedly fell sick and died.[88] Chagall was devastated and could not paint for almost a year – first

the extreme fear and anxiety he suffered from the unknown devastations of the Holocaust, and now the death of his true love. Chagall's sadness over the Holocaust became enveloped in his sadness over Bella's death: "As news poured in through 1945 of the Holocaust at the European concentration camps, Bella took her place in Chagall's mind with the millions of Jewish victims. Maybe Chagall was trying to acknowledge a poetic truth: exile from Europe had sapped Bella's will to live."[89]

Chagall was able to find strength through national pride, and began to show support for the founding of the Jewish nation of Israel. Israel was founded in 1948, after the devastation of the Holocaust left hundreds of thousands of Jews displaced from both their loved ones and their European homes (a feeling that Chagall could easily relate with at the time).[90] Even before the war, Chagall was interested in the idea of Zionism, or the founding of a Jewish national homeland.[91] Before beginning the illustrations for the original *Bible* etchings in 1931, Chagall made a trip to see the land of his forefathers and mothers. During the journey, he visited a kibbutz; kibbutzim are Jewish communal settlements (usually agricultural) in what was then known as Palestine.[92] Chagall was clearly sympathetic to their cause as he stated that he "even wanted to live among them."[93] This sentiment continued through the 1940s, and in response to the Holocaust Chagall became adamantly pro-Israel. Moreover, when Israel came under attack during the Six-Day War in 1967, Chagall's support was resolute. He wrote:

> Now the Semitic nations have arisen, jealous of our hard-earned piece of bread, our burning national ideal, our national soil. They want to show that, like other nations, they are also anti-Semites. They want to choke us as the Pharaohs of old. But we crossed the sea of the ghettoes, and our victory was eternalized in the [Passover] Haggadah.[94]

It is clear through his own writings, that Chagall not only supported the nation of Israel, but also viewed the Haggadah, or the telling of the story of Passover, which is encompassed in the text of the Exodus, as a metaphor for the larger idea of Zionism.

Chagall began creating *The Story of the Exodus* lithographs in 1966; and, like the post-Holocaust images of the *Bible* etchings, the story and images became "an affirmation of Jewish history, culture, and religion in the face of near extinction."[95] In *The Story of the Exodus*, the message of Jewish survival is overt: the story begins with Moses leading the enslaved Israelites out of Egypt and into the desert in hopes of finding God's Promised Land. During their lengthy journey, Moses receives the Ten Commandments from God on Mount Sinai. Afterwards, the Israelites accept the covenant of God and are forevermore the Biblical "chosen people."[96]

Although very little discourse regarding *The Story of the Exodus* lithographs exists, a great deal of attention has been paid to both the *Bible* etchings created for Vollard, and the later museum dedicated to Chagall's "biblical message" or the Musée National Message Biblique Marc Chagall in Nice, France (fig. 11). The museum houses over five-hundred works created (and donated) by Chagall, all containing Biblical themes, narratives, or characters; the diverse media of the works includes oil paintings, gouaches, etchings, sculpture, sketches, and more.[97] As the *Exodus* suite visually relies upon the *Bible* etchings or other biblically themed works collected in the aforementioned museum, each biblical depiction contains a similar unifying message; therefore, the meaning of each of Chagall's many biblical works can be carefully analyzed and occasionally used interchangeably.

Overall, the Bible tells a series of moralizing tales according to the Judeo/Christian dogma; however, through his illustrations Chagall was trying to express something different. In 1973, to correspond with the opening of his Biblical Message Museum, Chagall wrote an essay called "The Biblical Message." The essay explained: "To my way of thinking, these paintings do not illustrate the dream of a single people, but that of mankind… It is not up to me to comment on them. Works of art should be able to speak for themselves."[98] Chagall did not want his work to speak only to Judeo/Christians, but to all of humanity regardless of religious affiliation. Therefore, Chagall's ultimate biblical message was an attempt to create artistic universalism through the biblical narrative – for our purposes, *The Story of the Exodus*.

Inevitably, illustrating the text of the Bible became a task of illustrating the moral stature of the heroes that Chagall knew as his Jewish forefathers and mothers. Chagall communicated the moral message of the story through means of an emotionally rich humanity to which any viewer could relate. The emotionality displayed by Chagall's illustrations is conveyed through depictions of universal gesture and facial expression, despite the fact that he was using the Yiddish text of a specifically Jewish Bible to define his images.[99] Still, Chagall's biblical figures "possess a unique power of gesture… [that] captivates us by the homely naturalness and sincerity of their movements."[100] Both scholar Jean Leymarie and psychologist/author Erich Neumann accurately describe Chagall's biblical works as the "involvement of the individual with the universal."[101] In other words, while Chagall was striving for a universally understood message of morality, he was still using his own personal iconography to define the illustrations, an

iconography that relied heavily upon his early Jewish/Chasidic experiences. In concurrence with Meyer Schapiro and other scholars, throughout the scenes and depictions of *The Story of the Exodus*, I detect a specific "Jewish awareness, with its strong ethical and communal content and longing for Zion."[102] While Chagall maintained a universal expression of the moral stature of the players in the text, his iconography and the scenes he chose for illustration preserve specifically Jewish themes.

Throughout the *Exodus* suite, the hero of the story, Moses, is depicted as a kind and compassionate patriarch for the Israelites who eventually become the Jewish nation. He is visually defined by his great white beard and the rays of God's light that grace his face. Moses' rays sometimes have a horn-like appearance stemming from historical depictions such as Michelangelo's (1475-1564) *Moses* sculpture (ca. 1513-1515) housed within the church of San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome.[103] In the lithograph, *Moses Looks Upon the Toiling Israelites* (fig. 12), Moses is immediately recognizable on the left side of the lithograph, and is observing the Israelites working under the enslavement of the Egyptians. Since Chagall did not want to get caught up in storytelling while illustrating the *Exodus*, it was important for the accompanying text to illuminate the overall narrative: "And in those dayes, when Moses was growen, he went foorth unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens."[104] Each Israelite is portrayed hauling a sack to an undisclosed location – the Israelites literally carry their burden of slavery. A pyramid appears in the background landscape of the image, also referring to the slave labor of the Jews for Egyptian profit. As a Jew, who had typically been exiled from two locations throughout his life, and had vicariously witnessed the inhumanities of the Holocaust

(including slave labor); the metaphorical burdens of the Jews must have been a poignant subject for Chagall to undertake.

Each of the *Exodus* lithographs, including *Moses Looks Upon the Toiling Israelites*, offers a "historical mythology and the imaginary world of [Chagall's] his childhood."[105] In other words, the enslaved Israelites are represented as both people from the biblical past with oriental clothing, and people from the Eastern European present, or Chagall's idea of a modern-day Jew.[106] Moses' reaction to the Israelite's suffering is one of explicit empathy: he places his hand over his heart in order to convey his compassion and concern. The gesture and expression of Moses flawlessly express Chagall's intentions of revealing the essential humanity that reflects a universal morality. The pitiful toiling of the unjustly enslaved Israelites is as pervasive as the compassionate response from Moses; the moral stature of each player is intuitive through gesture and/or facial expression. Moreover, this depiction is heavily influenced by the Jewish belief that community, or "brethren," offers an important spiritual bond that needs to be maintained. Moses' spiritual strength was diminished because his brethren were being persecuted by their Egyptian captors, and Chagall's choice to depict that message shows his belief in the strength of the Jewish nation to endure despite the events of the past and the recent events of the Holocaust.

After Moses led the Israelites to safety and away from their Egyptian captors by miraculously parting the Red Sea, Moses and the Israelites sang and danced in order to praise God. The Bible text dictated that "Miriam the prophetesse, sister of Aaron, tooke a timbrell in her hande, and all the women came out after her with timbrells and

dances."[107] Chagall faithfully depicted this scene in the *Dance of Miriam* (fig. 13). The lithograph portrays Miriam and three other women lifting their arms in rejoicing praise while their bodies sway with a universal gesture of dance. Not only does the illustration of Miriam's joyful dance reflect the essential humanity and universal morality that Chagall strove to create through his biblical illustrations, but it also clearly reflects his early Chasidic upbringing. Movement and dance are an integral part of Chasidic worship and prayer. One reason for this tradition is that movement and dance were used in the religious rituals of the Jewish nation during ancient times.[108] In fact, *Laws and Custom in Hasidism* states that, "women, especially, excelled in this, and on every joyous occasion or festival they would go out with tambourines and dancing."[109] The circle is completed as the ancient act that Miriam performed eventually led to the Chasidic tradition that Chagall surely witnessed and practiced in his youth, a practice that undoubtedly informed his depiction of the *Dance of Miriam*. Other specifically Jewish elements penetrate this depiction: birds symbolize joyful expression and celebration in the Chasidic tradition and may be the reason for the depiction of the birds to the left of Miriam.[110] Although Chagall ultimately accomplished his goal of depicting a universally understood act of moral righteousness, or celebratory dance, much of the iconographical content of the illustration was directly influenced by the Jewish world in which Chagall was reared. The meaning of this print, and many others, is amplified when seen through a Jewish/Chasidic lens.[111]

The final scene of the *Exodus* suite depicts the continuing passage of Moses and the (now) Jewish nation to the Promised Land, led, quite literally, by a cloud in the

Continuing Exodus (fig. 14):

> Nowe when the cloude ascended up from the Tabernacle, the children of Israel went forwarde on all their journeys. But if the cloude ascended not, then they journeyed not till the day that it ascended. For the cloude of the Lorde was upon the Tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel thorowout all their journeys.[112]

Chagall faithfully illustrated the text, which is required for proper contextualization of this image: the cloud of the Lord is brought to Earth by an angel (who represents the presence of God throughout the illustrations), and was followed by a massive group of people that represent the Jewish nation, with Moses elevated and apart from the crowd. Through use of body language, Chagall was able to depict Moses in both of his roles as compassionate patriarch and obedient servant to God. Moses presents the tablets of the Ten Commandments to the Jewish crowd in order to express his role as leader of the Jewish nation. However, Moses also humbly kneels to acknowledge that he is only able to lead through the power and will of God. The moral grandeur that Moses presents to the viewer in this scene is a universal expression of the essential human spirit with which Chagall has endowed him.

In the crowd of the Jewish nation, Chagall again chose to depict both contemporary Russians and biblical characters of the past.[113] This temporal/spatial confusion is especially important in the illustration of the *Continuing Exodus*; Chagall strongly presents his support for the Zionist movement through his depiction of contemporary Jewish life searching for their promised homeland. Chagall's message of Zionism is overtly tied to his own Jewish heritage. As previously stated, during his life Chagall had been exiled, not only from his hometown of Vitebsk, but also from his

second home of Paris. Although Chagall was protected during the Holocaust, his Jewish brethren were inhumanely persecuted and murdered by the Nazis. Both of these experiences, as well as his proud heritage, and nationalist attitude made Chagall very sensitive to the need for a Jewish national homeland. While Chagall succeeded in creating a lithographic suite that contained a universal message of morality, he used a specifically Jewish narrative, along with Jewish iconography that cannot be interpreted universally. It is not until one understands the importance of Zionism for Chagall that this depiction can be understood as a statement of support for the movement.

Conclusion

The Morals of Marc Chagall does not seek to evaluate the moral character of Marc Chagall, but merely considers the moral portrayal within three of his illustrative suites. As seen through the humorous yet heavy-handed (im)moral depictions of the characters of *Dead Souls*, or its illustrative moral antithesis, *The Story of the Exodus*, Chagall's attitude towards depicting morality remained flexible, and responded to both personal and worldly experiences. Even though the depiction of characters in *Dead Souls* is heavy with moral commentary, Chagall was not dictating the scenes with moral righteousness, but with humor and satire while maintaining the strong Russian iconography of his early artistic life. Similar to *The Fables of La Fontaine*, his intention was not to correct immoral behavior, but simply to show the moral stature of each player within the text. The illustrations of the *Fables* allowed Chagall an avenue to explore the portrayal of essential humanity through an aesthetic inspired by the French culture that he adopted after being exiled from Russia. Lastly, *The Story of the Exodus* lithographs follow a similar pattern: Chagall created a depiction of each biblical character that displayed that character's moral stature. Instead of commenting on the moral righteousness or degradation present in the stories of the Bible, and how humanity should or shouldn't follow their example, Chagall was simply depicting morality as dictated by the text. In the end, Chagall was not interested in teaching moral lessons, but was interested in depicting human nature, whether virtuous or wicked.

ENDNOTES

1. Franz Meyer, *Marc Chagall: Life and Work*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1957), 21.
2. Alfred Werner, *Chagall: Watercolors and Gouaches*, (New York: Watson-Guptill, 1977), 17.
3. "Hasidism," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed August 23, 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/256573/Hasidism.
4. Early in his career, Chagall was a proponent of creating a Jewish art museum. He included specifically Jewish iconography and subject matter in his artwork and writings throughout his life. He also accepted commissions to create public art with Jewish themes for buildings such as the Hadassah Hospital Synagogue in Jerusalem. See Benjamin Harshav, *Marc Chagall and his Times: a documentary narrative*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 351-361, 874.
5. Meyer, *Marc Chagall: Life and Work*, 93.
6. "October Revolution," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed August 23, 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/888785/October-Revolution.
7. Jackie Wullschlager, *Chagall: A Biography*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 224.
8. Ibid., 229.
9. Harshav states that Chagall was not officially commissar of arts for Vitebsk, but that he was simply "Plenipotentiary on Matters of Art in Vitebsk Province." Harshav insists that Chagall could not have been a commissar because he was never a communist, but that the title of commissar might have been granted to Chagall as a nickname. Harshav is the only author I could find who acknowledged this possibility. Even Chagall called himself a commissar in his autobiography. See Harshav, *Marc Chagall and his Times*, 518; and Marc Chagall, *Marc Chagall: My Life*, trans. Elisabeth Abbott (New York: The Orion Press, 1960), 141.
10. Wullschlager, 229.
11. Ibid., 230.
12. Meyer, *Marc Chagall: Life and Work*, 268.
13. Kasimir Malevich was the father of the Suprematist movement and wrote the Suprematist Manifesto. The Suprematist movement was characterized by geometric, orderly, non-objective and non-utilitarian artwork. All imitation of nature was rejected. Geometric proportions were used to "retain validity for all time." This movement was seen as a means to obtaining absolute order for all humanity. See L. Hilberseimer, "Introduction," in *The Non-Objective World: The Manifesto of Suprematism*, Kasimir Malevich, (Mineloa: Courier Dover Publications, 2003), 7.
14. Wullschlager, 243.
15. Ibid., 272.
16. Chagall, 144-146.
17. Wullschlager, 249.
18. Ibid., 234.
19. Ibid., 249.
20. Werner, 14.
21. Benjamin Harshav, *Marc Chagall on Art and Culture*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 173.
22. Ambroise Vollard, *Recollections of a Picture Dealer*, trans. Violet M. MacDonald, (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1978), 251.

23. Wullschlager, 303.
24. Although Vollard sometimes suggested specific texts for artists to illustrate, he "unfailingly went along with the artists' preferences." See Una E. Johnson, *Ambroise Vollard, Editeur: Prints, Books, Bronzes*, (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1977), 23.
25. Werner Haftmann, *Marc Chagall: Gouaches, Drawings, Watercolors*, trans. Robert Erich Wolf, (New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1984), 83.
26. Walter Erben, *Marc Chagall*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1966), 86.
27. Nikolai Gogol, *Dead Souls*, trans. by Bernard Guilbert Guerney, (London: Yale University Press, 1996).
28. Susanne Fusso, "Introduction," in *Dead Souls*, Nikolai Gogol, trans. Gernard Guilbert Guernry, (London: Yale University Press, 1996), x.
29. Wullschlager, 246.
30. Meyer, *Marc Chagall: Life and Work*, 322.
31. Erben, 88.
32. Harshav, *Marc Chagall and his Times*, 450.
33. Johnson, 15.
34. This practice of not publishing completed prints was typical of Vollard. Similarly, he did not publish works by Georges Rouault (1871-1958), Georges Braque (1882-1963), André Derain (1880-1954), and more. See Johnson, 28, 33, and 38.
35. Roy McMullen, *The World of Marc Chagall*, (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1968), 106.
36. Gogol, 30.
37. Ibid., 33.
38. Ibid., 94.
39. Ibid., 99.
40. Ibid., 102.
41. Ibid., 181-182.
42. Ibid., 187.
43. Erben, 98.
44. Jean de La Fontaine, *The Complete Fables of Jean de La Fontaine*, trans. Norman R. Shapiro. (Chicago: University of Ohio Press, 2007), 1.
45. Franz Meyer, *Marc Chagall: His Graphic Work*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1957), 21.
46. Erben, 98.
47. Again, Chagall suggested the text that would be illustrated and Vollard approved. See Werner Haftmann, *Marc Chagall*, trans. Heinrich Baumann and Alexis Brown, (New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1984), 84.
48. Harshav, *Marc Chagall and his Times*, 317.
49. Ibid., 317.
50. Meyer, *Marc Chagall: His Graphic Work*, 20.
51. James Johnson Sweeney, *Marc Chagall*, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1946), 54.
52. Meyer, *Marc Chagall: His Graphic Work*, 21.
53. Harshav, *Marc Chagall and his Times*, 447.
54. Johnson, 18.
55. Although I was unable to find specific prices that Chagall received from Vollard for print commissions, he received between one and two thousand francs per gouache produced for The Fables of La Fontaine. It was most typical for Vollard to pay artists per artwork,

and not a commission upon sale, insinuating that Chagall ways paid by Vollard even without the publication of his prints. See Wullschlager, 335; and Johnson, 21.

56. McMullen, 106.
57. Jean Leymarie, *Marc Chagall: Work on Paper/Selected Masterpieces*, (Washington, D.C.: International Exhibitions Foundation, 1975), 9.
58. Didier Schulmann, "Chagall illustrateur des Fables de La Fontaine ou Comment quitter la Russie et devenir français." in *Marc Chagall: les fables de La Fontaine*, (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1995), 26.
59. Meyer, *Marc Chagall: His Graphic Work*, 21.
60. Although the fable acknowledges that men are also guilty of gossip, gossiping is cast as a particular immorality of woman-kind. See La Fontaine, 195.
61. Ibid., 195-196.
62. Ibid., 47.
63. Ibid., 48.
64. Ibid., 147.
65. Ibid., 148.
66. Ibid., 281-283.
67. Ibid., 282.
68. Ibid., 283.
69. Meyer, *Marc Chagall: Life and Work*, 383.
70. Meyer Schapiro, "Chagall's Illustrations for the Bible," in *Modern Art: 19th & 20th Centuries*, (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1978), 121.
71. Harshav, *Marc Chagall on Art and Culture*, 120.
72. Ibid., 172.
73. Charles Marq and Pierre Provoyeur, *Musée National Message Biblique Marc Chagall*, (Paris: Editions des Musées Nationaux, 1973), 63-88.
74. Wullschlager, 354.
75. Harshav, *Marc Chagall and his Times*, 440.
76. Ibid., 450.
77. Kenneth Bendiner, *The Bible Illustrations of Marc Chagall*, (Milwaukee: Patrick & Beatrice Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University, 1989), 7.
78. McMullen, 106.
79. Michael Berenbaum, *The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust as told in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, second edition, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 56.
80. Ibid., 39-56.
81. Wullschlager, 384.
82. Ibid., 386.
83. Berenbaum, 56.
84. Numerous individuals helped in securing the visas for Chagall by both donating funds and supplying demand for his artistic skill. Alfred Barr (1902-1981) and Solomon Guggenheim (1861-1949) were instrumental in securing visas for Marc, Bella, and Ida Chagall. See Wullschlager, 389.
85. Ibid., 391.
86. Ibid., 393.
87. Ibid., 398.
88. The actual cause of Bella Chagall's death is contested by scholars. Wullschlager states that her death was caused by a simply streptococcus infection that went untreated by

penicillin, which is consistent with reports that Bella was plagued by a sore throat in the days leading to her death. According to Harshav, her official death certificate indicates "Diabetes Milletus" as the cause of death. See Wullschlager, 389; and Harshav, *Marc Chagall and his Times*, 543-544.

89. Wullschlager, 416.
90. Berenbaum, 207.
91. "Zionism," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed September 15, 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/657475/Zionism.
92. "Kibbutz," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed September 28, 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/317247/kibbutz.
93. Harshav, *Marc Chagall and his Times*, 376.
94. Harshav, *Marc Chagall on Art and Culture*, 168.
95. Bendiner, 7.
96. *The Story of the Exodus*, text compiled by Dr. Rev. G. Daniel Mostow and Ann Siller, (New York: Leon Amiel Publishers, Inc., 1966).
97. Marq and Provoyeur, 25.
98. A universalist message was also reflected in Chagall's comments in the documentary: *Homage to Chagall*, directed by Harry Rasky (1976; Canada: Canadian Broadcasting Corp., Distributed by Kultur, 2009), DVD. See Harshav, *Marc Chagall on Art and Culture*, 173.
99. Chagall was not adept at reading Hebrew and asked his Yiddish speaking friends to find him a Yiddish Bible for the illustrations. See Wullschlager, 325.
100. Schapiro, 128.
101. Erich Neumann, "Chagall and the Bible," in *Creative Man: Five Essays*, trans. Eugene Rolfe, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 136; and Leymarie, 11.
102. Both authors refer directly to Chagall's selection of images within *The Bible Series* etchings. See Schapiro, 124; and Jacques Maritain, *Art and Poetry*, trans. E. de P. Matthews, (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, Inc., 1968), 21.
103. Schapiro, 126.
104. *The Story of the Exodus*, 17.
105. Harshav, *Marc Chagall and his Times*, 808.
106. The image of a Russian man hauling a sack has also been identified by numerous scholars as Chagall's symbolic equivalent to the "wandering Jew." See Rebecca Lyle Cleek, "Marc Chagall's The story of the exodus lithographs: his modern interpretation of a biblical theme" (master's thesis, University of California, Riverside, 1990), 44; and Haftmann, *Marc Chagall*, 9.
107. *The Story of the Exodus*, 50.
108. Aharon Verthaim, *Law and Custom in Hasidism*, (Jersey City: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1992), 162.
109. Ibid., 162.
110. Cleek, 60.
111. Werner, 17.
112. *The Story of the Exodus*, 104.
113. Schapiro, 128.

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APPENDIX A: FIGURES

Figure 1. *Farewell to Manilov from Chichikov*, Plate XII, from *Dead Souls*, 1923-1927, Etching on wove paper, UWM Art Collection

Figure 2. *The Groaning Table*, Plate XXXV, from *Dead Souls*, 1923-1927, Etching on wove paper, UWM Art Collection

Figure 3. *Signing the Agreement*, Plate XXXVII ter, from *Dead Souls*, 1923-1927, Etching on wove paper, UWM Art Collection

Figure 4. *The Gossiping Ladies*, Plate LXVI, from *Dead Souls*, 1923-1927, Etching on wove paper, UWM Art Collection

Figure 5. *Women and Secrets*, from *The Fables of La Fontaine*, 1927-1930, Hand-colored etching on Japon Nacre, UWM Art Collection

Figure 6. *The Cat Metamorphosed into a Woman*, from *The Fables of La Fontaine*, 1927-1930, Hand-colored etching on Japon Nacre, UWM Art Collection

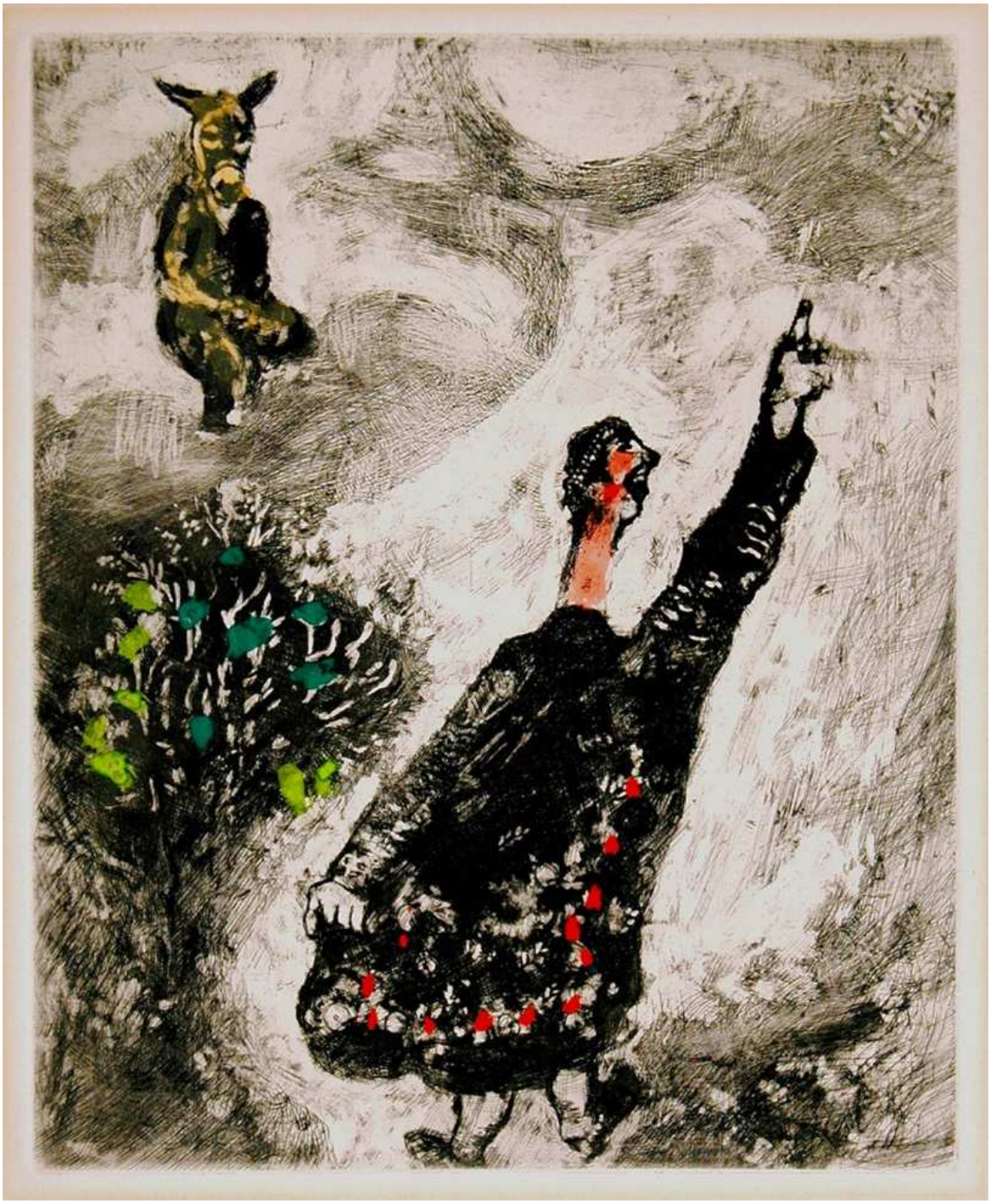

Figure 7. *The Charlatan*, from *The Fables of La Fontaine*, 1927-1930, Hand-colored etching on Japon Nacre, UWM Art Collection

Figure 8. *The Two Parrots, the King and his Son*, from *The Fables of La Fontaine*, 1927-1930, Hand-colored etching on Japon Nacre, UWM Art Collection

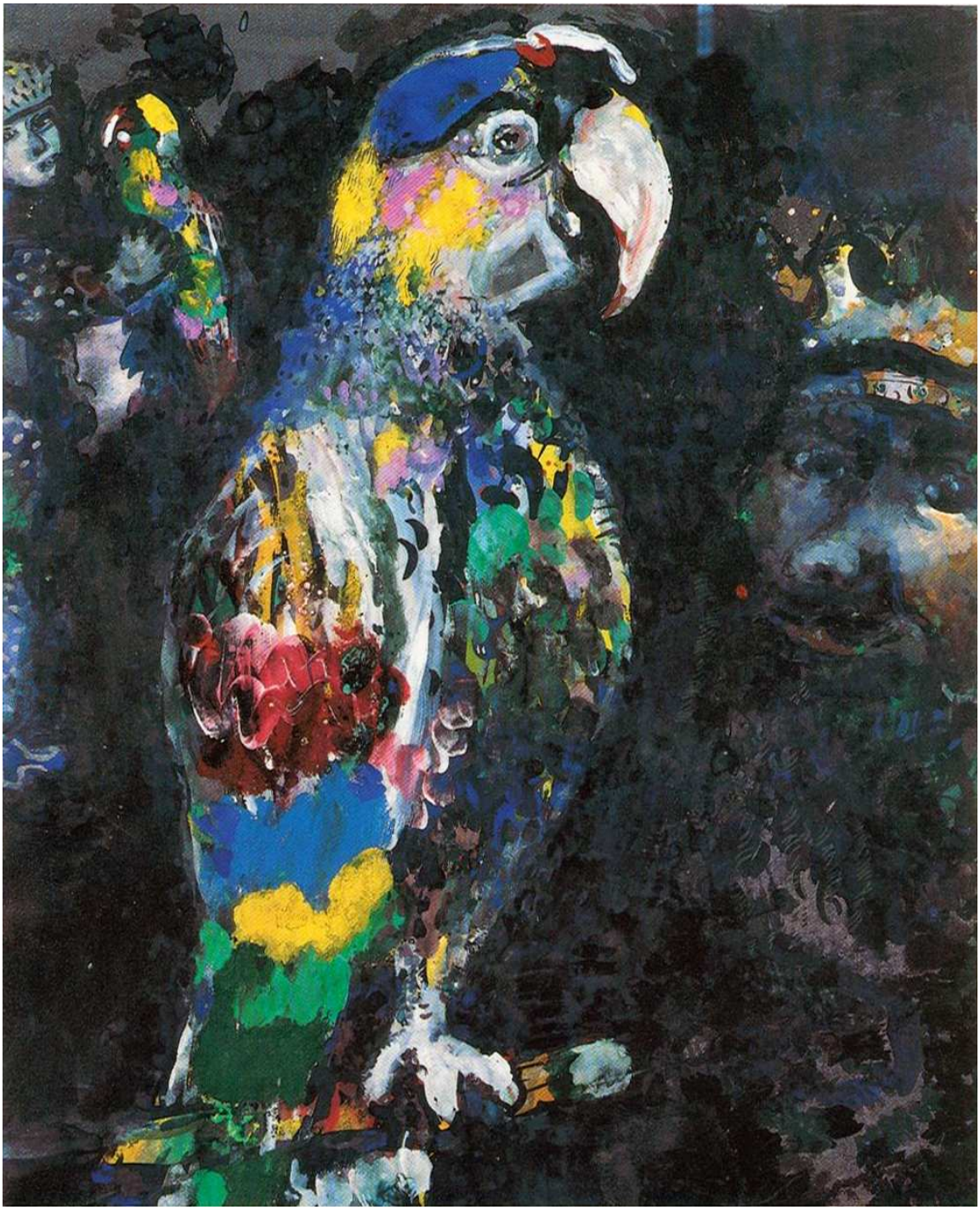

Figure 9. *The Two Parrots, the King and his Son*, from *The Fables of La Fontaine*, 1927, Gouache, Private Collection, London

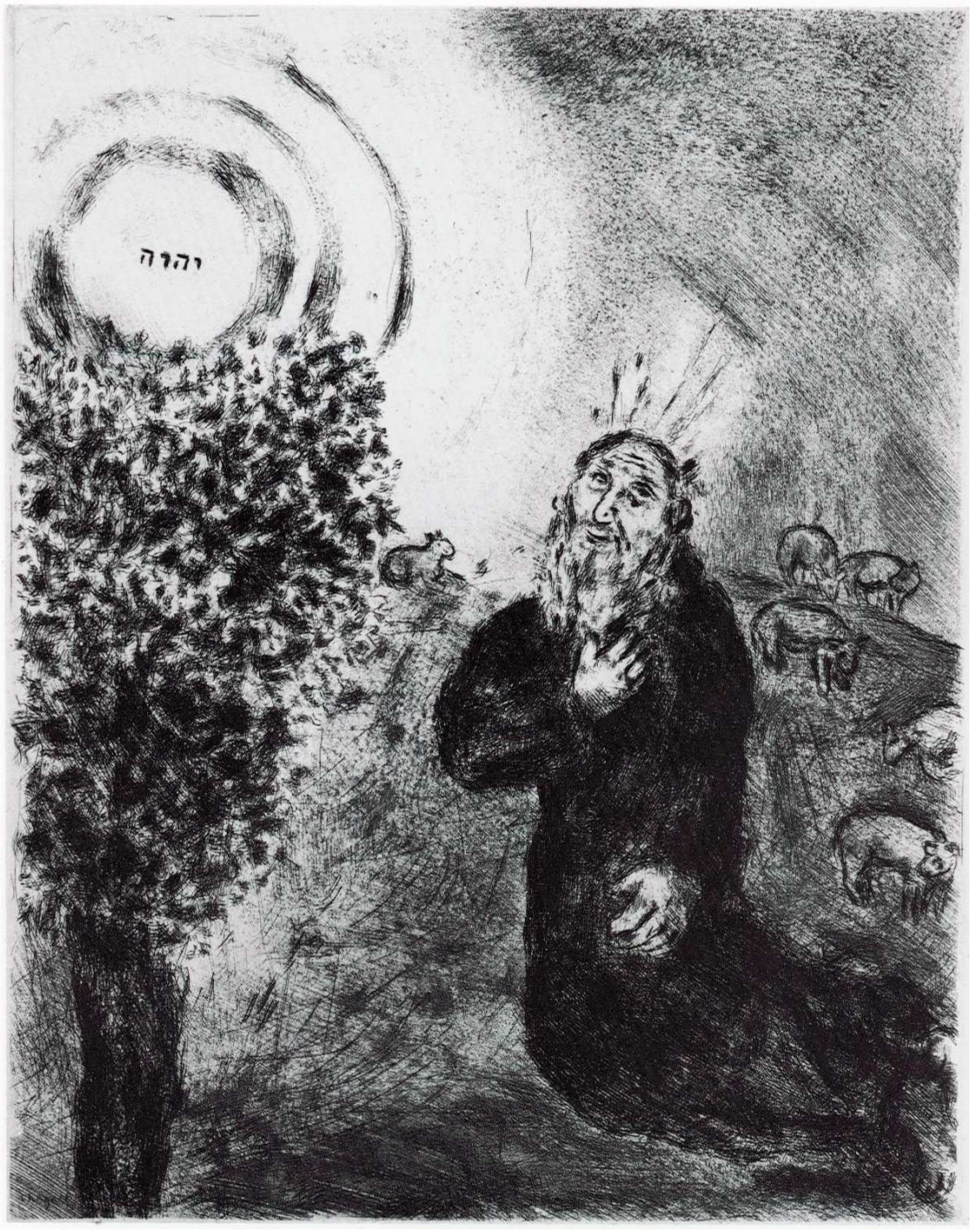

Figure 10. *The Burning Bush*, from *The Bible Series*, 1932-1939, Etching, Paris: Tériade Éditeur, 1956

Figure 11. *Moses before the Burning Bush*, Oil on canvas, n. d., Musée National Message Biblique Marc Chagall, Nice

Figure 12. *Moses Looks Upon the Toiling Israelites*, from *The Story of the Exodus*, 1966, Color lithograph on Arches paper, Special Collections, UWM Libraries

Figure 13. *Dance of Miriam*, from *The Story of the Exodus*, 1966, Color lithograph on Arches paper, Special Collections, UWM Libraries

Figure 14. *Continuing Exodus*, from *The Story of the Exodus*, 1966, Color lithograph on Arches paper, Special Collections, UWM Libraries

APPENDIX B: EXHIBTION CHECKLIST

All works by Marc Chagall (Russian/French, 1887 – 1985)

1. *Farewell to Manilov from Chichikov*
   Plate XII, from *Dead Souls*, 1923-1927
   Etching on wove paper
   Paris: Tériade Éditeur, 1948
   9 x 11 5/8 inches
   UWM Art Collection
   Bequest of Blanche and Henry Rosenberg
   1974.100

2. *Morning Tea*
   Plate XVIII, from *Dead Souls*, 1923-1927
   Etching on wove paper
   Paris: Tériade Éditeur, 1948
   9 x 11 3/4 inches
   UWM Art Collection
   Bequest of Blanche and Henry Rosenberg
   1974.106

3. *Nozdrev*
   Plate XXII, from *Dead Souls*, 1923-1927
   Etching on wove paper
   Paris: Tériade Éditeur, 1948
   11 1/2 x 9 1/4 inches
   UWM Art Collection
   Bequest of Blanche and Henry Rosenberg
   1974.095

4. *The Groaning Table*
   Plate XXXV, from *Dead Souls*, 1923-1927
   Etching on wove paper
   Paris: Tériade Éditeur, 1948
   11 x 8 1/2 inches
   UWM Art Collection
   Bequest of Blanche and Henry Rosenberg
   1974.054

5. *Signing the Agreement*
   Plate XXXVII ter, from *Dead Souls*, 1923-1927
   Etching on wove paper
   Paris: Tériade Éditeur, 1948
   8 3/4 x 11 inches
   UWM Art Collection
   Bequest of Blanche and Henry Rosenberg
   1974.051

6. *Pliushkin's Old Garden*
   Plate XXXIX, from *Dead Souls*, 1923-1927
   Etching on wove paper
   Paris: Tériade Éditeur, 1948
   11 x 8 1/2 inches
   UWM Art Collection
   Bequest of Blanche and Henry Rosenberg
   1974.068

7. *Pliushkin Collecting Things Under the Bridge*
   Plate XLII, from *Dead Souls*, 1923-1927
   Etching on wove paper
   Paris: Tériade Éditeur, 1948
   11 x 8 1/2 inches
   UWM Art Collection
   Bequest of Blanche and Henry Rosenberg
   1974.066

8. *Stephan Bouchon, Carpenter*
   Plate L, from *Dead Souls*, 1923-1927
   Etching on wove paper
   Paris: Tériade Éditeur, 1948
   11 x 8 1/2 inches
   UWM Art Collection
   Bequest of Blanche and Henry Rosenberg
   1974.049

9. *The Gossiping Ladies*
   Plate LXVI, from *Dead Souls*, 1923-1927
   Etching on wove paper
   Paris: Tériade Éditeur, 1948
   11 x 8 1/2 inches
   UWM Art Collection
   Bequest of Blanche and Henry Rosenberg
   1974.031

10. *Women and Secrets*
    The Fables of La Fontaine, 1927-1930
    Hand-colored etching on Japon Nacre
    Paris: Tériade Éditeur, 1952
    15 1/2 x 11 3/4 inches
    UWM Art Collection
    Bequest of Nathan and Pearl Berkowitz
    2011.027.26

11. *Death and the Wretched Man*
    The Fables of La Fontaine, 1927-1930
    Hand-colored etching on Japon Nacre
    Paris: Tériade Éditeur, 1952
    15 1/2 x 11 3/4 inches
    UWM Art Collection
    Bequest of Nathan and Pearl Berkowitz
    2011.027.01

12. *The Two Bulls and a Frog*
    The Fables of La Fontaine, 1927-1930
    Hand-colored etching on Japon Nacre
    Paris: Tériade Éditeur, 1952
    15 1/2 x 11 3/4 inches
    UWM Art Collection
    Bequest of Nathan and Pearl Berkowitz
    2011.027.02

13. *The Cat Metamorphosed into a Woman*
    The Fables of La Fontaine, 1927-1930
    Hand-colored etching on Japon Nacre
    Paris: Tériade Éditeur, 1952
    15 1/2 x 11 3/4 inches
    UWM Art Collection
    Bequest of Nathan and Pearl Berkowitz
    2011.027.06

14. *The Cock and the Fox*
    The Fables of La Fontaine, 1927-1930
    Hand-colored etching on Japon Nacre
    Paris: Tériade Éditeur, 1952
    15 1/2 x 11 3/4 inches
    UWM Art Collection
    Bequest of Nathan and Pearl Berkowitz
    2011.027.05

15. *The Fox and the Bust*
    The Fables of La Fontaine, 1927-1930
    Hand-colored etching on Japon Nacre
    Paris: Tériade Éditeur, 1952
    15 1/2 x 11 3/4 inches
    UWM Art Collection
    Bequest of Nathan and Pearl Berkowitz
    2011.027.14

16. *The Ass Dressed in the Lion's Skin*
    The Fables of La Fontaine, 1927-1930
    Hand-colored etching on Japon Nacre
    Paris: Tériade Éditeur, 1952
    15 1/2 x 11 3/4 inches
    UWM Art Collection
    Bequest of Nathan and Pearl Berkowitz
    2011.027.20

17. *The Charlatan*
    The Fables of La Fontaine, 1927-1930
    Hand-colored etching on Japon Nacre
    Paris: Tériade Éditeur, 1952
    15 1/2 x 11 3/4 inches
    UWM Art Collection
    Bequest of Nathan and Pearl Berkowitz
    2011.027.21

18. *The Two Parrots, the King and his Son*
    The Fables of La Fontaine, 1927-1930
    Hand-colored etching on Japon Nacre
    Paris: Tériade Éditeur, 1952
    15 1/2 x 11 3/4 inches
    UWM Art Collection
    Bequest of Nathan and Pearl Berkowitz
    2011.027.29

19. *Moses Looks Upon the Toiling Israelites*
    The Story of the Exodus, 1966
    Color lithograph on Arches paper
    New City: Leon Amiel Publishers, Inc., 1966
    20 x 14 1/2 inches
    Special Collections, UWM Libraries
    Bequest of Blanche and Henry Rosenberg
    1974.129

20. *Moses before the Burning Bush*
The Story of the Exodus, 1966
Color lithograph on Arches paper
New City: Leon Amiel Publishers, Inc., 1966
20 x 14 1/2 inches
Special Collections, UWM Libraries
Bequest of Blanche and Henry Rosenberg
1974.130

21. *Crossing of the Red Sea*
The Story of the Exodus, 1966
Color lithograph on Arches paper
New City: Leon Amiel Publishers, Inc., 1966
20 x 14 1/2 inches
Special Collections, UWM Libraries
Bequest of Blanche and Henry Rosenberg
1974.136

22. *Dance of Miriam*
The Story of the Exodus, 1966
Color lithograph on Arches paper
New City: Leon Amiel Publishers, Inc., 1966
20 x 14 1/2 inches
Special Collections, UWM Libraries
Bequest of Blanche and Henry Rosenberg
1974.137

23. *The Striking of the Rock*
The Story of the Exodus, 1966
Color lithograph on Arches paper
New City: Leon Amiel Publishers, Inc., 1966
20 x 14 1/2 inches
Special Collections, UWM Libraries
Bequest of Blanche and Henry Rosenberg
1974.138

24. *Moses' Anger towards the People*
The Story of the Exodus, 1966
Color lithograph on Arches paper
New City: Leon Amiel Publishers, Inc., 1966
20 x 14 1/2 inches
Special Collections, UWM Libraries
Bequest of Blanche and Henry Rosenberg
1974.144

25. *Continuing Exodus*
The Story of the Exodus, 1966
Color lithograph on Arches paper
New City: Leon Amiel Publishers, Inc., 1966
29 x 40 inches
Special Collections, UWM Libraries
Bequest of Blanche and Henry Rosenberg
1974.150