summary of the major interpretations of Mosca’s theories, and a brief biography.


Bobbio, Norberto. On Mosca and Pareto. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1972. A short paper on the two major Italian theorists of elite rule in modern societies, written by the leading contemporary political philosopher in Italy. Bobbio contrasts the political implications (and actions) of these two men whose understanding of elite theory was so similar.

Finocchiaro, Maurice A. Beyond Right and Left: Democratic Elitism in Mosca and Gramsci. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999. Finocchiaro examines the ideas of Mosca, a conservative, and Antonio Gramsci, a Marxist, and concludes that the two share a tradition of democratic elitism.

Hughes, H. Stuart. Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958. One of the best and most succinct accounts of Mosca’s work in English. Of particular value is Hughes’s approach, which situates Mosca in the context of general intellectual trends and social theory in Europe from 1890 to 1930.


See also: Antonio Gramsci; Adolf Hitler; Benito Mussolini.

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**GRANDMA MOSES**

**American painter**

A self-taught artist, Grandma Moses developed a distinctive style of painting, a form of Primitivism also referred to as naïve art or folk art.

**Born:** September 7, 1860; Washington County, near Greenwich, New York  
**Died:** December 13, 1961; Hoosick Falls, New York  
**Also known as:** Anna Mary Robertson (birth name)  
**Area of achievement:** Art

**Early Life**

Grandma Moses was born Anna Mary Robertson, of Scotch-Irish descent, to Russell King Robertson, a flax grower, and Margaret Shannahan. Anna Mary was the third of ten children. Her parents called her Sissy, her siblings, Molly, and her husband, Mary, but to the world she was known as Grandma Moses.

In her autobiography, Moses described the pleasures of her childhood and the work on the farm. Her memories of these happy days, as she called them, were the resources on which she drew for her art. She learned early to express herself in a creative way. She remembered how her father liked to see his children occupy themselves with drawing. He would buy large sheets of white blank newspaper that cost only a penny. Paper was cheaper than candy and lasted longer.

Her school days were limited. At the age of twelve, Moses left home to earn her living as a hired girl, working neighborhood farms for the next fifteen years. In November of 1887, she married Thomas Salmon Moses, a hired man who worked on the same farm. On their wedding day, they left New York to settle on a dairy farm in Staunton, Virginia. They had ten children, only five of whom survived.

In December, 1905, the family returned to eastern New York and bought a farm at Eagle Bridge. For the next twenty-two years, Grandma Moses’s main occupation was to work on the farm, care for the family, and keep up their house. On one occasion, she was wallpapering the parlor when she ran out of paper. Her solution became her first known painting. She applied some white paper to the empty space and painted a landscape, the Fireplace (1918). It is housed in the Bennington Museum.

When Moses’s husband died in 1927, her youngest son, Hugh, and daughter-in-law Dorothy took over the farm. She now had fewer responsibilities. She enjoyed embroidery, creating worsted yarn landscape pictures that she composed herself. When her rheumatism made embroidering difficult, she turned to painting. These were mainly done for amusement and given as gifts to friends. Sometimes she sold a few with her homemade  

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preserves and jams in the Women’s Exchange in the W. D. Thomas Pharmacy in Hoosick Falls.

**LIFE’S WORK**

The turning point in Grandma Moses’s artistic career came in 1938. Louis J. Caldor, an art collector and engineer, is credited with discovering her talent. He had stopped in Hoosick Falls while on vacation. As he walked by the Thomas Pharmacy, he noticed the Moses paintings in the window. He bought three and inquired where he could buy more. The prices were reasonable, usually between $3 and $5. Moses priced her paintings according to size. When Caldor left for New York the next day, he had an additional ten pictures, some painted and some embroidered in yarn.

The subjects of Moses’s paintings were memories of scenes and events she knew well. Landscape paintings of the four seasons dominate: white for winter paintings, light green for spring, deep green for summer, and brown and yellow for fall. Her early paintings were strongly influenced by illustrations, such as Currier and Ives lithographs, which she found in magazines. Sometimes she cut out figures that she moved around to find a composition that pleased her. Her usual practice was to work from memory, without a preliminary sketch.

Caldor tried for a year to interest someone in the Moses pictures. When he heard about the exhibition “Contemporary Unknown American Painters” at the Museum of Modern Art, New York City, from October 18 to November 18, 1939, Caldor entered three paintings: *Home, In the Maple Sugar Days,* and *The First Automobile.*

In 1940, these paintings were included in the artist’s first solo exhibition. Caldor had finally located an art dealer, Otto Kallir, who was interested in folk art and who agreed to arrange an exhibition. Kallir selected thirty-three paintings and one worsted picture. The exhibition “What a Farm Wife Painted” was held at Kallir’s gallery, St. Etienne, in New York, from October 9 to October 31, 1940. The artist, who had just turned eighty, did not come to the opening; as she said, she knew all the paintings.

An art critic in the *New York Herald Tribune,* on October 8, 1940, noted that in Washington County the artist was known as Grandma Moses. This was the first time the name appeared in print.

The reaction to her work was overwhelmingly positive. Requests came from everywhere for her paintings, in the beginning mainly for copies. This explains why so many paintings have the same or similar names, such as *Sugaring Off* or *Turkey Hunt.*

Before the exhibition closed, plans were under way for the next exhibition. The Gimbel’s Department Store in New York City invited Grandma Moses to show her work from November 14 to November 25, 1940. She was also asked to attend the opening. She accepted and appeared with complete self-confidence before an audience of more than four hundred people.

Now began a long series of exhibitions in the United States, including the New York State Art Show, where *The Old Oaken Bucket* (1941) received the State Prize. Her works were also shown abroad, first in 1949 in Canada and then in traveling exhibitions to Europe. In Grandma Moses’s lifetime, her paintings were shown in about eighty exhibitions.

Grandma Moses’s reputation continued to grow as she received other honors. On May 14, 1949, she accepted the Achievement Award of the Women’s National Press Club in Washington, D.C., and received a standing ovation from seven hundred dinner guests when she entered the hall. President Harry S. Truman presented the award to her and five other women, including Eleanor Roosevelt. The president, who was much impressed by Grandma Moses and her lively conversation, arranged to meet her the next day at Blair House. Later, Grandma Moses’s mentor and friend Otto Kallir offered the White House her painting *July Fourth* (1951).

More recognition came to Grandma Moses. She was the recipient of two honorary doctorate degrees: in 1949, from Russell Sage College, Troy, New York, and, in 1951, from the Moore Institute of Art, Philadelphia. A documentary film about her, completed in 1950, received a Certificate of Nomination for Award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Edward R. Murrow, a well-known broadcast commentator, interviewed her for the CBS *See It Now* television series. The interview aired on June 29, 1955.

In the film, Grandma Moses explained and demonstrated her work method. Neither a heat wave nor the hot camera lights bothered the almost ninety-five-year-old artist. The CBS film crew followed the creation of a painting from the beginning to the end. The subject that Grandma Moses chose was one of her favorites: a sugaring-off scene.

Moses selected a Masonite board. With a broad house painter’s brush, she applied flat white paint for the ground. When the surface was dry, she penciled in the horizon to see how high it would be. Then she indicated trees, bushes, and houses. Her painting began with the sky. A winter sky, she explained to the camera crew. She worked steadily, occasionally closing her eyes as if to conjure up
the scene in her mind. Sometimes she put a dab of bright red or blue on the board. This would soon turn into a recognizable figure. When she finished painting the white snow, she sprinkled glitter over it, ignoring those who said that glitter was inappropriate for a painting. She argued that anyone who had seen snow in sunlight knew it glittered.

One exception from her practice to paint only from memory was the painting of the Eisenhower Farm (1956). To honor President Eisenhower on the anniversary of his inauguration, the president’s cabinet wanted to give him a Grandma Moses painting. Working from numerous photographs of the farm, she accomplished her task to the president’s satisfaction. She was paid $1,000, the largest amount she ever received for a painting.

Grandma Moses completed almost 1,600 paintings, of which some twenty-five were done after her one-hundredth birthday. After she entered a nursing home in July of 1961, she was not allowed to paint. This was a great disappointment to her. Her death, on December 13, 1961, was announced on all radio networks and reported on the front pages of newspapers nationwide.

The Bennington Museum in Bennington, Vermont, holds the largest public collection of Grandma Moses’ work. The old schoolhouse from Eagle Bridge, now moved to the museum grounds, exhibits memorabilia from her life.

**Significance**

Grandma Moses, a talented untrained artist, created a unique style of painting. Unlike those of most nonacademic artists, especially in the nineteenth century, her artistic career was successful. She received international fame during her lifetime and furthered the cause of nonacademic art in both the United States and Europe. She helped to increase critical appreciation and popular acceptance of primitive, or naïve, art, the genre to which her works are usually thought to belong. In her art, she celebrated the virtues of American rural life, and through her example she taught thousands of people the value of a simple and uncomplicated manner of living. At an age in life when most people are retired, she started to work professionally and thereby became an inspiration to senior citizens. She demonstrated that age need not be a hindrance to a fulfilled life. In connection with Senior Citizens Month, in May of 1969, honoring all older Americans, the U.S. government issued a stamp to commemorate Grandma Moses, a distinction given to few artists. The commemorative stamp depicts a detail of July Fourth, 1951, the painting that hangs in the White House, Washington, D.C. Interest in Grandma Moses has not declined. In 1989, Cloris Leachman played Grandma Moses in a play, American Primitive, covering the years from 1905, when Grandma Moses moved back to New York, until 1960. The play, which was on tour from April 26 to July 9, 1989, went to fourteen major cities across the country.

—Elvy Setterqvist O’Brien

**Further Reading**

Biracree, Tom. *Grandma Moses: Painter*. American Women of Achievement Series. New York: Chelsea House, 1989. With an introduction by Matina S. Horner, president of Radcliffe College, the book gives a clear account of the artist’s life and career. It has a good selection of black-and-white photographs and eight pages of color reproductions, and it should be useful to high school students as well as to general readers.

catalog for an exhibition of Moses’s work. In addition to reproductions of Moses’s work, the book includes essays analyzing various aspects of Moses’s art.

______, Grandpa Moses, The Artist Behind the Myth. New York: C. N. Potter, 1982. Kallir discusses several other nonacademic artists contemporary with Grandma Moses, such as John Kane and Joseph Pickett. Describes Grandma Moses’s personal growth and artistic development and notes that the artist did not adopt any established style but invented her own.

Kallir, Otto. Grandma Moses. New York: Abrams, 1973. This is the major work on Grandma Moses. It contains valuable biographical information and a catalog of all of her nearly 1,600 paintings, her worsted pictures, and her tiles. The book includes 253 large illustrations, of which 135 are in color, plus more than 1,200 documentary illustrations.


See also: Edward Hopper; Edward R. Murrow; Paul Nash; Georgia O’Keeffe; Diego Rivera; Norman Rockwell; Harry S. Truman; Grant Wood; Andrew Wyeth.

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MOHAMMAD MOSSADEGH
Prime minister of Iran (1951-1953)

With a lifetime devoted to law and national service, Mossadegh led Iran into an era of prominence and independence and came to symbolize the nationalistic aspirations of peoples throughout the developing world. A U.S.-supported coup in 1953, which followed Mossadegh’s success at nationalizing oil production in Iran, led to his ouster.

Born: May 19, 1882; Tehran, Persia (now Iran)
Died: March 5, 1967; Tehran, Iran
Also known as: Mohammad Mosaddeq
Area of achievement: Government and politics

Early Life
Mossadegh was born into the distinguished Qajar Dynasty, which had ruled Persia (now Iran) from the late eighteenth century. His father served for thirty years as finance minister to Nasir al-Din Shah but died when Mossadegh was young. Mossadegh was raised to assume his father’s profession. He was immersed in politics and surrounded by government officials as he matured into adulthood. He witnessed the tobacco revolution of 1891, in which a popular protest against foreign control of the nation’s tobacco industry led people across the country, including the shah’s own wives, to put down their tobacco pipes.

In 1898, Mossadegh assumed his first post: tax auditor for the province of Khorasan. His uncle, Farmanfarma (Abdol Hossein Mirza), was a participant in the constitutional revolution of 1906, which established the Majlis, or parliament, and transformed the country into a fledgling democracy. In 1907, Mossadegh won a seat in the Majlis, representing the historic city of Isfahan. Two years later, the nation’s ruler, Mohammad Ali Shah, orchestrated an assault on the Majlis to stifle its indepen-