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IN THE MIND'S EYE: NEW PERSPECTIVES ON  
FRONTISPIECES BY ODILON REDON

by

ASHER ETHAN MILLER 

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

1998

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Art History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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## Preface

Some references in the text of this dissertation are given in abbreviation. These are as follows:

"M" followed by a number (i.e. M.27) indicates a reference to André Mellerio's catalogue raisonné of Odilon Redon's prints. "H" followed by a number indicates a reference to Sharon Harrison's catalogue raisonné of Redon's etchings. "V.G." followed by a number indicates a reference to Dirk van Gelder's catalogue raisonné of Rodolphe Bresdin's prints. "W." followed by a number indicates a reference to Daniel Wildenstein's catalogue raisonné of Redon's drawings and paintings; due to the fact that not all the volumes have been published, references to this work are made only to clarify certain points. (Full citations in bibliography).

La Tentation de saint-Antoine (The Temptation of Saint Anthony) is the title of numerous works by many individuals. Variations in its spelling in this dissertation, including the use of the hyphen and abbreviations, reflect its original designation by the artist or author in each case. Its spelling in primary sources has been preserved as well.

Each source reference is given a full citation in its first appearance in a footnote in each chapter. Subsequent references to the same source are typically abbreviated, with the abbreviation given in the footnote which contains the initial citation.

### Acknowledgements

The experience of bringing this dissertation to fruition has contributed greatly to my understanding of one of its themes: the ways in which our understanding of an individual's relationships with others contributes to the levels of meaning which may be found in his art. A measure of Redon's legacy is the many wonderful perspectives it invites onto aspects of the lives of the fascinating array of individuals who passed through his life. Thus, I would like to acknowledge my debt of gratitude to the persons who contributed to this work.

This study is dedicated to my parents, my sister Tamara, and my fiancée Heather Adams, who have been patient and generous during the most arduous periods of work on it.

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At an early stage of my research I had the pleasure of conversing with Marshall Berman, who encouraged me to formulate a very personal view of my subject. Adrienne Fontainas generously sent me her own unpublished research on Redon and Belgium. Jaye Clarke of the Art Institute of Chicago and Jill Newhouse were very

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The Department of Art History at the C.U.N.Y. Graduate Center had the foresight to provide a travel stipend which allowed me to visit the great Redon retrospective at the Art Institute of Chicago in the summer of 1994, well before I submitted my dissertation proposal. I am grateful for this, as I am for the award of a 1997-98 Program Dissertation Fellowship.

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## I. Introduction

This dissertation grew out of my interest in a single print by Odilon Redon, the frontispiece/title-page for the portfolio of lithographs entitled A Gustave Flaubert, which was published in Paris in 1889, and which includes six interior plates. This was the second of three suites of lithographs that Redon devoted to Flaubert's curious book of 1874, La Tentation de Saint Antoine, following the first by only one year; the third was published in 1896. I was first drawn by the discovery that the figure of the Devil in the print was copied from the Devil in the first plate of Eugène Delacroix's seminal illustrated edition of Goethe's Faust of 1828. It seemed to me that if Redon were to represent St. Anthony flying through the sky on the back of the same Mephistopheles who, in Delacroix's series, led around Faust, that this must be an image charged with a certain degree of ambivalence with regard to the forces representing good and evil. In works by Redon and others I subsequently found many representations of either Faust or St. Anthony, but none which combined the two.

While tracing its development, I was excited to find that its composition was remarkably sophisticated, and that this had very much to do with its dual function as a frontispiece and title-page. This work falls in the middle of Redon's career as a lithographer, which generally spans the 1880s and '90s. I decided to isolate a large portion of Redon's frontispieces and title-pages and to consider them within their respective projects, in order to

determine whether the unique combination of Faust and St. Anthony in the 1889 frontispiece was representative of a topos running throughout Redon's lithographic oeuvre.

In the present study, several themes will be explored in connection with this inquiry. The changing nature of the marketplace for art and literature in the mid-nineteenth century; the relationship of those changes to the transformation of the city as a place of art production; the development of what may be called a "print culture"-- these are factors which help to define what is at stake in Redon's work. I will argue that these are issues which Redon confronted, and which he incorporated into his work with a sense of ambivalence that is contextualized in his treatments of Faust and St. Anthony, singly and together, especially in his frontispieces for portfolios.

A frontispiece is an illustration which precedes the title-page of a book, frequently facing it. Title-pages may contain a decorative device, an insignia, for example, but they are traditionally distinct from frontispieces. In several of the lithographs by Redon examined in this dissertation, however, the distinctions between the two are blurred, as aspects of both are combined on a single sheet. In lithography, letters can be drawn or stencilled onto the same stone as an image, a technical innovation that, combined with its durability and inexpensiveness, allowed the medium to flourish in commercial printing. In many of the more interesting portfolios of the nineteenth century, artists took advantage of the elasticity of the format, together with their

chosen printmaking methods, to produce highly individual works. Redon's portfolios are marked by a general economy of means and expression. His first album, Dans le rêve (1879), has only ten interior plates, and was his largest until the third Temptation suite in 1896.

André Mellerio, who published the catalogue raisonné of Redon's prints in 1913-- still the standard reference although the years have added much new information-- describes frontispiece images printed on the portfolio, or album covers as couverture-frontispices. While this may seem straightforward enough, it fails to register a subtle conceptual distinction that I wish to emphasize in this study. There are three categories of album covers in Redon's oeuvre. These are (1) those containing only the title-information printed by or in imitation of letter press: the first of the interior plates in these examples generally contain characteristics of a traditional frontispiece; (2) those in which a lithographic design has been added to the above: these do not generally contain an interior frontispiece; (3) those in which the design of the album cover is a lithographic composition which incorporates the title information. In one example, A Gustave Flaubert, an album which is discussed at length in Chapter V, the cover contains only the title information, some of it repeated, incorporated into the design of the interior frontispiece, which is actually a title-page frontispiece. The categories defined above are distinguished by Redon's will to adapt in a highly deliberate fashion to various formats of presentation. In this study I will

examine the ways in which Redon's concerns about the public perception of his work are brought to bear in the composition and overall design of his portfolios.

Outside of a few specialized studies, a lack of attention to these distinctions has been compounded by a general lack of familiarity with the original appearance of Redon's portfolios in the century since they were produced. The majority seem to have been broken up, and frequently the covers were discarded since, especially if they were undecorated save for the title, they were presumably regarded to be lacking in interest among collectors. So, for example, it is a somewhat neglected fact that, whereas Mellerio designates the lithograph which adorns the cover of the album A Edgar Poe (1882) as a cover-frontispiece, it is not a frontispiece at all. The image is printed on the bottom cover; the top cover contains only the title information. It is nevertheless too substantial to be considered a tail-piece. Perhaps this is simply a case in which Mellerio elides a description which could lead someone to question the rank of such works as serious art, that is, to consider them of trivial interest. One of the features of this study is to show, however, that part of these works' novelty is their very ephemerality as a genre of art objects, and that it is necessary to restore this to our appreciation of them.

The title of this dissertation is meant to invoke Redon's imaginative vision. Like many artists, Redon's approach to art began with a study of nature, with an eye toward discovering his sense of place in it. Equally for him, however, it was to explore

his own sense of self, and to add to the visual vocabulary of nature one of images summoned by memories, dreams, and other personal associations: "the logic of the visible at the service of the invisible." In his plein-air sketches, Redon demonstrates an acute eye, but there is little to distinguish him from the many other landscapists of his time. In his noirs, however, Redon includes elements drawn from a highly personal imagery including and often combining free-floating eyes and disembodied heads, figures from mythology, literature, and religious history, as well as scientific illustrations, frequently with drastic discrepancies of scale. These are rendered in black, which both heightens their mystery and preserves them from sentimentality: "nothing prostitutes it."

The title is also meant to evoke Redon's own thoughts on his prints. Today we take almost for granted that the pedigree of Redon's prints is secure, and they are prized works of high art in the collections where they reside. In his own time, however, the artist expressed concerns that his lithographs simultaneously convey a sense of importance and novelty, and that they not be dismissed as a sort of sensationalistic ephemera. In the present study, I hope to show that Redon's attention to the subtleties of the format and presentation of his prints, particularly his frontispieces, is as crucial to our understanding of them as is a successful reading of their iconography, that, indeed, these elements are a part of their iconography as artifacts of their time and place.

Discussions in print of Redon's frontispieces and their permutations are diffused throughout the Redon literature, and several publications have been notably helpful to me. The groundbreaking catalogue for the great exhibition Odilon Redon, Prince of Dreams (Art Institute of Chicago and elsewhere, 1994-95) contains a great deal of new information on Redon's prints, but these are not treated as thoroughly as other areas of his biography and work (drawings and paintings). This was due partially to the fact that the show came in the wake of several fine smaller exhibitions, catalogues, and books devoted to them. Of these, the most influential (if geographically remote) was Ted Gott's The Enchanted Stone: The Graphic Worlds of Odilon Redon, held at the National Gallery of Victoria in Australia in 1990. But perhaps the most significant recent study of Redon's lithographs is Dario Gamboni's La Plume et le pinceau: Odilon Redon et la littérature (Paris, 1989). In this most thorough account of the literary context in which Redon lived and worked, Gamboni also explores the subjects of printing and publishing. Taken together, Gamboni and Gott have succeeded in reinvesting Redon's lithographs with their tangibility as objects, and they have shown how this aspect is so frequently tied to their appeal as erudite images. The secondary sources frequently cited in this dissertation are many, but one further source has been helpful enough to warrant mention here. Luc and Adrienne Fontainas's study of the Brussels publisher Edmond Deman in the Belgian journal Bulletin du Bibliophile (1986) contains a catalogue of all his editions, including many by or with

contributions by Redon, and it should be held as a model for a much needed new catalogue raisonné of Redon's lithographs. As with Gott, although to a greater extent, the Fontainas often describe pre-publication and post-publication variants within an edition, implicitly emphasizing the need for a critical census-taking of Redon's prints.

In providing a more general context for this dissertation, one book in particular has served to enliven my thinking more than any other. Upon reading Marshall Berman's account of the modern era All That is Solid Melts into Air (New York, 1982), I found his discussions of both Faust and Baudelaire as archetypal modern figures particularly compelling with regard to my subject. For Berman, the literary Faust's decisive moment comes with his decision to prioritize his investigation and consequent exploitation of the physical realm, resulting in true material progress at the price of the moral certainties guaranteed by faith in traditional religion and its laws. In this analysis, the old way of thinking represents a kind of pastoral mode because it becomes increasingly obsolete as a factor in the self-renewal characteristic of the marketplace. The cyclical perpetuation of new markets for material progress is the condition of the counter-pastoral and guarantees the success of Faust's venture. In this view, resistance to the marketplace and the temptations of progress is akin to martyrdom.

For Berman, Charles Baudelaire was the model poet of this new world, whose apprehension of the crisis it represented is apparent

not only in the form and content of his writings, but in the path of his career. In his prose poems and associated writings, Baudelaire finds beauty in the cathartic behavior which humans find necessary to deal with the violence of progress in Haussmann's Paris. And the very urbanity of his subject matter was compounded by the format in which many of his poems, especially his prose poems, were published, that is, in the myriad cheap periodicals which themselves came to be symbolic of progress in the increasingly related realms of communications and advertising. The proliferation of cheap books and newspapers, advertising and advertising posters, of printed items in general, led to a breakdown of each as a discreet category, as each came to adopt the visual as well as commercial strategies of others. The vulgar realities of operating as a poet under these circumstances were more than Baudelaire could bear, so defining the conditions of his martyrdom.

In consulting such periodicals at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, I was taken by the way in which their various elements--conventional news articles, illustrations of every stripe produced in every medium, advertisements, poems, typefaces-- all compete for the reader's attention through graphic means. In this context Baudelaire's prose poems read in such a way that allows one to see how ironic their stance is: they are like oases of a pure and direct art behind which all the other elements of the newspaper fall into place. It is this marshaling characteristic, partially graphic and partially literary, that led me to connect these poems

to Redon's frontispieces, whose role is to utilize these same means to draw attention to or introduce a book or portfolio.

In leveling the field between what have commonly come to be known as "high and low" objects, I am preceded by William Ivins, whose classic book Prints and Visual Communication (1953) sought to redefine the history of prints as a perpetual search for the means to reproduce images ever more accurately and to disseminate them ever more widely. This quest and its achievements, he posits, is one of the singular accomplishments of the post-medieval era, and I find that Ivins's message is underscored in the digital era of communications for which his book may be said to serve as a prologue.

Returning to Redon and his frontispieces, I began to see Baudelaire, whom Redon admired equally as a man and as a poet, as someone who embodied the conflicts inherent to an artistic career in nineteenth-century Paris. The printmaker Rodolphe Bresdin, Redon's teacher and mentor, had been a compatriot of Baudelaire, and in Chapter II of this dissertation I discuss ways in which Redon was inspired by the heroically pastoral way in which these men pursued their respective artistic careers. I will try to convey that the figure of St. Anthony, symbolizing one element of Redon's ambivalence in his A Gustave Flaubert frontispiece, is representative of the artist's own tendency to maintain a purity of vision and a sincerity in his own work. Redon depicted St. Anthony in numerous drawings beginning in the 1860s, coincident with his meeting Bresdin and years before he read Flaubert's novel (see

Chapter V). The figure representative of that other element of Redon's ambivalence, Faust, is literally present all along too in his repertoire of subjects, but also metaphorically, as the artist negotiates the marketplace in order to make a success of his career.

My discussion of Redon's frontispieces, title-pages, and related prints begins in Chapter III, but this dissertation is not an exhaustive catalogue. Nor is it a strictly chronological survey. This is because I wish for the reader to have been thoroughly prepared to approach the first two Temptation albums in Chapter V with an understanding of what is at stake in a print when the artist is executing it specifically for a publication for which he is not the publisher and may or may not be the author. Central to this dissertation is the thesis that the pressures and necessities of collaboration between artist, author, and publisher were perceived by Redon as reflective of qualities characteristic of St. Anthony and Faust. I will depict Baudelaire and Bresdin as precursors of Redon, in the sense that Redon's identity as a printmaker and as a literary-pictorial artist is based to a large extent on his comprehension of these men's having grappled with similar dynamics in their own work. I do not in every case locate the ambivalence that these terms represent in the iconography of the works, however. In Chapter IV, for example, which deals with Redon and his commissions in Belgium, what I stress is the ways in which Redon was prepared for and met the rapid expansion of the market for his work.

At this juncture, I will undertake a highly selective survey of prints from the second half of the nineteenth century. This will serve to establish a corpus by other artists in this period whose works illustrate some of the features found in Redon's.

Each of the frontispieces I will discuss in this section share characteristics. They mostly introduce portfolios of prints undertaken by idiosyncratic artists. These artists participate in a kind of cult of self-absorption that has its roots in the Romantic era, especially in Goya, but whose ancestors can be found too in the Dürer of Melencolia I [Fig. 1] or in Rembrandt. These are urban artists, and their portfolios are the product of an urbane sensibility. Indeed, these portfolios are products of the city itself, and in this respect their currency is an intrinsic component of the syntax of the city.

The first work to be discussed here, Charles Meryon's Eaux-Fortes sur Paris (1852-54), consists of etchings of views of Paris as well as poems composed by Meryon in his own handwriting. Created very early in the era of Haussmannization, the monuments and views depicted are of the old, medieval Paris that was fast disappearing. But this was the city into which Meryon felt himself inscribed, in which the patterns of daily life had taken place for centuries, and which held meaning dear to the people who lived there. There is a spectral quality in these images which is consistent with the death of the old city rather than the birth of the new one.

The title-page of the suite [Fig. 2] immediately informs the

viewer as to the nature of the images that follow it. In the first critical catalogue of Meryon's etchings, written with the artist's input, Philippe Burty wrote that the words of the title page appear on a "slab of limestone containing fossils and moss imprints, which was obtained from the quarries of Montmartre [...] Meryon intended it to be typical of the foundations of Paris."<sup>1</sup> The title page thus evokes the old Paris and thereby introduces the Paris with which Meryon personally identified and whose loss to Baron Haussmann's improvements he lamented. We must imagine, then, that this slab is the detritus of the new Paris, and that perhaps the beginnings of the crack etched through the word "PARIS" in the title refers to the fate of the new city.

Baudelaire admired these etchings and, perhaps never having seen the rare complete edition including Meryon's poems, proposed to the artist that a new edition be published with poems of his own. Meryon essentially declined the invitation to collaborate, with a counter-offer that would have amounted to Baudelaire's simply writing descriptions of the views. It is tempting to speculate how wonderful the results would have been, but the distance between Meryon's and Baudelaire's visions is telling. Baudelaire had envisioned a thoroughly modern work, something new and different, but the leap was too great for Meryon to comprehend. As denizens of the city, the difference between the two men, from the perspective of Baudelaire at least, may be seen as parallel to

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<sup>1</sup> Philippe Burty, "L'Oeuvre de M. Charles Meryon," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, June 1863, 519-533 and July 1863, 75-88.

that between the follower and the followed in Edgar Allan Poe's story The Man of the Crowd.

Equally introspective are Edouard Manet's two frontispiece designs for his suite of etchings entitled Collection de huit eaux-fortes, sujets divers (1862) [Figs. 3 and 4].<sup>2</sup> As an etcher, Manet belonged to the same milieu as Meryon, but he was a cosmopolite or flaneur in the vein of Baudelaire. Yet, ten years younger than either, he was notably more optimistic about the possibilities of the new Paris. Taken with the vogue for etching, he took up the medium, and in both frontispieces for this portfolio we can see many of the elements which show him to have been aware of the more fashionable trappings of Paris in his time. On the whole, however, the impression that we get of these as auto-referential images is due to their being the sum of their constituent parts rather than a baring of the artist's soul. In short, the frontispieces contain an element of wit that bespeaks an elegance which is consistent with the artist's bearing as member of the Parisian beau monde.

The next project I would like to discuss never actually saw the light of day as such. Le Jour et la nuit was the brainchild of Edgar Degas in 1879-80, and his collaborators were to have included Mary Cassatt, Camille Pissarro, and Félix Bracquemond, among others. Prints were prepared for what would have been a periodical

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<sup>2</sup> For a full consideration of this work, see Theodore Reff, "The Symbolism of Manet's Frontispiece Etchings," The Burlington Magazine CIV:710 (May 1962) 182-86. See also Larry Ligo, "Manet's Frontispiece Etchings: His Symbolic Self-Portrait; Acknowledging the Influences of Baudelaire and Photography Upon His Work," Gazette des Beaux-Arts Sept. 1986, 66-74.

journal, perhaps containing writing as well as prints.<sup>3</sup> Precedents for the idea of a periodical journal containing fine-art prints were many: the Gazette des Beaux-Arts, for example, was frequently available in a special edition which contained an original print, a famous instance being Corot's etching Souvenir de Toscane, included in the memorial issue of 1 April 1875. But a more specialized precedent exists in Eaux-fortes modernes (1862-67), the publication of the Société des Acqua-fortistes. This was issued monthly to collectors in livraisons or issues each of which included numerous etchings by contemporary artists such as Meryon, Manet, Bracquemond, and Daubigny. The publication, however, was largely the work of its impresarios, the publisher Alfred Cadart and the printer Auguste Delâtre, and enjoyed the support, directly or indirectly, of many writers, including Baudelaire, Philippe Burty, and Théophile Gautier.<sup>4</sup>

The interweaving of contemporary literature with prints by artists in the circle of the authors existed in many journals of the period, one of the most significant examples for this study being La Revue fantaisiste (1861; see Chapter II), through which

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<sup>3</sup> A concise history of Le Jour et la nuit is given by Sue Welsh Reed and Barbara Stern Shapiro in Edgar Degas: The Painter as Printmaker, exhibition catalogue (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1984), 168-74, cat. no. 51.

<sup>4</sup> On the Société des Acqua-fortistes see Janine Bailly-Herzberg, L'Eau-forte de Peintre aux Dix-Neuvième Siècle: La Société des Acqua-fortistes 1862-1867, 2 vols. (Paris: Léonce Laget, 1972). For a more general survey see Gabriel P. Weisberg, The Etching Renaissance in France: 1850-1880, exhibition catalogue (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1971).

Baudelaire introduced his old friend of the generation of 1848, Bresdin, to his current colleagues. I cite these periodicals to show that especially in the decades that precede and include Redon's lithographs, the appeal and collectibility of artistic prints had been tied to the consumption of literature in periodicals, and that as printmakers artists were intimately bound to their literary counterparts. From this we can have at least a glimpse of the pattern that Redon was to follow with his albums. The risk involved was great since his work was almost completely unknown outside his circle of friends and because he did not have the backing of a publisher, but the ability to circulate his images, however obvious that may seem, was a crucial and even brave strategy to employ to create a reputation.

One foreign work may be considered in this group. A Glove (1881), a portfolio of ten etchings by the German Max Klinger, is strikingly similar to Redon's in its use of the dream as a pretext for an album of prints [Figs. 5 and 6]. The subject of the dream is, loosely but at least partly, urban alienation and desire in the spaces of the modern city, and the level of abstraction of this reading is due to the album's lack of text aside from the brief plate titles. Klinger's mastery of the medium enables him to impart to his etchings an uncanny realism which nods to photography as a paradigm of accuracy of depiction. The chief quality of this ambiguity is irony, even kitsch. One might say that with photography's having exceeded "syntactical" forms of printmaking in its accuracy of reproduction and in its ability to reproduce itself

ad infinatum without any diminution of its physical properties, etching survived due to its own obsolescence.<sup>5</sup> Berman's and Ivins's theories coalesce in moments such as this, when, as the primary market for reproducible images tended toward the cheap and accurate, etching survived by nurturing a specific secondary, collector's market for itself. Philippe Burty, an early exemplar of this trend, promoted the purchasing and collecting of the belle épreuve or "beautiful impression" with his seminal publication Sonnets et eaux-fortes (1868), for which he commissioned contemporary artists including Bracquemond, Daubigny, Manet, and Gustave Doré, to produce etchings suggested by poems he had sent them.<sup>6</sup>

Lithographs in colors, especially the posters of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec [Fig. 7], are perhaps the most readily identifiable images of fin-de-siècle Paris. In posters advertising the cabarets and nightlife of an urban scene more at ease with itself in the decades after the Franco-Prussian War, together with lithographic albums such as Elles (1896) [Fig. 8], Lautrec epitomized the glamorizing of the grittier side of urban life through graphic means. The artist Henri Rivière, who created a shadow play for the artsy Paris cabaret Le Chat Noir (frequented by

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<sup>5</sup> My use of the word "syntactical" here is borrowed from William Ivins, and is used to mean those printing media which rely on a prescribed network of hand-made markings to render an image. See Prints and Visual Communication (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1953) 51ff.

<sup>6</sup> Gabriel P. Weisberg, The Independent Critic: Philippe Burty and the Visual Arts of Mid-Nineteenth Century France (New York: Peter Lang, 1993) 42ff.

Redon's supporter Joris-Karl Huysmans) entitled La Tentation de Saint Antoine in 1887, subsequently produced a set of color lithographs recording it.<sup>7</sup> These could not be further from Redon's dark and brooding images, but they underscore the connection between urban life and the collectibility of printed images.

Redon was viewed by Gauguin and his admirers, the Nabis, as a kind of godfather of Symbolism. These artists were prolific printmakers, particularly of color lithographs, and their portfolios and illustrated books are among the crowning achievements of late nineteenth-century graphic art. Albums such as Pierre Bonnard's Quelques Aspects de la vie de Paris (1899) [Fig. 9] and Edouard Vuillard's Paysages et intérieurs (1899) [Fig. 10], however, represent a new phase in the commercialization of prints. Published by Ambroise Vollard, one of the impresarios who would create a bridge between this generation and that of the early twentieth century, these albums were produced for a public who constituted a ready market of collectors of contemporary prints, particularly the belle épreuve, now extended to lithography and other media in addition to etching. It would not be incorrect to state that print serials such as André Marty's L'Estampe Originale (1893-95) and Vollard's L'Epreuve (1894) and Album des peintres-graveurs (1896-97) were akin to exhibitions delivered to one's

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<sup>7</sup> On Henri Rivière and Le Chat Noir, see Philip Dennis Cate, ed., The Graphic Arts and French Society, 1871-1914 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988) 115-17. See also Patricia Eckert Boyer, ed., The Nabis and the Parisian Avant-Garde, exhibition catalogue (New Brunswick: The Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, 1988) 53-58ff and color plates 6 and 8.

home, and in the case of Vollard especially, assured the reputations of the artists he represented as a dealer.

For Redon, the new colorism in artistic lithography was simultaneous with a new preference for color seen in his pastels and paintings; but the move away from charcoal drawings, his noirs, signaled the final phase of his lithographic production. Where artists who were primarily painters, Bonnard and Vuillard, for example, would incorporate painterly qualities into their prints, Redon would abandon printmaking once he moved away from charcoal drawing as the primary means of his production. Increasingly, his lithographs would be made on commission-- Redon even contributed two prints to L'Estampe Originale.<sup>6</sup> Published by Vollard, Redon's final major print cycles, the 1896 Tentation de Saint Antoine and L'Apocalypse de Saint-Jean (1899) were produced in a setting remote from the atmosphere of exploration evinced by his initial lithographic projects.

An unavoidable consequence of thinking and writing about one man and his work over the course of several years is that one begins to identify with him. Based on what we know of Redon's life and times, I feel that it is occasionally necessary to speculate as to his motivations and decisions when documentation is lacking. So, for example, we do not know that Redon sought information about Baudelaire from Bresdin, but based on what we know of him, it would

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<sup>6</sup> These are La Cellule auriculaire (1893) and Le Buddha (1895), included in Volume II (1893) and Volume IX (1895); see Chapter VI of the present study. Donna Stein and Donald Karshan, L'Estampe originale: A Catalogue Raisonné (New York: Museum of Graphic Art, 1970) 33, cat. nos. 63 (pl. 18) and 64 (pl. 89).

seem inconsistent for him not to have learned everything he could about the post from his teacher and mentor (see Chapter II). In another example, we have no evidence to explain why Redon produced, independently of an edition or a commission, a frontispiece for Huysmans's A Rebours, but it behooves us to speculate as to why he did so (see Chapter V).

There are at least two principle developments in Redon studies of the last ten years or so, notable especially in the great retrospective exhibition and catalogue organized by the Art Institute of Chicago in 1994. One has been to re-evaluate Redon's work and biography based on a more thorough use and understanding of primary and documentary sources. A second development is a consequence of this trend, which has been to reintegrate Redon into our picture of his world by taking into account a broader cultural context. It is hoped that the present study, by isolating a specific genre within Redon's work and taking an expansive view of its associations, will not only illuminate an aspect of his biography, but add to our understanding of how his prints were intended to be perceived in their time.

## II. Baudelaire and Bresdin as Precursors

Much has been written on the significance of Baudelaire for Redon, notably the poet's Les Fleurs du Mal, on which Redon based a series of drawings reproduced by the Evely process in 1890.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this chapter is three-fold. First, I will look at the means by which Baudelaire's writings were introduced to Redon by his friend Armand Clavaud, and Redon's subsequent, figurative encounters with the poet himself through mutual friends, such as Rodolphe Bresdin and later Paul Chenavard. Second, I will explore Baudelaire's prose poetry, initially published primarily in Parisian newspapers and journals in the years 1857 to 1867, which constitute a heretofore unrecognized significance for the development of Redon's frontispieces that will be developed in later chapters of this dissertation. Third, I wish to illuminate certain connections between Baudelaire and Bresdin, in order to introduce what I shall call the "Antonian" mode of 19th century bohemianism.

In a section of "Confidences d'Artiste" devoted to memories of Armand Clavaud, Redon recollects:

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<sup>1</sup> Published by Edmond Deman, Brussels. Deman published a second edition in a different format the following year. See Luc and Adrienne Fontainas, "Biographie et bibliographie d'Edmond Deman," Bulletin du Bibliophile nos. 3 & 4 (1986), cat. nos. II.1890-B and II.1891-C.

When the first books of Flaubert were published, he [Clavaud] already pointed them out to me with clear-sightedness. He made me read Edgar Poe and Baudelaire, "Les Fleurs du Mal," at the very hour of their publishing.

Lorsque parurent les premiers livres de Flaubert, il me les désignait déjà avec clairvoyance. Il me fit lire Edgar Poe et Baudelaire, Les Fleurs du Mal, à l'heure même de leur apparition.<sup>2</sup>

This dates Redon's introduction to Baudelaire's work to 1857.<sup>3</sup> Most writings on Redon have duly taken note of this, with an eye toward its culmination in the 1890 series of the same title published by Deman. They have noted, too, Baudelaire's translations of Poe with regard to the lithographic series entitled A Edgar Poe and other works.<sup>4</sup> The revival of literary interest in Baudelaire which took place in the 1880s has also featured prominently in Redon scholarship, notably in the books by Hobbs (1977) and Gamboni (1989). The carefully considered correspondences between Baudelaire's poetry and the content of Redon's art have largely taken place in the arena of source analysis. An early example is by Louis Hautecoeur, who writes:

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<sup>2</sup> Odilon Redon, A Soi-Même, journal 1867-1915 (Paris: José Corti, 1989) 18; cited hereafter as ASM. Trans. Mira Jacob and Jeanne L. Wasserman as To Myself (New York: Braziller, 1986) 15.

"Confidences d'Artiste" was an autobiographical letter sent to Redon's Dutch collector Andres Bongger and included in the original edition of Redon's journal.

<sup>3</sup> Dirk Van Gelder gave the year of Redon's meeting Clavaud as 1861. See "Rodolphe Bresdin et Odilon Redon: Réflexions sur les rapports d'amitié entre le maître et l'élève," Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek, Vol. 17, 1966, 266. Cited hereafter as "Van Gelder 1966."

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Suzy Levy, ed., Lettres inédites d'Odilon Redon à Bongger, Jourdain, Viñes... (Paris: José Corti, 1987) 127, note 3.

His first suite... Dans le Rêve, seems to us to have been inspired by Baudelaire: aren't the first two [plates] entitled Eclosion and Germination?

Sa première suite... Dans le Rêve, nous semble avoir été inspirée par Baudelaire: Les deux premières ne s'appellent-ils pas Eclosion et Germination?<sup>5</sup>

More recently, Terry Strieter has noted the borrowing of motifs from Les Fleurs du Mal in the lithographs La Roue (M. 29) and Sur la coupe (M. 36), both from Redon's first suite of lithographs, Dans le Rêve (1879).<sup>6</sup>

Another theme running through the Redon-Baudelaire literature is the important mediating factor of Clavaud himself, to whom I will add Rodolphe Bresdin, their mutual friend and Redon's own artistic mentor and teacher. Born in 1822, Bresdin was Baudelaire's exact contemporary. Redon began the essay he wrote for the catalogue of the posthumous Bresdin retrospective exhibition held at the Salon d'Automne in 1908 by quoting in full a letter of recommendation written by Baudelaire to Théophile Gautier on 29 April 1861:

My Dear Théophile,

You will remember that I have spoken to you of an old friend, M. Rodolphe Bresdin, who has returned to us, after a twelve-year absence.

I will ignore that his drawings are received at the Salon; but in any case, it is good that you see some pieces by him. I know you well enough to foresee that there are, there, some things that will please you infinitely. Receive Bresdin, then, as an old acquaintance; maybe he will have this effect on you, when

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<sup>5</sup> Louis Hauteceur, Littérature et peinture en France, du XVII<sup>e</sup> au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle (Paris: A. Colin, 1942) 205, cf. Sven Sandström, Le Monde imaginaire d'Odilon Redon (Lund: Gleerup, 1955) 86-87, cited hereafter as "Sandström, 1955."

<sup>6</sup> Terry Strieter, "Odilon Redon and Charles Baudelaire: Some Parallels," Art Journal XXXV:1 (Fall 1975) 17-19.

you come to know his works.

All the best to you,  
Baudelaire.

Mon cher Théophile,

Tu te souviens que je t'ai parlé d'un vieil ami, M. Rodolphe Bresdin, qui nous est revenu, après douze ans d'absence.

J'ignore si ces dessins sont reçus au Salon; mais, en tous cas, il est bon que tu voies quelques morceaux de lui. Je te connais assez, pour deviner qui'il y a, là, des choses qui te plairont infiniment. Reçois donc Bresdin, comme une vieille connaissance; il te fera peut-être cet effet, quand tu connaîtras ses oeuvres.

Tout à toi.

Baudelaire.<sup>7</sup>

The two had been compatriots in their youth in Paris, and fear of government reprisals forced Bresdin to end a ten-year residence<sup>8</sup> there a year following the Revolution of 1848. By the time Redon met Bresdin in 1864 in Bordeaux,<sup>9</sup> he too had lived in Paris, in 1862-63 and again in 1864-65 (to study briefly with Gérôme) following his introduction to Bresdin. Fired by their enthusiasm for Baudelaire, Redon and Clavaud must have jogged Bresdin's memory for first-hand stories about the poet. As recently as 1861, Bresdin had contributed etchings and Baudelaire had contributed poems to Catulle Mendès' short-lived journal La Revue fantaisiste. Redon's enthusiasm for his artistic heroes was genuine, as evidenced by his ploy to strike up a correspondence with Delacroix,

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<sup>7</sup> Redon's essay, "Rodolphe Bresdin (1822-1885)" is reprinted in its entirety in Robert Coustet, ed., Odilon Redon, Critiques d'art (Bordeaux: William Blake, 1987) 77-82.

<sup>8</sup> Dirk Van Gelder, Rodolphe Bresdin, 2 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976) I:18. Cited hereafter as "Van Gelder 1976."

<sup>9</sup> Van Gelder 1966, 265.

and his following the painter home one night in Paris after a ball.<sup>10</sup> Aside from the effort on Redon's part to seek out Baudelaire's letter cited above, there is no evidence to confirm that Bresdin regaled Redon and Clavaud with stories about Baudelaire. But it is recorded that in the 1870's, as a member of the Paris salon of Mme Berthe de Rayssac, Redon sought out such stories from the painter Paul Chenavard, who had been a friend of both Baudelaire and Delacroix.<sup>11</sup> So there is every reason to believe that Redon did seek such first-hand information from Bresdin as well.

As an intermediary between Baudelaire and Redon, Clavaud played a vital role in shaping Redon's proclivity toward the poet. Redon wrote of Clavaud to his brother Ernest on 30 January 1883:

Please send my regards to Clavaud, whom I very much regret not having gone to see on my last trip. I think of him often, even through him. Because his ideas, his literary choices, his aesthetic, his intellectual and clairvoyant eclecticism, I also find in my young friends of the generation that follows me, in the youngest ones.

Fais bien, je te prie, mes amitiés à Clavaud, que je regrette bien de ne pas être allé voir à mon dernier passage. Je pense souvent à lui, même par lui. Car ses idées, ses choix littéraires, son esthétique, son

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<sup>10</sup> ASM, 180-81.

<sup>11</sup> See Richard Hobbs, Odilon Redon (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1977) 28. It should also be noted here that the painter Henri Fantin-Latour, another member of this salon, had known Baudelaire through the circle of artists including Edouard Manet. His painting Hommage à Eugène Delacroix (1864) included a self-portrait along with portraits of the artists Albert de Balleroy, Bracquemond, Louis Cordier, Legros, Manet, and Whistler and the writers Baudelaire, Champfleury, and Duranty, gathered before a portrait of Delacroix. See Douglas Druick and Michel Hoog, Fantin-Latour, exhibition catalogue (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1983) 173-80, cat. no. 57.

intellectuel et clairvoyant éclectisme, je les trouve aussi dans les jeunes amis de la génération qui me suit, dans les plus jeunes.<sup>12</sup>

More recently, Douglas Druick and Peter Zegers have observed:

Clavaud's particular contribution to Redon's development was the way in which he framed his views, specifically his use of a combination of contemporary scientific theory and German philosophy to justify both Baudelaire's celebration of the imagination as the 'Queen of [our] faculties' and his own view that Romanticism was the century's greatest artistic achievement. From the notes grouped under the heading "Propos de Clavaud" ("Clavaud's Remarks"), we know the botanist revered Romanticism for its exploration of humankind's eternal struggle with the internal and external forces that vie for control of our souls...<sup>13</sup>

Among the many texts introduced to Redon by Clavaud was Charles Darwin's Origin of the Species (1859), translated into French in 1862.<sup>14</sup> This book, a model of positivism in its adherence to empirical observation, may be considered the opposite of Baudelaire's "celebration of the imagination as the 'Queen of our faculties'."

In addition to being an amateur of art and poetry, Clavaud was a botanist, of some renown. With his microscope he introduced Redon to the world of the microorganism. That these tiny creatures could be in a state of evolution, moving inexorably toward flora or

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<sup>12</sup> Letter from Odilon to Ernest Redon of 30 January 1883, cited in Sandström 1955, 186, no. 10; cf. p. 64.

<sup>13</sup> Douglas Druick, ed., and Peter Zegers in Odilon Redon, Prince of Dreams, exhibition catalogue (Art Institute of Chicago, 1994) 45. I have quoted the authors at length here because I have been unable to consult the archival notes to which they refer (Ryerson Library, Art Institute of Chicago, Mellerio-Redon Papers, A-3, 107-09).

<sup>14</sup> Sandstrom 1955, 64.

fauna, opened Redon's eyes to the notion that, after all, an unknown and mysterious ideal lurked behind the receding boundaries of empirical knowledge.<sup>15</sup> Later this would manifest itself within Redon's oeuvre in the distinct genres of acutely observed landscape drawing, on the one hand, and in the noirs, where chimeras inspired by the forms of microorganisms float in murky seas of black ink, on the other. The use of the word chimera to describe these figures in his art points directly to Baudelaire. The point of convergence between these two tendencies in his art will be discussed in the following chapter with regard to Redon's first frontispiece, created for the series Dans le rêve (1879).

The way in which these two strains of nineteenth-century thinking, positivism and idealism, relate to one another, has already been discussed with regard to the art of the late nineteenth century by Richard Shiff in his essay "The End of Impressionism" (1986).<sup>16</sup> Although he focuses primarily on Impressionism and the later development of Symbolism, Shiff is generous in providing a context for these movements in intellectual currents reaching as far back as Romanticism and Realism. He points out that Impressionism possessed its own elements of subjectivity and idealization, as Castagnary and others, including

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<sup>15</sup> For further reading on Redon's interest in the natural sciences and his attention to developments in this field, see Druick and Zegers in Chicago 1994, esp. 146-54 and the section entitled "La Nouvelle Optique," 111-17.

<sup>16</sup> Richard Shiff, "The End of Impressionism," in The New Painting: Impressionism 1874-1886, exhibition catalogue (Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 1986) 61-89.

the Symbolists, once understood.<sup>17</sup> A traditional concern shared by both Impressionists and Symbolists was the problem of the individual's means of arriving at truth or knowledge, and the relation of this individual (or private) truth to a universal (or public) truth. Shiff thus provides a context for the convergence of Redon's interests in the natural sciences, his direct observation of nature, and his often seemingly artificial images.

There can be no question that Les Fleurs du Mal held great sway over Redon's imagination. The purpose of this chapter, however, is to consider the impact of Baudelaire's prose poetry on Redon. These poems, collected posthumously as Le Spleen de Paris (1868), were originally published primarily in newspapers and journals in the years 1855 to 1867. Their importance for Redon lies not only in their content, but in the very means of their publication. To understand this, it will be necessary to outline both the development of the popular press in France in the middle of the nineteenth century and Baudelaire's difficult circumstances during the last ten years of his life, an aspect of his biography which contributed to the bohemian-artistic aesthetic in the last two decades of the century. The development of the popular press is directly linked in various ways to the concurrent history of printmaking, and thereby, to Redon.

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The literary life of Paris had traditionally centered itself

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid 62-63.

around periodicals,<sup>18</sup> and the newspaper was a forum for writing on all issues, with the interests of its audience in mind. Through the Restoration, the Parisian newspaper was typically a publication whose audience shared a common political cause. The content and circulation of these periodicals was thus based on the size and class of its constituency, which also determined their subscription price.

In about 1836, under the July Monarchy, the founders of La Presse and Le Siècle conceived of a new kind of periodical to challenge the hegemony of the traditional press. The primary characteristic of the new periodical was that the subscription rate would be significantly lowered. In order to compensate for the loss of income, advertisers would be taken on as a potentially more lucrative source of revenue. Where previously revenue from advertisements had supplemented subscriptions, now periodicals would utilize revenue from subscriptions to cover the costs of materials, postage, composition, and printing; revenue from advertisements would pay editorial and administrative expenses. While the raison d'être of the old-style newspaper was bound to its political convictions, the new paper was, in essence, a business arrangement. To guarantee a readership, and a broader one at that, the publishers introduced the feuilleton-- a section devoted to items of general interest and common curiosity, including

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<sup>18</sup> Walter Benjamin, Charles Baudelaire, A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Verso, 1989) 27. Cited hereafter as "Benjamin, Baudelaire."

criticism, poetry, and gossip.<sup>19</sup>

An entire literary genre grew out of the feuilleton. Novelists including Eugène Sue and Victor Hugo were paid high sums to publish serialized novels in this space.<sup>20</sup> The advertisement, aided in no small part by the development of the inexpensive process of lithography and the multiplication of type-faces, may be seen as the counterpart to the feuilleton. Indeed, the process was utilized for illustrations of articles and, notably, caricature, the genre of both Daumier and Grandville, and the subject of a critical essay by Baudelaire.<sup>21</sup> The marriage of image and text under the auspices of industry will prove to be of special interest with regard to Redon's frontispieces of the 1880s, to be discussed in later chapters of this dissertation.

The increasing prevalence of the feuilleton was popularly held to mark a decline in the dignity of journalism. Indeed it was termed "la littérature industrielle."<sup>22</sup> Where once readers had looked to their papers for confirmation and support of their

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<sup>19</sup> Alfred Français Nettement, Histoire de la Littérature française sous le Gouvernement de Juillet (Paris: Lecoffre, 1854) I:301-07. Cited hereafter as "Nettement 1854."

<sup>20</sup> The proliferation of the feuilleton was a truly international development, providing a forum for the work of Poe, Dickens, and Dostoevsky. See Donald Fanger, Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism (University of Chicago Press, 1965) 135-37, 140, cf. Berman 1982.

<sup>21</sup> The essay, "Les Caricaturistes," was published in two parts, the first dealing with French caricaturists, the second with foreign caricaturists, in Le Présent, 1 and 15 October 1857.

<sup>22</sup> This expression seems to have been coined by Sainte-Beuve himself. See note 24.

political beliefs, they now came to expect amusement and entertainment. As early as 1839, Sainte-Beuve wrote in the Revue de Deux-Mondes, one of the first periodicals to introduce the feuilleton,<sup>23</sup> that there was, of late, a noticeable lack of focus and sense of political purpose in the press. But he notes, too, that new and liberal ideas in literature had been introduced to the Parisian press in the seventeenth century, and that in every subsequent period the quality of literary production had been uneven. Sainte-Beuve asserts that innovations in format ultimately produce a regeneration of new and different talent, each making a mark on its epoch and exerting an influence over later generations.<sup>24</sup>

Twenty-two years later, in 1861, Eugène Hatin echoes Sainte-Beuve's mixed, but ultimately optimistic assessment of the feuilleton. Hatin notes that the increase in advertising was a sign of growing markets, and that the related increase in readership meant that, consequently, the world of politics did reach more people than ever before. And the advertiser's new markets were comprised of newspaper readers eager to be entertained by writers who themselves had increased access to a growing literary marketplace in the feuilleton. In this way, the press had transformed itself into a vehicle for concerns previously ephemeral to the purposes of instruction and edification. Hatin's

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<sup>23</sup> Nettement 1854, 303.

<sup>24</sup> Sainte-Beuve, "De la littérature industrielle," Revue des Deux-Mondes Vol. 19, 4th series, 1839, 675-691.

conclusion is that a literary marketplace already existed which was eager to expand into this new format. In this Hatin is, in turn, echoed by Benjamin, who observes that the "assimilation of a man of letters to the society in which he lived took place on the boulevard" by means of the feuilleton.<sup>25</sup>

This, then, was to be the vehicle for the public presentation of Baudelaire's prose poems, and Baudelaire must have had this in mind when he composed them, intending eventually to publish them as a single volume. Marshall Berman has broadly defined modernism as "any attempt by modern men and women to become subjects as well as objects of modernization, to get a grip on the modern world and make themselves at home in it."<sup>26</sup> With this model in mind, I turn to a brief account of Baudelaire's fortune with regard to his Fleurs du Mal and its aftermath.

In 1855, Baudelaire had published eighteen of his Fleurs du Mal poems in the Revue des Deux-Mondes. In 1857, he offered the manuscript to the publisher Michel Lévy. Because of Baudelaire's controversial reputation, Lévy hesitated to publish the work, and the poet subsequently offered it to his friend Auguste Poulet Malassis, a printer recently turned publisher, who aspired to become a publisher of small deluxe editions at a time when such work was relatively scarce.<sup>27</sup> An innovator in fine printing,<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Benjamin, Baudelaire, 29.

<sup>26</sup> Marshall Berman, All That is Solid Melts into Air (New York: Penguin, 1982) 5. Cited hereafter as "Berman, All That is Solid."

<sup>27</sup> Enid Starkie, Baudelaire (Norfolk, Connecticut: New Directions, 1958) 308-309. Cited hereafter as "Starkie 1958."

Poulet Malassis anticipated the deluxe printing revival which was to take place in the 1880s, notably in the editions of Edmond Deman of Brussels.

Upon its publication in June 1857, the Fleurs du Mal was immediately attacked as obscene in Le Figaro. Earlier in the year, Flaubert's Madame Bovary had been unsuccessfully tried on the same grounds at the behest of the Minister of the Interior, Billaut, who was looking for just such another case to vindicate himself.<sup>29</sup> In Baudelaire's case, the verdict pronounced six of his poems obscene. Existing copies of the edition were to be confiscated and destroyed, and Baudelaire was ordered to delete them from the text of further editions.

Incidentally, the second, revised, edition of Fleurs du Mal (1861) was intended to include a frontispiece commissioned by Baudelaire from the etcher Felix Bracquemond. The frontispiece never came to fruition because Bracquemond found himself unable to create the image described by Baudelaire, that is, plants depicting "the seven deadly sins stifling the tree of knowledge and goodness."<sup>30</sup> So the second edition did not contain a frontispiece. However, the "first" edition of Les Étapes (Brussels, 1866), comprising the poems ordered deleted from the 1857 edition as a result of the famous obscenity trial, did contain a frontispiece by the Belgian etcher Felicien Rops. That Brussels, which had

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 309-10.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 313.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 308.

historically been considered the poor cousin of Paris, culturally speaking, would be the place of publication of Les Étapes, should come as no surprise. Brussels was the traditional destination of refugees (including David, Baudelaire, Mallarmé) of the changing tide of the politics of taste in France.

Starkie has noted that although the notoriety of the case enabled Baudelaire to publish his first batch of prose poems in the 24 August 1857 issue of Le Présent, he never fully recovered from the humiliation and degradation brought on by the government's order to suppress his work.<sup>31</sup> There is, however, an inherent irony to this. If, as Starkie has pointed out, the program of Les Fleurs du Mal gives the book a unity which is part and parcel of its message, then the prose poems, by contrast, seem to be most effective when incorporated into the printed page of the newspaper. This is certainly an element of their melancholy, or "spleen," since their content virtually necessitates their appearance there, instead of in a conventional volume.

The prose poems did not easily see the light of day in Baudelaire's lifetime.<sup>32</sup> Taking on Baudelaire was a risky proposition for a publisher under the best of circumstances. His perfectionism led him to carry on endless series of proof corrections, often causing him to break his contract. But further, of course, there was his official disfavor, which brought with it the risk of subscribers threatening to cancel their subscriptions

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 325-27.

<sup>32</sup> See Starkie 1958, 440-43, 454-59, 488-89.

should his work appear in their paper."<sup>33</sup>

We see two ostensibly conflicting notions emerging here. The first is that Baudelaire conceived of the prose poems with publication in periodicals in mind. The second, propounded by Enid Starkie, is of Baudelaire the poet-martyr, forced to subject himself to the indignity of a fickle and superficially-minded publishing hierarchy. The key element is the prose format of the poems themselves, which speak to Baudelaire's need to work both in and against that establishment. Starkie's penetrating and sympathetic analysis of Baudelaire, while fully cognizant of Baudelaire's shortcomings, pits the formal innovation of his prose against an establishment unable to accommodate the poet's difficult personality. Of the poet Alphonse de Lamartine, who became quite successful with his contributions to the feuilletons, Baudelaire wrote that he was "a bit whorish, a bit prostituted."<sup>34</sup> In other words, Baudelaire felt that to subsume one's creative energies to the pressures of the marketplace was to demean oneself. This becomes a central paradox of modernism, since innovation in and expansion of the marketplace continually force the artist to incorporate new strategies of salesmanship into his work. The way beyond this conflict, as Berman has suggested, was for Baudelaire to turn the greater context of his prose poems into their subject

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 442-43.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Benjamin, Baudelaire, 33. Benjamin writes, "Baudelaire knew what the true situation of the man of letters was: he goes to the marketplace as a flâneur, supposedly to take a look at it, but in reality to find a buyer" 34.

as well as their object.

Summarizing Baudelaire's theory of the modern heroism, Berman notes that modern man is, first of all, all the more heroic for his lack of the paraphernalia of antiquity. The tendency of modernity to make all things new means that next year's modern life will look and feel different from this year's; still, both will be a part of the same modern age. But the fact that "you can't step into the same modernism twice will make modern life all the more difficult to grasp."<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, "the real point of the modern artist's work is to re-enact these processes, to put his own soul and sensibility through these transformations, and to bring these explosive forces to life in his work."<sup>36</sup> The means to this end is to épouser la foule, that is, "to marry the crowd" by engaging it in a manner consistent with the meeting itself. In this fashion, publication en feuilleton becomes a possible mode of interaction due to its identity with the everyday life of the inhabitants of the city.

Berman seems to slightly misapprehend the feuilleton, referring to it as a sort of "Op-Ed piece," but he is quite correct in his estimation of the creative and expressive possibilities inherent to the form.

Especially remarkable here is Berman's characterization of the feuilleton as possessing qualities which I would like to associate, in the case of Redon, with the frontispiece as a site of interface

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<sup>35</sup> Berman, All That is Solid, 143.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 145.

between an author and his illustrator. He writes, "It was generally written by an outsider, in an evocative or reflective tone, intended as a contrast to the editorial's combativeness-- though the piece might well be chosen to reinforce (often subliminally) the editor's polemical point."<sup>37</sup>

Examples of the publication of Baudelaire's prose poetry will help to contextualize Redon's own struggle in the 1880s to overcome the traditional subsidiary role of the illustrator with regard to the author, printer, and publisher. Although it is not known which periodicals Redon subscribed to, it is fair to assume that, when he could, he sought out those issues of journals and newspapers containing submissions by Baudelaire, if not from Bordeaux, then during his sojourns in Paris in 1862-63 and 1864-65. Baudelaire's first large group of prose poems that would later be included in Le Spleen de Paris appeared in the Parisian journal Le Présent<sup>38</sup> in 1857, the year Les Fleur du Mal was published, and the year Redon

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 147.

<sup>38</sup> Le Présent 1<sup>re</sup> année, tome premier, no. 8, 24 August 1857, 284-90, where the prose poems were included under the title "Poemes nocturnes." The essay "De l'Essence du Rire" appeared in the following issue dated 1 September 1857, and the two-part essay "Les Caricaturistes" appeared in the 1 and 15 October 1857 issues (see note 21 above). These subjects of critical inquiry are related to the popular press itself, in much the same way that the form and content of the prose poems are, as I will show. On the inside front cover of the August 24 issue, under the heading "Extrait de la table des numéros parus" is listed "Les Fleurs du mal, par Charles Baudelaire - Critique - F. Dulamon." One of the unhappy consequences of posthumous collections of Baudelaire's writings is the division of poetry from essays, which obfuscates their original connectedness by publication in series such as this one in Le Présent.

was first introduced to the works of the poet.<sup>39</sup> The poems are introduced under the heading "Poemes nocturnes." Included in the issue are "La crépuscule du soir," "la solitude," "les projets," "l'horloge," "la chevelure," and "l'invitation au voyage." The poems are indeed printed in prose format, making them visually indistinguishable from the articles and essays found throughout the issue. On the visual level, there is a tension that arises from the prose format, which is made manifest in the way in which the poems follow one another according to a logic that sets them apart from the remainder of the issue.

The first poem, "La crépuscule du soir," is immediately striking in its off-hand recounting of "a couple of friends." We read:

The fall of night has always been for me the signal of an interior feast and like the delivery of some anguish. In the forests as in the streets of a great city, where the darkening of day and the twinkling of stars and lanterns [streetlights] illuminate my mind.

But I have two friends...

La tombée de la nuit a toujours été pour moi le signal d'une fête intérieure et comme la délivrance d'une angoisse. Dans les forêts comme dans les rues d'une grande ville, l'assombrissement du jour et le scintillement des étoiles et des lanternes éclairent mon esprit.

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<sup>39</sup> The periodicals discussed here were consulted in the original (or microfilm) at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. The Flammarion edition of Le Spleen de Paris (Paris, 1987) cites the publication history of each poem prior to the 1868 edition. Edward Kaplan's Baudelaire's Prose Poems (Athens: University of Georgia, 1990), organizes the pre-publication history of the poems in a chronological list of the periodicals; see Appendix 2 entitled "Prepublication History," 175-81. Cited hereafter as "Kaplan, Baudelaire."

Mais j'ai deux amis...<sup>40</sup>

The second poem, "La Solitude" begins:

He also told me, - the second one, - that solitude was bad for man...

Il me disait aussi, - le second, - que la solitude était mauvaise pour l'homme...<sup>41</sup>

Thus, from one poem to the next there is the connection of one figure ("la seconde" in "La Solitude"). For the reader, it is disorienting to enter a "prose" space only to find oneself in a world of poetry, of mysterious companions alluded to but left unintroduced. The quarto format of Le Présent allows Baudelaire's poems to fill the pages they occupy. The qualities of the issue itself take on a distinct aesthetic dimension as one crosses over from criticism into this very different use of prose, and back into criticism.

Baudelaire's "Poemes nocturnes" follow the eighth installment by Léon Daléas of his Salon of 1857, in which Daubigny, Rousseau, Corot, and Fromentin, among others, are discussed. The poems are then followed by F. Dulamon's "Du Sommeil et de l'extase" ("Of Sleep and Exctasy"). The first section is entitled "Le Sommeil." It begins with the phrase:

Sleep is full of mysteries which always provoke

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<sup>40</sup> This is the first published version of "La crépuscule du soir" (see previous note), which differs substantially from the version which finally appeared in Le Spleen de Paris in 1868. The original version is reprinted in its entirety in the 1987 Flammarion edition: see 205-07, incl. n. 37.

<sup>41</sup> As with "La crépuscule du soir," "La Solitude" also appears in a different version in Le Spleen de Paris. The original version appears in its entirety in the 1987 Flammarion edition: see 206-07, n. 37.

curiosity, and at the same time its undulating and fleeting nature seem to defy the most penetrating sagacity.

Le sommeil est plein de mystères qui ont toujours provoqué la curiosité, et en même temps sa nature ondoyante et fugace semble défier la plus pénétrante sagacité.

Although thematically related to the Baudelaire excerpts cited above, here it becomes apparent just how effective Baudelaire's prose is in its simplicity and in its almost uncanny directness. In fact, Baudelaire and Dulamon were grouped together in this issue as "Variétés." Thus, the Editor, or Director, Etienne Mellier, has deliberately united the works, in order to highlight both their relationship to one another and that of the "Variétés" to the remainder of the issue.

Finally, Baudelaire's section ends with "(La suite prochainement)." As Kaplan has noted, there were no more "Poemes nocturnes" in the following issue,<sup>42</sup> but included is "De L'Essence du rire," subtitled "et généralement du comique dans les arts plastiques." In the next issue, no. 9, this article follows the ninth installment of Daléas' Salon. This issue also contains Emile Deschamps' review in verse of Baudelaire's Fleurs du mal addressed "A Quelques censeurs." Notably, the "poem" is dated "Versailles, 13 août 1857," and its title is starred with a footnote composed by Mellier:

With regard to a recent arrest, from whose one hundred pieces only six were eliminated, and to proclaim the laudable intentions of the author of Fleurs du Mal, we are happy to publish these verses by a poet universally loved and admired.

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<sup>42</sup> Kaplan, Baudelaire, 177.

These verses date from August 13th, the judgement given against the Fleurs du Mal is of the 20th.

Tout en respectant un arrêt récent, qui d'ailleurs sur cent pièces n'en a éliminé que six et a proclamé les intentions louables de l'auteur des Fleurs du Mal, nous sommes heureux de publier ces vers d'un poète universellement aimé et admiré.

Ces vers datent du 13 août, le jugement rendu contre les Fleurs du Mal est du 20.

Le Présent was essentially the old-fashioned kind of literary journal, whose Director shared in the aesthetic consensus of his readers. In this way, publication in a weekly journal could serve the poet well, the prose poems specifically, by giving them a sympathetic setting. Deschamps writes that Baudelaire has mirrored reality, as follows:

These frightening bouquets of Charles Baudelaire  
Are angered, torn by the wind of rage!...

No, Sirs, no! - The Real is the subject here.

In breaking the mirror does one change reality  
itself?

His painting, after all, is not an apology.

Ces bouquets effrayants de Charles Baudelaire

S'en iraient, déchirés au vent de la colère!...

Non, messieurs, non! - le Réel est ici le sujet.

En brisant le miroir détruirait-on l'objet?

Sa peinture, après tout, n'est pas l'apologie.

Deschamps observes that qualities of Baudelaire's writing are best described in visual terms, and that the borders between visual signs and literary signs are a subject of his work. This will lead directly to Baudelaire's prose poems, where certain of the "Real" relationships inherent to the form of publishing in the popular press evolved in the coming decade. As we shall see, the poet's fortune is directly related to his poems' position in a volatile medium, the disposable printed page.

A few years later, in 1861, Baudelaire contributed pieces,

prose poems among them, to the short-lived La Revue fantaisiste.<sup>43</sup> The brief history of this journal is notable for the wealth of talent it brought together and its inept leadership under the nineteen-year-old Catulle Mendès. Only nineteen livraisons, or issues, appeared in a span of nine months in 1861. The journal included art and literary criticism as well as, eventually, original etchings by Rodolphe Bresdin. Its circulation probably never exceeded one hundred. Among the literary contributors were Baudelaire, Théophile Gautier, Theodore de Banville, Jules Claretie, and Alcide Dusolier. The letter of 29 April 1861 from Baudelaire to Gautier cited earlier in this chapter must have immediately followed Bresdin's induction into the Revue, and was doubtless intended to re-introduce Bresdin to the artistic and literary world of Paris following his twelve-year absence. Beginning with the May 1st issue, Bresdin would ultimately contribute thirteen etchings to the Revue.<sup>44</sup>

The following works by Baudelaire, which were announced at the end of tome II, appeared in tome III as follows:

No. 13 (August 15) II. Réflexions sur quelques-uns de mes contemporains: VIII. Pierre Dupont. - IX. Leconte de Lisle.

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<sup>43</sup> It is unlikely that Redon knew the Revue fantaisiste during its short life span. Its subscribers numbered only in the dozens, and besides, Redon does not seem to have known Bresdin's work before his meeting him in 1864.

<sup>44</sup> As Van Gelder points out, the frontispiece designed by Bresdin for the Revue fantaisiste logically belongs to the first issue, which is dated February 15. However, Bresdin did not arrive in Paris until mid-March and did not sign his contract with the Revue until early April. Van Gelder 1976, I:165-66 and II:74-75, cat. no. 101.

No. 15 (September 15) V. Peintures murales d'Eugène Delacroix.

No. 17 (October 15) V. Livres: les Martyres ridicules, par M. Léon Cladel. [review]

No. 18 (November 1) I. - Poèmes en prose: Le Crépuscule du soir. - La Solitude. - Les Projets. - L'Horloge. - La Chevelure. - L'Invitation au Voya[g]e. - Les Foules. - Les Veuves. - Le vieux Saltimbanque.

Several works by Baudelaire were announced to follow livraison 18, including further prose poems and the essay "Dandys, Dilletantes et Virtuoses," but no. 19 was to be the final issue. Baudelaire's sole inclusion in no. 19 was his French translation of Poe's "Eléonora."

As with Le Présent, the Revue fantaisiste was led by a sincere editor who cared about the quality of his venture, but this was no guarantee of financial success. The two examples cited thus far were literary journals. The feuilleton proper was extrinsic to the sensibility of these periodicals, and although Baudelaire certainly did not get rich from his association with these publications, at the very least he could rest assured that he was not "prostituting" himself. As Benjamin has noted, however, Baudelaire was shrewd enough to re-submit poems that had been previously published:<sup>45</sup> this seems to represent the extent of his ability to navigate the market for his work.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> See Benjamin, Baudelaire, 33.

<sup>46</sup> Although, as Starkie has pointed out, Baudelaire did not consider it true re-publication if, for example, even an item of punctuation had been altered. Starkie notes that the republication of poems originally published in La Revue fantaisiste in La Presse was justified by Baudelaire in that serial publication in the latter was to present the complete poems in anticipation of their publication as a collection soon thereafter. Besides, La Revue

With the publication of three series (four were originally intended) of prose poems in La Presse (26 and 27 August and 24 September 1862) began Baudelaire's publication en feuilleton.<sup>47</sup> In the August 26 issue, the "Petits poemes en prose" serve as a bas-de-page diversion from news of Garibaldi's threats to lay siege to Rome. Here, of course, Baudelaire's prose and subject matter are remarkably distinct from what is found elsewhere in the paper.

With Baudelaire's publication of prose poems in the weekly Parisian newspaper Le Boulevard of 14 June 1863, we have a far richer context in which to examine the placement of the poet's work. This was a folio-sized paper with a much livelier layout and style than Le Présent or La Presse. Its primary characteristic is its ephemerality, which is part and parcel, it seems, of its currency and sophistication. The wood-block vignette which appears above the title of each issue depicts the sidewalk of a Parisian boulevard replete with all the types one would expect to find there: a café full of people seated around a sidewalk table, dandies in top hats and ladies in bonnets and petticoats strolling at a pace suited to leisurely conversation, a street urchin; the

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fantaisiste was virtually unknown, defunct, and copies were unobtainable. (Starkie 1958, 456).

<sup>47</sup> This was the only example I examined at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, in which Baudelaire's poems actually appear in a designated feuilleton section. The following poems appeared in the first, August 26, installment of three published in La Presse: "A Arsène Houssaye" (dedicatory letter), "L'Etranger," "Le Désespoir de la vieille," "Le Confiteor de l'artiste," "Un Plaisant," "La Chambre double," "Chacun la sienne" ("Chacun sa chimère"), "Le Fou et la Vénus," "Le Chien et le flacon," "Le Mauvais Vitrier."

sidewalk is not only planted with mature trees, but is wide enough for the sun to shine through; there is a kiosk plastered with advertising posters. In short, the emphasis is on the width of the sidewalk, characterized by its ability to accomodate every manner of street life. This is the world of Le Boulevard.

The 14 June 1863 issue contains numerous pieces by and about Baudelaire and his friends and acquaintances, including as well Banville's poem "Hélène" and Emile Deschamps' "Portrait of Monsieur Godu," a satirical depiction of a millionaire speculator. Although this issue does not include an installment, Jules Castagnary had begun to publish a series on the life of Courbet in the previous, June 7 issue, including a caricature of him by Etienne Carjat, who served as the paper's Redacteur en Chef. While Baudelaire's "poemes en prose" do not occupy the feuilleton section here, it may be said that the entire paper consists of feuilleton-type material.

In Le Figaro of 7 February 1864, Baudelaire's prose poems appeared with the paper's Sécretaire de la Rédaction G. Boudin's introduction, as follows:

The Spleen of Paris is the title adopted by M. C. Baudelaire for a book he is preparing, and with which he wants to fashion a worthy pendant to Fleurs du Mal. All that which finds itself naturally excluded from rhythm and rhyme, or more difficult to express, all the material details and, in a word, all the minutiae of the prosaic life, find their place in prose, where the ideal and the trivial are combined in an inseparable amalgam. Otherwise, the dark and ill soul which the author is presumed to have had in order to write the Fleurs du Mal is, more or less, the same who composes the Spleen de Paris. In the prose work, as in the verse, all the suggestions of the Parisian street, circumstance, and sky, all the jolts of conscience, all the languors of reverie, philosophy, dream and even anecdote may take their place in turn. It is only a matter of finding a

prose which adapts itself to the different states of the soul of the morose flâneur. Our readers will judge whether M. Charles Baudelaire has succeeded in this.

Some people think that London alone has the aristocratic privilege of the spleen, and that Paris, joyous Paris, has never known this black disease. There is perhaps as well, as the author claims, a sort of Parisian spleen; and he affirms that the number of those who have known and will recognize it is great.

Le Spleen de Paris est le titre adopté par M. C. Baudelaire pour un livre qu'il prépare, et dont il veut faire un digne pendant aux Fleurs du Mal. Tout ce qui se trouve naturellement exclu de l'oeuvre rythmée et rimée, ou plus difficile à exprimer, tous les détails matériels, et, en un mot, toutes les minuties de la vie prosaïque, trouvent leur place dans l'oeuvre en prose, où l'idéal et le trivial se fondent dans un amalgame inséparable.

D'ailleurs, l'âme sombre et malade que l'auteur a dû supposer pour écrire les Fleurs du Mal est, à peu de chose près, la même qui compose le Spleen de Paris. Dans l'ouvrage en prose, comme dans l'oeuvre en vers, toutes les suggestions de la rue, de la circonstance et du ciel parisiens, tous les soubresauts de la conscience, toutes les langueurs de la rêverie, la philosophie, le songe et même l'anecdote peuvent prendre leur rang à tour de rôle. Il s'agit seulement de trouver une prose qui s'adapte aux différents états de l'âme du flâneur morose. Nos lecteurs jugeront si M. Charles Baudelaire y a réussi.

Certains gens croient que Londres seul a le privilège aristocratique du spleen, et que Paris, le joyeux Paris, n'a jamais connu cette noire maladie. Il y a peut-être bien, comme le prétend l'auteur, une sorte de spleen parisien; et il affirme que le nombre est grand de ceux qui l'ont connu et le reconnaîtront.

With this rather distinguished introduction, notable since Le Figaro had so bitterly attacked Les Fleurs du Mal seven years earlier,<sup>48</sup> the poems themselves-- "La Corde" (A Edouard Manet), "La Crépuscule du Soir," "Le Joueur généreux," and "Envirez-vous"-- might almost be construed as "news," since their significance and relevance to the reader is explained. In this instance, then, one

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<sup>48</sup> One may speculate that Boudin's introduction may even have been a requirement of Baudelaire's.

finds an instance in which publication en feuilleton has crossed over from the realm of the ephemeral, and no longer serves an exclusively diversionary purpose."

In the last example I will cite here, Baudelaire's prose poems function more ambiguously with regard to their context, the newspaper La Vie Parisienne. Although in its large format it resembles Le Boulevard, La Vie Parisienne is almost completely lacking in the other paper's intelligent sense of chic-- it consists almost entirely of fluff. In the 2 July 1864 issue, the poem "Les yeux des pauvres" appears without Baudelaire's name appearing either with the poem itself or in the table. The poem follows a piece entitled "Types des Femmes" which starts off with a section entitled "Frou-Frou Parisienne." Following this, Baudelaire's poem seems quite dour, yet there are parallels. The woman in Baudelaire's poem bears a strong character resemblance to the women described in "Types de Femmes" but with a sense of irony that is entirely lacking in the essay. There can be no doubt that the editor of La Vie Parisienne deliberately juxtaposed the pieces. And, as undignified a context for this poem as this is, one cannot help but come to the conclusion that this, after all, is the perfect context for the poem. Integrated into its context by its prose format, the poem cannot be said to call attention to itself. But the reader, now up to date on Parisian "frou-frou," is now given a rather sober view of its inherent vanity, and might be

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" The February 14 issue included Baudelaire's prose poems "Les Vocations" and "Un Cheval de race."

inclined to take Baudelaire's poem as almost a moralistic caution against vanity. Baudelaire's poem describes external beauty masking internal ugliness, and conversely, external ugliness hiding profound truths.

"Les Yeux des pauvres" opens with the lines:

Ah! You would like to know why I hate you today. It is without a doubt less easy for you to understand than for me to explain; it is because you are, I believe, the most beautiful example of feminine impermeability that one might encounter.

Ah! vous voulez savoir pourquoi je vous hais aujourd'hui. Il vous sera sans doute moins facile de le comprendre qu'à moi de vous l'expliquer; car vous êtes, je crois, le plus bel exemple d'imperméabilité féminine qui se puisse rencontrer.

Later in the summer, in the 13 August issue, the poem "Les Projets" appeared. Here the poet's name appears with the poem and in the table. A summer issue, the poem appears among numerous illustrations depicting summer scenes and pastimes. The greater irony in this example is that at this time of year, a substantial portion of the paper's readership must have been away from the city heat, enjoying the pleasures of the countryside made available to them by the ever-expanding railway lines. In this poem, the protagonist strolls alone through the city, successively imagining himself and his lover ensconced in a palace, in a tropical scene, and finally in a simple Parisian inn, ultimately reaching the conclusion:

And in returning home alone, at this hour when advice and Wisdom are no longer stifled by the drone of exterior life, he says to himself: "I had today, dreaming, three homes where I found equal pleasure. Why constrain my body to change place, when my soul travels so nimbly? And what good is it to execute projects, when the project is in itself a sufficient joy?"

Et en rentrant seul chez lui, à cette heure où les conseils de la Sagesse ne sont plus étouffés par les bourdonnements de la vie extérieure, il se dit: "J'ai eu aujourd'hui, en rêve, trois domiciles où j'ai trouvé un égal plaisir. Pourquoi contraindre mon corps à changer de place, puisque mon âme voyage si lestement? Et à quoi bon exécuter des projets, puisque le projet est en lui-même une jouissance suffisante?"

The conclusion, compounded in the deserted city in summer, that one is after all just as well alone in his thoughts, is described as a source of pleasure. But there is an underlying loneliness to this conclusion as well, which is characteristic of urban alienation, one of the horrors of modern urban life. Implicitly, it represents a resignation from commerce as a matter for self-identity, and in this can be found the mark of the flâneur. On the subject of "Les yeux des pauvres," Berman has termed the encounter of the poor family displaced by Haussmannization with the protagonist and his estranged lover a "primal scene" of the new city, which "reveals some of the deepest ironies and contradictions in modern city life."<sup>50</sup> The immediate texture of the encounter described by Berman is at the heart of both "les yeus des pauvres" and "Les projets." Baudelaire expressed this in these two poems and in submitting them to La Vie Parisienne compounded this feeling. With this example, then, we see the dual aspect of Baudelaire's call to "épouser la foule" both in the content of the poem and in its low-brow publication.

As a work in progress, the decades-long modernization of Paris would produce no end of such primal scenes. But Baudelaire's

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<sup>50</sup> Berman, All That is Solid, 153.

inability to collect the prose poems in book form in his lifetime, indicative of pervasive financial distress, would eventually lead to his own demise. Three years after the publication of these poems, he died destitute in exile in Brussels, a martyr (for subsequent generations of artists and writers) to his own inability to harness and master the energies of the new literary marketplace.

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As stated earlier, the development of the feuilleton is tied to the development of the lithograph. Just as the feuilleton made it possible for numerous new literary forms to flourish, the cheapness and ease of lithographic printing made it ideal for illustrations, caricatures, and advertisements. The development of transfer lithography, whereby the image is drawn on a sheet of paper and subsequently transferred to the lithographic stone, rather than drawn directly onto the heavy and brittle stone itself, in the hands of the Parisian printer Lemercier in the 1850s and '60s, only enhanced its appeal.<sup>51</sup> Yet lithography's commercial applications tended to eclipse its reputation as an artistic medium. The formal innovation of the vignette, utilized brilliantly in, for example, Delacroix's Faust lithographs (1828),<sup>52</sup> is, after all, later found

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<sup>51</sup> Douglas Druick and Peter Zegers, La Pierre parle: Lithography in France 1848-1900, exhibition catalogue (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1981) 6-7.

<sup>52</sup> For an account of the initial artistic possibilities inherent to lithography as a reproductive medium, see Charles Rosen & Henri Zerner, "The Romantic Vignette and Thomas Bewick," chapter 3 of their Romanticism and Realism (London: Faber & Faber, 1984).

graphically incorporated into Le Boulevard's title. In short, the artistic possibilities of the medium came to be seen as secondary to its commercial potential, in much the same way as the feuilleton.

In this section I wish to briefly introduce examples of Bresdin's use of lithography. Although Redon collaborated on etchings with Bresdin, and although he undoubtedly knew Bresdin's lithographs, he only came under the spell of lithography in the 1870s. Nevertheless, aspects of Bresdin's lithographic production manifest themselves in Redon's frontispieces of the 1880s in ways that parallel the influence exerted by the prose poems. It will be important to keep in mind here that for Redon, the twin example of Baudelaire and Bresdin represented a window onto currents of Romanticism mediated by the scientific empiricism represented for him in the work of Clavaud.

If Baudelaire represented a paradigm of urban bohemianism, then Bresdin was his pastoral counterpart. An exact contemporary of Baudelaire, Bresdin first arrived in Paris in 1839. Almost nothing is known of Baudelaire's relationship with Bresdin, but the warm introduction to Gautier provided by him denotes the endurance of their obvious mutual affection.<sup>53</sup> Unlike Courbet, Bresdin seems to have been unable and uninterested in cultivating the same degree of celebrity or success. An indication of this is the somewhat

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<sup>53</sup> In addition, Baudelaire's proclivity toward helping out needy friends is illustrated by the example of his attempting to find a publisher for an edition of Charles Meryon's series of etchings Eaux-Fortes sur Paris, in which he had hoped to collaborate by providing prose poems. See Starkie 1958, 416.

fanciful account of him as the protagonist of Champfleury's novella Chien-Caillo (1847).

Feeling uncomfortable in Paris following the Revolution of 1848, in which he participated, Bresdin left Paris in 1849, beginning the periodic wanderings that took him throughout France and even to Canada (1873-1877) before his death in 1885. He spent 1849-51 in and around Tulle, 1851-52 in Bordeaux, and 1852-61 in Toulouse.<sup>54</sup>

Already a talented and prolific etcher, Bresdin produced his first lithograph, La Comédie de la Mort (V.G. 84) [Fig. 11], in 1854. In this desolate image, a male figure sits, bald head in hands, silhouetted in the dark entrance to a cave beneath a hillock. Another male figure lies back outside the cave, propped up on his two arms, staring blankly in a daze. Beside him an open book lies discarded, a mouse nibbling at the edges of its pages. The scene teems with an overgrowth of dead and dying vegetation, monsters, and human skeletal remains. Two intact skeletons dancing as if in revelry surmount this dismal scene. At first, they seem to be the only animators of the image, for only after carefully surveying it does one notice the distinctly Christ-like figure sneaking through the background at left.

The surprisingly few explanations of the imagery and its sources remain inadequate to account for the print's conception. Claude Roger Marx saw it as the embodiment of the frontispiece commissioned by Baudelaire for the second edition of Les Fleurs du

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<sup>54</sup> Van Gelder 1976, I:5 and throughout Vol. I.

Mal, certainly closer, as Van Gelder has observed, to the spirit of the book than the one produced by Rops.<sup>55</sup> Baudelaire himself compared it to the work of Holbein.<sup>56</sup> And later, Joris-Karl Huysmans would include Bresdin's lithograph in the gallery of his anti-hero Des Esseintes in his novel A Rebours (1884). More recently, Jacquelynn Bass Slee has attempted to show that Edmund Spenser's "The Faerie Queene" is a source for portions of the image.<sup>57</sup>

My own interpretation of the scene is, admittedly, largely conjectural. I see it as a meditation on the theme of the temptations of St. Anthony (ca. 250-356), the ascetic Egyptian desert hermit chronicled by St. Athanasius.<sup>58</sup> This is, after all, a desert, but not in the familiar sense. Throughout the era of European exploration, the post-Edenic wilderness of the New World inspired a tradition of literature which depicts it and its pagan inhabitants as existing without the grace of Christian civilization and its industriousness. This is particularly true in Protestant accounts of what would become the northeastern United States, from

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid, II:36-37, cat. no. 84.

<sup>56</sup> Van Gelder 1976, I, ch. 5 and II:36-37. Van Gelder also notes that, as Hieronymous Bosch was still virtually unknown in the nineteenth century, no contemporary allusions to his monster imagery exist.

<sup>57</sup> Jacquelynn Bass Slee, "A Literary Source for Rodolphe Bresdin's 'La Comedie de la Mort'," Arts Magazine 54:6 (February 1980) 70-75.

<sup>58</sup> Kitty Mrosovsky gives a brief biography of St. Anthony in the introduction to her translation of Flaubert's Temptation of St. Anthony (London: Penguin, 1987). The original source for the Life of Saint Anthony is St. Athanasius (d. 373 in Alexandria).

the chronicles of the Puritans to the Rousseau-inspired novels of James Fenimore Cooper. Bresdin's nickname of "Chien-Caillou," used as the title of Champfleury's story, derives from a mispronunciation of Cooper's hero Chingachook. Thus I posit that the pair of figures in La Comédie de la Mort have desperately abandoned, at least momentarily, their sense of Christian mission in this wilderness. I propose that the discarded open book is a bible, and furthermore, that the entire composition, including the figure next to the bible, is perhaps the imagined scene of the figure inside the opening to the cave.<sup>59</sup>

Bresdin had essayed the theme of St. Anthony at least four times before, in small etchings (V.G. 75, 77, 78, 80) which Van Gelder has dated to 1849-51, the years of his first respite in and around Tulle following his departure from Paris [Figs. 12, 13, 14, 15].<sup>60</sup> It seems to me that La Comédie de la mort is self-referential. The figure seated in the mouth of the cave resembles Bresdin's portrait, photographed a decade or so later [see Fig. 47]. Bresdin eschewed urban life, always maintaining a desire to

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<sup>59</sup> In an earlier version of the theme, depicting the death of St. Anthony in an oil painting by Granet, a simplified version of this setting is depicted from inside the cave. The painting is reproduced in a lithograph by Léon Noel included in livraison 43 of Galerie lithographiée de S.A.R. Mgr. le Duc D'Orléans (Paris: J. Vatout & J.P. Quénot chez C. Motte, 1824-1829).

<sup>60</sup> These are Van Gelder (1976) nos. 75, 77, 78, and 80. Thus, La Comédie de la Mort may be seen as a bridge between these etchings of 1849-51 and several of the etchings published in La Revue fantaisiste in 1861, with titles such as Les Chasseurs surpris par la Mort and La Mère et la Mort (Van Gelder nos. 88 and 104).

move to the America imagined by Rousseau.<sup>61</sup> But the countryside he depicts in this print is menacing and suggestive of a test of faith, particularly with its elusive, even abandoning Christ-figure. There is a suggestion of exile here, of asceticism which runs counter to the concept of the flâneur, the ultimate product of the modern city. Taken together, these factors roughly parallel the life of St. Anthony, and strongly suggest a reading of the image as a means of representing the identification of its author with the saint. The requisite of martyrdom had already been attributed to Bresdin by Champfleury, and as I will argue, this is an attribute which will continue in Redon's appreciation of him.

Bresdin worked on what is perhaps his greatest lithograph, Le Bon Samaritain (V.G. 100; 1861) [Fig. 16], while living in Toulouse. This was first printed by Lemercier in Paris in an edition of less than one hundred. The lithograph was exhibited at the Paris Salon of 1861 under its original title, Abd-el-Kader secourant un chrétien, together with six drawings.<sup>62</sup> Bresdin was in Paris again in 1861-62 (the Revue fantaisiste period), moving to Fronsac in 1862-32 and then to Bordeaux again in 1864-69 (the beginning of his friendship with Redon). The official success of Abd-el-Kader and its subsequent republication in numerous editions

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<sup>61</sup> Bresdin did journey to Canada in 1873-1877, as the result of winning a composition to design a banknote. He was never able to realise his dream of penetrating the wilderness and left poorer than when he arrived, having spent much if not most of his time there in Montreal. See Van Gelder 1976, I:114-15.

<sup>62</sup> David Becker, "Rodolphe Bresdin's Le Bon Samaritain," Nouvelles de l'estampe no. 70-71 (July-October 1983), 7-14.

testify to Bresdin's not being entirely the bumpkin he was made out to be in Champfleury's Chien-Caillou. In 1868, an edition of 250 impressions was printed as a supplement to the newspaper L'Eclair, as a bonus to subscribers.<sup>63</sup> Abd-el-Kader (1808-1883) was the anti-colonial French Algerian Emir, who was captured in 1847 and eventually sent in exile to Syria. In 1861, he saved as many as 25,000 Christians and 5,000 Jews from slaughter by Moslems in Damascus, news of which was widely reported in France, and which led to his being awarded the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor.<sup>64</sup> As with La Comédie de la Mort, the subject matter and interpretation of Le Bon Samaritain was susceptible to a certain degree of flux, in both cases encompassing Christian themes which reflect Bresdin's simple Christian piety.

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In identifying himself with St. Anthony in La Comédie de la Mort, Bresdin represents the pastoral counterpart to Baudelaire.<sup>65</sup> Baudelaire's strength lay in his ability to engage the marketplace and to absorb it thematically into his work; his weakness lay in his inability to master that marketplace, and as a result he was a

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<sup>63</sup> Van Gelder 1976, I, ch. 4, entitled "Le Bon Samaritain," 70-79 and II:66-73, cat. no. 100.

<sup>64</sup> David Becker, op. cit., 7.

<sup>65</sup> Although, as Starkie (1958) has shown, Baudelaire despised the Rousseauian conception of nature, Berman has identified "pastoral" as well as "counter-pastoral" tendencies in Baudelaire. As defined by Berman (All That is Solid, 137), Baudelaire's pastoral mode can be seen in his love affair with the sleekness of the modern world, notably in his depiction of a military parade. Thus, Baudelaire's pastoralism and Bresdin's should not be confused in my characterization of the two men as "Antonian."

martyr to it, much like the corollary displaced Parisian poor in his "Les yeux des pauvres." It has become a cliché to invoke the expansion of the French economy and the Haussmanization of Paris in histories of nineteenth-century French art. Yet, what I wish to do here is to signal the invocation of St. Anthony in French (and Belgian) art and literature of this period as a reaction to this phenomenon. The sense of alienation from the status quo which pervades Bressin's and Baudelaire's work can be seen as a co-opting of pastoral values to an urban environment, a dynamic which was best exemplified in the person of Gustave Courbet.

The converse of the theme of St. Anthony can be found in another popular motif of the period, Faust. As Berman has shown, the modern Faust was initially conceived by Goethe as a symbol of progress brought on by the Enlightenment. Liberation from the dogmatic Catholic bonds of medieval thought engendered innovation in every field of human activity, and thereby propagated entirely new fields of human thought and activity. Berman goes on to demonstrate, however, that, as Mephistopheles himself imparted to Faust, there would be a heavy moral price to pay for the implementation of these innovations. Although the terms by which Faust and St. Anthony oppose one another might at first seem to encompass the entirety of human thought and activity, from the vita contemplativa to the vita activa, the Antonian mode may be regarded as a function of the Faustian mode. And a result of the revolutionary forces unleashed by the Enlightenment is that the two are inexorably locked together in opposition to the reactionary

tenets of the Catholic establishment.

Mephistopheles' appeal to Faust may be summarized as follows. When God created the heaven and the earth and all manner of creatures who populated it, He had Himself upset the previous order. Mephistopheles' pride was a remnant of that previous order, and his banishment from Heaven resulted not from his pride, but out of his sympathy for the helpless Adam and Eve. To Mephistopheles, their exile from Eden was an act of cruelty to which he had committed himself to correcting. Mephistopheles appealed to Dr. Faust's frustration and sense of guilt resulting from his inability to cure his patients. Mephistopheles promised Faust that, if he abandoned his faith, he could become privy to secrets of the physical world hitherto unexplored due to faith in God, and master them. In this way, Faust's very humanity was set against the traditional teachings of Catholicism as justification for bourgeois success.

Following this line of reasoning, in the popular imagination of the nineteenth century, the irresistible lure of the marketplace for one's work was seen as a manifestation of Faustian, or bourgeois, forces, whereas the impulse to keep these forces at bay or an inability to master one's destiny within that framework could be seen as Antonian. In the chapters which follow, I will elucidate the ways in which these forces exerted pressure on Redon in his lithographic frontispieces, with their culmination in the frontispiece lithographs produced during the period of his noirs. Specific references in his work to Baudelaire, Bresdin and Clavaud,

Faust and St. Anthony, empiricism and idealism, will find fullest flowering in the frontispiece-title page to his lithographic suite A Gustave Flaubert (1889) [Fig. 17]. Although, as we have seen, Redon's interest in Baudelaire goes back to 1857, in subsequent chapters we will examine his renewed interest in the poet in the context of the broad revival of interest in Baudelaire which took place in the 1880s. Neither Baudelaire's sophistication nor Bresdin's naiveté resulted in the successful outcome of either men's careers. But for Redon, part of the romantic and heroic appeal of each was manifest in the strategies they employed in negotiating the marketplace.

### III. Early Projects with Frontispieces

Jules Destrée, author of the first catalogue of Redon's lithographs, related Redon's introduction to lithography as follows:

And this is how lithographic crayon was revealed to him. During a music session at the home of one of Chenavard's students, Redon had met Fantin Latour, who came to see his drawings. This was in 1877. Redon already had at least two hundred drawings in his portfolios. The painter recommended lithography to him as a means of multiplying them, as he had himself obtained remarkable results with it, notably with his interpretations of Wagner. It was Fantin who gave him his first sheet of transfer paper; and, a few days later, Redon brought him his first efforts, a number of plates from DANS LE REVE.

Et voici comment se présenta le crayon lithographique: Redon avait fait la connaissance, chez un élève de Chenavard, lors d'une séance de musique, de Fantin Latour, qui vint voir ses dessins. C'était en 1877. Redon en avait déjà bien deux cents dans ses portefeuilles. Pour les multiplier, le peintre lui conseilla la lithographie dont il sut, lui-même, notamment pour des interprétations de Wagner, obtenir de si remarquables résultats. Ce fut lui qui donna à Redon la première feuille de report lithographique et quelques jours après, Redon lui apportait ses essais: certaines planches de DANS LE REVE.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jules Destrée, L'Oeuvre lithographique de Odilon Redon. Catalogue descriptif (Brussels: Edmond Deman, 1891) 65, cited hereafter as "Destrée 1891"; my translation adapted from Ted Gott, The Enchanted Stone: The Graphic Worlds of Odilon Redon, exhibition catalogue (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1990) 22, cited hereafter as "Gott 1990".

Although Destrée writes that this anecdote dates from 1877, which he must have gotten from Redon himself, it is commonly accepted among scholars that it did not actually transpire until 1878. As has been noted elsewhere and frequently, Redon retrospectively edited details of his own biography, sometimes unwittingly, but always to his advantage. In pushing the date back a year, he may have wished to show that he took up lithography before his Paris Salon entry of 1878; see below.

In repeating this anecdote here, I wish to emphasize certain of its elements which are essential to an understanding of Antonian (pastoral) and Faustian (counter-pastoral) tendencies in his lithographic output of the 1880s and '90s. We must try to imagine the artist already in his late thirties, having finally arrived at a mature style. His inventory must reflect almost his entire output to date, because he has rarely, if ever, sold a single work as a means of supporting himself. He has been living on a family income, enabling him to devote himself to evolving an intensely personal idiom in a medium, charcoal on paper, that he has not used to any pretty effect.<sup>2</sup> And the obscurant nature of his imagery and the singularity of his vision all but excluded him from the Salon system, the mainstay of academic art, and even from the new circles of artists, such as the Impressionists, who had begun to exhibit privately or with dealers as an alternative to the Salon.

Then comes the suggestion from Fantin that he reproduce, and consequently multiply his drawings, by means of a medium whose

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<sup>2</sup> Redon wrote on the nature of charcoal in his letter to Edmond Picard of 15 June 1894, quoted in fragmentary form in André Mellerio, *Odilon Redon* (1913; New York: Da Capo, 1968), as follows (cited hereafter as "Mellerio 1913"):

About 1875 everything came to me through the crayon [...] This material alone, which has no intrinsic beauty, facilitates well my researches into chiaroscuro and the invisible. It is a material poorly regarded by artists, and neglected. Despite what I have said about it, charcoal does not allow itself to be pleasing to the eye, it is solemn.

Vers 1875 tout m'arriva sous le crayon [...] Cette matière quelconque, qui n'a aucune beauté en soi, facilitait bien mes recherches du clair obscur et de l'invisible. C'est une matière mal vue chez les artistes, et négligée. Que je le dise pourtant, le fusain ne permet pas d'être plaisant, il est grave [...] (81).

reputation among serious art devotees has fallen precipitously since the Romantic era: lithography. On the face of it, Fantin's suggestion is far-fetched, since the drawings were themselves unsalable. But the appeal of the artist's portfolio as a medium unto itself, combined with the possibility of guaranteed sales to friends as subscribers helped to ensure the success of the venture. This was Redon's first step toward taking stock of his "public."

Redon saw from the first that the medium of lithography was best suited to reproduce the effects achieved in his charcoal drawings. Rather than encumber himself with the baggage of commercialism that had come to mar lithography's reputation since the advent of the popular press, Redon sought a new approach. He would adapt the medium to his own vision and incorporate it into his creative process in the somewhat modish format of the portfolio. Redon was especially responsive to both the demands and the potential of the frontispiece, which can be seen as a reflection of the forces he was responding to and anticipating. The next section of this chapter is devoted to the roots of Redon's commitment to lithography as well as the choices he made in exploring the possibilities suggested by the album format and the role of the frontispiece.

#### Two Exhibits of 1878 and *Dans le rêve* (1879)

Published in 1879, *Dans le rêve* must be viewed as both a summation of Redon's graphic work to date and as a sort of blueprint for albums to follow. Although it is one of Redon's least literary albums in that it bears no relationship to a

preexisting text or to a text of Redon's own composition, the inherent literariness of its format would be developed and fine-tuned in subsequent projects.

The album consists of ten loose plates plus a cover, which is decorated with a frontispiece/title-page (M. 26) [Fig. 18]. The plates essentially reproduce existing noirs, selected for common motifs, with a preponderance of spherical or circular forms, including floating heads and eyeballs. There is an obvious emphasis here on vision and seeing, but this could not be further from the notion of vision expounded by the Realist school in general or the Impressionists in particular.

The plates were issued without given or even printed titles, and even the ones he assigned to them for exhibitions in the 1880s could hardly be more brief: Eclosion [Fig. 19], Germination [Fig. 20], La Roue [Fig. 21], Limbes, Le Joueur, Gnome, Félinerie, Vision [Fig. 22], Triste montée, Sur la Coupe (M. 27-36).<sup>3</sup> These titles have the quality of de-emphasizing the narrative element of the images without downplaying their visual impact. This is consistent with the presentation of the album's title, subsumed into the overall design of the cover. The title Dans le rêve conjures a world of pure image, and signifies a state of vision that is by nature visual yet undescribed.

Traditionally, the role of a book's title-page is to give the book's title, the author's name, and publication details. The

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<sup>3</sup> See Douglas W. Druick, ed., Odilon Redon, Prince of Dreams, exhibition catalogue (Art Institute of Chicago, 1994) 396, n. 19. Cited hereafter as "Chicago 1994."

frontispiece is usually an image which faces the title-page, serving the almost metaphysical function of embodying the text named by the title. In combining the two functions here, Redon promotes a new kind of viewing inherent to the album format, which prioritizes the image over text. Rather than images meant to be hung on a wall or viewed as ancillary to a text which they illustrate, the experience of viewing the album falls somewhere in between. It is a solitary and intimate one, as it can only best take place, quite literally, at a table, as anyone who has looked at them in a print room will attest. And the duration and sequence of the viewing experience is arbitrary, since the plates lack numbers and titles.

Redon prefaced his account of his first lithographs by describing the solitary experience of creating these works, and in so doing hinted at the parallel role of viewing them which he hoped they would inspire, as follows:

The gravity of the character of a work of art... has its effect on attentive and thoughtful persons. The same for he who created it: the artist knows very well that between all his works, the one which reflects him and reveals him the most were made in solitude. All genesis retains a little shadow and mystery. It is in solitude that the artist feels energetically alive, in secret profundity, and in which nothing from the mundane exterior could distract him and oblige him to disguise himself.

La gravité du caractère de l'art... a son action sur des êtres dont l'attention et la disposition sont réfléchies. De même chez celui qui le crée: l'artiste sait très bien qu'entre toutes ses oeuvres, celle qui le reflète et le révèle le mieux a été faite dans la solitude. Toute genèse garde un peu d'ombre et de mystère. C'est dans la solitude que l'artiste se sent vivre énergiquement, en profondeur secrète, et que rien du dehors mondain ne le sollicite et ne l'oblige au

déguisement.<sup>4</sup>

In the first article on Redon to appear in Belgium, in La Jeune Belgique of February 1886, coinciding with Redon's participation in the third annual exhibition of Les XX (Les Vingts, or The Twenty) in Brussels, Destrée describes the experience of viewing Dans le rêve from memory:

I will speak, therefore, from memory, memory a bit muddled, half-forgotten, difficult to clarify and translate into words, as if in reality I had dreamed these dazzling visions.

J'en parlerai donc de souvenir, de souvenir un peu confus, mi-effacé, difficile à préciser et à traduire en phrases, comme si réellement j'avais rêvé ces éblouissantes visions.<sup>5</sup>

Although Destrée regrets not having the album before him at the time of writing, he manages to describe it in recollection over the course of three pages. The result turns the putative disadvantage of not being able to compose a literary transposition of the images, in the vein of Huysmans (see discussion of Hommage à Goya, below), into advantage. Destrée's stated reliance on memory is distinct in that it emphasizes his specific role as viewer per se, distancing himself from the role of flâneur, or discoverer, with which Huysmans imbued his writing. It is also significant in that the function of memory for Destrée is related to Redon's statement

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<sup>4</sup> Odilon Redon, A Soi-Même, journal 1867-1915 (1922, Paris: José Corti, 1989) 126-27. Cited hereafter as "ASM."

<sup>5</sup> Jules Destrée, "Odilon Redon (Hommage à J.-K. Huysmans)," in La Jeune Belgique, 1 February 1886, 141ff.

Destrée reflected on the nature of the memory of a work of art in a journal entry dated 3 October 1886. See Destrée's Journal 1882-1887, ed. Raymond Trousson (Brussels: Académie Royale de Langue et de Littérature Françaises, 1995) 405-10, esp. 406.

of his lithographs as representations of dreams in the title of his first portfolio.

The symbolist poet and critic André Fontainas, whose appreciation of Redon in the Mercure de France appeared weeks after the artist's death on 6 July 1916, invoked Corot as a source for the parallel role of memory in the artist and, subsequently, in his viewer. In the section on Dans le rêve, he writes:

The mission of art consists of awakening in the brain of the attentive observer reveries and sensations analogous to those of the artist, not in giving rise to evidence of mathematical truths, or even logics. When Corot paints the ponds of Ville-d'Avray, what does it matter whether the view is exact and recognizable to every stroller? It matters, on the contrary, that Corot has given substance to the sensations which these sites made him experience, and that he communicates that emotion in his art. This mysterious communication, this propagation of sensibility, it's this that sums up all the wonder of art.

La mission de l'art consiste à éveiller dans le cerveau du spectateur attentif des rêveries et des sensations analogues à celles de l'artiste, non à susciter une évidence de vérités mathématiques, ni même logiques. Lorsque Corot peint les étangs de Ville-d'Avray, qu'importe que la vue en soit exacte et reconnaissable à tout promeneur? Il importe, au contraire, que Corot ait donné un corps aux sensations que ces sites lui font éprouver, et qu'il en communique l'émotion par son art. Cette mystérieuse communication, cette propagation de la sensibilité, c'est en quoi se résume tout le prodige de l'art.<sup>6</sup>

Memory played a significant role in the genesis of Redon's lithographs, which, when collected in thematic portfolios, required that pre-existing drawings be re-contextualized. As the artist produced more and more prints, they eventually recalled earlier prints as well as drawings, until they ultimately became largely

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<sup>6</sup> André Fontainas, "Odilon Redon," Mercure de France 16 August 1916, 577-588; see esp. 582.

retrospective in nature in the 1890s (see Chapter VI). It is not just the drawings themselves, but the context in which they were executed and exhibited that played a part in the choices Redon made with regard to the pulling together of an album, as was the case with Dans le Rêve, and as we shall now see.

Druick & Zegers have isolated a group of many fine and ambitious noirs produced in the second half of the 1870s; stimulated by discussions in the Rayssac circle, and by Delacroix's 1828 Faust lithographs, Redon took on the Faustian theme of good and evil in several of these works.<sup>7</sup> Yet while they cite Corot's album of lithographs entitled Douze croquis (1872) as a precedent for Dans le Rêve, the influence of Corot on at least one noir from this period, Angel and Demon (1877), is considerably more broad.<sup>8</sup>

Stylistically, Angel and Demon [Fig. 23] clearly shows the influence of Corot's own landscapes with figures, which can be found even in his earliest efforts in charcoal.<sup>9</sup> Thematically, it falls into a group of noirs which also includes such works as Primitive Man (1872), Mephistopheles (1877), Devil (1877), The Metal Ball (1878), and Strange Flower (Little Sister of the Poor) (1880), although its imagery is ostensibly more conventional than

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<sup>7</sup> Some of these reproduced in Chicago 1994 are cat. nos. 38, 47, 49, 56, 58, 59, 61, 62, 67, 72, 78. See n. 10 below for additional works in this vein.

<sup>8</sup> Redon, Angel and Demon, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Bordeaux (no inv. no.), reproduced as cat. no. 42 in Chicago 1994, 95.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Chicago 1994, cat. nos. 4 and 18.

either these or the ten on which Dans le Rêve would be based.<sup>10</sup> For this reason, perhaps, Redon entered it into the official Paris Salon of 1878, where it was accepted for exhibition. For the purposes of the Salon, however, the title was altered to A Faun Leading an Angel.<sup>11</sup> The subtle change in title reflects a significant shift from the original conception of the picture, in a direction that will ultimately have an impact on Redon's seminal decisions both to exhibit privately and to publish an album of lithographs later in the year. Initially a meditation on the pastoral versus the counter-pastoral in the context of Faust, the change of title to A Faun Leading an Angel reflects a calculated move toward a more purely pastoral notion.<sup>12</sup>

I am speculating here that Redon counted on visitors to the salon to associate this work with the school of Corot both stylistically and thematically. As an example, I posit an earlier work by Corot well-known to the salon-going public, Dante and

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<sup>10</sup> These are reproduced in Chicago 1994 as cat. nos. 32 (p. 83), 43 (p. 94), 44 (p. 98), 49 (p. 103), and 55 (p. 152).

<sup>11</sup> No. 3709, Un Faune menant un ange; cf. Chicago 1994, 437, cat. no. 42.

<sup>12</sup> Druick & Zegers have written that this picture "represents nature's inhabitation by the forces of light and dark, with the latter taking the lead..." (Chicago 1994, 94). In the context of Faust, as presented here in Chapter I, the forces of light and dark are synonymous with pastoral and counter-pastoral, and resolution of the contest unleashed between them is determined in the marketplace. Druick and Zegers also write, "In Angel and Demon, the figures "set out," as Hennequin observed [in his review of the 1882 Gaulois exhibition], "to harvest souls"; and enter into their inevitable struggle, represented in Faust and Mephistopheles (1880)," referring to the theme as illustrating "moral polarities" (141).

Virgil [Fig. 24], painted in 1859 and exhibited with great success at the salon of the same year, although not since. The work has been remarked upon since its debut for its exceptional qualities within Corot's oeuvre, notably its post-classical literary source and its "reach[ing] for the sublime through terribilità"<sup>13</sup> Redon had treated this theme in the manner of Corot in other drawings, notably Dante and Virgil (Private Collection) of 1865, in which the use of the charcoal and the scale of the landscape impart great drama to an otherwise peaceful scene [Fig. 25].

Thus, in selecting a relatively bucolic work from among his most recent noirs, Redon recalls not only an atypical one by Corot, but the more typical body of work against which Dante and Virgil seemed so striking. But even if critics in 1859 were surprised at the painting's vivacity, Redon alone seems to have responded to an aspect of the painting which struck him as old-fashioned and even obsolete. That the painting is firmly situated in the pastoral mode, without reference to anything in the least bit modern, has only partially to do with its natural setting and the removal of time, or the unwarranted fear of wild animals in the forest of Fontainebleau. In Dante's time, the question of pastoral and counter-pastoral could be framed in terms of the relative state of God's grace in the post-Edenic world. But in a rapidly industrializing society, these terms were radically altered, as we have seen in the previous chapter. Simply stated, taken together

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<sup>13</sup> See Gary Tinterow et al., Corot, exhibition catalogue (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996) 274-77, cat. no. 115.

with his ever-popular series of painted souvenirs, the salon-goer approached Corot's painting as a kind of catharsis. This is not inconsistent with Corot's approach in the souvenirs, finished works produced in the studio which were based not on studies but on the painter's recollection of the motif, whether in nature itself or from a pre-existing study.<sup>14</sup> Whereas Redon himself praised Corot's ability to invest ancient subjects with a freshness of observation, they are nevertheless subjects whose contemporary relevance was less than direct.<sup>15</sup>

For Redon, acceptance of A Faun Leading an Angel to the Salon represented only a measured or qualified success, which he does not seem to have mentioned in his writings. In showing this charcoal and in changing its title, he had privately worked out a complex strategy to pay homage to the late master, but he had perhaps compromised the query of pastoral and counter-pastoral posed more ambitiously in related works of the period listed above.

Conversely, in the months following the Salon, Redon exhibited privately a charcoal drawing more overtly on a Faustian theme entitled Mephistopheles [Fig. 26]. He wrote to his brother Ernest:

...Your Mephistopheles is in view, and well-displayed, in

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid 25-26.

<sup>15</sup> See Odilon Redon, "Salon de 1868 I" in, Odilon Redon, Critiques d'art, ed. Robert Coustet (Bordeaux: William Blake, 1987) 45-47, cited hereafter as "Redon, Critiques". This was first published in the Bordeaux newspaper La Gironde on 19 May 1868. The work in question is almost certainly Mephistopheles, cat. no. 83 in From Mantegna to Picasso. Drawings from the Thaw Collection at The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, exhibition catalogue (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1996) 174-75, repr. (cf. Chicago 1994, cat. no. 43; see n. 10, above).

a window in the rue du Bac, chez Katto, I think...

...Ton méphistophélés est en montre, et en bonne évidence, dans une vitrine de la rue du Bac, chez Katto, je crois...<sup>16</sup>

Recounting to a journalist in 1909 his early efforts at exhibiting privately, Redon stated that he was happy to see:

...the ease with which the young today may make an appearance. All the exhibition rooms are open. They owe this ease to the first independents, those of the heroic ages who, unable to exhibit in the official galleries, were obliged rather to find others.

la facilité avec laquelle les jeunes, aujourd'hui, peuvent se produire. Toutes les salles d'exposition leur sont ouvertes. Ils doivent ces facilités aux premiers indépendants, ceux des âges héroïques, qui, ne pouvant exposer dans les salles officielles, furent bien obligés d'en chercher d'autres (my italics for emphasis).<sup>17</sup>

I quote this statement because, with regard to the early dissemination of his work, Redon's decision to produce an album of lithographs is an innovation distinct from but arising directly from the twin showings of 1878, which preceded his first solo exhibition by three years. His use of the word "heroic," in particular, serves to acknowledge the original and pro-active nature of this endeavor.

Turning now to the frontispiece for Dans le rêve (M. 26) [Fig. 18], we may begin to see how it behaves with regard to the album as

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<sup>16</sup> Letter from Odilon Redon to Ernest Redon of 28 July 1878, reprinted in Sven Sandström, Le monde imaginaire d'Odilon Redon (Lund: Gleerup, 1955), 182, no. 1; cited hereafter as "Sandström 1955". According to Kevin Sharp (personal communication), contributor to Chicago 1994, the identity of "Katto" has yet to be determined.

<sup>17</sup> Estienne, "Des Tendances de la peinture moderne. XII. Entretien avec M. Odilon Redon," in Les Nouvelles, 5 July 1909, 4, reprinted in full in Dario Gamboni, La plume et le pinceau: Odilon Redon et la littérature (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1989) 312-14, cf. p. 54; cited hereafter as "Gamboni 1989".

a whole. The image consists of a field of black, bordered on its upper and right margins by a band of grey. Inset along its left margin is a tall, narrow, window-like view onto a field populated by a blasted tree and, to its left, a winged angelic figure, partially cut off by the left margin, who leans toward it on a lyre. These figures are silhouetted from behind by a vague but bright body of light that rises from a barren horizon an inestimable distance away.

A basic compositional similarity between this picture and the charcoal Angel and Demon hints at a causal or generative link between the two, but its actual sources do not, in themselves, betray any deeper connection. The shot tree is based directly on a black pencil study from nature of c.1868, Arbre dénudé. Médoc [Fig. 27].<sup>18</sup> By adding the orphic figure, Redon virtually illustrates Corot's dictum to place an uncertainty beside a certainty (A côté d'une certitude, mettez une incertitude).<sup>19</sup> In depicting these figures as silhouettes lit from behind, Redon is able to demonstrate the role of chiaroscuro in the relationship between certainty and uncertainty. In this way one may posit that the orphic figure, a kind of genius of the arts, is to be read as in opposition to the kind of realist view of nature employed by the

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<sup>18</sup> The connection was made by Giuseppina dal Canton, "Odilon Redon fra realtà e immaginazione: disegni per opere pittoriche e grafiche al Cabinet des Dessins del Louvre," Antichità Viva XXVII: 5-6 (1989), 23-35, esp. 28. See also Chicago 1994, 66-70, esp. 66-68 and fig. 77.

<sup>19</sup> ASM, 36.

Impressionists.<sup>20</sup>

The incorporation of text is part of a graphic solution to a formal challenge. Rather than draw the letters on the same horizontal axis as the picture, he has drawn them, from left to right, along the vertical axis of the plate. The text, which gives the appearance of having been stencilled in white on a black background, has been produced by leaving areas of the lithographic stone un-inked, creating a visual foil to the burst of white light which illuminates the vignette to its left. The distinction between pure black-and-white in the text-area (heightened by the band of pure chiaroscuro above it and to its right which partially defines it) and the role of chiaroscuro already defined for the vignette is significant because it is the stuff of the vignette and the composition as a whole that will lead the viewer to determine the orientation of the portfolio on his library table. The orientation of the vignette wins out over the orientation of the text, and the primacy of the image is thus established without diminishing the importance of the text introduced into the image.

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<sup>20</sup> Gott (1990) has gone so far as to claim for *Dans le Rêve* that "the choice of the title Dreaming was a deliberate act of defiance, a statement of direct opposition to the Impressionist school of painting. In literature the realism of Emile Zola was then in ascendance, and by stressing the supremacy of fantasy and imagination over realist documentation, Redon was also consciously attacking the pragmatic principles of Zola and his 'scientific' coterie."

Gott continues, that Redon "believed in the right of an artist to go beyond mimetic subservience to nature-- the right to dream, to indulge in the exuberant creativity of pure visual poetry..." (66).

Gamboni (1989; p. 86) also refers to the album as a "manifesto" on this very subject (see below).

The letters of the word "Rêve" are both larger and farther apart from one another than the letters in "Dans le," echoing the barrenness of the upper portion of the vignette, and prefacing the floating motifs characteristic of the interior plates.

Taking stock of the way in which the "semantic and, in part, formal incertitude touches the ensemble of elements" in the frontispiece, Dario Gamboni offers a possible connection with a passage in Redon's Salon of 1868. Redon states:

The time will come, without a doubt, perhaps it will be given to those who are still in the dark antechamber, to raise a corner of the veil, to finally see, beyond the half-light, in the splendor of a luminous vista, this beautiful garden of poetry, full of great murmurs and of raptures.

Le temps viendra sans doute; peut-être sera-t-il donné à ceux qui sont encore dans la sombre antichambre, de soulever un coin du voile, de voir enfin, au-delà de la pénombre, dans la splendeur d'une lumineuse échappée, ce beau jardin de la poésie, tout plein de grands murmures et de ravissements.<sup>21</sup>

The elegant and italic, almost scriptive "typography" chosen by Redon for this frontispiece is not in itself innovative. But it is significant here as in his later title-page/frontispieces that the letters are drawn rather than printed by means of letterpress.<sup>22</sup>

This sort of lettering is typically found in display faces of

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<sup>21</sup> Redon, Critiques, 62; cf. Gamboni 1989, 67. This passage is taken from the portion of the second installment of Redon's Salon devoted to Eugène Fromentin, where he praises the artist for his investment of classical themes with new life, reprising qualities observed in the work of Corot in the first installment (see above).

<sup>22</sup> Mellerio wrote incorrectly that "dans la partie sombre et gravé le titre..." (my emphasis; Mellerio 1913, 92, cat. no. 26).

the period, the frequently highly ornamented hand-drawn lettering used in newspaper titles and advertisements and advertising posters, in 18-point size and above [Fig. 28].<sup>23</sup> If indeed he had such display faces in mind, Redon was careful in this work to appropriate their graphic adaptivity without compromising the seriousness of his endeavor. The inclusion of text, then, first threatens to destabilize the picture plane of the cover by its divergent axis, a matter which is nevertheless quickly resolved. Second, the inclusion of a unique typeface serves as a kind of advertisement for what follows in the portfolio, that is, a new kind of literary-pictorial relationship.

In this fashion, the Faustian theme of good and evil which underlies the charcoal Angel and Demon is not abandoned, but transformed in the context of Dans le Rêve's frontispiece. As I have noted, the charcoal's exhibition under the title Faun Leading an Angel made it suitable for the Salon, but diluted the terms of good and evil under which it was conceived. In changing the charcoal's title for the salon, Redon turned an image whose literary source concerns the pastoral versus the counter-pastoral into one which is more in keeping with the pastoral exclusively.

So, the frontispiece represents the development of Redon's thinking in that by trial and error came the twin realisation that

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<sup>23</sup> Many thanks to Bruce Barton, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, for helping me to situate the lettering of Redon's title-page/frontispieces (telephone conversation 9 October 1996). Professor Barton kindly pointed out that nineteenth century display faces have been largely neglected in histories of typography, and that there has been no scholarly attempt to catalogue or document them.

the counter-pastoral as a means of advancing his art (entering the marketplace by means of commercial lithography and publishing) paralleled its true content (the nature of the relationship between good and evil) and that the marriage of the two was based on the strength of his commitment to each. In other words, he would now focus on building an audience and market for his work based on accessibility and proclivity to his work (see below). The terms of the relationship between commercialism and remaining true to the artist's vision are thus set for subsequent frontispieces, and in each the challenge of finding a balance between the two will play a significant role. The resolution of these two forces will come in Redon's first two albums based on Flaubert's Tentation de Saint-Antoine, where the pastoral will appear under the guise of St. Anthony, and the counter-pastoral will appear as Faust, hidden under the guise of Mephistopheles himself. The outcome of this resolution will come immediately thereafter in the 1890s, when Redon turned almost exclusively to pastel and oil paint as his primary media.

Finally, the distribution of Dans le Rêve remains to be discussed, as this was part of the album's initial conception. The album was published privately by subscription, in an edition of twenty-five.<sup>24</sup> Among the subscribers were his peers in the Rayssac

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<sup>24</sup> Stephen Eisenman has stated that the album was published in the small edition of only twenty-five copies due to Redon's inability to gauge its eventual reception (The Temptation of St. Redon [University of Chicago Press, 1992] 102; cited hereafter as "Eisenman 1992"). This notion is effectively countered, however, in Gamboni 1989 and Gott 1990, where it is correctly pointed out that, as stated by Huysmans, whatever copies of the album were not

circle, who must have eagerly awaited their companion's inaugural publication; they included the composer Ernest Chausson, the writers Jules Boissé,<sup>25</sup> Jules Tannery, and George de Massoungnes, his old friend Armand Clavaud,<sup>26</sup> the publisher Georges Charpentier, and the Dutch painter Isaac Israëls.<sup>27</sup> As Gamboni has noted, it was Charpentier (supporter of the Impressionists and publisher of the review La Vie moderne, in whose halls Redon's first solo exhibition was held) who later showed Huysmans the album, just prior to Redon's second solo exhibition at Le Gaulois in 1882.<sup>28</sup> In 1885, in reply to Destrée's letter to Huysmans asking whether he might be able to procure for him a copy of Dans le Rêve during the writing of his Jeune Belgique profile, the French author wrote:

The twenty-four albums have all been sold and are scattered across the universe, God knows where!-- I couldn't even get a copy myself, as Redon has only his own copy left-- I don't think there's much chance of finding one around either.

And, as for the twenty-four sets, it's my belief that Redon gave away at least fifteen of them!

Les 24 albums vendus, l'ont été, par l'univers, ils sont éparés, Dieu sait où!-- Je n'ai pu même l'avoir.

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distributed to subscribers were intended for promotional distribution; see below.

<sup>25</sup> Jules Boissé was an old friend of Redon, who introduced the artist to the Rayssac circle. See Chicago 1994, 128ff.

<sup>26</sup> Lettres de Gauguin, Gide, Huysmans, Jammes, Mallarmé, Verhaeren... à Odilon Redon, ed. Roseline Bacou (Paris: José Corti, 1960) 99, cf. Gamboni 1989, 57 (cited hereafter as "LàR").

<sup>27</sup> See Destrée 1891, 8 and LàR, 186, cf. Gamboni 1989, 57. Plates 1, 8, and 10 from Israëls' set of Dans le Rêve were exhibited at the third exhibition of Les Vingt in Brussels in 1886, cf. Les XX, Bruxelles, 1886, exhibition catalogue, cat. nos. 9.a, 9.b, and 9.c, on p. 30.

<sup>28</sup> Gamboni 1989, 57.

Redon n'en possédant plus un seul-- Je ne crois donc pas qu'il y ait chance d'en découvrir.

Et sur les 24, je crois bien qu'il en a donné au moins 15!<sup>29</sup>

Gamboni, elaborating on Gott, rightly points to a direct progression in the distribution of Redon's albums between 1879 and 1885.<sup>30</sup> Whereas in 1879, Dans le Rêve was necessarily made available by subscription, with the remaining copies distributed to his sympathetic and well-placed friends, the subsequent album, A Edgar Poe, bore the name of its publisher, G. Fischbacher, thus marking Redon's true entry into the commercial and critical marketplace. Gamboni has noted further that, unlike paintings in the salon, Redon's art was developed largely in advance of his public.<sup>31</sup> Writing to Destrée from the vantage point of late 1885 regarding Dans le Rêve's distribution, Huysmans found himself in the role of Redon's promoter, carefully orchestrating with him the promotional distribution of his latest album, Hommage à Goya.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Huysmans to Destrée, 17 October 1885; Joris-Karl Huysmans, Lettres Inédites à Jules Destrée, ed. Gustave Vanwelkenhuyzen (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1967) 68, trans. Gott 1990, 48.

<sup>30</sup> Gott 1988, throughout; Gamboni 1989, 57.

<sup>31</sup> Gamboni 1989, 92. "Francis Haskell a cité un observateur anglais pour qui, dans la France du Second Empire, c'étaient les banquiers et les spéculateurs qui peignaient les tableaux du Salon, puisque ces tableaux étaient peints pour leurs goûts et que leurs goûts étaient connus. Au contraire de la peinture de Salon, l'art de Redon s'est élaboré dans une large mesure en précédant son public."

<sup>32</sup> See Gamboni 1989, "La campagne d'Hommage à Goya et la cristallisation du symbolisme," 114-18. See also Gott, "Silent Messengers: Odilon Redon's Dedicated Lithographs & the Politics of Gift-Giving," The Print Collector's Newsletter XIX:3 (July-August 1988) 92-101 (cited hereafter as "Gott 1988"), later included in slightly revised form in Gott 1990.

A Edgar Poe (Jan 1882) and Contes grotesques (Nov 1882)

Having held his first solo exhibition at the offices of La Vie moderne in April-May 1881, in which a principle behind the selection of works was to stress the cohesion of his oeuvre and correspondences between the works, as opposed to including singular or exceptional ones,<sup>33</sup> Redon undertook a second album, A Edgar Poe. Begun during 1881, the album appeared in January 1882.<sup>34</sup> The following month, in response to Redon's second solo exhibition held at the offices of the newspaper Le Gaulois, the artist earned the critical acclaim of two writers, Joris-Karl Huysmans and Emile Hennequin. At the time, Hennequin was working on a translation of Poe's prose stories entitled Contes grotesques. During the month of March, the two became close friends, and soon after meeting Redon, Hennequin asked him to design a frontispiece for the book.<sup>35</sup> In this section I will compare the two projects of 1882: the so-called frontispiece for A Edgar Poe (M. 37) [Fig. 29] and the frontispiece designed for Contes grotesques (not in Mellerio) [Fig. 30]. Following the initial, measured success of Dans le Rêve, each of these projects represents both an expansion and an education in

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<sup>33</sup> This observation is one of the most important contributions to our understanding of Redon to appear in Chicago 1994 (see esp. 133).

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 134.

<sup>35</sup> Sandström 1955, is incorrect in believing that publication of A Edgar Poe followed Contes grotesques (110). It was also in this inaugural month of their friendship, March 1882, that Hennequin lent Redon his copy of Flaubert's Tentation de Saint-Antoine (1874); the fruits of this exchange are examined in the next chapter.

the context of Redon's frontispiece production, which would lead to further and more pointed refinements in subsequent works.

A Edgar Poe comprises six lithographs plus what has almost always been described as a frontispiece, or cover-frontispiece. Each of the interior plates contains a caption composed by Redon himself; authorship of these lines was frequently given to Poe by a public enamored with but not yet fully familiar with the American author. Like the previous album, it was printed by Lemercier, but this time in an edition of fifty copies. And, like the previous album, the cover consists of a large folded sheet of fibrous blue paper. The cover (M. 37) is printed in a slightly reddish orange ink. On the top cover [Fig. 31] is printed the title information with a cattle skull emblem. On the bottom cover is found the "frontispiece" with the year, 1882, included inside the lower border of the image [Fig. 29]. Its placement on the back might alternately lead one to consider it a tailpiece, a detail to be considered more fully below.

Poe's popularity among intellectuals during this period is partially attributed to the pedigree of his introduction in France. Baudelaire was the first to translate his poems into French and to describe the man himself, and it was largely through the filter of appreciation for Baudelaire that Poe was admired. In what may be considered the first true artist's book, Manet had illustrated Mallarmé's translation of Poe's The Raven in 1875. Druick and Zegers have suggested that in selecting the theme for his second album, Redon may have been attempting a direct assault on the

Impressionists, or that he was stimulated by Jules Boissé's invocation of Poe in his review of Dans le Rêve.<sup>36</sup> Poe may thus be regarded as a touchstone-- a point of association and contention-- around which members of the avant-garde could measure one another.<sup>37</sup> Whereas Dans le Rêve had been presented to a known audience, A Edgar Poe's dissemination was a great deal more public, and its reception was taken up by members of an avant-garde clearly excited and motivated by their discovery of one another due to common interests.<sup>38</sup>

In his review of the Gaulois exhibition, Hennequin wrote:

Indeed M. Odilon Redon is a singular artist who has lost in comprehension, in universality, what he has gained in penetration and speciality. Even then, he hasn't done this to please the masses, nor to depict actuality.

Assurément M. Odilon Redon est un artiste singulier qui a perdu en compréhension, en universalité, ce qu'il a gagné en pénétration et en spécialité. Assurément, encore, il n'est fait ni pour plaire aux masses, ni pour

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<sup>36</sup> Chicago 1994, 134. Druick and Zegers further note here that, "Also decisive must have been the presence of a willing publisher, Fischbacher, who worked with Boissé."

See Jules Boissé, "Lettre parisienne," Gazette des bains de mer de Royan, 10 October 1880.

Druick and Zegers' argument that in sharing the subject of Poe with Manet, Redon intended an assault on the Impressionists is misguided. First, Manet remained independent from the group. Second, Redon seems to have always maintained a kind of admiration for Manet, distancing himself from his aims, but respecting the man.

<sup>37</sup> See Chicago 1994, 128-34, for an excellent discussion of the significance of Baudelaire and Poe for the generation of young writers, including Jules Boissé and Armand Pigeon, who would tie Redon's critical fortunes to Poe's in some of the earliest critical pieces on his work.

<sup>38</sup> Indeed, Druick and Zegers attribute A Edgar Poe's large edition size of 50 (relative to 25 for Dans le Rêve) to Poe's reputation, which rested in turn on Baudelaire's. See Chicago 1994, 134.

peindre l'actualité.<sup>39</sup>

Here Hennequin identifies Redon as an artist worthy of specialized attention. The narrowness of his appeal is supported by the actual size of the editions of his two albums, and he is immediately dissociated from the Realists. Redon responded to Hennequin the very next day, March 5, to say that with this article, the critic had become his collaborator. Notably, Redon wrote of Hennequin's article that it "thoroughly dispels in me my anguish... (dissipe en moi bien des angoisses...),"<sup>40</sup> which is to say that he feels less isolated in finding a kindred spirit.

Redon and Hennequin's discovery of one another was achieved, or at least catalyzed, by the press. Connections forged between otherwise remote individuals in this manner may be seen as characteristic of the modern urban era, insofar as the role of communications media are concerned.<sup>41</sup> The establishment of communities of like-minded thinkers by means of the press and the dissemination of pictures was truly a novel innovation of the nineteenth century: it can be traced through Redon's discovery of Baudelaire, and through latter-day artists' and writers' discovery of Baudelaire's influence in Redon's prints. While Redon was by no

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<sup>39</sup> Hennequin, "Beaux-Arts: Odilon Redon, " La Revue littéraire et artistique 4 March 1882, 136-38, as quoted in Auriant, "Des lettres inédites d'Odilon Redon," Beaux-Arts, 7 June 1935 (part 1 of 2), 2.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> William Ivins, Jr., has written of the nineteenth century that, "as the community became engulfed in printed pictures, it looked to them for most of its visual information." See Prints and Visual Communication (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1953) 94.

means the first single artist, even since the initial heyday of lithography in the 1820s and 1830s, to produce portfolios of lithographs, their numbers increased rapidly as the 1880s continued. These works have been seen as definitive of the "aesthetic and thematic concerns of French art at the turn of the century."<sup>42</sup> Indeed, Gauguin and his followers, who were responsible for several portfolios of the coming decade-- Gauguin's Etudes lithographiques (1889), Emile Bernard's Bretonneries (1889), Edouard Vuillard's Paysages et intérieurs (1899), Pierre Bonnard's Quelques aspects de la vie de Paris (1899)-- looked to Redon as a sort of mentor. If the idyllic tenor of many of the prints contained in these albums derives from a search for a simultaneously contemporary and timeless alternative to the urbanity of Paris, the role of the city is nevertheless intrinsic to these works. Contemporaneous with these albums are others-- Félix Vallotton's Paris Intense (1894), Toulouse-Lautrec's Elles (1896), Henri Rivière's Les Trente-six vues de la Tour Eiffel (1888-1902)-- whose subject is explicitly the city. Part of the appeal of an artist's singularity in this context, then, is the way in which it behaves as a subject behind which, for his unseen audience, a whole web of associations may fall into place.

In the appendix to his book of collected criticism entitled L'Art moderne (1883), Huysmans picked up on the theme of the

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<sup>42</sup> See Philip Dennis Cate, "From Redon to Rivière: Albums of the 1890s," in Lasting Impressions: Lithography as Art, ed. Pat Gilmour (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988) 110ff.

singularity of Redon's art. He wrote that it was difficult to define it, and that Redon's true ancestors were among musicians and poets rather than painters, noting further that his was a transposition of one art into another, his masters being Baudelaire and Poe and, in the visual arts, maybe Goya.<sup>43</sup> He was incorrect, however, in assuming that Poe was the author of the captions in A Edgar Poe, but this misperception helped in fostering the close transpositional collaboration that was to become an important point of contact between them in the 1880s.<sup>44</sup>

With one exception, the unique placement of the album's frontispiece on the bottom cover has gone unnoticed in the literature. In 1891, Destrée described it as follows: "Couverture bleuté avec, au dos, un dessin tiré à l'encre rouge,"<sup>45</sup> continuing a few pages later:

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<sup>43</sup> Joris-Karl Huysmans, Appendice, in L'Art moderne (1883), published together with Certains (1889) (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1975) 275-76. In his 1886 article (see n. 5, above), Destrée would echo Huysmans's observation:

...between Redon's album and Poe's stories is established a certain correspondence. It is, in sum, the same shiver of art, expressed by different means.

...entre l'album de Redon et les contes de Poë (sic) s'établit une certaine correspondance. C'est, en somme, le même frisson d'art, exprimé par des moyens différents. (86)

<sup>44</sup> While belief that Redon had composed the captions was first dispelled in print in Destrée's catalogue of 1891, there may even have been some question of authorship in Destrée's mind at the time he wrote his 1886 article, where he seems to skillfully sidestep the question (see 137). Subsequent writers have periodically noted or compounded the early error. As late as 1955, Sven Sandström pursued what he considered the possibility that Hennequin was the author of the captions, rather than Poe or Redon.

<sup>45</sup> Destrée 1891, 23, note.

The cover bears, moreover, on the verso, a curious drawing. A wheel turns between squat columns and seems to be the driving mechanism of two small figures of women, rigid, like jointed playthings, and very singular and haunting in the contrast between their anxious and frightened expression, so lifelike, and their hard and doll-like faces.

La couverture [e] [p]orte, en outre, à son verso un dessin curieux. Une roue vire entre des colonnes trapues et semble le mécanisme moteur de deux petites figures de femme, raides, pareilles à des jouets articulés, et très singulières et obsédantes par le contraste de leur regard inquiet et apeuré, si vivant, avec leurs faces dures de poupées.<sup>46</sup>

Significant elements of Destrée's description are that he notes the frontispiece's placement, that he does not name it as such, and that it follows sequentially his description of the six interior plates.<sup>47</sup> Destrée, who must have examined the album complete and in the original, stops short of calling the image on the back cover a frontispiece. By definition, a frontispiece must precede or face a title-page. In Dans le Rêve he combined the two, but the present solution seems to disregard a fundamental convention of book illustration altogether. This, along with the initial mystery surrounding the authorship of the captions, must be what Jeanne Doin was referring to when she wrote in 1914 that one finds

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<sup>46</sup> Destrée 1891, 26.

<sup>47</sup> This sequence is carried over into the table of Redon's prints, in which A Edgar Poe's interior plates are catalogued as nos. 12-17, and the "couverture" is numbered 18. For every other album, the number of the frontispiece precedes those of the interior plates. From this we may conclude that Destrée considered the arrangement of the cover to be unusual, at least from a rhetorical perspective. In his monographic article of 1886, where he as yet makes no mention of the placement of the frontispiece, he nevertheless describes each portfolio in reverse chronological sequence, from most recent to first, a rhetorical device which serves to stress the artist's contemporary relevance.

"unexpected results" in A Edgar Poe.<sup>48</sup>

Let us take up the combined impact of the placement of the frontispiece together with the authorship of the captions, which are as follows:

I. The eye, like a strange balloon, moves toward Infinity  
 II. Before the black sun of Melancholy, Lenore appears  
 III. A mask sounds the funeral knell / IV. On the horizon  
 the angel of Certitude, and in the somber heaven a  
 questioning eye / V. The breath which leads living  
 creatures is also in the Spheres / VI. Madness

I. L'oeil, comme un ballon bizarre se dirige vers  
 l'Infini / II. Devant le noir soleil de la Mélancolie,  
 Lénor apparaît / III. Un masque sonne le glas funèbre /  
 IV. A l'horizon, l'ange des Certitudes, et, dans le ciel  
 sombre, un regard interrogateur / V. Le souffle qui  
 conduit les êtres est aussi dans les Sphères / VI. La  
 Folie (M. 38-43).

In sum, the frontispiece is not only visually separated but literally hidden from the title-page. Although the title of the album is A Edgar Poe, the captions are not explicitly ascribed to the artist, so that even someone familiar with Poe's writing might naturally conclude that the captions are actually by Poe.<sup>49</sup> From the relative remove of 1914 Doin seems to imply that the artist had

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<sup>48</sup> Jeanne Doin, "Odilon Redon," La Mercure de France 1 July 1914, 13. The complete sentence is repeated here: "En somme, d'un spectacle vulgaire, M. Redon tire des conclusions attendues." In other words, considered in the broadest terms, Redon draws unexpected conclusions from a vulgar spectacle. Doin is referring not only to the contemporary popularity of Poe, but the fact that it took place in popular printed media.

<sup>49</sup> Of the resulting confusion, Redon wrote to Mellerio on 31 July 1898 (Lettres 1923, 31):

I placed a few words beneath these new plates, skillfully I think, and the public got it wrong.

Pourtant je mis quelques mots sous ces nouvelles planches, habilement je crois, et le public s'y trompa.

I imagine that from the vantage point of 1898, Redon saw a touch of humor in this.

thereby freed himself from the strictures of the conventional artist-illustrator relationship. Indeed by then the artist's book had become a natural extension of many artist's repertoires.<sup>50</sup> But closer to the time of their appearance and from a markedly literary standpoint, Hennequin and Huysmans each preferred Dans le Rêve for the eloquence of its mute simplicity (recall that its plates were issued without titles).

Although he makes no mention of the frontispiece's placement, Eisenman was the first scholar to observe that the image contains not a depiction of two women, but of a woman and of Poe himself, demonstrating that the portrait of Poe resembles photographs of him, and that it is actually inspired by and based on Baudelaire's verbal description of him. Furthermore, the portion of the wheel visible at the right of the composition has been persuasively connected to the grist wheel in Albrecht Dürer's etching Melencolia I (1514) [Fig. 1], by way of Baudelaire's own description of Poe as melancholic.<sup>51</sup> The study for this print (Louvre inv. no. RF 4057, [Fig. 32]) differs in a few notable details: the skull at Poe's right elbow is more clearly visible, and the writer is presented nude rather than in a toga holding a book to his torso. At some point in the execution of the drawing, Redon experimented with the idea of showing Poe seated on a low rise (a rock?); without further

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<sup>50</sup> For many examples, see Riva Castleman, A Century of Artists Books, exhibition catalogue (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1994).

<sup>51</sup> Eisenman 1992, 104-09.

clues, however, it is impossible to determine the nature of the conception that the artist ultimately abandoned.

Having explored some literary possibilities offered by the lithographic portfolio, Redon must have enthusiastically embraced his first commission-- to design a frontispiece for Hennequin's Contes grotesques.<sup>52</sup> Although this was to be a translation of prose stories, Redon chose as his subject the poem The Raven. In so doing, he selected the most iconic and recognizable of Poe's images.

This was a calculated choice, owing, in part, to Manet's acclaimed portfolio of 1875. Of Redon's drawing<sup>53</sup> [Fig. 33] Sandström has claimed that it is "sans aucun doute inspiré par "le Corbeau" de Manet, dont les formes en silhouette sont en général étrangères à l'art de Redon," and that it is generally weak.<sup>54</sup> Eisenman echoes Sandström's disappointment with the drawing, noting unconvincingly, however, that this is in part due to the influence "apparently exerted" by the frontispiece created in 1881 by the well-known Englishman Linley Sambourne for a London edition of The Poems of Edgar Allan Poe.<sup>55</sup> The drawing was submitted to

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<sup>52</sup> Redon and Hennequin discussed but never executed additional projects. See Sandström 1955, 110-11.

<sup>53</sup> See Mary Cazort Taylor in De Raphaël à Picasso: Dessins de la Galerie Nationale du Canada (Ottawa), exhibition catalogue (Paris: Louvre, 1969) 62, cat. no. 62 (Ottawa inv. no. 14847).

<sup>54</sup> Sandström 1955, 110.

<sup>55</sup> Eisenman's contention is supported solely by the closeness of the date of Sambourne's edition to Contes grotesques and on his hope that the reader will come to the same conclusion based on the juxtaposition of illustrations in his text. (Eisenman 1992, 104-

Hennequin most likely as a frontispiece design, and presumably by the translator to the publisher, Ollendorf, as a frontispiece as well. Over Hennequin's protests, however, the publisher cropped the design, and used it as a cover illustration, overlaid with type [Fig. 30].

Redon was furious at the result. He wrote to his brother Ernest on 30 January 1883:

But it is impossible for you to have the drawing The Raven printed any other way than in the way you have seen it! This sketch had been entrusted to my young friend Hennequin only so that it could be inserted in his book, but after a battle fought courageously in the offices of the publisher Ollendorf, my friend had to consent to let it appear on the cover. When the book appeared, it had nothing inside. Hennequin has been deceived by the publisher, who has turned my drawing of a bird into an advertisement. Here is why there is no plate other than the one you know. To have another example one would now have to execute another plate, one which would incur new expenses-- the new inventions for the multiplication of drawings are entirely for the profit of those who can exploit them, with their patents and their monopolies. Althwhile giving the impression of favoring good bargains and the dissemination of ideas, the fat industrialist who owns the presses enriches himself...

Mais, il est impossible de vous avoir le dessin le Corbeau autrement imprimé que tu ne l'as vu! Ce croquis n'avait été confié à ma jeune ami Hennequin que pour être inséré dans son livre, mais après une bataille livrée courageusement dans les bureaux de l'Editeur Ollendorff, mon ami dut consentir à le laisser paraître sur la couverture. Quand le livre parut, il n'y avait rien dedans. Hennequin avait été trompé par l'Editeur qui avait fait de mon dessin un oiseau de réclame. Voilà comment il n'existe point de cliché différent de celui que tu connais. Pour avoir maintenant un exemplaire autre il faudrait exécuter un cliché autre, ce qui serait de nouveaux frais-- les nouvelles inventions pour la multiplication des dessins sont toutes au profit de ceux qui les exploitent, avec leur brevet et monopole. Tout en ayant l'air de favoriser à bon marché, la multiplication de la pensée, le gros industriel qui tient

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les presses s'enrichit...<sup>56</sup>

Redon's disappointment was justified. In establishing a point of comparison with Manet by his choice of subject, Redon could only have anticipated results commensurate with the quality of the more established Manet's Le Corbeau. One of the most obvious differences, as Gamboni has noted, is that Manet and Mallarmé's publication was a deluxe, limited edition, whereas this new one was issued in a popular edition.<sup>57</sup>

In writing that the publisher had turned his drawing into an advertisement, Redon was likely thinking back jealously to Manet's frontispiece drawing for Le Corbeau, which had also been sensitively incorporated into an elegant poster advertising the publication, and which Redon surely knew [Fig. 34]. The poster embodied Mallarmé's wish for the project, in "presenting the publication as something very fashionable, very Parisian, and so on."<sup>58</sup> In the poster, Manet himself contributed to the "street as public theater"<sup>59</sup> that he depicted in his paintings. While this notion could not have been further from Redon's agenda, he no doubt wished for the book to embody the same ideals expressed by

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<sup>56</sup> Odilon to Ernest Redon, letter of 30 January 1883, printed in full in Sandström 1955, 186, no. 10. Trans. Eisenman 1992, 105, with my revisions and additions.

<sup>57</sup> Gamboni 1989, 96.

<sup>58</sup> Stéphane Mallarmé to Léon Cladel, letter of 2 June 1875, reprinted in Manet 1832-1883, exhibition catalogue (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1983) 381, cat. no. 151.

<sup>59</sup> This expression borrowed from Theodore Reff, Manet and Modern Paris, exhibition catalogue (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), see ch. 7.

Mallarmé.

Another detail which may shed light on Redon's reaction to the failure of the project is that his exhibition at La Vie moderne in 1881 followed Manet's exhibition there by one year. It may even have been prompted by it, although it was almost totally ignored.<sup>60</sup> Thus, on this score as well Redon had perhaps been hoping to make a favorable public impression with Contes grotesques.

Now he could only be embarrassed at the prospect of a reader turning back to the book's cover after reading Hennequin's acknowledgement found inside:

It remains for me to thank M. Odilon Redon for having consented to put his marvellous talent to the service of this volume. The author of Dans le Rêve and of the plates A Edgar Poe and of other strangely beautiful compositions is an artist of great enough scope so that this collaboration has double the value it would have if it were signed by better known names. We are happy to express to him publically a very profound note of admiration.

Il me reste à remercier M. Odilon Redon d'avoir consenti à mettre son merveilleux talent au service de ce volume. L'auteur de Dans le Rêve et des planches A Edgar Poe et d'autres compositions étrangement belles, est un artiste d'assez large envergure pour doubler par sa collaboration la valeur des oeuvres signées des plus grands noms. Nous sommes heureux de lui exprimer notre très profonde admiration publiquement.<sup>61</sup>

Redon's vehemence with regard to this incident stayed with him for the remainder of his life. If in A Edgar Poe he had pushed the limits of conventional illustration, resulting in confusion among his newfound public, with Contes grotesques he saw the sorry

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<sup>60</sup> See Stephen Eisenman, The Temptation of Saint Redon (University of Chicago Press, 1992) 102.

<sup>61</sup> Emile Hennequin, Contes grotesques Paris, 1882; cf. Roseline Bacou, Odilon Redon, 2 vols. (Geneva: Cailler, 1956) I:78.

results of not exerting complete control over his work. In later years he would claim repeatedly that his fondness for Poe had been overestimated by his public. Redon essentially banished the Contes grotesques incident from recorded memory for as long as he was able. The project is listed neither in Jules Destrée's descriptive catalogue of Redon's lithographs (1891) nor in Mellerio's catalogue raisonné of the complete prints (1913).

Les Origines (1883), Hommage à Goya (1885), and La Nuit (1886)

Of Redon's next three lithographic albums, only the first, Les Origines (1883), contains a frontispiece. Richard Hobbs was the first to recognize that the captions for each of these three albums comprises a prose poem, although the lines composed for the first were suppressed in the publication itself, surfacing in print for the first time in Jules Destrée's descriptive catalogue of Redon's prints published in 1891.<sup>62</sup> The result, over the course of the three albums, may be regarded as a striving for a reductive balance between the more obviously literary elements integral to the album format, as well as a response to and even collaboration with the literary activities of his critics. Based on this, we can set out to investigate the nature of Redon's literary-pictorial refinements in the brief period just prior to his breakthroughs in Belgium in 1886-87 and the two seminal albums based on Flaubert's Temptation

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<sup>62</sup> In eliminating the captions from the album, Redon may have wished to avoid the confusion regarding authorship which marked A Edgar Poe. Redon also changed the order of the images from that prescribed by the order of the captions.

of St. Anthony from 1888-89.

Like the frontispiece for A Gustave Flaubert executed several years later, the one for Les Origines (M. 44) exists in two states [Figs. 35 and 36]. In both instances, the first state differs from the second in that it contains a relatively blank area into which text will be inserted. The figures in the frontispiece are to be read as organisms in an early state of evolution. While the album has always been considered a meditation on Darwin's theory of evolution, Barbara Larson is the first scholar to situate Les Origines within a full account of Redon's pursuit of scientific knowledge.

Early in 1883, Redon wrote of Armand Clavaud to his brother Ernest, "I think frequently of him, even by him / Je pense souvent à lui, même par lui."<sup>63</sup> Redon was keenly interested in Clavaud's research in the natural sciences, and accompanied him in his activities throughout his twenties. In the 1860s the two belonged to the Cercle littéraire et artistique, an "intellectual circle of artists, writers, and scientists" who were particularly concerned with the spiritual implications of the increasingly scientific view of nature of the period.<sup>64</sup> Redon continued to follow scientific

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<sup>63</sup> Letter from Odilon to Ernest Redon of 30 January 1883, reprinted in Sandström 1955, 186; cf. Barbara Larson, Odilon Redon: Science and Fantasy in the Noirs (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, Institute of Fine Arts, 1996) 14; cited hereafter as "Larson 1996".

<sup>64</sup> Larson 1996, 15. The Cercle was organized by Charles Laterrade, a friend of Clavaud and the son of Clavaud's teacher, Jean-François Laterrade. Larson writes that "the climate for relationships between science and the arts in Bordeaux of the sixties was a fairly rich one for Redon both in terms of personal

developments throughout his life, and Les Origines is the closest he came to expressing these interests in a work of art.

The frontispiece for Les Origines does not exhibit the subtle complexities found in Dans le Rêve and A Edgar Poe. Yet issues raised in the first two albums arising from Redon's pastoral and counter-pastoral tendencies do parallel his concerns on the subject of evolutionary origins, and about popular anxieties about the decline of the French "race," particularly after their defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. As we have seen, following his entry into the Rayssac circle in the mid-1870's, and drawing largely from Faust, Redon took up the theme of good and evil in his noirs. The subject of Faust could hold special appeal in the nineteenth century for those whose lives and livelihoods transpired in urban centers, the hubs of modernity, where the negative ramifications of progress could seem acute.<sup>65</sup> Redon himself returned annually to his family's country estate Peyrelebadé outside the village of Listrac, near Bordeaux. Here he executed nature studies,

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relationships and a larger circle of acquaintances" (15) and that "Clavaud, Laterrade, and the group at the Cercle were interested in public instruction and the social potential of science." (16)

The subject of Redon and science, particularly Darwin's theory of evolution, has been frequently remarked upon, but not explored in any depth until very recently. While the Art Institute of Chicago's 1994 exhibition catalogue introduced a great deal of new contextual and biographical information on this subject, Larson's dissertation, in its breadth and scope, is the definitive study, also containing the best-documented history of Redon's relationship with Clavaud.

<sup>65</sup> Larson discusses at length the subject of late nineteenth-century perceptions of the relative robustness of rural populations as compared to the relative weakness of urban dwellers. See Larson 1996, ch. II, entitled "Evolution and Degeneration."

essentially impressions, which served to help him to enforce the laws of the visible upon the world of the invisible in the noirs which he then completed in his Paris studio. The city/country (as well as interior/exterior) division in his life is manifest in the related dichotomies of good/evil and pastoral/counter-pastoral in his work.

The increasing loss of contact with nature and its laws as governing principles of life is a recurrent theme in French literature of this period. The specifically urban and especially Parisian type, depicted ceaselessly in the writings of Baudelaire, Hugo, Zola, and the Goncourts, for example, reached the nadir of its decrepitude in the characterization of the effete Duc Jean Floressas Des Esseintes, the fictional protagonist of Huysmans's 1884 novel A Rebours, whose title has been variously translated as Against the Grain and Against Nature. The scion of one of the most noble and rich French families, Des Esseintes is a Baudelairean type who was modeled primarily after Robert, Comte de Montesquiou-Fezensac.<sup>66</sup> Succumbing to the temptations of luxury that wealth and idleness afford him, Des Esseintes's narcissism becomes his sole motivational force. In him Huysmans presents the very pride of France feeding off its own carcass. The decadence embodied by Des Esseintes was a very much feared end result of urban progress.

Redon, whose own works would count among the fictional art collection of Des Esseintes when A Rebours appeared in the year

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<sup>66</sup> Robert Baldick, The Life of J.-K. Huysmans (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955) 80-83.

following the publication of Les Origines, was well-versed on the subject of evolution and the current state of the French race. The fate of Des Esseintes was not limited to the rich. The recent discovery that the airborne spread of disease was accelerated in areas where populations were dense terrified the French as a nation, and led to innovations in medical science as well as public health policy.<sup>67</sup>

Les Origines has seven plates-- eight including the title-page/frontispiece printed on the cover. By comparison, the two successive albums, Hommage à Goya (1885) and La Nuit (1886), are scaled down. For both, the cover serves as title-page only, undecorated but for the typeface. They consist of just six interior plates apiece, each with captions composed by Redon that together comprise a sort of prose poem. If, by suppressing the captions in Les Origines, Redon was returning to the images their "innocence," as Hobbs has supposed, the artist now aspired to a more focused and even taut whole. The frontispiece is now removed from the exterior of the album and, as we shall see, its role is subsumed into the first interior plate. This is achieved by different means in each case.

Hommage à Goya's first and final plates [Figs. 37 and 38] are the most overt references to the Spanish artist's portfolio of etchings entitled Los Caprichos (1799). The captions are reprinted complete here:

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<sup>67</sup> See Larson 1996, ch. III, entitled "The Microbe."

I. In my dream I saw in the sky a face of mystery / II. The marsh flower, a sad human head / III. A madman in a dismal landscape / IV. There were also embryonic beings V. A strange juggler / VI. Upon waking I saw the Goddess of the Intelligible with her severe and hard profile.

I. Dans mon rêve, je vis au ciel un visage de mystère  
 II. La fleur du marécage, une tête humaine et triste  
 III. Un fou dans un morne paysage / IV. Il y eut aussi des êtres embryonnaires / V. Un étrange jongleur / VI. Au reveil j'aperçus la Déesse de l'Intelligible au profil sévère et dur (M. 54-59).

Gamboni has seen Visage de mystère as having a "programmatic value condensing a symbolic portrait of the author, an image of the artist and his activity, and an image of the function and the functioning of the work of art as analogous to the mystery of the universe."<sup>68</sup> He suggests too that in this symbolic self-portrait Redon was invoking the role of Goya's El sueño de la razon produce monstruos [Fig. 39]. This plate had been devised as the frontispiece for Los Caprichos, but it was published as the forty-third plate in the portfolio; for the frontispiece Goya produced a more traditional self-portrait [Fig. 40]. For Goya, the sleep of reason produced monsters, but for Redon reason, in the form of the Goddess of the Intelligible, is "severe" and "cold." She reveals herself in profile, rather than, say, in three-quarter view, which implies the necessity of chiaroscuro and its consequential element of mystery.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Gamboni 1989, 138.

<sup>69</sup> Gamboni (1989, 139) has observed that the three-quarter view of Visage de mystère is consistent with Redon's self-portraits, showing, by example, his painted self-portrait of 1867 now in the Musée d'Orsay (his fig. 3). Gamboni further muses on whether Visage de Mystère is a self-representation as man or as artist, and the difficulty of enumerating the sources which would allow us to arrive at a specific source for his self-depiction (see 139-46ff).

Hommage à Goya was published on 1 February 1885. Huysmans's review of the album, which Gamboni calls a "literary transposition" of the suite, appeared simultaneously in La Revue indépendante.<sup>70</sup> Huysmans's article was immediately considered the definitive response to the album. Hennequin's own review, appearing in La Revue Contemporaine later in the month of February, acknowledges the primacy of Huysmans's piece by means of its own brevity, consisting as it does of a summary if poetic description and a few characteristic words of praise about the artist.<sup>71</sup> One of the features of La Revue contemporaine was the chronicling by brief synopsis of recent critical writings of note from other publications; in the same issue as Hennequin's review appeared an anonymous (it is probably by Hennequin) mention of Huysmans's review in La Revue indépendante:

These pages are, in our opinion, pages of genius. The pessimistic descriptions of M. Huysmans have reappeared here, solemn, tragic, bronze-like and shadowy. It recalls to us Dante. And from it sounds, the length of the period, a somber harmony, the harmony of the unfathomable, of eternal sadness.

Ces pages-ci sont, à notre avis, des pages de génie. La description pessimiste de M. Huysmans y réapparaît, mais solennelle, tragique, airin et ténèbres. Elle nous rapelle Dante. Et d'elle sourde, le long de la période, une sombre harmonie, l'harmonie de l'insondable, de l'éternelle douleur.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Joris-Karl Huysmans, "Le nouvel Album d'Odilon Redon," La Revue indépendante, 1 February 1885, 291-96.

<sup>71</sup> Emile Hennequin, "Hommage à Goya," La Revue contemporaine, February 1885, 307-08.

<sup>72</sup> Anonymous (Emile Hennequin?), La Revue contemporaine February 1885, 326. Redon's name appeared numerous times in this publication after 1885.

Destrée too praised Huysmans's review. Introducing Redon for the first time to a Belgian readership in his article for La Jeune Belgique, Destrée underlined its inseparableness from Hommage à Goya itself by quoting it extensively as a substitute for his own critique, adding only an introduction to Huysmans's lines as follows:

...HOMMAGE A GOYA is the best known [album by Redon], because of the admirable description of it made by J.-K. Huysmans in La Revue Indépendante, in some superb pages, counting among the most beautiful written in French prose in the last few years. Restoring, at once, justice to the artist and to his prophet, I would like to cite again how he describes the two first plates of this album, the most beautiful...

...HOMMAGE A GOYA est le plus connu [album de Redon], à cause de l'admirable description qu'en faite J.-K. Huysmans dans la Revue indépendante, en quelques superbes pages, à compter parmi les plus belles qu'on ait écrites en prose française dans ces dernières années. Rendant à la fois justice à l'artiste et à son prophète, je veux citer encore comment il décrit les deux premières planches de cet album, les plus belles...<sup>73</sup>

The conjunction of the two publications-- Hommage à Goya and Huysmans's literary transposition of it-- was deliberate in its timing but underlined the autonomy of each as a work of art, so that the collaboration maintains a narrow margin between promotion and artistic collaboration, each caught up in the other.<sup>74</sup> Huysmans never once gives the title of Redon's album, not even in the title of his article, but reading his prose one has the impression of his sharing the same visual sources as Redon, and of

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<sup>73</sup> Destrée 1886, 136. In his 1891 descriptive catalogue, Destrée alternately uses the words "description," "décrit," "traduit," and "paraphrase" to describe Husymans's article, 28-32.

<sup>74</sup> See Gamboni 1989, 114-18.

his borrowing Redon's eyes as his own to depict them.<sup>75</sup> This was the intended effect, and helped to ensure that critical perceptions of Redon's life and work were tied to Huysmans's depiction of him.

Independent praise for Hommage à Goya came from none other than Stéphane Mallarmé, to whom Redon forwarded a pre-publication copy at the behest of their mutual friend Huysmans.<sup>76</sup> On 2 February 1885, Mallarmé wrote to Redon:

How you spoil me! and meet one of my wishes, which has been to look at length at one of your works. Here it's been two days that I have been leafing through this extraordinary suite of six lithographs, without exhausting the impression of each, so far does the sincerity of your vision go, no less than your power to evoke it in others. You have portrayed a quite mysterious sympathy in this delightful mad hermit, the poor little man which at the base of my soul I wish to be; and I hang this drawing apart, as if to some wall of my memory, to judge the others in a less disinterested fashion. The head of Dream, this marsh flower, illuminated by a light that she alone knows and which cannot be called the tragic lantern of ordinary existence; and what cruelly abridged synthesis, without its withering, instead almost satisfied by the length of its interior face, in plate IV. The study of the woman, whom you call so rightly the goddess of the Intelligible, leaves us homesick for nightmares; but the entirety of my admiration goes straight to the great inconsolable Magi, unyielding searcher of a mystery that he knows does not exist, and which he will pursue forever, out of the mourning of his lucid desperation, because that was the Truth! I know of no drawing which communicates as much intellectual fear and dreadful sympathy as this grandiose face. My other favorite, in the same order of solomonic dreams, is this "strange juggler" of a spirit devastated by the marvel to the profound sense that he achieves, and suffering so in the triumph of his consequent knowledge.

I also love your legend of a word or two, but of a justness that shows to what degree you penetrate the

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 115-16. Gamboni notes that the collaboration between Redon and Huysmans coincides with the "moment of symbolism's crystallization."

<sup>76</sup> Gott 1988, 93.

arcana of your subject.

It doesn't matter where I would have seen this work, dear Monsieur Redon, from which I have taken one of the greatest pleasures of art that there is; but sent by you, I leave it to you to discover how precious it is to me. There is in it a coincidence so exquisite, that I am unable, in thanking you so effusively, not to recognize, in all the pleasure which it has given me, the great friendship of our dear Huysmans.

Your devoted,

Stéphane Mallarmé

Comme vous me gâtez! et venez au-devant d'un de mes souhaits, qui était de regarder longuement une oeuvre de vous. Voilà deux jours que je feuillette cette suite extraordinaire des six lithographies, sans épuiser l'impression d'aucune, tant va loin votre sincérité dans la vision, non moins que votre puissance à l'évoquer chez autrui. Une sympathie bien mystérieuse vous a fait portraiturer dans ce délicieux hermite fou le pauvre petit homme que du fond de mon âme j'aimerais être; et je suspends ce dessin à part à quelque mur de ma mémoire, pour juger les autres d'une façon plus désintéressé. La tête de Rêve, cette fleur de marécage, illumine d'une clarté qu'elle connaît seule et qui ne sera pas dite, tout le tragique falot de l'existence ordinaire; et quelle synthèse cruellement abrégée, sans étiolement là, mais presque satisfaite de la face intérieure de beaucoup, dans la planche IV. L'étude de femme, que vous appelez si justement la déesse de l'Intelligible, nous sort à regret du cauchemar; mais mon admiration tout entière va droit au grand Mage inconsolable et obstiné chercheur d'un mystère qu'il sait ne pas exister, et qu'il poursuivra, à jamais pour cela, du deuil de son lucide désespoir, car c'eut été la Vérité! Je ne connais pas un dessin qui communique tant de peur intellectuelle et de sympathie affreuse, que ce grandiose visage. Mon autre préféré est, dans le même ordre de songes salomoniques, cet "étrange jongleur" à l'esprit dévasté par la merveille au sens profond qu'il accomplit, et si souffrant dans le triomphe de son savant résultat.

J'adore aussi votre légende d'un mot ou deux, mais d'une justesse qui montre à quel point vous pénétrez avant dans l'arcane de votre sujet.

J'aurais vu cette oeuvre n'importe où, cher Monsieur Redon, que j'en eusse tiré un des plus rares plaisirs d'art, qui soient; mais envoyée par vous, je vous laisse à deviner combien elle m'est précieuse. Il y a là une coïncidence si exquise, que je ne puis, tout en vous remerciant avec effusion, ne pas voir, dans tout ce contentement qui m'est causé, beaucoup l'amitié de notre cher Huysmans.

Votre dévoué,

Stéphane Mallarmé<sup>77</sup>

Mallarmé's letter of thanks for Redon's gift of Hommage à Goya is on a par with Huysmans's literary transposition in its thoughtful consideration of its impact on the literary viewer. Mallarmé responds to the gift as such, and in doing so also hints at the distinction between the album as an independent creation by Redon and the album within the context of the collaboration with Huysmans (which at this juncture extends beyond the artistic and the promotional into the realm of the personal). In the penultimate sentence Mallarmé directly invites Redon to meet him and to see for himself what impact the album has had on him; in the final sentence he acknowledges to Redon Huysmans's role of friendship in their rapprochement. Indeed, Redon's friendship with Mallarmé would outlast his friendship with Huysmans.

In La Nuit, which appeared one year after Hommage à Goya, the role of the captions exerts even greater control over the rhythm of the plates viewed in succession [Figs. 41-46].<sup>78</sup> Line 1 of Hommage à Goya both introduced the elements of space and time ("Dans mon rêve...") and the combined subject/object of the dream ("...je vis au ciel un visage de mystère"), while subsequent plates each

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<sup>77</sup> Letter from Stéphane Mallarmé to Odilon Redon, 2 February 1885, LàR, 132-33.

<sup>78</sup> As has already been noted above, La Nuit lacks an actual frontispiece, and its cover contains only the title-page information. The front cover states: ODILON REDON / La NUIT / 6 Dessins lithographiques à 50 exemplaires / 1886. On the back cover, preceding a list of Redon's previous lithographs, appears the line "DESSINS LITHOGRAPHIQUES DU MEME AUTEUR," implying that Redon is the author as well as the artist of the present and previous albums which contain captions.

represent an iconic and static moment of the dream, culminating in an awakening in the final plate. As in the previous album, the beginning of La Nuit serves a kind of declarative role, with the interior lines describing a list of subsequent or consequent scenes. In La Nuit we read:

I. To Old Age / II. The man was alone in a night landscape / III. The lost angel then opened black wings IV. The chimera gazed at all things with fear / V. The priestesses were waiting / VI. And the searcher was engaged in an infinite search.

I. A la Vieillesse / II. L'homme fut solitaire dans un paysage de nuit / III. L'ange perdu ouvrit alors les ailes noires / IV. La chimère regarda avec effroi toutes choses / V. Les prêtresses furent en attente / VI. Et le chercheur était à la recherche infinie (M. 62-67).

Plate I shows the head of an old man facing left, in a barely more than profile view. He is depicted with a minimum of means, the antithesis of images such as Profil de Lumière<sup>79</sup> or Dans mon rêve..., whose impact is based largely on a heavy application of ink. This is certainly a portrait of Rodolphe Bresdin, who died in the previous year [Fig. 47]. Plate II follows from plate I in that its caption completes the sentence begun there: "A la vieillesse[,] l'homme fut solitaire dans un paysage de nuit." What is striking here is the shift from a general time period in plate I to simple past tense in plate II, a mode which continues in plates III, IV, and V, before entering into the infinite time suggested by the final plate.

Elements of the interior plates suggest aspects of Bresdin's

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<sup>79</sup> Profil de Lumière (M. 61) was Redon's first lithograph to be published as a "pièce moderne," that is, as a single image not belonging to an album.

life-- his solitude, the forest setting, the all-encompassing view of nature, even the three priestesses (Bresdin had four daughters). The lost angel recalls Redon's post-war images of defeat and perhaps Bresdin's role in the Commune, while the chimera in the following plate is suggestive of the generation of 1848, when Bresdin had been a confrère of Baudelaire. The suggestion of imminent death in each successive plate is stayed in the final one, where the infinite extension of time suggests the passing on of the torch-- the search-- to the next generation, that is, Redon himself. Although the closeness of death is implied by the album's title and its contents, night also precedes morning in the day's cycle. The body of La Nuit continues and elaborates, both formally and thematically, the symbolic self-portrait of Hommage à Goya. Moved by the death of his teacher and mentor, Redon in the latter album retrospectively provides a kind of historical context for the first. Of course, Redon achieves this by means of suggestion; he was never so mundane as to provide more than a few clues to that which he was describing, or more correctly, addressing. Finally, as an elegy to Bresdin, the portfolio is pastoral in conception, further evidence that Redon perceived the man as an Antonian figure.

With these last three albums of 1883-1886, Redon reached the culmination of his initial explorations in the genre of the frontispiece as a literary-pictorial mode. La Nuit appeared in

early 1886,<sup>80</sup> in time for his participation in the third exhibition of the Belgian group Les XX in February of that year. With the commissions Redon would receive from Belgian authors and publishers in the following six years would open a new chapter in his frontispiece production. Although these are largely more conventional as frontispieces, this would allow him to focus on his role as collaborator, something he had temporarily abandoned after the debacle of Hennequin's Contes grotesques in late 1882, in which his input had been passed over.

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<sup>80</sup> Emile Hennequin wrote that "la Nuit a paru chez Dumont" in La Vie moderne of 27 February 1886, "Notes d'art," 130-31. Jules Destrée, whose article "Odilon Redon" appeared in La Jeune Belgique of 1 February 1886, writes that the most recent album was Hommage à Goya.

#### IV. Redon in Belgium

The art world of Brussels in the last quarter of the nineteenth century was small but populous and complex. It will be helpful to give some idea of the cultural landscape in Belgium at this time, to provide a context for many of the names already mentioned. Several forces conspired to render Belgium, and especially Brussels, a distinctive cultural center at the end of the century. Ending centuries of foreign domination, Belgium gained its independence from the Netherlands in 1830. The industrial revolution came to Belgium earlier than any other nation in continental Europe, and Brussels mushroomed as the seat of administration and commerce, its population growing from 88,000 in 1800 to 140,000 in 1830 to 600,000 in 1900. Yet, by the third quarter of the century, with increased competition from France and Germany, the lot of the Belgian worker suffered drastically, and the relatively closed political system encouraged the spread of socialist and anarchist politics in the 1880s and '90s. One charged moment during this period was the 1886 demonstration celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of the Paris Commune.<sup>1</sup>

In France, events such as this were considered the likely outcome of industrial transformation, adding to the angst which followed the Franco-Prussian War regarding the decline of the

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<sup>1</sup> Information on the history of Brussels in the nineteenth century from Stephen H. Goddard, ed., et al, Les XX and the Belgian Avant-Garde. Prints, Drawings, and Books ca. 1890, exhibition catalogue (Lawrence, Kansas: Spencer Museum of Art, 1992), esp. 21-22. Cited hereafter as "Goddard 1992."

French "race." A further point of interest to the French public was the ethnic controversy which divided Belgium between French-speaking Walloons in the west and Flemish- or Dutch-speaking Flemings in the east. This quagmire was intensified by the fact that French was the primary language of the government and the aristocracy, whereas Flemish was largely the language of the working class and the new bourgeoisie. Brussels's international position and its large influx of immigrants from throughout the nation, its very cosmopolitanism, helped to keep it considerably more aloof to issues of ethnic strife than provincial centers, however.

In some regards, Brussels was quite similar to Paris. As in Paris, official arts policy was relatively conservative, and artists increasingly found the Salon restrictive. More so than in Paris, however, were the arts and literature inextricably linked. Men of letters were among the earliest supporters and initiators of Les XX, Brussels's premier avant-garde exhibition group, and they would comprise the initial point of contact between Redon and a new audience for his work in Belgium.

Two of the four founders in 1881 of the journal L'Art moderne, Edmond Picard (1836-1924) and his protégé Octave Maus (1856-1919),<sup>2</sup> were lawyers, art patrons and collectors, authors, critics, and Socialists. In 1883, they were joined by the poet and critic Emile Verhaeren. L'Art moderne was devoted to art in all of its manifestations, and took a political line expounding the role of

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<sup>2</sup> The others were Victor Arnould and Eugène Robert.

art as a vehicle for social change.

A major rival of L'Art moderne was La Jeune Belgique, also founded in 1881. This periodical grew out of three others: Verhaeren's La Semaine des Etudiants, Max Waller's Le Type, and Albert Bauwens's La Jeune Revue littéraire. In contrast to L'Art moderne, La Jeune Belgique was principally a literary review, and its art for art's sake outlook removed it considerably from the realm of the political. Both periodicals were to become important supporters of Les XX.

Edmond Picard was a prime force behind the formation of Les XX in 1884,<sup>3</sup> so much so that L'Art moderne was considered its mouthpiece, even though Octave Maus was more directly involved in the group upon its founding and through to its dissolution in 1893.<sup>4</sup> Les XX was an exhibition group dedicated to avant-garde artists. Membership was limited to twenty Belgian artists, but domestic and notably foreign artists were invited to exhibit as well. Among the best-known members, all of them Symbolists, were James Ensor, Ferdinand Khnopff, Felicien Rops, Théo van Rysselberghe, and Jan Toorop. The roll of foreign artists invited to exhibit with Les XX is impressive: Félix Bracquemond (1885, 1889), Gustave Caillebotte (1888), Mary Cassatt (1892), Paul Cézanne (1890), William Merritt Chase (1884), Jules Chéret (1891),

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<sup>3</sup> Coincidentally, in Paris in 1884 Redon was a founding member of Les Indépendants, an exhibition group accepting the work of anyone who submitted. See Pierre Angrand, Naissance des artistes indépendants, 1884 (Paris: Nouvelles Editions Debresse, 1965).

<sup>4</sup> Les XX was succeeded, under the leadership of Octave Maus, by La Libre Esthétique in 1894, which lasted until 1914.

Henri Fantin-Latour (1885), Vincent van Gogh (1890, 1891 [memorial]), Max Klinger (1889), Claude Monet (1886, 1889), Berthe Morisot (1887), Camille Pissarro (1887, 1889, 1891), Redon (1886, 1890), Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1886, 1890), Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1888, 1890, 1892, 1893), James Abbott McNeil Whistler (1884, 1886, 1888).<sup>5</sup>

Jules Destrée had first seen Redon's prints and drawings in Huysmans's collection in Paris in 1885. No doubt with Huysmans's prompting, Destrée must have begun his article on Redon for La Jeune Belgique soon after he returned to Brussels, since he lists Hommage à Goya rather than La Nuit as the artist's most recent album. Destrée's article appeared in the February issue of La Jeune Belgique, to coincide with the opening of the third exhibition of Les XX, where Redon was showcased among foreign artists including Albert Besnard, Monet, and Renoir. In the catalogue are listed lithographs by Redon from the collections of Destrée (plates from A Edgar Poe and Les Origines) and Verhaeren (Hommage à Goya). Destrée's and Verhaeren's most immediate connection in this context was their mutual involvement in La Jeune Belgique. It is likely, then, that through Verhaeren and his connection to L'Art moderne (and Picard), Octave Maus, the Secretary of Les XX, came to invite Redon to the 1886 exhibition. This was a close world indeed, and even if the spread of knowledge

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<sup>5</sup> This is just a selection, drawing heavily from Redon's Parisian contemporaries, of the complete list. See Jane Block, Les XX and Belgian Avant-Gardism, 1868-1894 (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984), Appendix B: "Artists Invited to Les XX," 81-84. Cited hereafter as "Block 1984"

about Redon's work was somewhat less labyrinthine than depicted here, it is attributable in large measure to Huysmans's dedicated readership in Belgium.<sup>6</sup>

In the last few pages, I have tried to depict the arts scene in Brussels in the 1880s with an eye toward providing a context for the principal players in Redon's arrival there in 1886, and his subsequent popularity. As we have seen, an alliance which included Edmond Picard, Octave Maus, Emile Verhaeren, and Jules Destrée existed in the close-knit world of both the literary arts (L'Art moderne, La Jeune Belgique) and the visual arts (Les XX). These men were introduced to Redon through his lithographs, whose importance Huysmans had recognized in the press, particularly with his literary transposition of Hommage à Goya trumpeted by Destrée in La Jeune Belgique.<sup>7</sup>

Prior to his debut into Belgium, Redon had primarily produced frontispieces for his own portfolios. In these frontispieces is

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<sup>6</sup> Luc and Adrienne Fontainas have noted that Huysmans was well respected in Belgium by the early 1880s. I am grateful to Mme Fontainas and her late husband for providing me with an unpublished manuscript of their chapter on Redon to appear in their monograph on the Belgian publisher Edmond Deman, not yet published as of this writing (see bibliography). This book will amplify their critical catalogue of the publisher's work, now the standard reference, entitled "Biographie et bibliographie d'Edmond Deman," Bulletin du Bibliophile 1986, no. 3, 309-79 and no. 4, 485-582. The published article to be cited hereafter as "Fontainas 1986."

<sup>7</sup> As Gamboni has noted, whereas Monet and Renoir's inclusion in the exhibition served to expand their reputations beyond France, for Redon, who did not have a large following in his own country, the opportunity to exhibit in Belgium was "not an addition to, but a substitute for Parisian recognition, a sort of exile and detour." See Dario Gamboni, La plume et le pinceau: Odilon Redon et la littérature (Paris: Editions de minuit, 1989), 154. Cited hereafter as "Gamboni 1989."

manifest an awareness of the potential for a blurring of boundaries between the creative and the mercenary taking place as the artist's vision becomes subject to the forces of the literary marketplace. In 1885, however, Redon issued his first single print, or pièce moderne, entitled Profil de Lumière [Fig. 48]. Further single prints would be issued in publications into the 1890s.\*

Prints and printed objects were highly esteemed in Belgium in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, and among the Vingtistes were several celebrated printmakers. From the etchings of Ensor to the typography of Henry van de Velde, much of this interest was home-grown. Belgium's identity as a new nation weaned on industry guaranteed an unapologetic role for the applied arts that imparted to printmaking an immediacy and a relevance that was not burdened by the waxing and waning of fashion found in Paris. This factor made elements of the arts scene in Brussels especially receptive to Redon's prints and drawings. Although Paris may be regarded as the epicenter of the explosion of printmaking, particularly lithography, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the question of high art versus low there tended to obscure the underlying and irrepressible fact that the multiplication of images was inseparable from the expansion in communications which was a consequence of the new urbanism. This was equally the case in Paris, Brussels, and all the European centers of modernity, and helps to explain the central role of

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\* See Douglas Druick, ed., et al, Odilon Redon, Prince of Dreams, exhibition catalogue (Art Institute of Chicago, 1994), 167-69. Cited hereafter as "Chicago 1994."

printmaking in avant-garde art movements (and communications in general) from this period onward.

Some recent writers on Redon, departing from the traditional view of the man as timid and reserved, have brought to light information which strongly suggests a more active role for the artist in promoting his work, programmatically making gifts of dedicated prints to fellow artists, critics, patrons and prospective patrons, particularly with the aid of Huysmans.<sup>9</sup> In isolating the element of self-promotion which this pattern of gift-giving suggests, admittedly a productive area of his activity to explore, they have perhaps overdetermined it, ultimately suggesting that Redon's self-promotion was an end in itself with some of his lithographs. The boundaries between the various branches of letters and the arts had been increasingly interrelated at least since Diderot's salons, and earlier in Redon's own life this had characterized his milieux both in Bordeaux in the 1860s and his contact with the Rayssac circle in Paris in the 1870s.

I elaborate this point in the context of Les XX and Belgium because of the special role which prints played there as gifts for an artist's friends, colleagues, and business associates.<sup>10</sup> The

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<sup>9</sup> See Ted Gott, "Silent Messengers: Odilon Redon's Dedicated Lithographs and the 'Politics' of Gift-Giving," The Print Collector's Newsletter XIX:3 (July-August 1988), 92-101; and Kevin Sharp, "Redon and the Marketplace Before 1900" (237-56) and "Redon and the Marketplace After 1900" (258-80) in Chicago 1994.

<sup>10</sup> Goddard (1992) writes, "Whether or not they relied upon printmaking for income, all of the artists of Les XX who made prints used them as a form of gift for important patrons and colleagues... The print as a gift, then, was used as a greeting among friends, and as a means of maintaining good favor with

culture of and, increasingly, mania for prints and printed items, extending to books and bindings, portfolios, posters, photographs, typography, and methods and materials, was quite simply one of the conditions for Redon's success which he had been working toward in this vein since at least 1878, when he was first introduced to the possibilities of lithography.

The preconditions for Redon's acceptance in Brussels within the context of printmaking were met by an artist who had gained some measure of himself as an artistic personality exhibiting alongside artists with more established reputations. If, as I have argued, Redon's modest twin exhibitions of 1878 catalyzed his decision to produce his initial album of lithographs, then I would suggest that parallel but much expanded possibilities arise from the situation in 1886, when his showings with Les XX in Brussels in February and with the Impressionists in Paris in May together preface his stepped-up activity as a lithographer in the period immediately thereafter. Although little evidence remains to document Redon's friendship with the charter Impressionist Armand Guillaumin, the two seem to have met in 1884 in Paris as founding members of the Société des Indépendants.<sup>11</sup> The democratic principles of this group resulted in a perceived lack of pervasive quality in its exhibiting artists, but they constituted the very elements of Les XX that must have appealed to Redon, not

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dealers, critics, publishers, and collectors" (86 and 96, n. 95).

<sup>11</sup> The Société des indépendants was renamed the Société des artistes indépendantes several months after its founding.

forgetting, of course, his newfound critical attention in Brussels. The experience of exhibiting with Les XX must in some ways have increased his enthusiasm for the idea of participating with the Impressionists.

In short, we must be able to accept that the old view that Redon was simply not at all attracted to the Impressionist aesthetic requires some further consideration. Considering Redon's relative proximity to the Impressionists all along in Parisian circles, his view of them must have changed over time. In his now-famous assessment of the Salon of 1868, Redon, like other critics, saw Monet and Pissarro as followers of Manet, but by 1886 the group as a whole had come into its own as individual talents who had not, since their congregation in 1874, counted Manet among them in any case. Besides, the work of two of the most strongly representative members of the group, Monet and Renoir, perhaps seemed less threatening to his own art in the context of Les XX's diversity, and these two would not be included in the eighth and final Impressionist show three months later. This is not to suggest that Redon believed the public would see his rise in the Impressionist camp in relation to their withdrawal. It was the group's new heterogeneity and the promise of new talent that attracted him. Among the exhibitors were his fellow-Indépendants Seurat and Signac, also invited by Guillaumin. Gauguin too participated. And Degas, who had represented something of an anomaly within the Impressionist group all along, had always counted Redon as an admirer, even if it was Guillaumin and Pissarro, and not Degas, who

had favored the inclusion of these "new" artists.

All of this is to say that in 1886 as in 1878-79, Redon emerged from seeing his work on public display with an enhanced sense of himself as an artist in the public eye, with the result that he went on to produce for that public's consumption a series of daringly original images in multiple. These prints have a quasi-literary, one might even say high-brow, cachet that tends to obfuscate their place in the world in which they were conceived and executed. But in seeing his own reputation grow and reflect itself in two cities, Paris and Brussels, just as he would see posters advertising the same products in both cities, Redon gained a perspective on his public persona. Thus was he able to establish himself as an individual within a community that would extend beyond his immediate milieu. The traditional view that Redon's influences are of a selective and therefore limited nature, which it seems is due to his highly original imagery and his relative obscurity, has had the net result of enforcing the notion of a troubled career, whereas his ever-expanding reputation seems to speak otherwise. The impact of operating in two cities would develop into a kind of strategy, as in the coming years Le Juré, the first two Temptation albums, and the single lithograph Yeux clos came to published in more or less different forms first in Brussels and then in Paris.

That said, the 1886 Salon des XX was a boon to Redon's career in Belgium. Verhaeren, lender of plates from Hommage à Goya to the exhibition, undoubtedly met Redon there in person, for already on

February 26, the poet wrote to him in thanks for a gift of the new album La Nuit, praising his exhibit, and apprising him of an article on him which would appear in L'Art moderne of 21 March 1886. Verhaeren had already singled out Redon in print, in a review of the XX exhibition in La Jeune Belgique of March 5.<sup>12</sup> A noir exhibited at Les XX, Le Masque de la Mort Rouge [Fig. 49] was sold to Edmond Picard.<sup>13</sup> And, in an undated letter from 1886, Destrée wrote to Verhaeren, acknowledging their mutual fondness for Redon's work.<sup>14</sup>

In the following months both Picard and Verhaeren commissioned lithographs from Redon. These would be the first of numerous collaborations with Belgian authors, including as well Destrée and Iwan Gilkin, that would continue into the first years of the 1890s. The Bruxellois Picard, Verhaeren, and Destrée were men of letters in the broadest sense, and they had counterparts in the sectors of

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<sup>12</sup> Letter from Verhaeren to Redon dated 26 February 1886, in Lettres de Gauguin, Gide, Huysmans, Jammes, Mallarmé, Verhaeren... à Odilon Redon, ed. Roseline Bacou (Paris: José Corti, 1960) 168 (cited hereafter as LAR). See also Verhaeren, "Chronique artistique: Le Salon des XX," La Jeune Belgique 5 March 1886, 182-88; and "Odilon Redon," L'Art moderne 21 March 1886, 92-93.

<sup>13</sup> The sale of Le Masque de la Mort Rouge to Picard is confirmed by Redon's letter to Octave Maus dated 17 March 1886, reprinted in Gamboni 1989, 283, no. 4; see also 101 and 156. This noir, now in the Museum of Modern Art, New York, was one of the star pieces on exhibit at the 1994 Chicago retrospective, where it was shown in the frame Picard commissioned especially for it. As Gamboni has noted, the plaque affixed to it contains not only the title of the work, but the relevant quotation from Poe's story, as follows: "ODILON REDON / LE MASQUE DE LA MORT ROUGE. / Il y avait des figures / étrangement équipées, des / fantaisies monstrueuses / comme la folie / Edgard [sic] Poë".

<sup>14</sup> Undated [1886] letter from Jules Destrée to Emile Verhaeren reprinted in Gamboni 1989, 296-97, no. XI.

commercial printing, publishing, and graphic design whose roles in the arts were of equal import. For the purposes of this study, Redon's Belgian projects will be grouped by publisher. As we shall see, all but two of Redon's Belgian projects were editioned by a single visionary publisher, Edmond Deman (1857-1918), whose business with Redon went beyond simply publishing the books of the authors already mentioned.

Deman, Verhaeren, and Gilkin were law students together at the University of Louvain in the late 1870s, where they seem to have been more interested in literary activities than law. Together they founded the review La Semaine des Etudiants, whose rival, Le Type, was the student publication of Max Waller at the Free University of Brussels.<sup>15</sup> It will be recalled that in 1881, Verhaeren, with the lawyer Picard, went on to lead the review L'Art moderne, and that Waller founded La Jeune Belgique, in which Destree published his seminal 1886 article on Redon. A bibliophile since college, Deman became a book dealer in 1882, opening his own shop in Brussels, at 14, rue d'Arensberg.<sup>16</sup> By 1887, Deman decided to unite his interests in fine books and publishing, bringing out his first volume, Verhaeren's collection of poems entitled Les Soirs, which was printed on the first day of 1888. This was to be the first of a trilogy by Verhaeren to be published by Deman, followed by Les Débâcles (1889) and Les Flambeaux noirs (1890), each of which contained a frontispiece by Redon.

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<sup>15</sup> Fontainas 1986, 309.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 313.

Before delving into Deman-- the umbrella under which most of Redon's Belgian work fits-- the single most elaborate project executed by Redon in concert with a Belgian author was Edmond Picard's Le Juré. In the autumn of 1886, Octave Maus contacted Redon on Picard's behalf, to ask whether he would create illustrations for his as yet unpublished book, Le Juré. Redon replied to Maus on 25 October 1886 as follows:

Dear Sir,

Immediately after receiving your letter, the manuscript from M. Edmond Picard reached me.

I beg of you to tell him that he can count on me for absolute discretion with regard to the proofs that I will read and which may, I hope, suggest something to me.

I all but accept the proposal that you sent me. The only difficulty will be to furnish you with lithographs reproducing exactly the drawings that you wish to have!

To produce is an easy thing for me, but copies give me much difficulty, or to put it better, I don't copy myself at all. I can only think to tell you that my feelings on that, dear sir, are how much it would cost me to constrain myself and to engage myself poorly in a job to which I wish to place all my heart, and conscientiously.

I would therefore prefer that the affair be proposed thusly:

Either to undertake to furnish six original drawings which will be Mr. Picard's property and which will be reproduced by another hand than my own and by whatever process he likes;

Or, to undertake to furnish six stones which might be his property, except for an edition of 25 proofs for me, in album form;

Or, to undertake to furnish the drawings that Mr. Picard would like, but to only promise their lithographic reproduction as variants.

If this last proposal agrees with him I can get to work before long with a freedom and ease propitious to good work.

Apart from all this, I accept to do the edition of 50 or one hundred, on chine; and [replaced with "but"] we would maybe make an innovation: this would be to try the printing on loose chine: I think this will go better in a book: lithography on chine collé on strong paper requires large margins, and is a little heavy for a book. I will produce this innovation for you in trial proofs. It will be new.

As for the album, in the format that you indicated and which is just about the one that I adopted, I do not promise you the edition, since the cost of the two printings [for the book and the album] will absorb a part of my profit, almost all of it.

Finally, dear Sir, with my full desire to put myself to work, reflect on all this. I await a definitive response from you.

I beg of you to transmit to M. Picard how happy I am that he has considered me for this collaboration and for him to receive assurance of my devotion.

Odilon Redon

76, rue de Rennes

Cher Monsieur.

Aussitôt la réception de votre lettre le manuscrit de Monsieur Edmond Picard me parvenait.

Je vous prie de lui dire qu'il peut compter sur une discrétion absolue à l'égard des épreuves que je viens de lire et qui pourront, je l'espère, me suggérer quelque chose.

J'accepte, à peu près, la proposition que vous me transmettez. La difficulté, seulement, serait de vous fournir des planches de lithographies reproduisant avec exactitude les dessins que vous désirez!

Produire m'est chose aisée, mais la copie me donne beaucoup de mal ou, pour mieux dire, je ne me copie pas du tout. C'est là une disposition que je ne vous confie, cher Monsieur, que pour vous dire combien il me coûterait de me contraindre et de m'engager mal en un travail auquel je désire me mettre de tout coeur et en conscience.

Je préférerais donc que l'affaire fût ainsi posée:

Soit l'engagement de fournir six dessins originaux qui seraient la propriété de Monsieur Picard et qu'il ferait reproduire par une autre main que la mienne et par le procédé qu'il voudrait;

Soit l'engagement de fournir six pierres qui pourraient être sa propriété, sauf le tirage de 25 épreuves pour moi, en forme d'album;

Soit l'engagement de fournir les dessins que M. Picard désire mais de n'en promettre la reproduction lithographique que comme des variantes.

Si cette dernière proposition lui agréée, je pourrais bientôt être à l'oeuvre avec une liberté et une aisance propice à de bons travaux.

À part tout ceci, j'accepte d'en faire le tirage à 50 ou cent, sur chine; et [replaced with "mais"] nous pourrions peut-être faire une innovation: ce serait de tenter le tirage sur chine libre: je crois que cela entrerait mieux en un livre: la lithographie sur chine collé sur papier fort exige de grandes marges, et est lourde, un peu, pour le livre. Cette innovation-là je

vous la produirai sur les épreuves d'essai. Ce serait nouveau.

Quant à l'album, dans le format que vous me désignez et qui est à peu près celui que j'ai adopté; je ne vous en promets pas le tirage; à cause des frais de ces deux impressions-là qui absorberaient une part de mes bénéfices, presque le tiers.

Enfin, cher Monsieur, avec tout mon désir de mettre à l'oeuvre, réfléchissez à tout cela. J'attends de vous une réponse définitive.

Je vous prie de transmettre à Monsieur Picard combien je suis heureux qu'il ait pensée à moi pour cette collaboration et de recevoir l'assurance de mes sentiments bien dévoués.<sup>17</sup>

I reproduce this letter in full here to emphasize that, learning from his experience four years previously collaborating with Hennequin on Contes grotesques, Redon now leaves nothing to chance. Without the benefit of Maus's letter to which this is the reply, its contents can be gleaned from the articulation of each point. With the skill of Stendhal's Julien Sorel, Redon seems to be completely aware of Picard's profession as a lawyer and of the stakes involved for the advancement of his own career. Thus, one is able to anticipate that Redon intended his use of the word "collaboration" to be interpreted in the fullest sensed. Although it is not known whether Redon did receive permission to try impressions on unsupported chine, that his proposed innovation did not see the light of publication is beside the point. That he ventures to suggest such an innovation at all implies that he wishes Picard to sense his vision of his role within the completed project. In this too is his independent artistic temperament inextricably tied to his display of business sense. Yet another

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<sup>17</sup> Letter of 25 October 1886 from Odilon Redon to Octave Maus reprinted in Gamboni 1989, 284-85, no. 6.

point of interest with regard to this letter is the planned eventuality of the further edition, in album format, of the plates alone. In a possible precedent for the albums of 1888 and 1889 based on Flaubert's Tentation de St. Antoine, the first series would be published in Brussels, the second in Paris.

As Gamboni has shown, Picard's acceptance of Redon's preferred third proposal shows his appreciation for Redon's thoughtfulness, and his full acceptance of Redon's role as collaborator is demonstrated by the freedom with which Redon would be able to turn the album into an independent work.

On 10 November 1886, just two weeks after writing this letter, Picard debuted Le Juré, reading it himself to the Conférence du Jeune Barreau de Bruxelles, an event recorded in the book itself. This book, a "monodrama" in five acts, is the story of a juror eventually overcome by suicide upon voting guilty a man convicted of murder and condemned to death. The story was based on an actual case which took place in 1882, in which Picard was the lawyer for an unsuccessful defendant.<sup>18</sup> Redon sent six of the seven drawings upon which the seven lithographs which would eventually illustrate Le Juré were based some time before the February 1887 Salon des XX. Although Redon did not participate as an official invité, he did come to Brussels to attend the special event of Picard's reading Le Juré before a hanging of the six drawings, exhibited hors catalogue.

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<sup>18</sup> See Stephen Eisenman, The Temptation of Saint Redon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) 208, and esp. 266, n. 76.

The book was printed in 1887, on the first anniversary of its debut reading, at the presses of Mme Sylvie Monnom, frequently referred to as "Veuve (Widow) Monnom." Her venerable publishing house was founded in Brussels in 1834 by one Félix Callewaert as a commercial printing house, eventually realizing aspirations of a reputation for fine printing. From Callewaert's daughter Octavie, the establishment was taken over by Monnom in 1885. Monnom was a printer-publisher who extended furthest the serious literary activity of the house, maintaining contact with every major Belgian writer in the French language at the fin-de-siècle. In addition to publishing volumes by Belgian avant-garde authors, after 1885 she was publisher of La Jeune Belgique and L'Art moderne as well as other literary periodicals.<sup>19</sup> Monnom was also the "lithographer of choice" for the members of Les XX, printing too their posters and catalogues.<sup>20</sup>

The format of Le Juré marks it as a special and very personal publication [Fig. 50]. It was issued in large format with pages measuring approximately 11 x 8 7/8 inches, in an edition of 100 on holland paper.<sup>21</sup> The project was "directed" by Edouard de Winter

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<sup>19</sup> Information on Veuve Monnom is from Henri Liebrecht, Histoire du Livre et de l'Imprimerie en Belgique des origines à nos jours (Brussels: Le Musée du Livre, 1934) VI:143-45.

<sup>20</sup> Goddard 1992, 80-81.

<sup>21</sup> Le Juré must have been available by subscription; at least some of the copies were distributed to known purchasers. For example, the copy at Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, number 72 of 100, was issued to René Vanderborcht of Brussels, whose name was printed on the justification page (cf. Philip Hofer, The Artist and the Book 1860-1960 in Western Europe and the United States, exhibition catalogue [Boston: Museum of Fine

and Monnom herself was responsible for the text. Le Juré's lithographs were printed separately from the text, by Becquet in Paris, who also printed the plates for the album version of the title. Half of the first 46 pages are blank, attracting attention to the craftwork employed in the layout of the signatures which comprise the volume. The book's binding is especially notable. Rather than issuing the volume in simple soft wrappers, to be hard-bound by the purchaser, the edition was issued with a deluxe but uniform binding of white gilt-embossed vellum. As part of the gilt decoration, at the four corners of the inner of two borders on the top and bottom covers, appears the scales of justice, a motif which is repeated five times on the spine. Also on the spine, on a rectangle of red leather affixed to the vellum, appears the following: "E. Picard / et / O. Redon / Le Juré." Taken together, all these details of the book's manufacture, as well as those described below, impart to it a conceptual uniformity that underscores its message of social justice; it is rather like the fullest flowering of a broadside taken to artistic extremes. On the other hand, the prominence given to Redon's name throughout is consistent with the nature of his role in the collaboration of the publication itself.

Redon chose lines of text as departures for his lithographs, for which he was able to draw on preëxisting noirs for motifs

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Arts and Cambridge: Harvard College Library, 1961] 171, cat. no. 252; cited hereafter as "Artist & Book").

[Figs. 51-57].<sup>22</sup> As if to emphasize the independence of the images from the text, the lines are printed on a page of tissue paper bound in to protect each lithograph from the page facing it. In every case, the right-hand page facing the lithograph is the first of a chapter, resulting in the effect of each lithograph appearing as the chapter's frontispiece.<sup>23</sup> The uniqueness of the volume is the result of the sum of these details, which are direct references to its evolution and manufacture. The collective effect is to foreground the circumstances in which it came about, as if to commemorate in deluxe fashion the efforts which brought it into being, and whose message, ultimately, is an enlightened one: to implicate the death penalty as a tool of a misguided government.

Picard and Redon became intimate friends as a result of this project. That Redon's expanding reputation in Brussels had afforded him some opportunity to rise above the death of his infant first son, Jean, who was born in May 1886 and who died three months later, is confirmed by the naming of Picard as the godfather of the Redon's second son, Ari, who was born in April 1889.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to the book Le Juré, Redon also produced a

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<sup>22</sup> These are Mellerio nos. 77, 79, 78, 75, 80, 76, and 81. Mellerio catalogued these lithographs in the sequence in which they appeared in Redon's subsequent album version of Le Juré; see below.

<sup>23</sup> Gamboni 1989, 180.

<sup>24</sup> Picard attended Ari's baptism on August 4, 1889, while visiting the Redons at their rented summer house in Samois, in France. Stéphane Mallarmé's daughter Geneviève was named godmother. See LàR, 161 as well as Artist & Book, 171, no. 252 and Gott 1990, 14-15.

portfolio of the lithographs, independent of the book.<sup>25</sup> This was issued in an edition of twenty sets, also in 1887, but distributed by Laurent Dumont in Paris. The lithographs for both the book edition and the portfolio were printed by Becquet, in Paris, but whereas the ones for the book were printed on Japan paper, the ones for the album were printed on chine appliqué. For the portfolio, Redon changed the order of the plates as they appear in the book, as follows: IV, VI, I, III, II, V, VII. In addition, he altered the titles of each plate, generally shortening them, and consequentially creating for them an entirely new context. Mellerio's cataloguing of these plates in the order in which they appear in this subsequent edition indicates that Redon considered the portfolio to be the definitive edition of these lithographs. Removed from the grandiose context of Picard's book and in a new sequence with altered titles, the portfolio edition of Le Juré embodies the effect of "economy" which I take to be one of the characteristic qualities of Redon's albums. The re-packaging of the plates into an album results in a condensation of Redon's contribution to Picard's book. But more than that, the album format is more immediately accessible to the viewer than the book, and, freed from Picard's specific literary and political motivations, it opens up new possibilities of appreciation and interpretation for the viewer. This viewer is presumably no longer a known individual to whom the printer has assigned a unique copy,

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<sup>25</sup> See André Mellerio, Odilon Redon (1913; New York: Da Capo, 1968) 101-02, cat. nos. 75-81.

but someone to whom the relatively novel format of the artist's portfolio will appeal.

Presumably at the end of the winter of 1887, Verhaeren wrote to Redon to ask him to create an illustration for his forthcoming book of poems entitled Les Soirs. This was to be the first of a trilogy to be published by Deman. Verhaeren sent Redon four of the "most descriptive" poems from which to choose lines of verse to illustrate.<sup>26</sup> On March 18, Redon replied that he could be counted upon as a collaborator in this project and that he would need no less than one month to re-read the poems, referring to his "slow incubation period."<sup>27</sup> In the same letter, Redon thanked Verhaeren for his positive review of his drawings for Le Juré, included in his article on the recent XX exhibition in the Revue indépendante of that same month.<sup>28</sup> Redon's reply to Verhaeren is notably different from his reply to Picard's request for drawings of the previous October 25. That letter, addressed to an author (albeit at a more decisive stage and through an intermediary) who was a lawyer first and foremost, has a deliberate businesslike quality, while this one is markedly more relaxed.

From among the four poems that Verhaeren sent, Redon chose one

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<sup>26</sup> Undated letter from Verhaeren to Redon, reprinted in L&R, 169, no. II. See also n. 1, which lists the four poems Verhaeren sent to Redon as follows: Idole, Apparition, Le Lys, and La Plaine.

<sup>27</sup> Letter from Redon to Verhaeren dated 18 March 1887, reprinted in Gamboni 1989, 297-298, no. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Emile Verhaeren, "Chronique d'art. Salon des XX," Revue indépendante, March 1887, 367-70; cf. Gamboni 1989, 298, no. 1 and Bibliography, 337.

entitled "L'Idole." The lines of verse chosen as a springboard for the drawing, entitled The Poet, which would serve as Les Soirs's frontispiece, are:

Wavy with pines, bushy with ivy,  
 Whilst the horizon of ebony and sunshine  
 Still looks on, a mountain is seen to rear-up, like  
 Some enormous and nocturnal stone idol  
Calamistré de pins, embroussaillés de lierre  
Tandis qu'un horizon d'ébène et de soleil  
Regarde encore, on voit un mont surgir, pareil  
A quelque idole énorme et nocturne de pierre<sup>29</sup>

On 28 May 1887, Redon wrote to Verhaeren to tell him that he was sending the drawing to Deman. He also warns him that it differs from the frontispiece itself, and asks whether he has seen the proofs or the stone as yet.<sup>30</sup> The Poet<sup>31</sup> [Fig. 58] offers an unusually illustrative picture of Redon's creative process for such projects. These lines of Verhaeren's must have recalled to Redon's visual memory two drawings accepted as having been executed prior to the commission. These are The Sphinx, or The Face in the Rocks [Fig. 59] and Idol, or Human Rock [Fig. 60].<sup>32</sup> Each of these three

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<sup>29</sup> Daniel Wildenstein, Odilon Redon. Catalogue raisonné Vol. I (Paris: Wildenstein Institute, 1992) 93, no. 216.

Trans. Richard Hobbs, Odilon Redon (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1977) 61.

<sup>30</sup> Letter from Redon to Verhaeren dated 28 May 1887, reprinted in Gamboni 1989, 298, no. 2.

<sup>31</sup> The drawing is now in the collection of the Musée Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp, inv. no. MPM W 603.45. It was left to the museum in 1956 as part of the formidable Verhaeren archive amassed by René Vandevor; see Le Salon Emile Verhaeren. Donation du Président René Vandevor au Musée Plantin-Moretus à Anvers (Antwerp: Musée Plantin-Moretus, 1987).

<sup>32</sup> The first, Wildenstein 214, is now in the Thaw Collection of The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York; see Cara Denison et al, The Thaw Collection: Master Drawings and New Acquisitions,

drawings represents the left profile of a human face emerging from a cliff. In The Sphinx, the eyes look straight ahead while in Idol they look upward. In The Poet they are downcast, as if averted from the rays of light which beam from the left. These are not the sun's rays, however, as they do not illuminate the scene naturalistically so much as they seem to signify artistic inspiration. The eyes do not squint as they would as a result of brightness. Instead they are passive, even introverted.

Eight years earlier, for Redon's first frontispiece, for the album Dans le Rêve, the use of light as a motif itself had been used to similar effect. He again turned to his inventory of drawings as a repertory of motifs which could be integrated into the drawing on which he was working. Now, however, he takes as a starting point the words of an outside author, and the nature of the recollection of the motif that would be developed in the present work must itself have struck him as he rediscovered the drawings so well-suited to Verhaeren's verse. For the Dans le Rêve frontispiece the notion of anti-naturalism which was part of its subject was ironically poised counter to the literary format of the album, but over the course of the artist's subsequent development the introduction of an outside literary source has given him the opportunity to focus on the point of contact between artist and author. Fittingly, the motif of the face in the rocks itself refers to Redon's self-training as a draughtsman. It recalls

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exhibition catalogue (New York: The Pierpont Morgan Library, 1994) 118-19, cat. no. 86. The second, Wildenstein 215, is now in the Art Institute of Chicago, inv. no. 1950.1415.

Leonardo's own drawings of the same subject, discussed in Treatise on Painting, which Redon owned.<sup>33</sup>

The drawing Redon sent to Deman did not, in fact, serve as the study for the frontispiece (M. 74) [Fig. 61] in the traditional sense. The lithograph refers generally to all three drawings, and is simpler and more even in tone than any of them. Its tall, narrow format is relatively idiosyncratic for Redon, and implies a heightening of the field of vision which the face in the cliff commands. The beams of light have been reduced to an area that is simply lighter than the area of darkness vaguely delineated in the space above the level of the cliff's edge.

Les Soirs was Edmond Deman's inaugural publication. Redon wrote in appreciation to Verhaeren upon receipt of his copy on 8 February 1888, and asked the poet to pass along his compliments to the publisher.<sup>34</sup> The book contains all the simple and elegant elements which were to become the hallmark of all of Deman's books: fine paper, distinctive typeface, and marbled wrappers. Deman's insignia, designed by Knopff [Fig. 62], appears printed in gold with the title on the top cover, and again in black both on the title-page and as a tailpiece. In an earlier letter of November 1887, whose main purpose was to ask Verhaeren about the possibility of Deman's publishing his own projected album based on La Tentation

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<sup>33</sup> See Roseline Bacou, "La Bibliothèque d'Odilon Redon," Festschrift to Erik Fischer (Copenhagen, 1990), 29-37. Redon owned a copy from a French edition of 1716.

<sup>34</sup> Letter from Redon to Verhaeren dated 8 February 1888, reprinted in Gamboni 1989, 299, no. 4.

de Saint Antoine (see next chapter), Redon asks about the progress of Les Soirs. Thus, Redon already felt assured that in Deman he had found a publisher who was both sympathetic to his work as a lithographer and who could be counted on to be attentive to the subtleties which he demanded for his work. In the end, the volumes of Verhaeren's trilogy, which would all include frontispieces by Redon, comprising as well Les Débauches (M. 101; 1888) [Fig. 63] and Les Flambeaux noirs (M. 106; 1889) [Fig. 64], would be defined by a consistency of design and quality commensurate with Redon's expectations.

Another Belgian poet who was to form a triumvirate with Redon and Deman was Iwan Gilkin, for whom Redon created two frontispieces, for the volumes La Damnation de l'Artiste (M. 104; 1890) [Fig. 65] and Ténèbres (M. 121; 1892) [Fig. 66]. A third volume, Satan, was projected but did not see the light of day.<sup>35</sup> Although Gilkin's admiration for Redon is contemporary with that of his Belgian peers, as a published poet his idea for a projected trilogy with frontispieces by Redon is certainly based on Verhaeren's precedent. The occultist and decadent element in Gilkin's writing does not lend itself sympathetically to the contemporary sensibility, but its sources are in Baudelaire, and its imagery clearly appealed to Redon as sources for his own interpretations.<sup>36</sup>

In 1890, Redon's Parisian printer Becquet pulled 100 examples

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<sup>35</sup> Artist & Book, 172, no. 255. See also Fontainas 1986, 352.

<sup>36</sup> See Hobbs 1977, 63-66.

of the lithograph Yeux clos (M. 107) [Fig. 67]. This was one of the so-called "pièces modernes," the series of single lithographs inaugurated by the appearance of Profil de Lumière in 1887. The first 50 were published by Durand-Ruel in Paris, while the second 50, constituting a "second edition," were published by Deman in Brussels. It would seem that by this point, Redon could approach his Belgian publisher to issue lithographs to a ready audience.

In 1890 and 1891 Deman published editions of Redon's album of prints based on Baudelaire's Fleurs du Mal (M. 198-206). The first was in folio format and the second, in octavo, was intended to be able to be inserted into a published edition of the literary work; the 1891 edition also included the page references in the Michel Levy edition of Fleurs du Mal to which each plate corresponded.<sup>37</sup> As prints, this project differs from any other that Redon produced. Rather than execute lithographs based on existing noirs, Redon selected drawings from as early as 1870 (plate VII) and 1871 (plate VIII), which were subsequently reproduced photomechanically by the newly developed Evely process.<sup>38</sup>

The most immediate consequence of this medium is that the images suffer from a textural flatness, lacking the velvety richness of Redon's lithographs. Also, Redon would usually base

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<sup>37</sup> Fontainas ms (see n. 6, above), 13-14.

<sup>38</sup> Léon Evely (1849-1937) worked in the Banque Nationale de Bruxelles as well as the postage stamp workshop at Malines. He was interested in fine art printing, and counted Félicien Rops among his friends. The process he invented involved the transfer of a photographic image onto copper plates, on which the images could be re-touched, rendering the final impression a kind of pseudo-etching. Ibid, 14, n.68.

his prints on existing drawings, so that the single theme of the project at hand imposes a cohesiveness to his reprising of earlier compositions. Ideally, his portfolios benefit from this procedure, as the role of memory itself is part of the process, but here a lack of cohesiveness is apparent. One would assume that in approaching as seminal a literary work as Fleurs du Mal, Redon would yield less disappointing results. Perhaps he expected that his drawings would be more faithfully served by the medium, and perhaps he was attracted by its novelty. Redon had been open to experimentation before, as illustrated by his letter of proposal regarding Picard's Le Juré, quoted above.

In one drawing produced specifically for the project, the cover design [Fig. 68], the device Redon created is a literal representation of the title itself. Here, set atop a column like a capital, is a black flower pot, with a portion of the left profile of a face protruding, a single tear falling from the closed eye. It is possible that Redon intended the sketchiness of this plate, together with that found in plates III and V [Figs. 69 & 70], to create a contrast with the more worked up drawings, to emphasize the fugitive nature of modernity as an element of the Baudelairean aesthetic. Nevertheless, the overall impact of the portfolio is far less striking than previous or subsequent ones.

With the exception of Le Juré, discussed first in this chapter since it was Redon's first Belgian project, all the above projects were published by Edmond Deman. Yet Deman, who can be counted as an artistic collaborator by means of his underlying interest in

fine printing, was, as we have seen with Le Juré, by no means the sole Bruxellois publisher able to bring about deluxe editions.

In 1888, Picard, recently returned from Morocco, asked Redon to provide a frontispiece for his account of the journey, entitled El Moghreb al Aksa (M. 103) [Fig. 71], which was published in 1889. In his letter of 25 November 1888, Picard specified that the frontispiece be based on the first twenty lines of the manuscript, and that the title of the book be incorporated into the image; he asked that Redon otherwise be as free as he wished.<sup>39</sup> Considering the perfunctory nature of Picard's text, previous scholars could be more charitable with regard to their assessment of the resultant frontispiece.<sup>40</sup> The motif draws from the one included in the frontispiece for the first Temptation album of 1888, emphasizing in somewhat abstract fashion the oriental exoticism of North Africa.<sup>41</sup> While the composition is weak, an accumulation of details rather lacking in unity, the chimera-like figure, apparently of feminine gender, may be said to represent faithfully the image of Picard drawn away from his business affairs toward his adventure.

El Moghreb al Aksa was published by Picard's friend Ferdinand Larcier, who, although primarily a publisher of volumes having to do with legal subjects (including his first title, Destrée's

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<sup>39</sup> LàR, 160, no. IX.

<sup>40</sup> See, for example, Fred Leeman in Chicago 1994, 194.

<sup>41</sup> A parallel may have come to Redon's mind between this commission and Delacroix's role as artist in Comte Charles de Mornay's 1832 diplomatic mission to North Africa, whose purpose was to establish relations between Louis-Philippe and the Sultan of Morocco.

Pandectes Belges of 1881), was also the founder of the Cercle de la Librairie et l'Imprimerie en Belgique in 1883. Already a fervent supporter of Redon, Picard must already have had the orientalist subject of St. Anthony in mind in choosing him for the commission.

Also in 1889, Redon collaborated with Jules Destrée on his book Les Chimères, to which Destrée's betrothed, Marie Danse, contributed significantly in the form of etchings found both inside the volume and across the single sheet of its soft wrapper [Fig. 72]. Henry de Groux also created a lithograph for the volume, Le Forêt des suicidés [Fig. 73]. Redon's velvety lithographic frontispiece (M. 105) [Fig. 74] is the antithesis of Danse's spidery etchings, but there is a point of convergence in the origins of both artists' common subject matter. Danse's medievalising design for the top cover depicts a gargoyle perched on a corner of masonry peering out over a night sky. Her etching La Gouge [Fig. 75] is an internal frontispiece introducing the poem Les Gargouilles des Cathédrales vieilles, which Destrée dedicated to her.

The gargoyle rose to prominence as a familiar motif in the medieval revival of the Romantic era. An exponent of this revival, Victor Hugo's novel Nôtre Dame de Paris (1831), exerted a great influence on the nineteenth century imagination. In the etchings of Charles Meryon (1821-1867), the cathedral of Nôtre Dame and other gothic monuments, as well as the entire medieval fabric of the city, represented an organic whole, much of whose imminent demolition threatened the fabric of urban life as it was known.

Meryon's etching Le Stryge (1853) [Fig. 76] has been seen as a chimerical metaphor, watching over the pursuit of essentially evil activity in the streets below, streets which were being re-cast to accomodate its inhabitants' greedy pursuits.<sup>42</sup> For Baudelaire, prurient desire was one of the elements which drove the modernization of Paris, an activity whose end was, in its own way, to create a new organic ideal of the city, as a network of streets in the service of greater commerce and communications. As the century wore on, the ambivalent role of the gargoyle, as the chimera which drove human endeavor, accrued both pastoral and counter-pastoral characteristics, and as such became a popular motif for Baudelairean artists and writers, including Redon and Huysmans. And in Brussels, which enjoyed a close artistic relationship with Paris in the last fifteen to twenty years of the nineteenth century, this very Parisian notion was adopted by intellectuals who witnessed parallel modernizations in their own capitol. Thus, the pastoral fantasy of Baudelaire's poem Chacun sa chimère is given an urban context in which the motivations of the individual are subject to unseen but watchful eyes, and as a motif whose tradition is perpetuated largely by prints, the medium becomes, part and parcel, the object of the diffuse and unseen audience.

The medieval revival of the late nineteenth century is a subject warranting thorough and comprehensive study, as the example

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<sup>42</sup> See Adele M. Holcomb, "Le Stryge de Notre Dame: Some Aspects of Meryon's Symbolism," Art Journal XXXI:2 (winter 1971-72), 150-57.

of Destrée's Les Chimères demonstrates. But there is sufficient evidence to begin to reconstruct the context in which Redon's, Danse's, and de Groux's dissimilar prints were gathered together in this volume. Les Chimères, like Le Juré, was published by Monnom, who emerges as a publisher capable of accomodating various authors' very specific visions for their books. The plurality of styles in Destrée's volume could not be more different from the monumental unity of Picard's, and the uniqueness of each may be distinguished from the elegant sameness of Deman's output.

The final publication to be considered in this chapter contains no contributions by Redon at all: this is Destrée's monograph L'oeuvre lithographique de Odilon Redon. This book, referred to frequently throughout the present study, was published by Deman in 1891. It is unillustrated save for the etched frontispiece by Marie Danse, now Mme Jules Destrée. As in his Jeune Belgique article of 1886, Destrée aspires to an equivalent to Huysmans's literary transposition of Hommage à Goya, but the 1891 volume also doubles as a catalogue raisonné. Although the print run of seventy-five copies seems small, the book is intended as a literary corollary to Redon's complete lithographic output for the serious collector, and as such the edition size is appropriate.

It is fitting that the first catalogue of Redon's prints was published in Brussels, where his artistic presence was based largely on his lithographs. In the literary avant-garde there Redon found sympathetic collaborators and promoters, and through their artistic contacts in Les XX he was able to gain a level of

celebrity that he was yet to experience at home. In exhibitions but primarily in publications, Redon participated in the first great burst of modernism in the arts in Belgium, but after 1892 he engaged in no new joint projects with Belgian authors or publishers. As we shall see in the final chapter, Redon's career as a printmaker lasted only until 1899. In the intervening years, the role of printmaking in his career began to lose the appeal of novelty and became displaced by an overriding impulse toward retrospection. In the next chapter, however, we will return to Paris in the years 1887-89, when Redon executed the first two of three sets of lithographs based on Flaubert's La Tentation de Saint-Antoine.

### V. The Temptation of Saint Anthony (First Two Series)

A year after his first solo exhibition held in 1881 in the offices of the Paris newspaper La Vie Moderne, Redon mounted a second one in the offices of another Parisian paper, Le Gaulois. The series of exhibitions held by these newspapers were intended as a corollary to the profuse photomechanical illustrations they contained, which were a sign of their modernity. As Gamboni, followed by Druick, has shown, these exhibitions functioned as more than a mere alternative to the official Salon.<sup>1</sup> They were a kind of living feuilleton, transposed into the life of the boulevard. Advertised and open to the public, they became a part of the world of the street, as depicted in the title-vignette of the newspaper Le Boulevard described in Chapter I.

Founded in April 1879, La Vie moderne was intended as a forum for the talented writers (Flaubert, the Goncourts, Zola, Huysmans) and artists (Degas, De Nittis, Manet, Renoir) in the circle of its publisher, Georges Charpentier. As such, the review played a central role in reaffirming the primacy of the Parisian vanguard in the years following France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War.<sup>2</sup> All the artists listed above exhibited there, and their exhibitions were well-advertised in the review's pages; the paper remained curiously silent about Redon's exhibition, however.

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<sup>1</sup> Dario Gamboni, La Plume et le pinceau: Odilon Redon et la littérature (Paris: Editions de minuit, 1989), cited hereafter as "Gamboni 1989." Douglas Druick, ed., et al, Odilon Redon, Prince of Dreams, exhibition catalogue (Art Institute of Chicago, 1994), cited hereafter as "Chicago 1994."

<sup>2</sup> Chicago 1994, 124-25.

Redon remained mystified for the rest of his life by the cool detachment, indeed inattention, of the public toward the Vie Moderne show.<sup>3</sup> But as we have seen, two responses to the 1882 show at Le Gaulois, by Emile Hennequin and Joris-Karl Huysmans, are inextricably linked to Redon's development as a literary-pictorial artist in the 1880s, notably in his lithographic albums; they were crucial in catalyzing his critical and commercial success of the decade, too.

Emile Hennequin (under the pseudonym "Triolet") reviewed Redon's exhibition in the March 2 issue of Le Gaulois, and wrote again praising the exhibition in the March 4 issue of the newspaper La Revue littéraire et artistique, this time under his own name. The following day, March 5, Redon wrote to Hennequin, thanking him for his kind words.<sup>4</sup> The two quickly became close friends, as their correspondence shows, and during the course of March they found that they shared many common interests. Hennequin was preparing Contes grotesques (for which Redon would soon prepare the frontispiece). Redon himself was to produce the album A Edgar Poe in the same year (see Chapter III). Other projects were discussed but never completed, including illustrations based on the writings of Pascal and Baudelaire. Redon's version of Fleurs du Mal

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<sup>3</sup> As he wrote to Emile Hennequin on 25 August 1882, regarding the Vie Moderne show of April-May 1881, "There was a cold and a reserve which will stay in my memory like an enigma / Il y eut un froid et une réserve qui resteront dans mon souvenir comme une énigme." See Auriant, "Des Lettres inédites d'Odilon Redon (part 1)," Beaux-Arts, 7 June 1935, 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

published by Deman in 1890 and 1891 may be the long-range result of these plans, although Hennequin died in 1888.

Sometime in March, Hennequin sent Redon a copy of Flaubert's Tentation de Saint Antoine (1874), as a potential source of inspiration for his drawings and lithographs. Redon thanked him on March 31, writing:

Thank you for having me read the Temptation of Saint Anthony, a literary marvel and a mine for me...

Je vous remercie de m'avoir fait lire la Tentation de Saint Antoine, une merveille littéraire et une mine pour moi...

adding that the novel was "the most beautiful allegorical poem since Faust (le plus beau poème allégorique qui soit après le Faust)."<sup>5</sup> Redon was eventually to produce three albums of lithographs based on the book: La Tentation de Saint Antoine (1888), A Gustave Flaubert (1889), and La Tentation de Saint Antoine (1896). Together, these albums comprise forty-two lithographs, that is, one third of his total lithographic output. This chapter deals primarily with the frontispieces for the 1888 and 1889 suites. As I will argue, the Faustian and Antonian forces apparent in his earlier albums reached their fullest fruition in A Gustave Flaubert.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Another, very different, perspective on the Temptation albums, more in keeping with the subject of Barbara Larson's dissertation on Redon and science (see chapter III), is Claudia Müller-Ebeling's study entitled Die "Versuchung des heiligen Antonius" als "Mikrobenepos": Eine motivgeschichtliche Studie zu den drei Lithographiefolgen Odilon Redons zu Gustav Flauberts Roman (Berlin: Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung, 1997).

The subject of St. Anthony was not unknown to Redon prior to 1882. As discussed in Chapter I, Bresdin had depicted the theme in etchings of 1849-51 and perhaps again in La Comédie de la Mort in 1854. The subject of a pen-and-ink drawing by Redon which dates, on stylistic grounds, to his early tutelage under Bresdin in the 1860's, is St. Anthony in the Wilderness [Fig. 77].<sup>7</sup> This work, a landscape-turned-history through the inclusion of the saint, is typical of Redon's romantic drawings and etchings of the period, and reflects the impact of Bresdin.<sup>8</sup>

The subject was a popular one among French artists with romantic inclinations throughout the century, and had been portrayed in recent years. Eugène Isabey's Tentation de Saint Antoine was exhibited at the Salon of 1869. Cézanne treated the theme in numerous small oil paintings of the 1870s, and Hennequin himself published an important and lengthy article entitled "Gustave Flaubert: étude analytique" in the October 1885 issue of La Revue contemporaine. Early in 1888, Henri Rivière designed a production of the story as a shadow play at the Chat Noir, a Paris nightclub. In the mid-1880s the subject attracted the attention of Belgian avant-garde painters: Fernand Khnopff's oil La tentation de Saint Antoine d'après Flaubert (1883) [Fig. 78] was displayed at the first exhibition of Les XX in Brussels in 1884, and James Ensor's large drawing La tentation de Saint Antoine (1887) [Fig.

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<sup>7</sup> Christie's, New York, 23 February 1983, lot 59, illus.

<sup>8</sup> For more on the subject of Redon's romantic treatment of the single figure in a landscape, see Chicago 1994, 60-62.

79] was exhibited at Les XX's exhibition of 1888. Redon, it will be remembered, was invited to exhibit with Les XX in 1886 (and again in 1890), and he must have been aware of the subject's currency in Belgium in the period that his reputation was growing there.

Between 1882 and 1887-88, Redon produced a few independent works based on Flaubert's novel, such as the charcoal entitled Oannes Surrounded by Sylphs (1883) [Fig. 80].<sup>9</sup> But it was not until 1887 that Redon focused his attention on producing a suite of lithographs based on the novel. In a letter which Bacou has dated to autumn 1887, Huysmans wrote to Redon:

As for the Quantin affair, I still haven't done a thing, on hold since I have come to spend 8 days in my room with the flu, rheumatism, and other hateful commodities, but you will see me in the coming days, tomorrow night or Monday perhaps, accompanied by Guiches, one of the very influential men from the house of Quantin. I will work him up, dining with him on that day. I will not go only if I am on the verge of death. Through him and M. Malherbe, I hope to pull off a deal.

Pour l'affaire Quantin(sic), je n'ai rien fait encore, attendu que je viens de garder 8 jours la chambre avec grippe, rhumatismes et autres denrées bêtes, mais vous me verrez ces jours-ci, demain soir ou lundi peut-être, accompagné de Guiches, l'un des hommes très influents de la maison Quantin. Je vais l'emballer, dînant avec lui, ce jour-là. Si je ne suis point crevé car je ne vais pas. Par lui et M. de Malherbe, j'espère enlever l'affaire.<sup>10</sup>

This is the first documented reference to Redon's preparation

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<sup>9</sup> See Fred Leeman in Chicago 1994, 190-91, illus. See also Maria Luisa Frongia, "Rapporti fra Redon e Flaubert: il dio caldeo Oannes," Ricerche di Storia dell'arte, 1981, no. 13-14, 111-18.

<sup>10</sup> Lettres de Gauguin, Gide, Huysmans, Jammes, Mallarmé, Verhaeren... à Redon, ed. Roseline Bacou (Paris: José Corti, 1960) 111. Cited hereafter as L&R.

for the Tentation de Saint Antoine, which would eventually appear in the spring of 1888. As Bacou has observed, Huysmans was encouraging Redon to produce a deluxe album based on Flaubert's novel, and at this stage was planning to sell the idea to his friends Gustave Guiche and Gustave de Malherbe of the publishing house Quantin.<sup>11</sup> Surely Huysmans pursued the matter with the two men, but presumably Quantin was not interested in publishing the album. Before long, it seems, Redon took it upon himself to find a publisher for the album,<sup>12</sup> and in so doing further cemented his relationship with the important Belgian publisher Edmond Deman.<sup>13</sup> On 23 November 1887, Redon wrote from Paris to Emile Verhaeren in

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<sup>11</sup> LAR, 111, esp. notes 2-4. "Malherbe was a kindly and intelligent man who used his position at the publishing house of Quantin to help many unknown or indigent writers." Robert Baldick, The Life of J.-K. Huysmans (London: Oxford University Press, 1955) 115.

<sup>12</sup> This may be the source for the still-mysterious rift which seems to have occurred between Redon and Huysmans following the publication by Edmond Deman of the first Temptation album in 1888. Huysmans' negative critiques of the album in his private correspondence upon its appearance may be due, in part, to Redon's striking out on his own at this time. To be discussed at greater length later in this chapter.

<sup>13</sup> From the late remove of Peyrelebade on July 21, 1898, Redon recalled incorrectly in a letter to Mellerio that,

I should like to draw your attention to the first series of lithographs that I did on the subject of this book [Tentation de Saint Antoine], which was asked of me by the publisher Deman.

Je vous ferai remarquer que la première série de lithographies que j'ai faite, à propos de ce livre qui m'a été demandée par l'éditeur Deman.

Lettres d'Odilon Redon, 1878-1916, published by his family with a preface by Marius-Ary Leblond (Paris-Brussels: G. van Oest, 1923) 32. Cited hereafter as Ld'OR.

Brussels:

Our friend Maus tells me that you wanted very much to recommend me to Monsieur Deman and gives me hope that your publisher would maybe deal with me for some work.

If you have occasion to see him, you would truly oblige me in proposing to him Flaubert's *Temptation of Saint Anthony*, an album of eight to ten plates that I am preparing right now.

Notre ami Maus me dit que vous avez bien voulu me recommander à Monsieur Deman et me donne l'espoir que votre éditeur traiterait peut-être avec moi pour des travaux.

Si vous avez l'occasion de le revoir, vous m'obligeriez vraiment en lui proposant la *Tentation de Saint-Antoine de Flaubert*, un album, de huit à dix planches que je prépare en ce moment.<sup>14</sup>

By November 1887, then, Redon had neither found a publisher nor decided on the final format of the album. It is especially intriguing that he had not yet decided on the number of plates to include, vascillating between eight and ten. Was he working on eight or ten at the time? Or was he working on as many as eighteen? Taking into account that the 1888 album comprises ten plates plus a frontispiece, and that the 1889 album comprises six plates plus a frontispiece, totalling eighteen images, it is tempting to imagine Redon working on all of them simultaneously, with some obviously in a greater state of finish than others. There is no evidence to confirm that Redon had plans yet to bring out a second album, but whatever the number of images in preparation in late 1887, his intention was to choose eight to ten from among them for the album he now hoped Deman would publish.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> FS XVI 148/970, cf. Gamboni 1989, 298-99.

<sup>15</sup> According to Fred Leeman, the initial concept for the *Gustave Flaubert* album coincides with the publication of the first *Temptation* album, but this may only safely be regarded as a

Verhaeren must have passed Redon's idea on to Deman immediately. On 2 December 1887, as if in reply to a letter which may now be lost, Redon wrote directly to Deman:

I am pleased to be of the same mind as you in this idea of illustrating the works of Flaubert. Here are, based on the information noted down from the printer, such conditions that would make it possible for me to execute the interpretation of the Temptation of Saint Anthony:

The drawings, stones, and the album printed in an edition of 60 on white and china (1/2 large colombier or 1/2  Jésus format, your choice) would cost you

for	8	1100 francs
	10	1300 "
	12	1500 "

complete.

It would be possible for me, if we are in agreement, to send you the proofs and the stones in the course of March, and the drawings a little thereafter.

With regard to the eventual reduction of which you speak, there are several applicable processes depending upon the material of the object to be reproduced:

Lithographs are reproducible by means of photography onto stone.

For the drawings, I recommend photoglyptie, the only means of multiplication which can render, near enough, chiaroscuro, that element of art which is so difficult to transmit...

Je suis heureux de me rencontrer avec vous dans cette idée d'une illustration des oeuvres de Flaubert. Voici, après renseignement pris auprès de l'imprimeur, en quelles conditions il me serait possible d'exécuter l'interprétation de la Tentation de Saint Antoine:

Les dessins, pierres et l'album tiré à 60 exemplaires sur blanc et chine (format 1/4 gd colombier, ou 1/2 Jésus, à votre choix) vous coûteraient

les	8	1100 francs
	10	1300 "
	12	1500 "

tout compris.

Il me serait possible, si nous étions d'accord, de vous faire parvenir les épreuves et les pierres dans le courant de Mars, et les dessins un peu plus tard.

Quant à la réduction éventuelle dont vous me parlez, il y a divers procédés applicables selon la matière de l'objet à reproduire:

Les lithographies sont reproductibles par la

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terminus a quo (Chicago 1994, 192).

photographie sur pierre.

Pour les dessins, je vous recommande la photoglyptie, le seul moyen de multiplication qui peut rendre, à peu près, le clair-obscur, cet élément de l'art si difficilement transmissible...<sup>16</sup>

Even at this point, then, the exact number of plates still had not been determined, although the possibility of including as many as twelve plates indicates that, as suggested above, at least that many drawings were in preparation.

In a subsequent letter to Deman, only a substantial fragment of which survives, and dated by Gamboni to the end of 1887,<sup>17</sup> Redon gives the publisher a choice of printers (Becquet or Lemercier, both in Paris), with production costs based on the size of the edition-- 50, 75, or 100-- to be determined. In the letter of December 2, Redon mentioned an edition of sixty, which is the size eventually agreed upon (only fifty-eight were ultimately produced), but here he gives Deman a range of edition sizes, presumably to help the publisher budget the project. In a postscript to this further letter, Redon writes:

For an entirely new frontispiece, to follow up the Soirs, it's still 50f, without the drawing, plus the printing at your expense...

Pour tout nouveau frontispice, faisant suite aux Soirs, ce serait toujours 50 f. sans le dessin, et le tirage, à votre charge...

In a letter of 16 December 1888, Redon writes to Deman:

I have the pleasure to inform you that the first series of the Temptation of Saint Anthony is your property. It will be a source of satisfaction to me to know that it will be in Brussels, where I can already count on a few

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<sup>16</sup> Gamboni 1989, 270, no. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 271-72, no. 4.

collectors.

May I please ask of you, because I hasten to give you the bon-à-tirer, to tell whether you wish that the designating text be inscribed under each plate.

We will deduct one hundred francs, if you do not make a cover.

The stones and the printing of 60 can be sent to you in the first days of March.

J'ai le plaisir de vous dire que la première série de la Tentation de St Antoine de Gustave Flaubert, est votre propriété. Ce sera une satisfaction pour moi de la savoir à Bruxelles où je compte déjà quelques collectionneurs.

Veillez, je vous prie, car j'ai hâte de donner le bon-à-tirer, dire si vous désirez que le texte de désignation soit inscrit sous chaque planche.

Nous défalquerons cent francs, si vous ne faites pas de couverture.

Les pierres et le tirage de 60 pourront vous parvenir dans les premiers jours de Mars...<sup>18</sup>

This brief letter reveals more, perhaps, than Redon himself wished. For the first time, he refers to this album as the "first" series on Flaubert's Temptation, suggesting that even if he had made no concrete plans for a second one, he at least had it in mind. The allusion to his collectors in Brussels suggests that he hoped for the album's success there, and, perhaps, that he had thought about producing a second album in Paris, for his domestic audience. And, too, his waiting to hear from Deman about the placement of the captions indicates that the publisher and not the artist had control over this aspect of the album's format.

Yet another letter to Deman, dated February 20, a mere four days later, indicates both his and Redon's eagerness to enter the production phase:

Today I think I shall begin to print the Temptation album, and I have been engaged with the printer since

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 272-73, no. 5.

sending my last letter, which contained an agreement that I was happy to send you, after having extricated myself, here. Your letter of the 13th seemed to want a conclusion before too long.

This delay leads to complications for me and the security of the job: the stones are no longer able to remain uncovered.

Therefore, will you please reply if you wish for the text to be inscribed on each plate.

Moreover, I don't know anymore whether I should go on with the execution of the drawings, because I must frankly confess that I am unable to begin this very important job without leaving another from which I can draw income, and I cannot afford the wait.

Concluding thus, send me an advance for the expenses. If the portion of the total sum for the stones, the proofs, and the drawings seems too much for you, send me the sum of four hundred francs as a security, since you would take the stones and their printing, since you would add the ten or twelve drawings-- you won't have any complications with me for the subsequent settlement of the details.

But write to me, to get me out of this veritable inaction. I would prefer to start your drawings now while I am in the midst of this business, than to begin some other which would then become impossible to put down.

Receive, Monsieur, the assurance of my fondest feelings for you,

Odilon Redon

P.S. You ought to send me another payment upon receipt of the stones. And the balance upon delivery of the drawings.

Je pensais pouvoir commencer aujourd'hui le tirage de l'album de La Tentation, et je m'étais engagé avec l'imprimeur dès le départ de ma dernière lettre, qui contenait un acquiescement que j'étais heureux de vous transmettre, après m'être dégagé, ici. Votre lettre du 13 semblait vouloir conclure à brève échéance.

Ce retard entraîne bien des complications pour moi et la sécurité de travail: les pierres ne peuvent rester découvertes.

Je vous prie donc de me répondre si vous désirez que le texte soit inscrit sur chaque planche.

En outre je ne sais plus si je dois donner cours à l'exécution des dessins, car je vous l'avoue franchement, je ne puis commencer ce travail, assez important, sans en laisser un autre dont je tire subsistance, et ce suspens m'est matériellement impossible.

Concluons donc: envoyez-moi une avance pour les frais. Si la moitié de la somme totale faite pour les pierres, les épreuves et les dessins vous semble trop forte,

envoyez-moi la somme de quatre cents francs à titre d'acompte, soit que vous preniez les pierres et leur tirage, soit que vous y ajoutiez les 10 ou 12 dessins - vous n'aurez aucune complication avec moi, pour les règlements ultérieurs des détails.

Mais écrivez-moi pour me sortir d'une véritable inaction. Je préférerais entamer maintenant vos dessins pendant que je suis en ces choses, que de commencer des travaux autres qu'il me serait impossible ensuite de laisser.

Recevez, Monsieur, l'assurance de mes meilleurs sentiments.

Odilon Redon

P.P. Vous m'enverriez un autre acompte à la réception des pierres. Et le solde à la livraison des dessins.<sup>19</sup>

Redon's outlining and reporting of procedural necessities is interesting here as it is in other examples of his correspondence with Deman, for it helps to show the degree of control exercised by the publisher (note how, for example, in the letter of February 16, Redon writes to Deman that the album "is now your property") as well as his own close involvement in the steps of the album's production. As one might expect, there is little such correspondence for albums where the artist, printer, and publisher were all located in the same city.

After this considerable correspondence between Redon and Deman, and at this advanced stage of the album's production, Huysmans wrote to Redon in a letter dated by Bacou to April 1888, presumably as a follow-up to his letter of November 1887:

Don't think I've forgotten, my dear Redon, but if I have not seen you, it's because I am in a state of continuous ennui. Imagine my luck. I have been affected by a rheumatic eye condition, unable to read, to write, to withstand light, unable to do anything.

The business with May is still delayed, which is to say that he hasn't yet decided whether the Temptation should

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 273, no. 6.

appear immediately in a deluxe format, which is what is slowing down your progress.

This animal says yes, says no, in such a way that one cannot count on his immediate thoughts right now. It will happen, but when?...

Ne vous pensez pas oublié, mon cher Redon, mais si je ne vous ai pas vu, c'est que je suis dans de considérables ennuis. Imaginez ma chance. Je suis atteint d'une ophtalmie rhumatismale, défense de lire, d'écrire, de rester à la lumière, défense de tout.

L'affaire chez May<sup>20</sup> en est toujours à ses prodromes, c'est-à-dire qu'il n'est pas encore décidé à faire paraître tout de suite la Tentation en format de luxe, ce qui retarde l'attaque, à propos de vous.

Cet animal dit oui, dit non, de sorte qu'on ne peut tabler sur l'impression immédiate, à cette heure. Ca se fera, mai quand?...<sup>21</sup>

Having followed Redon's correspondence of the previous four or five months with Deman, this last question should come as a surprise to the reader, as perhaps it did to Redon himself. Could Huysmans not have known about the impending publication of the first Temptation album? Could Redon have kept him in the dark about his ongoing

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<sup>20</sup> This must be a reference to Ernest May, banker and patron of the arts, who must have been considered a potential publisher after negotiations with Quantin fell through. May is depicted in Degas's oil painting At the Bourse (Portraits in the Stock Exchange) (ca. 1879). May had been a would-be backer of Le Jour et la nuit, the never-realized journal of original prints organized by the Impressionists Degas, Pissarro, Cassatt, and others in 1879-80.

After five or six months of attempting to find a backer for Redon's project, Huysmans's frustration is signaled by his reference to May, a Jew, as "cet animal." This is perhaps evidence of his anti-semitism. It has been pointed out that Degas's portrait of him in At the Bourse contains overtones of a visceral anti-semitism that would not surface definitively until the Dreyfus Affair. For more on May, Le Jour et la nuit, and Degas's anti-semitism, see Sue Welsh Reed and Barbara Stern Shapiro, Edgar Degas: The Painter as Printmaker, exhibition catalogue (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1984) 168-74, cat. no. 51; and Linda Nochlin, "Degas and the Dreyfus Affair: A Portrait of the Artist as an Anti-Semite," The Politics of Vision (New York: Harper & Row, 1989) 141-69, esp. 165 n. 17.

<sup>21</sup> LàR, 111-12, no. XVII.

business with Deman? Although, as Huysmans writes, he has not seen Redon for some time, he implies Redon's awareness of the "affaire chez May" with regard to the Temptation album, indicating that they had conversed on the matter at some point since the previous fall. And his use of the expression de luxe harkens back to his letter of November.

The coming to light of additional correspondence between Huysmans and Redon or others may help to shed further light on this subject. The possibility remains that Huysmans' original vision was for a deluxe publication comprising all the Temptation plates in preparation by autumn 1887, with or without Flaubert's entire text. This would help to explain Redon's readiness with production costs as soon as his letter to Deman of 2 December 1887, cited above. It would imply that Huysmans was aware of Redon's proceeding with the Deman album, and it would explain why and how he still hoped to bring the project to conclusion as late as his letter to Redon of April 1888. Perhaps Redon's Tentation de Saint Antoine (1896), his third and last publication based on Flaubert's book, addresses a yet-unsatisfied desire that goes back to autumn 1887, that is, to bring together Flaubert's complete text with twenty-four entirely new lithographs. As we shall see in the last section of this chapter, Huysmans' responses to the Temptation albums of 1888 and 1889 mark a change in his attitude toward Redon's work that seems to reflect a personal dissatisfaction with the course of Redon's career as well as his work at this juncture.

In any event, the production of the first Temptation album

proceeded, with an announcement of its impending publication in the 8 April 1888 issue of the Brussels periodical L'Art moderne (the periodical in which Edmond Picard introduced Redon to the Belgian art world in 1886).<sup>22</sup> This was followed by an announcement in the May 20 issue, stating that the publication date would be June 2.

Redon's correspondence with Emile Verhaeren in the years 1887-89, the period during which Redon initially approached him with regard to the possibility of Deman's publishing the first Temptation album, centered on his three frontispiece commissions from the poet. Before then, Redon had not produced a frontispiece for one of his own albums since Les Origines of 1883. For the frontispiece for Verhaeren's Les Soirs, Redon had returned to a motif explored previously in his noirs. For the new album's frontispiece, however, he gave visual form to a creature which unites his previous imagery with the types of demons which appear in Flaubert's novel. The first Temptation frontispiece (M. 83) [Fig. 81] depicts a winged figure with a humanoid head and an arabesque tail. This combination of human and animal elements is suggestive of desire tempered by intellect, its iconic character reinforced by the fact that it is shown in profile.<sup>23</sup> In fact, the

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<sup>22</sup> Fontainas unpublished ms (see Chapter IV, n. 6), 12.

<sup>23</sup> Destrée described the cover-frontispiece as follows:

La couverture sous laquelle sont réunis ces dix dessins, s'illustre d'une belle silhouette noire de femme ailée, sorte de chimère couronnée, crêtée, qui fait face au titre, imprimé en travers à droite, dans un beau mouvement d'indication fière.

Jules Destrée, L'Oeuvre lithographique d'Odilon Redon. Catalogue

work does not function only as a frontispiece. The image and title-page information are printed together on a large sheet of blue paper with a vertical fold down the middle, so that it is a cover for the ten plates as well. On the obverse of the cover is printed Deman's emblem, designed by Fernand Khnopff. It seems that this design was not added until the fifty-eight sets reached Brussels, although Redon reported some difficulty in printing the cover-frontispiece in his letter to Deman of 27 April 1888:

You remitted to me, on April 22, 246 francs to defray the costs of the ten plates of the Temptation...

...The cover can be printed Monday, the proofs can be sent later in the week. Same price as the plates.

With regard to the stone for the cover, I cannot still promise it to you, not having seen the printer, M. Becquet. I had (I forgot to mention it to you verbally), I had some difficulty in obtaining the one for the Temptation. I recollect having dealt with you for the one for Idole, which I obtained readily. It seems that these stones were made from choice material, and are not sold retail except at a loss to the printer, even at higher prices, and it is difficult to obtain an appreciable number of them.

Vous m'avez remis, le 22 avril, 246 francs pour complément des frais des dix planches de la Tentation...

...L'impression de la couverture pourra être faite lundi, l'envoi des épreuves dans la même semaine. Même prix que les planches.

Quant à la pierre de cette couverture, je ne puis vous la promettre encore, n'ayant pas vu l'imprimeur M. Becquet. J'ai eu (ce fut oubli de ne pas vous en avoir parlé verbalement), j'ai eu quelque difficulté à obtenir celle de la Tentation. J'avais traité avec vous en souvenir de celle de l'Idole que j'obtins aisément. Il paraît que ces pierres étant un matériel de choix, ne sont vendues au détail, qu'à perte, pour l'imprimeur, même à des prix élevés, et difficilement

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déscriptif (Brussels: Edmond Deman, 1891) 51-52. Cited hereafter as "Destrée 1891."

appréciables...<sup>24</sup>

To the right of the frontispiece's image appears the album's title: TENTATION / DE / SAINT ANTOINE / TEXTE DE GUSTAVE FLAUBERT. Redon's stylized monogram is discreetly located at the bottom of the sheet. Here the artist was focusing on his role as the visual interpreter of Flaubert's novel, presenting in rather general terms the nature of St. Anthony's temptation. The frontispiece makes it clear that the ten images it introduces depend upon the writer at least as much as on the artist. Yet there is a tentativeness here that, as we shall see, will no longer be the case in the frontispiece-title page for A Gustave Flaubert. Redon's role appears to be self-consciously marginalized by the placement of the monogram. And, more importantly, the text and the vignette-like lithographic image have not been fully integrated into a strong overall design. The artist/author, frontispiece/title-page duality has not yet been broached here.

So Redon's first Temptation album was scheduled for publication on 2 June 1888. Two other projects of interest here preceded publication, however, and help to shed light not only on the crucial subject of Huysmans' relationship with Redon at this juncture, but on the origins of the second Temptation album as well.

First, on April 22, Huysmans wrote to Redon to thank him for

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<sup>24</sup> Gamboni 1989, 274, no. 7. Gamboni notes that, from passages of this letter not quoted here, it seems that Deman and his wife had recently visited the Redons in Paris, and on that occasion purchased several drawings from the artist.

sending an impression of Des Esseintes (M. 82) [Fig. 82], a lithograph printed in an edition of fifty. The lithograph was intended as an hors-texte frontispiece for Huysmans' 1884 novel À Rebours, and depicts that book's protagonist, the fictional Duc Jean Floressas Des Esseintes, the raffiné scion of an old noble family given to relieving his boredom by ever-refining his physical senses in decadent and artificial ways. In his letter of thanks, Huysmans wrote:

...Thank you for Des Esseintes, which is grim and strange, well done-in, of course. He puts me in the mind of a more satanic and Hoffman-esque des Esseintes, more consumed by the occult sciences than mine, which was perhaps not enough so, in view of the current which is taking so many people away from these shores at this time.

..Merci du Des Esseintes qui est âpre et curieux, bien vanné, comme de juste. Il me fait l'effet d'un des Essentes plus satanique et hoffmanesque, plus mangé de sciences occultes que le mien qui ne l'était peut-être pas assez, étant donné le courant qui emporte vers ces rives, un tas de gens à cette heure.<sup>25</sup>

There seems to be no earlier documentation relating to the lithograph, and Redon may have intended it as a sort of mollifying gesture, having proceeded with the first Temptation project without Huysmans' usual involvement, which had been customary since the album Hommage à Goya of 1885. Huysmans' careful elucidation of the differences between Redon's Des Esseintes and his own, and the further connection between Redon's figure and the "gens à cette heure" may be an oblique reference to the young symbolist dandies in both Paris and Brussels who now attached themselves to Redon. Indeed, it was highly unusual for a frontispiece to appear entirely

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<sup>25</sup> LAR, 112-13, no. XVII.

apart from a book edition. In his "catalogue descriptif" of Redon's lithographs published by Deman in 1891, Jules Destrée may hint at these circumstances surrounding the frontispiece's appearance:

Several Belgian writers have had the same rare fortune of collaborating with Odilon Redon; in France, only one, [whose name] one can guess.

In a sign of gratitude for he who has so energetically proclaimed his ignored genius, Redon composed a Des Esseintes which may serve as a frontispiece to a new and deluxe edition of A Rebours, a choice publication which an intelligent and refined publisher will give us someday, one hopes.

Plusieurs écrivains de Belgique eurent ainsi le rare bonheur de la collaboration d'Odilon Redon: en France, un seul, qu'on devine.

En signe de gratitude pour celui qui avait si énergiquement proclamé son génie ignoré, Redon composa un Des Esseintes qui pourrait servir de frontispice à une édition nouvelle et luxueuse de A Rebours, publication de choix qu'un éditeur intelligent et raffiné nous donnera quelque jour, il faut l'espérer.<sup>26</sup>

The second project which occurred before the June 2 publication of the Deman Temptation was the printing by Redon in or by May 1888, of an edition of ten impressions of Ammonaria battue (M. 95) [Fig. 83], later re-printed to be included as plate I of the 1889 album A Gustave Flaubert. The concreteness of Redon's plans to bring out a second album of lithographs based on Flaubert's Temptation cannot be determined. That an impression of Ammonaria was exhibited at the Paris Salon that year, however, certainly indicates the artist's wish to attract the public's attention to the album just

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<sup>26</sup> Destrée 1891, 69.

published by Deman.<sup>27</sup> It was not until the 17 June 1888 issue of L'Art moderne that the first notice appeared, announcing "a new album consisting of six plates on the same subject will come out next and complete the magnificent album of ten plates currently for sale at the publisher Deman," that is, A Gustave Flaubert.<sup>28</sup> (That the second album is described as "completing" the Temptation series may relate to the possibility briefly explored above of Huysmans' hope that all the plates would appear together in a single "deluxe" publication.)

The Redons passed the summer of 1888 at a rented summer house in Samoio. They invited the Demans, but they do not seem to have made the trip.<sup>29</sup> Emile Hennequin came to visit them, but he drowned tragically in a swimming accident there on July 13. The June announcement of the second Temptation album indicates that Redon had made some degree of progress on it-- the Ammonaria plate, at least, was already finished. Redon must have begun the final preparations for A Gustave Flaubert upon his return to Paris. He received letters of thanks for receipt of pre-publication copies of

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<sup>27</sup> Ted Gott has written that these ten impressions of Ammonaria "may have been proofs taken as early as May 1888, before the plate was formally included in the To Gustave Flaubert album." In positing that these may have been "proofs," Gott hints at an early date-- spring 1888-- for the conception of the second Temptation album, but his qualifying use of the words "formally included" indicates a reticence to firmly set this as the date. See The Enchanted Stone: The Graphic Worlds of Odilon Redon, exhibition catalogue (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1990) 116, cat. no. 61. Cited hereafter as "Gott 1990."

<sup>28</sup> Fontainas, unpublished ms, 12.

<sup>29</sup> See letter of 6 May 1888, from Camille Redon to Constance Deman in Gamboni 1989, 274-75, no. 8.

the album from Huysmans and Mallarmé in December. (Their responses will be examined in the section devoted to the critical reception of the album later in this chapter.)

Both the image and the text of the frontispiece for A Gustave Flaubert (M. 94) [Fig. 17] differ markedly from the frontispiece for the 1888 suite, particularly in Redon's use of artistic and literary sources. In the latter frontispiece he seems to focus more emphatically on his role as independent creator in his involvement with Flaubert's novel, from which we may extrapolate a considerably fuller picture of Redon as a literary-pictorial artist. In this instance, the work still functions as both a frontispiece and a title-page, but through the process of arriving at the final design, Redon now emerges with a more assured sense of his role.

The subject of the A Gustave Flaubert frontispiece is the only one not in sequence with the other six, whose arrangement faithfully reflects the order of the passages drawn from the novel which serve as their titles. It represents the moment toward the end of the book, when the Devil transports Anthony through the sky and into the heavens.<sup>30</sup> As Eisenman has pointed out, it is also

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<sup>30</sup> Eisenman is the first to have suggested that the frontispiece contains a subject drawn from Flaubert's text, but declines to identify a specific passage as its source; see The Temptation of Saint Redon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) 262, n. 83, cited hereafter as "Eisenman 1992." Oktavia Christ reproduces all the plates of the 1888, 1889, and 1896 Redon drew the title for each as well as its page number in the novel, but does not cite a source for the 1889 frontispiece; see Odilon Redon. Visionen eines Künstlerpoeten (Berlin: Reimer, 1994) [unpaginated] 292.

the only plate in the series in which Anthony appears, so that "the title serves to usher the viewer into a realm of fantasy in which aesthetic distance is abandoned; once we turn to plate one, we will become Anthony, the pure passive recipient of malevolent will."<sup>31</sup> As in the first series, below the platemark of each page in the album is printed a short passage excerpted from Flaubert's text which Redon chose as a starting point for the compositions, thereby serving as the titles as well. No caption appears on the frontispiece, but the exchange between Anthony and the Devil which is its source is one of the most remarkable in Flaubert's novel:

[Underneath Anthony he flies like an elongated swimmer - and cloudlike, his two wide-open wings wholly conceal him.]

ANTHONY:

Where am I going?

Just now I glimpsed the shape of the Evil One. No! I'm carried on a cloud. Perhaps I'm dead, and going up to God?

Ah! how well I can breathe! The stainless air buoys my spirit. No more weight! No more suffering!

Down there beneath me the thunder breaks, the horizon

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<sup>31</sup> Eisenman 1992, 210. Eisenman's interpretation of the viewer's assumption of the role of Anthony recalls Jean Seznec's discussion of Redon's approach to the lithograph entitled ...Je me suis enfoncé dans la solitude. J'habitais l'arbre derrière moi, plate IX from the 1896 Temptation series: "the artist's gaze has actually followed the direction of Saint Anthony's eyes. It is the same optical effect." See Seznec, "Flaubert and the Graphic Arts," Journal of the Warburg Institute, Vol. 8, 1945, 175; cited hereafter as "Seznec 1945".

The words of Eisenman's interpretation on his p. 210 quoted here are themselves drawn from the lines of Jean-Paul Sartre, quoted by Eisenman on pp. 193 and 263 n. 36, but not cited on p. 210:

"[Flaubert] prefers to yield seemingly, to exaggerate discretely, to push to the limit and at the same time to show himself, pure passive recipient of the will of others, to become an object to give them a horror of themselves."

widens, rivers intersect. That blonde patch is the desert, that pool of water the Ocean.

Other oceans too appear, huge regions that I didn't know. Here are the black lands smoking like braziers, and the snow zone always smothered in mists. I'm looking out for the mountains where each night the sun goes down.

THE DEVIL:

The sun never goes down!

[Anthony is surprised by this voice. It strikes him as an echo of his thoughts - his memory's answer.

Meanwhile the earth becomes ball-shaped; and he observes how it turns in the blue on its poles, while turning around the sun.]

THE DEVIL:

So it doesn't form the centre of the world? Human arrogance, humble yourself!<sup>22</sup>

[Il vole sous lui, étendu comme un nageur; - ses deux ailes grandes ouvertes, en le cachant tout entier, semblent un nuage.]

ANTOINE:

Où vais-je?

Tout à l'heure j'ai entrevu la forme du Maudit. Non! une nuée m'emporte. Peut-être que je suis mort, et que je monte vers Dieu?...

Ah! comme je respire bien! L'air immaculé me gonfle l'âme. Plus de pesanteur! plus de souffrance!

En bas, sous moi, la foudre éclate, l'horizon s'élargit, des fleuves s'entre-croisent. Cette tache blonde c'est le désert, cette flaque d'eau l'Océan.

Et d'autres océans paraissent, d'immenses régions que je ne connaissais pas. Voici les pays noirs qui fument comme des brasiers, la zone des neiges obscurcie toujours par des brouillards. Je tâche de découvrir les montagnes où le soleil, chaque soir, va se coucher.

LE DIABLE:

Jamais le soleil ne se couche!

[Antoine n'est pas surpris de cette voix. Elle lui semble un écho de sa pensée, - une réponse de sa mémoire.

Cependant la terre prend la forme d'une boule; et il l'aperçoit au milieu de l'azur qui tourne sur ses pôles, en tournant autour du soleil.]

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<sup>22</sup> Gustave Flaubert, Temptation of Saint Anthony, trans. Kitty Mrosovsky (New York: Penguin, 1980) 205.

LE DIABLE:

Elle ne fait donc pas le centre du monde? Orgeuil de l'homme, humilie-toi!"<sup>33</sup>

There can be little doubt as to the appeal of this passage for Redon, due partially to Anthony's very Faustian revelation that the earth is not the center of the "world." One is left only to speculate which individual phrase might have served as the image's title. As Redon recounted to André Mellerio in 1898,

With regard to Flaubert, it was my so-grieved Emile Hennequin who brought me the Temptation of Saint Anthony, upon having seen Les Origines. He told me that I would find some new monsters in this book. I was quickly seduced by the descriptive subject of this book, by the relief and the color of all those resurrections of a past time.

Quant à Flaubert, ce fut mon très regretté Emile Hennequin qui m'apporta la Tentation de Saint Antoine, lorsqu'il eut vu les Origines. Il me dit que je trouverais en ce livre des monstres nouveaux. J'ai été vite séduit par la partie descriptive de cet ouvrage, par le relief et la couleur de toutes ces résurrections d'un passé.<sup>34</sup>

The text is in constant opposition to itself, with its abrupt interruptions and changes of direction as swift as the movement of the Devil and Anthony (themselves in opposition to the stasis of the narrative voice). When the Devil interrupts Anthony's words "...the mountains where each night the sun goes down" with "The sun never goes down!," it is a sign of their rapid movement away from the earth and of the resulting change in Anthony's visual perception of the world. The striking visuality of this passage is made all the more relevant for Redon by the formal description of

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<sup>33</sup> Gustave Flaubert, La Tentation de Saint Antoine, ed. Édouard Maynial (1874; Paris: Éditions Garnier, 1954) 231-32.

<sup>34</sup> Letter to André Mellerio of 21 July 1898, Id'OR, 32.

stark contrasts between light and dark-- the very means of his noirs. Another element of the text which Redon has imparted to the image is Anthony's spacial dislocation-- where is he? The answer to this question will become apparent as we trace the genesis of the frontispiece.

Redon rarely composed freely on lithographic stone, usually drawing instead on transfer paper from motifs first set down in his charcoal drawings or in previous lithographs. Frequently, however, the recycled motif is invested with accrued meaning in its new context, so that its evolution takes on a certain retrospective quality. In the instance of the present frontispiece, one must go back to its first, unpublished, state to more easily identify its visual sources. The figural group is based on a noir of 1876, entitled Devil Carrying off a Head [Fig. 84]. As Druick and Zegers have demonstrated, the charcoal is based on Delacroix's lithograph Prologue in Heaven [Fig. 85], plate I of the his illustrations for Stapfer's 1828 edition of Faust. Rather than duplicate Delacroix's skyline, Redon has depicted that of his native town of Listrac, near his family estate of Peyrelebadé.<sup>35</sup> As a noir of 1880, entitled Faust and Mephistopheles,<sup>36</sup> attests, Redon's interest in the subject in this period was not due exclusively to Delacroix's treatment of the theme.

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<sup>35</sup> Chicago 1994, 97. Redon's lithograph may, in turn, be based in part on Goya's etching Alla vá eso [Fig. 86], plate 66 from Los Caprichos (1799), a connection which Redon may have recognized.

<sup>36</sup> Faust and Mephistopheles is illustrated as figures 13:6 and 24 in Chicago 1994 (see 140-41 and 439, cat. no. 57).

The overall similarities between the figural group in Redon's lithograph and that in the Delacroix, indicates that Redon must have looked again at the Delacroix when he composed the frontispiece.<sup>37</sup> In the first state of Redon's frontispiece [Fig. 87], Satan's torso and left leg bent over the right one are direct quotations of Delacroix's figure of Mephistopheles. The general disposition of the figure as a whole confirms the connection, as does the handling of the lithographic medium.

In the second, published state, the lower portion of the figure is covered up, introducing a striking innovation. An imaginative extension of the curvilinear border of the white area establishes this part of the page as a portion of a circle. That this white circle is the light source for the upper portion of the image ostensibly implies a connection with the sun, since there is a setting sun in the corresponding area of the Delacroix.

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<sup>37</sup> There are numerous examples of Redon's having copied Delacroix's lithographs. See, for example, Shepherd Gallery, New York, The Non-Dissenters: David through Puvis de Chavannes, 1968, cat. no. 185, illus. plate XXXV (cf. Eisenman 1992, 262, n. 17; see also Sven Sandström, Le Monde imaginaire d'Odilon Redon [Lund: Gleerup, 1955] 96-97, figs. 71 and 72).

Claude Roger-Marx, owner of one of the two proof impressions of the first state of the À Gustave Flaubert frontispiece, made the connection between the two images in his book Les Tentations de Saint Antoine de Redon (Paris: Éditions L.C.L., 1969). I had neglected this slight publication until well after my own discovery of this connection. Roger-Marx observes:

Aside from the admirable frontispiece of the second album (to connect it with Delacroix's, shown [here] in the first state), he has equally avoided showing the tempter and the demons in the work.

Excepté dans un frontispice admirable du second album (à rapprocher de celui de Delacroix pour Faust, et que nous reproduisons ici en premier état), il évite également de montrer le tentateur et les démons à l'oeuvre."(iv-v)

As we shall see, Redon has substituted one motif for another, and the introduction of the latter one marks a significant and profound development. Delacroix's setting sun draws Mephistopheles into the image, but what of the part-circle of white light in the Redon? For Delacroix this was exclusively a function of illustrating Goethe's text, which is depicted in a traditional, comprehensible space, but Redon turns the motif into a problematic element of the formal composition. Redon offers only a fleeting glimpse: Satan's left wing is cropped by the upper border of the plate, his lower body is cropped by the white circle, and the circle itself is limited by the parameters of the page.<sup>38</sup> Without Flaubert's words as a caption to guide the viewer, one is initially inclined to make sense of this portion of a circle as the sun itself, but following the text, it is the earth, made visible by the light of the unseen sun. Any details of the planet's topography described by Flaubert, however, have been obliterated by the sheer brightness of the light. What Redon shows is the earth as it is revealed by the sun, or the reflection of the sun. This reflection parallels the effect of Satan's voice here: "It strikes [Anthony] as an echo of his thoughts - his memory's answer." The process of Anthony's memory may even have struck Redon as analogous to his own process of returning to an earlier drawing as a basis for the frontispiece.

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<sup>38</sup> Eisenman (1992) has noted Redon's use of cropping, citing the example of plate III, La Mort: Mon ironie dépasse toutes les autres!, as follows: "the edge of the paper is both the delimitation of a neutral field and an echo of the [figure] contained within." (220)

The page, which announces itself (and the plates that follow in the album) by means of a series of impositions to the image, is a field in which form is manipulated in such a way that invests it with meaning that combines the literary with the formal at an unusually high pitch. The blankness of the earth literally threatens to drive away the inky blackness above it and simultaneously becomes a field for text. A formal analogy is made between the presentation of image and of text purely in terms of the expressive potential of black and white. The razor-sharp border of the earth reminds us of the limitations of the representation of text itself-- black figures on a white ground, while the rest of the image is constructed by means of more subtle modulations of black and white. For Delacroix, image and text had been mutually exclusive, but for Redon forces of attraction and opposition set them in uneasy balance. Text is present in an area otherwise reserved exclusively for visual information, yet this is a fully integrated portion of the work as a whole. In other words, the broad white area which signifies the planet earth exists as both part of and apart from other elements in the image. In this way, it "reads" simultaneously as an object in the image and as the blank white page. Redon's grasp of the graphic possibilities inherent to the medium of lithography was enunciated years later by the painter Pierre Bonnard:

...What strikes me most in his work is the combination of two nearly opposed qualities: the very pure material substance and a very mysterious expression...

...Ce qui me frappe le plus dans son oeuvre, c'est la réunion de deux qualités presque opposées: la matière

plastique très pure et l'expression très mystérieuse...<sup>39</sup>

It has not yet been possible to ascertain how the typeface used in this and other frontispieces was selected. In Redon's more fully developed frontispieces, such as those for Dans le Rêve, Les Origines, and A Gustave Flaubert, the text comprises a sensitively integrated component of the work. The restrained elegance of the typeface used in A Gustave Flaubert's frontispiece, for example, may deliberately echo the typeface used by Edmond Deman.<sup>40</sup> Two intimately related sources-- the popular press and advertising posters for books-- provide the context for illustrators' concerns about typography in the nineteenth century. It will be recalled that in 1882, Redon was shaken by the appropriation of his frontispiece drawing for Hennéquin's Contes grotesques for use as its cover-illustration. Although accomplished poster artists such as Jules Chéret brought new respectability to the medium of poster design in the 1880s, artists who contributed their talents to poster design in previous decades, such as Grandville and Doré, were known primarily as illustrators, if at all. Redon was specifically concerned about being identified as a mere

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<sup>39</sup> Pierre Bonnard in "Hommage à Odilon Redon (part 1)," La Vie No. 41, 30 November 1912, 129.

<sup>40</sup> Baudin notes that there is no reason to suppose that Deman did not select the typeface used in the books he published, since the typeface is always the same in his books whether printed by the firms of Fischlin, Monnom, or Berqueman; nevertheless, despite similarities to typefaces designed by Henry van de Velde, the typeface has not been credited a specific designer. See Fernand Baudin, "La formation et l'évolution typographiques de Henry van de Velde," part 1 of 2, Quaerendo I:4 (October 1971) 266-67.

illustrator, and more generally, about being considered a commercial artist. Yet when Redon created the A Gustave Flaubert frontispiece, he must have felt comfortable enough with his reputation to appropriate the elements of advertising in an innovative fashion, and to do so in a manner that set him apart in both realms. Like Baudelaire with his prose poems before him, Redon can now be seen as exploiting the commercial for its expressive potential.<sup>41</sup> The delicate balance between image and text is further enhanced by the fact that, as a frontispiece, the work functions dynamically within the suite as a whole. The final plate, Les Sciapodes: La tête le plus bas possible, c'est le secret du bonheur! (M. 100) [Fig. 88], is iconically less emphatic than the final plate from the 1888 series, ...Et dans le disque même du soleil rayonne la face de Jésus-Christ (M. 93) [Fig. 89]. Inherent in the marked contrast of the pessimism of Les Sciapodes is its emphasis on downward motion. Whereas the 1888 series comes to a grinding, if uplifting, halt, in 1889 the viewer is compelled to return to the frontispiece in order to ascend. As mechanisms of

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<sup>41</sup> On the subject of advertising posters for books, see: Pierre Noriey, "Les Affiches de librairie," Arts et métiers graphiques no. 65 (15 November 1938) 47-54, esp. 50-51; and Réjane Bargiel and Ségolène Le Men, L'affiche de librairie au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle (Les Dossiers du Musée d'Orsay no. 13) (Paris: R.M.N., 1987).

An important antecedent to Redon's designing of both image and text in his frontispieces are Manet's own frontispiece etchings, designed for his 1862 album entitled Collection de huit eaux-fortes, sujets divers. The Baudelairean sources for them are explored in Theodore Reff, "The Symbolism of Manet's Frontispiece Etchings," The Burlington Magazine Vol. CIV, no. 710, May 1962, 182-86 and in Larry Ligo, "Manet's Frontispiece Etchings: His Symbolic Self-Portrait, Acknowledging the Influences of Baudelaire and Photography upon his Work," Gazette des Beaux-Arts VI<sup>e</sup> période, Vol. CVIII, 1412<sup>e</sup> livraison, September 1986, 66-74.

opposing upward and downward motion, the first and last images play a more than parenthetical role.

Thus a circular "reading" of the album as a whole is imposed on the viewer in an innovative way: one's eyes are physically guided downward at the end and, as the album is closed front-face up, upward again. By physically engaging the viewer in this fashion, Redon may have been attempting to transpose elements of drama usually reserved for music or theater. Redon had previously made specific works that touched on each of these fields, including the illustrations for Edmond Picard's Le Juré (1887). For the 8 August 1886 issue of the Revue Wagnérienne, Redon produced the lithograph Brunnhilde (M. 68) in an edition of 300. The Revue Wagnérienne (later La Revue indépendante) was founded in Paris in February 1885. Its joint editors, Edouard Dujardin and Teodor de Wyzéwa, intended the journal as a forum for writing and art on the subject of Wagner for French audiences. Redon was a favorite artist of the journal's contributors, and it is not unlikely that the treatment of Wagnerian themes in his art points directly to the incorporation of formal elements of non-visual artistic media in the final plate of A Gustave Flaubert.<sup>42</sup> As such, the album may presage the Wagnerian notion of gesamtkunstwerk that was to occupy the Symbolist followers of Gauguin in the coming decade.

Returning now to A Gustave Flaubert's frontispiece in its first state, we see that Redon signed his full name in the as yet-

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<sup>42</sup> For more on the subject of Redon and music, particularly Wagner, see Gamboni 1989, 101-105; Gott 1990, 96-98, cat. nos. 40-42; Chicago 1994, 202-203.

undefined light area just above the bottom margin of the image, suggesting that at this stage of the image's evolution, it was intended to be one of the later plates in the series.<sup>43</sup> Thus, a late moment in Flaubert's novel is ultimately given at the beginning of the lithographic suite in order to destabilize at the outset the traditional author-illustrator relationship in which the latter is subordinate to the former.

The unmodulated text-area is rendered outside narrative time, while the space above it is conceived in narrative time. The presence of text in the area of the sun denies it the possibility of the illusion of perspective which is a prominent characteristic of the chiaroscuro above it. The conceptual tension between word and image is represented formally in this fashion.

The change of title between the 1888 and 1889 series is therefore notable. The second album is entitled: A / GUSTAVE FLAUBERT / six dessins pour la / TENTATION DE ST. ANTOINE / par ODILON REDON. It suggests a homage to the author, on a level above that of the typical author-illustrator relationship exemplified in the frontispiece to the 1888 series. The lithographs are consequently presented on a par with Flaubert's text, which is not directly mentioned in the title. That this is Flaubert's text is not clearly indicated, providing an interesting counterpoint to the album A Edgar Poe, where the fact that the titles of the plates had been of Redon's own composition was unwittingly not indicated,

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<sup>43</sup> With the exception of plate II, Une longue chrysalide couleur de sang, all the plates in the series are signed in the stone.

leading viewers to assume that they were by Poe himself. In asserting the primacy of his role as an interpretive reader of Flaubert's text, Redon places his viewer in a new role, too, which incorporates but does not privilege the act of reading. Writing in 1916, the symbolist poet André Fontainas addressed this new role of reading for the artist and his audience:

No reader, in the presence of Flaubert's absolute descriptions, imagines the fabulous monsters or the human or divine faces of the Temptation of Saint Anthony as much as they imposed themselves on Redon in a triple series of his lithographs. As book illustrations, one accuses them with just cause of inexactitude and infidelity. They are different, being but the image of meditations suggested by a stirring reading, and not a representation of the original work.

Besides that which an artwork has expressed, is one able to claim, in truth, to transpose it into another? A translation exists only to make up for the weakness of our knowledge. It is supported by a foreign idiom. What meaning will it have in the plastic arts? It is not in vain, on the contrary, to discover that which the creation of a masterpiece has produced by repercussion in a sensitive and conscientious mind.

Aucun lecteur, en présence des descriptions absolues de Flaubert, n'imaginerait les monstres fabuleux ni les visages humains ou divins de la Tentation de saint Antoine tels qu'ils se sont imposés à Redon dans une triple série de ses lithographies. Illustrations du livre, on les taxerait à juste titre d'inexactitude et d'infidélité. Elles sont différentes, n'étant que l'image des méditations suggérées par une lecture émouvante, et non une représentation de l'oeuvre originale.

D'ailleurs ce qu'un art a exprimé peut-on prétendre, en vérité, le transposer dans un autre? Une traduction n'existe que pour suppléer à l'infirmité de notre savoir. Elle se supporte d'un idiome à un idiome étranger. Quel sens aurait-elle en art plastique? Il n'est point vain, au contraire, de surprendre ce que la création d'un chef-d'oeuvre a produit de répercussion sur un esprit sensible et conscient."

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" André Fontainas, "Odilon Redon," Mercure de France 16 August 1916, 584.

In tracing the formal and narrative development of the A Gustave Flaubert frontispiece, we have seen how a series of individual elements combine at certain stages in such a way that each resultant balance is a tense one. From the relative perfunctoriness of the 1888 frontispiece, Redon went on to create a highly complex one in 1889. The most essential coincidence in the 1889 frontispiece, that is, the combination of the archetypal opposites Faust and St. Anthony, can now be introduced. Inscribed into the mutual presence of these figures are all the tensions (i.e. black vs. white, image vs. text, author vs. illustrator) presented in this chapter. Exploring their convergence will help to situate the work within the trajectory of Redon's frontispiece development outlined in Chapter I.

In previous chapters we have seen how Antonian and Faustian forces are manifest in Redon's lithographic output, especially his frontispieces. With the frontispiece to A Gustave Flaubert, however, these forces find their fullest fruition in a work that combines them overtly. The manipulation of perspective and the resultant flattening of space in the area of text in the second state of the frontispiece goes beyond a mere assertion of the medium, to the extent that it serves to comment on the nature of scientific inquiry and its place in the modern world. We can construe Redon's process as a series of negations-- the cropping of the figures by the earth, of the figures and earth by the platemark, of black by white and vice-versa, each of which forces a question about the nature of the image. Through the process of

creating it, Redon has revealed a sensitivity to the Antonian mode of inquiry outlined in Flaubert's text, which, as he wrote to Hennequin, evoked for him Goethe's Faust.

In this way, the creative process as a mode of discovery betrays a degree of ambivalence. Anthony and Faust, each in his own way, is tempted by the Devil's promise of innovation, of greater knowledge of the physical world through an abandonment of faith. Anthony and Faust are thereby juxtaposed according to the terms of their relationship to Satan. Redon posits himself with respect to the polarities of Anthony and Faust, each defined by his respective inclination toward or resistance to the offerings of Satan.

That Redon experienced the reading of Flaubert's novel on a profoundly personal level cannot be doubted, and, with the success of the recently completed first Temptation album in the spring still in his mind, the book must have taken on added significance following Hennequin's death-- Hennequin's gift of the book marked the consummation of their friendship in March 1882. The futility and senselessness of Hennequin's death must have seemed especially pronounced following the recent publication of his magnum opus, entitled La critique scientifique. The passage on which the frontispiece is based thus takes on a special significance, describing as it does the figure of Satan as an elongated swimmer, leading Anthony through the heavens on a journey of discovery that results in the shocking awareness of the limitations of human mortality. While the plate La Mort: mon ironie dépasse tous les

autres (M. 97) [Fig. 90] has been seen as a meditation on the loss of Redon's three month old son Jean in August 1886,<sup>45</sup> it takes on added weight in the wake of Hennequin's death.

The 17 June 1888 announcement in L'Art moderne of a second album based on Flaubert's Temptation states that the album would comprise six lithographs. Considering that the first state of the A Gustave Flaubert frontispiece was signed and that it depicts a late episode in Flaubert's book, it is possible that it was designed by June, and that it was initially conceived as the last of the six plates announced, the artist having a less developed frontispiece, such as the one in the Deman album, in mind for the new album. In this likely scenario, the image was turned into a frontispiece following Hennequin's death, with the Sciapodes plate taking its place. The richer relationship the frontispiece would now enjoy with the other plates, together with the new final plate, and the implications of its new context described in this chapter, may be seen as reflecting the profound gravity of the loss of Hennequin. With this in mind, we can return to the two final plates of the 1888 and 1889 Temptation albums. The first implies a traditional affirmation of faith. The second suggests a kind of admonition with regard to the dangers of questing for greater knowledge, through the force of downward movement which nevertheless compels the viewer to return to the frontispiece. Whatever the likelihood that the original project for the

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<sup>45</sup> John Rewald, "Odilon Redon," in Redon/ Moreau /Bresdin, exhibition catalogue (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1961) 34.

Temptation called for eighteen or so plates, it is logical to suppose that, by the time the second album was being formulated, increased attention would be applied to the frontispiece and the final plate to define the album's character, since the selection of the intermediate plates would have been largely pre-determined by the culling of ten plates from the original larger group for the Deman album.

The retrospective quality of the frontispiece shows Redon's attempt in this period to posit his place in the lineage of artists and writers from which he sees himself emerging. The lithographic album format differs from his charcoal drawings in its inherent commerciality and in its grounding in the realm of publishing. Certainly the example of scientific inquiry set by Clavaud and the example of critical inquiry set by Hennequin helped to open Redon's eyes to the nature of the inherently modernist struggles of Baudelaire and Bresdin. The examples of Baudelaire, the Faustian poet, consumed by the very forces of modernism which he employed in his prose poems, and Bresdin, the Antonian artist, neglected by a public he was rarely able to sustain, helped to provide the stimulus Redon required to begin working in a medium and a format which would allow him to create an audience for his work on his own terms.

Considering that A Gustave Flaubert contains fewer plates than the previous series, we may conclude that a primary aim of the second album is to further amplify the significance of the individual plates. This is certainly the case with regard to the

respective frontispieces. The 1888 frontispiece functions less dynamically within its suite as a whole than does the 1889 frontispiece. This is due substantially to the fact that in 1887-1889 Redon collaborated with the authors Emile Verhaeren, Edmond Picard, Iwan Gilkin, and Jules Destrée, so the A Gustave Flaubert frontispiece naturally signifies a heightened sensitivity to the literary dimension of his art. Whereas the 1888 Temptation represents a departure from the promotional control of Huysmans, by autumn of that year Redon felt it necessary to further refine the literary aspect of his albums with A Gustave Flaubert, at a time when he was becoming increasingly perceived as a "literary" artist. As the directions of Redon's interests and his associations became more varied, his frontispieces become increasingly multi-valent. Thus, Redon regarded the role of the frontispiece as intrinsically suited to explorations of the relationship between image and text, and of the artist to the author and even to his critics.

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Perhaps because of the degree of independence marked by Redon's having found his own publisher for the first Temptation album, Huysmans' diminished involvement resulted in a less strenuous publicity campaign than accompanied Hommage à Goya of 1885. A direct result is that published responses to the first two Temptation albums are fewer. As we shall see, however, they come from an interesting array of sources which reflect the variety of opinions one might expect from Huysmans, Verhaeren, Mallarmé, and the Ministry of Fine Arts. In each case, however, Redon's

appropriation from Flaubert of his titles for the individual plates is the innovation that will condition the response.

Huysmans accepted Redon's pre-publication gift of the 1888 Temptation with his letter of 16 May 1888, writing:

Dear friend,

Thank you for the Temptation, from which, I believe, I will take profit, for an article for my book which is struggling along, but all the same my eyes continue to work...

Cher ami,

Merci pour la Tentation, j'en tirerai, je crois, profit, pour un article de mon livre qui marche cahin-caha, mais tout de même en dépit de mes yeux marche...<sup>46</sup>

Writing to the Dutch collector Arij Prins in July, however, Huysmans denigrated the album, reporting that only one of the ten plates, Plate VI, entitled C'est une tête de mort, avec une couronne de roses. Elle domine un torse de femme d'une blancheur nacrée (M. 89) [Fig. 91], was worth owning, and advising him not to acquire the entire suite.<sup>47</sup> More recently, Druick and Zegers have echoed Huysmans' reaction, citing the album as a failed attempt to recapture the originality of vision found in earlier albums, and lacking in their inspiration.<sup>48</sup> They cite, too, Redon's depression following the death of his first son Jean in 1886, after which, they claim, Redon "focused on publishing projects, perhaps hoping that the discipline of the pre-existing texts and deadlines was the

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<sup>46</sup> LAR, 113.

<sup>47</sup> Chicago 1994, 170; cf. J.-K. Huysmans, Lettres inédites à Arij Prins 1885-1907 (Geneva: Droz, 1977) 133, cited hereafter as "Huysmans-Prins".

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 170. Druick and Zegers fail, however, to support their echoing of Huysmans' own vague assessment with a critique of the album's content.

best way to ensure his continued production."

To Huysmans, the album represented something of a critical impasse. Huysmans, like Hennequin, discovered Redon at the time of the Gaulois exhibition in 1882. Gamboni has explored in detail the parallel development of the critics' relationships with Redon, focusing on Hennequin's collaboration with Redon on their respective Edgar Allan Poe projects of 1882 and on Huysmans' literary transpositions of Redon's images, notably in the context of Redon's album Hommage à Goya.<sup>49</sup> For the purposes of understanding Huysmans' initial negative reaction to each of the first two Temptation albums, I now return to the writer's published criticism, to the "Appendix" of his collection of criticism of the official Paris salons and Impressionist (Indépendant) exhibitions of 1879-1881, entitled L'Art moderne (1882), particularly the following paragraphs:

It would be difficult to define the amazing art of M. Redon; basically, if we make an exception for Goya, whose spectral side is less rambling and more real, if we except too Gustave Moreau with whom M. Redon is, in sum, in his healthy passages, a distant enough follower, we would find his ancestors only among musicians perhaps, and certainly among poets.

It is effectively a veritable transposition of one art into another. This artist's masters are Baudelaire and above all Edgar Poe, on whose comforting aphorism "All certitude is in dreams" he seems to have meditated; there is the true filiation of this original mind; with him we are keen to lose our footing and to float in dream, to a hundred thousand places, of all schools of painting, antique and modern.

Il serait difficile de définir l'art surprenant de M. Redon; au fond, si nous exceptons Goya dont le côté spectral est moins divaguant et plus réel, si nous exceptons encore Gustave Moreau dont M. Redon est, en

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<sup>49</sup> Gamboni 1989, Chapter 6, throughout.

somme, dans ses parties saines, un bien lointain élève, nous ne lui trouverons d'ancêtres que parmi des musiciens peut-être et certainement parmi des poètes.

C'est, en effet, une véritable transposition d'un art dans un autre. Les maîtres de cet artiste sont Baudelaire et surtout Edgar Poe, dont il semble avoir médité le consolant aphorisme: "Tout certitude est dans les rêves"; là, est la vraie filiation de cet esprit original; avec lui, nous aimons à perdre pied et à voguer dans le rêve, à cent mille lieues de toutes les écoles, antiques et modernes, de peinture.<sup>50</sup>

Thus, from the outset, Huysmans "read" Redon's work as a transposition of literary ideals into the realm of the visual, providing a springboard for his own literary transpositions of Redon's images, as discussed by Gamboni, especially in the context of the album Hommage à Goya. Huysmans sets Redon within a historical framework whose order has been dispensed with. Although his immediate sources are Goya, Moreau, Baudelaire, and Poe, "with him, we like to lose our footing and to drift in dream, to a hundred thousand places, away from all schools, antique and modern, of painting."<sup>51</sup>

By introducing Redon in this fashion, Huysmans places him at the vanguard of a paradoxically ahistorical trajectory that he, as an inspired flâneur, has discovered. After all, the "Appendix" to L'art moderne is ostensibly a review in two parts, first, of the Impressionist exhibition of 1882, and second, of the official Salon of that year. Thus, Huysmans writes, it was the disappointment of the Salon that led him not only to the Impressionist show reviewed

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<sup>50</sup> J.-K. Huysmans, L'art moderne (1883), published together with Certains (1889), (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1975) 276.

<sup>51</sup> I would like to thank Dario Gamboni for his help with translating this passage.

immediately previously, but also to what is actually the third exhibition reviewed: that of Redon at le Gaulois, whose subject comprises the third part of the essay.

Returning now to 1888, Huysmans wrote to thank Redon on December 9 for his pre-publication copy of A Gustave Flaubert, as follows:

My dear friend,

You are to be praised for the blossoms and the larvaes, the lowered head, and for the very beautiful frontispiece which opens the album...

Mon cher ami.

Soyez encensé pour les chrysalides et les larves, la tête en bas, et pour le très beau frontispice qui ouvre l'album...<sup>52</sup>

However, despite the fact that Huysmans sent copies of the album to Emile Zola<sup>53</sup> and Edmond de Goncourt<sup>54</sup>, he wrote to Arij Prins again on 12 December 1888 as follows:

Saw Redon, who has completed a new album after Flaubert's temptation [sic]. Very bad. It's terrible how [his art] has been declining recently. He is riddled with worries, with a wife who's pregnant and sick..., of that there's no doubt...<sup>55</sup>

Taking this letter at more than face value, Druick and Zegers concede that the reasons for Huysmans' "disenchantment" are

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<sup>52</sup> LAR, 118. As subsequent writers have tacitly shown, Bacou (note 1) is incorrect in ascribing Huysmans' remarks to the 1888 Temptation. In singling out the frontispiece and alluding to the final plate of the album ("la tête en bas"), Huysmans was struck by the way in which the two work together, as described earlier in this chapter.

<sup>53</sup> Now in the collection of the Minneapolis Institute of Art.

<sup>54</sup> National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., inv. no. 1943.3.7378-7384.

<sup>55</sup> Chicago 1994, 170; cf. Huysmans-Prins, 152.

"clearly more complex," writing that Redon was "forced by material circumstances to produce two albums in rapid succession, against his instincts." As I have argued, however, it was indeed Redon's instincts that drove him to complete A Gustave Flaubert, particularly following Hennequin's death.<sup>56</sup>

In 1889, Huysmans' volume of criticism entitled Certains appeared. The book consists of monographic essays on numerous contemporary artists including Chéret and Degas, Wagner, and various subjects ranging from diletantism to the Musée des Arts décoratifs et l'Architecture. Of interest here is the essay entitled le Monstre, the article mentioned by Huysmans in his letter to Redon of 16 May 1888, cited above. The essay is notable in the collection in its (ostensibly) dual structure; it is both a survey of the history of the monster in art, from ancient times to the present, and an entrée to the subject of an artist of the present day: Odilon Redon.

Huysmans begins by asserting that,

The monster in art doesn't really exist, or rather doesn't exist any more, at this time, for us. Imagination, which in all times took pleasure in creating the beauty of terror, varied little, and only obtained images of monsters by developing and deforming the great carnivores or in taking from the human body certain of its parts which it combined awkwardly with those of the dreadful bodies of animals.

Because of their certitude as fiction and because of

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<sup>56</sup> Fred Leeman has written of A Gustave Flaubert that "the initial concept of the second album must coincide with the publication of the inaugural one" (Chicago 1994, 192). This neither supports nor refutes Druick and Zegers' contention that the second album was necessitated by financial considerations, but is consistent with my own contention that Hennequin's death served as a catalyst for its eventual publication.

the incoherence of their forcibly juxtaposed parts, today these monsters no longer seem able to inspire in us the sensations of the artist who wishes to symbolize evil deities and crime, and to arouse horror.

Le monstre en art n'existe réellement pas ou plutôt n'existe plus, à l'heure qu'il est, pour nous. L'imagination qui, dans tous les temps, se complut à créer la beauté de l'épouvante a peu varié et n'a obtenu des images de monstres qu'en développant et en déformant les grands carnassiers ou en prenant au corps humain certaines de ses parties qu'elle alliait à d'autres empruntées à des corps redoutés de bêtes.

En raison de leur certitude de fiction et de l'incohérence de leurs membres forcément juxtaposés, ces monstres ne semblent plus pouvoir faire naître aujourd'hui en nous les sensations auxquelles les destina l'artiste qui voulut symboliser les divinités mauvaises et le crime, et susciter l'horreur.<sup>57</sup>

Following a survey of monsters in the art of ancient times, Huysmans goes on to discuss the continuity of the depiction of monsters in Christian art. The focus here is the "belt of monsters which encircle Notre-Dame de Paris... leaning for a hundred years over the enormous city which ignores them" (ceinture de monstres qui entoure Notre-Dame de Paris<sup>58</sup>... penchées depuis cent ans au-dessus de l'énorme ville qui les ignore).<sup>59</sup> Huysmans laments that knowledge of a great deal of the instructive iconography of these sculptures has been lost. On the other hand, the anonymity of the men who worked on these sculptures seems to speak to a certain sincerity and directness in their work which diminishes progressively following the late medieval efforts of Lochner, Breughel, and Schongauer.

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<sup>57</sup> Huysmans, "Le Monstre," in Certains (1889), 379 (see n. 50, above).

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 381.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 384.

The oddly stilted survey of named artists-- Callot, Goya, and Ingres-- selected by Huysmans to bridge the late middle ages and the present-day seems deliberately intended to reinforce the message of the opening paragraph, that monsters are no longer the inspiration for modern art (with the exception of Japanese art).

The remainder of the essay will be quoted here in full:

As traversed as it has been, the way of monsters is, nevertheless, new again. And more ingenious this time for man, nature has yet created veritable monsters, not in large beasts, but in the "infinitely small"-- in the world of animalcules, infusions, and larvae whose sovereign horror the microscope reveals to us.

It seems, in effect, that nothing can equal the anguish and fear that spreads from the proliferation of these heinous tribes. The idea of the monster which is maybe born in man by means of visions borne by nightmarish nights, has not invented more appalling forms.

What artist, even in dreams wrecked by fevers, has been able to dream these living and moist tendrils which teem like filaria in our urine and in our veins; what painter could forge, in troubled hours, the Spearwort, this leaf of myrtle which withers, wastes, takes it, titillated in the lacerated livers of old sheep; what poet, in the quest for monsters, will discover the Dracunculus, the Worm of Medina who, near the Ganges, lives in the cellular tissue of feet and coils up in the surplus space of the abcess which it forms there; what man, finally, will imagine this crowd of substance which turns heads half-way around, armed with hooks and pincers, lit by eyes cut into facets or raised in a dome, this sinister and ferocious crowd of annulated laces, of tube-like threads, of oxyures, of ascarids, of maggots, which camp out and swarm inside collapsed intestines?

There is, then, a new point of departure, almost a new solution; it seems to have been discovered by the only painter now enamored with the fantastic, by M. Odilon Redon. He has, in effect, attempted to fabricate his monsters in order to imprint on the undulous and fluent world, districts of the imperceptible magnified by projections, and so more terrifying than the falsehoods exaggerated by the old monsters, the prodigious fear of their swarmings?

It is in this manner that, in an album, he has sought a translation of this line of Flaubert's, in the Temptation of Saint Anthony: "And all manner of frightful creatures arise" [M. 91; Fig. 92].

In a sky of permanent and profound black, liquid and phosphorescent beings, vesicles and bacillae, corpuscles ringed darkly with hair, capsules implanted with cilia, aqueous and hairy glands fly without wings and entangle themselves in ribbons of trichinae and tenia; it seems that all the fauna spun in verse, that all the tribes of parasites swarm in the night of this plate, in which there suddenly appears a human face, unfinished, brandished at the end of this living spiral or darkened like a pit in the animated gelatin of protoplasms.

M. Redon had, in effect, to resort to ancient concepts, to marry the horror of the face of man to this hideousness encircled by caterpillars, to create the monsters anew.

Swollen by divined infusors and larvae, he has come to interpret certain more precise phrases of the dance of Lust and of Death, in the Temptation, for example here:

"It is a death's head with a crown of roses. It rises above a woman's torso, pearly white and, beneath this, a starred shroud acting as a sort of tail. And the whole body undulates, as might a gigantic worm lifting itself upright" [N. 89; Fig. 91].<sup>60</sup>

The lithograph which she suggests to him is one of the most frightful that this artist has made.

Against an impermeable, silent black, velvety as the black of a bat, the monster is illuminated in white and embosses the night in the obstinate form of a capital C.

The death's head with the widened rictus, with full eyes like sockets of darkness, leans back above the bust of a wrapped mummy, hands crossed over a breast of hard resin. From this head, coiffed with a long embroidered hennin, emanates a kind of grace, which glides, so that the monster pulls along her diaphonous hindquarter, which radiates oscillating rings in relief under her cold skin.

Here and there, some lost aspects, off-white cocoons spared in the shadow tremble around this frightening image of Lust which is based on the manner the poet

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<sup>60</sup> Huysmans has cited here more of Flaubert's words than Redon gives in the title of the image, Plate VI of the first Temptation series, suggesting that he referred to the original text of the novel when he composed Le Monstre. However, from the phrases he added, Huysmans omitted Flaubert's description of the stars on the shroud as gold (un linceul étoilé de points d'or). In doing so, he seems to wish to emphasize Redon's use of black and white.

wished, in effigy of Death itself.<sup>61</sup>

In his second album dedicated to the glory of Flaubert, as much as in another collection entitled Origines, the painter has again projected his monsters by analogous combinations.

In the one, he has strewn about the innards of the world of flying monads, of sprouting tadpoles, of amorphous beings of miniscule disks where embryonic eyelids take shape, of uncertain mouth holes [probably M. 19; Fig. 36].

In the other, under the title: "A long red chrysalis" [M. 96, Fig. 93], he has, before the square of a large temple, rolled up on a low column the body of a thin larva, whose feminine head is leaning on the place which the capital should occupy.<sup>62</sup>

And this face, emaciated, blemished, distressing to look at with her closed eyes, dolorous and pensive mouth, seems vainly to hope, like a victim on the block, for the liberating fall of an invisible axe.

In spite of its totally modern structure, this figure restores from centuries back, by means of a profound expressiveness unique to its strokes, the doleful works of the Middle Ages; it links M. Redon to the chain of fantastic bestiaries and the Visionary love of the monster interrupted since the Renaissance.

Only the great science of Religious Symbolism is no more. In the domain of the Dream, art lives alone, in these times when the hungers of the soul are sufficiently assuaged by the ingestion of the theories of Moritz Wagners and Darwins.

Si parcourue qu'elle ait été, la voie des monstres est donc encore neuve. Et plus ingénieuse cette fois que l'homme, la nature les a pourtant créés les véritables monstres, non dans le "gros bétail", mais dans "l'infiniment petit", dans le monde des animalcules, des infusoires et des larves dont le microscope nous révèle la souveraine horreur.

Il semble, en effet, que rien ne puisse égaler l'angoisse et l'effroi qu'épandent les pullulements de ces tribus atroces. L'idée du monstre qui est peut-être née chez l'homme des visions enfantées par des nuits de cauchemar, n'a pu inventer de plus épouvantables formes.

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<sup>61</sup> "...in the manner the poet wished..." On the subject of Flaubert's antipathy toward the illustration of his writings see Sez nec 1945, esp. 183-86ff.

<sup>62</sup> Here again Huysmans changes the name of the plate (M. 96) slightly. Redon's title, using Flaubert's words, is Une longue chrysalide couleur de sang rather than Une longue chrysalide rouge.

Quel artiste, même dans les songes brisés des fièvres, a pu rêver ces vivantes et humides vrilles qui grouillent comme les Filaria, dans nos urines et dans nos veines; quel peintre a pu forger, dans des heures de trouble, la Douve, cette feuille de myrte qui se recroqueville, coule, se reprend, titille dans le foie lacéré des vieux moutons, quel poète, en quête de monstres, découvrirait le Dracunculus, le Ver de Médine, qui, près du Gange, habite le tissu cellulaire des pieds et se love dans le plus des abcès qu'il forme; quel homme enfin imaginerait cette cohue de substance qui remue des têtes en hémisphère, armées de crochets et de pinces, éclairées d'yeux taillés à facettes ou exhaussés en dôme, cette cohue sinistre et féroce de lacets annelés, de fils tubicoles, d'oxyures, d'ascarides, d'asticots, qui campent et vermillent dans les routes effondrées des ventres?

Il y a donc un nouveau point de départ, presque une issue neuve; elle paraît avoir été découverte par le seul peintre qui soit maintenant épris du fantastique, par M. Odilon Redon. Il a, en effet, tenté pour fabriquer ses monstres d'emprunter au monde onduleux et fluent, aux districts des imperceptibles agrandis par les projections et plus terrifiants alors que les fauves exagérés des vieux maîtres, le prodigieux effroi de leurs grouillements.

C'est ainsi qu'en un album, il a cherché la traduction de cette phrase de Flaubert, dans la Tentation de Saint-Antoine: "Et toutes sortes de bêtes effroyables surgissent."

Dans un ciel d'un noir permanent et profond, des êtres liquides et phosphoreux, des vésicules et des bacilles, des corpuscules cernés de poils, des capsules plantées de cils, des glandes aqueuses et velues volent sans ailes et s'enchevêtrent dans les rubans des trichines et des taenias; il semble que toute la faune des vers filaridés, que toutes les peuplades des parasites fourmillent en la nuit de cette planche dans laquelle apparaît subitement la face humaine, inachevée, brandie au bout de ces vivantes spires ou enfoncée comme un noyau dans la gélatine animée des protoplasmes.

M. Redon a dû, en effet, recourir aux anciens concepts, marier l'horreur du visage de l'homme aux hideurs enroulées des chenilles, pour créer à nouveau le monstre.

Belluaire des infusoires devinés et des larves, il devait interpréter certaines phrases plus précises de la danse de la Luxure et de la Mort, dans la Tentation, celle-ci, par exemple:

"C'est une tête de mort avec une couronne de roses; elle domine un torse de femme d'une blancheur nacrée et, dessous un linceul étoilé fait comme une queue. Et tout le corps ondule à la manière d'un ver gigantesque qui se

tiendrait debout."

La lithographie qu'elle lui suggéra est une des plus redoutables que cet artiste ait faites.

Sur un noir imperméable, sourd, velouté de même que le noir de la chauve-souris, le monstre s'éclaire en blanc et gaufre la nuit de la forme cabrée du grand C.

La tête de mort au rictus agrandi, aux yeux pleins comme de pots de ténèbres, se renverse sur un buste de momie emmaillottée, les mains croisées sur une gorge en résine dure. De cette tête coiffée d'un long hennin à broderies, émane une sorte de grâce qui glace, alors que le monstre roidit sa croupe diaphane que rayent les oscillants anneaux en relief sous la peau froide.

Cà et là, des aspects perdus, de blanchâtres cocons épars dans l'ombre tremblent autour de cette effrayante image de la Luxure qui se fond, ainsi que le voulut le poète, en l'effigie de la Mort même.

Dans un second album également dédié à la gloire de Flaubert, de même que dans un autre recueil intitulé "les Origines", le peintre a encore projeté par d'analogues combinaisons ses monstres.

Dans l'un, il a semé la gésine du monde de monades volantes, de têtards en pousse, d'êtres amorphes, de disques minuscules où s'ébauchent des embryons de paupières, des trous incertains de bouches.

Dans l'autre, sous le titre: "Une longue chrysalide rouge", il a, devant le parvis d'un improbable temple, roulé sur une colonne basse le corps d'une mince larve dont la tête de femme se pose à la place que doit occuper le chapiteau sur la plateforme.

Et cette face, émaciée, blême, navrante avec ses yeux clos, sa bouche douloureuse et pensive, semble vainement espérer, comme une victime sur un billot, la tombée libératrice d'une invisible hache.

En dépit de sa structure toute moderne, cette figure ramène à travers les siècles, par l'expression profonde, unique des traits, aux oeuvres dolentes du Moyen Age; elle relie avec M. Redon la chaîne interrompue depuis la Renaissance des Bestiaires fantastiques, des Voyants épris du monstre.

Seulement la grande science de la Symbolique Religieuse n'est plus. Dans le domaine du Rêve, l'art demeure seul, en ces temps dont les fאים d'âme sont suffisamment assouvies par l'ingestion des théories des Moritz Wagner et des Darwin.<sup>63</sup>

Just as in his review of 1882, Huysmans places Redon within a historical framework, only in 1889 it is out of the collapse of a

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<sup>63</sup> Huysmans, Le Monstre, 388-92.

specific tradition within that lineage that Redon appears. Huysmans observes that modern man's monsters no longer take the form of beings larger and more powerful than himself, but, more ingeniously, in the shape of the infinitely tiny life-forms revealed by the microscope. This transition is marked by the language of Huysmans' text as well. Until this point, the text is peppered with the colorful names of ancient places and peoples, their gods and their demons; in the remainder of the text, it is the strikingly unfamiliar vocabulary of the laboratory that defines the pantheon of modern monsters, and Huysmans may have hoped that it would echo the classicizing names found throughout Flaubert's novel.

Huysmans then poses the question, "What artist... what painter... what poet... what man..." will depict these monsters? The reply is, of course, Odilon Redon. This extended introduction to Huysmans' discussion of Redon's first two Temptation albums reflects, on the one hand, the critic's growing interest in gothic art, which would lead ultimately to his Trois Églises et Trois Primitifs (1908). On the other hand, the introduction represents a solution to the impossible challenge of a literary transposition of visual images whose sources-- whose very titles-- are lifted directly from another author, that is, Flaubert. The impossibility of this endeavor on the part of the critic, on the occasion of Redon's albums devoted to Flaubert's Temptation is, as we can now see more clearly, a characteristic of these lithographs that is suggested in the formal arrangement of the frontispiece for A

Gustave Flaubert.

In previous albums, the titles of the individual plates had been Redon's own, notably A Edgar Poe (1882), Les Origines (1883), and Hommage à Goya (1885), where the titles actually combine to form prose poems. In the Temptation albums, however, the titles are lifted directly from Flaubert, as they were in the case of Redon's illustrations for Edmond Picard's Le Juré of 1887. Perhaps Huysmans had Picard's book in mind when he encouraged Redon to produce a deluxe album based on Flaubert's Temptation in his letter of autumn 1887 cited earlier in this chapter.

Huysmans' denigration of these albums in his letters to Arij Prins may thus be attributable, in part, to an initial misapprehension of Redon's new stance as a literary-pictorial artist. Huysmans evades the strength of Redon's position in his newly declared relationship to the author he illustrates by upholding his own position as Redon's conduit to the public at large. By setting the terms of the introduction to Le Monstre as a survey of the decline of the monster in art following the pre-Christian era and then the Christian era, and by asking who will translate this tradition into a modern visual language, Huysmans (in the role of flâneur for L'art moderne) reasserts the primacy of his "discovery" of Redon. Huysmans has repeated the tripartite format of Le Monstre in a manner that reinforces his position as critic in this fashion. But Huysmans has reversed his critical position as the transposer of Redon's images into literature; he has instead adapted Redon's imagery to a critical inquiry of a very

personal nature. He has, in a sense, upset the balance achieved in the Hommage à Goya collaboration, by returning to a critical voice which enforces a greater distance between himself and Redon's work.

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Having successfully subsumed Flaubert's text in the two portfolios, the albums' appeal was somewhat limited and its intentions misapprehended outside Redon's close circle of collectors. This may be at least part of the reason that the publishing firm Quantin turned down the project in 1887. This is especially apparent in Redon's correspondence with the Ministry of Fine Arts. On 4 October 1889 and again on October 24, Redon solicited Gustave Larroumet, Directeur des Beaux-Arts, for a grant to cover the expenses of producing A Gustave Flaubert." On November 4, the two letters were forwarded by the Bureau des l'Enseignements et des Musées to the Bureau des Travaux d'Art, which on November 11 sought the advice of Inspecteur des Beaux-Arts Henry Havard. On November 14, Havard sent his response to the Ministre de l'Instruction Publique, des Cultes et des Beaux-Arts:

Even though these drawings present a dose of rare originality, they do not offer, having been separated from the text that they aim to illustrate, an interest of the nature to explain a subscription by the Fine Arts Administration.

Bien que ces dessins présentent une dose d'originalité rare, ils n'offrent pas, étant séparés du texte qu'ils ont pour but d'illustrer, un intérêt de nature à expliquer une souscription de l'Administration des Beaux-

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" That Redon submitted his request for funds solely for A Gustave Flaubert, without mention of the Deman album, indicates a terminus ad quem for any hopes he may ever have had for uniting the two as well as a self-assuredness with regard to the independence and integrity of the second album with regard to the first.

Arts.<sup>65</sup>

An undated draft of Larroumet's letter to Redon reads:

I have the honor of informing you that your drawings meant to illustrate the Temptation of st Anthony by Flaubert have been taken into consideration.

Separated from the text that they refer to, these drawings do not offer sufficient interest to justify a subscription by the Fine Arts Administration. It is therefore not possible to pursue your request and I offer you my regrets.

J'ai l'honneur de vous informer qu'il a été procédé à l'examen de vos dessins destinés à l'illustration de la Tentation de st [sic] Antoine de Flaubert.

Séparés du texte auquel ils se rapportent ces dessins n'offrent pas un intérêt suffisant pour motiver une souscription de l'Administration des Beaux-Arts. Il n'a donc pas paru possible de donner suite à votre demande et je vous en exprime mes regrets.<sup>66</sup>

This letter indicates a presumption of the inability of the wider public to comprehend Redon's suite of lithographs, and locates the source of the problem in the perceived lack of an overt literary framework. In other words, Larroumet was expressing a need to maintain the subordinate role of the "illustrations" within the framework of the text in its entirety. The suite was, in any case, not intended for a large audience. Printed by Becquet and published by Dumont, both Parisian firms, in an edition of only sixty sets, the album was destined for a select audience of collectors in Paris and Brussels.

Representative of this small group is Stéphane Mallarmé, who, like Huysmans, received a pre-publication copy of the album from Redon. In his letter dated 19 December 1888, which is the most

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<sup>65</sup> The correspondence relating to A Gustave Flaubert from Gamboni 1989, 261-62.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 262.

openly laudatory contemporary assessment of either album, the poet wrote to thank and to praise him:

What a gift! I wanted to go to shake your hand Monday, but was and am racked by bad nights. One of these days I will bring you something from myself, but you will lose in the exchange.

The printing, to finish with everything that has nothing to do with your genius and your sure vision, renders the blacks royal like purple, and the whites a singular pallor... truly magic sheets! But, my friend, in them you have mirrored a total mystery that noone could make out. I find still find myself stupefied by this Death, skeleton above, wound up so powerfully that we cannot see where it ends: I don't know what artist has done, or poet dreamed, such an absolute image! and the poor sad cheek asleep on the block, all your distant inventions! Mercy-- don't scare Madame Redon too much...

Quel cadeau! J'ai voulu aller vous serrer la main lundi, mais étais et suis déchiré de mauvaises nuits. Un de ces jours je vous porterai pour ma part quelque chose, mais vous perdrez au change.

Le tirage, pour en finir avec tout ce qui n'est pas votre génie de visionnaire sûr, donne des noirs royaux comme la pourpre et des blancs qu'aucune pâleur... vraiment les magiques feuillets! Mais, mon cher, vous avez miré là tout un mystère, que nul n'entrevoit. Me voici stupéfié encore par cette Mort, squelette en haut, en bas enroulement puissant tel qu'on le devine ne finir: je ne crois pas qu'artiste en eut fait, ou poète rêvé, image ainsi absolue! et la pauvre joue triste endormie au billot, toutes vos lointaines inventions! Merci, ne faites pas trop peur à Madame Redon...<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> LAR, 134; see also notes on 135.

## VI. Conclusion: Retrospection and the End of Printmaking in the 1890s

Odilon Redon was fifty years old in 1890, and as fate would have it, he would continue to live and to work another twenty-six years. After 1900, Redon's printed work was limited to a some single portrait lithographs of intimate friends and a few etchings, but in the 1890s he was still an active printmaker. The '90s is the most baffling period of Redon's artistic activity. After having achieved a reputation as a graphic artist based on his noirs, both drawings and lithographs, he emerged as a highly original pastellist-painter, working in brilliant colors. This shift may be regarded as one of the most striking developments of his artistic biography. I have shown how certain elements of his work as a draftsman support the adoption of printmaking as a related activity and make it a logical step for him to take in his career. But even with hindsight it is relatively difficult to anticipate the changes that would take place in his palette.

In some of his strongest prints of the 1880s Redon raises questions about the relationship between image and text and the nature of authorship. Some of these questions go back to Redon's interest in aspects of the life and work of Baudelaire and Bresdin, two figures central to his understanding of the cultural climate in which he matured. I have argued that Redon conceived of the frontispiece, its site, and its function as a field of inquiry suited to these questions. Narrow though this field may be in the broader context of his life and work, it was nevertheless rich in

personal associations for him.

Strictly speaking, 1890 is a convenient but slightly arbitrary designation with which to begin this chapter. The integral role played by Redon in the literary publishing renaissance which took hold in Brussels lasted from 1886 to 1892. The pièces modernes, or single prints, which Redon had initiated with Profil de Lumière (M. 61) [Fig. 48] in 1886 continued unabated through the 1890s. But with the album Songes (1891) ends a string of independently authored or conceived portfolios that had begun with Dans le Rêve in 1879. And with Songes begins a steady stream of prints largely retrospective in import.

The last albums, the three which followed Songes-- La Tentation de Saint Antoine, third series (1896), La Maison Hantée (1896), and L'Apocalypse de Saint-Jean (1899)-- each contains a title-page embellished with a lithographic design [Figs. 94 (M. 134), 95 (M. 160), 96 (M. 173)]. But they lack the qualities found in previous works, that is, attributes which contribute substantially to the impact of the album as a whole. In the later examples, the vignette on each title-page is largely decorative, secondary to the presentation of the title information.

Songes was the last album to be made available by Laurent Dumont, who had issued every Parisian portfolio since Les Origines in 1883, and it was printed in an edition of eighty. It was dedicated "A la mémoire de mon Ami Armand Clavaud." Following the deaths of Bresdin in 1885 and Hennequin in 1888, Clavaud's suicide in December 1890 must have given Redon a more profound perspective

on how far he had come since youth, when the two friends had discovered Baudelaire together.

Aspects of Songes are characteristic of the portfolios Redon had produced since Dans le Rêve in 1879, but which would disappear in his final albums. The album is economical, with only six plates and a cover unadorned save for the title information; in this regard it looks back to La Nuit (1886), which was, as I have argued, a memorial to Bresdin, whom Redon had met in the company of Clavaud. Songes was the last of Redon's portfolios in which a relative frugality in the number of plates is synonymous with an overall literary-pictorial structure. Taken together with its function as a memorial, the album imparts immortality to Clavaud, and does so by embodying the effect of his memory on Redon. Historically, a work of stature of this kind is typically associated in the plastic arts with painting or sculpture, and in literature with the book or poem. But a facet of Redon's genius is illuminated in the means by which he adapted a relatively novel format, the artist's portfolio, to his approach as a literary-pictorial artist. In this, Redon's albums reveal an appreciation of Baudelaire's prose poems, an aspect of which is his apprehension of their suitability to the novel format of the feuilleton.

Among Redon's contemporaries who also show the impact of Baudelaire, Manet and Fantin-Latour seem especially notable because they also produced portfolios of prints. Fantin personally encouraged and facilitated Redon's initial foray into lithography, and his Wagner lithographs show him to have had parallel musical

interests. But, as we have already seen in his response to the Contes grotesques project in 1882, Redon may have considered the example of Manet to be particularly relevant. More recently, among Edmond Deman's first publications, contemporaneous with his initial commissions from Redon, was Mallarmé's translation entitled Poèmes d'Edgar Poe (1888), which is dedicated to Manet and which includes Manet's image of the Raven from his 1875 portfolio on its cover and, inside, a reproduction of his portrait of Poe.<sup>1</sup> In dedicating this translation of Poe to Manet, Mallarmé was preceded by Baudelaire, the other great translator of Poe into French, with his dedication of the prose poem La Corde to Manet in 1864.<sup>2</sup> This may be considered part of the pre-history of Redon's approach to the lithographic portfolio as a novel yet serious vehicle for his memorial to Clavaud.

Plate I, entitled ...C'était un voile, une empreinte (M. 110) shows Clavaud's portrait, a single tear falling from his left eye, in sudarium, an obvious reference to St. Veronicas's vision of Christ [Fig. 97] which lacks, however, the crown of thorns.<sup>3</sup> The portrait appears on a kind of curtain hanging in a window or

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<sup>1</sup> See Luc and Adrienne Fontainas, "Biographie et bibliographie d'Edmond Deman," Bulletin du bibliophile, part 1, 1986, no. 3: 341-46.

<sup>2</sup> La Corde was first published in Le Figaro, 7 February 1864 (see Chapter II). The dedication to Manet is maintained in the initial posthumous edition of Petits Poèmes en Prose (1869).

<sup>3</sup> Ariane Durand, "Odilon Redon et Armand Clavaud ou les étroits contacts entre la botanique, l'art et la philosophie," Revue historique de Bordeaux et du département de la Gironde (1975) 150-82.

doorway. In a study for the plate [Fig. 98], now in the Louvre, Clavaud's visage had been depicted as a head placed on a column, without a tear,<sup>4</sup> in an image that Redon must have realized was too chilling. The sense of loss promulgated by the revised image is thus more universal, even as it is made more colloquial in its inclusion of the portrait on a curtain rather than the more conventional handkerchief supported by angels. Furthermore, the pictorial change is reflected in the print's title, in which the word empreinte alludes to both the subject and the medium. In this way, the print acts as a kind of frontispiece for the portfolio. In plate II, entitled Et la-bas l'idole astrale, l'apothéose (M. 111) [Fig. 99], the image of the hunter may allude to Sagittarius, a reference to Clavaud's death in early December.<sup>5</sup>

The penultimate plate, Pèlerin du monde sublunaire (M. 114) [Fig. 100], refers ultimately to Clavaud's research with the microscope, in a kind of landscape that by now has its equivalent in Redon's repertoire of motifs. The neck and the head of the horse are a variation on Pégase Captif (M. 102) [Fig. 101], a pièce moderne of 1889 which was not published until 1891.<sup>6</sup> The mountains

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<sup>4</sup> Louvre inv. no. RF 40513, cf. Roseline Bacou, [Musée du Louvre] La donation Ari et Suzanne Redon (Paris: RMN, 1984) 183, cat. no. 455, catalogued as Tête coupée sur une colonne.

<sup>5</sup> Sven Sandström, Le monde imaginaire d'Odilon Redon, étude iconologique (Lund: Gleerup, 1955) 89.

<sup>6</sup> The edition size was supposed to be one hundred, but only as many as twenty-five were printed. These were offered simultaneously by Dumont and Durand-Ruel in Paris as well as Deman in Brussels. See André Mellerio, Odilon Redon (1913; New York: Da Capo, 1968) 106, cat. no. 102.

which rise up along the left margin contain the faint suggestion of a face, in the vein of the drawings on which were based L'Idole, the frontispiece for Emile Verhaeren's Les Soirs. The rays of lunar light recall the final plate of the first Temptation series, ...Et dans le disque même du soleil rayonne la face de Jésus-Christ.

The sixth and final plate, Le Jour (M. 115) [Fig. 102], is the strongest in the portfolio and one of the most remarkable in Redon's oeuvre. The promise of day following the series of images representing night and artificial light comes as a relief. The universality of this image is achieved by its very simplicity, and in the context of Clavaud's interests forms a counterpoint to the final plate from the first Temptation.

Thematically, Songes is similar to Dans le Rêve. In short, the first album had been a kind of manifesto, drawing the viewer beyond the quantifiable world of the visible by means of a loosely collected series of ten images. In the present album, Redon employed a subtle and quasi-literary structure that he had developed in the intervening twelve years. The title Songes evokes the earlier one, but its emphasis is less on the act of dreaming and more on the stuff of dreams. Le Jour actually reprises the frontispiece for Dans le Rêve [Fig. 18] in certain regards. Formally, each consists of an overall arrangement of broad, geometric areas of black, chiaroscuro, and white, the last being a window of sorts. In Dans le Rêve there is a figurative window, showing a "view" that functions pictorially by upsetting the sense

of the image, given the perpendicular setting of the words on the frontispiece. In Le Jour, the window is a literal one, with a dual function: it admits light, enabling the illumination of the cell-like orbs which float in the interior space, and it offers a surprisingly limited view onto the tree immediately outside. The tree in Dans le Rêve is clearly dead, while the delicate leaves in Le Jour suggest spring, re-inforcing the cyclical promise of day following the darkness in the preceding plates. In 1892, Redon would give a more expansive view of a similarly rendered tree in the lithograph L'Arbre (M. 120) [Fig. 103]; in the way this lithograph reprises Le Jour, it may be considered a pendant to Le Liseur (M. 119), another lithograph of 1892, to be discussed below.

Both the Dans le Rêve frontispiece and Le Jour rely upon literary conceits for much of their impact. This had been a novelty in 1879, but in 1891 much of the effect is based on a prior familiarity with Redon's imagery. As Redon's initial lithograph, Dans le Rêve's frontispiece lends itself to a reading as the sum of its parts, but by contrast Le Jour presumes a degree of experience on the part of the viewer which allows for a relatively immediate visual impact.

Songes employs a literary-pictorial idiom honed over the course of twelve years in numerous portfolios and collaborative publications. Yet there is nothing entirely new here. It is retrospective in every regard, and this speaks to an impending exhaustion of possibilities. Drawing from his stock of drawings, Redon had until now been continuously inspired by literary sources

and events to innovate in each successive project-- writing captions or using those of others, numbering plates or leaving their sequence up to the collector, including a frontispiece overtly or imparting its function to an interior plate. This had been most clearly the case in A Gustave Flaubert, where all the possibilities of innovation employed in previous projects came to a head, in ways that spoke most clearly to the issues surrounding the artist's career, and the role printmaking played in it. The frontispiece had frequently been approached as an occasion for incorporating an expanded set of associations in such projects. Even in Songes, where technically there was no frontispiece, the general economy of means simply meant that the role of the frontispiece would be subsumed into the first interior plate.

In addition to the portfolio and the frontispiece, Redon introduced the publication of single prints with Profil de Lumière in 1886. These could be issued in a variety of ways, whether distributed by the artist himself, by one or more dealers or publishers, or in periodical publications. Between 1886 and 1899, the year of Redon's final portfolio, L'Apocalypse de St. Jean, Redon issued thirty-four single lithographs. Of these, nine were published in periodicals; ten were made available by one of, or combinations of the following: Laurent Dumont, Galeries Durand-Ruel, or Gustave Pellet in Paris and Edmond Deman in Brussels; fourteen were apparently self-published; one was a menu design for a banquet held by the Lithographes français in April 1887.

The prints published in periodicals are of interest here

because, although they are not frontispieces, they have symbolic predecessors in Baudelaire's prose poems, as presented in Chapter II. In the previous chapter, I argued that as late as 1889, in A Gustave Flaubert, Redon could not help but give symbolic form to certain pressures which he perceived as weighing on him with regard to his role as an artist who incorporated commercial publication into his means of expression. Since the 1860s he had developed complementary personal iconologies based on at least two themes, St. Anthony and Faust, and these themes had worked themselves into his prints almost subliminally, until their relatively overt expression in the frontispiece for A Gustave Flaubert [Fig. 17]. Baudelaire, who wrote in "Mon coeur mis à nu" that "there is in every man at every moment, two simultaneous tendencies-- the one toward God, the other toward Satan (Il y a dans tout homme, à toute heure, deux postulacions simultanées, l'une vers Dieu, l'autre vers Satan)," was a source for this line of thinking.<sup>7</sup> I put forth the possibility that Redon responded to certain of Baudelaire's prose poems, issued en feuilleton, with an eye toward their effect on the reader in the context of the periodicals in which they appeared.

As we saw in Chapter II, Baudelaire's prose poems appeared in periodicals of every stripe, including journals devoted to poetry and literary criticism such as La Revue fantaisiste (1861), which also published some etchings by Bresdin. As a parallel development

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<sup>7</sup> Charles Baudelaire, "Mon coeur mis à nu," Oeuvres complètes, ed. Marcel A. Ruff (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1968), 632; cf. and trans. Donald Fanger, Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 256.

in the explosion of the press at the time was the rise of fine arts periodicals. The Gazette des Beaux-Arts, founded in 1859, was the first periodical in France to deal exclusively with the visual arts. Some numbers, published in a deluxe edition, contained prints, for example, the 1 April 1875 issue, which included 750 copies of Corot's landscape etching Souvenir of Tuscany. Another example is the Société des Aquafortistes, organized in 1862, which issued monthly portfolios of etchings until 1867. What all of these have in common is etchings. Indeed, the etching revival which took place in the 1850s and '60s set a precedent for the lithography revival which took place in the 1890s. The etching revival was part of Redon and his contemporaries' youth; many of them participated in the lithography revival and Redon even anticipated it, but much of the vitality of '90s print culture comes from a younger generation of artists, critics, dealers, and publishers.

As Redon turned increasingly to color in his work in this decade, he was no doubt responding to trends around him. But part of the reason for his continued application to lithography must be attributable to increasing attention to the medium among artists of the younger generation, art impresarios, critics, collectors, and the ever-expanding popular press. In 1886, Redon had contributed the lithograph Brunnhilde (M. 68) [Fig. 104] to La Revue wagnérienne. This was followed in 1887 with Cime Noire (M. 69) [Fig. 105], which was inserted into La Revue indépendante. The former was printed in an edition of 300 copies, the latter, 400.

Since Redon's self-published lithographs never exceeded an edition size of 80, more frequently 25-50, this was a helpful way of reaching a broad audience.

By the 1890s, however, new opportunities arose. In 1894, following a two-year hiatus since the appearance of his last major printing efforts with Deman, Redon was invited to participate in André Marty's periodical L'Estampe Originale. Like the Société des Acquafortistes, Marty wished to showcase belles épreuves by contemporary artists, but he invited any medium and both color and black-and-white; the edition size was limited to 100. Redon's lithograph Cellule Auriculaire (M. 126) [Fig. 106] was included in the second livraison in 1893, and in 1895 his lithograph Le Buddha (M. 132) [Fig. 107] appeared in the ninth and final issue.<sup>8</sup> Marty represented a new breed of art publisher. Thadée and Alfred Natanson, for example, who had been involved in supporting print publications in the past (notably Degas et al's ill-starred Le Jour et la Nuit) put out La Revue blanche, which included Redon's Cheval ailé (M. 127; 1894) [Fig. 108]. In 1898, Redon's lithograph Ari (M. 170) was intended for, but never actually included in L'Estampe et l'affiche. The editor of L'Estampe et l'affiche was André Mellerio, for whose book Le Mouvement idéaliste en peinture (1896) Redon produced a frontispiece (M. 159) [Fig. 109]. Mellerio would

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<sup>8</sup> Le Buddha included the following caption from La Tentation de Saint Antoine: Buddha: On m'a mené dans les écoles. J'en savais plus que les docteurs. Auguste Clot, the printer, would print half of the lithographs to be included in Redon's La Tentation de Saint Antoine (third series), to be published the following year.

go on to write the first catalogue raisonné of Redon's prints in 1913.

But perhaps the greatest impressario of prints in the '90s was Ambroise Vollard, whose influence in this regard was to last well into the twentieth century, bridging the Impressionist generation with the innovations of Picasso and beyond.

In February 1896, Redon issued his third album of lithographs based on Flaubert's Tentation de Saint-Antoine. This portfolio included twenty-four lithographs, including the frontispiece. The history of this publication remains a subject of some confusion. One hundred sets were printed, at Redon's expense, with the plates variously printed by Clot and Blanchard in Paris. Although once again the lithographs were issued with titles taken from Flaubert, but without the complete text, this time Redon secured five subscriptions from the government. Fifteen sold immediately. Apparently subsequent sales were slow, however, and Redon eventually sought an outside publisher for the remaining sets; Vollard purchased them in 1902.<sup>9</sup> Redon may have had Vollard in mind as early as the album's original publication date.

In that year, 1896, Vollard included a lithograph by Redon, Vieux Chevalier (M. 158) [Fig. 110], in his Album des Peintres-

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<sup>9</sup> See Susan Pinsky and Marc Rosen, Prints and Portfolios by Odilon Redon, dealer catalogue (New York and London, 1997), cat. no. 26.

A further edition, in deluxe format and with variations from the 1896 album, was published by Vollard in 1938, twenty-two years after Redon's death. See Dario Gamboni, La Plume et le pinceau: Odilon Redon et la littérature (Paris: Editions de minuit, 1989) 188-89; cited hereafter as "Gamboni 1989".

Graveurs, which was published in an edition of 100. The album consisted of twenty-two prints by artists including Bonnard, Denis, Fantin-Latour, Munch, Renoir, Vallotton, and Vuillard.<sup>10</sup> This was followed in 1897 by Béatrice (M. 168) [Fig. 111], a rare effort in color lithography, which was included in L'Album d'estampes originales de la Galerie Vollard, the follow-up to the previous year's album. In 1898, Redon produced four lithographs for an edition of Mallarmé's poem Un coup de dés [jamais n'abolira le hasard] (M. 173-175)-- one of the lithographic stones broke, however, and the edition never came to pass.<sup>11</sup>

Vollard published Redon's final album, L'Apocalypse de Saint-Jean, in 1899. This is a collection of thirteen lithographs, including the cover-frontispiece, and was published in an edition of 100. In terms of its subject, this work is a logical follow-up to La Tentation de Saint-Antoine at the fin-de-siècle.

In devoting three albums to the Temptation, Redon had made clear his commitment to the theme, broadly stated, of good versus evil. In the course of this extended undertaking, he had defined a role for himself as a literary-pictorial artist, by exploring the dynamics of visually interpreting a contemporary re-telling of an ancient story. From the first series of 1888 to the second series of 1889, Redon had introduced a number of subtle shifts which suggest that the composition of each album was integral to its

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<sup>10</sup> Una E. Johnson, Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur: Prints, Books, Bronzes, exhibition catalogue and catalogue raisonné (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1977) 19.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid 145, cat. no. 105.

content. For example, as I have argued, in reducing the number of plates from eleven to seven, the frontispiece took on an immensely charged role within the suite in a manner which invites a close reading of the image. For the 1896 Temptation, however, the number of plates has been expanded to an unwieldy twenty-four, and the title-page/frontispiece [Fig. 94] is utterly lacking in the complexities found in the one for the previous Temptation suite.

For the final plate of the first series, Redon had taken as a point of departure the penultimate line of Flaubert's book: ...Et dans le disque-même du soleil, rayonne la face de Jésus-Christ [Fig. 89]. In the second suite Redon innovated, creating an image [Fig. 88] which leads the reader to return to the title-page/frontispiece, thus avoiding a duplication. For the final plate in the third series, however, Redon re-utilized Flaubert's words from the first suite, something he never did before, only he added a phrase from earlier in the passage, so that it reads in full: Le jour enfin parait.... Et dans le disque même du soleil, rayonne la face de Jésus-Christ (M. 157) [Fig. 112]. The prefacing words provide additional context for the image, which now recalls as well the dawn in the final plates of the albums La Nuit and Songes. Rather than show Christ in the form of pantocrator, He is shown in death, crowned in thorns. In Redon's 1896 interpretation of the vision, then, Christ is shown not as a judge but as a martyr and saviour. The shift represents a difference in St. Anthony's experience of the vision of Christ, recounted in full by Flaubert as follows:

Day at last dawns; and like the raised curtains of a tabernacle, golden clouds furling into large scrolls uncover the sky.

There in the middle, inside the very disc of the sun, radiates the face of Jesus Christ.

Ant[h]ony makes the sign of the cross and returns to his prayers.

Le jour enfin paraît; et comme les rideaux d'un tabernacle qu'on relève, des nuages d'or en s'enroulant à larges volutes découvrent le ciel.

Tout au milieu, et dans le disque même du soleil rayonne la face de Jésus-Christ.

Antoine fait le signe de la croix et se remet en prières.<sup>12</sup>

Anthony's returning to prayer in the final line takes on a different sense in the context of the third suite's final plate than it does in the second's. It is truer to the book, perhaps, but less emphatically original as a formal element of the suite.

Returning now to L'Apocalypse de Saint-Jean, the timeliness of the subject for the last year of the nineteenth-century is telling, and the concept for the album must coincide with Redon's later reflections on the theme of the temptation of St. Anthony. The apocalypse ushers in the phase of final judgement, in which the consequences of the battle between good and evil are resolved. In this way, the album is retrospective in character, and as such is consistent with other aspects of Redon's printmaking in the '90s.

Apart from lithography, Redon etched sporadically after the 1860's: four etchings ca. 1880, four ca. 1886-1888, seven ca. 1891-ca. 1893, and three additional etchings in ca. 1899-1914.<sup>13</sup> In

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<sup>12</sup> Gustave Flaubert, The Temptation of St. Anthony, trans. Kitty Mrosovsky (New York: Penguin, 1987) 232. French edition ed. Édouard Maynal (Paris: Editions Garnier, 1954) 276.

<sup>13</sup> Sharon Harrison, The Etchings of Odilon Redon, catalogue raisonné (New York: Da Capo, 1986) xxii-xxiv.

1886, he may have been inspired by the death of the etcher Bresdin the previous year, as I have argued was the case with his lithographic album La Nuit. In 1891, Redon contributed the etching Passage d'une âme (M. 21, H. 25) [Fig. 113] as a frontispiece for Adrien Remacle's La Passante, roman d'une âme. Redon must have met Remacle, Director of La Revue contemporaine, through the late Hennequin. The memory of Hennequin takes on added significance in 1891, the date of the album Songes, dedicated as it was to the memory of Redon's other great friend Armand Clavaud.

As late as 1892, Redon incorporated a likeness of Bresdin in one of his greatest works, the lithograph Le Liseur (M. 119) [Fig. 114], much of whose impact is due to the web of personal associations which it represents. The memory of Bresdin had played an important role in the album Songes (1891), where elements recall La Nuit (1886), which was an anonymous memorial to the unnamed Bresdin.

A source for Le Liseur is Rembrandt's etching St. Jerome in a Dark Chamber (1642) [Fig. 115], in the effects of etching achieved through techniques intrinsic to lithography, in elements of the composition, and in the subject itself, although Redon does not identify his reader by name. The content of the lithograph thus ties Bresdin and Redon to Rembrandt, who according to Redon was "the greatest master besides Leonardo. He gave moral life to shadows, just as Michelangelo gave it to sculpture."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See Ted Gott, The Enchanted Stone: The Graphic Worlds of Odilon Redon, exhibition catalogue (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1990) 78-79, cat. nos. 21-22.

While the prominence given the window in Le Liseur calls to mind Le Jour, the final plate from Songes, here it does not function as a view to the exterior, but to admit light to an interior, both illuminating the sitter and enabling him to read. The functional difference is telling, since the hatching used in the rendering of the light may be read as a kind of homage to Rembrandt's means of illuminating Jerome, who is Bresdin's prototype here.

Bresdin's connection to Jerome can be further strengthened. Bresdin made an undated etching whose subject has been identified as Jerome Reading [Fig. 116], which may be a self-portrait as a hermit.<sup>15</sup> In addition, the absence in Le Liseur of Jerome's frequent companion, the lion, may perhaps have been filled by Redon's recollection of Bresdin's Bordeaux address at the time of their first meeting, in Rue Fosse-aux-Lions, or the Street of the Lion's Den.

As in the A Gustave Flaubert frontispiece, Redon has combined the features of one figure (Bresdin) with the characteristics of another (Jerome), resulting in a kind of synthesis. In the earlier print, this was a synthesis of fundamentally opposed thematic elements (St. Anthony/ Faust) and compositional elements (image/ text) which represented polarities of the artist's conception of himself. In Le Liseur, however, the associations which are at its source are not polarized but collapsed. It is as though, in

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<sup>15</sup> Dirk Van Gelder, Rodolphe Bresdin: Catalogue raisonné de l'oeuvre gravé, 2 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976) II:64-65, cat. no. 98.

approaching the lithographic stone, the biographical issues addressed in the A Gustave Flaubert frontispiece in 1889 were no longer relevant in quite the same way in 1892.

In the new century, printmaking would never reclaim the importance it had achieved in Redon's oeuvre in the previous twenty years. What is certain is that, as an outgrowth of his work as a draftsman, prints had lost their relevance. Not only was Redon now working in color primarily, but his inventory of charcoals was severely depleted, a consequence of the success he had achieved largely by means of disseminating them as lithographs. Redon's technique, in Le Juré, for example, had been to delve into his stock of noirs for images called to mind by Picard's text, and to proceed by working these images up into a suite of lithographs.

As the prints became increasingly retrospective in their autobiographical associations, the role played by memory and association in the piecing together of a suite was thus interrupted by gaps in the inventory. As Redon wrote to the collector André Bonger in 1901, "The noirs, where are they now?" (Les noirs, où sont-ils maintenant?).<sup>16</sup>

With the appearance of Dans le Rêve in 1879, Redon chose a path which required him to discover for himself and then to master a market for his unusual work. In the sphere of literature and publishing, he had been preceded by Baudelaire, and the various

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<sup>16</sup> Odilon Redon to André Bonger, letter of 17 January 1901 in Lettres d'Odilon Redon, published by his family with a preface by Marius-Ary Leblond (Paris-Brussels: G. van Oest, 1923) 44, cf. Gamboni 1989, 170.

forms of publication with which Redon experimented show a similar degree of courage to negotiate these uncharted waters. Bresdin had been less successful in bringing his work to the marketplace, incapable of incorporating its demands into the business of printmaking. The example of the feuilleton constituted one element of the cultural and commercial backdrop whereby Redon was able to apprehend the potential for a novel but viable medium in the form of the artist's portfolio. These albums, and the prints he made for books, allowed him to uncompromisingly extend the creative process brought to bear in his drawings, and, equally important, gave him an outlet for his literary aspirations. Thus, an important part of his legacy is his projection of a literary-pictorial identity, in which the balance is achieved by wedding the forces of the marketplace to the creative possibilities suggested to him by the album format.

Illustrations

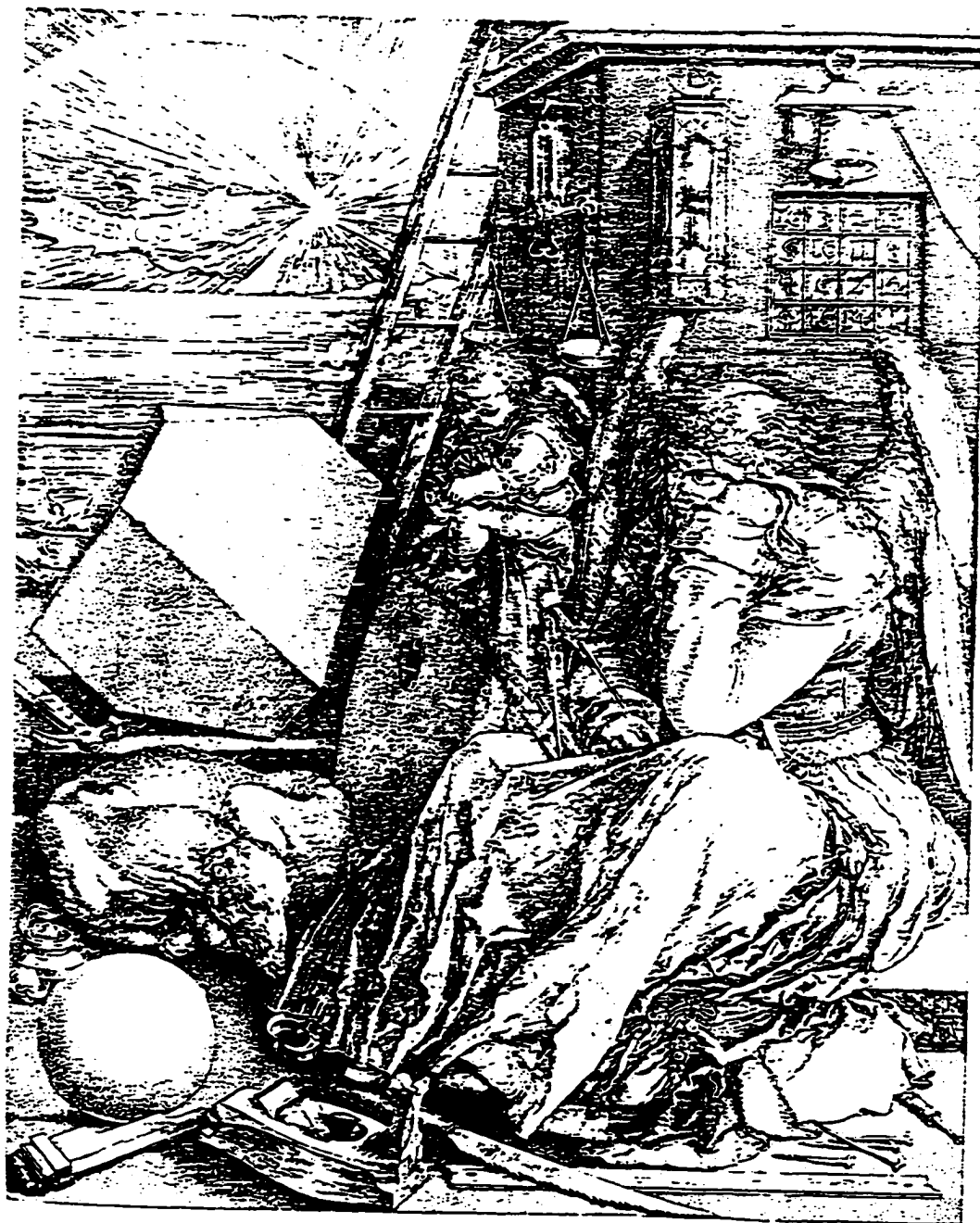


Fig. 1. Albrecht Dürer, Melencolia I, engraving, 1514.

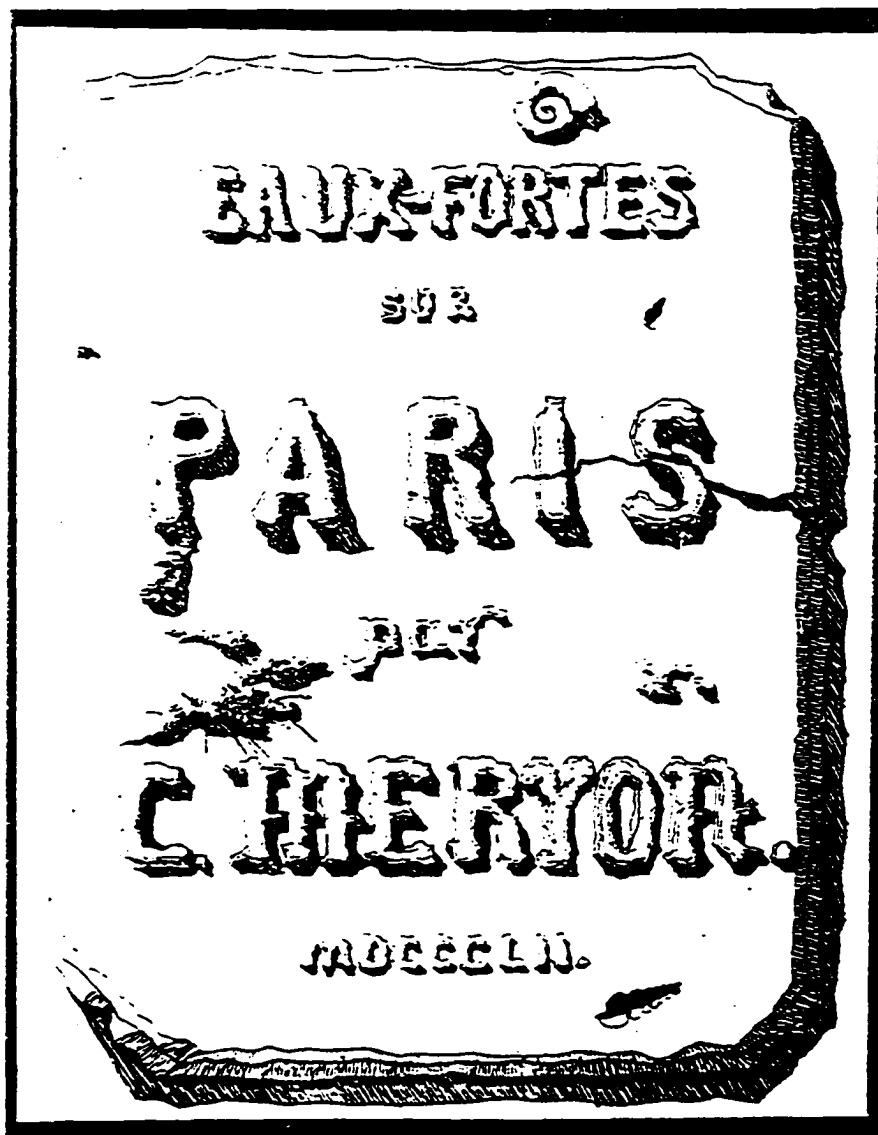


Fig. 2. Charles Meryon, Title-page from Eaux-fortes sur Paris, etching, 1852. New York Public Library.



Fig. 3. Edouard Manet, Frontispiece from Collection de huit eaux-fortes, sujets divers, etching, 1862. First version. Print Collection. Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs. The New York Public Library. Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundation.



Fig. 4. Manet, Frontispiece from Collection de huit eaux-fortes, sujets divers, etching, 1862. Second version. Print Collection. Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs. The New York Public Library. Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundation.

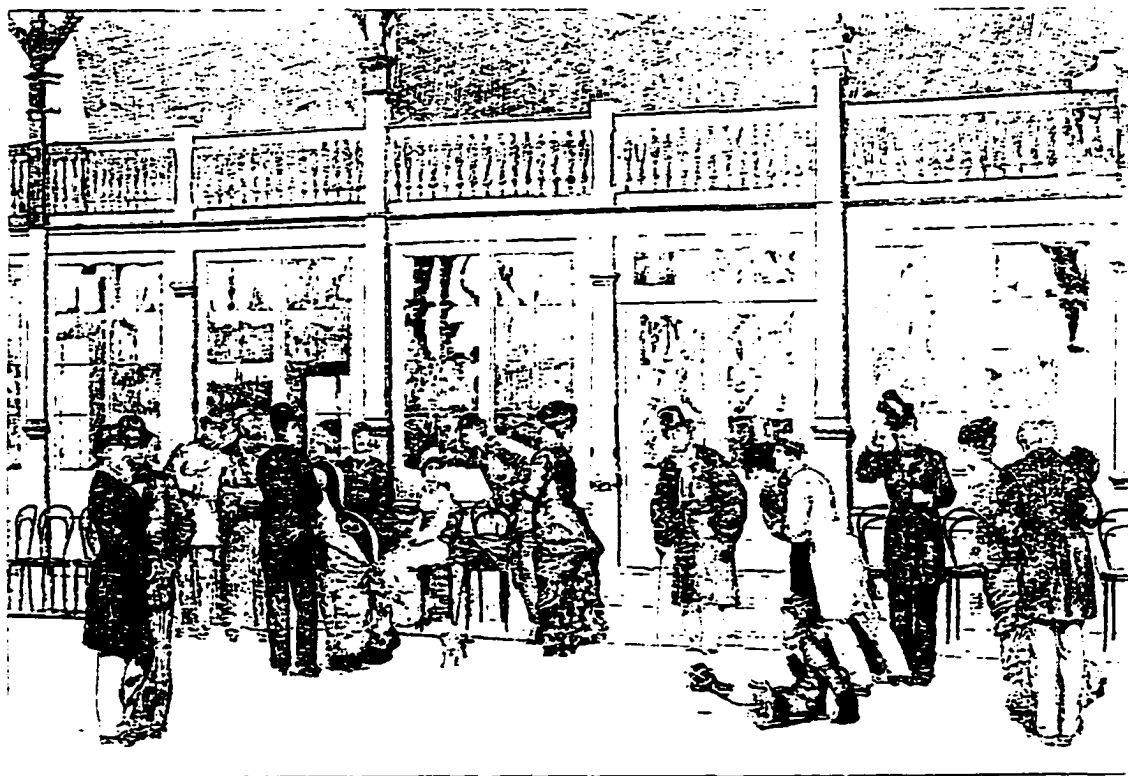


Fig. 5. Max Klinger, Place, Plate I from A Glove, etching, 1881.



Fig. 6. Klunger, Action, Plate II from A Glove, etching, 1881.



Fig. 7. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Moulin Rouge: La Goulue, color lithographic poster, 1891.



Fig. 8. Toulouse-Lautrec, Title-page on top cover from *Elles*, color lithograph, 1896. Fogg Art Museum (M 13,497), Cambridge.

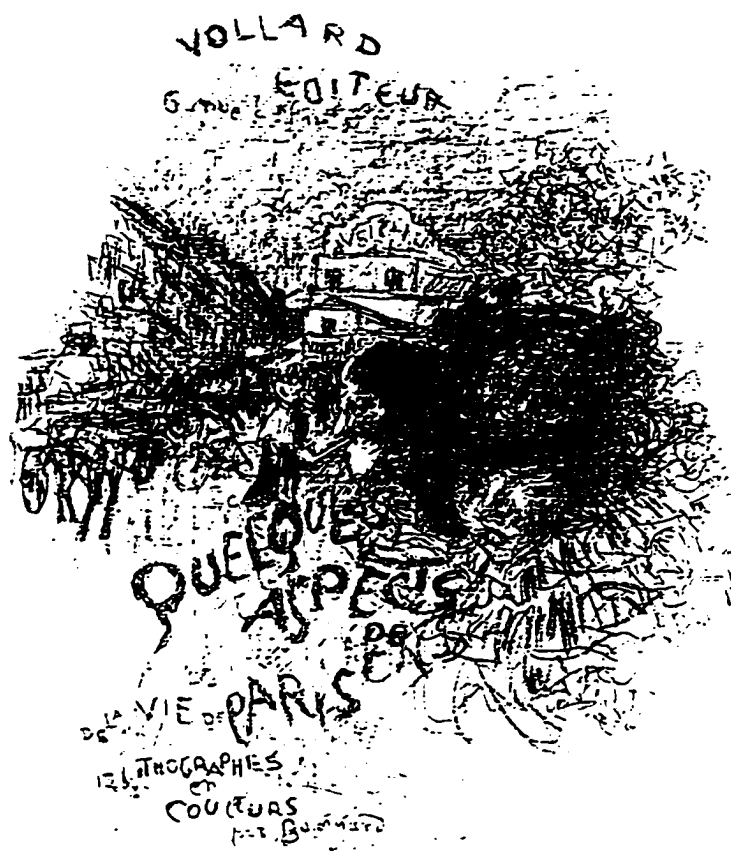


Fig. 9. Pierre Bonnard, Frontispiece-Title page from Quelques aspects de la vie de Paris, color lithograph, 1895. Fogg Art Museum (M 13,697), Cambridge.



Fig. 10. Edouard Vuillard, Frontispiece-Title page on top cover from Paysages et intérieurs, color lithograph, 1899. Fogg Art Museum (M 13, 602), Cambridge.

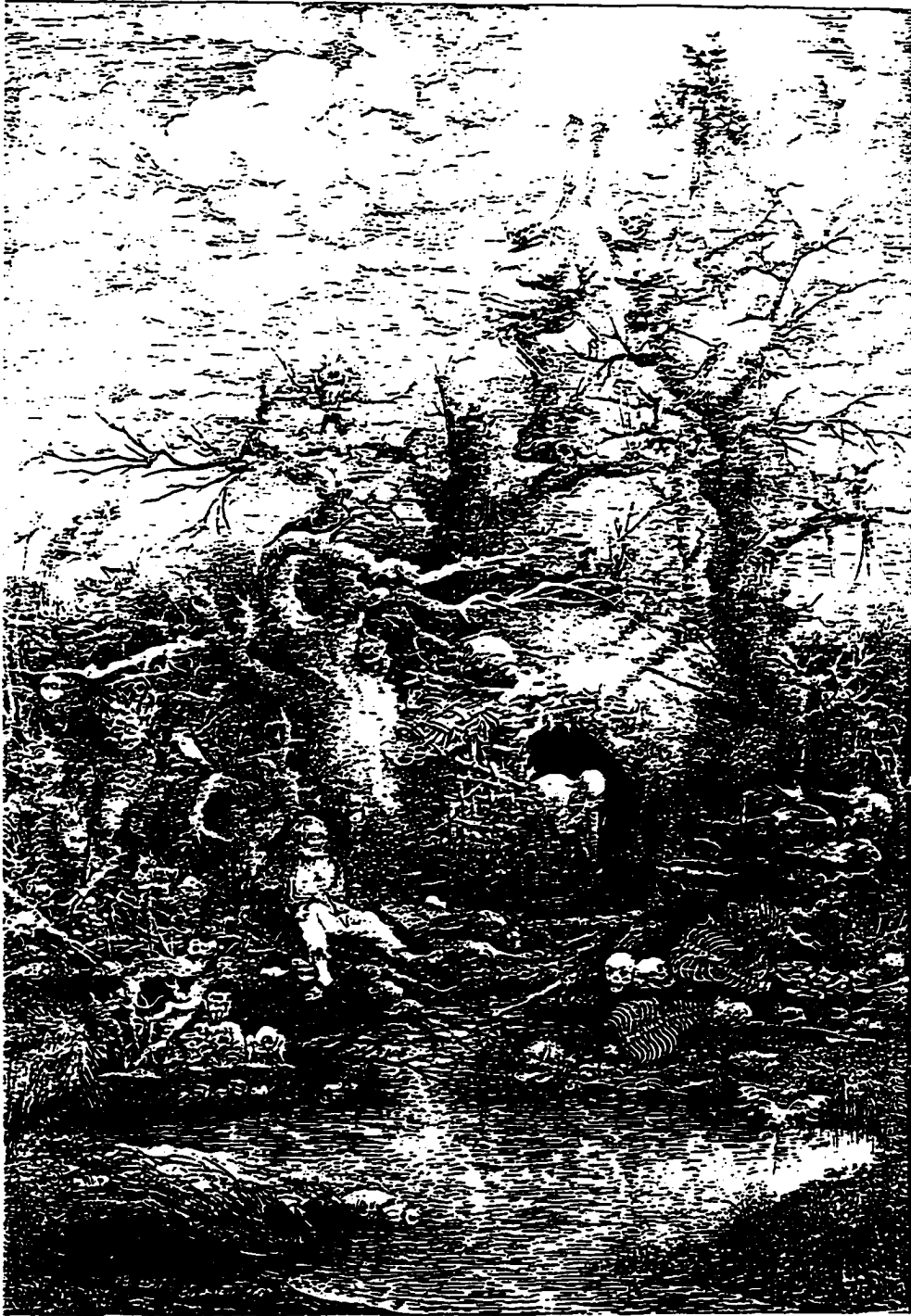


Fig. 11. Rodolphe Bresdin, La Comédie de la Mort (V.G.84), lithograph, 1854.



Fig. 12. Bresdin, La Tentation de saint Antoine (V.G.75), etching, 1849.



Fig. 13. Bresdin, La Tentation de saint Antoine (V.G.77), etching, c.1849-51.



Fig. 14. Bresdin, La Tentation de saint Antoine (V.G.78), etching, c. 1849-51.



Fig. 15. Bresdin, Saint Antoine et la Mort (V.G.80), etching, 1851.



Fig. 16. Bresdin, Le Bon Samaritain (V.G.100), lithograph, 1861.

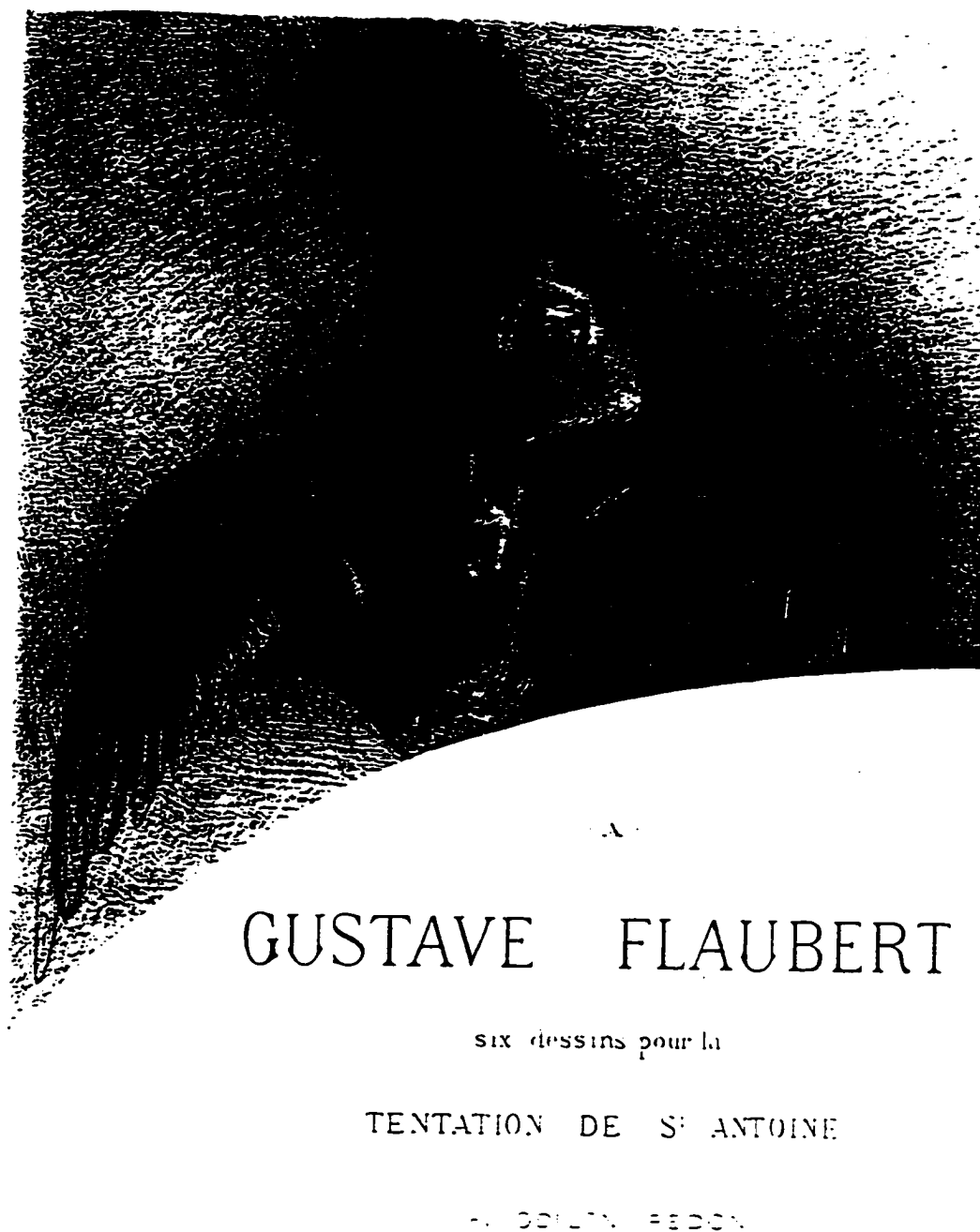


Fig. 17. Redon, Frontispiece-Title page from A Gustave Flaubert (M.94), lithograph, 1889. Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis.



Fig. 18. Redon, Frontispiece-Title page on top cover from Dans le Rêve (M.26), lithograph, 1879.



Fig. 19. Redon, Eclosion, plate I from Dans le rêve (M.27), lithograph, 1879.



Fig. 20. Redon, Germination, Plate II from Dans le rêve (M.28), lithograph, 1879.



Fig. 21. Redon, La Roue, Plate III from Dans le rêve (M.29), lithograph, 1879.

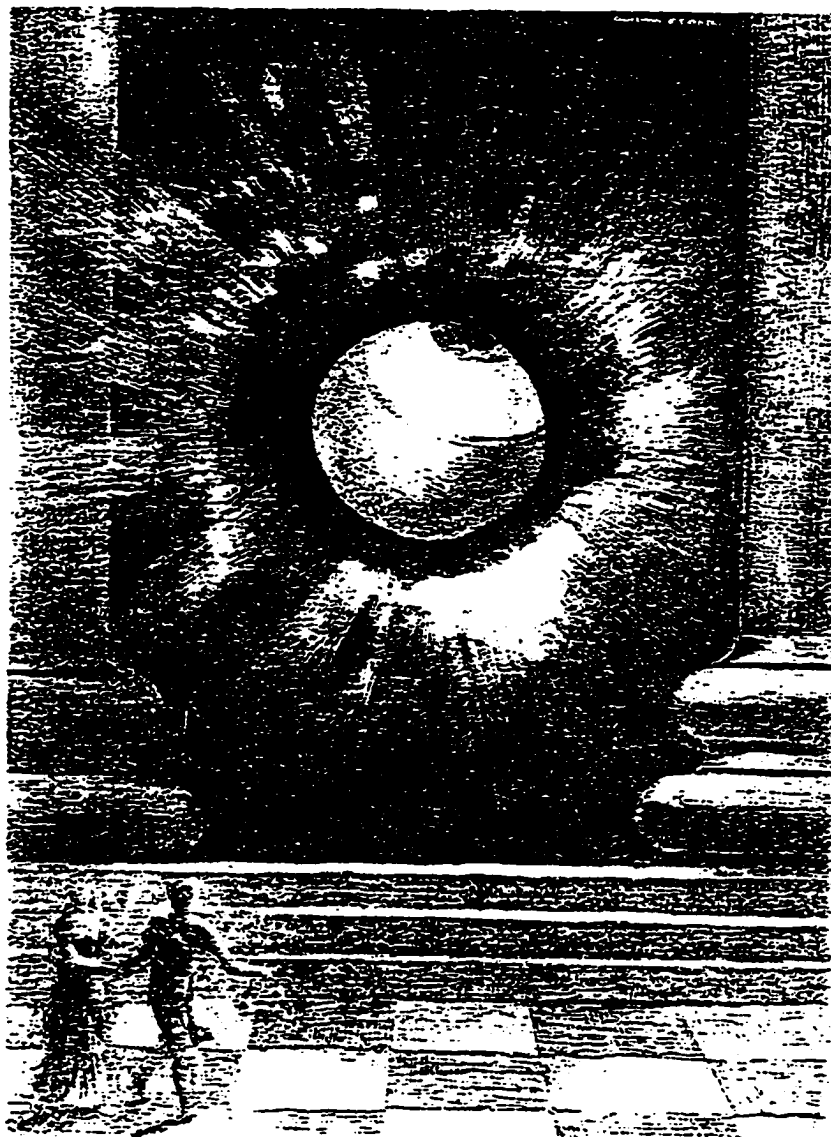


Fig. 22. Redon, Vision, Plate VIII from Dans le rêve (M.34), lithograph, 1879.



Fig. 23. Redon, Angel and Demon, charcoal, 1877. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Bordeaux.



Fig. 24. Camille Corot, Dante and Virgil, oil on canvas, 1859.  
Museum of Fine Arts (75.2), Boston.



Fig. 25. Redon, Dante and Virgil, charcoal, 1865. Private collection, New York.



Fig. 26. Redon, Mephistopheles, charcoal, 1877. The Thaw Collection, The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.



Fig. 27. Redon, Arbre dénudé. Médoc, pencil, c. 1868. Musée du Louvre (RF 40713), Paris.

# VOYAGE OU IL VOUS PLAIRA

PAR M.M.  
 - TONY JOHANNOT -  
 - ALFRED DE MUSSET -  
 - P.J. STAHL -

33 LIVRES A  
 30 CENTIMES  
 10<sup>f</sup>

L'OUVRAGE COMPLET



J. HETZEL ÉDITEUR.  
 ON SOUSCRIT ICI.

Fig. 28. Tony Johannot, poster for Voyage où il vous plaira, lithographic poster, 1843. Musée de la Publicité (8 914), Paris.



Fig. 29. Redon, Frontispiece from A Edgar Poe (M.37), lithograph, 1882.

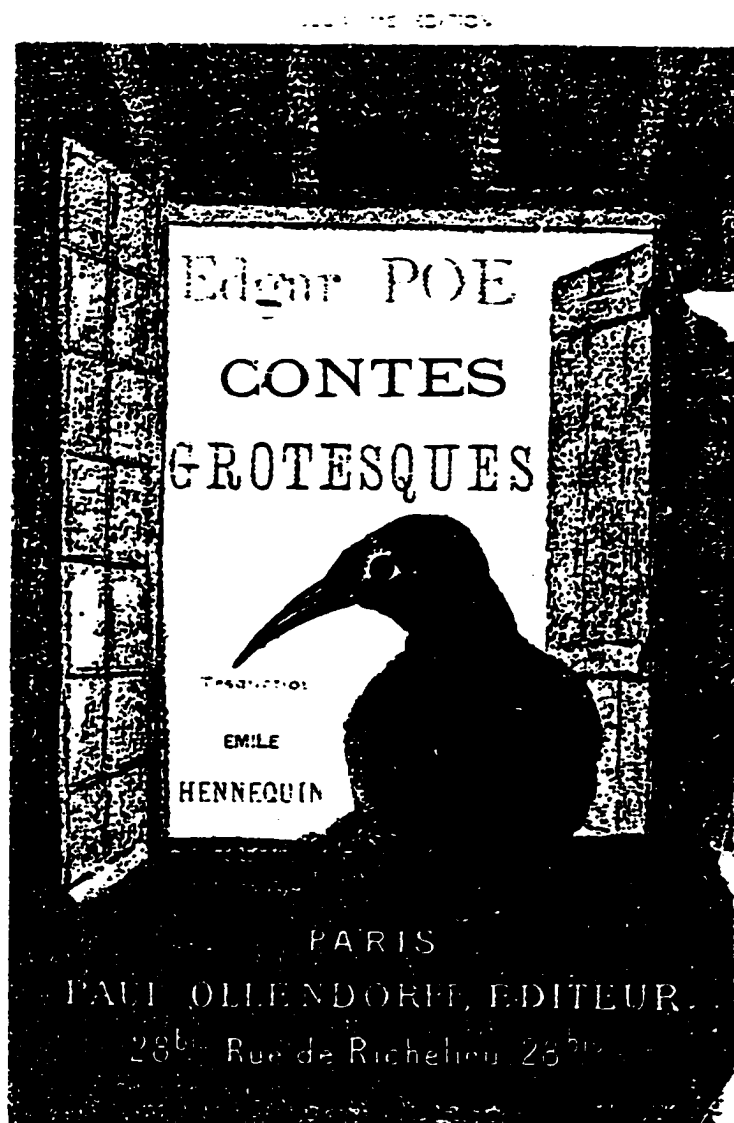


Fig. 30. Emile Hennequin, Contes grotesques, book cover design incorporating Redon's Le corbeau, lithograph, 1882. Robert Hobbs, Bristol.

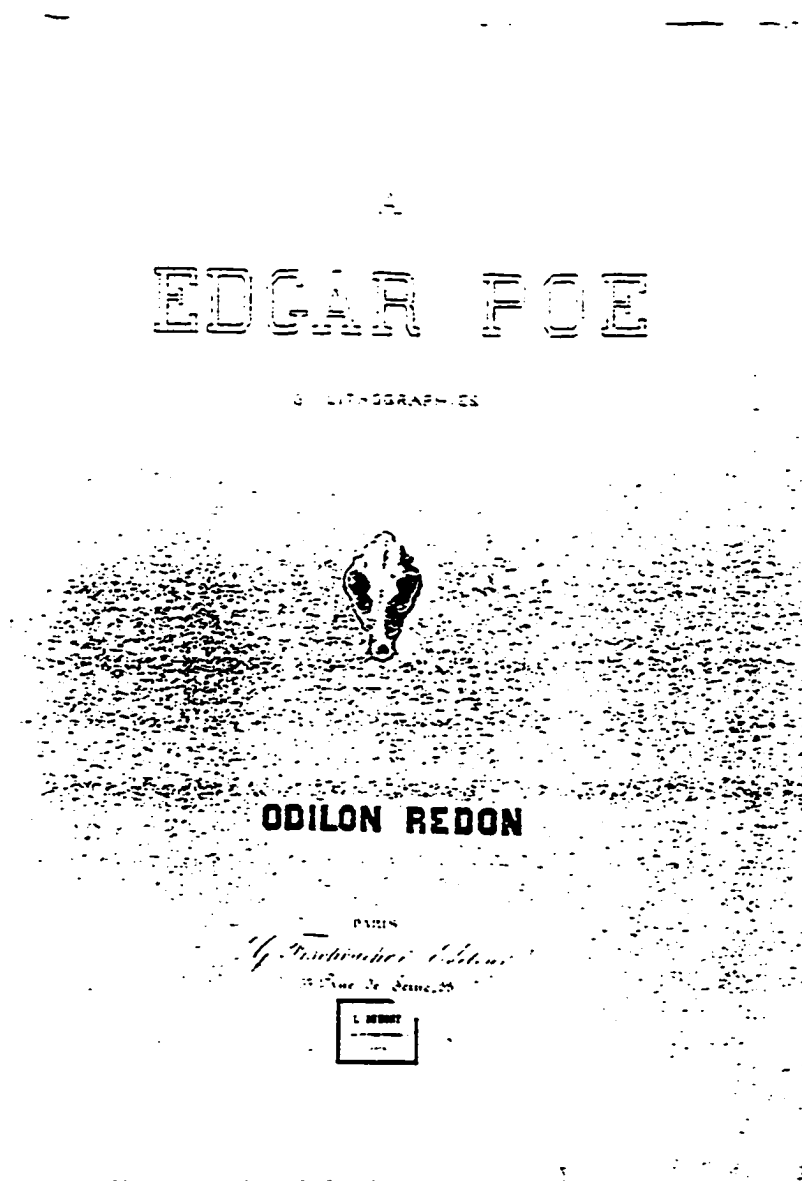


Fig. 31. Lemer cier & Cie. workshop (?), Design for top cover with title information from Redon portfolio A Edgar Poe (M.37), lithograph, 1882. Courtesy of Susan Pinsky and Marc Rosen (Marc Rosen Fine Art).

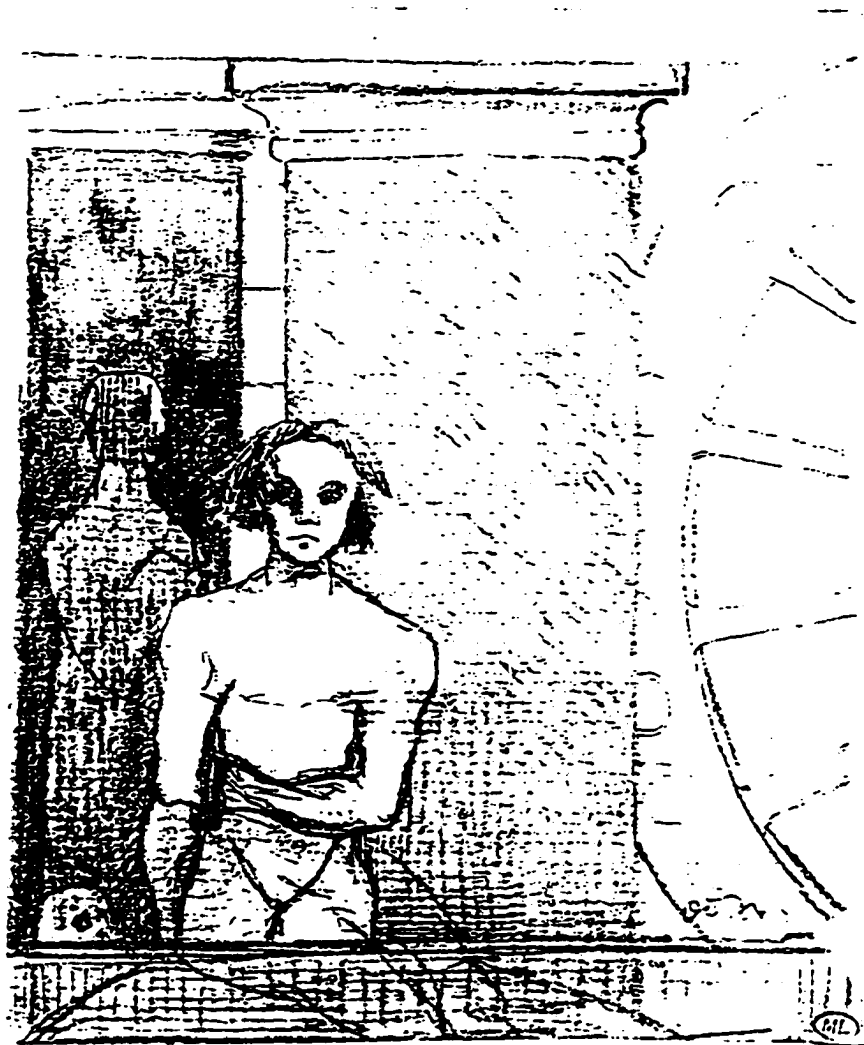


Fig. 32. Redon, Study for frontispiece from A Edgar Poe, charcoal, 1882. Louvre (RF 4057), Paris.

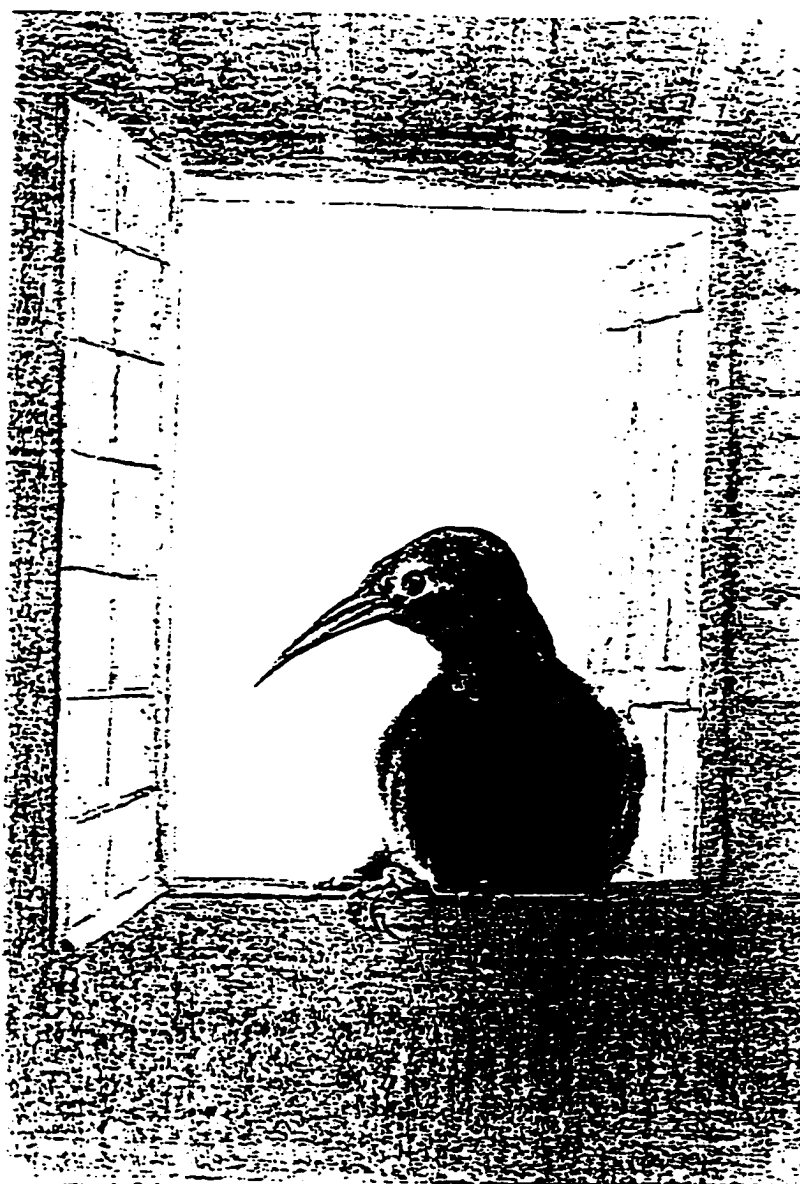


Fig. 33. Redon, Le Corbeau, charcoal, 1882. National Gallery of Canada (14847), Ottawa.

# LE CORBEAU

(THE RAVEN)

Poème d'EDGAR POE

TRADUIT PAR STÉPHANE MALLARMÉ

Illustré de cinq Dessins de MANET



TEXTE ANGLAIS ET FRANÇAIS

Illustrations sur Hollande ou sur Chine

11. 1875

Couverture et Ex-Libris en parchemin — Tirage limité.

PRIX 25 FRANCS

Avec Épreuves doubles sur Hollande et Chine : 35 francs.

Cartonnage illustré, en sus : 5 francs

Fig. 34. Manet and Lemercier & Cie. workshop (?), Advertising poster for Le Corbeau, transfer lithograph and letter-press, 1875.

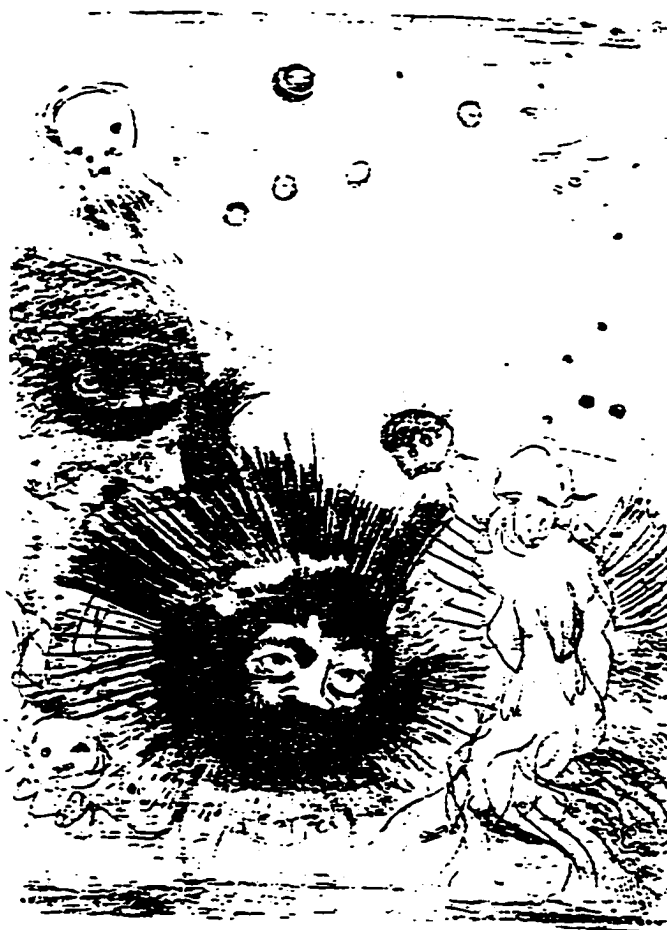


Fig. 35. Redon, proof of first state, without letters, of cover design from Les Origines (M.44), lithograph, 1883. Whereabouts unknown (formerly with Paul Prouté, Paris).

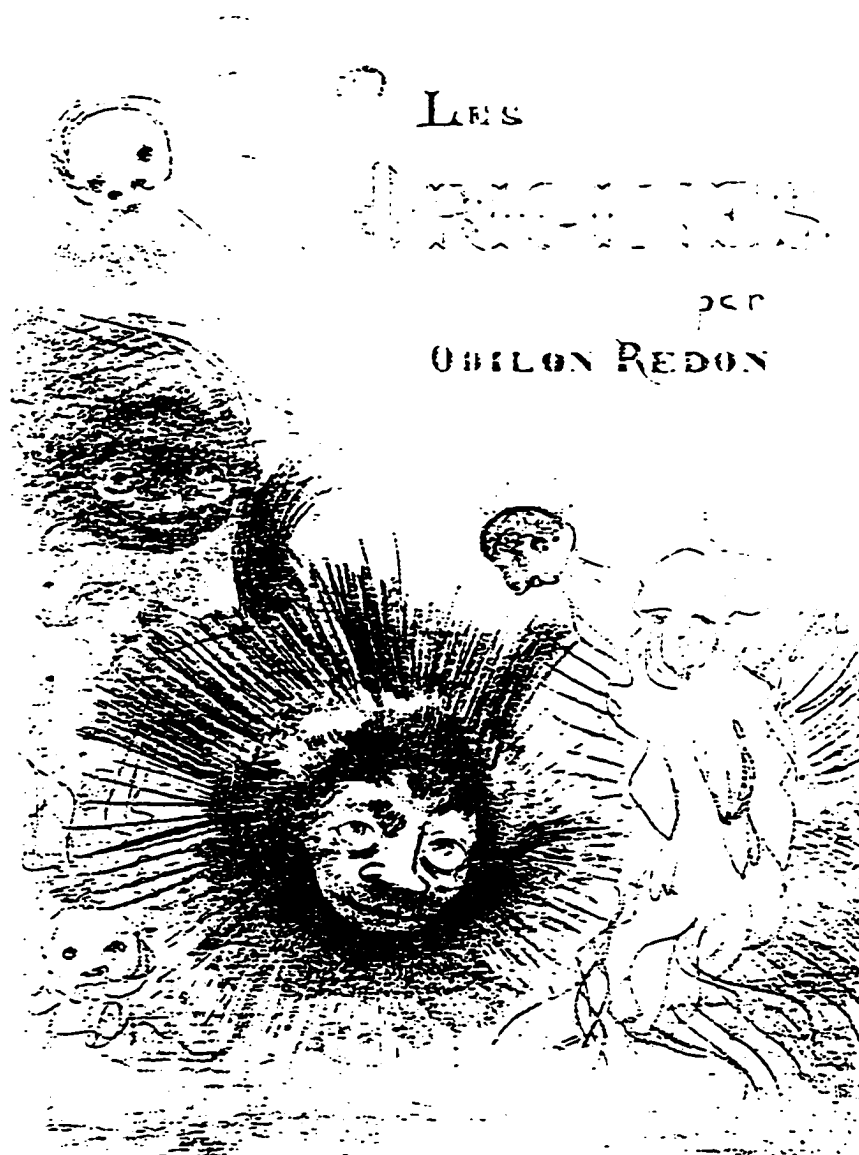


Fig. 36. Redon, Frontispiece-title page on cover from Les Origines (M.44), lithograph, 1883.



DANS MON RÊVE, JE VIS AU CIEL UN VISAGE DE MYSTÈRE

Fig. 37. Redon, Dans mon rêve, je vis au Ciel un VISAGE DE MYSTÈRE, plate I from Hommage à Goya (M.54), lithograph, 1885. Ian Woodner Family Collection, New York.



ODILON REDON. LA DÉESSE DE L'INTELLIGIBLE au profil sévère et dur

Fig. 38. Redon, Au reveil, j'aperçus la DÉESSE de l'INTELLIGIBLE, au profil sévère et dur, plate VI from Hommage à Goya (M.59), lithograph, 1885. Ian Woodner Family Collection, New York.



Fig. 39. Francisco Goya y Lucientes, El sueño de la razón produce monstruos, plate 43 from Los Caprichos, etching and aquatint, 1799.



*Francisco Goya y Lucientes,  
Pintor*

Fig. 40. Goya, Francisco Goya y Lucientes, Pintor, plate 1 from Los Caprichos, etching and aquatint, 1799.

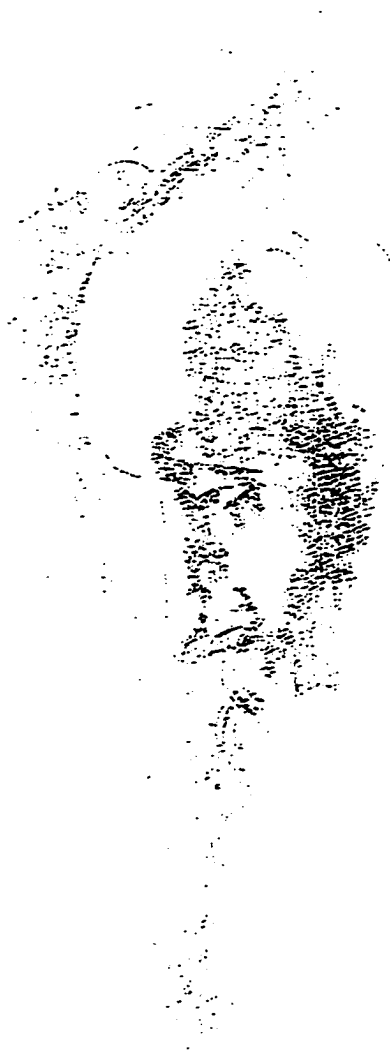


Fig. 41. Redon, A la Vieillesse, Plate I from La Nuit (M.62), lithograph, 1886.



Fig. 42. Redon, L'homme fut solitaire dans un paysage de nuit,  
Plate II from La Nuit (M.63), lithograph, 1886.



Fig. 43. Redon, L'ange perdu ouvrit alors les ailes noires, Plate III from La Nuit (M.64), lithograph, 1886.



Fig. 44. Redon, La chimère regarda avec effroi toutes choses, Plate IV from La Nuit (M.65), lithograph, 1886.



Fig. 45. Redon, Les prêtresses furent en attente, Plate V from La Nuit (M.66), lithograph, 1886.

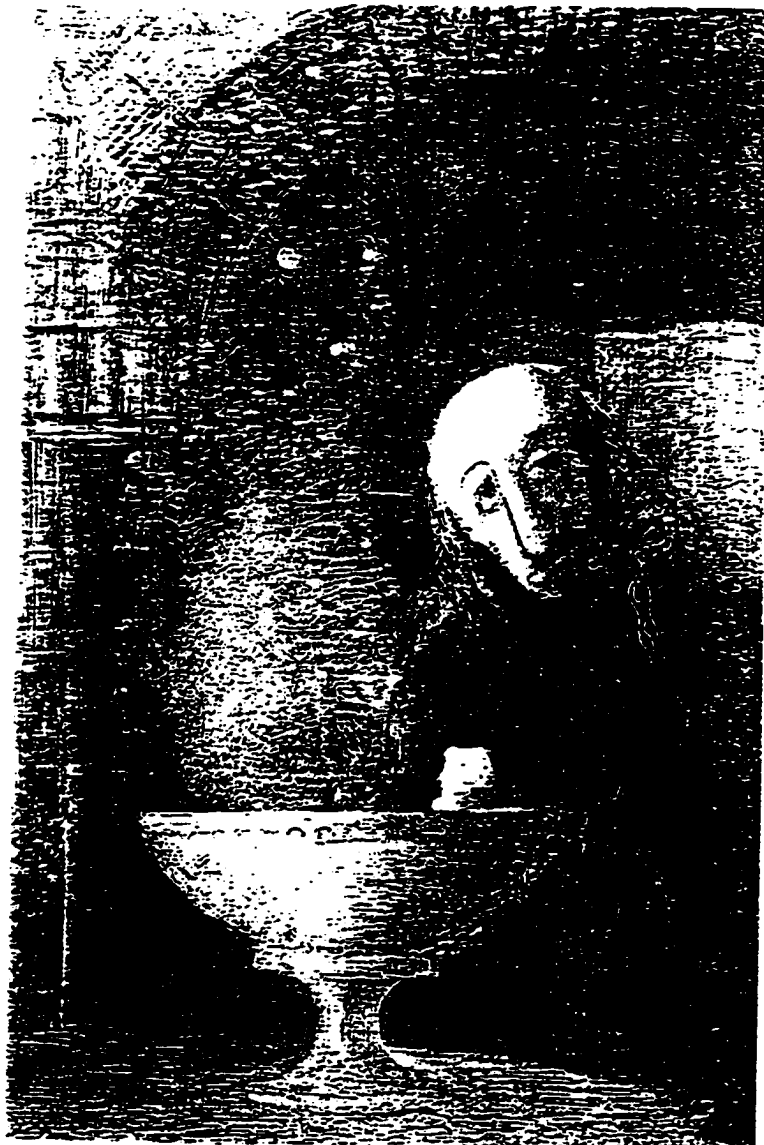


Fig. 46. Redon, Et le chercheur était à la recherche infinie, Plate VI from La Nuit (M.67), lithograph, 1886.



Fig. 47. Anonymous, Portrait of Rodolphe Bresdin, photograph, 1860s.



Fig. 48. Redon, Profil de Lumière (M.61), lithograph, 1886.



Fig. 49. Redon, Le Masque de la Mort Rouge, charcoal, 1883. Museum of Modern Art, New York.

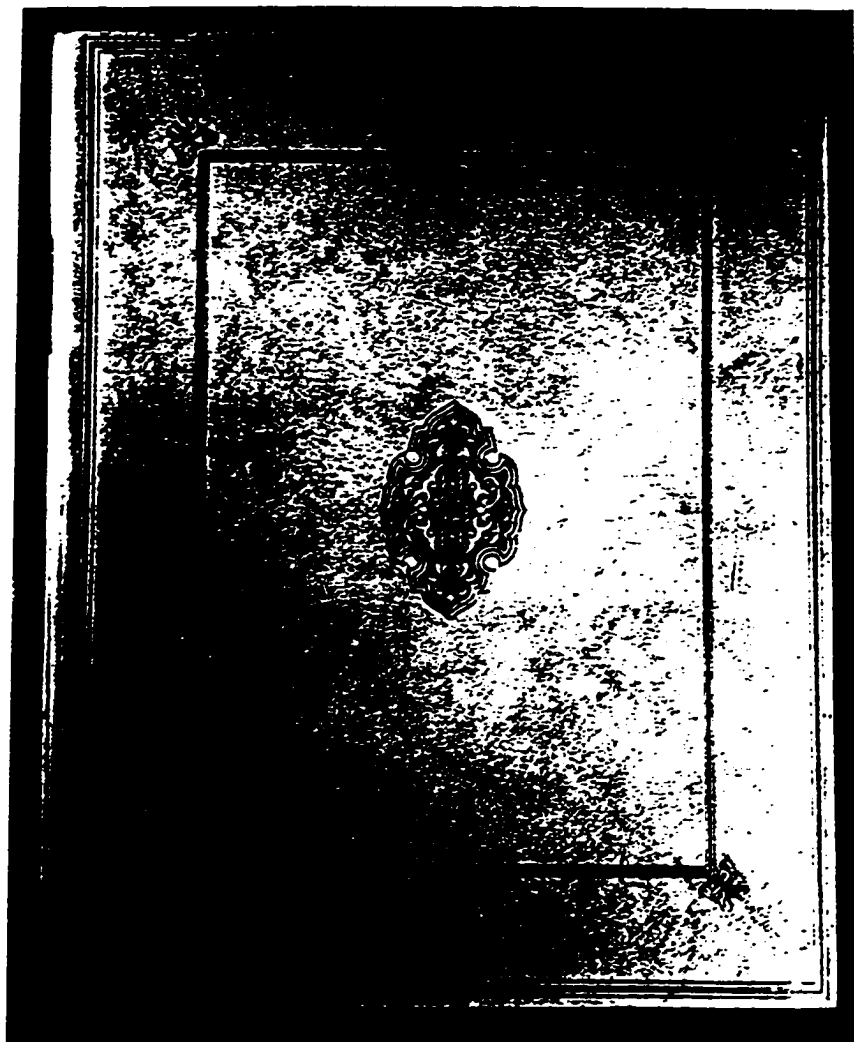


Fig. 50. Edmond Picard, Le Juré, Brussels: Veuve Monnom, 1887. Ian Woodner Family Collection, New York.



Fig. 51. Redon, La muraille de sa chambre s'entrouvrait et de la fente était projetée une tête de mort, Plate I from Edmond Picard, Le Juré (M.78), lithograph, 1887.



Fig. 52. Redon, Elle se montre à lui, dramatique et grandiose avec sa chevelure de prêtresse druidique, Plate II from Edmond Picard, Le Juré (M.80), lithograph, 1887.



Fig. 53. Redon, Un homme du peuple, un sauvage, a passé sous la tête des chevaux, Plate III from Edmond Picard, Le Juré (M.75), lithograph, 1887.

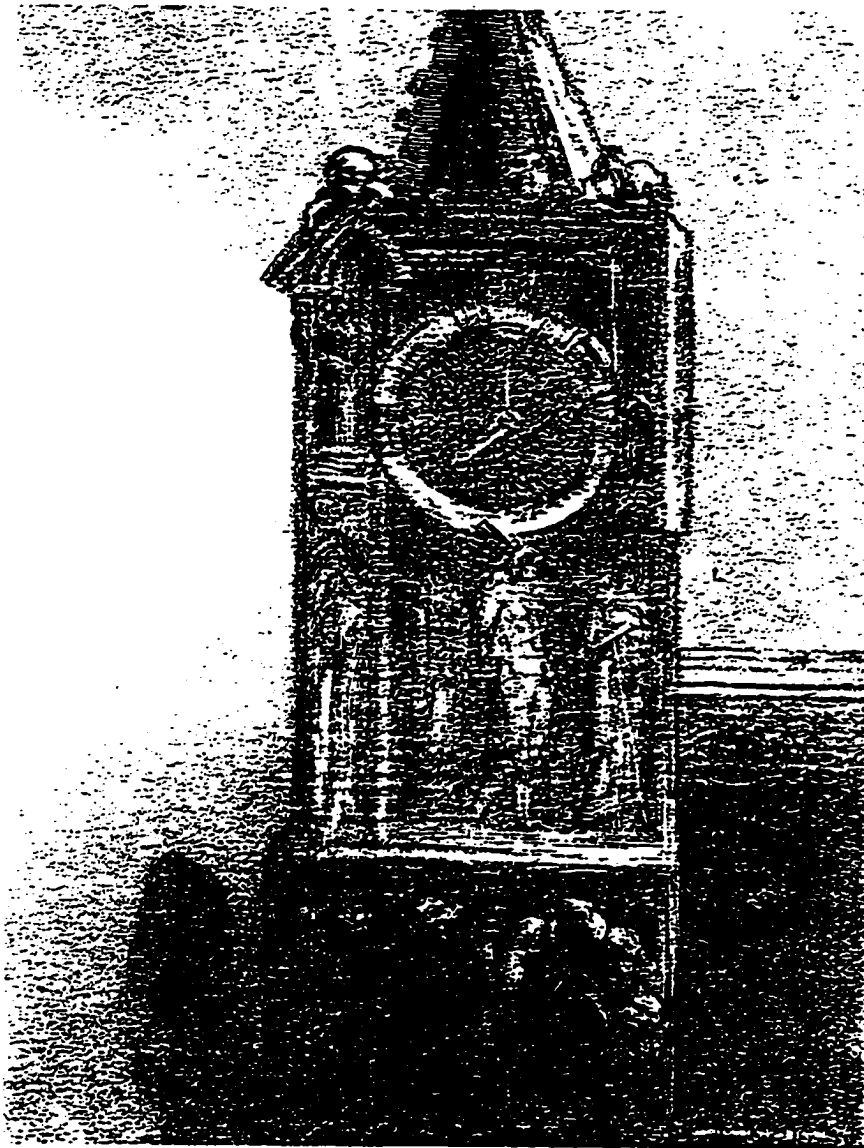


Fig. 54. Redon, La cloche grave de Saint-Gudule battait l'heure dans la tour voisine, Plate IV from Edmond Picard, Le Juré (M.77), lithograph, 1887.



Fig. 55. Redon, A l'entrée des allées, où les arbres entrelacent le dédale ostéologique des branches, glabre et décharné, se dessine le spectre, Plate V from Edmond Picard, Le Juré (M.76), lithograph, 1887.



Fig. 56. Redon, Pourquoi n'existerait-il pas un monde composé d'êtres invisibles, bizarres, fantastiques, embryonnaires?, Plate VI from Edmond Picard, Le Juré (M.79), lithograph, 1887.

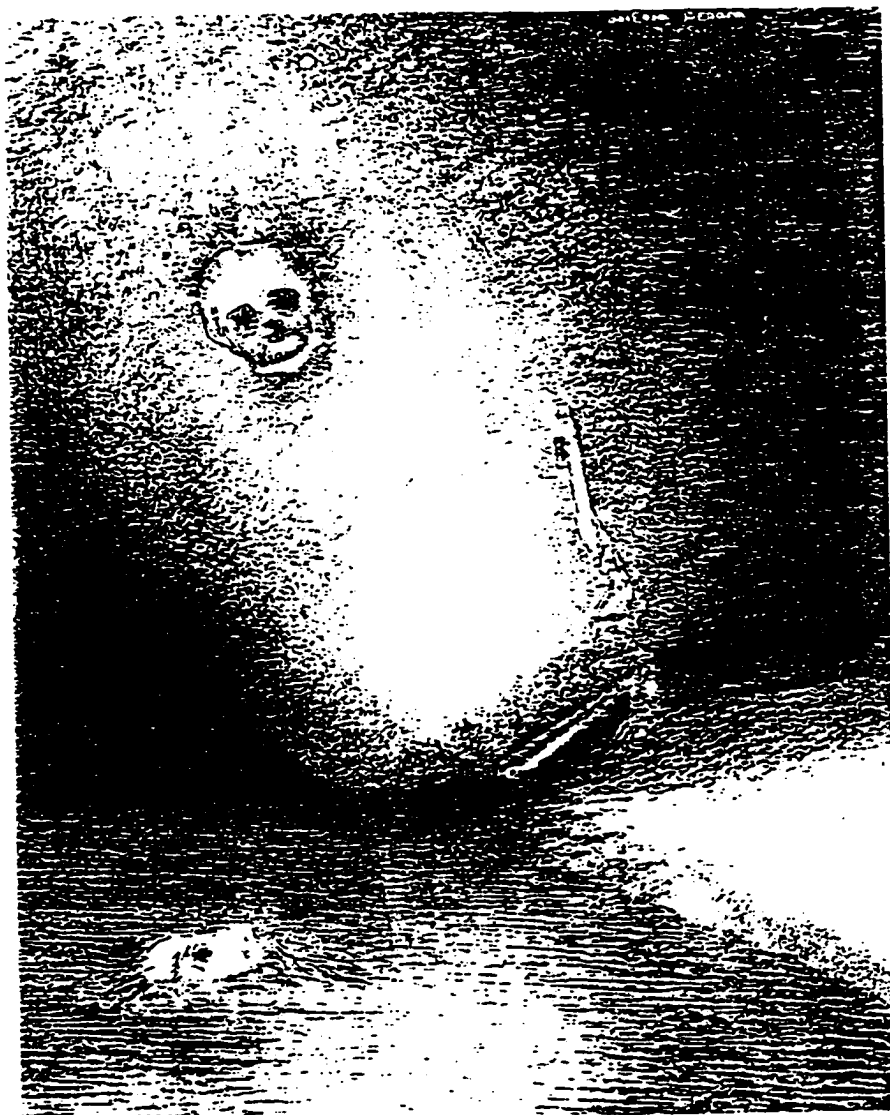


Fig. 57. Redon, Le commandement sinistre du spectre est accompli. Le rêve s'est achevé par la mort, Plate VII from Edmond Picard, Le Juré (M.81), lithograph, 1887.



Fig. 58. Redon, The Poet, charcoal, c.1886, Museum Plantin-Moretus (MPM W603.45), Antwerp.



Fig. 59. Redon, The Sphinx, or The Face in the Rocks, charcoal, 1883, The Thaw Collection, The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.



Fig. 60. Redon, Idol, or Human Rock, charcoal, 1883, Art Institute of Chicago (1950.1415).



Fig. 61. Redon, Idole, Frontispiece for Les Soirs (1888), (M.74), lithograph, 1887.

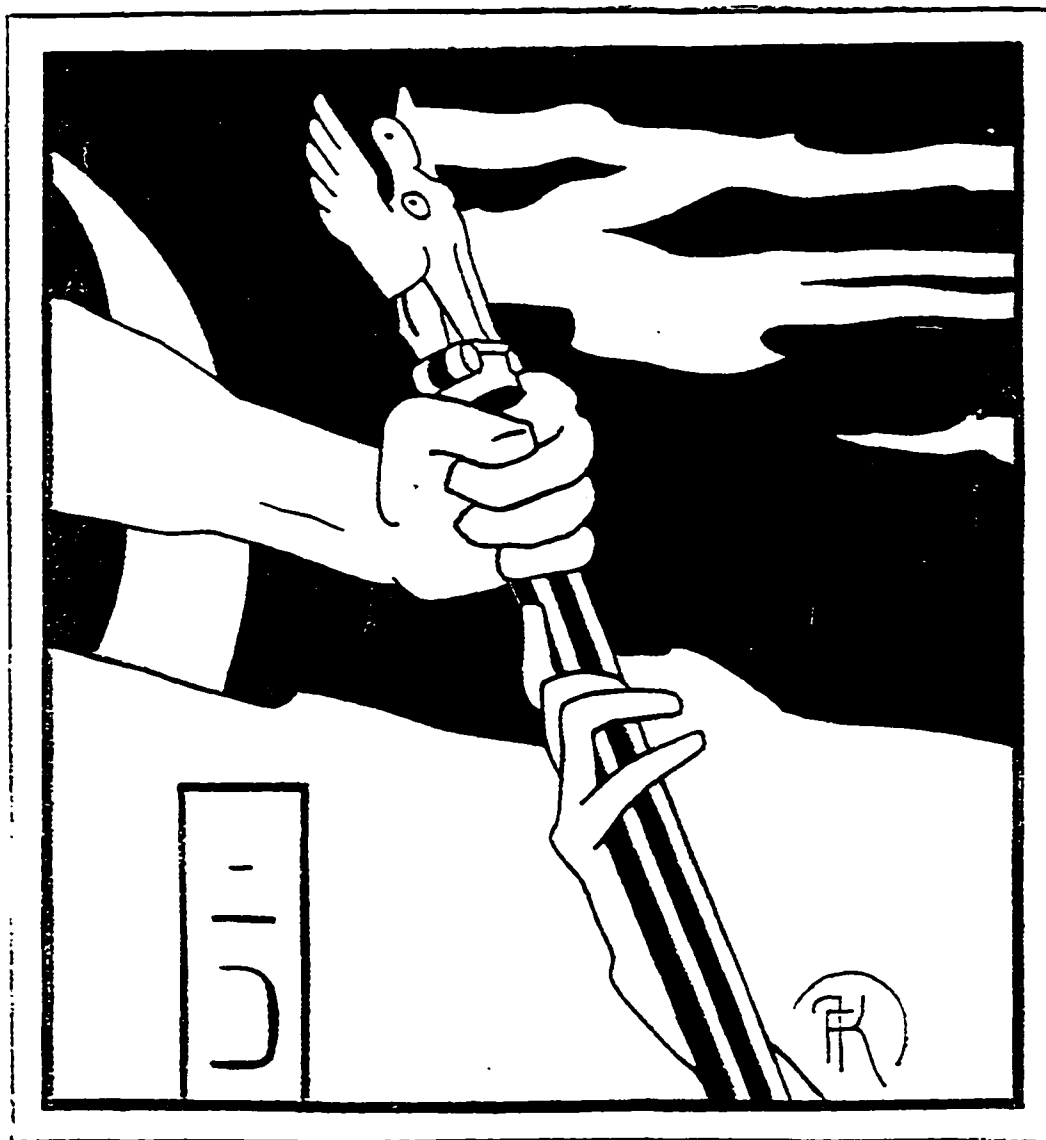


Fig. 62. Ferdnand Khnopff, insignia design for Edmond Deman, by 1887.



Fig. 63. Redon, Frontispiece for Les Débauches (M.101), lithograph, 1889.



Fig. 64. Redon, Frontispiece for Les Flambeaux noirs (M.106), lithograph, 1890. Ian Woodner Family Collection, New York.



Fig. 65. Redon, Frontispiece for La Damnation de l'Artiste (M.104), lithograph, 1890.



Fig. 66. Redon, Frontispiece for Les Ténèbres (M.121), lithograph, 1892.



Fig. 67. Redon, Yeux clos (M.107), lithograph, 1890.

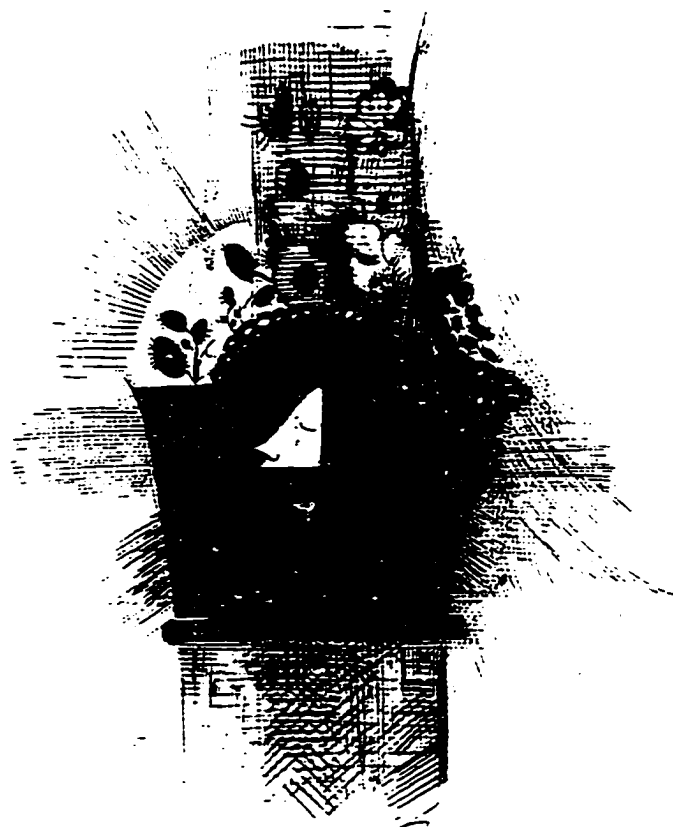


Fig. 68. Redon, Frontispiece design incorporated into Title page on top cover of Les Fleurs du Mal (M.198), Evely process, 1890.



Fig. 69. Redon, Parfois on trouve un vieux flacon qui se souvient, d'ou jaillit toute vive une ame qui revient, plate III from Les Fleurs du Mal (M.200), Evely process, 1890.



Fig. 70. Redon, Volupté, fantôme élastique!, plate V from Les Fleurs du Mal (M.202), Evely process, 1890.



Fig. 71. Redon, Frontispiece for El Moghreb al Aksa (M.103), lithograph, 1889.

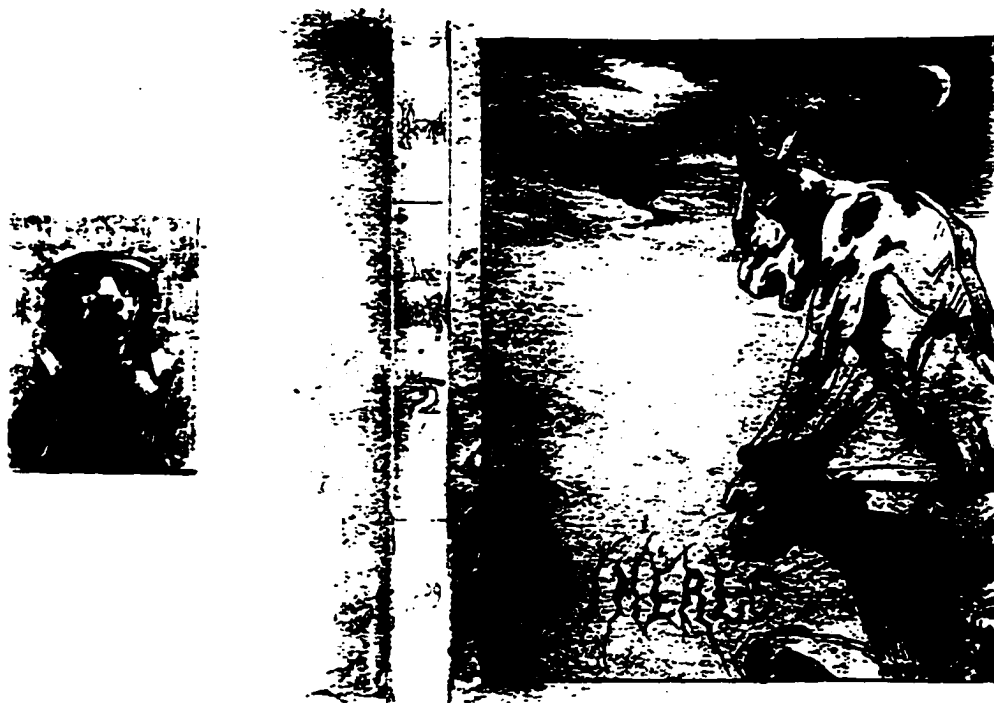


Fig. 72. Marie Danse, cover design for Les Chimères, etching, 1889.  
Ian Woodner Family Collection, New York.



Fig. 73. Henry de Groux, Le Forêt des suicidés, lithograph for Les Chimères, 1889. Ian Woodner Family Collection, New York.



Fig. 74. Redon, Frontispiece for Les Chimères (M.105), lithograph, 1889, Ian Woodner Family Collection, New York.



Fig. 75. Danse, La Gouge, etching for Les Chimères, 1889. Ian Woodner Family Collection, New York.

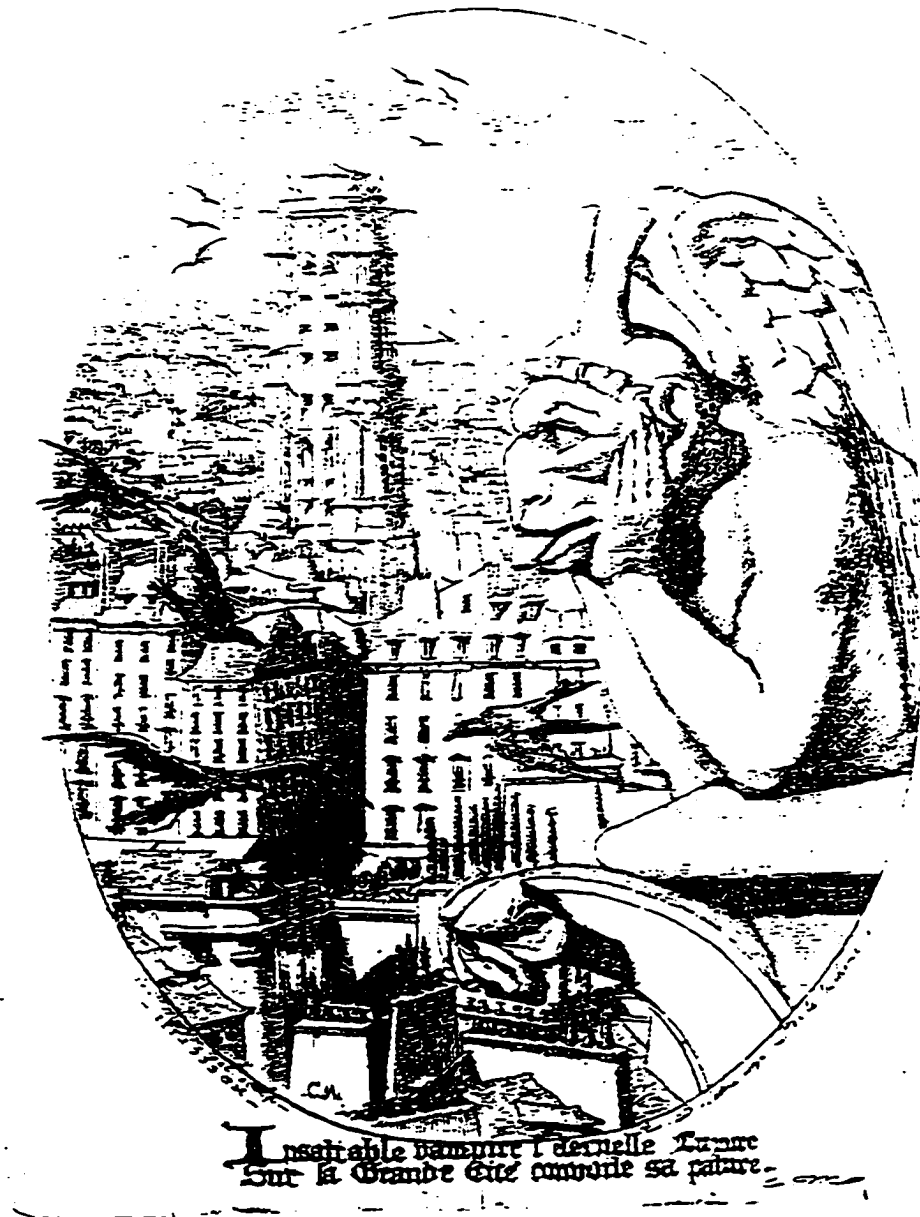


Fig. 76. Meryon, Le Stryge, etching from Eaux-fortes sur Paris, 1853.



Fig. 77. Redon, St. Anthony in the Wilderness, pen and ink, after 1864. Whereabouts unknown (Christie's, New York, sale of 23 February 1983, lot 59, illus.).



Fig. 78. Khnopff, La Tentation de saint Antoine, d'après Flaubert, oil on paper, 1883. Coll. Anne-Marie Gillion Crowet, Brussels.



Fig. 79. James Ensor, La Tentation de saint Antoine, pencil on paper, 1887. Private collection, Brussels.

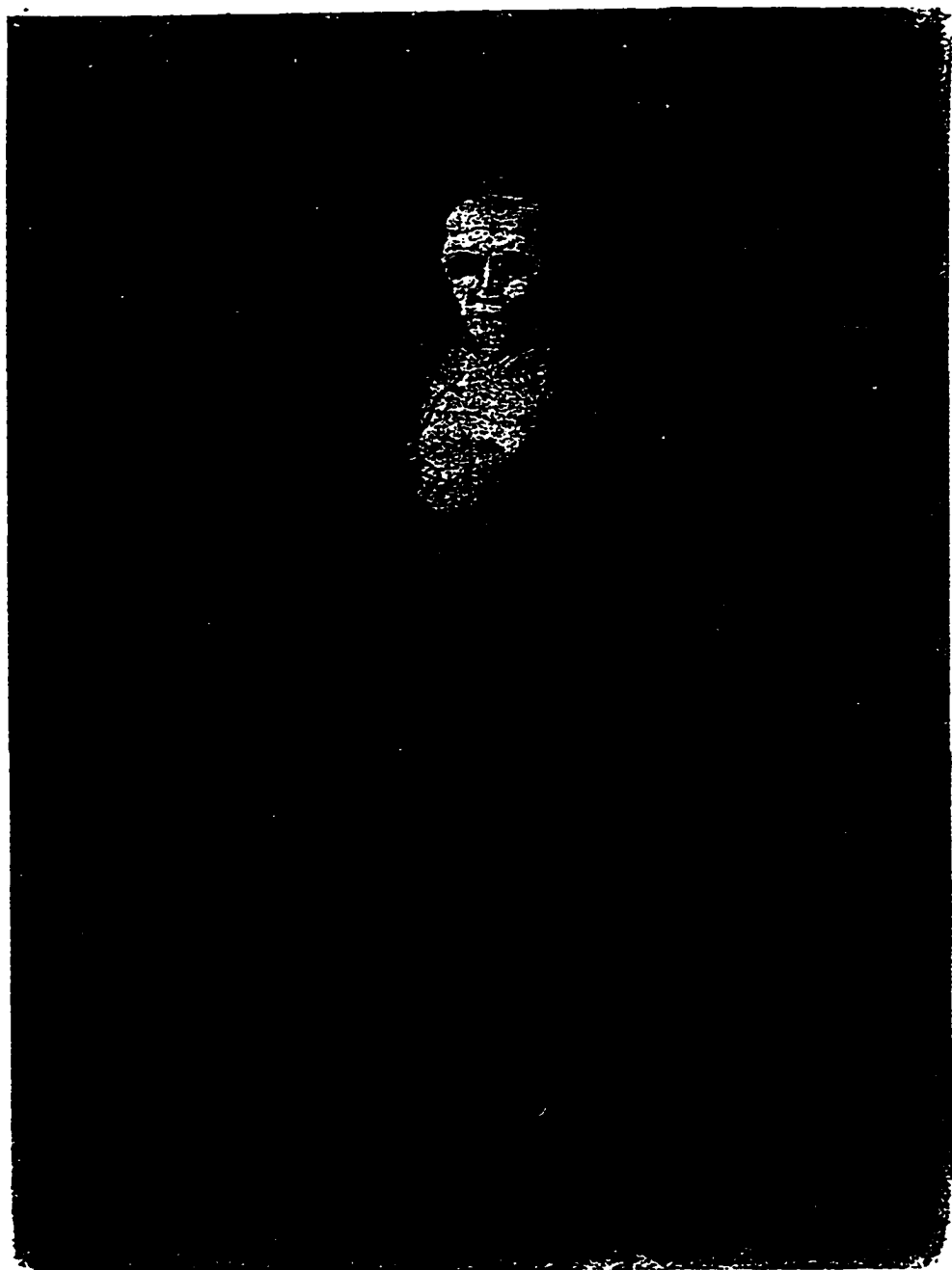


Fig. 80. Redon, Oannes Surrounded by Sylphs, charcoal, 1883.  
Private collection, Chicago.

Odilon Redon.



Fig. 81. Redon, Frontispiece-title page on top cover of Tentation de Saint-Antoine (M.83), lithograph, 1888. Museum of Modern Art (126.56.11), New York.



Fig. 82. Redon, Des Esseintes (M.82), lithograph, 1888.



Fig. 83. Redon, Ammonaria battue (M.95), lithograph, 1888 (The second edition included as plate I of A Gustave Flaubert, 1889).



Fig. 84. Redon, Devil Carrying off a Head, charcoal, 1876. Musée du Louvre (RF 38978), Paris.



Il faut que l'âme soit en Dieu  
Et que le corps soit en Dieu.

Fig. 85. Eugène Delacroix, Prologue in Heaven, plate I of Faust, lithograph, 1828. Art Institute of Chicago (1930.1256), Chicago.



*Alli vè eso.*

Fig. 86. Goya, Alla vè eso, plate 66 from Los Caprichos, etching and aquatint, 1799. Brooklyn Museum of Art (37.33.66), Brooklyn.



Fig. 87. Redon, first state, without letters, of Frontispiece-title page from A Gustave Flaubert (M.94), lithograph, 1888 or 1889. Art Institute of Chicago (1920.1645), Chicago.

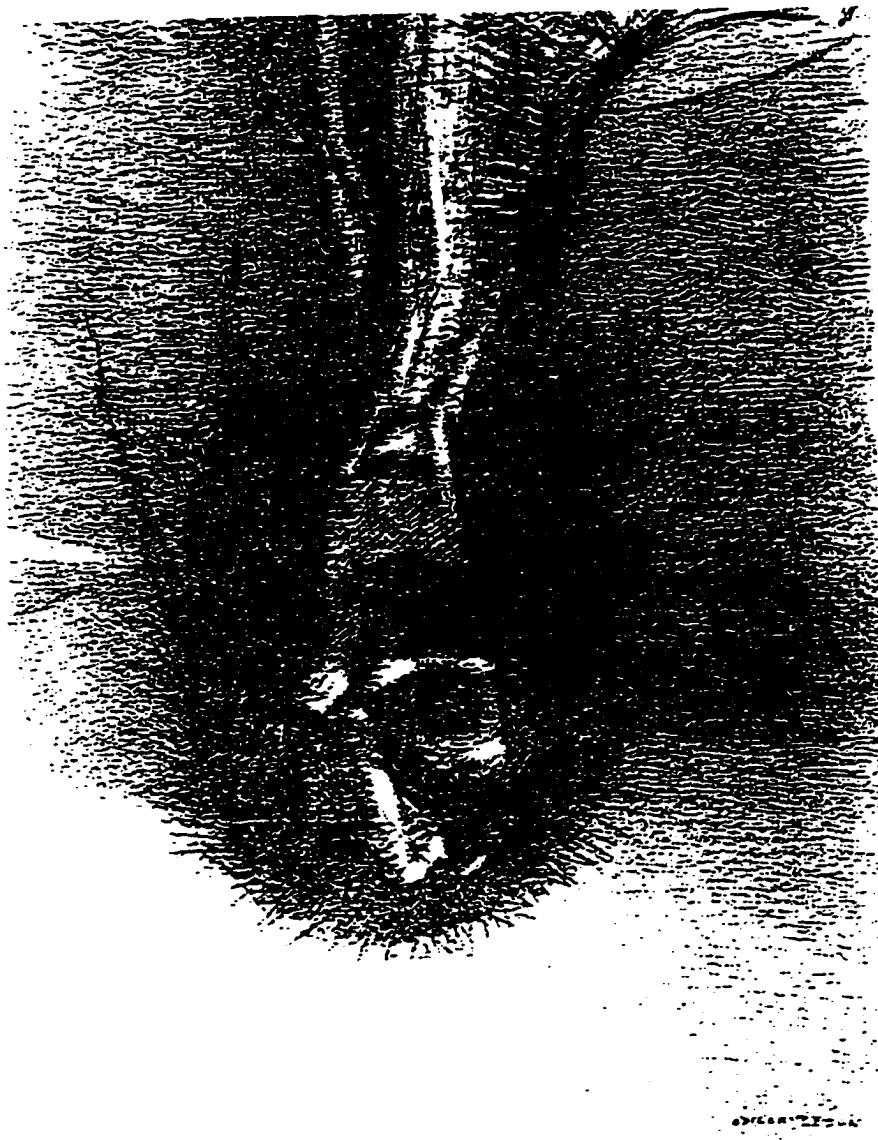


Fig. 88. Redon, Les Sciapodes: La tête le plus bas possible, c'est le secret du bonheur!, plate VI from A Gustave Flaubert (M.100), lithograph, 1889.

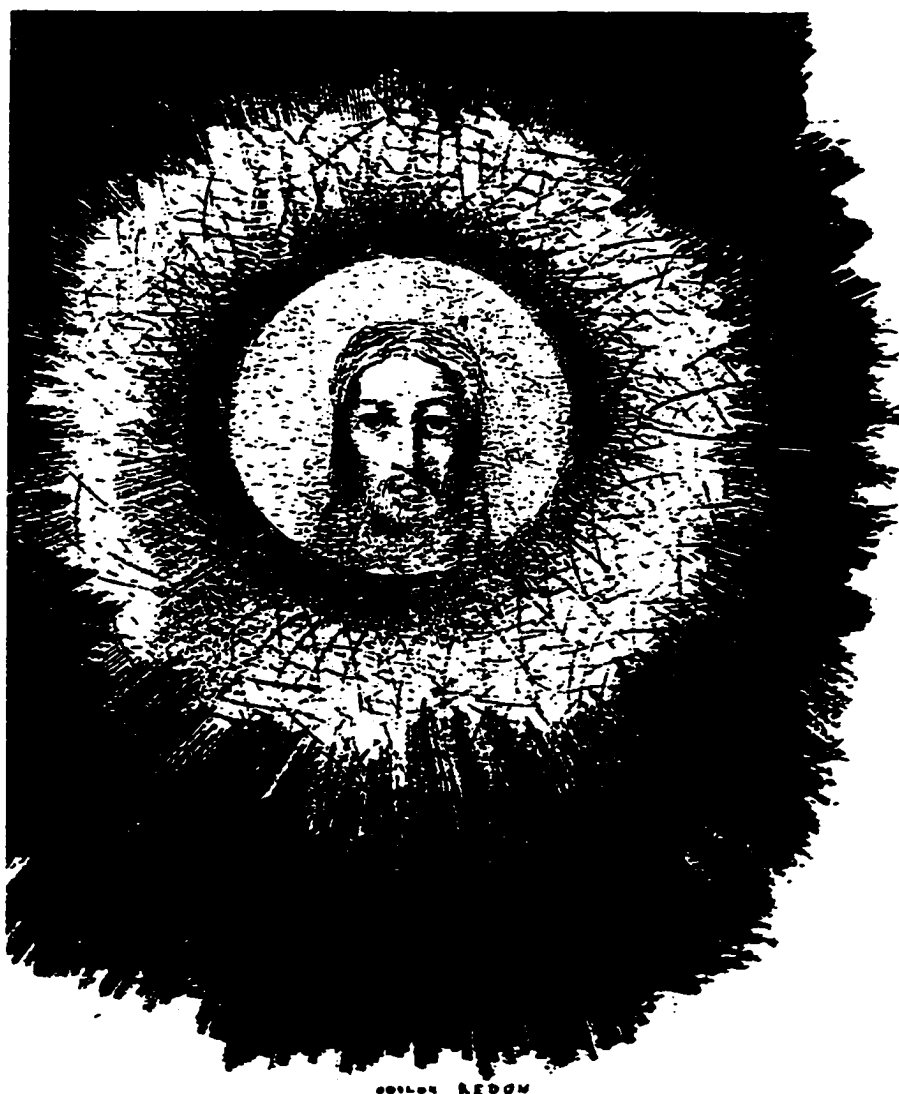


Fig. 89. Redon, ...Et dans le disque même du soleil rayonne la face de Jésus-Christ, plate X from Tentation de Saint Antoine (M.93), lithograph, 1888. Art Institute of Chicago (1920.1644), Chicago.



Fig. 90. Redon, La Mort: mon ironie dépasse tout les autres, plate III from A Gustave Flaubert (M.97), lithograph, 1889.



Fig. 91. Redon, C'est une tête de mort, avec une couronne de roses. Elle domine un torse de femme d'une blancheur nacree, plate VI from Tentation de Saint Antoine (M.89), lithograph, 1888. Minneapolis Institute of Arts (P.12,502), Minneapolis.



Fig. 92. Redon, Et toutes sortes de bêtes effroyables surgissent, plate VIII from Tentation de Saint Antoine (M.91), lithograph, 1888.

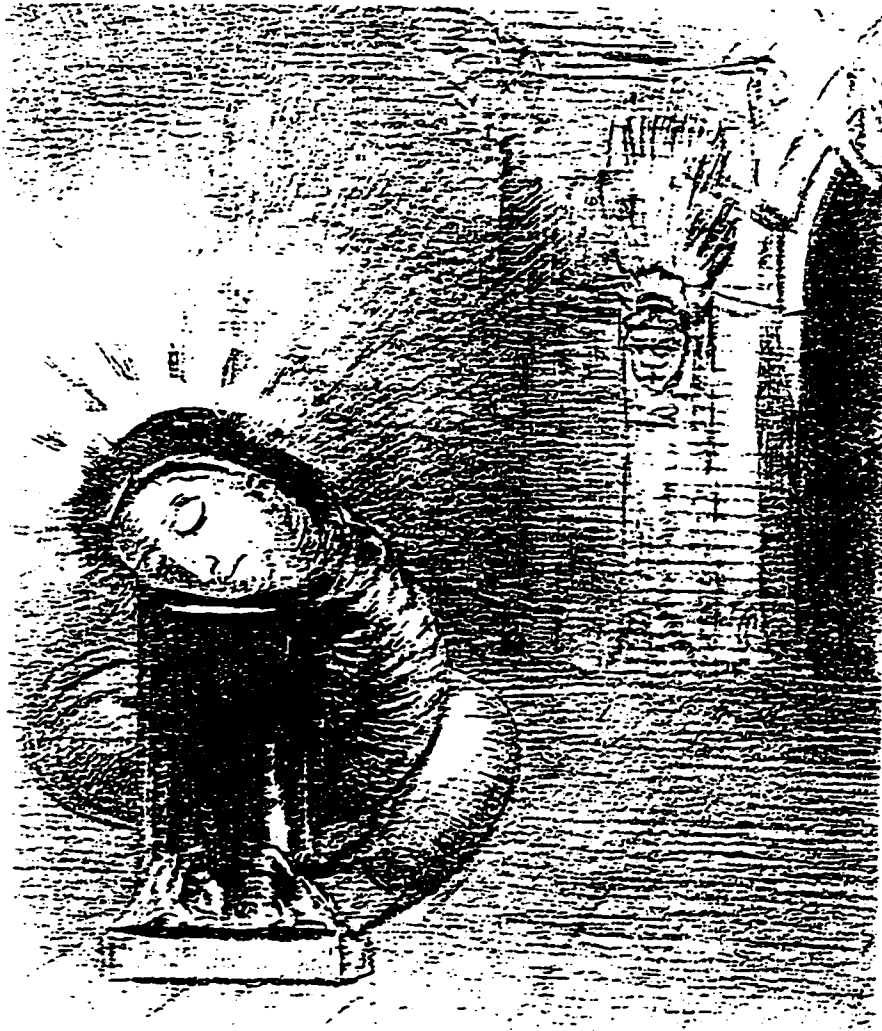
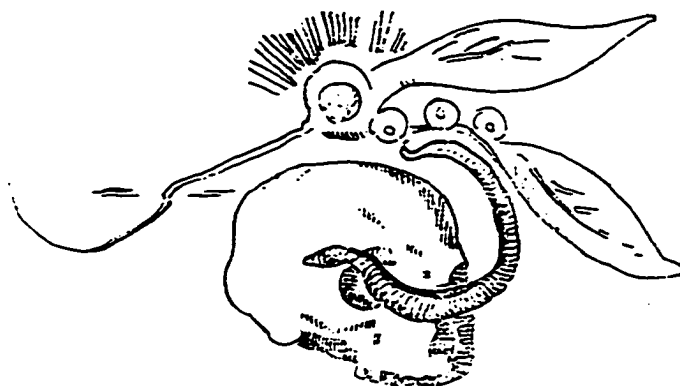


Fig. 93. Redon, ...Une longue chrysalide couleur de sang, plate II from A Gustave Flaubert (M.96), lithograph, 1889.

LA TENTATION  
DE  
SAINT-ANTOINE

3<sup>e</sup> SÉRIE.



Texte de

GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

Fig. 94. Redon, Frontispiece-title page on top cover from La Tentation de Saint Antoine (third series), (M.134), lithograph, 1899.

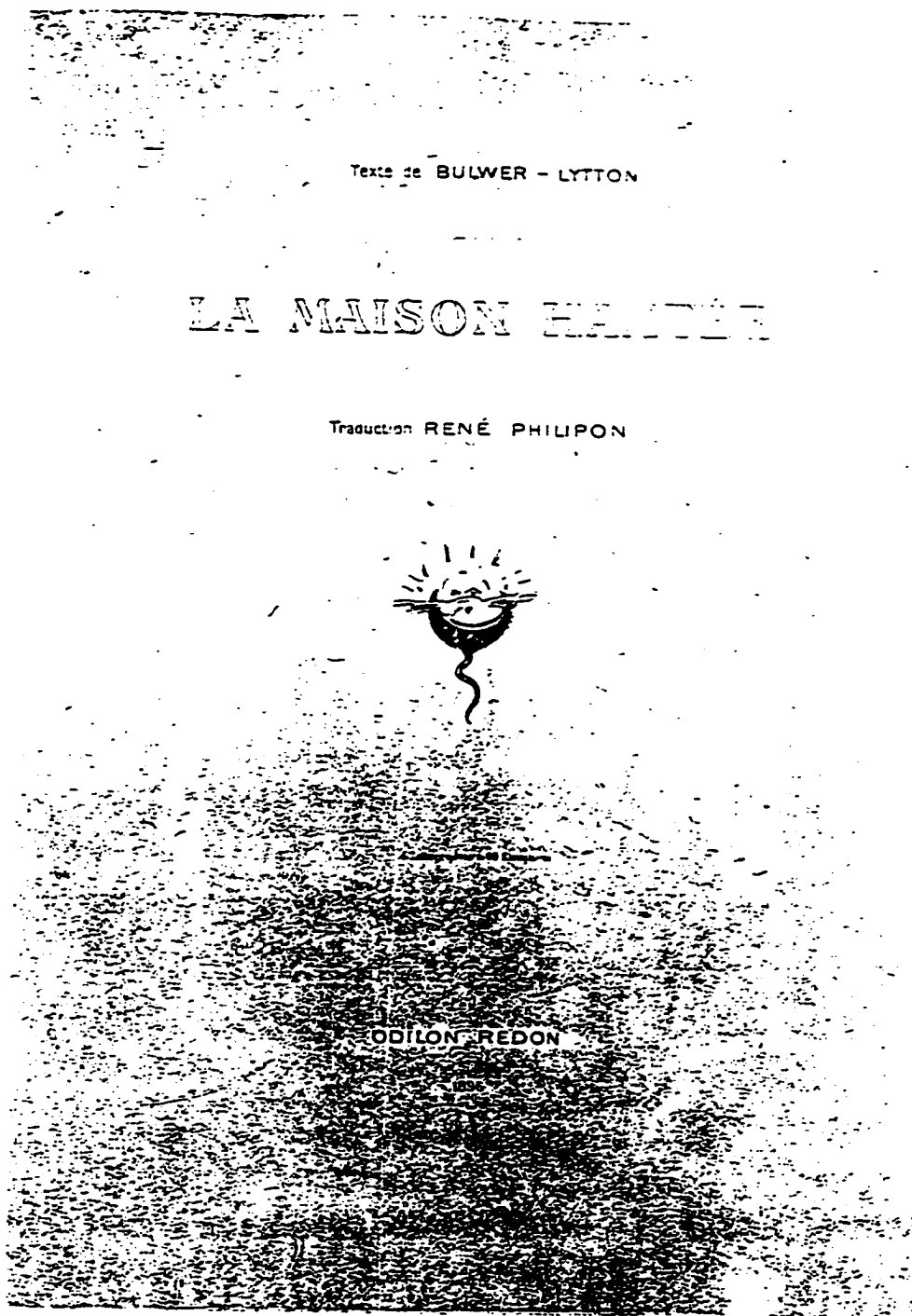


Fig. 95. Redon, Frontispiece-title page on top cover from La Maison hantée (M.160), lithograph and letter-press, 1896. Ian Woodner Family Collection, New York.

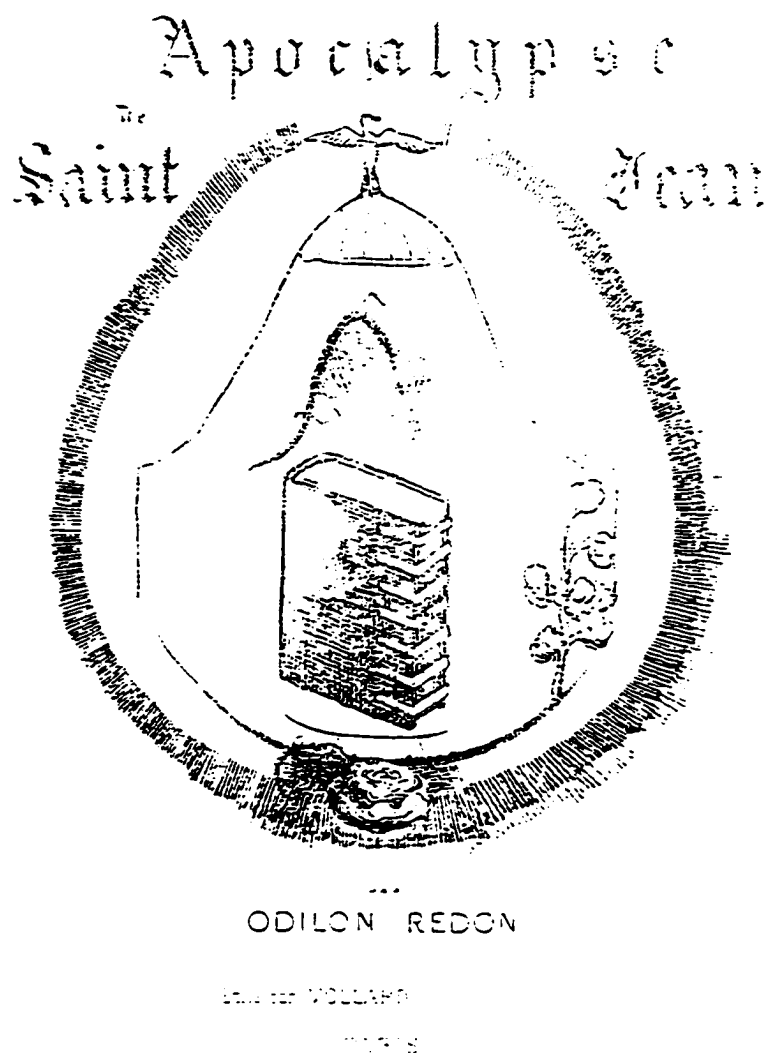


Fig. 96. Redon, Frontispiece-title page on top cover from L'Apocalypse de Saint-Jean (M.173), lithograph, 1899.



Fig. 97. Redon, ...c'était un voile, une empreinte, plate I from Songes (M.110), lithograph, 1891.



se. n.



Fig. 98. Redon, Study for ...c'était un voile, une empreinte, plate I from Songes, pencil, 1891. Musée du Louvre (RF 40513), Paris.

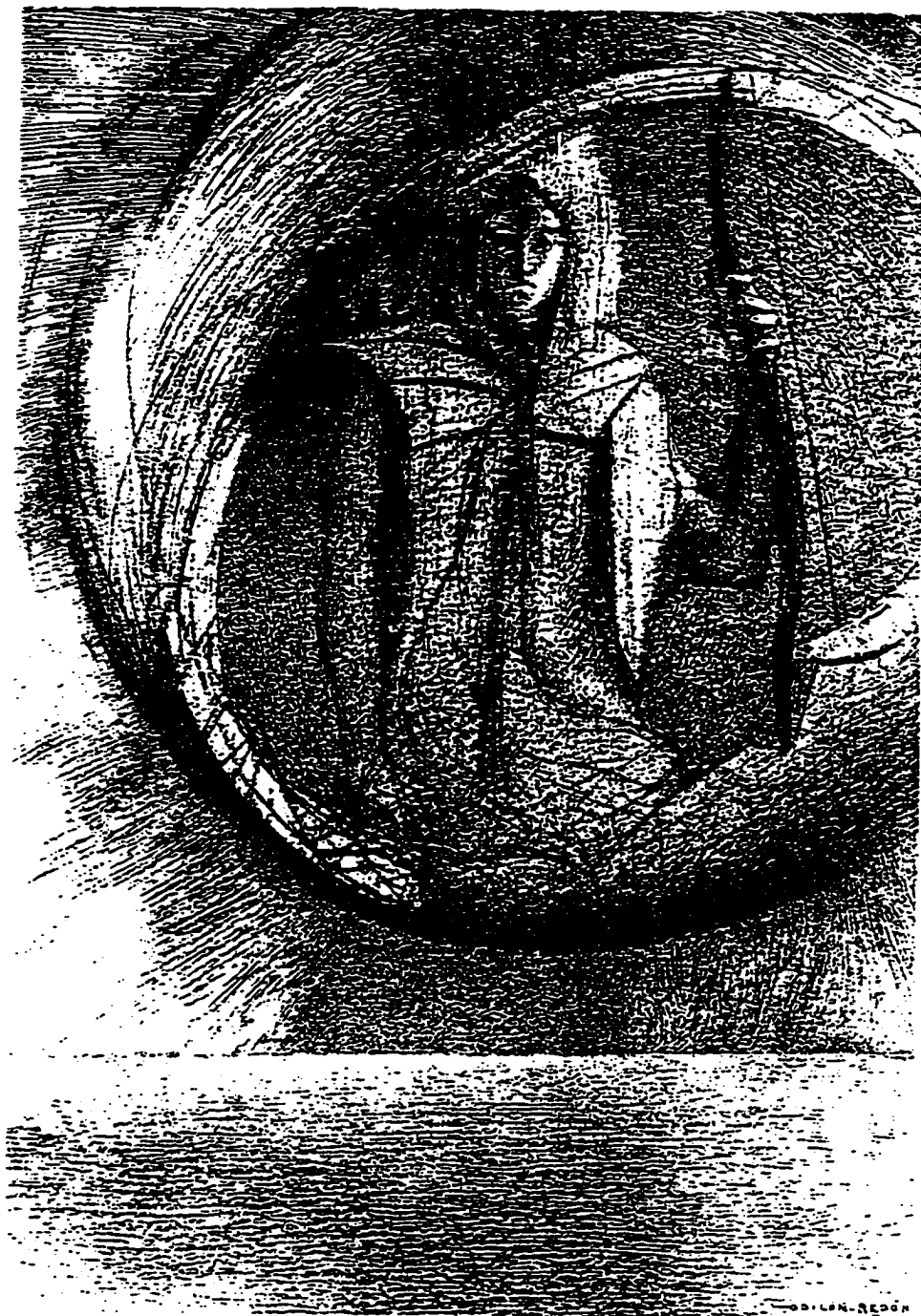


Fig. 99. Redon, Et la-bas l'idole astrale, l'apothéose, plate II from Songes (M.111), lithograph, 1891.



Fig. 100. Redon, Pèlerin du monde sublunaire, plate V from Songes (M.114), lithograph, 1891.



Fig. 101. Redon, Pégase captif (M.102), lithograph, 1889.

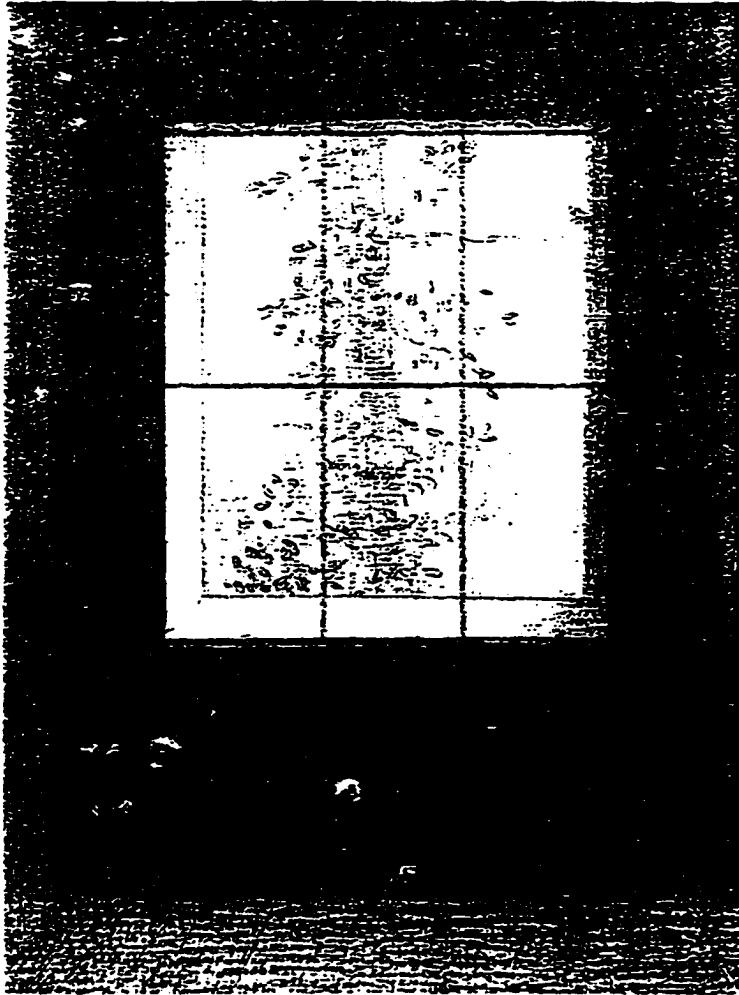


Fig. 102. Redon, Le Jour, plate VI from Songes (M.115), lithograph, 1891.



Fig. 103. Redon, Arbre (M.120), lithograph, 1892.



Fig. 104. Redon, Brunnhilde (M.68), lithograph, 1886.



Fig. 105. Redon, Cime noire (M.69), lithograph, 1887.



Fig. 106. Redon, Cellule auriculaire (M.126), lithograph, 1893.  
Ian Woodner Family Collection, New York.

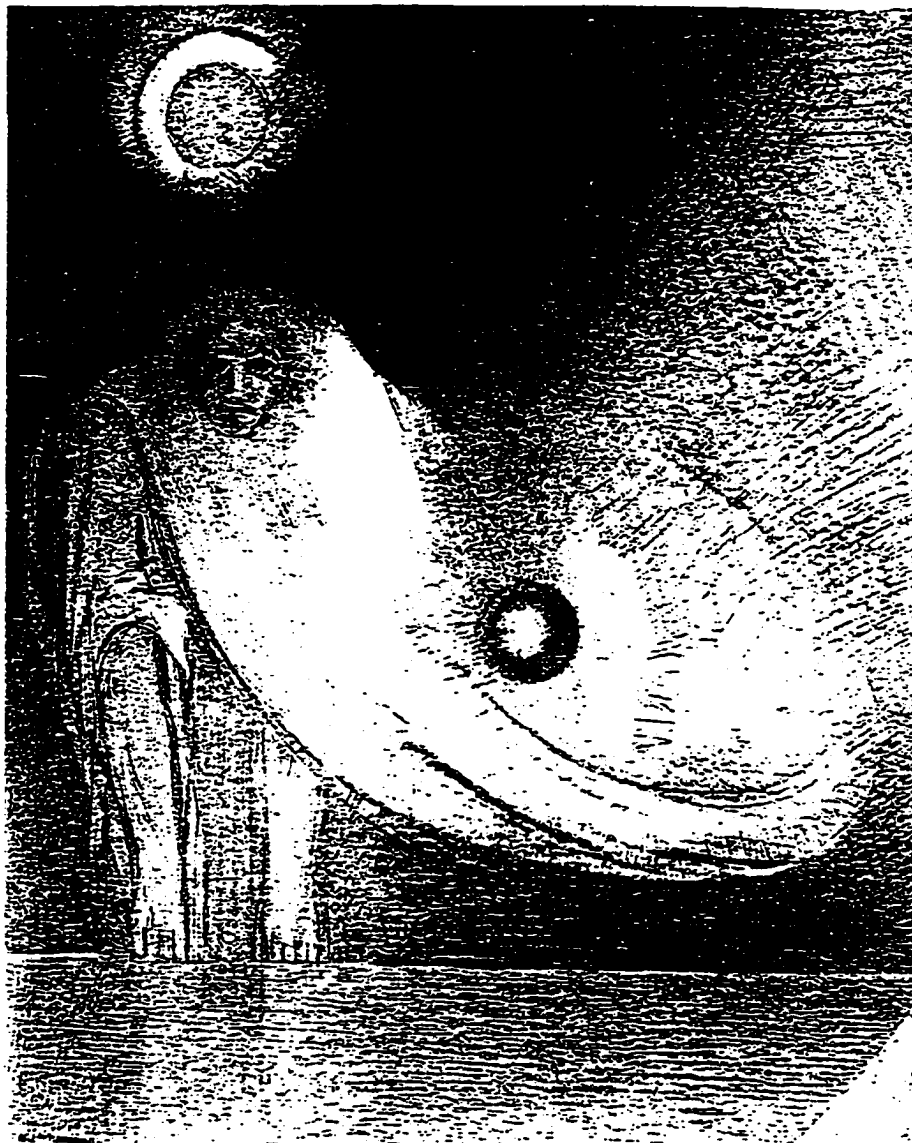


Fig. 107. Redon, Le Buddha (M.132), lithograph, 1895.



Fig. 108. Redon, Cheval ailé (M.127), lithograph, 1894.



Fig. 109. Redon, Frontispiece for Le Mouvement idéaliste en peinture (M.159), lithograph, 1896.



Fig. 110. Redon, Vieux chevalier (M.158), lithograph, 1896.



Fig. 111. Redon, Béatrice (M.168), color lithograph, 1897.



Fig. 112. Redon, Le jour enfin parait, ...Et dans le disque même du soleil, rayonne la face de Jésus Christ, plate XXIV from Tentation de Saint Antoine (third series), (M.157) lithograph, 1896.



Fig. 113. Redon, Passage d'une âme, Frontispiece for La Passante, roman d'une âme (M.21, H.25), etching, 1891.



Fig. 114. Redon, Le Liseur (M.119), lithograph, 1892.



Fig. 115. Rembrandt van Rijn, St. Jerome in a Dark Chamber (Bartsch 105), etching, 1642. Fogg Art Museum (G 3247), Cambridge, MA.

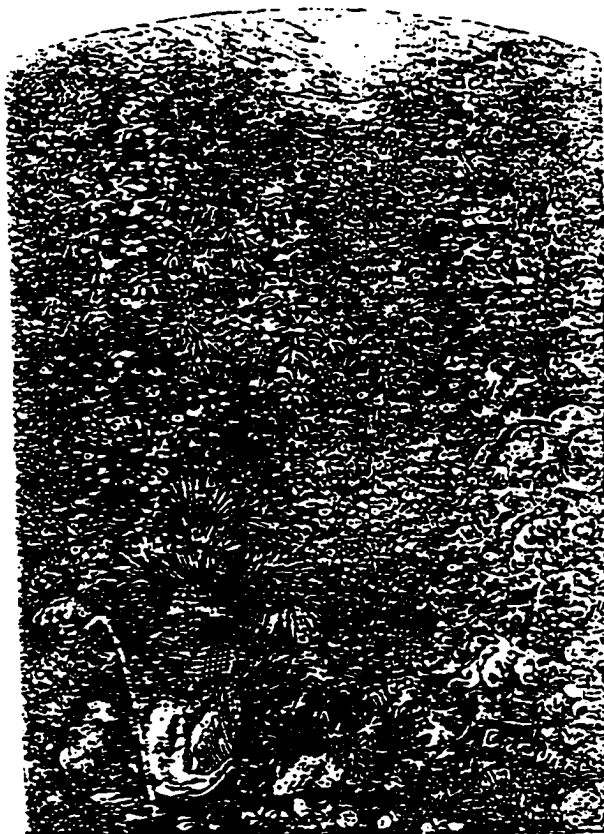


Fig. 116. Bresdin, Jerome Reading (V.G.98), etching, n.d., Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

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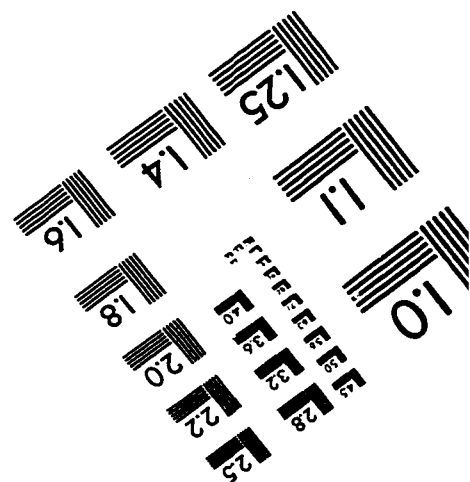
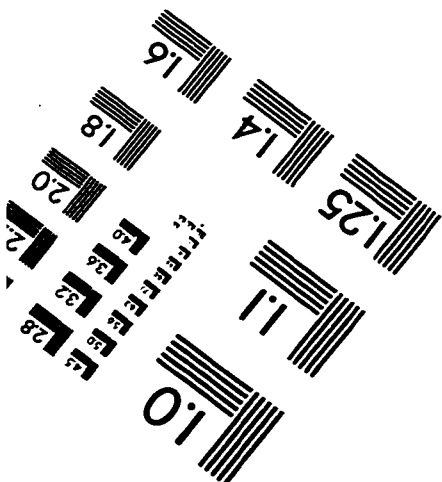
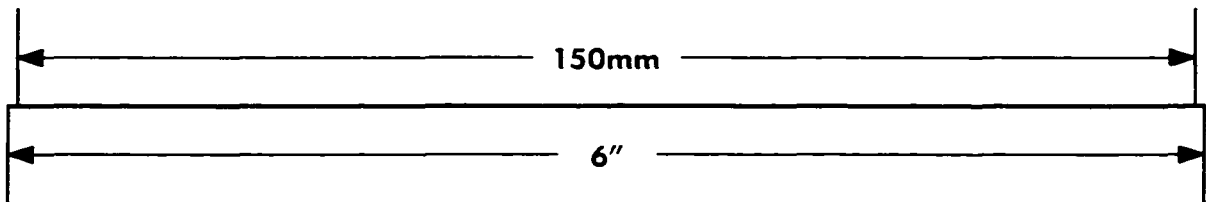
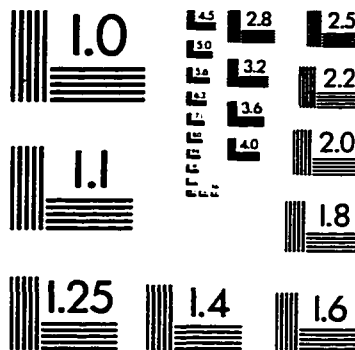
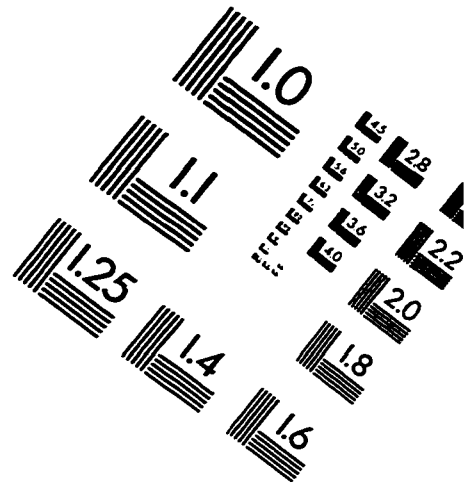
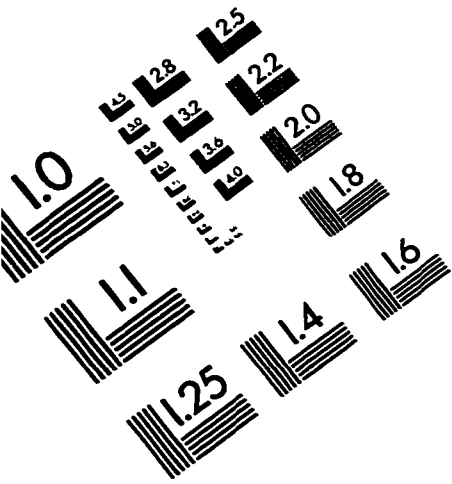
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