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Greenspan, Taube G., Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1981

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"LES NOSTALGIQUES" RE-EXAMINED: THE IDYLLIC LANDSCAPE IN FRANCE, 1890-1905

by

TAUBE G. GREENSPAN

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.

1981

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My interest in some of the lesser-known areas of Symbolist art was awakened in a seminar conducted by Professor Robert Pincus-Witten at a time when Symbolist studies were burgeoning. Scholars were then engaged in rehabilitating artists whose reputations had been buried in the wave of twentieth-century modernism. Their revisionist efforts extended the knowledge of Symbolist art beyond the sphere of Gauguin's influence and brought to light art which departed less radically from conventional pictorial standards.

This study of Symbolist nostalgia has emerged from the scholarly probing of these lesser-known areas. The retrospective vision of much Symbolist art had been noted but not systematically examined. Since the subject is vast, we have limited our study to France, but the poetic focus on the idyllic transcended national borders; art of the nineties from other European centers and America reveals a similar rejection of mundanity.

The Symbolists' embrace of the past, echoing the escapism of Romanticism, was, curiously, deemed modern in its own time because it stemmed the tide of naturalism. Their universal predilection for the idyllic landscape reveals affinities between artists previously studied only within the context of a particular historical group.

The major part of this research was conducted in Paris. I was aided immeasurably by scholars, collectors, and dealers who showed interest

in this project. Without their help, this work could not have been accomplished. Among them, I must single out for special thanks Mlle. Isabelle Compin of the Services de Documentation, Département de Peintures, Musée du Louvre, who allowed me the freedom of consultation in their archives. I am also appreciative of the kindnesses extended to me by Mme. Geneviève Lacambre, M. Georges Martin-du-Nord, M. Bob Benamou, and Mme. Florence Poisson. Relatives of the artists provided invaluable information and the opportunity to study works in their collections. Mlle. Yolande Osbert was particulaarly helpful as she shared her memories and documents preserved from the 1890's. I am also grateful to Mme. Claire Denis and M. Antoine Salomon for their generous assistance. For their warm hospitality and personal favors, I give my heartfelt thanks to M. and Mme. François Bouruet-Aubertot.

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and specific issues have sustained my efforts. I also extend special thanks to Professor Robert Pincus-Witten for his continuing interest in this dissertation and his perceptive discussions on matters of interpretation. I am immensely grateful to Professor John Rewald for his careful reading and suggestions, and to professor Charles Eldredge for his willingness to participate on this committee and to read the manuscript long-distance.

Last, but not least, I thank my daughters for their assistance in the final stages of the work and their confidence in my efforts over the long period of its accomplishment.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN FOOTNOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

GBA	Gazette dex Beaux-Arts
Autour de Lévy-Dhurmer	Autour de Lévy-Dhurmer, Visionnaires et Intimistes en 1900, 1973
French Symbolist Painters	French Symbolist Painters. Arts Council of Great Britain, London, 1972.
Puvis	Puvis de Chavannes. Paris: Grand Palais, 1976.
Rev. Encycl.	Revue Encyclopédique.
RAAM	Revue de 1'Art Ancien et Moderne
BAAM	Bulletin de 1'Art Ancien et Moderne.
Art Bull.	The Art Bulletin
NRF	Nouvelle Revue Française

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The re-examination of late nineteenth century art, currently in progress, seeks to rectify attitudes about that period which have dominated twentieth century criticism. When the term "modern" in our century became synonymous with abstraction, there followed the devaluation of all prior art which did not nourish this concept. Thus began the inversion of values which separates our era from the turn of the century. As the twentieth century progressed, the most highly regarded artists of the 1890's—Puvis de Chavannes, Gustave Moreau, Eugene Carrière and others—faded into obscurity, while controversial artists such as Cézanne, Seurat, Van Gogh, and Gauguin were recognized as masters and as precursors of the modern.

In the current revisionist approach, the focus has been turned to this area of neglected art which more conventionally reflected the spirit of its time. Recognizing the need for greater understanding of this period, historians are presently engaged in rediscovering lesser-known artists or re-evaluating known figures.[1]

The aim of this dissertation is to re-examine the work of several artists of the 1890's called "Les Nostalgiques" whose work was especially associated with a particular theme—the idyllic landscape—and to explore the significance and meanings of this theme within the spectrum of Symbolism, a major current in fin-de-siècle art and literature.

Since a basic premise of Symbolist doctrine was the rejection of the mundane, Symbolist artists frequently painted idyllic subjects that embodied a dreamy detachment from reality. But idyllic or Arcadian themes apparently fascinated all artists of that time. In perusing the catalogues of the various Salons, one finds evidence that this imagery was commonplace. This theme was prevalent in the art of both official Salons—Le Salon des Artistes Français (Le Salon des Champs Elysées) and the Salon de la Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts (Le Salon du Champ-de-Mars) as well as in the non-conformist Salon des Independants and Le Salon de la Rose+Croix. This imagery was adopted by certain Neo-Impressionists as well as by most Symbolist artists, ranging from the radical followers of Gauguin to the Idealists who, to modern eyes, appear as borderline Academics. But as we shall see, our group of "Nostalgiques" used an approach that differentiated them visually from most Salon painters.

As the antidote to Impressionism, the nostalgic landscape hinted at deeper and poetic meanings. Its imagery consisted of dreamy figures in forest glades at the hour of sunset or dawn. A desire to escape from the present permeated the nostalgic evocation of a remote and happier past.

These attitudes were noted by the critic Gustave Coquiot, who created the classification "Les Nostalgiques" in his chronicle of the early exhibitions of the Société des Artistes Indépendants. Coquiot characterized his "Nostalgiques" rather ironically:

> Songez que voilà des âmes qui regrettent les temps du deluge, les apparitions vesperales, les mythologies et les aspects lunaires des architectures de jadis!..Ah, revoir les nymphes, les Faunes, les Hamadryads et les joueurs de flute aux bord des promontoires!.. Ah nous, les nostalgiques, nous n'exprimerons jamais assez nos rêves brisés, nos illusions meurtries, nos ailes cassées! 2

Coquiot included in this category such disparate artists as Osbert, Séon, Roussel, de Chirico, Girieud, and Trachsel. Since we have found that the longing for the past and the theme of the idyllic landscape permeated a great deal of Symbolist painting, we have concluded that Coquiot's group of nostalgic artists should be expanded. Thus, in addition to certain artists named by Coquiot as "Nostalgiques", i. e. Alphonse Osbert, Alexandre Séon, And K.-X. Roussel, we will also study the idyllic theme as painted by the following artists: Maurice Denis, Aristide Maillol, Henri-Emond Cross, Théo Van Rysselberghe, Hippolyte Petitjean, Armand Point, Maurice Chabas, Henri Le Sidaner, Henri Martin, Edmond Aman-Jean, Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer, Emile-René Ménard, Charles-Marie Dulac, Eugene Grasset, and Andhré des Gachons. [3] Our more comprehensive group of "Nostalgiques" is not limited, as was Coquiot's, to those artists who exhibited at Les Indépendants, and it includes artists of widely varying pictorial manners. We have grouped these artists and called them "Nostalgiques" because they all conformed in some way to Coquiot's definition of escapist art.

The landscape of the imagination painted by these nostalgic artists of the 1890's took various forms; in some cases it appeared in what might be called the dream of Hellenism; while for others, the image of nature was a revelation of the Divine. Landscape was also

regarded as a mirror of human emotion or as a vehicle for the expression of the artist's unconscious, the famous "état d'âme" so frequently referred to in Symbolist criticism.

To be sure, the escapist phenomenon was not confined to the last decades of the past century. Rather, this epoch, characterized by extremes of egoism, hyper-sensitivity, and morbidity, in many ways restated problems of Romanticism. The reappearance of the mal-du-siècle with its pessimistic outlook permeated almost all artistic expression. The Symbolists' detachment from the world of reality, and the artist's alienation from bourgeois society inevitably recalls the situation of the 1830's.

In the 1890's, the "Nostalgiques" and other Symbolist artists felt that landscape painting had to express a state of mind rather than merely describe what the eye saw. For them, the naturalist current culminating in Impressionism lacked both feeling and Ideality; a more subjective and poetic attitude was called for. In turning from empiricism, the Symbolists emphasized imagination. Their nostalgic reveries provided a route of escape from the detested present. Artists at the end of the century were no less attracted to the past than were the earlier generations of Ingres, Delacroix, and the mid-century "Classiques."[4]

But for our "Nostalgiques", nostalgia and Symbolism were interdependent. They scorned the precise historicism of Gérome and Bouguereau for its verisimilitude and sentimentality. As Symbolists, their aim was to "put the logic of the visible at the service of the invisible" [5]

and their attitude toward the past was never archeological.

Still, for a variety of reasons, certain traditions appealed to the Symbolists. In avoiding the mundane, they embraced the "primitive." To the world-weary artist, this term implied the bucolic innocence of the Hellenic "golden age". To the religious artist whose faith was stirred by the Neo-Catholic revival, the art of the Italian Primitives was a model of simple piety and pure beauty. And finally, reawakened nationalism and conservatism in politics spurred a vogue for le grand siècle when classical ideas and the French tradition had merged.

The Symbolist generation was much influenced by the reflective mood and vague references to a vanished past which appeared in the works of the English Pre-Raphaelites, Puvis de Chavannes, and Gustave Moreau. For the "Nostalgiques" the form and content of Puvis' paintings were inspirational. But Redon, Carrière, Gauguin, and Fantin-Latour also influenced the young artists in their cultivation of a non-descriptive approach to nature.

Although the mood and pictorial form of the Symbolist idyllic landscape were largely inspired by Puvis' murals and easel paintings, this new approach was influenced by Corot's Arcadian paintings as well. At the end of the century Corot was revered not only by the Impressionists but also by the "Nostalgiques," for to them he represented the rebirth of the seventeenth-century landscape tradition. In the renewed Idealism of the 1890's, Corot's earlier return to the Claudian idyll was echoed by Puvis and his Symbolist followers.

Our task will be to illuminate some of the lesser-known aspects of Symbolist art as revealed in this particular thematic material. Our method will consist of an examination of various groups of artists through visual evidence and documentation, including a consideration of the critical literature. Studied from these viewpoints, the cultural attitudes of a particular era become evident. Through both the encomium and castigation expressed in the literature, we can grasp the expectations of the art public and the significance of each artist seen in relation to his contemporaries and to the past. In order to understand this period and its art, we must divest ourselves of our biases and consider it from the point of view and the prevailing sentiments of its own time, as best as we can reconstruct them.

In this context, we shall examine the works of certain nostalgic artists who painted idyllic themes using a variety of styles which can all be called Symbolist. For purposes of organization, the artists are grouped in certain categories based on their historical affiliations. This task is complex because they were connected on several levels such as personal friendships and group exhibition loyalties as well as by stylistic affinities.

Our attention will be directed first to the Nabis who painted idyllic subjects in their flight from the mundane: Maurice Denis, K-X. Roussel, and Aristide Maillol. We shall examine pastoral paintings by the Neo-Impressionists Henri-Edmond Cross, Paul Signac, Théo Van Rysselberghe, and Hippolyte Petitjean, who show affinities with Symbolism.

and exemplify the narrowing gap between these two important movements of the 1890's. Idyllic landscapes were favored at the Salons de la Rose+Croix; several of our "Nostalgiques"—Alexandre Séon, Alphonse Osbert, Armand Point, Maurice Chabas, Eugène Grasset, and Andhré des Gachons—shared the Idealist viewpoint of Sâr Péladan, the founder of these Salons. Other artists, called by the critic Camille Mauclair, "Idéalistes" and "Intimistes" - Edmond Aman-Jean, Henri Martin, Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer, and Emile-René Ménard—were not linked as a formal group, but can be studied together for their common interest in the idyllic landscape.

We also include Charles-Marie Dulac as a "Nostalgique". This little-known, reclusive artist remained apart from the above groups. His mystical landscapes in the medium of lithography were unique although his conception of landscape as a revelation of the Divine was paralleled in the art of Maurice Denis and Maurice Chabas. The art of Dulac and Denis exemplify the nostalgic yearning for paradise on earth within a specifically Christian context.

The escapist dream which stimulated the idyllic visions of the "Nostalgiques" was equally attractive to some Salon painters. They similarly expressed their yearnings for the past in their choice of unreal subjects. Muses, nymphs, and idealized bathers animated the walls of all exhibitions of the 1890's and Salon artists sometimes borrowed the pictorial mannerisms of Whistler-like tones, hazy light, and dreamy figures which constituted the syntax of the "Nostalgiques." Thus the gap between the Symbolist "Nostalgiques" and academic artists began to narrow, creating a situation which has seemed confusing to modern

historians.[6] This overlapping was compounded by the participation of certain "Nostalgiques" in the official Salons while they continued to exhibit at the liberal Independants, the Salons de la Rose+Croix, La Libre Esthetique, and at private galleries such as Le Barc de Boutteville, Georges Petit, Durand-Ruel, etc.[7] However, if the themes chosen by Salon artists and the "Nostalgiques" shared a predilection for idyllic themes their aesthetic aims and pictorial forms still differed. The "Nostalgiques" suggested hidden meanings and the invisible by means of ambiguity and allusion and through the use of "pictorial equivalents" prescribed by Maurice Denis,[8] whereas Salon artists who painted Arcadian themes usually incorporated elements of visual realism and photographic detail appreciated by their public.

The "Nostalgiques" frequently used the medium of pastel and several of them exhibited with the Société des Pastellistes Français, founded in 1885. Osbert, Point, Aman-Jean, Lévy-Dhurmer, Martin, Le Sidaner, Ménard, and Roussel made significant contributions to the revival of this medium which has been popularized by Degas. In general, the Symbolists who used pastel did not employ it to catch fugitive effects, but rather to instill the feeling of mystery and unreality.

In our study of the Symbolist milieu, we may sometimes apply the terms "conservative" or "progressive" to the attitudes of various artists or groups in order to indicate their conformity to, or divergence from the standards of the Academy. Thus the "conservative" Symbolist artists, many of them trained in the Ecole des Beaux Arts, combined

some traditional elements with new techniques such as pointillist or Impressionist brush strokes, heightened color, and simplified drawing and modelling. "Progressive" artists, on the other hand, rejected the academic values of Renaissance illusionism and classical drawing because they felt them to be inhibiting in their attempt to incorporate musicality and poetic feeling.

Maurice Denis, one of these "progressive" artists, articulated their search for "pictorial equivalents":

> Ils ont préféré dans leurs oeuvres l'expression par le décor, par l'harmonie des formes et des couleurs, par la matière employée, à l'expression par le sujet. Ils ont cru qu'il existait à toute émotion, à toute pensée humaine, un équivalent plastique, décoratif, une beauté correspondante.

In contrast to scholars who consider late nineteenth century art "progressive" in the degree that it affected or anticipated twentieth century developments, our use of this term will be restricted to examining the attitudes and varied responses within Symbolist circles to new ideas. In this investigation it will become evident that "conservative" and "progressive" approaches cannot be clearly separated and indeed were not always antithetically charged.

Our examination of the idyllic iconography of Symbolist art has led us to consult the vast body of literature of the 1890's and the early twentieth century. Except for Coquiot's brief, flawed chapter, this is the first study of the nostalgic attitudes so integral Symbolist art.

The literature on the Symbolist epoch is of uneven quality.

It ranges from the early documentation of events in the art world to the recent scholarly investigations of this once-neglected art. To provide the background for our current work, we shall examine the significant contributions to the literature chronologically.

In the years around 1900, the artists on whom this study is focussed were gaining recognition and were fairly successful through the support of loyal critics and collectors. Their works were exposed regularly at the Salons, both the official and the more progressive exhibitions. The catalogues of these Salons, the articles on individual artists, and the myriad Salon reviews in the periodicals provide visual and textual documentation of the artists' works. The language of this literature, with a few exceptions, is monotonously laudatory, often rhapsodic. Thus, its value is essentially documentary. Additionally, there are a few summaries of contemporary art of the period ending with the First World War and monographs on the founding figures, Puvis de Chavannes and Gustave Moreau.[10]

Critical analysis in the early monographic studies and articles is, by contemporary standards, lamentable. The periodicals of this era are notoriously partisan, reflecting the affiliation of their founders and contributors to a particular aesthetic doctrine. Still, Symbolist periodicals are valuable for their publication of poetry, prose and original graphic works. In many cases, contributing poets doubled as art critics, following the example set by Baudelaire and Gautier, thus strengthening the ties between poetry and painting.[11] In this category were the poet-critics Camille Mauclair, Alphonse

Germain, and Raymond Bouyer, whose numerous articles and books provide valuable insights into the Symbolist phenomenon.[12]

An important early summary of Symbolist art was written by André Mellerio, Le Mouvement idéaliste au peinture (1896).[13] Mellerio traced the idealist tendencies stemming from the work of Puvis, Moreau, Redon, and Gauguin and their effect on the younger artists. Although a slight volume, it is a remarkably perceptive summary by a contemporary writer. Indeed, it remains a prime document.

General histories of nineteenth century art appeared within the first decade of the twentieth century. Julius Meier-Graefe, Development of Modern Art (1904; in English, 1908) covered Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, and the Idealist tradition, including in the latter category Puvis, Moreau, Denis, and Maillol. Richard Muther, A History of Modern Painting (in English; 1907) also traced the influence of Puvis and Moreau on some of their Symbolist followers. A more selective focus was present in several studies of the 1910's and 1920's. Achille Ségard, Peintres d'aujourd'hui, Les Décorateurs (1914), emphasized the legacy of Puvis to artists in the 1890's who followed his lead in mural painting. Other early summaries which include Symbolists are those of Tristan Klingsor (1913, 1921) and J.C. Holl (1914). Maurice Denis' Théories, (1912 and 1920) followed by Nouvelles Théories (1922), both anthologies of critical articles from 1890 on, are landmarks in the theoretical literature of the early 20th century.

In the 1920's a number of comprehensive histories of nine-

teenth-century art were published. These include works by André Fontainas and Louis Vauxcelles, André Michel, Henri Focillon, Louis Dimier. These are major historical works which document all types of painting, and are valuable compilations of the varied pictorial material of the past century.

Gustave Coquiot's history of Les Indépendants (1920) has been referred to above.[14] This important document lists artists who participated in the early exhibitions of the society. Coquiot's idiosyncratic grouping of artists, linking Osbert and de Chirico as "Nostalgiques", is shocking by current standards, but it heightens our awareness of the complexity of the period and it defines a category not treated elsewhere.

Another informative account of the diverse currents in fin-de-siècle art was written by the well-known society painter, Jacques-Emile Blanche, Les Arts plastiques. (1931).

In the same year, Robert Rey published La Renaissance du Sentiment Classique: La Peinture française à la fin du XIXe siecle (1931). The author examined the classical element to be found in the work of some Impressionists and Post-Impressionist artists, notably Seurat and Cézanne. The intorductory chapter consists of an illuminating discussion of the term "sentiment classique", in which the author omitted discussion of Puvis and the lesser-known classicizing painters of the 1890's. Thus we find in this book the tendency which was then becoming standard; the focus was placed on the leading masters of Impressionism and Post-

Impressionism, while Puvis and his artistic descendents were neglected. This set the pattern of twentieth-century scholarship and criticism; structural and formal elements of late nineteenth century art were seen as the basis for modern painting. The emphasis on formal means at the expense of iconographical considerations doomed idealist painting to oblivion.

Le Cinquantenaire du Symbolisme, an exhibition at the Bibliothèque Nationale in 1936 exposed the literary and artistic accomplishments of the Symbolist movement to a new public and stimulated interest in this field which had been largely forgotten. In the 1940's there followed several general studies which further broadened the knowledge of Symbolism.

Bernard Dorival, Les Etapes de la peinture française contemporaine, (1943) includes important material on the Symbolists and Neo-Impressionists. Louis Hautecoeur, Littérature et peinture en France (du XVIIe au XXe s.) (1942) is an intelligent study which reversed the trend toward formalist analysis in its study of the complex interrelationship of literature and painting. Charles Chassé, Le Mouvement Symboliste dans l'art du XIXe s. (1947) is also an important work. More specialized is Agnes Humbert's Les Nabis et leur époque (1955). More chatty than scholarly, this book is valuable as it was the first full-length study of the Nabis.

The renewal of interest in this latter group led to several large scale exhibitions and scholarly articles on various Nabi artists.

Symbolist theory was published in Paul Sérusier, A B C de

la Peinture, (1942, 1950). Maurice Denis' Journals (3 vols. 1957) provide many valuable insights into his own work and that of his friends. An important book by H. Rookmaaker Synthetist Art Theories (1959, 1972) is still an indispensable volume for Symbolist studies. John Rewald, Post Impressionism-From Van Gogh to Gauguin (1956,1962, 1978) contains much information on Symbolist theory, literary background, and the lesser-known Symbolists.

A few of the artists have been studied in monographs, but those which date before 1945 suffer from lack of scholarly method. An exception is Suzanne Barazzetti-Demoulin's biography and incomplete catalogue, Maurice Denis (1945) which is still helpful. Isabelle Compin's exemplary monograph and catalogue Henri-Edmond Cross (1964) provides both documentation and valuable insights.

By the mid 1960's, art historical revisionism opened new paths into the fin-de-siècle period. Scholarly investigations culminated in comprehensive exhibitions of Symbolist art involving international cooperation.[15] The Sacred and Profane in Symbolist Art (Turin and Toronto, 1969) was a model for introducing the work of unknown artists. French Symbolist Painters (Arts Council of Great Britain, 1972) and Le Symbolisme en Europe (Paris, Rotterdam, Brussels, Baden-Baden, 1976) were major exhibitions which inspired a wealth of smaller, but also important exhibitions.[16] Robert Herbert's exhibition and catalogue, Neo-Impressionism (S. R. Guggenheim Museum, 1968) was an important contribution in that field. Scholarly attention has been focussed on Puvis de Chavannes in two recent exhibitions, (Toronto, 1975; Paris and Ottowa, 1976).

The former exhibition documents the wide sphere of influence exerted by Puvis on his contemporaries and twentieth-century artists, an idea which was germinated in a significant article by Robert Goldwater in 1946.[17]

The revival of interest in the Symbolist movement is evident in the growing number of books and Ph.D. dissertations on various groups and individual artists. From the late 1960's on significant contributions have been made on Puvis de Chavannes, the Nabi movement, the Rose+Croix Salons, Denis, Sérusier, and K.-X. Roussel.[18] Thus, current investigations into the area of French Symbolism have opened new avenues of knowledge and provided us with a more accurate historical picture of the art world at the end of the century. With our focus on the theme of the idyllic landscape in the 1890's we hope to enrich the burgeoning field of Symbolist studies.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

FOOTNOTES

1. Tangible evidence of the historical re-evaluation of the nineteenth century is to be found in the projected opening of the Musée d'Orsay (Paris), a new wing of the Musées Nationaux. This Museum will be devoted to French art from 1815-1914, and will offer exhibition space to works formerly in storerooms in the Louvre and in provincial museums. Until the opening of the new museum, many of the works from the storerooms of the Louvre and Musée d'Art Moderne have been exhibited at the Palais de Tokyo (from 1978 to the present).

   The opening of the André Meyer Galleries at the Metropolitan Museum in 1980 was significant as evidence in the revisionist approach to the nineteenth century. Formerly neglected works--Academic and Symbolist paintings--were rehung after decades in the storerooms to give a more complete historical overview of the century.

2. Gustave Coquiot, Les Indépendants (Paris: Ollendorff, 1920), p. 123.

3. Some of these artists who exhibited with the Independants were placed in other groups by Coquiot. Others, who never exhibited in that Salon, were of course not studied by Coquiot in this particular chronicle. In the chapters below devoted to individual artists, we have indicated this.

4. Henri Peyre discusses the "néo-grec" style at mid-century in the work of Hamon, Picou, Baudry, Amaury-Duval, continued later by Gérome, Bouguereau, Cabanel. He shows certain parallels with Parnassian poetry in the continuing fascination with Hellenism throughout the century. H. Peyre, Bibliographie critique de l'Hellenisme en France, 1843-1870 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932), p. 47, 54-65.

5. Odilon Redon, A Soi-même (Paris, 1922), p. 29, quoted in [and translated by] John Rewald, Post-Impressionism (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1962), p. 170.

6. See the discussion of this issue by Hans H. Hofstätter, "L'Iconographie de la peinture symboliste," in Symbolisme en Europe (Rotterdam, Brussels, Baden-Baden, Paris, 1976), p. 11.

7. Henri Martin and Lévy-Dhurmer participated in the Salon des Champs Elysées. M. Chabas, Le Sidaner, Osbert, Séon, Point, Aman-Jean, Ménard, Denis, and Dulac exhibited at the Salon du Champ-de-Mars.

8. Maurice Denis, "Préface de la IXe exposition des peintres impressionistes et symbolistes, chez Le Barc de Boutteville," 1895, reprinted in Théories (Paris: Rouart et Watelin, 1920).

9. Ibid., p. 27.

10. See bibliography.

11. See writings by Stuart Merrill on Armand Point, Emile Verhaeren on Van Rysselberghe and Cross, Alphonse Germain on Séon in bibliography.

12. See chapter III on Landscape, Introduction to chapter VII on Salons de la Rose+Croix, Introduction to chapter VIII on Idéalistes et Intimistes.

13. See bibliography for this and publications listed below.

14. See note 2 above.

15. Some of the more important exhibitions are: Die Maler der Revue Blanche, Toulouse Lautrec und die Nabis, Bern, 1951; Bonnard, Vuillard et Les Nabis, Paris, 1955; The Nabis and Their Circle, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1962; Die Nabis und Ihre Freunde, Mannheim, 1963; Neo-Impressionists and Nabis in the collection of A.G. Altschul, Yale, 1965; Vuillard and Roussel, Munich and Paris, 1968; Bonnard, Vuillard, Roussel, Bruxelles, 1975; also: Maurice Denis, Albi, 1963; Paris, 1970; Bremen, 1971.

16. See Autour de Lévy-Dhurmer, Visionnaires et Intimistes en 1900 (Paris, 1973), in which many of the "Nostalgiques" were well-represented. See also Salons de la Rose+Croix, London, Piccadilly Gallery, 1968, also others listed in bibliography.

17. Robert Goldwater, "Puvis de Chavannes, Some Reasons for a Reputation," Art Bulletin, Jan. 1946, pp. 33-43.

18. Note: The titles published by Garland, New York, were originally Ph.D. dissertations dated earlier.
George Mauner, The Nabi Movement, New York: Garland, 1978 (Columbia University, 1967); Robert Pincus-Witten, Occult Symbolism in France, Josephin Péladan and the Salons de la Rose+Croix, New York: Garland, 1976 (University of Chicago, 1968); Ellen Oppler, Fauvism Re-Examined, New York: Garland, 1976 (Columbia University, 1972); Aimée Brown Price, "The Easel Paintings of Puvis de Chavannes," Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1972; Jeanne Stump, "The Art of K.-X. Roussel," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Kansas, 1972; Cecile Guy, "Les Ecrits Théoriques et Critiques de Maurice Denis," Diplome d'Etudes Supérieures, Université de Tours, 1963; Matthew Herban, "Maurice Denis, 'Le Nouvel Ordre Classique' as Contained in his Theories," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1972; Katherine Porter Aichele, "The Sacred Workshop: Maurice Denis and Georges Desvallières," Ph.D. Dissertation, Bryn Mawr, 1976; Catherine Bock, "Matisse and Neo-Impressionism." Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1977.

See also Robert Goldwater, Symbolism (New York: Harper, 1977). This book represents the publication of manuscripts in progress at the time of the author's death. These texts have been edited but lack documentation in the form of footnotes, and the final synthesis by the author.

Chapter II

THE SYMBOLIST ERA

The "Nostalgiques" shared the anti-materialist tendencies and the aesthetic stance of the larger group of Symbolist artists. In their detachment from reality and their commitment to the escapist dream, they crystallized the essence of Symbolist ideology. In order to place the "Nostalgiques" within the Symbolist framework, it is necessary to define the aesthetic milieu in which nostalgic attitudes flourished.

The terms "Symbolism" and "Symbolist movement" have been endlessly probed; they seem to lend themselves less to precise definition than to lengthy exigeses of their complexity and ambiguity. Discussions of this terminology are often the departure point for studies of both the literary and artistic manifestations of this aesthetic phenomenon. [1]

Symbolism could be considered a form of Idealism which grew out of the artist's disenchantment with the prevailing commitment to the philosophical positivism of Hippolyte Taine. [2] The alienated artist, reacting against a hostile environment, rejected all suggestions of earthly contingency in his art and sought instead to express metaphysical ideas and universal truths.

In the 1880's, prose writers sought to replace the favored naturalist approach, while poets rejected the impassivity, objectiv-

ity and formal perfection of the Parnassians. Both cultivated a more subjective approach and a new aesthetic which allowed them to instill their writing with a sense of spirituality and mystery.

In the field of art, painters also sought freedom to transcend the conventional approach of empiricism. The generation of artists maturing around 1890 voiced their dissatisfaction with the retinal aspect of Impressionism, for they felt the need to incorporate ideas and emotional qualities in their art. Like the poets, they viewed nature subjectively, and sought a new style to transmit their interiorized vision.

Symbolist doctrine was based on the search for an ideal world lying beyond the realm of everyday experience. The legacy of German idealistic philosophy, already absorbed by the French early in the century, once more permeated intellectual circles.[3] Like the Romantics, the Symbolists' attitudes were marked by the desire to transcend the world of outward appearances, to apprehend the cosmic role of man in the universe, and to attain the ideal of absolute beauty through their art. They recognized that these spiritual goals could not be achieved through rational means but only through the cultivation of the subconscious state of dream.

The other-worldly strivings and the metaphysical ideals of the Romantics had been rejected during the mid-century era by the demands of a bourgeoisie attuned to progress, a society dominated by positivist and scientific thought. However, in the wake of the

Franco-Prussian war, the disillusion and pessimism permeating French society engendered a new receptivity to transcendental ideas which promised an alternative route, an escape from the bonds of materialism.

In this era of post-war depression, Schopenhauer's ideas on the illusory nature of the exterior world were popular in France due to studies and translations of his works.[4] Schopenhauer's aesthetic philosophy established the ideality of art above the world of nature and human experience. This realm of higher reality became attainable to the artist through the creation and contemplation of art, the embodiment of universal spirit. Schopenhauer's theory of art as salvation was mined by the Decadent poets in the 1880's and it was especially meaningful for Mallarmé and his Symbolist followers.[5]

The anti-naturalist stance of the young writers in the 1880's was strengthened by a renewal of interest in the mystic writings of Swedenborg and the Romantics: Carlyle, Novalis, de Nerval, and Baudelaire.[6] The Symbolists, seeking to escape the confines of mundanity, embraced anew Swedenborg's teachings which emphasized the life of the spirit and the role of dream to attain higher reality.

Swedenborg had differentiated between the spiritual and the sensual aspects of man's nature, and through his theory of universal analogies, linked all phenomena in the natural world to Divine universal spirit. His mystical philosophy provided the Romantics with a mysterious pseudo-religion of universal truths and a new means of apprehending the Infinite which replaced for many the worn-out claims

of organized Christianity. Later in the century Baudelaire's poetry and his theory of correspondences infused with Swedenborgian mysticism, became a cornerstone of Symbolist aesthetics.

In his sonnet, Correspondances, Baudelaire identified outward nature as a "forest of symbols." He felt that only the poet, gifted with special insight and using metaphors based on universal analogies, could penetrate the realm of pure spirit. Transcending rational patterns of thought, this analogical intuition could illuminate the secret correspondences between Divine essence and earthly manifestation as well as provide the synaesthesia of sensory impressions. [8]

Baudelaire conceived of poetry, and in a larger sense, all art, as a means of transcending ordinary existence ; echoing the ideas of Edgar Poe, he wrote, "C'est par et à travers la poésie que l'âme entrevoit les splendeurs situées derrière le tombeau." [9] Mallarmé, too, considered the creation of art as spiritual activity and the means of gaining knowledge of the Infinite:

> Poetry, when human language has been reduced to its essential rhythm, is the expression of the mysterious meaning of the various aspects of our existence. It therefore gives true value to our life on earth and is the only duty of our soul. 10

Thus the Symbolist poet or artist of the 1880's, inspired by Baudelaire and Mallarmé, attempted to attain the Absolute through his art; by his invocation of universal analogies he allowed his spirit, and that of his reader or viewer, to unite with the Infinite. In this metaphysical process, the artist relied on the evocative

power unleashed by his symbols to communicate ideas and thus to transcend the phenomenal world. This conception of the symbol had its roots in Carlyle:

> In a Symbol there is concealment and yet revelation . . . in the Symbol proper . . . there is ever more or less distinctly and directly . . . some embodiment and revelation of the Infinite: the Infinite is made to blend itself with the Finite, to stand visible, and as it were attainable thereby . . . For is not a Symbol ever, to him who has eyes for it, some dimmer or clearer revelation of the Godlike? 11

In order to represent an elusive or ambiguous idea, the Symbolist poet used symbols rather than allegory. The symbol chosen by him alluded to a heavenly Absolute and revealed its meaning through mysterious evocation rather than through conventionally accepted allusion. [12] This approach was codified by a contemporary critic:

> Leur Symbolisme a pour but . . . de rendre le mystère perceptible en toutes choses. Ils s'appliquent à la tâche différemment les uns des autres . . . Mais ils ont entre eux ceci de commun qu'on les doit tous considérer comme des interprètes de l'Inéffable. 13

In this era, as naturalism was devalued, the creation and enjoyment of art was elevated to a religious experience. Arthur Symons wrote in 1889, "for in speaking to us so intimately as only religion had hitherto spoken to us, it becomes itself a kind of religion with all the duties and responsibilities of the sacred ritual." [14]

By the end of the eighties, the reign of naturalism was shaken by a surge of mysticism. In his preface to Vanor's study of

Symbolism in literature, L'Art symboliste (1889), Paul Adam predicted, "L'époque à venir sera mystique. Mystique et théiste." [15]

The Symbolists' commitment to the world of the spirit was nourished by a contemporary wave of occultism and esoterism, manifested in numerous periodicals and books. A major event was the publication of Edouard Schuré's Les Grands Initiés. [16] This important theosophical text set forth ancient esoteric and hermetic doctrines, syncretized the teachings of all religions, and reconciled their mystical approach with modern scientific doctrines. This compilation of universal spiritual truths was a rich source mined by artists and writers alike.

The decade of the 1880's was clearly marked by ferment; literary clubs, cafe groups and a flurry of little reviews reflected the enthusiastic response to new ideas. These publications, often ephemeral, were founded by writers who later provided important Symbolist texts--Fénéon, Wyzewa, Moréas, and Kahn--and the reviews were the mouthpieces of the new décadent aesthetic. [17] This label, applied in scorn by hostile journalists who interpreted the term moralistically, was nonetheless pridefully borne by the Décadents who definitively rejected "la vie quotidienne" to seek a higher reality. [18]

While Verlaine was regarded as the leader of the Décadents, Mallarmé was the most influential poet for the Symbolists. [19] The list of his disciples includes numerous poets and artists similarly committed to spiritual ideals. [20] Mallarmé faulted the Parnassians for

their dedication to formal perfection at the expense of poetry's essentially mysterious and suggestive power. Mallarmé's frequently quoted dictum represents a crystallization of Symbolist aesthetics:

> Poetry lies in the contemplation of things, in the image emanating from the reveries which things arouse in us . . . . To name an object is largely to destroy poetic enjoyment, which comes from gradual divination. The ideal is to suggest the object. It is the perfect use of this mystery which constitutes symbol. An object must be gradually evoked in order to show a state of soul; or else, choose an object and from it elicit a state of soul by means of a series of decodings. 21

However, Symbolist ideals were defined by the more dynamic and public personality, Jean Moréas. The new doctrine was boldly launched in his manifesto of 1886 with a firm pronouncement of the name Symbolisme and a long statement of its aesthetic stance and its sources.

> Symbolic poetry endeavors to clothe the Idea in a sensitive form which nevertheless, would not be an end in itself, but would be subordinate to the Idea while serving to express it. The Idea, on the other hand, should not make its appearance deprived of the sumptuous trappings of external analogies, for the essential character of symbolist art consists in never going straight to the conception of the Idea itself. 22

In this article, Moréas claimed Baudelaire as the spiritual father of the present movement, and cited Mallarmé, Verlaine, and de Banville as contributors to the revolution still in progress.

While many of these ideas were well-established in the literary community by the mid-eighties, it would be erroneous to assume

that there was a unified response in terms of poetic style or even a cohesive program shared by all writers. [23] The diversity within Symbolism arises from its premise of subjectivity and the liberation of the artist from outworn methods of expression. Adhering to this new aesthetic, the artist heightened the suggestive power of language through the use of words with musical sounds and irregular rhythms. [24] All art was to "constantly aspire towards the condition of music," Walter Pater's phrase which was paralleled by Verlaine's Art Poétique, "De la musique avant toute chose, et pour cela préfère l'impair. . ." [25]

The Symbolists' dedication to musicality also reflected Carlyle's theory that music was the art closest to human feeling and that it dealt with essential truths because of its appeal to the soul. [26] Writing in this vein, Symbolist critic Téodor de Wyzewa stated that music was the most suggestive of the arts because of its independence from descriptive function: "Une sonate peut bien nous procurer des émotions sans le sécours d'un texte, scenario ou programme." [27] He too encouraged the incorporation of musical ideas in poetry: "Et pour suggérer les émotions, . . un signe special a été inventé; le son musical." [28] To the Symbolists, Wagner's operas represented the highest form of art because the other arts--drama, literature, and visual imagery--were merged with music to create even greater emotional expression. Edouard Dujardin, a founder of La Revue Wagnérienne, an important mouthpiece for Symbolist doctrine, stated the analogies between Symbolism and the Wagnerian concept of art.

> Sa conception de l'art, sa philosophie, sa formule même était à l'origine du symbolisme et il était impossible d'aller au fond du Wagnérisme sans y rencontrer le symbolisme; c'est à dire qu'il était impossible d'exposer la conception wagnérienne sans y reconnaître la doctrine ou tout au moins l'un des éléments primordiaux de la nouvelle doctrine poétique. [29]

The art world in the mid-eighties had not yet been shaken by the aesthetic upheavals taking place in the literary sphere. The Academy continued to hold its firm grip, and the still-struggling Impressionists were showing signs of a "crisis." [30] Certain artists who rejected naturalism as contained within academic conventions or in the innovations of Impressionism turned instead to Idealism. The art of Puvis de Chavannes, Gustave Moreau, and Odilon Redon, while sharing no common stylistic ground, most closely incorporated the ideas circulating among Symbolist poets. In the critical literature of the 1880's they were called "idéalistes" and were admired for their original styles which enabled them to remain apart from both Salon art and Impressionism. In recent studies of Symbolism, these older painters who turned from naturalism have been considered as precursors of the Symbolists. [31]

For long periods in their careers, Puvis de Chavannes and Gustave Moreau eschewed the Salon and its requirements to formulate new techniques which would more suitably convey an ambience of dream and unreality. Both artists sought to induce a poetic reading of their paintings through the evocation of an idyllic past derived from the imagination. In this sense, they paralleled the Parnassian

poets, but in order to emphasize the unreal, they departed more radically from traditional formulas. [32]

By appealing to the imagination, Puvis, Moreau, and Redon gave visual meaning to the legacy of Baudelaire. They passed on to the young Symbolist painters Baudelaire's theories that art is the antithesis of nature, that art must derive from the imagination, and that it expresses its ideality through a system of correspondences which elevate the consciousness of the viewer to the level of spiritual awareness. [33]

According to the art historian Alan Bowness, these precursors of Symbolism and their followers present an "alternative tradition" which connects Romanticism to the modern art of the twentieth century. [34] Bowness's point of view extends that of the Symbolist critics Aurier and Mellerio and other early writers who pointed to additional evidence of a "pre-Symbolist" aesthetic in the art of Whistler and the later Pre-Raphaelites--Rossetti, Burne-Jones, and Watts--whose influence had already been absorbed by the French precursors. [35] The new ideas furnished by these artistic precursors and by Symbolist poets were absorbed by Gauguin, Bernard, and Seurat. Their paintings of the late 1880's , evidence of their search for new pictorial images, were among the first to convey the artist's response to nature using a non-descriptive language.

In the 1890's artists who followed their literary counterparts in adopting a subjective approach were recognized as Symbolists. This

appellation was extended to Redon, Bernard, Gauguin and his Pont-Aven followers, the Nabis, the Rose+Croix artists, and Mauclair's heterogeneous group of Idéalistes.[36] Efforts to define a "Symbolist" pictorial manner shared by these artists would be futile, yet their attitudes coincided in certain respects. A common denominator was their intention to create new forms which would reflect their spiritual orientation and which would impart universal meaning. They uniformly disdained an imitative approach to nature and stated their independence from traditional painting methods. Following Mallarmé, they proclaimed that art should be suggestive and never pedestrian.

They were also united in their common aversion to the art exhibited at the Salon des Artistes Français (Le Salon des Champs Elysées), exemplified by its leaders--Bouguereau, Gérome, Cabanel, and Laurens. In the 1880's the art of the Salon still reflected the standards of drawing, perspective, and meticulous finish imposed by the academy; furthermore, it flattered the taste of the public for recognizable allegory and sentimental narrative.

Maurice Denis, spokesman for burgeoning Symbolist art, condemned the exaggerated illusionism and the photographic realism of Salon painting:

> J'appelerai "nature" le trompe-l'oeil de la foule, comme ces raisins du peintre antique, becquetés des oiseaux, et les panoramas de M. Detaille--où l'on doute, ô l'esthétique émotion, si tel caisson de premier plan est réel ou sur toile. . . Les bons appareils infaillibles, de rigoureuse exactitude, qu'on a voulu fabriqué dans les académies! 37

While the Symbolists rallied against this type of art, they never agreed on a uniform style as an alternative. The various pictorial modes covered by the term "Symbolist" reflect the wide range of departure from accepted representational standards based on illusionism.

The most clear-cut rejection of tradition appeared in the Nabi's adoption of primitivism exemplified in the works of Gauguin, Bernard, Van Gogh, and Redon. Most of the Rose+Croix artists and the idéalistes were less daring; they did not completely reject earlier pictorial conventions but altered them significantly to express poetic meaning and musicality.

Like the poets, Symbolist artists felt the need to paint interior visions and emphasized their subjective response to nature. Going beyond Zola's assertion that art is "nature seen through a temperament," they transformed appearances into symbols employed as equivalents of their own emotional state. [38] Maurice Denis articulated the intentions of the Symbolists:

> Nous avons substitué à l'idée de la nature "vue à travers un temperament," la théorie de l'équivalence ou du symbole: nous affirmions que les émotions ou états d'âme provoqués par un spectacle quelconque, comportaient dans l'imagination de l'artiste des signes ou équivalents plastiques capables de réproduire ces émotions ou états d'âme sans qu'il soit besoin de fournir la copie du spectacle initial; qu'à chaque état de notre sensibilité devait correspondre une harmonie objective capable de le traduire. 39

Like the Symbolist poets, painters aspired to a mystical

communion with a universal spirit, and they expressed the Infinite by using symbols. Thus the painter too became a "seer" into the realm of divine essences. The visionary power of the artist was invoked by Sâr Péladan on the occasion of the first Rose+Croix Salon dedicated to the exhibition of ideal and mystical art: "Artiste, tu es prêtre . . . Artiste, tu es roi . . . . Artiste, tu es mage." [40]

Among the young artists maturing in the mid-eighties, Seurat was the first to adopt a pictorial style which reflected the ideals of the Symbolist poets. [41] This was perhaps inevitable, owing to the close personal relationships and the overlapping interests that linked Seurat and Signac to the coterie of the important Symbolist periodical, La Revue Indépendante, which included the writers Felix Fénéon, Gustave Kahn, Charles Henry, and Jules Laforgue. Fénéon, one of the most influential critics of the fin-de-siècle period, supported Seurat and his followers. He concluded that Seurat was an idealist and that his paintings were visual analogues of Symbolist poetry. [42]

Another rupture with Impressionism appeared with the Synthetist program formulated by Emile Bernard and Paul Gauguin. [43] The radical new ideas emerging from Gauguin's circle at Pont-Aven were evidence of the inroads made against naturalism. By 1890, Gauguin was in personal contact with Mallarmé, Moréas, and Charles Morice, thus producing even closer exchanges between poets and painters. A proliferation of articles on Symbolism in art then appeared; the names of Seurat, Redon, Bernard, Cezanne and Gauguin were frequently mentioned. [44]

In 1891, Albert Aurier published an article on Gauguin that strengthened the position of Symbolism. [45] Aurier defined pictorial Symbolism and outlined its aesthetic doctrine in vigorous and authoratative language that paralleled Moréas' manifesto of literary Symbolism.

Aurier pointed out that the new art initiated by Gauguin followed the idealist and anti-naturalist direction set by the Symbolist poets. Aurier perceived Gauguin as a true idealist--"un de ces sublimes voyeurs --for he possessed the psychic gift of clairvoyant vision elucidated in Swedenborg's system of analogies. Gauguin was praised as the ideological (idéiste) painter of his time, endowed with the "don d'émotivité." [46] Thus Gauguin's paintings became the embodiment, par excellence, of the new Symbolist aesthetic.

Aurier summarized the new art as "idéiste, symboliste, synthétique, subjective et décorative." Decorative art included all the other elements and thus it was central to Aurier's concept. He elaborated: "la peinture décorative c'est, à proprement parler, la vraie peinture. La peinture n'a pu être créée que pour décorer de pensées, de rêves, et d'idées les murales banalités des édifices humains." [47] As part of the Symbolist aesthetic, the term "decorative" painting did not refer exclusively to wall painting and murals, it embodied a basic approach to art. Inspired by a decorative ideal, Symbolist art rejected mimesis and aimed at pure beauty. Maurice Denis broadened its meaning by calling it "le triomphe universel de

l'imagination des esthètes sur les efforts de bête imitation, triomphe de l'émotion du Beau sur le mensonge naturaliste." [48]

In their search for pure expression uncontaminated by description, Symbolist painters borrowed structural and rhythmic elements from music. In their emphasis on decorative pictorial techniques, they often employed a curvilinear structure and rhythmic surface patterns in order to unify their image. Critics were aware of the artists' efforts to incorporate musical feeling in their works, and they frequently used the term "arabesque" with its musical, and decorative associations in discussing these paintings. [49]

The frequent use of this term in art criticism paralleled its prominence in contemporary music theory. Discussion of the term "arabesque" had appeared in the influential book by Edward Hanslick, Du Beau dans le Musique (1877), translated into French and published in 1893. [50] The Symbolist generation could appreciate Hanslick's theories as he stated that all art aimed at producing beauty and affected the "organ of pure contemplation, our imagination." [51]

Hanslick considered music an autonomous and pure art, free from the need to convey ideas: "It's kingdom is, indeed, not of this world." [52] Music was conceived as a pure kaleidoscope or "arabesque" of sound, devoid of meaning. Hanslick defined the term "arabesque" in relation to music, noting its origin in visual art:

> The arabesque, a branch of the art of ornamentation, dimly betokens in what manner music may exhibit forms of beauty though no definite emotion be involved. We see a plexus of flourishes, now bending into graceful curves, now rising in bold sweeps; moving now toward, and now away from each other; correspondingly matched in small and large arcs; apparently incommensurable, yet duly proportioned throughout; with a duplicate or counterpart to every segment; in fine, a compound of oddments, and yet a perfect whole . . . . If, . . . we conceive this living arabesque as the active emanation of inventive genius, the artistic fullness of whose imagination is incessantly flowing into the heart of these moving forms, the effect, we think, will be not unlike that of music. 53

The type of curvilinear rhythm in music described by Hanslick found many visual parallels in Art Nouveau. His ideas correspond to the theories of Denis and Van de Velde. [54] Hanslick's theories were continued at the turn of the century in Debussy's writings. Debussy stated that music had an "individual life of its own" even though many of his own works had been inspired by literature. [55]

Following Aurier, other writers chronicled the burgeoning of Symbolism and supported their favorite artists. As Aurier had promoted Gauguin and his synthetist followers, founders of Symbolist art, Alphonse Germain and Camille Mauclair, both influential critics of the nineties, backed their favorite artists as promulgators of Idealism. [56] Maurice Denis' pronouncements on Symbolist aesthetics are already well-known. In scores of articles he outlined Symbolist doctrines and chronicled many of the key events of the epoch. [57]

In sum, after the hard-won struggles of the eighties, the

Symbolist aesthetic dominated the nineties; the dreamers had triumphed over the realists. Artists and poets together pursued the Ideal; their efforts revolutionized their respective art forms. Camille Mauclair summarized the interdependence of poetry and painting in the Symbolist epoch:

> Abolissant la démarcation factice entre le littérateur et l'artiste, les symbolistes prétendaient que tous les arts étaient les formes polyvalentes d'un même état fervent de la sensibilité, et qu'il y avait bénéfiée (sic) à les ressentir tous, quelque forme d'expression où l'on choisît de spécialiser sa production. 58

The lack of homogeneity that characterized Symbolist expression gave the period its unique flavor, its complexity and its interest. In the following chapters we will be concerned with the connections between our group of "Nostalgiques" and other aspects of Symbolism. [59]

CHAPTER II

THE SYMBOLIST ERA

FOOTNOTES

1. Most general studies of Symbolism include remarks bearing on the difficulty of dealing succinctly with this artistic phenomenon. See the exhibition catalogues of the Symbolist exhibitions in London, 1972; Paris, Rotterdam, Baden-Baden, etc., 1976; Toronto and Turin, 1969. For Symbolist literature, see bibliography on G. Michaud, K. Cornell, M. Decaudin, A. Balakian, A. Symons, A. Lehmann.

2. A.G. Lehmann, The Symbolist Aesthetic in France (Folcroft, Pa.: Folcroft Press, 1969), p. 47.

3. Ibid., pp. 38-39.

4. Ibid., p. 38,48. Ribot's study was published in Paris in 1874. A new translation by J. Bourdeau, Pensées, Fragments, etc. was published in Paris in 1880. The influence of Schopenhauer on French thought was noted by Remy de Gourmont, Preface du Livre des masques, 1896, pp. 11-12, reprinted in Guy Michaud, La Doctrine Symboliste, Documents (Paris: Librarie Nizet, 1947), p. 23.

5. Lehmann, Symbolist Aesthetic, pp. 39-40; Michaud, Documents (Moréas), pp. 24-25, (Mallarmé), pp. 26-27, (Gide), p. 28.

6. Swedenborg's works were translated into French in 1820. Lehmann notes that Carlyle wrote the introduction to Taine's L'Idéalisme Anglais, 1864. H.R. Rookmaaker, Gauguin and 19th Century Art Theory (Amsterdam: Swets+Zeitlinger, 1972), p. 28.

7. Baudelaire, "Correspondances" reprinted in Michaud, Documents pp. 21-22. Swedenborg's analogies were mentioned in A. Aurier, "Le Symbolisme en peinture," 1891, and C. Morice, La Littérature de tout à l'heure, 1889. Both reprinted in Michaud, Documents pp. 40, 41, 43.

8. Baudelaire on Victor Hugo, Art Romantique, 1861, reprinted in Michaud, Documents, p. 22.

9. Baudelaire, Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poë, quoted in Charles Chadwick, Symbolism (London: Methuen, 1971), p. 3.

10. Mallarmé, Letter to Leo d'Orfer, 1884, published in La Vogue, 1886. Reprinted in Michaud, Documents, p. 15. Translated in Bradford Cook, Mallarmé, Selected Prose Poems, Essays and Letters (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1956).

11. Carlyle, Sartor Resartus, 1831, quoted in Lehmann, Symbolist Aesthetic, pp. 258-260.

12. In allegory, the form used suggests another meaning which is generally known to the spectator whereas the Symbolists used symbols to evoke a mood or an emotion that can not be definitively identified. See note 54 below.

13. André Beaunier, "Les Parnassians et les Symbolistes," Mercure de France, II, 1901, p. 388.

14. Arthur Symons, The Symbolist Movement in Literature (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1958; originally published 1889), p. 5. Charles Morice also stressed the religious function of art: "Ainsi entendu l'art n'est pas le révélateur de l'infini; il est au Poète un moyen même d'y pénétrer . . . De nature donc, d'essence, l'Art est religieux." Charles Morice, La Littérature de tout à l'heure, Paris, 1889, p. 35, quoted in Lehmann, Symbolist Aesthetic, p. 106.

Etienne Baju similarly commented: "Ce qui assure le triomphe de cette littérature c'est son rôle éminemment éducateur, rôle qui fut celui de la Religion. Le prêtre mort, la direction morale des esprits appartient à l'Ecrivain." E. Baju, Le Décadent, 1 Oct. 1888, quoted in Lehmann, p. 107.

15. Paul Adam, in G. Vanor, L'Art Symboliste, p. 11, reprinted in Michaud, Documents, p. 36. In his study of mysticism in literature Charbonnel quoted Sarcey, "Je ne sais quel vent de mysticisme souffle sur la France!" Victor Charbonnel, Les Mystiques dans la littérature présente (Paris: Mercure de France, 1897), p. 1.

16. Edouard Schuré, Les Grands Initiés (Paris: Perrin et cie, 1889), passim. Some of these revues are listed by Robert Pincus-Witten, Occult Symbolism in France (New York, 1976), pp. 58-59; see also Charbonnel Mystiques, pp. 1-8, 78; and Guy Michaud, Le Message poétique du Symbolisme (Paris, 1947), pp. 465-70.

17. Kenneth Cornell, The Symbolist Movement (New York: Archon Books, 1970), p. 201, list of Symbolist revues in Appendix. See also John Rewald, Post-Impressionism (New York, 1962), p. 149.

18. Laforgue used this phrase. Arthur Symons defined this movement in The Symbolist Movement, p. 4. See also Anna Balakian, The Symbolist Movement (New York: N.Y.U. Press, 1977), pp. 51-52.

19. See Paul Verlaine, Les Poètes Maudits (Paris, 1884). In this book he explained the poetry of Mallarmé, Rimbaud, and Corbière, and characterized these writers as revolutionaries like Baudelaire, rejecting the mundane and seeking the ideal.

J.K. Huysmans, A rebours (Paris, 1884) summed up Decadent aestheticism in a personage modeled after the contemporary Robert de Montesquiou. Besides his lavish praise of Moreau and Redon, he also focused on Mallarmé as the perfect example of Idealism.

Mallarmé lived a hermetic existence and his aesthetic theories were known only to his disciples during the 1880's. Even when his essays were revealed to a larger public, they were appreciated only by an intellectual elite.

20. See Les Mardis, Stephane Mallarmé and His Circle, University of Kansas Museum, 1966. (Essay by Klaus Berger); Wallace Fowlie, Mallarmé (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 259.

21. Mallarmé, response to Jules Huret, Enquète sur la littérature presente, 1891. Translated in Bradford Cook, Mallarmé, Selected Prose Poems, Essays and Letters, 1956, p. 21.

22. Jean Moréas, "Un Manifeste littéraire," Le Figaro, 18 Sept. 1886, reprinted in Michaud, Documents, pp. 23-26. Part of this article is translated in Rewald, Post-Impressionism (New York, 1962), p. 148.

23. See Balakian, Michaud, Décaudin, Symons, all passim. (Bibliography)

24. In breaking with the past, the Symbolists gradually replaced the traditional form of the alexandrine with free verse as an aid to achieve musicality.

25. Paul Verlaine, Art Poétique, written 1874, published 1884, reprinted in Le XIXe Siècle, edited by Daniel Gallois and J.B. Pieri (Paris, 1960), p. 523. Walter Pater, "The School of Giorgione," The Renaissance (London: Macmillan and Co., 1899), p. 140.

26. H. Rookmaaker, Gauguin, pp. 213-214. This theory was discussed by Brunetière in an article in Revue des Deux Mondes, 1888, quoted in Lehmann, Symbolist Aesthetic, p. 167.

27. Wyzewa, "Mallarmé," La Vogue, 5 July 1886, p. 368, quoted in Lehmann, Symbolist Aesthetic, p. 169.

28. Wyzewa, "L'Art Wagnerien, IV," Revue Wagnérienne, 1886, reprinted in Nos Maîtres (Paris: Perrin, 1895), p. 58.

29. Edouard Dujardin, quoted in Cinquantenaire du Symbolisme (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1936), p. 72.

30. As the various artists reached maturity and achieved some measure of success, the aesthetic conflicts within this group led to a cessation of their group exhibitions in 1886. Monet, Cézanne, and Degas continued explorations which removed them further from the original premises of the Impressionist aesthetic. Renoir was in the process of synthesizing Impressionism and classicism; Pissarro was experimenting with divisionism. 1886 was the year of Moréas' Symbolist manifesto. On the crisis in Impressionism, see Rewald, History of Impressionism (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1973), p. 486 ff. Sven Lövgren, The Genesis of Modernism (Bloomington, Ind.: University of Indiana, 1971), pp. 8, 12 ff.

31. French Symbolist Painters (London, 1972), pp. 79, 101. Le Symbolisme en Europe (Rotterdam, Paris, Baden-Baden, etc., 1976). Puvis and Moreau were not consistent exhibitors in the Salons. Although Puvis was awarded several public commissions and Moreau taught at the Ecole, their idiosyncratic painting styles did not conform to academic standards. See also Rewald, Post-Impressionism (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1962), pp. 164-165; Albert Aurier, "Les Peintres Symbolistes," Revue Encyclopédique, April 1892, pp. 474 ff.; André Mellerio, Le Mouvement Idéaliste en peinture (Paris: H. Floury, 1896), p. 13.

32. Aimée Brown Price, "The Easel Paintings of Puvis de Chavannes," Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1972, pp. 72 ff.

33. Baudelaire, "Salon of 1859," quoted in (and translated by) Jonathan Mayne, Art in Paris (London: Phaidon Press, 1970), pp. 155-162.

34. Alan Bowness, "An Alternative Tradition?" French Symbolist Painters (London, 1972), pp. 14-20.

35. Jacques Lethève, "La Connaissance des Pre-Raphaélites en France" Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1959, p. 315; Le Symbolisme en Europe (Paris, 1976), p. 21 ff. These ideas appear in the early chronicles of Symbolism by Aurier and Mellerio, and were restated in all later literature on Symbolism.

36. G. Albert Aurier, "Paul Gauguin," Mercure de France, March 1891; G.A. Aurier, "Les Peintres Symbolistes," Rev. Encycl., April 1892, pp. 474-486; Maurice Denis, Théories (Paris: Rouart et Watelin, 1920), p. 262. Camille Mauclair, "Quelques peintres idéalistes français," L'Art décoratif, Sept. 1901, p. 223 ff.; see also John Rewald on Volpini exhibition, 1889, and various exhibitions at Le Barc de Boutteville gallery, Post-Impressionism, pp. 280 ff., 470.

37. Denis, Théories, p. 4.

38. Richard Schiff, "The End of Impressionism, A Study in Theories of Artistic Expression," Art Quarterly, n.s. v.I, #4 (Autumn 1978), pp. 333-378.

39. Maurice Denis, "De Gauguin et de Van Gogh au Classicisme," L'Occident, 1909, reprinted in Théories, 1920, pp. 267-268.

40. Josephin Péladan, "Introduction," Catalogue, Première exposition du Salon de la Rose+Croix, 1892. Also in Salons de la Rose+Croix (London: Piccadilly Gallery, 1968). The concept of the artist as seer appears also in Baudelaire's theory of correspondences as well as in Rimbaud and Mallarmé.

41. This was first mentioned by Felix Fénéon, "Les Impressionistes en 1886," La Vogue, June 1886. See discussions in Rewald, Post-Impressionism, p. 97 ff. Lövgren, The Genesis of Modernism, p. 82 ff.

42. Ibid. Fénéon linked Seurat's theories with Charles Henry's esthétique scientifique, a system based on scientifically determined laws to arrive at universal truths. Fénéon's interpretation of Seurat's art as Symbolist is borne out in the paintings of the late eighties; La Parade, Le Chahut, and Le Cirque. They are visual equivalents of states of feeling and express a certain mood. They are painted in accordance with Henry's psychophysical laws governing the use of color and line, and also from Seurat's adoption of idealist theories formulated earlier

by Humbert de Superville and Charles Blanc.

In his article on Symbolism of 1886, Gustave Kahn, a poet and friend of Fénéon, referred to the appearance of Idealism in the forms of painting and music. Kahn also cited Henry's theories which enabled artists to "focus on the ideal."

Robert Goldwater refers to Seurat's style as "scientific synthetism," Symbolism (New York: Harper, 1979), p. 141. Seurat's theory appears in a letter to Maurice Beaubourg, translated in Rewald, Post-Impressionism, p. 142. William Homer, Seurat and the Science of Painting (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1964), pp. 188-189, 198-217; R.L. Herbert, Seurat's Drawings (New York: Shorewood, 1962), pp. 108-110; R.L. Herbert, Neo-Impressionism (New York: Guggenheim, 1968), pp. 15-23.

Homer and others point out that Seurat's theories combine Blanc's idealism—part of the academic heritage of the nineteenth century—and color theories developed by Delacroix, Chevreul, Rood, Helmholtz, and Sutter. Charles Henry combined these theories with his physiological researches.

See Lövgren, Genesis, pp. 81-86 on the links between the literary Symbolists and the Neo-Impressionists. This includes a translation of Kahn's article which appeared 29 Sept. 1886 in L'Evénement. As Lovgren pointed out, Kahn did not name the Seurat group but his reference is clearly to them. Kahn later summarized the evolution of Neo-Impressionism in "Au Temps du pointillisme," Mercure de France, vol. 171, April 1924, pp. 5-23. See also chapter VI below on Neo-Impressionism.

43. There are striking parallels between Seurat's theories and Gauguin's ideas of pictorial harmony expressed in his letter to Schuffenecker (1885) and in his later Notes on Painting. The relationships between these artists have been discussed at length. See Rewald, Post-Impressionism, p. 283. Fénéon noted the analogies between the Neo-Impressionists and the Synthetists, but cited their differences in method. "M. Paul Gauguin tâchait vers un but analogue, mais par d'autres pratiques." F. Fénéon, "Autre groupe Impressionniste," La Cravache, 1889, reprinted in Fénéon, Oeuvres, pp. 178 ff., quoted in Lövgren, Genesis, p. 144.

44. Rewald, Post-Impressionism, p. 455.

45. Aurier, "Paul Gauguin," pp. 155-165. This important article is partially translated and reprinted in Rewald, Post-Impressionism, p. 481, and in more abridged form in Lövgren, Genesis, pp. 153 ff. Aurier knew both Bernard and Gauguin and learned from discussion with them. See also H. Rookmaaker, Gauguin, p. 153. See also Aurier, "Les Peintres symbolistes," Rev. Encycl., April 1892.

46. Aurier, "Paul Gauguin," p. 164.

47. Ibid. Aurier's concept of pictorial Symbolism was based on Baudelaire's theories on the relationship of the artist and the natural world. Aurier converted these ideas into the language of painting. Thus, the Symbolist artist rejected the attempt to depict the exterior world using illusionistic means, and instead translated objects from the world of nature into signs--the symbolic form of pure Idea. "Ce sont des lettres d'un immense alphabet que l'homme de génie seul sait épeler" (p. 160). Aurier used the term "Idea" in preference to the more prevalent "Ideal" in order to avoid confusion with the classical use of Platonic allegory, for he recognized that the Symbolists wished to evoke mystery rather than use a traditional system of symbolic references (p. 159). As noted by Rookmaaker, Aurier's theory reflects the ideas of Baudelaire and Delacroix (p. 154). Aurier pointed out that, in the process of transforming objects from the sensorial world into symbols corresponding to the Idea, the gifted artist had to employ the faculties of selection and simplification in order to transmit to the viewer the "ideological" significance of the object depicted. So as to give clear pictorial form to the Idea, the artist must "exaggerate, attenuate, and deform" the pictorial elements if necessary, to accord with his inner vision. See Rewald, Post-Impressionism, 1962, pp. 481-482.

48. Denis, Théories, p. 12.

49. Achille Ségard, Les Peintres d'aujour'hui, les décorateurs (Paris: Ollendorff, 1914), vol. 2, pp. 64, 70.

Maurice Denis used this term in writing about the Mona Lisa as the antithesis of latter-day academic painting: "Les arabesques bleues, du fond, prestigieux accompagnement d'un rythme envahissant et caresseur, du motif orangé, comme la seduction des violons dans l'ouverture de Tannhauser!" Denis, Théories, p. 13.

See also Alphonse Germain, "A. Séon, Le Symbolisme des teintes," La Plume, May 1891, p. 171. Quoting Séon's theory, Germain wrote: "Donc, mesurer figure et forme, enchasser sa composition dans une ossature d'arabesques décoratives." See also R. de la Sizeranne's discussion of thedecorative paintings of Henri Martin and E.R. Ménard in "Le Sentiment décorative aux Salons de 1906," Rev. des Deux Mondes, 1 June 1906, p. 685; many other examples can be cited. See chapter VIII on Aman-Jean below.

50. Edward Hanslick, Le Beau dans la musique (Paris: Brandus, 1877, 1893).

51. Edward Hanslick, The Beautiful in Music (New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1957), p. 11.

52. Ibid., p. 50.

53. Ibid., p. 48.

54. Denis, Théories, 1920, p. 11. Denis discussed the preference for forms of the arabesque in graphic design and book illustration: "cette décoration sans servitude du texte." Van de Velde wrote: "A line is a force which is active like all elemental forces," etc. (Quoted in P. Selz, German Expressionist painting (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), p. 55. Arthur Wenk discussed Debussy's love of Art Nouveau design and collection of Art Nouveau objects, and his preoccupation with the aesthetic theories of Art Nouveau which conformed to his own musical ideas. Claude Debussy and the Poets (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 212.

55. Léon Vallas, Theories of Charles Debussy (New York: Dover, 1967), p. 32. Many of the artistic currents of the 1890's converge in the art of Debussy. His music and theoretical writings reflect the ideas he absorbed in the Symbolist circles he frequented. Although he is often called an Impressionist in music, Rookmaaker correctly points out that his allegiances and aesthetic were closer to Symbolism. Rookmaaker, Gauguin, p. 87.

Strongly influenced by Mallarmé, Debussy's music reflected the nostalgic mood found in poetry and art of the 1890's. Debussy wrote that music was not intended to "reproduce nature more or less exactly but to receive the mysterious accord that exists between nature and the imagination." Quoted in Vallas, p. 10. Debussy's debt to Mallarmé is discussed by Arthur Wenk, Debussy, p. 245.

Debussy's criticism often served as the format for his theories. His articles appeared in avant-garde periodicals from 1901-1914: La Revue Blanche, Mercure de France, Gil Blas, Revue Bleue. They were published in 1971 as M. Croche et autres écrits (Paris: Gallimard, 1971).

In these writings, Debussy followed Hanslick's ideas of the intrinsic beauty of the arabesque pattern derived from abstract ornament. His discussion of Bach's use of the arabesque appears in Wenk, Debussy, p. 181.

56. Germain preferred artists such as Séon whose pictorial manner remained closer to traditional norms. He disliked Gauguin's radical stylizations and called his followers "Les Déformateurs." See Alphonse Germain, "Les Déformateurs," La Plume, 1891, pp. 289-290. See also Alphonse Germain, "L'Ideal au Salon de la Rose+Croix," L'Ermitage, January 1892, pp. 210-216. See discussion of Mauclair in chapter VIII below.

57. Denis, Théories. See also Maurice Denis, Nouvelles Théories (Paris: Rouart et Watelin, 1922).

58. Camille Mauclair, Servitudes et grandeurs littéraires (Paris: Ollendorff, 1922), pp. 215-216.

59. In this brief introduction to the Symbolist episode, we have not discussed the aesthetic changes which affected the course of Symbolist literature during the 1890's. The impact of new approaches was felt by Symbolist artists also, but only after they had incorporated the fundamental tenets of the Symbolist aesthetic as developed by Mallarmé and Baudelaire. The artists' responses to transformations of Symbolist poetry will be discussed in the chapters devoted to individual artists.

CHAPTER III

LANDSCAPE AS AN "ETAT D'AME"

> Le paysage change comme la littérature. . .le paysage est une littérature non ecrite; il est comme elle, une sorte de flatterie adressée à nos passions ou de nourriture offerte à nos besoins. 1
>
> Hippolyte Taine, 1858.

The Symbolists, and especially the "Nostalgiques," realized their ideals in the medium of landscape painting. The Symbolists transformed this genre; rather than being a record of exterior appearance, it became a vehicle for the artist's thought and feeling. The Symbolists' approach to landscape was articulated by Alphonse Germain, a champion of fin-de-siècle Idealism:

> Disons donc qu'il y a un paysage psychique lorsque l'artiste a trouvé dans un effet motif à extérioriser son état d'âme et que sous l'emprise d'une pénétrante émotion, il a vraiment communié avec la nature. . . .
>
> S'il l'artiste comprend. . . qu'il y a une correspondance entre la nature et nous, il ne peindra jamais que le paysage l'ayant émue, il en degagera l'état d'âme, ou mieux, son état d'âme a lui, car tout cérébral se subjectivise en l'objectif, la nature devient un reflet de son moi. 2

The Symbolist era, when new tendencies challenged the reign of Impressionism, represented the closing chapter in a century marked by changing approaches to landscape art.

Landscape painting was clearly a dominant mode of expression in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Its status was summarized by Raymond Bouyer, a well-known critic of the 1890's, and devotee of landscape art: "Notre paysage français, dans les divers chapitres de sa vie complexe depuis Georges Michel jusqu'à Lebourg restera comme le chef d'oeuvre du siècle." [3]

The acceptance of Symbolist ideas in art signalled an end to empiricism. As the Symbolists sought to imbue their paintings with psychic meaning and mood, they turned to Poussin's idealized landscapes as a model. [4]

They realized that Poussin's recourse to ancient "modes" enhanced the expressive possibilities of landscape elements. Watelet, an eighteenth-century critic, wrote of Poussin's conception of landscape: "Il faut que la nature attriste, se rejouisse, s'attendrisse, ou s'exalte suivant la drame humain qui s'y deroule." [5]

Because our study of the idyllic landscape in the Symbolist period involves references to earlier landscape art, a summary of previous attitudes toward this genre and its evolution in the nineteenth century is in order. Today, our definition of the term "landscape" appears to be a simplification of the argument set forth in a Dictionnaire of 1826. According to the Encyclopedia of World Art, landscape painting is the "type of pictorial representation in which natural scenery is the subject or at least prevails over the action of figures." [6]

In the earlier Dictionnaire des Arts du dessin, M. Boutard had

defined landscape:

> Le paysage a pour objet l'imitation des effets de la lumière dans les espaces de l'air et sur la face de la terre et des eaux. Le paysage embrasse la représentation des terrains, des montagnes,, des rochers, des arbres, des lacs, des rivières, de tout ce que présente ou peut présenter l'aspect d'un pays. [7]

Both definitions presuppose the independence of landscape, in contrast to a subsidiary status as accessory to history, genre, or portrait painting. Neither definition promotes idealization of natural elements as had often been the practice in the past; the latter definition more specifically implied a truthful transcription of the effects of light on natural elements.

Landscape became a recognized genre with the establishment of a Prix de Rome for historical landscape in 1817. The inclusion of landscape painting in the curriculum of the Ecole des Beaux Arts and the concours for the Prix were crucial factors for the development of this previously undervalued art form. This was brought about through the efforts of Pierre-Henri Valenciennes and his pupil, Jean-Baptiste Deperthes, whose treatises on the theory and practice of landscape painting were closely studied for the remainder of the century. [8] Their work legitimized landscape painting as self-sufficient, with its own standards, independent of the requirements of figure painting. Gradually, academy policies were made to accomodate the demands of these pioneers who promoted landscape as an independent art. [9]

As a painter, theoretician, and teacher dedicated to the ideal of Poussin, Valenciennes was called "le David du paysage" by

Raymond Bouyer.[10] Valenciennes felt that landscape was a proper vehicle for mood and gave it priority over the placement and scale of the figures. Furthermore, Valenciennes felt that landscape was particularly affecting to the soul because of its adherence to the noble idea of Poussin:

> L'artiste ne fait pas alors le froid portrait de la nature insignifiante et inanimée, il la peint parlant à l'âme, ayant une action sentimentale, une expression determinée qui se communique facilement à tout homme sensible. 11

He stated that landscape should conform to Winckelmann's theories of the Beau idéal, and he cited this element in the landscapes of Poussin, Titian, and the Carracci. For Valenciennes, these painters had recaptured the spirit of the ancient poets in their idyllic paintings:

> Ils ont fait ce qu'Homère, Virgile, Théocrite et tous les poètes fameux eussent fait s'ils avaient peint avec des couleurs. Ces peintres se sont pénetrés de la lecture de ces poètes sublimes; ils les ont medités et ferment les yeux, ils ont vu cette nature idéale, cette Nature parée des richesses de l'imagination, et que le seul genie peut concevoir représenter. 12

Following the categories of de Piles, Valenciennes distinguished between "le paysage historique" and "le paysage portrait" (rural). In the early nineteenth century, the latter type was represented by the Dutch landscape. It was regarded as inferior to the historic style which showed nature "as it ought to be." Here, the erudition of the artist was of primary importance, as it elevated him to a status far above the mere painter of "vues."[13]

Valenciennes' own landscapes conformed to the high standards

of the Academy; with thematic material drawn from the repertory of noble subjects, the artist's technical skill is shown in their balanced arrangement and meticulous finish. These landscape paintings were conceived and executed with the same seriousness and elevated approach demanded by history painting.

Yet Valenciennes encouraged his pupils to study nature assiduously and his own studies show his attempt to capture transient effects of light and atmosphere. [14] But in stating, "Ces études d'après nature ne forment pas des tableaux," Valenciennes adhered to the ideal of the paysage composé. [15]

The idealized landscape promoted by Valenciennes encompassed a broad spectrum of meaning. Two related and sometimes overlapping types of landscape exist within this general category: the heroic (or historic) and the idyllic (or Arcadian). According to the definition of Raymond Bouyer,

> Le paysage historique est le décor des lectures savantes . . . Le jardin de Platon comme le parterre de Le Nôtre est un acte de volonté de suprematie de main-mise sur le chaos des choses . . . la main qui obéit à l'intelligence. 16

During the course of the nineteenth century, the heroic landscape in the grand manner of Poussin and Claude Lorrain waned. Idealized landscapes were more often idyllic rather than didactic. The idyllic landscape as painted by the Symbolists differed significantly from the heroic landscapes of the early years of the century. The Symbolist idyllic landscape did not often depict a particular myth or

legend; it vaguely evoked antiquity. If deities were present, they were not the powerful gods but rather the minor woodland figures--Pan and his retinue of nymphs and satyrs--or alternately, muse-like figures. The goal of the idyllic landscape was the suggestion of a poetic mood and a detachment from reality without specific literary reference.

As they desired to reconcile poetry and painting, the Symbolists appreciated the Virgilian spirit in Claude's landscapes. They considered his art equivalent to Poussin's in its lyricism, and admired his atmospheric effects. Earlier, Valenciennes had remarked on this aspect of his painting:

> Il a peint admirablement l'air atmosphérique: personne n'a mieux fait sentir que lui cette belle vapeur, ce vague et cette indécision qui fait le charme de la nature et qu'il est si difficile à rendre. 17

In contrast to his master Valenciennes, Jean-Baptiste Deperthes was receptive to the previously scorned Dutch landscape tradition. By giving emphasis in his theories to the empirical approach of the "style champêtre," and by recommending the study of Claude's paintings, Deperthes opened the door to the naturalism of French landscape from the 1830's on. [18] The gradual acceptance of Deperthes' ideas led ultimately to a loosening of Academic demands for didactic themes and rigorous order. Increasing numbers of artists were attracted to this genre.

Still, despite the tendency toward naturalism, the historic

landscape was slow to die and it survived until the 1860's.[19] The cult of Poussin remained an undercurrent, thus extending the grip of classicism beyond the early years of the century. Even to painters committed to empiricism, evidence of classical ordering still appeared. In a letter on landscape in 1855, Philippe de Chennevières, Inspecteur Général des Expositions d'Art, wrote:

> . . . on retrouve le culte passionné du Poussin et la pénétration de son esprit dans ce que notre école dernière a compté de paysagistes les plus serieux; je ne parle pas seulement des systematiques, mais des indépendants tels que Marilhat, Decamps, J.F. Millet, etc. 20

In the Symbolist era, classicism, as a rejection of Impressionism, was reborn in modified form. Several art critics pointed out that the revival of Poussin in the 1890's was due to the intermediary role of Corot and Puvis de Chavannes. Although today Corot is seen as a precursor of Impressionism, in his own time he was considered important for the return of fin-de-siècle Idealism. According to André Michel, a nineteenth-century art historian, Corot's poetic landscapes, independent of figures, imparted the "action sentimentale" demanded by Valenciennes.[21] Corot incorporated the idyllic spirit of Claude and Poussin, and in turn inspired Puvis. Although Puvis himself denied this filiation, Maurice Denis specifically cited the evidence of this influence:

> Ses gammes sont les gammes gris et argent de Corot. . . Il y a encore chez Puvis une autre influence de Corot, le regime des valeurs ramené, par une echelle de gris, à plus de finesse, de

> verité, et de poésie. On fera la même observation sur le modelé sobre, à base de gris froid, et sans reflets que Puvis semble avoir aussi emprunté à Corot. 22

Alphonse Germain felt that the soul of nature had been admirably captured in the landscapes of Corot and Puvis:

> La nature aussi a une âme, et certains pages de Corot, et maints décors Chavannesques, permettent d'affirmer que l'artiste dont l'esprit perçoit le rapport des physismes avec nos psychismes n'a que faire d'une figure allégorique pour idéaliser ses paysages . . . . la poésie des lignes, des nuances et des lumières lui suffit. 23

Raymond Bouyer also named Corot as the link between Poussin's classicism and the idealized landscapes of Puvis and his followers, the "Puvisistes"--the nostalgic painters of the Symbolist era.

> Corot, blanc Virgile, lumineux Poussin des songes, arbitre enchanteur entre le passé et le present! La divination sereine de l'antiquité retrouvée survit de nos jours dans les poèmes composés de Corot, le dernier des Grecs. 24

Although partisan to Symbolism, Bouyer admired the lyricism of some earlier landscape painting. Hoping for a greater exposure and appreciation of landscape art, he proposed an historical exhibition or a Musée du Paysage devoted solely to this genre. [25] He did not follow Péladan who rejected everything but the classical landscape "à la Poussin, composé et subordonné aux figures." [26] Still, Bouyer recognized the importance of Poussin for the Symbolists in their embrace of Idealism and their predilection for idyllic themes. [27]

Bouyer felt that even Monet had been affected by the current

wave of Idealism as shown in his 1895 exhibition of the Rouen Cathedral series. Borrowing an epithet for Monet coined by Alphonse Germain, "le sténographe d'atmosphères," Bouyer pointed out the difference between his early works and these paintings which he considered visionary:

> (ils) semblent bien moins les portraits nuancés de la Cathedral de Rouen que les cathédrales de rêve . . . L'art est forcement un idéaliste, et Claude Monet est un grand visionnaire sans le savoir; ils revient de la caverne de Platon. 28

But Bouyer also felt that Monet's paintings lacked "le style" (à la Poussin) and thus they remained in the realm of retinal art; finally "leur nihilisme moléculaire amuse et inquiète." Thus Bouyer demonstrated that at the end of the century, the apogee of his hypothetical "Musée," there were two conceptions of landscape painting; that of Monet--a late, transformed Impressionism, and that of Puvis, the classical, "paysage de style" or "paysage décoratif." [29]

In a salon review written a few years later, the same author claimed that the Symbolist landscape of the 1890's re-established the link to classical principles for it reinstated "le style" which he defined: "ce quelque chose de supérieur au réel qui entraine l'impressionisme vers les ampleurs décoratives." Bouyer felt that Poussinism was revived to reaffirm the "auguste permanence" of line over the excesses of color which had dominated during the reign of Impressionism. The critic also pointed out that the return to classical ideas was not retardataire, but showed the freedom of art to move forward toward

new goals. "(Ce) n'est pas un retour en arrière, mais une affirmation renouvelée du libre arbitre contre les tyrannies récentes de la matière . . . . Une nouvelle page d'histoire au profit du Beau s'écrivait." [30] Indeed, the Symbolists inaugurated a new chapter in landscape painting. In its idealistic turn to the past, the Symbolist landscape reflected the état d'âme of its artists.

CHAPTER III

LANDSCAPE AS AN 'ETAT D'AME"

FOOTNOTES

1. Hippolyte Taine, Voyage aux Pyrénées, 1858; quoted by R. Bouyer, L'Artiste, Sept. 1893, p. 209.

2. Alphonse Germain, Pour le Beau (Paris, ed. Girard, 1893), pp. 93-94.

3. Raymond Bouyer, "Le Paysage dans l'art," L'Artiste, Jan. 1893, p. 20. See also André Michel, "Le Paysage et le romantisme," Journal des Debats, 1903, reprinted in Sur la Peinture Française au XIXe Siecle (Paris, 1928).

4. Poussin's landscapes were considered as paradigms by Bouyer and other Symbolist critics, e.g. J. Péladan, M. Denis, Roger Marx, E. Bernard. In this context, Cézanne's statements on Poussin, transmitted by Emile Bernard, are relevant. See Theodore Reff, "Cezanne and Poussin," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, v. XXIII, Jan.-June, 1960. See Bouyer, "Le Paysage dans l'art," L'Artiste, Aug. 1893, p. 122.

5. Watelet, quoted by Claude Roger-Marx, Le Paysage français de Corot à nos jours (Paris: Plon, 1952), p. 92.

6. Encyclopedia of World Art, Vol. IX, p. 2.

7. M. Boutard, Dictionnaire des Arts du dessin (Paris, 1826), p. 497. Here there was no mention of the use of figures relative to the elements of nature despite his Neo-Classical orientation. André Michel called Boutard, "un critique de gout très classique mais de très libre ésprit." André Michel, "L'Oeuvre de Corot et le paysage moderne," Revue des Deux Mondes, Feb. 1896, p. 915.

8. See bibliography. See also Albert Boime, The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century (London: Phaidon, 1971), pp. 143-144.

9. Ibid., p. 136 ff.

10. Raymond Bouyer, quoted in Valenciennes (Musée de Toulouse, 1956), p. 19.

11. P.H. Valenciennes, Élémens de perspective pratique à l'usage des artistes, suivis de reflexions et conseils à un élève sur la peinture et particulièrement sur le genre du paysage (Paris, 1800), p. 308; Valenciennes, p. 26.

12. Valenciennes, Toulouse, p. 19; Valenciennes, Élémens, p. 305. For Poussin and Claude, the Venetian landscape was the supreme example of lyricism and the harmonious blending of figure and landscape. For discussion of idyllic themes in Venetian Renaissance painting see A.R. Turner, The Vision of Landscape in Renaissance Italy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 98, 104 ff. Venetian artists were inspired by the publication of Jacopo Sannazzaro's L'Arcadia, in 1500, an updating of Virgil's pastoral poetry which made a lasting impression on contemporary society, already receptive to the escapist content. Sannazzaro's language is visually evocative, and can be seen as an immediate stimulus to Giorgione and Titian. Sir Kenneth Clark, Landscape into Art (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1949), p. 64.

13. Valenciennes quoted in Boime, Academy and French Painting, pp. 136-137. De Piles also quoted here.

14. Boime, Academy and French Painting, p. 138. There are many of Valenciennes' watercolor and gouache sketches in the Louvre. These informal, closely observed recordings of atmospheric effects predict the studies of Constable. Besides this visual evidence, Valenciennes' advice to his pupils seemingly anticipates the concerns of later landscape artists.

"Quelle différence du tableau représentant une vache et quelques moutons paissant dans la prairie à celui des Funerailles de Phocion; d'un paysage des bords de la Meuse à celui des bergers de l'Arcadie; d'un temps pluvieux de Ruysdael au deluge de Poussin! Les premiers sont peints avec le sentiment de la couleur, et les autres la couleur de sentiment."

Valenciennes, Elémens, p. 405. However, Valenciennes still insisted that the mission of the artist was to ennoble his work through the inclusion of dignified subject matter and to avoid all the "low elements" of the Dutch School.

"Nous avons déjà fait observer que les effets de la Nature ne sont presque jamais les mêmes aux mêmes instants ou à pareille heure. Ces variations dépendent d'une multitude de circonstances, telles que la lumiere plus ou moins pure, la quantité de vapeurs de l'atmosphère, le vent, la pluie, les sites plus ou moins élevés, les différens reflets des nuages causés par leur couleur, leur légèreté ou leur épaisseur . . . Mais ce que nous avons dit doit suffire pour prouver qu'il est absurde à un Artiste de passer toute une journée à copier d'après Nature une seule vue."

Valenciennes, Elémens, pp. 308-309; Valenciennes, Toulouse, p. 21.

15. Valenciennes, Toulouse, p. 25; Valenciennes, Elémens, p. 340.

16. Raymond Bouyer, "Les Artistes aux salons de 1897," L'Artiste, July 1897, pp. 5-6. Watelet's definition of 1792 was quoted in the late nineteenth century:

"Tout est grand dans le style heroïque; les sites sont pittoresqueset romantiques; les fabriques sont imposantes et majestueuses. La nature n'est point telle qu'elle se montre familièrement à nos regards; elle a reuni pour le manifester à l'artiste dans ses songes sublimes des parures qui lui appartient mais qu'elle a coutume de séparer.

(Watelet, Dictionnaire des Arts de Peinture et Sculpture, 1792; quoted in R. Ménard, "Aligny et le paysage historique," L'Artiste, 1882, t.2, p. 52. T. Gautier's definition was quoted by Roger Marx: "(C'est) la nature subordonnée à l'homme, arrangée pour une scene, et disposée d'une façon en quelque sorte monumentale" (Roger Marx, "Salon du Champ de Mars," Rev. Encycl. 1896, pt. 1, p. 284).

According to modern scholars, Poussin's oeuvre included both heroic and poetic landscapes. Poussin's landscapes of 1648-52, e.g. the Phocion landscapes and Orpheus & Eurydice are considered heroic. More poetic are the landscapes of 1658-64, e.g. The Landscape with Blind Orion, and the Four Seasons series. For this distinction, see Anthony Blunt, "The Heroic and the Ideal Landscape in the work of Nicolas Poussin," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Insts,. Vol. VII, 1944, pp. 154-167; articles by D. Mahon, Art de France, 1961; P. Alfassa, GBA, 1925; W. Friedlander, Poussin (New York: Abrams, 1964).

17. However, Valenciennes felt that Claude's paintings failed to stimulate the imagination, and that he had "trop sacrifié au genre," Moreover, his works did not appeal to the soul because his scenes often lacked the animating spirit of nymphs and woodland deities. Valenciennes, Elémens, p. 916, quoted in Michel, Rev. des Deux Mondes, Feb. 1896, p. 916.

Claude was criticized negatively from his own time onward. De Piles noted his "insipid choice" of sites, quoted in Elizabeth Holt, Documentary History of Art, Vol. II (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1966), p. 81. William Gilpin and others, including Roger Fry, attacked his figure drawing, calling it weak; but Fry concluded by praising the unity of effect in which a "Virgilian sentiment" resided. Roger Fry (1907), reprinted in Vision & Design (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1940), pp. 181-190.

18. J.B. Deperthes, Histoire de l'art du paysage (Paris: Lenormant, 1822), pp. 157-160, 160-163.

19. Boime, Academy and French Painting, pp. 144-147.

20. Prosper Dorbec, L'Art du paysage en France (Paris: H. Laurens, 1925), pp. 166-167. In his chapter, "L'École de 1830," Dorbec included a lengthy section on "Les Néo-Classiques"--Bertin, D'Aligny, Flandrin, Cabat, Corot, Decamps, and Puvis.

21. André Michel, "L'Oeuvre de Corot, etc." Rev. des Deux Mondes, Feb. 1896, pp. 913-930.

22. Maurice Denis (1927), quoted in Puvis de Chavannes (Paris and Ottowa, 1977), p. 201. Puvis always denied relationships with other artists if a dependency was implied. See L. Wehrle (1911), quoted idem. Puvis did not deny his admiration for Corot.

23. Alphonse Germain, Pour le Beau, p. 106. Germain stated that landscapes could reveal Absolute Beauty: "Affirmons donc que les éléments du Beau se trouvent dans la nature--les lignes d'un paysage si elles s'equilibrent harmonieusement dans l'espace par cela seul dégagent du Beau." Ibid., p. 119.

24. Raymond Bouyer, "Une Exposition historique du paysage," L'Ermitage, Nov. 1892, pp. 278-279. Bouyer called Séon, Martin, and Osbert "Puivisistes" in L'Artiste, Aug. 1893, p. 116; also July 1893, p. 37. The succession of Puvis followers was also discussed by Péladan, Denis, André Michel and Dorbec.

25. Bouyer, "Le Paysage dans l'art," L'Artiste, Aug. 1893, p. 100 ff. This marked the start of a series of articles in L'Artiste which were published later as a separate volume (Paris, 1894). Bouyer summarized the evolution of landscape painting during the nineteenth century as "l'antagonisme durable entre le paysage rustique--réaliste et le paysage de style." The former term referred to Millet and the subsequent defection from the paysage composé of Poussin. Bouyer, L'Ermitage, p. 279; L'Artiste, July 1893, p. 39.

26. Sâr Péladan, "Le Salon de la Rose+Croix," Le Figaro, 2 Sept. 1891, p. 1. Although Bouyer did not share Péladan's opinion of Monet, he quoted a Salon review by Péladan to illuminate the polarity of landscape styles existing in 1890. Péladan had written "Je tiens pour Poussin et je dis net que l'oeil de M. Monet est malade et ne voit pas les demi-teintes." Péladan, "Salon de 1890," quoted by R. Bouyer, "Sur le krach de l'art moderne," L'Ermitage, July 1895, p. 82.

27. Bouyer, L'Artiste, July 1893, p. 83.

28. Bouyer, "Sur le krach de l'art," p. 83.

29. Ibid.

30. Bouyer, "L'Art et la beauté aux Salons de 1898," L'Artiste, Jan.-Mar. 1898, p. 158. Note the correspondence of Bouyer's theories of Absolute Beauty and the primacy of line and those of A. Germain; both were inspired by Charles Blanc. See Chapter VII on Séon below, p. 177.

Bouyer's ideas about what constituted new art is in direct opposition to present-day concepts of "progressive art." It is important to keep in mind that in 1890, Impressionism was "old hat" while the revival of seventeenth-century classicism and Idealism represented innovation.

CHAPTER IV

REFLECTIONS ON THE PAST

> Le paysage de nos jours a quelque chose d'ancien . . . d'un peu rétrospectif et réfléchi, comme si le dilettante se retournait vers le passé plus subtil, faute de trouver sa nourriture spirituelle parmi les siens, dans le temps présent.
>
> R. Bouyer, "Le Déclin du paysage," Revue Bleue, 1902

The Antique and the Medieval

The landscape paintings of the "Nostalgiques," permeated with longing for a remote past, constituted a significant aspect of Symbolist expression. Desirous of fleeing the present, the "Nostalgiques" looked backwards; their dreams of an earthly paradise were nourished by the alternate traditions of Hellenism and Medievalism.

The dream of a Golden Age in the past haunted the century attuned to progress; it was fundamental to the philosophical, political, and aesthetic ideology of the nineteenth century.[1] If the idea of a paradisial state existing in the remote past was not invented by the Symbolists, it was still a singularly attractive dream for this generation of aesthetes whose disenchantment with bourgeois materialism rivaled that of the Romantics.

Since early in the century, Hellenic antiquity and the

Christian Middle Ages, each representing a blessed state, had been focal points for nostalgic yearning. As Henri Peyre pointed out, Hellenism remained close to the creative consciousness of the nineteenth century. When the Greek ideal did not fully determine the artistic style of an epoch, it continued as a leit motif which never completely died out. [2]

Yet the Christian past replaced the Antique when spiritualism reigned. As in the Romantic era, Medievalism was an attractive form of nostalgia during the fin-de-siècle. Among the Symbolists, the "Nostalgiques" most consistently probed both past traditions to restore the values of beauty and purity lost during the reign of materialism.

In the classicist tradition of French literature and art, the Golden Age and the Arcadian idyll were familiar ideals. [3] The "Nostalgiques" and other Symbolists often adopted the paradise myth as part of their otherworldly vision, and as fulfillment of their escapist dream.

The Hesiodic account of a time when man lived in a state of perpetual harmony with nature held great appeal to the Symbolists suffering from mal-du-siècle. The Arcadian metaphor materialized in the idylls of Theocritus and Virgil engendered imagery that became commonplace in later literature and art; the pastoral idiom of shepherds and nymphs in rustic settinga has universally signified serenity and harmony. [4]

In nineteenth-century painting the Golden Age was a commonplace theme. Although Ingres' L'Age d'or was the eminent painting of

this genre, [5] the Symbolists were more attracted to the new approach to Hellenism in the nostalgic paintings of Puvis de Chavannes. [6] His pastoral paintings served as a model for the young artists of the 1890's searching for new imagery to convey inner visions. In their return to the Hellenist ideal, Puvis and his Symbolist followers capped the century-long evolution begun by David and Ingres, continued by Corot and Chasseriau.

Puvis' nostalgic paintings were acclaimed by contemporary critics, especially those with Symbolist loyalties. [7] One of these, Camille Mauclair, a poet and critic dedicated to Idealism, praised Puvis' pastoral paintings in the light of the Symbolists' attraction to the primordial past:

> . . . cet archaisme pastoral donne à toute l'oeuvre Chavannienne une poésie nostalgique. Nous nous tournons vers cette société disparue en enviant sa securité morale, son ignorance de toutes nos passions, sa pauvreté simplificatrice et ses joies modestes, encore plus que l'état d'esprit des églogues grecques ou latines, déjà créées par des citadins raffinés enviant le bonheur que les laboureurs ont sans le connaître. 8

Georges Rodenbach, the Belgian Symbolist poet, also linked Puvis' nostalgic landscapes and those of the young "Nostalgiques" . . . "il se rapproche des symbolistes qui s'en tiennent à des attitudes de légende ou de beauté . . . . il a projeté une atmosphere irréelle, une lumière d'au-delà." [9]

Puvis' easel paintings and murals provided the Symbolists with a formal solution which hinted at detachment and unreality. Par-

ticularly meaningful for them was the decorative cycle in the Palais des Arts, Lyon, where Puvis incorporated the antipodes of nineteenth-century nostalgia; Hellenism was present in La Vision antique, while the Middle Ages was recreated in L'Inspiration chrétienne.

By evoking the past, Puvis symbolized two essential approaches to art; that of form and Ideal beauty (the Antique) opposed to pietistic feeling (the Middle Ages) and he synthesized both elements in the central composition Le Bois Sacré.[10] (figs. 1, 2, 3.)

Most of the artists we consider "Nostalgiques" worked in the shadow of Puvis. Following his example, they used the idyllic motif of the Sacred Wood as a metaphor for their escapist dreams. The forest setting, pervaded by silence, with its antique-draped figures and lyre-playing muses, was favored because it revived the hallowed past while it still conformed to Symbolist aesthetics.[11] However, the Symbolists' veneration of Puvis' form and iconography was characterized by some contemporary critics as slavish dependence on the master. André Michel called these followers "ses pâles imitateurs."[12]

To some "Nostalgiques," the Christian past rivaled the Hellenist dream. The Neo-Catholicism of the final years of the century encompassed a revival of Medieval art and literature. In the religious fervor of this era, the pietistic spirit of Romantic writers such as Chateaubriand and Mme de Staël was reborn. A revived sense of devotion to spiritual life and a wave of mysticism ruled the 1890's.[13] In its inward-turning aspect, the religious revival and Medievalism

provided a congenial atmosphere for burgeoning Symbolist ideas, and as a result, art and literature were infused with spirituality and emotion. [14]

As pointed out by Louis Hautecoeur, the Symbolists' embrace of the Medieval caused them to emulate the naïve pictorial manner of Gothic and Quattrocento artists.

> Les anciens décadents après tant de voluptueux parfums, decouvraient celui de ses vertus; après tant de raffinements, ces esthètes voulaient etre aussi simples que son bourriquot (St. François) et tous, à force d'admirer les vitraux des églises gothiques et les calvaires bretons, oubliaent Anna la Javanaise pour Sainte Claire, et leurs âmes semblaient émaillées de toutes les fleurettes qui poussent aux prédelles de l'Angelico. 15

The Symbolists were also aware that their predecessors--the Pre-Raphaelites, Puvis, and Gustave Moreau--had already absorbed pictorial mannerisms of the Primitives. Moreau had stated his belief that the art of the Italian Primitives, in contrast to that of the Renaissance masters, lay close to the modern soul in its preoccupation with the life of the spirit.

> On revient à cet art primitif, à cet art de la fin du moyen-âge, si different de celui de la Renaissance, proprement dit, par cette raison seule: c'est que cet art primitif est bien plus près de l'état de notre âme moderne que cet autre art décoratif et sensuel. 16

Thus the images created by the "Nostalgiques" and other Symbolist artists refer to both the art of the Italian Primitives and the Quattrocento-influenced paintings of their nineteenth-century pre-

cursors. In these sources, the Symbolists found their ideals of purity and sincere Christian sentiment. [17]

The adoration of the Primitives which affected much of the art of the 1890's was reflected in the critical literature of the period. Critics traced the archaisms of Puvis and his followers to their predilection for the naive art of these early masters. [18] Félix Fénéon, apologist for the Neo-Impressionists, noted the analogies between Puvis' mural style and that of the Quattrocento frescoists:

> . . . il envisage la peinture sous le grand aspect décoratif . . . Son oeuvre—hermetique et symbolique, intelligible pour les seuls penseurs, exécutée tout entière dans un style superbement simpliste que reprend la tradition des grands primitifs Buffalmaco. Benozzo Gozzoli, Gaddo Gaddi—sera une des gloires de ce siècle. 19

According to some critics, many Symbolists were too dependent on the Primitives. Gustave Geffroy criticized the Rose+Croix artist Armand Point, one of our "Nostalgiques," as a "pasticheur":

> Ainsi, M. Armand Point qui se fait une manière avec l'imitation des Primitifs italiens, poursuivie non seulement dans les procedés matériels de peinture à l'oeuf et de peinture à fresque, mais dans les arrangements de personnages, dans les modes de gesticulation, dans les décors des paysages . . . 20

While all Medieval art was admired by the Symbolists, Giotto, Masaccio, Fra Angelico, and Botticelli were the artists especially revered by the "Nostalgiques." [21]

These Quattrocento favorites were often cited as models in the writings of Maurice Denis who shared the nostalgic viewpoint of

many Symbolists.[22] In an article on current religious painting, he pointed out the affinities between Fra Angelico and contemporary Symbolist painters.[23] Denis felt that Fra Angelico's paintings continued the Byzantine tradition, which was, for him, the purest expression of Christian sentiment.[24] He linked Byzantine art to current Symbolist theory in its search for ideal beauty, absolute harmony of proportion, and its stress on the mysterious unseen Denis saw a gradual decline from the purity of this early period as the increasing naturalism and scientific interests of fifteenth-century artists threatened the expression of unadulterated spirituality. Furthermore, Denis considered Fra Angelico an anomaly in his own time for his refusal to follow the humanist ideals of Giotto, and he analogized the monk's spiritual concerns to the otherworldly orientation of the nineteenth-century Symbolists.[25]

In his paintings and his theories of the 1890's, Denis probed the art of the Christian past in his search for Ideality. His writings are evidence that the nostalgic turn to the past was an integral factor in Symbolist expression.

The Nostalgic Revival of the Art of the Primitives in the Nineteenth Century

The adoration felt by Maurice Denis and other "Nostalgiques"

for the art of the Primitives was nourished by the investigations of scholars throughout the Nineteenth century.[26] The final decades of the century represented a peak in the knowledge of Pre-Renaissance art. Because of continuing research in this area, Medieval and Quattrocento art had emerged from its former state of oblivion; new information was made available and misattributions were corrected.

The rediscovery of the art prior to the classical Renaissance began in the mid-eighteenth century. While Winckelmann was urging "imitation of the ancients" and eulogizing Raphael as the modern continuer of the Greek ideal, others, immersed in the Christian tradition, were promoting a revival of Medieval art.[27] They perceived the Quattrocento as a continuation and culmination of the Medieval age of faith rather than as a prelude to the humanism and secularism of the High Renaissance.[28] The turn to the Gothic continued into the nineteenth century and, like the revival of antiquity, it was an aspect of the Romantic search for a past tradition that would satisfy both spiritual and religious needs.

The Medieval revival had its roots in Germany where Christian art of the Gothic era was conceived as an integral part of the national heritage.[29] Countering Winckelmann's charge that Northern art was "barbaric," both Goethe and Wackenroder promoted the idea that the making of art involved religious devotion, and that "Kunstgefuhl" superceded "Kunstverstand." His theories influenced artists throughout

the century, from the Nazarenes to the Pre-Raphaelites and Ruskin, and through them, the French Symbolists.

A similar interest, coupled with archeological efforts, marked the work of French, Italian, and English scholars working in Italy to uncover the little-known works of artists of the neglected Trecento and Quattrocento.[30] Among those were Seroux d'Agincourt and Paillot de Montabert, whose researches were to form the basis for later studies by French and English artists and writers.[31]

Seroux was a devotee of Quattrocento art, determined to become the "Winckelmann des temps de barbarie . . . Oui, j'ai dit adieu aux beautés de la Vénus de Medicis pour me dévouer tout entier à la simplicité des Madones de Cimabue, de Giotto, et des vieux maîtres Grecs."[32] He traveled extensively in Italy and employed artists to make copies of the architecture, sculpture, and painting of unknown masters. These were later published to prove his claim that "le fil abandonné par Winckelmann à la décadence de l'art n'avait jamais été entièrement rompu."[33]

In addition to the important contribution made by Seroux's visual documentation, his enthusiastic reponse to this art prefigured the tone of later nineteenth-century writers such as A.F. Rio, Maurice Denis, and J.K. Huysmans.[34]

Paillot de Montabert enriched the scholarship in this area and directly affected the course of painting. On his return from Italy

in 1796, he entered David's atelier, and made personal contact with Ingres and members of the group known as "les primitifs." [35] He encouraged their taste for the linear as found in archaic Greek and early Italian art. The artists also benefited from Paillot's technical knowledge of fresco and encaustic painting which he had learned in Italy under the tutelage of Seroux.

The publication of Alexis-François Rio's La poésie de l'art chrétien in 1836 was a landmark during the Gothic revival in England and France. [36] This influential book, a standard in its own time, prompted a mystical and emotional interpretation of early religious art. Later in the century, it held fresh appeal to the Symbolist generation, being much appreciated in the new climate of heightened religiosity. Rio's writings were referred to in the texts of Maurice Denis and Eugène Müntz, and it can be assumed that Huysmans' ecstatic exigesis on the art of the Primitives is based on his knowledge of Rio's texts. [37]

Like others of his generation, Rio was indoctrinated in German philosophy and scholarship and was particularly influenced by those writers whose attention was focused on the neglected artists of the Quattrocento. [38] He set out to correct the historically-accepted but prejudiced view of Vasari which favored High Renaissance masters by making a detailed study of Trecento and Quattrocento painters. For Rio, the value of all Christian art lay in its degree of mysticism.

His belief that "Mysticism is to painting what ecstasy is to psychology" indicates his intuitive, emotional interpretation of religious art. [39]

Rio's enthusiastic response to the art of the Italian Primitives was conveyed in a breathless prose style. Rio considered Fra Angelico the perfect artist for his mystical and lyrical qualities and excused his technical failings:

> But we must, indeed, be very insensible to all the delicious emotions which Christian art excites in souls susceptible of its influence, if we can allow ourselves to criticize minutely the technical imperfections of this divine pencil . . . . which were . . . much less owing to any feebleness of execution in the artist, than to his indifference for everything which was foreign to the transcendental aim with which his pious imagination was occupied. 40

According to Rio, Perugino and the Umbrian school had preserved the purity of Christian art while the Florentines were seduced by pagan ideals. He especially admired the "poetic" landscape backgrounds of Perugino's paintings, and characterized all works of this school as "seraphic." He commented that the Umbrian sites had been sanctified by the presence of St. Francis, a belief that was later shared by Maurice Denis and Charles Dulac.

> It would seem that a special blessing was attached to the particular localities sanctified by the presence of St. Francis of Assissi, and that the perfume of his holiness preserved the fine arts from corruption in the neighborhood of that hill, where so many painters had successively contributed to decorate his tomb. 41

Rio's book was an immediate success in England where Pugin's religious ideas and the Oxford movement were part of a major Gothic revival. [42] At this time, the youthful John Ruskin became aware of Rio's impassioned views on the experience of art and its religious basis. The conviction that art and religious sentiment were inseparable became a cornerstone of Ruskin's aesthetics traceable to Rio's influence. For Ruskin, "Religion must be and always has been the ground and moving spirit of all great art." [43]

By the second half of the nineteenth century, the knowledge and appreciation of the Quattrocento had broadened considerably due to the spadework of the early scholars. The ground was thus prepared for the more accurate and complete historical studies of Burckhardt, Blanc, and Müntz. [44]

Thus the young artists of the Symbolist generation were given an historical view of the Renaissance which rightfully included the contribution of Quattrocento artists.

CHAPTER IV

REFLECTIONS ON THE PAST

FOOTNOTES

1. Werner Hofmann, Art of the Nineteenth Century (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), p. 363 ff.

2. Henri Peyre, Bibliographie Critique de l'Hellenisme en France (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932), p. 19 ff. See also discussion of Hellenism in Aimée Brown Price, "The Easel Paintings of Puvis de Chavannes," Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1972, pp. 66-71.

3. See Ernst R. Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, translated by Willard Trask (New York: Harper & Row, 1953); A. Bartlett Giamatti, The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966); A.R. Turner, The Vision of Landscape in Renaissance Italy (Princeton University Press, 1966).

4. Michael C.J. Putnam, Virgil's Pastoral Art (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970); Price, "Puvis"; Peter V. Marinelli, Pastoral (London: Methuen, 1971).

5. Ingres' L'Age d'or at Dampierre was one of the most important versions of this theme. Ingres based his complex iconographic scheme on ancient sources and the seventeenth century interpretation, L'Astrée by Honore d'Urfé. According to Ingres, "J'ai pris hardiment l'âge d'or comme les anciens poètes l'ont imaginé." See Henri Delaborde, Ingres, sa vie, ses travaux (Paris: H. Plon, 1870), pp. 193-195; Norman Schlenoff, Ingres, ses sources littéraires. (Paris: Presses universitaires, 1956), p. 252.

6. Price, "Puvis," p. 67.

7. Leon Thévenin, Puvis de Chavannes (Paris: L. Vanier, 1899), p. 5; Gustave Geffroy, La Vie artistique, Vol. 7 (Paris: E. Dentu, 1897), p. 272.

8. Camille Mauclair, Puvis de Chavannes (Paris: Librarie Plon, 1928), p. 123.

9. Georges Rodenbach, quoted in Charles Chassé, Le Mouvement Symboliste (Paris: Floury, 1947), p. 43.

10. Puvis de Chavannes, Livret du Salon de 1886, quoted in Puvis de Chavannes (Paris, 1976), pp. 195, 197, 200. These paintings have been discussed at length by Price, "Puvis," p. 67; see also Sal Porcellati, "Puvis de Chavannes: a Study of Le Bois sacré cher aux arts et aux muses," M.A. thesis, Queens College, 1972; Price points out that Puvis was probably inspired by T. Gautier's theory that art was a synthesis of "idée et forme" ("Puvis," Vol. I, p. 87, also Vol. II, pp. 527-528, 532-537). For Gautier theory see also Louis Hautecoeur, Littérature et Peinture en France (Paris: A. Colin, 1942), p. 93.

11. Price, "Puvis," p. 66. See illustrations by Osbert, Séon, Henri Martin.

12. André Michel, "Puvis de Chavannes," Notes sur l'art moderne (Paris: A. Colin, 1896, p. 157). Without naming the artists, Price refers to the "pale reminders of the already pale Puvis" in her discussion of the widespread use of whitened colors in the 1890's. Price, "Puvis," p. 199.

13. Elizabeth Fraser, Le Renouveau religieux d'après le roman Francais de 1886-1914 (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1934), pp. 188-193.

14. Price discusses the state of religious painting earlier in the nineteenth century; "Puvis," pp. 49, 51-52, 147-148, also p. 166 n. 1, 4, 5. See also comprehensive history in Rosenthal, Du Romanticisme au Réalisme (Paris: Librarie Renouard, 1914), pp. 302 ff.

15. Hautecoeur, Littérature et peinture en France, p. 246.

16. Gustave Moreau, Cahier III, 93-94, quoted in Julius Kaplan, Gustave Moreau (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1974), pp. 142-143.

17. Maurice Denis, "De la gaucherie des Primitifs," Les Arts de la Vie, July 1904, pp. 11-18. See also Max Nordau, Degeneration (New York: Howard Fertig, 1968), p. 84. Nordau pointed out differences between the Medieval artists who saw the legends of faith as "truth," and the Pre-Raphaelites and Symbolists who affected their style. Nordau hated Symbolism, and made the distinction between the "childlike" art of the fifteenth century and the "childish" art of nineteenth-century mystical artists.

18. Jules Breton, Nos Peintres du Siècle (Paris: Société d'edition artistique, 1900), p. 228. This is a useful record of the art world of the 1890's by a non-Symbolist painter. See also Richard Muther, History of Modern Painting (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1907), Vol. III, p. 219.

19. Felix Fénéon, Oeuvres (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), p. 92.

20. Geffroy, La Vie Artistique, Vol.2, p. 8.

21. See section on Botticelli revival in Chapter VII on Armand Point below.

22. See chapter V below.

23. Maurice Denis, "Notes sur la peinture religieuse," Théories (Paris: Rouart et Watelin, 1920), pp. 39-40. See chapter IV on Denis below, p. 85.

24. Denis' veneration for Byzantine art was shared by Sérusier and Filiger. See W. Jaworska, Gauguin and The Pont-Aven School (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1972), pp. 123 ff., 159 ff.

25. Denis, "Notes sur la peinture religieuse," p. 40.

26. Until now, there has been no comprehensive study which analyzes and summarizes this form of nineteenth-century historicism. Isolated studies of this phenomenon have focused on particular periods, but there is none that covers the entire century, concluding in the Symbolist decades. Recent studies of Symbolism, while mentioning nostalgic attitudes, have not connected these with the century-long interest in Quattrocento art. See Robert Rosenblum, Transformations in Late Eighteenth Century Art (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); _____, International Style of 1800 (New York: Garland, 1976), pp. 160-163. See also articles by Von Klenze, Borenius, Lamy, Chastel, Levey, in bibliography.

27. Evidence of this interest appeared in F. Chateaubriand, Génie du Christianisme (Paris: Beaucé-Rusand, 1818).

28. Wallace Ferguson, The Renaissance in Historical Thought (Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1948), p. 140.

29. Ferguson examines the situation in Germany where medievalism had not only an aesthetic and religious significance but also influenced social and political ideas. (Ferguson, The Renaissance in Historical Thought, pp. 116, 121.) Fraser discusses the concurrent strengthening of nationalism and the rising power of the church in France at the end of the nineteenth century due to the revival of the Middle Ages. E. Fraser, Renouveau religieux, p. 13.

30. Rosenblum, Transformations, and articles cited in note 26.

31. Seroux's work, initiated earlier, was interrupted by the Revolution, and was published posthumously in 1823. It consisted of five volumes of folio size, and contained 225 plates. When it was reprinted in England in 1847, it contained 3,000 illustrations. L'Histoire de l'art d'après les monuments depuis sa décadence au VIe s. jusqu'à son renouvellement au XVIe s. On seeing his collection, Goethe wrote: "on voit comment l'esprit n'a pas cessé d'être actif pendant le temps des tenèbres. Si l'ouvrage s'achève, il sera très remarquable."

Quoted in M. Lamy, "La Decouverte des primitifs Italiens au xixe siècle; Seroux d'Agincourt et son influence sur les collectionneurs, critiques et artistes français," La Revue de l'art ancien et moderne, Jan.-June 1921, p. 176.

32. Seroux, quoted in Lamy, "Découverte," p. 174.

33. Ibid. Seroux's ideas influenced a great number of artists and collectors and stimulated research by both English and French scholars. See also Tancred Borenius, "The Rediscovery of the Primitives," Quarterly Review, April 1923, p. 268.

34. Ibid. See writings by Maurice Denis, "Notes sur la peinture religieuse," Theories, pp. 39-40; J.K. Huysmans, La Cathédrale (Paris: P.V. Stock, 1898); Henry Cochin quoted by André Perate, Notes d'Art et d'Archéologie, Vol. 17, 1905, p. 18.

35. George Levitine, The Dawn of Bohemianism, The Barbu Rebellion and Primitivism in Neo-Classical France (University Park: Penn. State University Press, 1978), pp. 90-91. Paillot's paintings à la cire and his demonstrations of fresco methods were helpful to Ingres' pupils who made church decorations. See also Lamy, "Découverte," pp. 186 ff.; Price, "Puvis," pp. 141, 167, notes 7, 8; Maurice Denis, "Les Elèves d'Ingres," Theories, pp. 89-128.

36. Alexis-François Rio, De la poésie chrétienne (Paris. Debucourt, 1836). Translated and published in England; The Poetry of Christian Art (London: T. Bosworth, 1954). See Camillo von Klenze, "The Growth of Interest in the Italian Masters," Modern Philology, Oct. 1906, p. 49.

37. See mention of Rio in Denis, "Les Elèves d'Ingres," p. 91; Eugène Müntz, Histoire de l'art pendant la Renaissance (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1889, Vol. I, pp. 651-664; Joris-Karl Huysmans, La Cathédrale, p. 380; Ferguson pointed out that Rio's works were appreciated in England before they were in France, Renaissance, p. 141.

38. Rio was particularly indebted to Von Rumohr who followed earlier Romantic writers with his solid contributions of new research and re-attributions in this area. On the basis of this scholarship, Rio added his personal brand of mysticism and religion. See Von Klenze, "The Growth of Interest," pp. 48-51.

39. Rio, The Poetry of Christian Art, p. 123.

40. Ibid., p. 147.

41. Ibid., p. 179.

42. Von Klenze, "Growth of Interest," pp. 61-63; Ferguson, Renaissance, p. 142. Rio married an English woman and, after many visits, became well-known in religious circles there. He influenced Wordsworth, Carlyle, Mrs. Anna Jameson and Lord Lindsay. Mrs. Jameson had met him in Paris in 1841; her studies culminating in Sacred and Legendary Art (1848) were probably inspired to a great extent by Rio and Rumohr. The same can be said of Lindsay's Sketches of the History of Christian Art (1847). See also Michael Levey, "Botticelli and Nineteenth-century England," Journal of Warburg & Courtauld Institutes, 1960.

43. John Ruskin, Works (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1903-1912), Vol. III, p. 670. See also von Klenze, "Growth of Interest," p. 66; Robert Hewison, John Ruskin, The Argument of the Eye (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), p. 67.

44. Jacob Burckhardt, Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy (1860); Charles Blanc, Histoire des peintres de toutes les écoles (1861); Eugène Müntz, Histoire de l'art (1889-1895). Blanc's historical program was to re-evaluate the Renaissance with special emphasis on the Primitives. See Albert Boime, "Seurat and Piero," Art Bull., June 1965, pp. 265-271.

Müntz considered the art of the High Renaissance as a Golden Age, but he also praised Quattrocento art where he found much Idealism. Although Müntz used other sources for factual material, he often quoted Rio. See Müntz, Vol. I, pp. 651-664. In addition to the popularity of Müntz' text in the well-educated circles of his time, Müntz had personal contact with young artists as he was librarian at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in the early 1880's. See Boime, "Seurat," and Gustave Coquiot, Seurat (Paris, 1924), p. 174.

PART II

CHAPTER V

THE IDYLLIC THEME IN NABI ART

Nabis as Nostalgiques

The art of the Nabis, formulated in the shadow of Gauguin, Bernard, and Redon, was in the mainstream of Symbolist expression.[1] The young artists who called themselves Nabis adopted the Synthesist methods of their mentors to convey inner visions. Like Coquiot's "Nostalgiques," the Nabis' hostile attitude toward bourgeois values and the art of the Salon led them to explore past traditions still untainted by materialism. Seeking to express spirituality and purity, they turned to the Medieval and to non-Western art. They were inspired by the archaistic paintings of Puvis de Chavannes and the pre-Raphaelites which anticipated the Symbolists' nostalgic attitudes.

But while the Nabis shared a common goal and spirit of freedom from convention, their individual approach to past art differed significantly.[2] For example, Denis, Roussel, and Maillol turned to the Quattrocento or to Classicism, while Sérusier, Verkade, Lacombe, and Ranson, more attracted to the occult, adopted a Breton or orientalizing primitivism. Bonnard, Vuillard, and Vallotton incorporated Japonisme in their intimate scenes of domestic life. However, because of their close interests, there was some overlapping stylistic and thematic overlapping among all the Nabi artists.[3]

The idyllic art of Denis, Roussel, and Maillol in their Nabi years shows many connections with the art of other Symbolist "Nostalgiques."[4] Their work will be examined within this context to expand the notion of fin-de-siècle nostalgia.

MAURICE DENIS (1870-1943)

The artist as "Nostalgique"

In Coquiot's chronicle, Les Indépendants, Maurice Denis was not classified with "Les Nostalgiques" but with the "Peintres sacrés."[5] Coquiot felt that Denis' commitment to religious themes linked him more closely with the latter group, and perhaps realized that the oblique references to the artist's personal life that appear in his work were incompatible with the escapist aims of the "Nostalgiques."

Still, despite his attachment to religious themes, Denis may also be considered a "Nostalgique," because his Symbolist paintings are idealized and show detachment from the real world; they also evoke a distant, more perfect past. Denis' nostalgia for the Age of Faith is evident in his pietistic mood, his predilection for sacred themes and his adoption of medievalizing archaisms. His early paintings are idyllic in feeling, while in formal terms they incorporate the Nabi aesthetic of simplification, naiveté, and anti-naturalism. An early convert to Symbolist aesthetics, Denis chose to follow the direction set by the literary Symbolists and the artistic precursors—Puvis de Chavannes, the English pre-Raphaelites, and Gauguin—who conveyed mood and emotion through pictorial equivalents rather than following naturalistic formulas of representation.

In their dual rejection of the sterile academic tradition and the spontaneity of Impressionism, most Symbolist artists were inspired by

earlier art or non-Western traditions when artists used non-mimetic means to convey their sentiments directly and poetically. Denis' relationship to the past is more ambiguous and more complex than that of the other "Nostalgiques"; it also appears inconsistent and contradictory, as his youthful taste for the Primitifs mellowed and merged with his later devotion to Classical art. Thus, at various times, Denis consulted both the Hellenic and Christian traditions for the ideals which enabled him to transcend mundane expression. [6]

In the early years of his career, when he often painted religious subjects in small easel format, Denis considered Gothic and Quattrocento art as paradigms of pure Christian sentiment. Even before his exposure to the theories of Synthetism brought by Sérusier from Pont-Aven, Denis had expressed his passion for the art of the Italian primitives, especially Fra Angelico. [7] In 1886, at the age of sixteen, he wrote:

> La peinture est un art essentiellement religieux et chrétien. Si ce caractère s'est perdu dans notre siècle impie, il faut le retrouver. Et le moyen, c'est de remettre en honneur l'esthétique de Fra Angelico qui seule est vraiment catholique; qui seule répond aux aspirations des âmes pieuses, mystiques, aimant Dieu. 8

Ten years later, his writings still show his adoration of this primitif:

> ...si plein de charme, si jeune, si simple, il a pénétré les mystères de la vie intérieure, il en a restitué toute la poésie; il a revêtu de formes plus belles les attitudes de nos âmes devant Dieu, il nous a dotés d'un idéal meilleur. 9

Throughout his life, Denis was inspired by this spiritualized art, and during the nineties he incorporated the native pictorial mannerisms of the early Italians in his own paintings. [10]

Denis' statements on Quattrocento art approach those of Charles Dulac, a little-known artist, who was also classified by Coquiot as a "peintre sacré." Dulac's mystical landscapes emerged from a similar nostalgic yearning for a Christian paradise. His letters praising Fra Angelico and the terrain of Umbria sanctified by St. Francis are paralleled by Denis' fervent writings.[11]

Denis' feeling for the Primitives was reinforced when he saw Puvis' idyllic paintings in which his nostalgia for the Quattrocento were realized. We have pointed out earlier the significance of Puvis' art to the generation of young Symbolists eager to find new ways to create an allusive, non-descriptive art.[12] Denis and other young artists became acquainted with Puvis' art in the major exhibition at Durand-Ruel in 1887.[13] The impact of Puvis' nostalgic vision on Denis is evident in his statement: "Puvis n'a fait songer à Flandrin, à Botticelli, à l'Angelico, il m'a aussi rapellé mes rêves d'autrefois."[14]

Formally, Denis' paintings of the early nineties were based on the stylistic innovations of Bernard's and Gauguin's Synthetism—a compound of Japonisme, medievalism, and cloisonnisme—but emotionally they were more akin to the pietistic sentiment of late medieval and early Renaissance art.[15]

In his early years as an artist, Denis had been receptive to the new ideas surfacing in the art world despite his conservative background. Although traditionally educated in the classics and philosophy, and a devout Catholic, Denis could not accept the rigid training of the Ecole. While studying at the Academie Julian, he met Sérusier who revealed to the students the "Talisman" painted in accordance with Gauguin's theories. Denis' spiritual orientation predisposed him toward Gauguin's Synthetism.

With his friends who formed the core of the Nabi group, Denis saw that this new aesthetic provided a route of escape from stultifying conventional art.

Like Gauguin, Denis felt that the source of art lay in the artist's inner response to nature, and that art was created through the imaginative transposition of sensation and feeling into plastic equivalents. "Ainsi nous connûmes que toute oeuvre d'art était une transposition, une caricature, l'équivalent passionnée d'une sensation reçue." [16]

Inspired by the religious art of the Primitives, and fortified by his own mystical tendencies, Denis conceived of artistic creation as a sacred activity emanating from the spirit. In an article on religious painting, he pointed to its inner sources: "les peintres, épris d'une autre lumière que celle du jour solaire, tournèrent leur attention vers ces clartés intérieurs qui leur découvraient la Religion au fond d'eux-mêmes." [17]

While Denis' Nabi years were marked by his devotion to both early Italian and Japanese art, the period following his trip to Rome in 1897 revealed a change in his aesthetic. His Roman experience triggered an overwhelming response to the art of Raphael and the Classical tradition. His new appreciation of the values of order, clarity, and balance then became the counterpoint to his youthful embrace of the Primitives. [18]

At the turn of the century and in the pre-war years, Denis' new ideal was based on the art of Raphael and Poussin. He considered the antique, expressed through their classicizing form, the paradigm of harmony and perfection. Denis' art nostalgically recalled the classicism of Raphael and Ingres in its new breadth of form and harmonious design, yet for him, it remained within the framework of Symbolism. [19]

Maurice Denis' considerable talents as a painter and writer enabled him to "wear many hats." In his earliest efforts as a painter in the progressive, Gauguin-influenced wing of Symbolism, and later, as a painter of classicizing mural decorations, Denis found success among collectors and critics. He was also respected as an intellectual in the literary community for his contributions which took varied forms: doctrinaire essays on the aesthetics of Symbolism, classicism, of sacred art; chronicles of Symbolist activities; critical articles and historical studies of fellow artists.[20]

In his multifarious activities, Denis was a key figure in the Symbolist heyday of the 1890's. He acted as a bridge, linking various factions of the art world through his personal contact with several "Nostalgiques," including Osbert and Aman-Jean, with the Neo-Impressionist Henri-Edmond Cross, as well as with Paul Gauguin and Emile Bernard.[21]

He was active in several literary circles, and contributed to many periodicals, some with Symbolist allegiances, others with a more conservative, Neo-Classical bias.[22] He attended Mallarmé's Mardis, and his coterie included André Gide, Paul Valéry, Maurice Barrès, Edouard Dujardin, Paul Fort, Adolph Retté, Henri de Regnier, Albert Samain, Adrien Mithouard, and Francis Jammes.[23] Musicians were also among his intimate friends. He was particularly close to Ernest Chausson and Vincent D'Indy, and he collaborated with Debussy, Hermant, and others.[24]

Early Symbolist Paintings

Denis' paintings of the early nineties follow his own anti-naturalist theories and Gauguin's ideas that art should be an abstraction.[25] Sharing the metaphysical views of Symbolist poets, Denis sought to incorporate otherworldly ideals in his paintings. To express his mystical ideas, Denis adopted the Synthetist style of Gauguin and Bernard, often softening the lines and colors to achieve a more dreamy effect.

His painting, Soir Trinitaire (1891) was based on a poem with the same title by Adolphe Retté.[26] (Fig. 4). Denis' painting does not illustrate the text literally; rather, it corresponds in mood and evokes a mysterious atmosphere. As Retté's poetry conveys layers of meaning through the use of symbols, so too does Denis' painting. Because Denis never recorded his ideas on Retté's poem, the exact meanings of his imagery remain ambiguous.

In this work, the three female figures seated in a strange garden are plastic realizations of the triple form assumed by Retté's beloved Titania, an imaginary personage whom he described thus: "or quand elle approcha je vis qu'elle était triple."[27] Although Retté's poem suggests the separate phases of Titania's personality--chastity and coldness, false ingenuousness, and poetic inspiration, Denis' three feminine figures cannot be identified with these specific attributes.[28] The young women are generalized and share the same physical traits, being differentiated only in their state of dress and their

placement in the garden space. In an Ingresque pose, the closest nude turns her back toward the spectator[29]; her nude companion, seen in three-quarter view, wears only a small black hat; while the third figure, slightly separated from her companions, but connected by glance, is clothed in a simple black dress which entirely covers her body as she merges with the dark tones of the ground. Denis thus attempted to incorporate Retté's identification of Titania with Death and Ecstasy:

> O Mort et toi, sa soeur, vivace Volupté,
> Regnez dans ce domaine où regna le mensonge. [30]

The immateriality of Denis' figures is a visual parallel to the poet's questioning of the physical reality of his lady love and his intimation that she may even be poetry herself. [31] Retté also described her physical appearance as "maigre . . . si triste . . . le charme ambigu d'un très jeune garcon . . . vos torses cabrés en pale trinité." [32]

The poet's questioning of reality is reflected in the mysterious landscape setting.

> Un jardin hanté de rêves morts,
> Aromates trop lents que stimule le soir...
> Ecoute palpiter le sommeil de mes lys,
> Ecoute mon amour pleurer dans les bassins. . .
> Ton rire d'irréelle incante le jardin-- [33]

Denis similarly extended the unreal quality of his figures into the strange garden surroundings. The curvature of the jointless bodies is echoed in the flowing arabesque of the natural elements. Here, Denis used curving lines to indicate a slight spacial recession as well as to unify the surface, a device he often adopted in the paintings of this

period. [34] The compression of space and the landscape which continues vertically beyond the frame without meeting the horizon arise from dual formal sources: from Puvis' paintings such as The Young St. Geneviève in Prayer, as well as from the non-Western spatial concepts of Japanese prints. [35]

The suggestion of unreality is furthered by the ground, decorated with linear tracery and sparcely sprinkled blossoms resembling a Medieval tapestry or a flat woven carpet rather than a true lawn. Sensitive to the suggestive possibilities of Retté's poem, and because he felt that art and the imitation of nature were inimical, Denis rejected traditional methods of representation. Denis felt that the duty of the artist, like that of the poet, was to transform his experience, to submit nature to the imagination in order to arrive at a language of universal meaning. [36]

Still fascinated with the ideas he explored in connection with Retté's poem, Denis continued to experiment with an image incorporating multiple aspects of a single personage. In the following year, 1892, Denis painted Le Triple portrait de Marthe fiancée, and here, he further refined the idea by enclosing three heads within the flat white shapes of flowing mantles (Fig. 5). The heads, also treated without modeling form a pattern of repeated ovals and are shown in full face, profile, and three-quarter view, with eyes open or shut, signifying Marthe's state of spiritual consciousness. The decorative quality of the flat shapes and the curving line of the drapery are echoed in the background where a trellis supports an arabesque of curving vines. Coincidentally, close formal analogies exist in paintings by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. [37] (Fig. 6 and 7).

The theme of the trinity or duality of personality was explored in several of Denis' Symbolist paintings and the device of enclosing multiple figures within a single form was frequently employed in his pictorial syntax in the 1890's. Examples are found in Procession sous les arbres (1892), Avril (1892), Marche de fiançailles (1893), and Verger des vierges sages (1893). (Figs. 8, 9, 10, 12). These paintings show Denis' Synthetist method of painting idyllic scenes with both religious and secular content.

Procession sous les arbres (Fig. 8) invokes the atmosphere of a sacred ritual through non-traditional pictorial means. Denis' application of Synthetist theory is evident as both the figures and landscape elements reflect the transformation of sensed nature through the imagination of the artist. By using "plastic equivalents" Denis instilled meaning rather than recorded an event. The procession thus becomes a symbol of religious faith rather than an enactment of a ritual. According to his theories, Denis' ideas on synthesis involved simplification, not for its own sake, but to gain a certain order:

> Synthétiser, ce n'est pas nécessairement simplifier dans le sens de supprimer certaines parties de l'objet: c'est simplifier dans le sens de rendre intelligible. C'est, en somme, hiérarchiser; soumettre chaque tableau à un seul rythme, à une dominante, sacrifier, subordonner, généraliser. 38

Although Denis' theory of deformation was not published until 1895, his ideas were developed while he worked on this painting. In a letter to Retté, Denis wrote: "C'est une étude de déformation subjective. Déformation, bien entendu n'implique laideur . . . D'autres necessités:

Telles la recherche de l'accompagnement convenable, la concordance de tout l'entourage, l'orchestration des couleurs choisies." [39]

Denis painted the paired communicants with featureless faces, their bodies weightless and unarticulated beneath their robes. Bonded together like Siamese twins, these forms are subsumed in a flat white shape, clearly separated from the colorful ground, symbolizing their withdrawal from their surroundings. This unity enhances their inward focus as well as their timeless, sexless and impersonal quality. The elongation and weightlessness of these figures recall Gothic figures or those of Fra Angelico which Denis characterized in an article, "figures sans galbe, des draperies sans corps." [40]

However, in his desire to create a decorative, non-naturalistic art, Denis took greater formal liberties than his Quattrocento models, who, following Masaccio, had employed volumetric modeling. Seeking a less imitative form of expression, Denis adopted the cloisonnisme and extreme simplification of Synthetism.

In Procession, the suggestion of ritual is carried out in the landscape setting, summarily indicated by the rhythmic placement of the tree trunks. This vocabulary was frequently used by Denis to suggest a sacred wood and to introduce an element of musicality. [41] The intervals of the trees here suggest a park rather than an uncultivated wood, and probably was the one known to Denis since his childhood, the Terrace at St. Germain-en-Laye. [42] (Fig. 8a).

Denis' bold use of color for expressive purposes was derived from Gauguin's Synthetist paintings of 1888-1890 and conformed to Gauguin's idea that color should "flow from itself, from its own nature, from its mysterious and enigmatic interior forces." [43] In paintings such as this, Denis incorporated his own theories of decorative art and also Aurier's who stated, "Decorative painting . . . is nothing other than a manifestation of art at once subjective, synthetic, symbolic, and ideist." [44] Here, his ideas on the "subjective deformation" are given primacy. [45]

Denis' preoccupation with decorative ideals determined the formal patterns of this painting. The shadows of the foliage have been abstracted into a lacelike design of intense blue that flow across the white robes of the communicants and the red-orange path, and up the trunks of the opposite row of trees where the negative shapes of orange continue the pattern in conformity with decorative, rather than natural, laws. Color and line, freed from representational demands, convey a feeling of the supernatural. The autonomy of the pictorial elements make this painting a realization of the theory that the "picture . . . is essentially a plane surface, covered with colors assembled in a certain order." [46]

While many of Denis' striking formal innovations of this period can be traced to Japanese art or to the Italian Primitives, the subject matter and mood derives from other precedents--from the mid-nineteenth century religious painting of Ingres' pupils. Denis' commitment to religious ideals similar to those upheld by Ingres' school was demon-

strated in his scholarly article on "Les Elèves d'Ingres." [47] Denis' research on these artists and his study of their works may have provided new ideas for presenting sacred images in a Symbolist format.

Certain paintings by Louis Janmot can be considered precursors for Denis' favorite theme of communicants and young virgins set in idyllic landscapes. (Fig. 11). Like many of Ingres' pupils, Janmot was primarily a painter of religious subjects. His mystical approach to Catholicism is particularly evident in a remarkable series of thirty-four paintings in Lyon, Le Poème de l'âme (1854). Accompanied by a poem written by the artist, each painting was published in photographs in a book of 1881. The paintings were exhibited together, accompanied by the printed text, in the Salon of 1854, and again in the Exposition Universelle of 1855. They were highly praised by Delacroix, Baudelaire, and Gautier. [48] Of all Ingres' pupils, Janmot was perhaps the most important for the Symbolists because of his mysticism and his extraordinary imagination. The publication of Le Poème de l'âme coincided with the Neo-Catholic revival and could well have inspired spiritualized imagery among the Symbolists. [49] As Denis pointed out, the religious paintings of Ingres' pupils Flandrin and Lamothe were often dry and lifeless, lacking the grace and spirituality of Janmot's works. Janmot's figures recapture the youthful ardor and religious sentiment of Quattrocento models such as Botticelli and Lippi. [50] His landscapes as well as his figures reveal a Divine spirit.

Denis' idyllic painting, Avril (1892) reflects both contemporary ideas and those from the past. (Fig. 12). The curvilinear integration of the figures and the landscape is clearly in the vein of Art Nouveau, yet, beyond the symbolism of the seasonal theme, there are futher levels of meaning. [51]

As in many paintings by Denis, the site can be precisely identified; here it is the Terasse at St. Germain-en-Laye overlooking the bend in the Seine, with a view of the landscape beyond, extending towards Paris. The bright blue curve of the river, which echoes the shape of the pale orange path of the foreground and the smaller white S-curves of the bending figures, separates the verdant locus amoenus of the terrace from the duller terracotta tones of the ordinary terrain beyond. A vermillion railing with a zig-zag shift of plane further demarcates the two zones which could be interpreted symbolically as the idyllic and blessed land separated from the world of mundane existence. [52]

The paired figures in the foreground, enclosed in a common shape and outline, are joined from the shoulder down, with no indication of their separate bodies; their hands emerge mysteriously from the unarticulated flat shape of their garment. Echoes of Puvis appear, and certain motifs from Le Pauvre pêcheur were transposed by Denis. [53] For example, the bending, plucking figures almost literally repeat the pose of the young girl shown in isolation in the meadow in Puvis' painting. (Fig. 13). In addition, the vine-like plant form in the lower left of Avril is a visual analogy to the anchor placed in the corresponding corner of Pauvre pêcheur.

Denis' ideas to suggest a paradisial setting in the foreground separated from the workaday world behind could also have been inspired by Puvis. In Inter Artes et naturam (1890) Puvis painted the manufacture of pottery in the foreground without reference to a specific time or place, yet the background depicts a local landscape--Rouen and the curves of the Seine. (Fig. 14). Furthermore, in Denis' painting, there is a recall of Puvis' tapestry-like ground spotted with flowers. But in addition to the formal borrowings from Puvis, the idyllic mood that permeates Denis' painting corresponds to that of Puvis. By using local sites as landscape backgrounds both artists invested the present with a paradisial flavor. [54]

La Marche de fiançailles (1893), called by Denis "une allégorie des fiançailles," again shows paired communicants bearing his fiancée Marthe's features. (Fig. 9). Although the figures and landscape are still rigorously simplified, they appear more naturalistic than in the earlier paintings. Here, Denis allowed some indications of illusionism, in the introduction of light and shadow, spacial recession, and the drawing of the landscape elements. However, the effect of luminosity which arises from the golden tint of the sky and water are closer to Puvis' Bois sacré than to the natural light effects of Impressionism. [55] Thus Denis used light to imply Divine presence in his perception of landscape as an earthly paradise. A cool color harmony of blues, green, and lilac complements the golden areas; decorative arabesques linking the landscape and figures enhance the serene mood.

Denis continued to depict Marthe in multiple aspects during this phase when the Symbolist aesthetic dictated a departure from natural appearances. Denis' nostalgia for the Medieval was revealed in Le Verger des vierges sages (1893) (Fig. 10). In this homage to the chastity of his fiancée, the virginal image of Marthe appears again three times. Meditating in an orchard, she remains impervious to the temptation of the apples, and she is contrasted to the profane virgins, represented as mannered nudes, separated from her by the fence.[56]

This painting typifies Denis' Symbolist approach of the early 1890's; the meaning of the work is enhanced by the oblique references to his personal life. Denis intended to convey a moral truth through the use of universal symbols, but his personification of the Wise Virgin as Marthe in close rapport with their house in St. Germain reveals a self-conscious approach that removes the work from the realm of allegory.

Denis continued to rely on non-classical models for his formal ideas in this phase of his career. The hem of Marthe's dress swells out in a pattern of linear swirls, recalling the drapery tradition of the Flemish painters. The tiny flowers sprinkled over the ground form a pattern of decoration rather than of natural growth and suggest the mille-fleur grounds of early tapestries.[57]

Denis again used the device of slender trees in this garden-like setting. The trees act as verticals which delineate spacial compartments for the figures as well as stabilizing elements for the

curvilinear forms. A direct precedent for these trees with their arching boughs exists in Puvis' Inter Artes et naturam of 1890. (Fig. 14).

Unlike her other appearances in double or triple form, Marthe exists here as three separate figures. This imagery, which implies variety within unity, corresponds to ideas expressed in Gustave Kahn's review of Puvis' exhibition of 1887. In writing about Puvis' Jeunes filles au bord de la mer, Kahn saw not three separate women but rather the symbolic representation of three ages of one woman. It is conceivable that this article could have inspired Denis' imagery. [58] (Fig. 15).

Denis' portrait of Mlle Yvonne Lerolle en trois aspects (1897) is another example of his use of this formula. (Figs. 16 and 17). Like Marthe in the painting discussed above, the subject is shown full-length, in three views; she is presented standing frontally, as well as in three-quarter view, bending to pick a flower, and then from the back showing her head in profile. According to Barazzetti-Demoulin, Denis decided to paint Mlle Lerolle in this fashion because "(il) l'a trouvé charmante sous plusieurs angles; il a inventé ce biais pour n'en sacrifier aucun." [59]

The Turn to Classicism

Denis' journeys to Tuscany and Umbria in 1895 and 1897 confirmed his youthful passion for early Italian art, and affected his

turn from Synthetism to Classicism. Stimulated by seeing the art of the Primitives in situ and following the path of St. Francis, Denis realized the spiritual kinship that bound him to these artists. Motivated by piety, he emulated their formal approach and shared their intense feelings toward nature. [60]

As he grew to appreciate these traditional forms of art, Denis began to temper the radical, anti-naturalistic stylization of Synthetism which demanded "la gaucherie d'exécution et la simplification presque caricaturale de la forme." [61]

Inspired by Quattrocento art, Denis turned to a more naturalistic rendering of space and modeling of forms. His deep love of the Tuscan countryside and his sincere faith are reflected in the paradisial landscapes of these years. The idyllic quality which permeates his harmonic compositions reflects his conviction that nature was the revelation of the Divine. [62] According to Denis, the artist of Medieval times was similarly inspired: "La nature pour lui, c'est la Création, et les créatures sont les témoins et les signes de la Toute Puissance et la Toute Bonté." [63] Thus Denis' paintings of scriptural events are continuing evidence of his earlier theoretical premise that "l'art est la sanctification de la nature." [64]

With the benefit of hindsight, Denis later summarized the changes in his aesthetic that led him to return to tradition and to Classicism. [65] Although he felt that the deformations of Synthetism were no longer viable, his paintings continued to conform to Symbolist ideals

since they conveyed sentiment and meaning through plastic equivalents. While admitting a certain degree of change, he still emphasized the role of form and color to suggest emotional states:

> C'est le moyen d'expression (lignes, formes, volumes, couleurs), et non l'objet représenté qui doit lui-même être expressif. Une telle idée implique l'existence de correspondances entre les lignes, les formes, les couleurs et d'autre part nos états d'âme, entre le visible et l'invisible; une connexion d'idées en rapport avec la connexion des choses. 66

These ideas were incorporated in many small easel paintings depicting scriptural events taking place in the Tuscan setting, and later, in the important commission for mural paintings in the church of Le Vesinet (1899-1901). In an article praising Denis' decorative scheme, Gabriel Mourey wrote of Denis' affinity for the Italian Primitives: "en se réclamant de ces maîtres adorables, en se pénétrant de leur esprit, M. Maurice Denis agit conformément à son instinct et aux acquisitions de son expérience." [67]

While visiting in Fiesole, Denis painted several versions of the Annunciation taking place on the terrace with a panoramic view towards Florence in the background. [68] (Fig. 18). Denis often painted the sites chosen by Fra Angelico and others as he nostalgically attempted to recreate, in his own paintings, a similar spiritual ambience. By including members of his own family and those of his friends, he identified personally with sacramental events. [69] In these tranquil paintings, the purity of Quattrocento art is revived in the Neo-Catholic wave of the 1890's.

Earlier, following his marriage in 1893, Denis made intimate paintings of his family. Responding to this theme, he showed less interest in the arcane themes of Symbolist poetry and gradually replaced the stylizations of Synthetism with greater naturalism. As with the intimités and maternités of Carrière, so highly esteemed by the Symbolists, Denis created a new iconography of "la vie familiale." [70] Later, Denis characterized this phase of his art:

> La première période de ma peinture c'est l'amour, l'émerveillement devant la beauté de la femme et de l'enfant. Intimités passionnées . . . . l'expression de sentiments vrais seule comptait. Sérusier et Gauguin, apres les Primitifs, me prêtait leurs techniques, dont la simplicité s'accordait si bien avec les sentiments que j'exprimais dans la joie. 71

While many of these domestic scenes are also indebted to Renoir, others, in their allusion to sacred art, reveal Denis' ideas about the mystery of birth and the sanctity of life. [72] In the numerous paintings depicting Marthe as the Madonna, Denis elevated his domestic life to the level of sacrament. Examples of his blending of the sacred and the vernacular are seen in Sinite Parvulos Venire ad Me (Let the Little Children Come to Me) (1900), and L'Apres-midi dans le bois (1900). In the former, the Denis family, like Quattrocento donor figures, present themselves to a domesticated Christ in their garden. (Fig. 19)

At this time, Denis also invested less personal subjects with religious overtones. In the large decorative panel, Le Jeu de volant (1900), a sportive scene takes on deeper meaning. (Fig. 20). The ritualistic setting--a closed-off clearing and pool, resembling the sacred

forests painted by Puvis and Osbert—has been updated, with Denis' women in modern dress, replacing the nymphs, muses, and priestesses normally associated with sacred grounds. [73] Although the title suggests spontaneity, the scene appears unnaturally calm. The foreground pair of players shows lady-like restraint, and does not disturb the quiet air or other figures interspersed among the trees. The softly filtered sunlight, pale colors, and slow rhythms of the composition contribute to the mood of absolute serenity. It is not surprising that the title, Le Bois sacré, has sometimes been attached to this panel. [74]

Denis' conversion from Synthetism to Classicism occurred following his visit to Rome in 1898. Still devoted to the Primitives, he reacted at first negatively to the city and its treasures which seemed entirely shaped by the Baroque, a style he deplored. But with the guidance of his friend André Gide, who was already a confirmed classicist, Denis fell under the spell of classical Rome. [75]

> Gide, à qui je fais des theories là-dessus, se trouve justement dans le même état d'esprit. Jugez alors s'il m'y encourage, s'il m'éclaire de ses méthodes, et si nous devenons classiques ensemble. 76

Speaking of himself in the third person, Denis was to admit:

> C'est grâce à lui qu'il subit...le charme profond... de la Ville éternelle. Et grâce à lui qu'il fit la différence entre les qualités d'aspect qu'il exigeait des oeuvres d'art, et la véritable beauté. Ils en vinrent à comparer aux saines méthodes de l'art classique, les théories impressionnistes, et cet empirisme sensuel dont il s'était jusque-là réclamé. 77

However, Gide felt that Denis' discoveries in Rome were not a revelation since he was already disposed to these ideas. [78] On seeing

Raphael's Vatican paintings, Denis began to realize that this Renaissance master carried forth Greek ideals of harmony and beauty, which later were to become the basis for his own work.[79] In this new dedication to classical art, Denis discussed its relevance for his own age in an article, "Les Arts à Rome ou la méthode classique." [80]

Denis' visit to Tuscany had already preconditioned him for this return to tradition, but it was due to his Roman experiences and his embrace of classiciam that he was able to turn unequivocally from his youthful commitment to Synthetism. In rationalizing this new aesthetic stance, Denis did not mean to reject Symbolism but to reconcile its basic premises with the classical tradition.

Denis explained that both Impressionism and Symbolism had fallen into dangerous excesses in their separate reactions to academic art. According to Denis, both approaches were superficial, whereas Classicism was an art of absolute harmony achieved through the intellectual processes of the artist. [81]

> La puissance vous est révélée d'un art qui sait se passer d' agréments superficiels. Il n'est plus question de l'attrait d'une facture, d'une matière, d'un ton. L'artiste n'a point cherché à réaliser l'harmonie avec son seul goût . . . il y a appliqué toute sa science, toute sa raison, toute la passion de sa volonté ambitieuse . . . C'est le plus grand effort de l'âme humaine vers la beauté; l'art classique. 82

Denis' innate love of order, sublimated during his years of commitment to Nabi ideals, probably determined his acceptance of a standard of beauty formed by the mind rather than the senses. He

now felt that the art of the Greeks, later carried on by Raphael, Poussin, and Ingres, was of a higher order than that of his beloved Primitifs, whose appeal lay in sentiment rather than in rationality. [83]

Raphael's chastened art ("le style châtié") embodied the values of order, measure, and proportion, uncompromised by superficial charm and sensuality. According to Denis, Raphael had achieved grandeur of style through his willingness to sacrifice to the beau idéal: "Il a fait, lui, un libre choix et sacrifié l'agrément pour attendre au style." [84]

Poussin figured in Denis' hierarchy of classical masters as he reconciled the classical ideal with French tradition. [85] Denis considered Poussin's noble landscapes equal to Raphael's figure compositions: "(il) ne notait pas le detail de ses paysages, des ciels, des effects dont il composait ses tableaux. (Rubens and Poussin) comprenaient la necessité de digérer leurs sensations . . . qui permet un travail homogène et rationnel. " [86] Denis also documented the passion for the seventeenth century that was sweeping France around 1900:

> On connaît l'engouement de la nouvelle génération pour le XVIIe siècle, pour l'Italie, pour Ingres: Versailles est à la mode, Poussin porté aux nues; . . . le romanticisme est ridiculisé. En littérature, en politique, les jeunes gens ont la passion de l'ordre. 87

Ingres too fit into this progression. In his article, "Les Elèves d'Ingres," Denis summarized Ingres' doctrines based on the beau idéal of Raphael. Ingres had referred to the master as "un dieu, un être inimitable, absolu, incorruptible," and warned his pupils not to copy the model but to "chercher avant tout la Beauté . . . c'est

ce qu'on discerne en fréquentant les Grecs et Raphaël." [88]

Denis perceived that Classicism was not moribund, but a living tradition which could be reconciled with his own Symbolist ideals. To support this, Denis cited Puvis' ideas on order: "Car je suis convaincu que la conception la mieux ordonnée se trouve en même temps la plus belle. J'aime l'ordre parce que j'aime passionnément la clarté." [89] At the same time, Denis acknowledged that his theory of "plastic equivalents" had been based to some degree on Puvis' statement "pour toutes idées claires il existe une pensée plastique." [90]

Following his embrace of Classicism, Denis regretted the emphasis on subjectivity in his earlier theory and in its application by the Synthetists which led from nature to the greater simplification and caricatural force that Denis labeled "la déformation subjective." [91] Feeling the need to reconcile classical ideals and Symbolist aesthetics, Denis called for "la déformation objective," an expression of order, rationality, and objectivity in the transposition of apperceptions of nature. [92] Thus, as late as 1909, Denis could still maintain "il y a pas d'art veritable qui ne soit Symboliste" as long as the artist conceived of "l'oeuvre d'art comme un traduction generale d' emotions individuelles." [93]

Denis also condidered Cézanne a classical artist. He felt that Cézanne attained "le juste equilibre entre la nature et le style." [94] Among the moderns, Denis singled out Cézanne: "(il) vaut par soi-même par les qualités d'unité de composition, de couleur, et pour tout

dire de peinture." [95] Denis realized that Cézanne's method, which involved meditation and the conscious ordering of his sensations, removed him from the concerns of Impressionism and brought him close to the ideals of Poussin.

Furthermore, Denis began to feel that Cézanne's contribution to Symbolist aesthetics outweighed that of Bernard and Gauguin. In Cézanne's statement, that "le soleil ne se pouvait pas réproduire, mais qu'il faillait le représenter par autre chose," Denis recognized a parallel to his own theory of plastic equivalents. [96] Denis concluded that "il [Cézanne] est à la fois l'aboutissement de la tradition classique et le resultat de la grande crise de liberté et de lumière qui a rejeuni l'art moderne. C'est le Poussin de l'Impressionnisme." [97]

As Denis cast a retrospective glance at the progression of Symbolist art from 1890 on, he became convinced that his own commitment to Classicism did not imply a defection from that type of Symbolism which,

> ...loin d'être incompatible avec la méthode classique, peut en renouveler l'efficacité et en obtenir d'admirables développements. Et ce n'est pas le moindre avantage de notre système que de fonder un art très objectif, un language très général et très plastique, enfin un art classique, sur ce qu'il y a de plus subjectif et de plus subtil dans l'âme humaine, sur les mouvements les plus mystérieux de notre vie intérieure. 98

Denis' paintings in the period around 1900 reflect his new classicism. This change marks the culmination of the greater naturalism appearing in his maternités and Quattrocento-inspired religious works of the middle nineties.

After 1900, Denis was frequently employed as a muralist by the Church as well as secular patrons. His activities were international, including commissions in Germany and Russia, while in France he worked in both the public and private spheres. [99] These later large-scale works show the maturation of Denis' Nabi predilection for decoration in his absorption of Raphael's harmonious designs. The doctrines of Ingres passed on to his pupils were also important in this phase of Denis' career. [100] Denis' paintings show that he took to heart the words of this master: "Plus les lignes et les formes sont simples, plus il y a de beauté et de force. Toutes les fois que vous partagez les formes, vous les affaiblissez." [101]

According to Achille Ségard, author of a standard work on decorative painting, Denis' mature style was better suited to mural decoration than to easel painting. [102] Ségard felt that Denis' success as a muralist was due to his Symbolist approach--his use of plastic equivalents to convey feeling--and to his use of the arabesque as a compositional form. He pointed out that Denis' paintings followed the laws of decoration: the large flat areas of color were bound to the surface and always harmonized with the architectural setting. Ségard also praised Denis' use of color because it was freed from conformity to nature. With green skies, pink sand, yellow-green flesh color, and strong blues, Denis created independent harmonies following the aesthetics of decoration. Ségard wrote: "C'est mieux que l'exactitude, c'est la vérité décorative, c'est la transcription par les couleurs sur une surface plane d'une émotion visuelle." [103] Ségard concluded that Denis was a true decorative artist because he employed his imagination to achieve

ideal beauty and harmony.

A typical painting of this genre is L'Oratorio, l'Eternel été, a decorative suite for the music room of M. Mutzenbecker in Wiesbaden (1905). (Fig. 21). The scheme consists of five panels depicting young girls playing instruments in garden settings. [104] The theme, "Dans l'éternel été retentira le chant nouveau," indicates Denis' continuing involvement with paradisial ideas, here materialized as a dream of music and beauty. Denis' intentions were articulated in a letter to Mme. de la Laurencie, the daughter of Vincent d'Indy, who posed for one of the figures:

> Je songe beaucoup au Paradis, je suis en train de le peindre...Il y a des anges et des vierges blanches, qui chantent et jouent des instruments... J'exprime... dans l'ensemble que chaque âme manifeste le meilleur d'elle-même, sa musique intime... Je crois que les beaux paysages et les beaux sourires que nous voyons ici-bas ne sont pas indignes de la perfection céleste. [105]

In these panels, idyllic, flower-filled gardens convey the celestial quality sought by Denis. A sense of "mysticité fleuri," a term used by J.C. Holl, a contemporary critic, is a component of this idealized vision of joy and harmony. Holl also quoted lines by the poet Georges Rodenbach which come close to Denis' imagery: "...aux jours pascals, quand le ciel est d'azur...apparaissent les Premières Communiantes." [106]

In the panel, L'Oratorio, a band of harpists and singers provide musical accompaniment for the procession of communicants winding their way along a garden path. An extensive space is implied, yet the flat surface

plane remains intact, enlivened by the play of curving elements. Although some of the figural and landscape forms are simplified and flattened in accordance with the mural aesthetic, there are passages of modeling and shadows which indicate a limited commitment to naturalism. The effect of bright sunlight, and the color scheme of white, fresh greens, and clear blues enhance the illusion of a harmonious, never-ending summer. In the decorative works of this period, as in the earlier Synthetist phase, it appears that the subject itself is of less significance for Denis than the pictorial and emotional considerations. Whether treating secular or sacred themes, Denis idealized the figures and setting to produce an idyllic mood and sense of universal harmony.[107]

The same feeling for youth, beauty, and serenity pervades the easel painting, La Madone au jardin fleuri (1907). (Fig. 22) The Madonna and female attendants are arranged almost symetrically in a garden setting filled with flowering trees and plants. Depth and modeling, although simplified, are based on traditional ideas.

In these works, Denis' relationship to past traditions appears somewhat ambiguous. The ordered compositions reflect a classical harmony and serenity, yet they are infused with an aura of innocence and purity closer to Quattrocento models. Denis' nostalgia for both traditions underlies this decorative style in which sophistication is combined with youthful charm and grace.

Our examination of several early paintings and later decorative works has revealed contradictions in Denis' aesthetics that prevent the

formulation of broad generalizations about the nostalgic quality of his work. In our study of the early works, we have seen that Denis shared wholeheartedly with his contemporaries the adoration for the Italian Primitives. Later, he endeavored to bring Classicism within the spectrum of Symbolist expression. In this effort, his theories, argued with intelligence, clarity, and conviction, are mirrored in his paintings. The classical approach of his later paintings reflects his mature attitudes as clearly as did the Synthetist works of the nineties.

Denis' commitment to Classicism in the years around 1900 is a manifestation of the modifications that were taking place within several Symbolist circles. As Symbolism based on Mallarmé's aesthetic appeared less viable for both artists and writers, Denis' turn to Classicism was very much of its time. [108]

K.-X. ROUSSEL (1867-1944)

> Autour de ses aînés, la jeunesse est devenue résolument classique. Le retour à la tradition et à la discipline est aussi unanime que l'était dans notre jeunesse le culte du moi et l'ésprit de revolte. Je citerai ce fait que dans le vocabulaire des critiques d'avant-garde le mot "classique" est le suprême éloge, et sert par conséquent à désigner les tendances avancées. 109
>
> Maurice Denis, 1909

As we pointed out in our study of Maurice Denis, the artists who embraced Classicism around 1900 were considered avant-garde rather than retardataire. [110] Like Denis, K.-X. Roussel turned from Synthetism to Classicism, and his predilection for the idyllic landscape allowed Gustave Coquiot to classify him as one of the "Nostalgiques." [111]

Roussel's oeuvre lacks the formal unity that marks the work of other "Nostalgiques." At the end of the nineties, he abandoned the Synthetist vocabulary of his Nabi period and developed a decorative style compounded of elements of the Rococo, the Classical, and Impressionism. As a Nabi and in his later work, Roussel remained detached from reality, a fugitive from the concerns of the everyday world.

While Roussel made the transition from the primitivizing syntax of the Nabis to his later colorful freely painted works, the mood of his pictures also changed from the inward, static world

of Nabi Symbolism to the joyful lyricism of the later Arcadian scenes. Opposed to the Verlaine-like dreaminess and crepuscular tones of the landscapes painted by most of the "Nostalgiques," Roussel's paintings after 1900 were vibrant with a Dionysian exuberance of color, light, and movement. His idyllic landscapes, animated by bathers or frolicking nymphs and fauns, embody Nietzsche's dynamic paganism and the new mood of optimism that accompanied it. Roussel's turn to classicism in the post-Nabi years clearly reflects the cultural changes of his epoch. These were summed up by the literary critic André Billy: "La grand influence de ces premieres annees du siècle était celle de Nietzsche." [112] Roussel's new interest coincided with Nietzche's invocation of paganism to redress the harmful inroads of Christianity; a stance which held great appeal to the despairing generation of the 1890's. Roussel's Hellenism, infused with vitalistic spirit, paralleled the approach of the Fauvists, while it still recalled the traditional art of Poussin and the Rococo.

One of the first young artists to join the Nabis, Roussel adhered to the Synthetist theories of Gauguin and Bernard. Like his colleagues, Roussel adored Japanese and Medieval art as well as the more recent art of Puvis de Chavannes, Redon, Cézanne, and Van Gogh. The Nabis were dedicated to the anti-naturalistic ideals summed up in Maurice Denis' theory of "pictorial equivalents" which stated that radically simplified forms and arbitrary color should be used to express mood and feeling. Denis characterized the approach of his fellow Nabis:

> Ils ont préferé dans leur oeuvres l'expression par le décor, par l'harmonie des formes et des couleurs, par la matiere employée, à l'expression par le sujet. Ils ont cru qu'il existait à toute émotion, à toute pensée humaine, un equivalent plastique, décoratif, une beauté correspondante. 113

An early work by Roussel, Vierge au sentier (1890) shows formal analogies to Denis' Nabi paintings in its simplified figural and landscape shapes, the curving path, and flattened space. [114] (Fig. 23).

Along with other Nabis, Roussel was eager to incorporate the stylizations of Synthetism in mural paintings. They all shared the ideas expressed by Aurier: "la peinture décorative c'est . . . la vraie peinture."[115]

Roussel's predilection for monumental painting was evident in two decorative schemes he worked on in the early nineties. [116] In each of the two panels of Les Saisons de la vie (1892), four women are shown in conversation, yet they are artificially separated from each other, and placed in hieratic fashion along an imaginary ground line in the frontal plane. (Fig. 24). The landscape behind them is radically simplified and abstracted into patterns of flat color. The unmodeled figures carry further the reductions introduced by Puvis. The women are treated summarily, with few facial features and details of costume. Differentiated by the attributes of age, they symbolize the ages of mankind parallel to the seasons of the year, a commonly used Symbolist theme. [117]

Another pair of paintings, Réunion de dames (Fig. 25) and Conversation dans un jardin (ca. 1893) depicts women conversing in a park. The landscape is organized in broad arabesques which imply a

more extensive space than in the above pair of panels. There is also evidence of Roussel's japonisme in his sophisticated use of decorative patterns, flat curvilinear shapes, and in the intimate mood. Subtly harmonized colors are thickly applied, creating the opaque matte surface favored by the Nabis. Pierre Georgel has suggested that Roussel's decorative paintings, derived from his study of the Japanese and from Puvis, were more audacious than the contemporary panels painted by Vuillard which remain closer to Impressionist sources. [118]

George Mauner points out that Nabi paintings based on their experiences of bourgeois life were not merely genre paintings but carried hidden levels of meaning. The theme of female figures in park settings, such as these painted by Roussel, took on ritualistic meaning and thus they correspond to the arcane Pont-Aven paintings of women in sacred forests. [119]

Albert Aurier recognized Roussel's precocious talent as a muralist and he reproduced a Puvis-like drawing by Roussel in his article "Les Symbolistes." (1892). Citing this illustration, Projet de décoration, Aurier wrote:

> Un autre très intéressant artiste qu'il faut citer à leur côté, mystique lui aussi, mais comme Gauguin ou Bernard, d'un mysticisme qui rapelle davantage l'extase de Plotin ou de Porphyre . . . c'est Roussel. S'il tient les promesses de ses premières études d'un style si parfait, d'une vision si simple, si calme et si grande, où l'on retrouve comme une parenté intellectuale (sic) avec Puvis de Chavannes, il deviendra un merveilleux décorateur. 120

As a Nabi, Roussel produced a few "intimiste" paintings of interior domestic scenes. [121] But, unlike his close friends Bonnard and Vuillard, Roussel chose landscape as the most suitable medium to visually render his belief in universal spirit linking men and nature. He transformed into a locus amoenus, the sought-for eternal paradise. In these paintings, he gave up his commitment to Synthetism and its program of artificiality. Denis later recognized that the Nabi commitment to Synthetist formula was incompatible with Roussel's need to paint intuitively:

> Roussel, subtil paysagiste, peintre d'histoires mythologiques, splendide décorateur, ne regrette pas no plus...de s'être impregné non sans résistance des formules un peu simpliste de notre jeunesse. 122

Jacques Salomon, Roussel's son-in-law, wrote an affectionate memoir in which he emphasized the artist's love of nature which was realized in his plein-air pastels of the Ile-de-France countryside. "Ces petits poèmes que Roussel compose par touches légères témoignent de l'intime dialogue du peintre avec les apparances." [123] Roussel chose the landscape of Etang-Le-Ville where he moved in 1899 as the setting for his mythological fantasies. [124] Gustave Coquiot also credited this locale as the source of his nostalgic landscapes: "Pour lui, ce plaisant pays, c'est toute l'Arcadie, le Béotie et aussi les Cyclades." [125]

Around 1896, other Nabis as well as Roussel tired of the stylization of Synthetism and they all sought new ways to clothe Symbolist ideals. Bonnard, Vuillard, and Roussel all began to look more favorably on Impressionism which they had earlier rejected in

their adoption of cloisonnisme and japonisme. [126]

This change is evident in Roussel's pastel, Femmes dans la campagne of 1897. [127] (Fig. 26). Roussel no longer presented women in the form of schematized silhouettes in flattened space. Here the figures are modeled by light and, like Renoir's, exude a feeling of naturalness. The landscape and figures are bathed in a hazy light, which, combined with soft colors and static poses, creates a mood of bucolic serenity. Beyond the feeling for idyllic calm, there is no inner meaning. Roussel appears to have returned to the traditional ideas of space and a painterly execution derived from Monet and Renoir. [128]

However, Roussel considered Impressionism merely as a point of departure. He used vibrant color and strong contrasts to express poetic feeling rather than to record empirically. His new art was a poetic meditation on nature nurtured by several sources; the idylls of Theocritus and Virgil, the contemporary poetry of Mallarmé, Cézanne's paintings of bathers, and French classicism from Poussin and Claude to Watteau, Delacroix, and Corot. Salomon wrote that Roussel's paintings took shape in his imagination, stimulated by his love of poetry:

> Si Roussel concevait ses ouvrages dans ses rêveries
> en se remémorant peut-etre quelques vers de Virgile
> ou de Mallarmé, et en les méditant les yeux mi-clos,
> le crayon à la main, c'est ensuite, dans son atelier,
> comme nous venons de le voir, que ses rêveries
> s'élançaient à la recherche de leur forme. 129

Maurice Denis pointed out Roussel's affinities with the classical landscape as painted by Poussin:

> Comme Poussin à qui K.-X. Roussel a été déjà si justement comparé, on sent que c'est ici une nécessité d'associer à l'amour de la terre française le sensuel cortège des dieux de la Fable, de peupler de formes sereines les beaux sites qui lui son familiers . . .
>
> Il peut, il doit pousser jusqu'aux derniers détails cette homogénéité d'expression. C'est ainsi qu'il s'apparente aux plus grandes Maîtres, poètes et peintres de notre XVIIe siècle, Saturnia regna! Il fait revivre l'âge d'or de la peinture d'histoire. 130

But Roussel's idyllic paintings were not always mythological. In the early years of the twentieth century, he painted bathers basking in Mediterranean landscapes. Les Baigneuses (1906) (Fig. 27) and Venus et l'amour au bord de la mer (ca. 1906) are works which typify his transition from the Nabi years to full-fledged Classicism. Maurice Denis, who by then had also turned from Nabism, praised the idyllic quality of Roussel's compositions: "Par le modelé des figures, l'agencement des groupes, par des recherches de tonalités de techniques, il sait relier intimement à des paysages précis le charme virgilien de ses pastorales. [131]

However, Georgel correctly points out some reminders of contemporary life: the lack of idealization in the anatomy, the fashionable coiffures, and the truthful transcription of the Provencal sites. [132] In Venus et l'amour au bord de la mer, the southern sun intensifies the blues of the sea and sky. The luminosity and clear colors of the landscape contrast with the cool greyish-greens of the land and the figures. Visible strokes of color are freely applied in the ground area and the nude figure of Venus, in contrast to the uniform dense

texture of paint forming the sea and the sky. Venus' back is constructed of hatched strokes of cool flesh tones with blue and green shadows, linking her by color to the landscape elements. As in the contemporary paintings of bathers by Cézanne, the unity of the figure with nature is materially established. [133]

In January 1906, Roussel and Maurice Denis journeyed together to the Midi where they paid a visit to Cézanne at Aix. [134] For Roussel, the impact of this meeting was profound. Denis reported the immediate effect on Roussel: "il (Cézanne) causait avec Roussel, lequel était radieux comme je ne l'ai jamais vu!" [135]

For both Roussel and Denis, the meeting with Cézanne was the realization of their personal dream as well as the confirmation of their new commitment to classicism. In the early years of the twentieth century, Denis and Roussel looked to Cézanne for the modern restatement of classical order. In 1907, following his visit to the Midi, Denis wrote a eulogy of Cézanne, "si naturellement peintre et si spontanément classique." [136] Later, Denis stated that only Roussel, among all contemporary painters, continued the legacy of Cézanne.

> K.-X. Roussel est de tous les peintres actuels
> le seul en verité qui continue Cézanne, avec des
> dons, selon moi, aussi riches et aussi spontanés,
> un goût aussi vif pour la nature et pour le style:
> la magnificence de ses mythologies rejoint à
> travers Cézanne celle des palais romains . . . .
> il fait du Poussin sur nature. . . . 137

The aftermath of the visit to Aix, when the travelers visited Henri-Edmond Cross at St. Clair, and Signac at St. Tropez, was equally sig-

nificant for Roussel. He had been friendly with Cross in Paris and, since they had both exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants, Roussel had found opportunities to study Cross' paintings of idyllic bathing scenes.[138] As Georgel suggests, there are formal and iconographical parallels between Cross' works painted in the Neo-Impressionist mosaic stroke and Roussel's syntax in the paintings of 1903—six of which similarly depict bathers in tranquil Mediterranean settings.[139]

Although Roussel did not use regular Neo-Impressionist brushwork after 1906, he derived great benefit from the lessons in color which he received from Cross and Signac. The bright palette and the use of sumptuous color in his later paintings can be traced to his experience of working with these colorists.[140]

Following his trip to Provence, Roussel painted large-scale decorative panels based on mythological subjects. He was given many commissions for murals where he realized his poetic dream, the Arcadian landscape.[141]

Although Roussel often chose subjects of violent content such as Enlèvement des filles de Leucippe and Polypheme surprenant Acis et Galatee, as well as quieter moments involving the entourage of Bacchus, these paintings are far from the traditional concept of the historic or heroic landscape. As noted by a contemporary critic, André Fontainas, "M. Roussel affectionne le paysage antique. Paysage antique ne veut pas dire paysage historique,

avec les froides reconstitutions personnelles que l'Ecole nous a infligées." [142]

Roussel infused the personnages of antiquity with a vitality and earthiness through his deft use of métier--brilliant joyous colors applied with the freedom and spontaneity of a sketch; a unique blend of Impressionist method, Rococo lyricism, and classical spirit exists in these later works. Although his subjects were drawn from the mythic repertory, narrative considerations were subordinate and often were merely indicated to suggest mood. As with Ménard and Cross, nature herself, expressed through landscape forms and the intertwined figures, was the only true subject. His energetic, frolicking figures symbolized Roussel's ideas on the generative force of nature herself.[143]

The legendary subject, L'Enlèvement des filles de Leucippe, originating in the idylls of Theocritus and Ovid's Fasti, provided rich material for Roussel's pictorial imagination; he returned to it several times as a theme for decorative paintings.[144] (Fig. 29).

The paradigmatic painting of this subject by Rubens stood as a distant antecedent for Roussel who shifted the emotional focus from the dramatic and sensuous figural elements to the landscape setting. Roussel chose to depict a less violent moment when the nude daughters, here appearing like bathing nymphs, were spied by the distant attackers.

The merging of the relatively small figures in the extensive woodland setting drains the narrative of its dramatic power and voluptuous eroticism. The theme thus becomes a mere pretext for Roussel's poetic evocation of the beauty of nature.

Roussel's lyrical feelings for nature were expressed through a Rococo-like freshness of color and a brushstroke derived from Impressionism. The small touches of warm colors, pink, yellow and white, indicate flowers scattered through the grey-green grass and repeat the highlights of the flesh tones. The spot of red, the only strong color note, acts like an exclamation point to express meaning.[145] The over-all decorative effect of a mille-fleur tapestry shows that, like Denis, Roussel had been impressed by the exhibition of French Primitives in Paris in 1904.[146] The sun-dappled setting, filled with flowering trees and plants expresses the artist's ideals of sensuality and beauty. This idyllic landscape belies the legendary theme of violence conveyed by the title, and thus exemplifies Roussel's personal and lyrical approach to antique themes. Octave Mirbeau felt that Roussel's imaginative power provided these unique visions:

> . . . Mais ce ne sont pour ses dons de peintre qu'autant de prétextes à imaginer des enveloppes précieuses, des harmonies rares, et à en realiser dont la généralité s'amplifie à mesure qu'il mûrit et se développe.[147]

In agreement with Stump, this writer finds that Roussel's Arcadian paintings perpetuate, well into our century, a Symbolist outlook.[148] These visions of an earthly paradise, nostalgically recapturing a world of primordial bliss, offered an escape from the ills of modern society. As emanations of the artist's dream they exist in the form of suggestive pictorial symbol--the plastic equivalent of the artist's emotion.

ARISTIDE MAILLOL (1861-1944)

In the 1890's when he joined the Nabis, Maillol was less-known as a sculptor than as a painter and designer of tapestries. [149] In this phase of his career, he shared the interest in idyllic themes with many Symbolists. On account of his lyrical compositions of feminine figures in idealized landscapes, we include him as one of our "Nostalgiques." Maillol's life-long commitment to the pastoral mode caused Maurice Denis to call him a "chevrier de Virgile, amoreux de toute la nature." [150]

In 1900, when he was threatened with blindness, Maillol was forced to abandon painting and tapestry-making and turned exclusively to sculpture. [151] His monumental sculpture needs no comment here, but the connections between this major art and his earlier non-sculptural work bears investigation. The serene attitudes and the simple, harmonious forms of Maillol's first monumental sculptures are perhaps a carry over of the pastoral mood of his earlier paintings. Desiring to escape the moribund tradition of the Ecole, the young artist adopted the anti-naturalistic approach exemplified by Puvis de Chavannes and Paul Gauguin. Even before his association with the Nabi group, Maillol's paintings reflected the influence of these artists. [152]

Like other young Symbolists, Maillol was much affected by the exhibition of works by Puvis de Chavannes at Durand-Ruel in 1887. In a retrospective view, Maillol confided:

> Puvis, c'est à lui que nous avons dû les plus grandes émotions d'art de notre jeunesse; ces compositions d'un joli style, d'un beau dessin, nous emplissaient d'une impression de poésie par leur science du vaste décor et leur harmonie. L'oeuvre de Puvis a été pour notre inexpérience un bon conseil. 153

Puvis' impact was evident in several early paintings by Maillol. Like Seurat, he copied Le Pauvre pêcheur, and both this work and Puvis' L'Enfant prodigue inspired Maillol's own variations on the theme of the lone figure meditating in a desolate landscape. (Fig. 30). Maillol's painting of L'Enfant prodigue (1890) as an isolated, melancholic figure is but one example of a motif commonly painted by the Nabis. [154] (Fig. 31). His painting, Gardeuse de vaches (1890), is formally similar, although the position of the figure is reversed. (Fig. 32). The girl's brooding attitude repeats that of L'Enfant prodigue and her pose anticipates that of Maillol's later sculpture La Mediterranée (1901). (Fig. 33).[155]

Beyond their obvious debts to Puvis, these paintings also show Maillol's awareness of Gauguin's Synthetism. Maillol first saw Gauguin's works at the Volpini exhibition of "Le Groupe impressionniste et synthétiste" in 1889, and subsequently he had the opportunity to study the paintings in the collection of Gauguin's friend, Daniel de Monfreid. Later Maillol met Gauguin, introduced to him by Daniel de Monfreid. In an article, Gauguin praised one of Maillol's tapestries, exhibited at the Brussels Salon de la Libre Esthétique in 1894. "Maillol expose une tapisserie qu'on ne saurait trop louer." [156]

Maillol always acknowledged the liberating effect of Gauguin's art in causing him to reject his academic training and to adopt the radical stylization of Synthetism:

> Gauguin's painting was a revelation to me. The Ecole des Beaux Arts instead of enlightening me had obscured my vision. Looking at his paintings of Pont-Aven I felt that I would be able to work in the same vein . . . I told myself at once that what I was doing would be satisfactory when Gauguin would approve of it. 157

While Maillol had not yet fully incorporated the radical pictorial means of Gauguin and Bernard, his paintings of the early nineties show that he had subordinated the raw materials of nature to his artistic will. His adoption of Synthetism was somewhat tentative: the space is not completely flattened; the facture still shows traces of the Impressionist broken brush strokes, and a cloisonnist outline is only partially used. Thus these works are closer to Gauguin's Breton Girls Dancing (1888), a harbinger of Gauguin's fully developed cloisonnism.[158]

Maillol's painting, Deux Baigneuses (ca. 1897) is more clearly Synthetist in its pictorial forms while it still shows a certain debt to Puvis (Fig. 34). Within a broad decorative landscape, the nude figure at the left recalls the pose of the central figure in Puvis' Jeunes filles au bord de la mer. (Fig. 15). Maillol's profile nude lacks the subtlety of Puvis' reclining dreamer and approaches Gauguin's primitivism in its deliberate awkwardness. Her radically simplified anatomy and the flat patterns of the trees and foliage recall the forms of Bernard's tapestry, Women Picking Pears (1888).[159] The mood of

mystery and silence resembles that in Puvis' painting and arises from the pronounced isolation of the figures and the decorative curves of the landscape.

Maillol designed tapestries, sharing the Nabis' belief in the decorative basis of all art. His designs, depicting women strolling or making music in gardens, combine the modern vocabulary of Art Nouveau with a revival of the medieval craft. [160] (Fig. 35). The tapestry, Le Jardin enchanteé, like the secular idylls of Grasset, Aman-Jean, Vuillard, and Van Rysselberghe, does not have the religious and mysterious overtones of park scenes painted by Maurice Denis. [161] (Fig. 36). Nevertheless, Maillol felt that in this phase of his work, Denis had influenced him: "Telle de mes tapisseries est un Maurice Denis traduit en laine." [162]

According to Maillol himself, his experience working in this medium was crucial for his later artistic development. As he looked back on this happy era, Maillol stated to his biographer:

> C'est par la tapisserie que j'ai commencé à faire de la composition... Je n'ai pas trouvé mon expression dans la peinture, je l'ai trouvée dans la tapisserie... La tapisserie peut être considerée comme de la grande peinture. C'est un art plus beau, plus significatif que celui du tableau et je crois que j'aurais fait de belles choses, de véritables créations... 163

The mood of withdrawal and silence found in the early paint-

ings and tapestries was continued in the early classicizing sculptures such as La Mediterranée (1901) (Fig. 33) and La Nuit (1902-9). The compact, quiet poses, the simplification of modeling, and the emphasis on generalized planes are stylistic evidence of the ideas shared by Maillol and Maurice Denis during the first decade of the new century.[164] (Fig. 37). Since their Nabi days these two artists had followed separate paths from Symbolism to Classicism, but their basic aesthetic ideals remained close. In an important article on Maillol's early sculptures, Denis called him a "Primitif Classique" in order to show that Maillol's classicism had nothing to do with academicism.[165] Denis' seemingly contradictory epithet can be understood in his notion of Classicism as summarized by Ingres--the synthesis of Raphael's idealism and the purity of the Primitives.[166] Since Denis' own paintings around 1900 were marked by Ingrisme, he discerned a similar direction in Maillol's sculpture, and pointed to his respect for Ingres' theory: "Pour arriver à la belle forme, il faut modeler rond et sans details intérieurs--pour la belle forme, ce sont des plans droits avec des rondeurs . . . Que les jambes soient comme des colonnes."[167]

André Gide, a friend of both Denis and Maillol, praised the latter's sculpture in almost identical terms, and even repeated the same maxim of Ingres. On Lá Mediterranée, Gide wrote:

> Simple beauté des plans, des lignes, nul detail inutile, nulle coquetterie; la noble forme reste fruste, idéalisée fortement--non point spiritualisée, comme on croit trop souvent que le mot veut dire, mais simplifiée--de manière qu'on y peut entendre chaque muscle, mais qu'aucun ne s'y vient discrètement

> affirmer. Cela est d'un poids admirable; massivité pesanteur de la tête sur le bras, imposante massivité de l'epaule. [168]

In addition to his Classicism, Denis noted that Maillol preserved the feeling of freshness and the desired "gaucherie" of the Primitives, the quality of "bienheureuse naiveté" coveted by Ingres.[169]

Maillol's relationship with Denis was but one aspect of his artistic development. Their similar interests in the Primitives, in Ingres and the Classical tradition joined them in the early years of the twentieth century, but this tradition was only one of many probed by Maillol. The Egyptian, Archaic Greek, and Hindu sculptures were perhaps as meaningful for his monumental sculpture.[170]

CHAPTER V

FOOTNOTES

THE IDYLLIC THEME IN NABI ART

1. In recent Symbolist studies, the Nabis were the first group to be re-examined. See bibliography for Humbert, Chassé, Mauner.

2. Mauner also pointed out that their liberal spirit allowed this diversity. He also pointed out the short span of their association (1890-1896), and their greater stylistic divergences thereafter. George Mauner, The Nabis (New York: Garland, 1978), p. 173 ff.

3. Maurice Denis' maternités and other depictions of domesticity share the intimism of Bonnard and Vuillard. Roussel's early Nabi paintings, especially the park scenes, are close to Bonnard and Vuillard. Bonnard painted idyllic landscapes with Hellenic overtones in Faune et les Nymphes (1899), Les Faunes (1905), and his illustrations to Daphnis and Chloe, Vollard (1902).

4. Coquiot included Roussel in his chapter on the "Nostalgiques" but Denis was included with "Les Peintres sacrés." Gustave Coquiot, Les Indépendants (Paris: Ollendorf, 1920).

MAURICE DENIS

5. Coquiot, Les Indépendants. Coquiot also placed in this category Charles Dulac, Georges Desvallières, and Charles Filiger. Denis exhibited at the Independants 1891-1894, 1901-1906, 1909.

6. Charles Chassé, Le Mouvement symboliste dans l'art du XIXe siècle (Paris: Floury, 1947), p. 155 ff. See also Suzanne Barazzetti-Demoulin, Maurice Denis (Paris: B. Grasset, 1945), passim.

7. As a schoolboy, Denis studied Fra Angelico's paintings in reproductions and at the Louvre. Inspired by them, he resolved to become a painter of sacred themes. Maurice Denis, Journal (Paris: La Colombe, 1957), Vol. I, pp. 36, 41-42, 63-64.

8. Ibid., p. 63 (Jan. 5, 1886)

9. Maurice Denis, "Notes sur la peinture religieuse," L'Art et la Vie, 1896, reprinted in Théories (Paris: Rouart et Watelin, 1920), p. 40.

10. His nostalgia for Fiesole, Florence and Siena was cited by J.C. Holl, La Jeune Peinture contemporaine (Paris: Edit. de la Renaissance contemporaine, 1912), p. 25.

11. See Chapter IX, p. 358 below. Denis and Dulac belonged to the same Catholic society, La Société de St. Jean. Denis wrote an article on the posthumous exhibition of Dulac's work shown by this Society in 1905. See also Louis Hautecoeur, Littérature et peinture en France (Paris: A. Colin, 1942), p. 248.

12. See Chapter IV, pp. 65-66.

13. Denis recorded his impressions of the Durand-Ruel exhibition in Journal I, p. 67.

14. Ibid.

15. For a detailed stylistic analysis and discussion of the relationship between Denis' early work and Japanese art, see Ursula Perucchi-Petri, Die Nabis und Japan (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1976), pp. 151-197.

16. Maurice Denis, "L'Influence de Paul Gauguin," L'Occident, Oct. 1903, reprinted in Théories, p. 167.

17. Denis, "Notes sur la peinture religieuse," Théories, p. 37.

18. However, Denis never ceased to love Giotto and the French Gothic. See Chassé, Le Mouvement symboliste, p. 158, and Denis, Journal I, p. 212: "Je retournerai à Rome avec bonheur, et après, au pays de St. François, de Giotto et des rudes Quattrocentistes que j'aime plus profondement que la mollesse napolitaine . . . Je suis venu ici avec le désir enthousiaste de mieux aimer les Grecs et j'en-reviendrai giottesque plus que devant . . . "

19. See text below, pp. 104-107.

20. See Cecile Guy, "Les Ecrits de Maurice Denis," Thèse, Université de Tours, 1964.

21. See Chapters below on various artists.

22. Maurice Denis contributed regularly to the following periodicals: L'Occident, L'Ermitage, Art et Critique, L'Art et la Vie, Mercure de France, La Revue Blanche, La Plume, GBA. See Guy, "Les Ecrits de Maurice Denis."

23. Maurice Denis (Paris: Orangerie, 1970), p. 91. See also Barazzetti, Denis, pp. 29-30.

24. Denis met most of these writers and musicians through Henri Lerolle. See Note 55 below.

25. Denis, "Définition du néo-traditionnisme," Art et Critique, Aug. 1890, reprinted in Théories, pp. 1-13. Paul Gauguin, Lettres de Gauguin à sa femme et à ses amis, ed. Maurice Malingue (Paris, 1949), pp. 44-47, translated in Herschel B. Chipp Theories of Modern Art (Berkeley, 1971), p. 58.

26. Adolph Retté, Oeuvres Completes, Poésie, Vol I (Paris: Bibliothèque artistique, 1898), pp. 135-150; Soir Trinitaire was first published in La Wallonie, 1890, and L'Ermitage, 1891. Denis met Retté at the offices of Art et Critique in 1890. Retté introduced Denis to Verlaine in 1890, after Denis had completed the illustrations to Verlaine's Sagesse. See Adolph Retté, Le Sym-

bolisme (Paris: L. Vanier, 1903), p. 50.

27. Retté, Oeuvres, I, p. 139. The relationship of this poem to Retté's life is discussed by W.K. Cornell, Adolph Retté (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), pp. 49-51.

28. Cornell, Retté, p. 50.

29. See Ingres, La Baigneuse de Valpincon, or Le Bain Turc.

30. Retté, Oeuvres, I, p. 146.

31. Ibid., p. 130. "Mais n'est-ce la Poésie, La dame que j'ai choisie?" This passage appears in the longer poem, Une Belle Dame passa, of which Soir Trinitaire is a section. This interpretation was made by Cornell, Retté, p. 50.

32. Retté, Oeuvres, pp. 140-142.

33. Ibid.

34. See discussion of Avril, Procession sous les arbres, and Marche des fiançailles below.

35. Puvis de Chavannes, Ste. Geneviève enfant en prières (Pantheon, 1876), ill. in Puvis de Chavannes (Paris, 1976), p. 134.

36. This idea was formulated in Denis' first published article, "La Définition du néo-traditionnisme," Théories, p. 12. Denis wrote: "Le grand art, qu'on appelle décoratif . . . qu'est ce?--sinon le travestissement des sensations vulgaires--des objets naturels--en icones sacrées, hermétiques, imposantes . . . Triomphe universel de l'imagination des esthètes sur les efforts de bête imitation, triomphe de l'émotion du Beau sur le mensonge naturaliste."

37. Interest in the works of Pre-Raphaelites was intense in France at this time, witnessed by the multitude of articles and books appearing in the eighties and nineties. (See Jacques Lethève, "La Connaissance des peintres PreRaphaelites anglais en France (1855-1900)," GBA, 1959, pp. 315-328 for summary and bibliography documenting this phenomenon.) However, the later works of Rossetti which most closely correspond to the imagery of the French Symbolists were not seen in France. Burne-Jones' and Watts' work, with its stylistic similarity to the late Rossetti works were known in France and the formal influence of the English aesthetic movement on French Symbolism derives from this source.

See Rossetti's Rosa Triplex, 1874, in which three images of the same woman are connected with intertwined hands. (see Fig. 6). (Surtees #238, Vol. I, p. 135, Vol. II #348.) The painting was never exhibited in France, and was never illustrated in any French periodical. There is a related image, in the form of three angels' heads below the main image of the painting La Damoiselle Elue (see Fig. 7.) (Surtees #244, Vol. I, p. 141, Vol. II, III #355.)

Although Denis made a lithograph in 1892 as a frontispiece for the music by Debussy on Rossetti's poem, there is no evidence that Denis ever saw Rossetti's painting, which remained in England and was not illustrated in French journals. Although Sarrazin described this painting in his article "L'Ecole esthétique anglaise" in La Revue Indépendante, 1885, he did not mention the motif of the triple image of the angels.

38. Maurice Denis, Cézanne," L'Occident, 1907, reprinted in Théories, p. 260.

39. Letter of Denis to Rette quoted by:
Adolphe Retté, "Septième Exposition des Artistes Indépendants," L'Ermitage, 1891, t. 2, p. 300. Denis' theory of the subjective and objective deformations first appeared in his article, "Armand Seguin " (1895), reprinted in Théories, pp. 20-25.

40. Denis, "Notes sur la peinture religieuse," Théories, p. 40.

41. Denis and other Symbolists could have been inspired by Puvis' murals in the Salle du Zodiaque, Hôtel de Ville, Paris--L'Eté and L'Hiver, 1891. This device which flattens space and adds a decorative rhythm was a commonplace in the 1890's. Its sources

are multiple: from Quattrocento painting, e.g. Botticelli, Birth of Venus and Japanese prints in which the repeated verticals are called "trellis-work." See World Cultures and Modern Art (Munich: Haus der Künst, 1972), p. 115.

42. This park suggested the setting for many paintings by Denis, including Les Muses, 1893, and Le Mariage, a painting which documents his own wedding in 1893. (Collection D. Denis.) A drawing for this work is Fig. 8A.

43. Paul Gauguin, Diverses Choses, quoted in Herschel Chipp, Theories of Modern Art (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 66.

44. G.-Albert Aurier, "Le Symbolisme en peinture," Mercure de France, Mar. 1891, translated and reprinted in part in Chipp, Theories of Modern Art, p. 92. These ideas about decorative art appeared slightly earlier in Denis, "Définition du néo-traditionnisme " (1890) Théories, pp. 1-13. See Chapter II above, pp. 32 ff.

45. Denis, "L'art au lieu d'être la copie, devenait la déformation subjective de la nature." "De Gauguin et de Van Gogh au classicisme," Théories, p. 268.

46. Denis, "Definition du néo-traditionnisme," Théories, p. 1, translated in Chipp, Theories of Modern Art, p. 94.

47. Maurice Denis, "Les Elèves d'Ingres," L'Occident, Aug-Oct. 1902, reprinted in Théories, pp. 89-128. In writing this article, Denis felt that he was continuing the tradition of Viollet-le-Duc, Lammenais, and Montalembert who revived the Middle Ages earlier in the century.

48. Denis discussed Le Poème de l'âme in his article on Ingres' pupils. See Théories, p. 125. He also pointed out that some of Ingres' pupils relied too much on formula and fell into sterile imitation at the same time he noted that the masters of Degas, Seurat, Aman-Jean, Osbert, and Seon were Ingres' pupils (p. 121).

49. Denis was not the only Symbolist to be influenced by Janmot. As pointed out in chapter below on Le Sidaner, his work also appears to have been influenced by certain paintings in the Poème de l'âme series. Emile Bernard, too, may have been inspired by these paintings. See Appendix I.

50. Denis, Théories, p. 124.

51. The seasonal theme was popular among the Symbolists. See chapters below on Séon, Grasset, and Henri Martin. Puvis also used this theme in his decorations for the Hôtel de Ville, Paris. See Puvis de Chavannes (Paris, 1976), pp. 214-216. In Barazzetti, this painting is identified as Le Printemps. In the same year, Denis also painted Soleil d'avril and four panels for a young girl's bedroom illustrating the four seasons. Barazzetti, Maurice Denis, p. 280.

52. In French Symbolist Painters (London, 1972), Mme. G. Lacambre suggests that the two zones imply the fruitful versus the desolate. Perucchi-Petri traces pictorial sources for elements in this painting to both Japanese prints and Italian XV century paintings. She suggests that Denis was perhaps inspired by the curving river of the landscape background of the Mona Lisa, and also the background of a Baldovinetti Madonna in the Louvre. While these sources are tenable, we feel that the actual view from the Terrace, and also the curving river shapes in paintings by Puvis were equally important as sources for Denis. See discussion in text below.

53. Le Pauvre pêcheur, acquired by the Luxembourg in 1881, was seen again by Denis at the Durand-Ruel exhibition of 1887. See Note 9 above. This painting deeply affected the younger generation of painters, and was copied by both Seurat and Maillol between 1885-90. The latter was a close friend of Denis.

See also Puvis de Chavannes and the Modern Tradition (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1976), pp. 69, 130, 143. Perucchi-Petri also cites Japanese sources for the S-curve figures, Die Nabis und Japan, p. 170.

54. The numerous references to Puvis in Maurice Denis' Journal constitute a leit motif, ranging from his remarks as an adolescent in 1887 to the final entry which refers to the Bois sacré. (Denis, Journal I, p. 67; Journal III, p. 242.) Puvis' decorative scheme in Rouen (1890) is subtitled, "Les Bienfaits de la paix."

55. Other Symbolist paintings in which a golden sky appears are Gauguin, D'Ou venons-nous? etc., and Osbert, Solitude, 1903.

56. The zig-zag fence which functions as a separator of the landscape into two zones differentiated by meaning was an element used earlier in Avril. A further reference to the medieval appears here in the figure of the knight as the bridegroom arriving in the distance behind the separate groups of Virgins. The figure of the knight reappears in several works of this time. See Trois jeunes princesses, 1893 (Orangerie #66, Bremen #43); Nu au bouquet de violettes, 1894 (Orangerie #69, Bremen #45); and lithograph from Amours, Le Chevalier n'est pas mort à la Croisade (French Symbolist Painters #49a.)
In 1892, Denis had depicted Marthe in Le Triple portrait de Marthe fiancée. (Fig. 5)

57. Although this work predates Denis' article "Sur la gaucherie des Primitifs" written on the exhibition of French Primitives in Paris in 1904, it is evident that Denis was also attracted to Northern Primitive art. See Maurice Denis, "Sur la gaucherie des Primitifs," Les Arts de la Vie, 1904.

58. Puvis' painting of 1879 was exhibited at Durand-Ruel in 1887, and now is in the Louvre. Kahn's review appeared in Revue Indépendante, Jan-Mar. 1888, p. 145. The impact of this review is discussed in Puvis (Paris, 1976), p. 156; the formal analogies between Puvis' painting and works by Seurat, Signac, and Gauguin are pointed out. Although Kahn's perception of Puvis' works along Symbolist lines was not unique, Puvis denied such Symbolist interpretations of his work. See Ary Renan, "Puvis de Chavannes," Revue de Paris, Jan. 1895, p. 447. See Chapter IV , pp. 65-66.

59. Barazzetti, Denis, p. 228. Barazzetti worked with Denis personally and thus her biography has been considered a reliable source. She does not discuss the influence of Puvis as suggested in text above. The connection between Les Jeunes filles au bord de la mer

and Denis' portrait was made by Mme. G. Lacambre in French Symbolist Painters, p. 38. Denis was very close to the Lerolle family. He wrote a biography of Yvonne's father, Henri Lerolle, who was a painter, a composer, an art critic and collector. (Maurice Denis, Henri Lerolle et ses amis (Paris: Impr. Duranton, 1932). At Lerolle's Salon, Denis met many writers and musicians with whom he later collaborated. Lerolle was an early patron of Maurice Denis. He purchased Soir Trinitaire in 1892, and commissioned a ceiling decoration, one of Denis' earliest decorative works. L'Echelle dans le feuillage (1892) represents Yvonne in four poses placed against a decorative background of flattened foliage and patches of sky. Denis used a striking color scheme of pinkish-lavender, gold, blue-green, and light blue. The swirling arabesques reflect art-nouveau decorative ideals. (Illustrated in color in Bremen, #27.) See Fig. 17 and cf. Grasset, Figs. 86, 89.

60. Denis wrote "Il (l'artiste du moyen-age) se retrouve devant la nature plein de candeur et de puerilité." Maurice Denis, "Les Nouvelles directions de l'art chrétien," Nouvelles Théories (Paris: Rouart et Watelin, 1922), p. 236.

61. Maurice Denis, "De Gauguin et de Van Gogh au classicisme," L'Occident, 1909, in Théories, p. 263. Other members of the Nabi group were turning from the anti-naturalism of Synthetism at this time.

62. Denis had held this conviction since his adolescence. In a journal entry dating from his fifteenth year, he wrote: "Dieu dont la nature est comme un reflet." Denis, Journal, I, p. 38.

63. Denis, Nouvelles Théories, p. 236.

64. Denis, "Definition du néo-traditionnisme," Théories, p. 12.

65. Maurice Denis, "Le Symbolisme et l'art religieux moderne," Revue des Jeunes, 1918, reprinted in Nouvelles Théories, p. 168 ff.

66. Ibid., pp. 175-176.

67. Gabriel Mourey, "M. Maurice Denis, décorateur," Revue Universelle, Nov. 1903, p. 564. This decorative cycle was widely praised.

68. See Barazzetti, Denis, pp. 280 ff. See Ave Maria au chaussons rouges, 1898, and Annonciation à Fiesole, dated 1908, 1914, 1919, 1928. These versions vary slightly in composition.

69. Ibid., pp. 220, 225.

70. Carrière's paintings are illustrated in French Symbolist Painters, pp. 28-30.

71. Denis, Journal, III, p. 214, entry dated 31 Dec. 1939.

72. See Denis, Orangerie #81, 82-85, 97-99.

73. This suggestion was also made by Mme .G. Lacambre, French Symbolist Painters, p. 39.

74. The title, Bois sacré has been given to the sketch for this panel which is in the Petit Palais. In the discussion of a related painting, The Badminton Players, 1897 (French Symbolist Painters, p. 39), the finished panel is also called Le Bois sacré. Both Barazzetti and the Catalogue to the Orangerie exhibition entitle the finished work, Jeu de volant, as does the Catalogue des peintures, Musée des arts décoratifs.

A slightly earlier painting, Figures dans un paysage de printemps, 1897, presents similar problems of title and interpretation. See discussion by Mme. Lacambre, Symbolisme en Europe, 1976, pp. 37-38.

75. Denis, Journal, I, pp. 125-127. See also Maurice Denis, "Les Arts à Rome ou la méthode classique," Le Spectateur Catholique, #22, 24, 1898, in Théories, p. 45 ff.

76. Journal, I, p. 134; Theories, Ibid. Maurice Denis remained close to Gide since their collaboration on Voyage d'Urien, 1893. Like Gide, Denis' persuasive writings helped to establish the Neo-Classicism of the years around 1900. See Ellen Oppler, Fauvism Re-examined (New York: Garland, 1976), pp. 235-236, 265-267. During this time, Denis' and Gide's taste in art coincided; they both wrote about the beauties of classical art and the tradition followed by Raphael, Poussin, and Ingres, and both praised Maillol. Gide found his art "simplifiée, noble form, massivité" and compared it to Ingres. Gide also wrote the preface to Denis' 1904 exhibition. See André Gide, "Promenade au Salon d'Automne, GBA Dec. 1905, p. 479; Gide, "Maurice Denis," Oeuvres Complètes IV (Paris: NRF, 1932), pp. 417-420. Denis' tribute to Maillol's classicism was published in L'Occident, 1905, reprinted in Théories, p. 235 ff. See chapter below on Maillol.

77. Denis, "Les arts à Rome," Théories, p. 45.

78. Gide, "Maurice Denis," Oeuvres Complètes IV, p. 419: "ce fut une confirmation plutot. Son originalité pour écouter les leçons de Raphael, ne se craignit pas compromise."

79. Denis, Journal, I, p. 139; Théories, p. 48.

80. Denis, Théories, p. 45 ff. See Note 71 above.

81. Denis, Journal, I, p. 131, and letters to Vuillard, pp. 133-134. Denis continued: "Depuis le symbolisme, le travail de l'artiste est devenu plus subjectif que jamais. Toute émotion peut devenir un sujet de tableau. La vie se fait, une sorte de sténographie des sensations quotidiennes. Certainement Raphaël ne procédait pas ainsi. Les impressionistes eux-mêmes sont encore tenus par le travail d'après le modèle, d'après nature, qui necessite des lenteurs dans l'analyse." (Journal, I, p. 140.)

" . . Il est évident que l'Antique et l'art classique sont ceux qui y sont arrivés le plus complètement et c'est aussi chez eux qu'on trouve l'emploi le moins direct de la nature, qu'on sent que le travail subi par la nature dans leur cerveau était lent et inconscient jusqu'à ce se fut créée une invention vraiment saine, vivante et viable, en même temps que plus intellectuelle." (Ibid.)

82. Théories, pp. 46-47.

83. ". . . il nous faut renoncer ici à toute, cette saveur, à tout cet attrait sensuel, aux qualités d'aspect . . . Il y a ici des oeuvres qui s'adressent plus à notre jugement qu'à nos sens; qui ne sont nullement sentimentales . . . " (Ibid.)

84. Ibid., p. 48.

85. Ibid. See also Matthew Herban, "Maurice Denis' 'Nouvel Ordre classique' as Contained in his Theories," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1972, p. 166. Oppler pointed out that nationalism and nostalgia for le Grand Siècle were integral to the classical revival at the turn of the century. Oppler, Fauvism, pp. 231-236.

86. Theories, p. 51.

87. Ibid., p. 267.

88. Ibid., p. 100.

89. Ibid., p. 46.

90. Ibid., p. 51.

91. Ibid., p. 268.

92. Ibid.

93. Ibid., pp. 271, 278.

94. Maurice Denis, "Cézanne," L'Occident, 1907, reprinted in Théories, p. 260. Denis defined style: "Le style, c'est une certaine grandeur obtenue par des sacrifices volontaires, de l'expression par la Simplification. Ainsi:l'expression voulue, rien d'inutile, ordonnance architectonique, proportions . . . " (Journal, I, p. 210.)

95. Ibid., p. 247. In 1900, Denis painted Hommage à Cézanne, which depicted the Nabis and several sympathizers grouped around a still-life painting by Cézanne, thus implying their debt to him. Together with K.-X. Roussel, Denis visited Cézanne in Aix, accompanied him to the motif, and discussed his theories of art. The visit is recorded in Journal, II, pp. 28-30. (1906). Denis did a painting of Cézanne working on a landscape, with himself and Roussel observing, La visite à Cezanne (1906). On Hommage à Cézanne, see J. Rewald, "Quelques notes et documents sur Odilon Redon, GBA, Nov. 1956, pp. 97-98.

96. Ibid., p. 253.

97. Ibid., p. 260.

98. Ibid., p. 278.

99. These are listed in Barazzetti, Denis, and Denis, Orangerie.

100. See note 47 above. His study of Ingres' doctrines made in preparation for this article, helped his own mural style. See Théories, p. 95 ff, Journal, I, pp. 166-167, 178-179; also Théories, pp. 47-48, Journal, I, pp. 139-140.

101. Maurice Denis, "Le Salon de 1891," Théories, p. 64.

102. Achille Ségard, Les Peintres d'aujourd'hui, les Décorateurs (Paris: Ollendorf, 1914), Vol. II, p. 190.

103. Ibid. This statement seemingly anticipates Matisse's dictum, "L'exactitude n'est pas la verité"(1947). It is possible that Ségard was influenced by Matisse's Notes of a Painter of 1908. It also echoes Denis' own writings.

104. The panels are L'Orgue, La Musique chorale, Le Quartuor, La Danse, L'Oratorio.

105. Denis, Journal, II, p. 25.

106. J.C. Holl, La Peinture contemporaine, p. 31.

107. In L'Eternel printemps, another decorative scheme in 1903, there is a similar idyllic mood. Illustrated in Paul Jamot, Maurice Denis (Paris: Librarie Plon, 1924). See Fig. 37.

108. See the similar direction shown in the work of Henri Martin, K.-X. Roussel, Aman-Jean, Maillol. While not all of the "Nostalgiques" turned to Classicism, they modified their Symbolist style around the turn of the century, following ideas adopted by poets and writers.

K.-X. ROUSSEL

109. Maurice Denis, "De Gauguin et de Van Gogh au classicisme," L'Occident, May 1909, reprinted in Théories, p. 267.

110. See Chapter III, Note 30; also Chapter V on Denis, Note 104.

111. Coquiot, Les Indépendants, p. 126. Because of his Nabi activities, Roussel is one of the few "Nostalgiques" who has attracted scholarly investigation within recent years. Besides important exhibitions and catalogues in the 1960's devoted to him individually or as a member of the Nabi group, there has been a Ph.D. dissertation on Roussel which explores certain issues endemic to this present study, and which establishes a much-needed chronology of the works.

Because the basic sources listed below supply factual and interpretive material on Roussel, this chapter will be relatively brief, and references indicated to fuller coverage in these earlier texts. Our discussion of Roussel will be confined to paintings executed between 1890 and 1910 which place him in a context of idyllic and nostalgic painters. See also: Jacques Salomon, K.-X. Roussel (Paris: Bibl. des Arts, 1967); K.-X. Roussel (London: Wildenstein, 1964); Roussel (Bremen: Kunsthalle, 1965); Vuillard, Roussel (Paris: Orangerie, 1968). I am indebted to Jeanne Stump's Ph.D. dissertation "The Art of K.-X. Roussel" (University of Kansas, 1972) for factual material and insights on the oeuvre of Roussel.

112. Andre Billy, L'Epoque 1900 (Paris: Jules Tallendier, 1951), p. 475. This was quoted by Ellen Oppler, Fauvism Re-examined (New York: Garland, 1976), p. 203. Oppler's discussion of the impact of Nietzsche on developing Fauvism can be applied as well to Roussel's contemporary absorption in paganism. See also discussion of Nietzsche in Michel Décaudin, La Crise des valeurs symbolistes (Toulouse: Privat, 1960), pp. 46-47. By the mid-nineties, Nietzsche's works were well-known in Paris. They were translated and excerpted in L'Ermitage and La Revue Blanche in 1893 and 1894; the complete works were published in Paris in 1898. Stump disclosed that a volume of Nietzsche's works was present in Roussel's library. (Stump, "Roussel," p. 97.) She also pointed out, in her discussion of Roussel's use of Bacchanalian subjects, the parallel with Nietzsche's concept that the artist was the agent to restore a Dionysian spirit to a suffering world. (Stump, "Roussel," p. 213).

113. Maurice Denis, "Preface de la IX exposition des peintres impressionistes et symbolistes, Chez le Barc de Boutteville, 1895," Théories, p. 27. While the Nabis succumbed to influences in common, their respective interests separated them in terms of subject matter. Despite this, they maintained close personal relations that extended over the span of many years. Roussel

and Vuillard knew each other from boyhood, and Roussel married Vuillard's sister in 1893. Other members of the group shared experiences with them at the Academie Julian from 1888 on. See J. Salomon, Roussel, passim; C. Chassé, The Nabis and Their Period (New York: Praeger, 1969); Agnes Humbert, Les Nabis et leur époque (Geneve: Cailler, 1954); and G. Mauner, The Nabis (New York: Garland, 1978).

Roussel was connected with a cross-section of avant-garde artists in the first decade of the twentieth century. He exhibited at the Salon d'Automne, and the Independants, and never with the official Salons. He was friendly with Manguin, Signac, and Cross, with whom he shared ideas on idyllic themes.

114. See Denis' paintings: Avril (1892), Les Verger des vierges sages (1893), and Women in a garden (1901), illustrated in Charles Chassé, The Nabis and Their Period, #21.

115. Albert Aurier, "Le Symbolisme en peinture: Paul Gauguin," Mercure de France, Mar. 1891, p. 163. Aurier credited Puvis with the revival of the mural tradition, and he called Gauguin "un décorateur de génie."

116. Les Saisons de la Vie (Orangerie #209, 210) were formerly identified as "Panneaux pour le decoration d'une mairie" but Pierre Georgel notes the absence of documentation to support this and the lack of a specific architectural format such as exists in #211 and #212, Réunion de dames and Conversation dans un jardin. He suggests that the latter panels are the second versions of the same subject. Mauner also concludes that the latter pair of paintings similarly are based on the theme of the "ages of man." George Mauner, The Nabis, p. 244.

117. See Alexandre Séon, decorative panels in Mairie de Courbevoie; Henri Martin, Les Moissonneurs; Denis, Avril.

118. Vuillard, Roussel, Paris, Orangerie 1968, p. 288.

119. Mauner, Nabis, p. 244. See Paul Sérusier, The Incantation (1890) illustrated in Charles Chassé, The Nabis and Their Period (New York: Praeger, 1969) #31. Stump also discusses thie iconography and traces its source in Schuré, Les Grands Initiés (1889). See also Chapter VII on Osbert below.

120. Albert Aurier, "Les Symbolistes," Revues Encyclopédique, April 1892, pp. 483-484.

121. Paintings by Roussel that share the intimism of Bonnard and Vuillard and Denis are La Grandmère, ill. #196, #197, L'Enfant à la chèvre, #203, Femme au peignoir bleu moucheté #207, in Vuillard, Roussel, Paris, 1968.

122. Maurice Denis, "L'Epoque du symbolisme," GBA, Mar. 1934, Théories, Paris, 1964, p. 65.

123. Salomon, K.-X. Roussel, p. 45. Pastel was a medium frequently used by Roussel, both for studies and finished works. Like other "Nostalgiques" he exhibited with the Société des Pastellistes and received critical praise for his work in this medium. See "F.M." "Le Mois artistique," L'Art et les Artistes, Nov. 1908, p. 130.

124. Like Monet, Roussel created a large garden here. Arsène Alexandre stated that Roussel found "Virgilian" glades at Etang-la-ville, and repeated the anecdote about Corot who saw nymphs "qui hante l'étang de Ville d'Avray." Arsène Alexandre, La Collection Canonne (Paris: Bernheim Jeune, 1930), p. 92.

125. Gustave Coquiot, Cubistes, Futuristes et Passéistes (Paris: Ollendorf, 1914), p. 146.

126. Stump notes the impact made on declining Nabism by events which furthered the acceptance of Impressionism: a greater respect for Cézanne due to the Vollard exhibitions of 1895 and 1898, the lessening of Gauguin's influence in his absence, and the exhibition of the Caillebotte bequest in 1896. Salomon told of Roussel's unflagging love of Monet's painting, and documents the visit of Roussel and Vuillard to Monet at Giverny, 1925. Salomon, Roussel, p. 26.

127. Vuillard, Roussel, Paris, Orangerie, #221, p. 292. Georgel oddly calls it "un véritable pastiche de Puvis," perhaps because of the lethargic poses of the women and the separation between the groups of figures.

128. Stump pinpoints a change in form and a turn to classicizing subject matter in a lithograph, La Source, included in the Vollard, Album du Paysage. (Stump, "Roussel," p. 79, Fig. 33). Georgel also considers this album transitional between the Nabi style and "le climat personnel de Roussel." p. 294, #229, Orangerie cat.

Stump attributes Roussel's colorism and sketchy brushwork to Delacroix. She suggests the increasing awareness of Delacroix's color theories and renewed attention to his paintings occurred in the artistic community of this time due to the publication of Delacroix's journal in 1895, and Signac's discussion of the 19th century color theory in D'Eugène Delacroix au Néo-Impressionisme, published in serial in 1899. Stump, "Roussel," p. 80.)

129. Salomon, Roussel, pp. 26, 35. Salomon noted that Roussel loved to recite Mallarmé's verses and had committed to memory his "Hommage à Puvis de Chavannes." Roussel and Vuillard did not actually attend Mallarmé's Mardis, but their pictorial style clearly reflected his influence. Bonnard, like Roussel, made paintings inspired by Mallarmé's "Apres-Midi d'un faune" after 1899. See J. & H. Dauberville, Catalogue Raisonné de l'oeuvre peint, Bonnard, 2 vols. (Paris: Bernheim Jeune, #221, 329, 471).

130. Maurice Denis, "Exposition K.-X. Roussel," L'Occident, Dec. 1903, in Théories (1920), p. 139.

131. Ibid.

132. Georgel dates Les Baigneuses 1903, stating erroneously that it was exhibited in the Salon d'Automne of that year. (Vuillard, Roussel, Paris, 1968, p. 296). Stump correctly states that it appeared in the Salon of 1906. (Stump, "Roussel," p. 88.) Stump's dating is based on the similarity of subject matter, mood, and brushstroke to slightly earlier paintings by Henri-Edmond Cross. See text below on relationship of these artists.

The landscapes probably were painted from sketches made during the 1906 trip between Aix and St. Tropez. Denis recorded that they stopped in several places to sketch; and a watercolor by Roussel from the album of sketches made there is reproduced in Salomon, p. 54. See Denis, Journal, t. II, p. 32.)

133. As noted by Stump, the rectangular stroke, "like brick-work," may be

Roussel's version of Cross's brushstroke, observed in Roussel's study of the latter's method. Stump, "Roussel," p. 94.

134. Denis, Journal, Vol. II, p. 32. This visit has been referred to by scholars in their studies of the theories of Cézanne and Denis. See Theodore Reff, "Cézanne and Poussin," Journal Warburg & Courtald Institutes, 1960, p. 196; Oppler, Fauvism, p. 262 ff.

135. Denis Journal, II, p. 30. Salomon documented Roussel's constant love of Cézanne and his acquisition of a painting of male bathers from Vollard in exchange for some of his drawings (1903). Later (in 1913), Roussel copied Cézanne's composition in a lithograph. Salomon, Roussel, p. 53. Stump also discusses the inspiration Roussel derived from Cézanne. She attributes the fervor and Baroque dynamism of Roussel's later mythological works to Cézanne's early work permeated with erotic feeling, e.g., Lutte d'amour, and L'éternel féminin. Stump, "Roussel," p. 218.)

136. Denis, "Cézanne," Theories, p. 245.

137. Denis, "Opinions sur l'art moderne," reprinted in Nouvelles Théories, Paris, 1922, pp. 122-123.

138. The most complete study of Cross to date is that of Isabelle Compin, Henri-Edmond Cross (Paris, Quatre Chemins, 1964). For analogies with Roussel, see especially #96, La Plage à St. Clair, 1901 #97, La Plage Ombragée, 1902. Georgel calls the latter the prototype for Roussel's Baigneuses. For discussion of Cross's paintings of this period, and his relation to Symbolism, see our chapter VI.

139. Georgel considers a pure landscape by Roussel, Paysage de St. Tropez, (1906), strongly influenced by Cross, not only in facture, but also in the compositional arrangement. Denis' Journal documents his own and Roussel's fascination with the painting technique of Cross. "Cross peint chaque touche de couleur en glacis sur les touches blanches." Denis, Journal, II, p. 33. Stump also discusses the affinities between Roussel and Cross, p. 94.)

140. Compin notes that the relationship between Cross and Roussel was one of mutual exchange. Although Cross was close to poets and an admirer of Mallarmé, his works of 1906, Faune, Nymphes, Fuite des Nymphes, (#142, 144, 147) owe something to Roussel's mythological works. She feels that, like Roussel, Cross turned to antiquity to transcend mundane reality, and used these subjects as a pretext to instill lyricism in his paintings of nudes in landscapes. Compin, Cross, p.63.

141. Following the Nabi involvement in theatre work and their commitment to the aesthetics of decorative painting, the greater part of

Roussel's oeuvre from 1907 on was in this vein. His theatre work includes the curtain for Le Theatre des Champs Elysées (1913), Designs for Penelopé, Paris Opera (1913), and others, see Stump, "Roussel", p. 263, Georgel, Vuillard, Roussel, p. 304. He had numerous commissions for decorative paintings in the public and private sectors; among them are the series for le Musée de Winterthur, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Palais de Chaillot, Le Théatre National de l'Odéon. His mural paintings were praised by Gustave Geffroy, La Vie Artistique, 1899.

142. André Fontainas at Louis Vauxcelles, L'Art francais de la revolution à nos jours, (Paris: Libr. de France, 1922), Vol. I, p. 245.

143. Stump, "Roussel," p. 264. Her conclusion is anthropocentric; the landscapes with nude figures are a symbolic representation of the sensual nature of man.

144. Ibid., pp. 298-299. Stump traces the geneology of the legend and lists Roussel's various paintings on this theme. The definitive version, in tall format with arched top, formerly in the Bernheim family collection (1911) is now in the Préfiguration de la Musée d'Orsay.

145. The color range of the Polyphemus Surprising Acis and Galatea (1912), Vuillard, Roussel, Paris, Orangerie, #250, p. 341, is much more intense, reflecting a scene of erotic passion. In this, but not in the Rape of Leucippus' Daughters, the effect of Fauvism is seen.

146. Stump mentions a flat overlapping of color touches which gives an actual effect of woven tapestry to later panels, "Roussel," p. 244. This exhibition stimulated Denis to write an article titled, "De la gaucherie des Primitifs," Les Arts de la Vie, 1904.

147. Octave Mirbeau, quoted in Coquiot, Cubistes, etc., p. 164-165.

148. Stump, "Roussel," p. 263.

A. MAILLOL

149. Maillol began to sculpt in 1895. He exhibited wood carvings and terra cotta figures as objets d'art" from 1896 on. See Waldemar George, Aristide Maillol, (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1965), p. 220; Julius Meier-Graefe, Modern Art (London: William Heinemann, 1908), Vol. II, p. 78.

150. Denis, Journal, Vol. II, p. 149. Maillol's woodcuts illustrating classical poetry and literature are well known. He illustrated Virgil's Eclogues (1928) and texts by Ovid, Longus and Flaccus. He also illustrated modern poetry by Verhaeren, Verlaine, and Ronsard. See Aristide Maillol (Buffalo: Albright Institute of Art, 1945), p. 194.

151. John Rewald, Maillol (New York: Hyperion Press, 1939), p. 11 Maillol returned to painting about forty years later. See Aristide Maillol (Paris: Galerie Charpentier, 1947), text by W. George. George points out that this later painting style was strongly influenced by Renoir. We would suggest, in addition, a similar influence by Roussel, who was a life-long friend.

152. Maillol was associated with the Nabis from 1893 on. After the disintegration of the formal group, Maillol remained in close personal contact with Denis, Vuillard, Roussel, Bonnard, and Rippl-Ronai. His friendship with Denis lasted throughout his life, and it was fruitful in both personal and artistic terms. (George, Maillol, p. 220.)

153. Judith Cladel, Aristide Maillol, sa vie, son oeuvre, ses idées (Paris: B. Grasset, 1937), p. 40. Maillol's statements on his veneration of Puvis de Chavannes appear on p. 41.

154. See Sérusier, La Mélancolie, 1890; Roussel, Vierge au sentier, 1890; Denis, La Dormeuse, 1892. As seen above, this theme is common in all of the paintings of the nostalgic symbolists, viz. Osbert, Chabas, Séon, Henri Martin, etc.

Gauguin's painting Human Misery (1888), possibly the antecedent for these works, was in the Volpini exhibition.

155. This was pointed out by Jeanne Stump, "Maillol in the 1890's," University of Kansas Museum Register, March 1971, pp. 34-44.

156. Paul Gauguin, "Essais d'art libre," Feb.-April 1894, quoted in Cladel, Maillol, p. 54. Earlier Gauguin had criticized a tapestry in Maillol because it was not flat enough.

157. John Rewald, Post-Impressionism (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1956), p. 284, originally in Rewald, Maillol (New York: Hyperion Press, 1939), p. 10.

158. Reproduced in Rewald, Post-Impressionism, p. 298.

159. Reproduced Ibid., p. 301.

160. Maillol was greatly inspired by the tapestries in the Musée de Cluny. See Maurice Denis who discusses his Gothicism, "Aristide Maillol," L'Occident, 1905, reprinted in Denis, Théories, pp. 235 ff. See also Rewald, Maillol, p. 10; Meier-Graefe, Modern Art, Vol. II, p. 75.

161. See also Young Women in a Park, reproduced in Rewald, Post-Impressionism, p. 470. Cf. Denis, Procession sous les arbres, (Fig. 8).

162. Cladel, Maillol, p. 66. On the cross-fertilization between Denis and Maillol see Cecile Vincent (Guy) "Maurice Denis et Maillol," Information d'Histoire de l'Art, 1970, #5, pp. 209-215. Arsène Alexandre, "Maurice Denis," L'Art et les Artistes, T. 8, Nov.-Mar. 1909, pp. 111-166. Suzanne Barrazzetti-Demoulin also quoted Maillol: "Maurice Denis a eu sur moi une influence profonde." Maurice Denis (Paris: B. Grasset, 1945), p. 268.

163. Cladel, Maillol, pp. 50, 56.

164. See Maurice Denis, L'Eternel Printemps, especially the simulated bas relief painted below which resembles Maillol sculpture (Fig. 37).

165. Denis, "Maillol," Theories, p. 243. Article appeared in L'Occident, 1905.

166. Later, Maillol disclaimed admiration for Ingres, except for the portraits. In an interview with Cladel, he stated, "No, I'm not a great admirer of Ingres..." Translated and quoted in Maillol, Buffalo, p. 40. See Chapter V, Maurice Denis, above. Meier-Graefe also mentioned the Ingresque quality of both Denis and Maillol, Modern Art, Vol. II, p. 78.

167. Denis, "Les Elèves d'Ingres," L'Occident, 1902, reprinted in Théories, p. 99.

168. André Gide, "Promenade au Salon d'automne," GBA, Dec. 1905, p. 479.

169. Denis, "Maillol," Théories, p. 242. Denis' appreciation of this aspect of Maillol's style was probably stimulated by the article on the exhibition of the French Primitives in Paris in 1904. See Denis, "La Gaucherie des primitifs," Les Arts de la Vie.

170. Cladel also cited the influence of Bourdelle, Maillol's close friend; Cladel, Maillol, p. 58. In her interview with Maillol,

he also spoke of his love for Hindu sculpture which he saw at the Exposition Universelle in 1900. Maillol, Buffalo, p. 32. In the same interview he disavowed African sculpture because it was too far from French tradition. This may also explain his dislike of Gauguin's sculpture. Ibid., p. 37.

CHAPTER VI

THE IDYLLIC LANDSCAPE IN LATE NEO-IMPRESSIONISM

In a catalogue of 1910, Maurice Denis looked back to the era of the late 1880's when new approaches to art, all bound by the common goal of Idealism, began to flourish.

> A cette époque et dans ce milieu, tout fermentait, tout était mis en question, tout se renouvelait; mais sous divers noms et, sous des apparences contradictoires, c'était l'idéalisme qui tendait à reprendre ses droits—les droits de l'imagination, cette 'reine des facultés' du peintre—sur le réalisme des années précedentes. 1

In their common antipathy for Salon art and their desire to invest Impressionism with new meaning, both the Neo-Impressionists and the Synthetists adopted a stance of anti-naturalism and dedicated themselves to creating an art of harmony and permanence. The aesthetic program of Neo-Impressionism, begun by Seurat and Signac, was carried on with certain modifications in the 1890's.

HENRI-EDMOND CROSS (1856-1910)

In the decade following Seurat's death, the Neo-Impressionists, like the Symbolists, tended toward subjectivity and became less doctrinaire in their adherence to formulas derived from science. Still conforming to Divisionism, Henri-Edmond Cross and Paul Signac used color and brushstroke suggestively, to transmit a poeticized vision of nature.

In this later phase of Neo-Impressionism, new subjects also emerged. Moving away from Seurat's focus on "la vie moderne," Cross,

Signac, Van Rysselberghe and Petitjean often painted timeless visions removed from the everyday world. Their idyllic paintings, like those of the "Nostalgiques," embody their yearning for a paradisial past.

The gap which formerly separated the Symbolists and the Neo-Impressionists began to narrow as artists in both camps recognized the common goal of Idealism, passed on to them by their respective leaders, Gauguin and Seurat. This heritage continued into late Neo-Impressionism through Seurat's absorption of Charles Blanc's idealist theories and Charles Henry's scientific probing of the expressive possibilities of line and color. Recent scholars of Neo-Impressionism have pointed out that these theories led Seurat away from empiricism toward a non-naturalistic, idealized art.[2] In his last works, Seurat's use of color and line to convey emotion paralleled the ideas expressed by Symbolist theorists such as Gauguin, Aurier, and Maurice Denis.[3]

The Symbolist critics, Félix Fénéon and Gustave Kahn, remarked that Seurat extended the Symbolist aesthetic to painting. Seizing on the hieratic, unnatural elements in Seurat's early divisionist works, they pointed out the analogies to their own poetic efforts.[4]

Félix Fénéon, the chief defender and spokesman for the Neo-Impressionists, defined the goals of the Seurat-Signac group:

> Synthétiser le paysage dans un aspect définitif qui en perpetue la sensation...c'est que le realité objective leur est simple thème à la création d'une realité supérieure et sublimée où leur personnalité se transfuse.[5]

He perceived a classical simplicity in Seurat's work and called him a "Puvis modernisant."[6]

Gustave Kahn, a Symbolist poet and a critic on La Revue Indépendante, discussed the "ideal focus" of the young artists in Seurat's circle and also linked them to Symbolist poets. Quoting Seurat's claim that his compositions were inspired by the Panathenaic frieze, Kahn analogized Seurat's paintings to Puvis' decorative murals.[7] Kahn later summed up the reasons for Seurat's appeal to the poets:

> Outre que nous nous estimions de mener le combat pour des idées nouvelles, il y avait ceci chez eux d'attachant pour nous et qui pouvait nous sembler un parallelisme entre nos efforts, c'était ce point de statique, cette recherche de dégagement d'absolu qui caractérisait l'art de Seurat (peintre ou dessinateur de figures). Nous étions sensibiles à la mathématique de son art. Il n'est point certain que le feu de la jeunesse n'ait pas suscité en nous de quasi-certitudes que ses recherches sur la ligne et la couleur offraient des points précis de similitude avec nos théories sur le vers et la phrase. La théorie du discontinu pouvait bien avoir quelque parenté avec celle du mélange optique. Peintres et poètes étaient mutuellement enchantés d'incliner à y croire.[8]

Later, Cross, Signac, and Van Rysselberghe furthered the idealist aspects of Neo-Impressionism through their close personal relationships with Symbolist poets. Cross belonged to a literary group that included Gide, Verhaeren, Maeterlinck, Fénéon, Vielé-Griffin, and other Symbolist writers. Verhaeren recognized the fundamentally poetic approach of his friend Henri-Edmond Cross:

> ...il peignit...la glorification de ses visions intérieures. (L'âme) de Henri-Edmond Cross s'alimentait de poésie, tantôt dans les livres, tantôt dans la nature ...Tout art élevé lui apparaissait d'ailleurs devoir être le résultat d'une synthèse.[9]

Cross and Van Rysselberghe felt that the landscape medium should be used to impart universal meaning, and thus they transformed the Midi into Arcadian glades. It was in this milieu that Matisse, working briefly

with Signac and Cross, produced his idyllic painting in the Divisionist style, Luxe, calme et volupté.[10]

The paintings and writings of Cross and Signac in the 1890's document the evolution of Neo-Impressionism beyond Seurat's original formulation of the style. Divisionist methods were changed as Cross and Signac, seeking more brilliant color effects than were possible using minute dots of color, gradually enlarged their brushstrokes, first to the size of a "sealing wax wafer," then to larger strokes resembling mosaics.[11]

Signac's and Cross' touches of color, loosely applied and not always in the same direction, appeared more active in contrast to the precise dots used by Seurat, while they still lacked Impressionist spontaneity. As the touch of color was enlarged, forms necessarily were simplified. In the years after 1900, the stroke became more unified in size and direction, increasing the decorative and abstract quality of the painting surface. Color, liberated from the systematically applied complementaries, became the vehicle for independent harmonies and personal expression.[12]

These pictorial changes were noted in 1899 by one of the organizers of the large exhibition of new painting at Durand-Ruel:

> ...Signac and consequently the others have changed a lot. Signac has gained as a painter; he has come closer to Monet; but how far we are from the decorative if slightly stiff technique of Seurat who had a certain greatness, a great sobriety and could better adapt itself to compositions governed by general directions of lines. Well, the Neo's vibrate and sing at the top of their voices. It is, I believe, what they want above all. Signac applies much less strictly than before the—oh! how scientific—laws of Chevreul and Rood.[13]

In his journal, Signac denied an imitative approach to nature and emphasized the personal response of the artist:

> One should not allow oneself to be diverted by nature from one's ideal any more than one should do without nature and deprive oneself of all the beautiful, rare and varied that it offers (sic) I know that, for my part I have never done anything worthy when I went outdoors to work without knowing in advance what I wanted to do ...Always in search of a freer technique while retaining the advantages of divisionism and contrast...more and more, technique is giving way to sentiment. We leave the hard and useful period of analysis when all our studies resembled one another to enter into that of personal and varied creation...
>
> Nature provides graceful and varied details—but I am convinced that the really strong man could draw everything from his head alone. 14

Cross' idyllic painting, L'Air du soir (1894) embodied the ideals of late Neo-Impressionism. (Fig. 38) Using stylized forms that suggest burgeoning Art Nouveau, the artist clearly showed his desire to create a poetic ambiance through suggestion. The title of the work underscores the artist's inspiration in Baudelaire's poem Harmonie du soir. The painting magically captures the langorous mood and sensuality of the poetry:

> Voici venir les temps où vibrant sur sa tige
> Chaque fleur s'évapore ainsi qu'un encensoir;
> Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir;
> Valse mélancolique et langoureux vertige!

Cross' painting is recognizable as one of the many offsprings of Puvis de Chevannes' painting Doux Pays (1882).[15] (Fig. 39) Cross borrowed Puvis' motif of idling figures in a serene and sheltered landscape, and used a similar compositional arrangement of stable horizontals and verticals bisected by curving diagonals.[16]

Besides its debts to Puvis, Cross' large painting is also a culmination of formal ideas developed in his own earlier works. The setting of Cross' idyll, with its sloping land mass and bay dotted with sailboats owes as much to the artist's own experience as to his memory

of Puvis' composition. However, Cross' eye seemed preconditioned to select the decorative aspects of landscape. In his description of the Côte d'azur, he wrote:

> ...almost always great undulating lines. The area is teeming with charmingly intimate corners alongside the great magical and decorative scenes. Yes, these two epithets best convey the sensations I feel.[17]

Cross had earlier painted such a motif in a pure landscape, La Pointe de la Galère (1891-2) imposing upon the natural forms a rigorous flattening and simplification derived from Japanese prints. (Fig. 40) His admiration for them had been recently stimulated by the exhibition at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in 1890.[18] The decorative stylization of L'Air du soir links Cross' painting to certain works of the Nabis, particularly those of Maurice Denis.[19] (Fig. 41) A contemporary critic wrote of the "véritable langage poétique" of L'Air du soir.[20]

This painting exemplifies Cross' arbitrary use of Divisionist methods. On first viewing the painting, the spectator is impressed by the overall shimmer of radiant color.[21] While complementary colors are often juxtaposed to achieve optical vibration, there is a wide range of colors used independently to create a pleasing effect of late afternoon light, somewhere between that of blazing midday light and the softer color of twilight. The most intense areas of color are the greens and yellow-greens of the foreground and the vermillion of the figures in the middle ground. The overall effect, however, is of harmoniously related color: violets and blues balanced by pinks, ochre, and yellow.

The touches of the brush vary in size; larger spots of pure color make up the ground, while the figures are formed with smaller dots.

Tiny dots of blue placed close together form the outlines of the figures, trees, and sails, emphasizing the curving contours which animate the surface.

Like those of the "Nostalgiques," Cross' paintings of the early nineties reflected the ideas and moods expressed in Symbolist poetry. In Cross' Carnets, one repeatedly finds evidence of the tension felt by an artist torn between his devotion to nature and the need to present an imagined, personal image.[22] Cross wrote of the need to synthesize, harmonize, and exaggerate to produce certain effects:

> Finir, c'est harmoniser. Pour finir, passer en revue le tableu par fragments, au point de vue de l'harmonie et non de l'objet...
> ...La nature ne donne que de beaux fragments—jamais l'ensemble (II, p. 254). Les objets considérés non objectivement, mais comme éléments nécessaires à l'harmonie qu'il faut créer. "Peindre" en vers. (II, p. 256)
> Des harmonies correspondent à des sentiments... Etablier une gamme de teintes en harmonie avec le sentiment à exprimer (VII p. 470)[23]
> Non pas l'objet lui-même, mais une transfiguration basée sur un accord de lignes, une harmonie de couleur. Telle belle forme ornée de telles magnifiques couleurs nous interessera; il peut se faire qu'elle corresponde à un arbre...Dégager le caractère de l'objet, le caractère synthétique de sa forme, de sa couleur...Proceder par élimination. (I) p. 230-231. [24]

In Nocturne (1896), Cross presented a lyrical mood suggested by the title. (Fig. 42) His poetic ideals dominate; the compositional order of regularly spaced trees and boats with raked masts create a rhythmically repeated pattern that complements the fluid curves of the women on the ground below. Cross' painting, as much as any labelled "Symbolist," conformed to the doctrine of plastic equivalents to convey feeling. As articulated by Maurice Denis: "C'est le moyen d'expression (lignes,

formes, volumes, couleurs) et non l'objet représenté qui doit lui-même être expressif.[25] Although Cross did not identify a literary source for this work, Isabelle Compin convincingly suggests its inspiration in a drama by Edouard Dujardin, Le Chevalier du passé, for which Maurice Denis made the stage sets.[26]

Signac's mural painting Au Temps d'harmonie (1893-1895 in the Mairie de Montreuil), originally titled Au Temps d'anarchie, is related to Cross's idyllic paintings and is another progeny of Puvis' Doux Pays. (Fig. 43) Inspired by the anarchist slogan, "the golden age lies not in the past, but in the future," Signac turned Puvis' wistful dream vision into a politicized statement based on contemporary bucolic ideals.[27]

In contrast to Cross' timeless scenes of idling figures, Signac's painting referred specifically to workers and to the promised paradise of Socialism. And yet Signac, like Denis, denied the importance of subject matter by stating: "...the subject is nothing or no more than the other elements: colors, drawing, composition."[28]

Despite their different approach to color and form, Cross shared with the "Nostalgiques" their idealistic yearning for a better world. In contrast to their predilection for the pale colors and silvery tones of Puvis de Chavannes and Whistler, Cross used clear, saturated hues which captured the sun-drenched atmosphere of the Midi. Nevertheless, La Plage ombragée (1902), a typical pastoral painting, expresses an Arcadian spirit. (Fig. 44)

As noted above, Cross had long been troubled by the "éternel dilemme" (or "le persistant débat," both terms used by Cross) which confronted all artists; the necessity of choosing between fidelity to

nature and a freer, more imaginative approach.[29] This painting shows that Cross opted for the latter, and his search for harmony was focused primarily on the domain of color. For, as documented in several letters, he repainted his original work, heightening the colors in order to provide more intense optical vibrations and the feeling of the hot summer sun.[30]

Despite Cross' use of a vibrant color harmony, the mood is one of tranquility and withdrawal from the everyday world. The pyramidal composition of the figures at the base of the tree adds stability to the natural curves of the land. Cross' carefully crafted composition incorporates some ideas recorded in his Carnet: "Equilibre, mesure, grandeur, simplicité...Organiser ses sensations. La nature n'offre que de beaux détails...Opposer à ce désordre à ce hasard, à ces trous de l'ordre et de la plénitude."[31]

Denis recognized Cross' need for order and called him a Classicist as well as a great colorist:

> Tandis que Signac passe du naturalisme scientifique à une sorte de romantisme raisonné, Cross, délivré de la plupart de ses scrupules d'impressionniste s'achemine vers une conception classique de l'oeuvre d'art. Les rythmes de ses paysages ont un équilibre, une solennite dans le balancement des masses qui font songer...à des inventions de Claude Lorrain...[32]

Interestingly, both Denis and Cross had spoken of the necessity of sacrifices in the creation of art. Denis had focused on this element in Raphael's art and concluded that it was a requisite of classicism. Cross also felt this necessity without identifying it with classicism. "Les sacrifices sont de formes, de valeurs, de teintes. Toute oeuvre d'art

est pleine de sacrifices...sacrifices du modelé, point de depart: harmonie. L'art vit de sacrifices."[33]

André Chastel pointed out the affinities between Cross' paintings of bathers and the contemporary pastorales of K.-X. Roussel: "il peint des bords de la mer idylliques et fait penser à un K.-X. Roussel divisionniste.'"[34] Cross and Roussel were friends and visited each other in Paris and in the Midi.[35] Like Roussel, Cross used bathers to suggest the harmonious relationship of man and nature.[36] Later, in his desire to increase the universality of this metaphor and to enhance the lyrical quality of his landscapes, he transformed these secular figures into nymphs and fauns.[37]

Besides their common commitment to idyllic iconography, Cross and Roussel sought to enhance the poetic quality of painting through their harmonic use of color, line, and brush stroke.[38] And while their techniques differed, the Arcadian spirit of their paintings shows the commonality of interest linking Neo-Impressionism and Symbolism.

As we shall explore later, the new attitudes expressed by Cross and Signac regarding techniques and subject matter were to directly affect Matisse and Fauve painting.[39]

THEO VAN RYSSELBERGHE (1862-1926)

Théo Van Rysselberghe was another Neo-Impressionist in Signac's circle in the Midi. Originally Belgian, Van Rysselberghe moved permanently to France in 1898. As a neighbor and close friend of Cross at St. Clair, he also participated in their literary circle.[40]

Although Van Rysselberghe was recognized primarily for his portraits and marine scenes, he started to paint landscapes and figures after his visits to the South. His close association with Cross and Signac in the "eden of St. Tropez" (Cachin's term) no doubt inspired his turn to idyllic subjects.

L'Heure embrasée (1897) is perhaps his most important painting in this genre.[41] (Fig. 45) One of the Arcadian Côte d'azur landscapes painted by Neo-Impressionists, Van Rysselberghe's work has affinities with those of Cross and Signac, and perhaps influenced Matisse.[42]

The title, L'Heure embrasée (the glowing hour), was probably chosen for its double meaning. Beyond the reference to the sunset glow which enflames the landscape, the title also suggests a paradisial moment. It seems that Van Rysselberghe, like Cross and Signac, was inspired by the composition and mood of Puvis' Doux Pays.[43] (Fig. 39)

Camille Mauclair commented that this work represented a culmination of Van Rysselberghe's artistic ideals and named Puvis as one of his sources: "L'eurythmie des vagues et des bois des pins font songer à Puvis de Chavannes...avec une grace simple toute l'oeuvre est sereine, pure, presque classique."[44] Mauclair called the bright colors "impressionist," and noted the artist's debt to Monet. He concluded that Van Rysselberghe, like Henri Martin, had reconciled Classicism and Impressionism.[45]

Although the greyish tonalities of the nostalgic "idéalistes" were more to Mauclair's taste, he also responded to the magical power of Van Rysselberghe's colors: "ces orgies de lumière, criantes de beauté,

ces fetes invraisemblables que sont les couchants des beaux jours méditerranéens." [46]

L'Heure embrasée was probably painted in response to a recent pastoral work by Cross, Bords Méditerranéens (1895). (Fig. 46) [47] This landscape with bathers anticipated Van Rysselberghe's painting in its idyllic mood and its oblique reference to daily life. Cross had, by then, abandoned the rigorous stylization of his earlier, Baudelaire-inspired, work, L'Air du Soir.(Fig. 38) In Bords Méditerranéens, the bathers share the strand with a circle of fishermen plying their nets, and the wooded shoreline shows natural recession rather than the artificially flattened space of the earlier work.

Signac's utopian mural, Au temps d'harmonie, which also alluded to the present, was perhaps another source for Van Rysselberghe's secularized Arcadia. But, differing from the works of Cross and Signac, L'Heure embrasée represents a compromise in stylistic terms; the idealized landscape shelters some naturalistically painted bathers. [48]

Although Van Rysselberghe adhered to certain requirements of the divisionist technique, his figures lack the simplification resulting from the strict application of Seurat's method. He resorted to complementaries suggested by the sunset spectrum: orange, red-orange, and gold, contrasted by blue and violet. The brushstroke remained pointillist, but precise modeling and contours are also evident. The individualized faces and gestures approximate Salon art. [49]

Van Rysselberghe's attachment to nature did not displease his close friend, Emile Verhaeren. In an article written when L'Heure embrasée was exhibited at La Libre Esthétique, Verhaeren praised its idyllic mood

and the harmonious integration of color and line. "Ce n'est pas une peinture de belles parties agencees, c'est un ensemble dont rien ne doit etre distrait pour provoquer une admiration exclusive." But as a writer whose own work reflected the attitudes of later Symbolists to reconcile life and art, Verhaeren favored Van Rysselberghe's watered-down aesthetic approach:

> Cet art plonge ne point dans le reve ou l'extase, mais dans une sorte de vie choisie, montree sous ses aspects de sante et de beaute. Du bonheur frais y circule sans qu'on songe aux idylles des anciens poetes, ni aux paradis classiques. La donnee n'est en rien litteraire... Une existence souple et naturelle nous est montree et nous est offerte comme un beau fruit mur.[50]

Thus L'Heure embrasee , the artist's modernized Arcadia, conformed to the new direction taken by some Symbolists to counteract the retreat into the dream world. By nature, Van Rysselberghe was less committed to idealistic goals than Cross and Signac; he was unwilling to make the artistic sacrifices adopted by them. Cross had clearly stated the priorities in art: "Tout est capital sans doute-- dessin, modele, teinte, mais ne croyez vous pas que dans une oeuvre d'art parfaite, il y a toujours deux de ces elements soumis au troisieme. L'art vit de sacrifices."[51]

By using intense colors and stressing the abstract shapes of the landscape, Van Rysselberghe partially followed the ideals of late Neo-Impressionism, but in remaining too close to nature in his painting of the human forms, he failed to achieve the goal of universal beauty.

HIPPOLYTE PETITJEAN (1854-1929)

The dream of Arcadia which stimulated the poetic landscapes of 1900 attracted not only the major Neo-Impressionists but also a minor

figure, Hippolyte Petitjean. The changes in the aesthetics and techniques of late Neo-Impressionism introduced by Signac and Cross did not affect Petitjean who remained on the periphery of the group. Called by Robert Herbert, "more a follower of Neo-Impressionism than a participant,"[52] Petitjean was a "Puvisant" pointillist who applied this technique in a routine manner to bucolic subjects.

An early disciple of Seurat, Petitjean gave up his Salon affiliations and began to exhibit with the Neo-Impressionists at Les Indépendants and at the gallery Le Barc de Boutteville from 1891 on. His academic training with Cabanel and his veneration for Ingres perhaps accounted for his predilection for the female nude.[53] His Hellenist-pointillist paintings such as En Arcadie (1895)(Fig. 48) and Au Bord de l'eau (1896) (Fig. 49) and Les Baigneuses (1896) (Fig. 50) won favorable comments from several Symbolist critics. Raymond Bouyer pointed out the artist's Idealism:

> Les Baigneuses du pointilliste H. Petitjean ne montraient-elles pas le chromoluminarisme faisant effort vers l'idéal et le poème adoptant le métier du réalisme?[54]

Another contemporary critic pointed out the parallels between Petitjean's pastorales and those of Alexandre Séon, a Rosicrucian artist who was among Coquiot's "Nostalgiques": "Quant à M. Petitjean, ses deux paysages rappellent Séon en leur plaisante éurythmie. Ses baigneuses sont une exquise éphébée."[55]

Although recent scholars have found Petitjean's paintings too derivative, they have seen more imagination and personal qualities in his drawings. (Fig. 51) Inspired by Fantin-Latour's drawings, they capture the idyllic spirit with sensitivity and sincerity.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER VI

THE IDYLLIC LANDSCAPE IN LATE NEO-IMPRESSIONISM

1. Maurice Denis, "Préface à 1'exposition postume d'Henri-Edmond Cross, 1910, chez Bernheim," reprinted in Théories (Paris: Rouart et Watelin, 1920), p. 161.

2. Robert L. Herbert pointed out that these ideas have their sources in the writings of Charles Blanc and Humbert de Superville. See Neo-Impressionism (New York: S.R. Guggenheim Museum, 1968), pp. 17, 21. See Chapter VII on Séon below. See also William I. Homer, Seurat and the Science of Painting (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1964), pp. 198-217. See Seurat, letter to M. Beaubourg, trans. by John Rewald, Post-Impressionism from Van Gogh to Gauguin (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1956), p. 142; Robert Goldwater, Symbolism (New York: Harper-Icon Editions, 1979), pp. 140-147.

3. Herbert, Neo-Impressionism, p. 21; Herbert, Seurat's Drawings (New York: Shorewood, 1962), pp. 108-110; Sven Lövgren, The Genesis of Modernism (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1971), pp. 81-86; Rewald, Post-Impressionism, pp. 157, 160.

4. Lövgren, Genesis, pp. 61, 86.

5. Félix Fénéon, "Le Néo-Impressionnisme," L'Art Moderne, 1 May 1887, p. 130. This passage is translated by Rewald, Post-Impressionism, p. 99.

6. Rewald, Post-Impressionism, p. 160; Herbert, Seurat's Drawings, p. 162; Lovgren, Genesis, p. 82.

7. Gustave Kahn, "Exposition Puvis de Chavannes," La Revue Indépendante, Jan.-Mar. 1888, p. 142.

8. Gustave Kahn, Les Dessins de Georges Seurat (Paris: Bernheim-jeune, 1928), p. 2. This passage is translated by Rewald, Post-Impressionism, p. 160.

9. Emile Verhaeren, "Henri-Edmond Cross," NRF, July 1910, p. 48-9. See Isabelle Compin, Henri-Edmond Cross (Paris: Quatre Chemins, 1964), on links of Cross with John-Antoine Nau and Fernand Caussy, poets, with whom he was very close. Van Rysselberghe showed Cross in the literary circle in his painting, La Lecture of 1903, Ill. in Compin; Cross, p. 55. Cross was the only painter shown among the writers André Gide, Verhaeren, Maeterlinck, Ghéon, Fénéon, Vielé-Griffin, and others.

10. See Chapter X, pp. 409-410.

11. See note 13 below.

12. Signac, "Journal," 1895 (translated by J. Rewald), GBA, 1949, Vol. 36, p. 174; Herbert, Neo-Impressionism, p. 21. Signac felt that these changes were beneficial; when he saw Seurat's Les Poseuses after the lapse of several years he wrote:

"The plain parts like the background, for instance covered with these small touches, are unpleasant and this work appears useless and harmful, since it gives to the whole a gray tonality. The accessory parts which are treated more broadly, are of a more beautiful color! We did well to loosen our execution..." (Signac, "Journal," 1897, edited by J. Rewald, GBA, 1952, Vol. 39, p. 300.)

13. Comte Antoine La Rouchefoucauld in letter to Emile Bernard on the Durand-Ruel exhibition, 1899, reprinted in Signac, "Journal," edited by John Rewald, GBA, 1953, Vol. 42, p. 78.

14. Signac, "Journal," GBA, 1949, Vol. 36, p. 1974; GBA, 1952, Vol. 39, p. 300.

15. See also Signac, Au Temps d'harmonie (discussed in text below); Seurat, Baignade à Asnières, 1884.

16. This painting has been studied by C. Frèches-Thory, Revue du Louvre, 1978, #2, P. 110. She points out that the reclining backview figure in the foreground can be traced to the figure on the left of Puvis' Inter Artes et Naturam, Rouen, 1890 Salon; the standing figure coiffing her hair is a three-quarter view transposition of the central figure in Puvis' Jeunes filles au bord de la mer. This gesture and pose was adopted by Matisse in turn, for the standing figure at the right in Luxe, calme et volupté. This was pointed out earlier by Compin, p. 67. Frèches-Thory discusses Cross's painting in terms of its "résonnances Symbolistes."

17. Henri-Edmond Cross, in letter to Signac, 1891, quoted in Françoise Cachin, Paul Signac (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1971), p. 55. Cross was an intimate of Signac's ; the latter's love of the sea is evident in his preoccupation with marine subjects.

18. Compin, Henri-Edmond Cross, pp. 37, 38, 115. I am indebted to Compin's excellent monograph and catalogue. An analogous composition by Signac is his Sailboats and Pines, 1896. See Cachin, Signac, p. 67.

19. See Maurice Denis illustrations, Voyage d'Urien, 1893.

20. L. Tiphereth, Le Coeur, Dec. 1894, p. 6, quoted in Compin, Cross, p. 134.

"M. Cross oriente toute son intellectualité vers l'harmonie des grandes lignes; pour lui elles sont un véritable langage poétique et dans L'Air du Soir tout se compose avec un rythme admirable, avec une cadence parfaite. C'est simple et beau. Aucun de ces détails encombrants; cette toile semble une tapisserie avec sa facture de grosses taches."

21. This writer had the opportunity to see this painting when it was hung temporarily at the Jeu de Paume, adjacent to Gauguin's Les Alyscamps. The touches in Cross's painting were no less brilliant than Gauguin's broader color areas. However, the pointillist technique diluted the vivid effect of the individual color strokes.

22. Henri-Edmond Cross, "Carnets," Bulletin de la Vie Artistique, 1922. The same conflicts are expressed in Signac's Journals; see references in text above.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Maurice Denis, Nouvelles Théories (Paris: Rouart et Watelin, 1922), p. 175, from a lecture (1918). These ideas had been stated earlier. See Denis, Théories, p. 267.

26. Compin, Cross, p. 146. Denis also illustrated a story by Dujardin. French Symbolist Painters (London, 1972), p. 39.

27. Signac's slogan as the basis for the painting was discussed in a letter to Cross in 1893; quoted in Cachin, Signac, p. 73; see Eugenia Herbert, The Artist and Social Reform (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), pp. 190-191.

Although Cross also supported anarchism, he was less disposed than was Signac to mix politics and painting. Compin discusses Cross' politics and his lithographic contributions to anarchist journals. Cross, pp. 51-54; Robert Herbert quotes a letter from Cross in which he states his preference for painting nymphs to peasants in his landscapes; Herbert, Neo-Impressionism, p. 47.

28. Cachin, Signac, p. 73. But Signac was distressed by the paintings of the "Symbolards." He stated that their painting was "darker than that of the old conventionalists." Signac, "Journal," edit. by Rewald, GBA, 1949, p. 171.

29. Compin, Cross, pp. 44-45.

30. Cross' use of color for expression inspired Matisse's experiments with Neo-Impressionism. See Chapter X. See Compin, Cross, pp. 43-46, 49, pp. 192-193; cat. #97. His attitudes correspond clearly to Signac's, expressed in his Journal.

31. Cross, "Carnets," Bulletin de la Vie Artistique, 1922, p. 256.

32. Maurice Denis, "Henri-Edmond Cross, Préface to Exposition, 1907, chez Bernheim," in Théories, pp. 159-160.

33. Cross, "Carnet," Bulletin de la Vie Artistique, 1922, p. 427. Denis wrote: "l'art classique est fait de sacrifices," Journal I (Paris: La Colombe, 1957), p. 140.

34. André Chastel, Le Monde, 7 Aug. 1964.

35. See Chapter V on K.-X. Roussel. Georgel and Stump both point out that Roussel, like Matisse, benefited from Cross's instruction in color. Denis and Roussel visited Cross in St. Clair following their visit to Cézanne in Aix, 1906. (Denis Journal II, p. 33.) Cross's influence on Roussel is most evident in a landscape, Paysage de St. Tropez, 1906, Vuillard, Roussel, Paris, Orangerie, 1968, #241.

36. See also Les Baigneuses, 1899; La Plage de St. Clair, 1901 (Compin, Cross, cat. #97, 72, 96) and numerous paintings of nudes in the landscape from 1902 on.

37. Compin stated: "Nuls sens philosophique n'est à chercher dans ces oeuvres...la mythologie n'est pour Cross qu'un prétexte pour peindre avec lyrisme des nus dans les paysages ensoleillés." (Ibid., p. 63) These works appear in 1906, relatively late in Cross's oeuvre. See Faune, #142; Nymphes, #144; Fuite des Nymphes, #147 (Compin cat.).

38. In this context, contemporary paintings of bathers by Maurice Denis may be mentioned, e.g., Baigneuses 1899, and 1903. While different in painting technique from both Roussel and Cross, Denis turned to the venerable theme, as did Ménard, to instill a feeling of timelessness and harmony.

39. See Chapter X. Homer referred to late Neo-Impressionism as an "avant-garde" style in the years around 1900. Seurat and the Science of Painting, p. 255.

Van Rysselberghe

40. Van Rysselberghe sculpted the portrait bust for Cross's tomb. Compin discusses Van Rysselberghe's literary circle in Paris in which Cross participated; Cross, pp. 54-55. He had met Signac in 1886 during his meetings with Seurat. He was a co-founder of Les XX, the Belgian group providing exhibition opportunities for the most progressive new art.

Van Rysselberghe was converted to Neo-Impressionism by 1888. See Herbert, Neo-Impressionism, pp. 178-179.

41. The painting, a large scale work which has the appearance of a decorative panel, was not conceived for a specific architectural setting. It was exhibited at the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Weimar in the exhibition of Neo-Impressionists in 1903 and was purchased by the museum at that time.

42. See Chapter X, p.

43. From Puvis, Van Rysselberghe borrowed and reversed the curving diagonal of the shore with hills closing off the horizon. Further borrowings are seen in Van Rysselberghe's standing figure with arms crossed over her chest, and the standing figure putting on her robe; both figures are derived from Puvis' standing women but are changed from Puvis' generalized types into individuals in the mannered attitudes struck by studio models.

44. Camille Mauclair, "Théo Van Rysselberghe," L'Art Décoratif, July 1903, p. 88.

45. Ibid. Mauclair was probably referring to Martin's Faucheurs, the panels for the Capitole de Toulouse, completed in the year the article was written, also painted in small broken brush strokes. See Chapter VIII on H. Martin below, p.

46. Ibid., p. 89.

47. See Compin, Cross #51, p. 140. Cross's painting was exhibited at La Libre Esthétique, 1897, and the Independants, 1898; Signac's painting was exhibited at the Independants, 1895, and La Libre Esthétique, 1896. It has been pointed out that when Van Rysselberghe's L'Heure embrasée

was exhibited at La Libre Esthétique it was placed in the same central position of honour as was Signac's mural painting in 1896. Marie-Jeanne Chartrain-Hebbelinck, "Théo Van Rysselberghe," Revue Belge d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art, t. 34, 1965, p. 119.

48. One critic suggested that Van Rysselberghe's accomplishments as a portraitist bound him too closely to the model. Paul Fierens, Théo Van Rysselberghe (Bruxelles: Editions de la Connaissance, 1937), p. 24. Fierens felt the work unsatisfying because of the lack of idealization in the figures.

49. Signac commented on this and analogized him to Gervex. Signac "Journal," GBA, 1953, Vol. 42, p. 77. Van Rysselberghe's commitment to realism is also evident in a related painting of bathers, La Plage à St. Clair, 1897. (Fig. 47) In this work, in which strong color effects do not figure, the artist's use of divisionism appears conservative. Van Rysselberghe also painted a large decorative panel, La Lecture au Jardin, for Hotel Solvay, Brussels, 1903. Although the painting is animated by the calculated flow of curves and linear rhythms, and the careful balance of color applied in small touches, there is too much attention paid to the accessories à la mode and other realistic details to elevate the work to the level of idealism found in the decorative murals of Aman-Jean. See Chapter VIII on Aman-Jean below. The same comments could be made in comparing decorative panels by Vuillard; the DesMarais panels (1892), illustrated in Vuillard, Roussel, Paris, L'Orangerie, 1968, #32-34, or Jardins Publics 1894, #51-54.

50. Emile Verhaeren, "Théo Van Rysselberghe," L'Art Moderne, 13 March 1898, p. 87. In Van Rysselberghe's painting La Lecture, Verhaeren is shown reading to the literary cenacle. Cross is shown with his back to the viewer.

51. Cross, "Carnets," p. 427. Cross and Van Rysselberghe's working methods differed significantly in the late nineties. Van Rysselberghe always incorporated studies made from the motif in the final work. Cross, on the other hand, stated that he created the work in the studio from his memory of studies, or that the work took shape first in his imagination, and he verified it by looking at nature. Cross, "Carnets," p. 254; Chartrain-Hebbelinck, Van Rysselberghe, p. 117; Compin, Cross, p. 45, p. 66. Cousturier, L. "H.E. Cross," L'Art Décoratif, 1913, t. 29, p. 129.

Hippolyte Petitjean

52. Herbert, Neo-Impressionism, p. 79. Herbert also pointed out that Petitjean's later works are pointillist, but do not employ divided color. See also Jean Sutter, edit., The Neo-Impressionists (Greenwich, Conn.:

New York Graphic Society, 1970), pp. 117-146. Signac noted Petitjean's inconsistent use of divisionist methods and characterized his paintings, "so drab, so precise." Signac, "Journal," GBA 1953, p. 77.

53. Later Petitjean copied Ingres La Source in pointillist technique.

54. Raymond Bouyer, "Le Paysage dans l'art," L'Artiste, 1894, p. 118. Tristan Klingsor, a Symbolist poet and critic also praised Petitjean's works: "Presque toutes les toiles de Petitjean sont en effet de délicieuses bucoliques." Tristan Klingsor, "Hippolyte Petitjean," L'Art et les Artistes, Jan. 1930, p. 139.

55. Lily Bazalgette, "Chronique—Les Arts," L'Ermitage, Jan.-June 1893, p. 296.

CHAPTER VII

"NOSTALGIQUES" IN THE ROSE+CROIX CIRCLE

Introduction: The Salons de la Rose+Croix

Most historians now acknowledge the importance of the Salons de la Rose+Croix in the epoch of Symbolism. One scholar, Robert Pincus-Witten, has done much to illuminate this aspect of Symbolist studies, introducing the artists associated with the founder of these exhibitions, Sâr Mérodack, i.e., Joséphin Péladan. Pincus-Witten stated that: ". . . the Salons de la Rose+Croix were, at their apogee, the most important, topical, fashionable, Symbolist manifestations of the period."[1]

These annual exhibitions, staged between 1892 and 1897, presented a variety of mystical art, proving that a reaction to naturalism was well launched. The exhibitions of art which were accompanied by concerts of new music, esoteric dramas, and lectures were perhaps the crowning achievement of Péladan, who had distinguished himself since the early eighties as a crusader for the cause of Idealism through his prolific writing as art critic and novelist.[2] His propagandistic manifesto for the new Salon set the quasi-religious tone of the exhibitions: "Le Salon de la Rose+Croix sera un temple dedié à l'art—Dieu avec les chefs d'oeuvre pour dogmes et pour saints les génies."[3] To be exhibited

in these Salons, a painting had to conform to Péladan's rigid requirements for idealized and mystical art based on the noble Italian tradition. Péladan's goals, announced in a strident public statement, reflected the aspirations of many Symbolists:

> Le Salon de la Rose+Croix sera une manifestation de l'Art contre les arts, du Beau contre le réel, du passé contre le present, infâme, de la tradition contre la blague! La Rose+Croix n'exige pas que l'idéalité des oeuvres.[4]

These Salons provided an alternate exhibition opportunity for artists of "noble aspiration" whose idealist art conformed to the strict rules for subject matter and technique prescribed by the Sâr. Called "gestes esthétiques," Péladan's Salons were the perfect showcase for many of the "Nostalgiques" for the "Sâr" banned all mundane and materialistic art: specifically, historical paintings and battle scenes, representations of contemporary life, portraiture, genre, and all rustic landscapes lacking idealization à la Poussin.[5]

Among the regular contributors to Péladan's annual "geste esthétique" were two of Coquiot's "Nostalgiques," Alexandre Séon and Alphonse Osbert. In addition, several other artists who exhibited frequently in the Rose+Croix Salons—Armand Point, Maurice Chabas, Andhré des Gachons, and Eugene Grasset—we call "Nostalgiques" on the basis of the idyllic content and retrospective focus of their works.[6]

Symbolist writers and critics looked with favor on the Rose+Croix Salons since they attracted great public interest and thus furthered the cause of idealism. Victor Charbonnel extravagantly praised these Salons

and the artists in his book of 1897, Les Mystiques dans la littérature présente:

> Il est indéniable qu'ils marquèrent dans l'art une sincère rénovation idéaliste...des vrais et grands artistes, affirmèrent par l'incontestable supériorité de leur talent dans le temple de la Rose+Croix ce renouveau d'idéalisme qui ces années dernières a si rapidement et puissament transformé notre art, et repandu autour de l'oeuvre glorieux et sacré du maître Puvis de Chavannes une vie de jeunesse. 7

The Rose+Croix Salons were also cited in André Mellerio's early chronicle of Symbolist art. Although Mellerio supported the Synthetists and the Neo-Impressionists, and was not sympathetic to Rosicrucian art, he acknowledged the contribution of these manifestations to the spread of Idealism in art. [8]

ALEXANDRE SÉON (1855-1917)

> Mettre en harmonie la couleur propre de l'objet et celle de l'espace dans lequel il est placé, tel est, sans doute, le but que l'artiste doit poursuivre; mais une autre connaissance lui est également nécessaire, celle du rapport des couleurs avec le sentiment.
>
> —Goethe, quoted by A. Germain, Pour le Beau, 1893.

Alexandre Séon, one of Coquiot's "Nostalgiques," was closely associated with Sâr Péladan during the epoch of the Rose+Croix Salons. Péladan called him "l'harmonieux Séon, le peintre de style" because his work exemplified Péladan's "art idéaliste et mystique." The Sâr praised the artist for his ingenuous purity, the probity of his drawing, and his affinities with noble Italian art.[9] Besides participating in all but one of the six Rose+Croix Salons, Séon painted Péladan's portrait and drew frontispieces and illustrations for several of his novels.[10]

In his Salon review of 1890, Péladan attacked modern landscape painting for its lack of poetic feeling as he called for a new form, "le paysage musical." Péladan felt that landscape painting, too long devoted to transitory effects, should instead touch the soul and reveal the mystery of nature. Thus he urged artists to avoid the imitation of nature and to reveal its inner secrets in order to convey emotion and meaning independent of figural action. According to Péladan, "tout paysage est susceptible de signifier les gradations sentimentales de l'allégresse la plus solaire au désespoir le plus sombre."[11]

Péladan felt that Séon's paintings best fulfilled these ideals, and that they were an antidote to prosaic rustic landscapes. He commented that even Pan and his retinue were too impure for Séon's rarified forests. [12]

As a fellow Lyonnais, Péladan regarded Séon as the culminating figure in that regional school which had preserved the tradition of religious painting. Séon, a pupil and associate of Puvis de Chavannes, also from Lyon, was thus a link in the chain which perpetuated the Idealism of Ingres and his Lyonnais pupils. [13]

Alphonse Germain, a poet and prominent Symbolist critic, supported Péladan's campaign for spiritual art and he, too, focused on Séon as the leading Idealist painter. Like Péladan, Germain praised Séon extravagantly while pointing out that Séon's paintings reconciled the idealist pursuit of pure Beauty with recent scientific theories. [14]

Germain considered Séon a reformer, one of the few who were striving to return art to the realm of the Ideal after it had suffered from the depradations of realism. [15] Like many of his contemporaries, Germain was dependent on Charles Blanc's theories which had been set forth in the Grammaire des Arts du dessin. [16] Germain pointed out that Séon had absorbed Blanc's Idealism and thus achieved "le style" in all phases of his art, from his drawings and book illustrations to his easel and mural paintings. [17] Germain cited Séon's affinities with Blanc:

> Le style, c'est reconnait-il (Séon) avec Charles Blanc, 'la vérité agrandie, simplifiée, degagée de tous les details insignificants, rendue à son essence originelle, à son aspect typique.' L'idéal, il le comprend, selon la definition de Joséphin Péladan, 'toute idée sublimée à son point supreme d'harmonie, d'intensité, de subtilité.' 18

With the support of Péladan, Germain, and other contemporary critics, Séon was recognized in Symbolist circles, but today he is little-known, a shadowy figure whose career can be documented mainly through his exhibition activities. [19] He participated in various public Salons, in several private exhibitions, and in the Exposition Universelle of 1889, where he was awarded a silver medal. Séon had entered Puvis' atelier in 1881 and for over ten years he had assisted the master in the execution of his numerous murals. [20] Séon profited greatly from this association; although he arrived at Puvis' studio as a fully trained painter who had already exhibited in the Salon. [21]

While still assisting Puvis, Séon entered a competition in 1885 and was awarded the commission for the decoration of the Salle des Fêtes in the Mairie of Courbevoie. This was the only large decorative commission Séon ever received, much to the regret of Péladan who stated, "L'élève a la même nature de talent que le maître, et l'élève n'a jamais pu donner sa mesure." [22] The renaissance of mural painting at the end of the nineteenth century can be largely credited to Puvis' innovations in this medium, which were readily assimilated by the new generation of decorative painters. Puvis' mural work capped an evolution which had begun with Ingres' pupils at mid-century who were active in the decoration of Parisian and provincial churches. [23] Like Chassériau and other Ingristes, Puvis was inspired by the tradition of Quattrocento fresco painting. Puvis' murals are characterized by a deliberate gaucherie: figures and landscape are drastically simplified, space is flattened, and colors are pale. By incorporating these elements derived from his study of the

Italian primitives, Puvis formulated the unique style that revitalized monumental painting, and pointed the way to young Symbolists who were seeking non-illusionistic methods.

The renewal of interest in mural paintings which had been evident from the mid-century on spurred many articles and painting manuals which outlined the special requirements of mural decoration. [24] In this literature it was argued that mural painting could effectively provide an ambiance of serenity and beauty. A new set of standards was recognized for mural paintings which, unlike easel paintings, were inseparable from their architectural framework. In the new mural aesthetic, the trompe-l'oeil illusionism of Renaissance art was considered inimical.

Of primary concern was the surface of the painting which continued the flatness of the surrounding walls. Since the painting was of monumental scale, and was not ordinarily seen at close range, the forms of figures, buildings, and landscape backgrounds were broadly handled and minute detail eliminated. Emotional expression of a violent or distressing nature was banned in accomodation to the large scale and sustained periods of viewing. Restrained emotions were conveyed through body gestures rather than facial expression. Compositional arrangements constituted by balanced horizontals and verticals with curving arabesques produced the desired mood of tranquility, while strong diagonals provoking dynamic tensions were avoided. Colors were muted in order to soothe the viewer's eye and to prevent piercing holes in the shallow planes of the painting. Through these pictorial methods, the artist was able to create a harmonious environment and to impart a serious message in a clear manner.

Séon's mastery of the special requirements of mural painting is evident in the decoration of the Mairie of Courbevoie where he achieved an impressive, ordered ensemble. When one enters the Salle des Fêtes, one is struck by the harmonious relationship between the architectural framework of paneled wood, painted in tones of blue-grey and gold, and the muted colors of the paintings.

The decorative scheme is comprised of eight rectangular wall panels and an oval ceiling painting. The wall panels, arranged symetrically on three walls of the square room (the fourth wall contains large windows), thematically treat the various phases of man's life. The scenes depicted are childhood, education, labor, leisure, courtship, family life, war, and old age. The ceiling panel represents the seasons of the year linked to the times of day; morning and spring (avril), afternoon and summer (juillet), evening and autumn, and night and winter. [25]

The figures and landscape in each panel remain close to the surface, allowing an unbroken continuation of the flat plane of the wall. Séon minimized illusionistic space by tilting up the ground and using an unusually high horizon line. This device for suppressing spatial depth had already been used by Puvis in his compositions of the late seventies. [26]

Séon's use of large scale figures, quiet poses, and generalized forms also recall those of Puvis; both artists sought to recreate the calm serenity of classical art. Séon was aware of Puvis' goal of clarity and harmony which the latter had stated in an interview:

> Je suis convaincu que la conception la mieux ordonnée c'est à dire la plus simple et la plus claire, se trouve être en même temps la plus décorative et la plus belle. En toute chose, la clarté, la clarté avant tout. Je ne haïs rien tant que la vague et le nébuleux. 27

Following the precepts of his master, Séon allowed few details in painting his figures and settings. The figures are generalized into types and are dressed in garments of vaguely classical derivation to suggest universality and timelessness. Like Puvis, Séon chose this type of drapery to create a sense of distance from everyday life and to evoke an idyllic past.

Some of Séon's figures were influenced by Puvis, while others refer to ancient prototypes. The young woman seated in the courtship panel repeats the pose of Puvis' L'Enfant Prodigue, except for their differences in emotional expression. (Figs. 52, 30) Her attitude echoes the horizontal and vertical bars of the gate which unites her symbolically with the standing male figure. Behind them, the expanse of greyish-green field establishes the mood of bucolic calm, a feeling which is enhanced by the seated classically-draped figure. Séon's biographer cited the artist's affinity for the Antique: Germain called him a Hellène for his sculptural appreciation of the draped body. [28]

Fernand Weyl, another Symbolist critic, noted that Séon, like the Greeks, knew that the body could be more expressive than the face: "Ce qu'il faut surtout s'attacher à rendre, ce sont les lignes et l'harmonie du corps; ce sont les attitudes et les gestes." [29]

The facial expressions remain impassive and the features are generalized though to a lesser degree than the simplified forms of Puvis' late murals.

Séon's panel depicting family life bears formal similarities to a section of Puvis' panel Ave Picardia Nutrix. [30] (Figs. 53, 54) Séon

adopted Puvis' pyramidal composition; the centralized geometrical shape comprises a young man standing on a ladder forming one side of a triangle, connected by gesture and glance to a woman and child who form the corresponding line of the other side. It was perhaps significant that Séon based this composition on Puvis' scene of harvesting which allegorically implies maturity and domestic fulfillment. The equilibrated and harmonious composition further enforces the ideal of family unity and devotion. [31]

Séon used color adroitly to harmonize the mural paintings and the surrounding walls of grey-blue and gold. A muted tonality of mauve, pale yellow, flesh tones, and grey-greens unites the figures, draperies, and landscape elements. This pallid harmony, derived from Puvis, removes all suggestions of the quotidian. These nostalgic visions are Séon's expression of the escapist dream so frequently painted by the Symbolists.

In a review of Séon's one-man exhibition in 1901, Raymond Bouyer noted that all his paintings appeared "décolorées" and compared them to antique frescoes. [32] Like Puvis' murals, Séon's recall the matte finish of this early art, although the medium used by both was canvas mounted on the wall. The surface has a uniform density of paint texture unsuited to impasto and virtuosity of brushwork.

In this scheme, Séon transmitted a vision of man's passage through life which was serious; no frivolity animated the artist's view toward his subjects. Séon shared with Puvis and many contemporary Symbolist painters the preference for mural painting because its formal and iconographic demands allowed him to paint nostalgic visions untainted by

mundanity. These panels represented Séon's commitment to poetic painting and the expression of philosophic ideas through the use of a Puvisian vocabulary. His later paintings, based on his theories of symbolic color, were even further removed from the realm of reality and outward appearance.

Séon's paintings of the nineties reflect Symbolist doctrine as promulgated by Aurier, Gauguin, Denis, Sérusier, and Seurat. His theory, Le Symbolisme des teintes, may have been in gestation during the period of his work at Courbevoie, but it was not revealed in his painting until the early nineties. By that time, Séon's contacts with Seurat and Germain had confirmed his own researches into the methods of arriving at ideal beauty. [33]

As evident in his theories as well as his painting, Séon used color to elicit a psychological response rather than to describe a physical fact. In this sense he followed the example set by Puvis, Redon, and Gauguin. Alphonse Germain summarized Séon's approach:

> Quant aux colorations, il leur fait jouer un role sensationnel aussi important que celui des linéatures. Car, pour ce subtil, les multiples nuances des couleurs spectrales et du blanc qui les contient toutes, correspondent avec nos intimes perceptions, nos psychismes; par conséquent, doivent servir à les traduire, à les symboliser sur toile.
>
> Corporéiser, par les lignes, un symbole dans un type amplifié à l'archetype; homogenéiser ce symbole, au moyen des teintes, avec le caractère d'un être ou mieux son substratum... 34

Germain pointed out that Séon's system was based on the subtle harmonies of tints or nuances of color rather than the contrasts of complementaries of Chevreul's system. Séon believed that Chevreul's theories which

dealt with colors on a flat plane were not applicable to the depiction of spatial depth. He argued that the use of nuances of color and spatial depth were necessary to create a poetic, dreamy mood, and, echoing Péladan, he cited Leonardo's use of depth and suggestions of atmosphere in landscape backgrounds to convey the ineffable sense of mystery in nature. [35] Péladan, in his commentary on Leonardo's Traité du paysage, wrote: "Or la distance constitue l'idéalité du paysage...la perspective aérienne le préoccupe en premier, et c'est la plus poétique impression que puisse donner le paysage, c'est celle du lointain." [36]

Séon developed his theory of the "dégradation perspective du ton" to reconcile the conflicting demands of aerial perspective and pure color. In his article on "Théorie Chromo-luminariste, exposé et critique," Germain discussed Séon's theory as well as that of the Neo-Impressionists, considering both as culminations of nineteenth-century color perception. While he evaded an outright endorsement of Séon's methods, Germain explained that this artist's solution was to diminish the size of the stroke in proportion to the shading off of color under conditions of spatial recession. [37]

Fernand Weyl also considered Séon's theory of color nuances a unique contribution in the current turn to poetic painting. Like Germain, Weyl stated that Séon's art was founded on the concordance of inner feelings and pictorial means. "Il ne se soucie pas du plus ou moins d'intensité d'une couleur; ce qu'il veut c'est créer, au moyen de nuances, une totalité harmonieuse qui parle à l'âme de celui qui

voit le tableau." [38] Weyl appreciated Séon's use of delicate nuances of color rather than the full intensity of a hue. He felt that Séon's paintings conveyed poetic feeling in his use of "une teinte où l'indécis au précis se joint." [39]

In addition, Weyl discussed Séon's personal symbolism of color; for example, "orangé éteint" (a faded autumnal orange) which evoked feelings of sadness and lifelessness, while dark blue and violet signified despair and melancholy. [40]

Weyl pointed out that Séon was developing his theories in the late 1880's at the same moment when Seurat was applying his theories of color and line to heighten a particular mood or emotion in his paintings. It was logical for this critic to relate these two artists since they had studied together in Lehmann's studio. After their stint there, Séon and Seurat had moved apart; they frequented different artistic circles and developed dissimilar pictorial styles. Nevertheless, they maintained their bond of personal friendship, and in 1889 were reported to be extremely close. [41]

Thus Séon must have been aware of and possibly influenced by Seurat's researches and divisionist theories. According to Weyl, Séon acknowledged the important conclusions reached by Seurat: "(Séon) aime à dire que bien des peintres doivent leurs succès à ce maître méconnu et mort trop jeune et que ses études sur la lumière ont montré aux artistes le bon chemin." [42]

The interests of the mystical Rosicrucian and the scientific Neo-Impressionist coincided in still another way. Their ideology commonly stemmed from Charles Blanc's idealist theories. [43]

The Idealism of Seurat's late works have been attributed to his contacts with Charles Henry and the Revue Indépendante circle of Symbolist writers. [44] Séon's relationship to this Symbolist circle has not been clearly charted. In the late eighties, he obviously absorbed idealist theories which were "in the air," although actual contacts between him and the avant-garde writers cannot be documented. We can assume that Séon was exposed to Charles Henry's ideas through attendance at Henry's public lectures in 1884, or his reading L'Esthétique scientifique (1885). Our knowledge of Séon's absorption of recent color theories is provided only through the discussions of his biographers, Germain and Weyl. [45]

These critics, both influenced by Charles Blanc, emphasized the importance of nature as a base in the idealist process adopted by Séon. According to Weyl, "il faut d'abord savior copier platement la réalité et l'idéaliser ensuite." [46] He noted Séon's careful study of light effects in the sky and various cloud patterns, but that observation was subservient to the demand for a subjective symbolic expression; nuances of light and color observed in nature were transformed into a personal language of pictorial equivalents signifying emotional states. [47]

Germain wrote: "C'est un idéaliste, qui aime et respecte la nature, c'est là ce qui fait la sûreté et la grandeur de son talent." [48]

Séon's theory of symbolic color and line is exemplified in his painting Le Désespoir de la chimère (1895). [49] (Fig. 55) By choosing to paint a fantastic subject, Séon gave primacy to his imagination and finally cast off his dependency on Puvis. Here, the artist departed further from the depiction of appearances to convey specific emotions--melancholy and

despair--through the predominance of blue and of downward sweeping lines. The blue wings of the bizarre female monster unite the figure with her rocky perch, which is painted in active broken brushstrokes of blue and pinkish-mauve. According to Séon's theory of the "dégradation perspective du ton," the brushstrokes of the foreground, of varying size and direction, are diminished to an even flatness in the distance.

Séon sought to convey mood through the landscape as well as the figures and utilized both the foreground and the far distance to this end. The pink highlights of the water and distant rocks continue the contrast of warm and cool tones of the foreground while they suggest a tranquil, other-worldly setting.

Line as well as color expresses feeling; the downward sloping lines of the desolate rocky promontory impart a melancholic emotion. [50] Weyl recorded Séon's intention here: "il a conclu que l'oblique à gauche symbolisera la douleur, l'oblique à droite la joie." [51] Using this approach, Séon incorporated the ideas of the earlier theorists Humbert de Superville, Charles Blanc, and Charles Henry. [52] However, Séon differed from them in his use of the vertical, which for him symbolized heavenly aspiration. This is evident in Séon's numerous paintings of forests which shelter virginal maidens. (Figs. 56, 57, 58) Spiritual meaning was implied when he depicted trees and figures in regular parallel rhythms, a device which was commonly used by the "Nostalgiques." [53] The artist thus linked all elements of creation in a unity of spirit. The formal device captivated his admirer, Sâr Péladan:

> Ses femmes sont toutes des vierges, des vierges sages ...On sent que l'artiste a le culte de la jeune fille; sa ligne toujours pudique, avec la dominante systématique des verticales ne s'adresse pas aux sens... 54

In the Lamentation d'Orphée (1896), Séon created a powerful image of the emotions of grief and despair. [55] (Fig. 59) His choice of subject was probably inspired by Puvis' Orphée of 1883, painted when Séon was working in his atelier. [56] (Fig. 60)

Séon's Orphée furnishes evidence that he was able to rival and even surpass his master through the application of his Symbolist theory. Here, the figure lies prostrate in an attitude that conveys both grief and enervation in contrast to the convulsive anxiety of Puvis' Orphée. Séon's painting gains emotional power through the desolate setting which extends the tragic quality of the despondent figure. By isolating the figure with its downward sloping axis on a barren stretch of beach, closed in by the impenetrable walls of rock, the artist clearly communicated his message. The cold blues and grey of the flat inhospitable landscape contribute as much as the pathetic figure to the mood of finality in the painting. It is not surprising that Péladan found in Séon his ideal painter; Séon had restored poetry and meaning to landscape painting.

ALPHONSE OSBERT (1857-1939)

La Nuit met le manteau lilas du crépuscule
Et descend sur la terre.
Ecoute: un invisible oiseau là-bas ulule
Dans le bois solitaire

Une fleur d'or s'effeuille et se fane au lac sombre:
C'est l'heure grave et triste.
La forêt dresse une muraille épaisse d'ombre
Sur le ciel d'améthyste.

—Marc Legrand

The Rose+Croix Salons attracted many artists who, like their founder, Sâr Péladan, were dedicated to the idea of "art as a religion of beauty." [57] This was the avowed ideal of Alphonse Osbert, a painter recognized by his contemporaries for his poetic and nostalgic landscapes.

Alphonse Osbert was another of the artists active in the 1890's, well-known and respected in the Symbolist milieu of arts and letters, whose work has been obscured by the modern prejudices of the twentieth century. [58] However, his work bears re-examination because it clearly reflects the ideals of Symbolist art and literature, and because it sheds more light on the connections between Rose+Croix artists and other Symbolist manifestations.

Osbert exhibited in all six Rose+Croix Salons as well as in the official Salons, the Indépendants, and in numerous private exhibitions. [59]

Called by Symbolist critics an "artiste de l'âme" and a "poète de silence," Osbert was appreciated for his imagery which reflected the other-worldly concerns of Symbolist poetry. As stated by a contemporary

critic: "Il donne au silence et au mystère la même intensité que le poète ressent devant la spectacle de la nature." [60]

Gustave Coquiot, the chronicler of the early exhibitions of the Société des Artistes Indépendants, focused on Osbert in his chapter devoted to "Les Nostalgiques." [61] While Coquiot criticized Séon's dependence on Péladan's Italianate taste, he praised Osbert as a poet of serene crepuscular visions. "Sa peinture...matérialise des rêves de paysages et d'âmes à l'unisson dans un mutuel recueillement." [62]

In Osbert's paintings, as in Symbolist poetry, a mood of withdrawal and reverie is conveyed through the artist's choice of subject and pictorial technique. Akin to the methods of Mallarmé, Maeterlinck, and Rodenbach, Osbert used the poetic means of suggestion to elicit a response in the psyche of his viewers. This was noted by his biographer, Dr. Albert Charpentier, who compared his paintings to Verlaine's poems in an issue of Les Hommes d'Aujourd'hui devoted to Osbert.

> Alphonse Osbert peut être defini le peintre du rêve dans la lumière grise. C'est une poète, en effet, qui chante son âme sur sa toile, comme Verlaine en ses vers. ...Et comme le poète est doublé d'un compositeur, il crée des fabulations pour développer son thème et transposer son âme. L'orchestration est en outre savante et le phrase bien écrite. 63

Osbert's poetic landscapes are permeated with a quasi-religious aura which is indefinable in terms of a particular religious faith. Silent forest clearings become sanctuaries for dream and meditation, far removed from the pressures of everyday existence. These dusky glades are inhabited by virgins whose immobile postures echo the simplified forms of the natural setting. The unreality of these visions and the musical aspirations

of the artist are captured in their titles, viz. "Poème (du soir)," "Chants (de la nuit)," "Hymne (à la mer)," "Harmonie (lunaire)," etc.

Osbert's cultivation of the musical idiom and his striving for harmonically integrated compositions did not escape the attention of the critics. Henri Degron, a poet, used musical metaphors in discussing Osbert's works: "M. Osbert en est-il arrivé à nous definir...toute une orchestration mélodique, une continuité de thèmes musicaux, qui en avivent le charme et le mystère et l'intensité." [64] Gustave Soulier, a Symbolist art critic, echoed these sentiments:

> Par sa recherche constante d'harmonie, tant dans l'assemblage des lignes et des formes que dans le groupement des tons, l'art d'Alphonse Osbert évoque une sensation musicale de thème savamment orchestré; les bleus chantent auprès des ors, qui résonnent comme des cuivres; et voici que, parmi les lyres et les flutes qui formaient la dominante de sa symphonie, il se glisse maintenant des sons plus profonds, et plus graves de violes, qui semblent prolonger sous la trame fondamentale la vibration d'un sanglot. 65

Osbert's typical compositions of draped female figures languishing in mysterious landscapes do not rely on formal distortions such as those employed by the Nabis and the Neo-Impressionists, yet neither do they conform to academic standards of precise drawing and perfect finish. A conservative critic took Osbert to task for what he regarded as excessive simplifications: "Je leur reproche d'être concus d'une manière un peu trop sommaire...il l'a entrainé à une synthèse trop rigoureuse." [66] Like most Rose+Croix art, Osbert's paintings occupy an ill-defined area between the progressive and conservative currents of their time. Yet, in both form and content, he adhered to the Symbolist aesthetic; his figures and land-

scapes poetically evoke a mood, they do not describe naturalistically.

In 1877, Osbert entered the atelier of Henri Lehmann where he met Séon, Ernest Laurent, Aman-Jean, and Seurat. He made his debut in the Salon of 1880, and his entries from then on were accompanied by the mention, "élève de Lehmann, Bonnat, et Cormon." However, Osbert was never a pupil of the latter two artists, as has been recently pointed out. [67]

As his fellow students Seurat and Aman-Jean hastened to remove themselves from the sterile atmosphere of Lehmann's studio, [68] so did Osbert, who began to study intensely the works of Velasquez and Ribera. Osbert admired the life-like quality of their paintings, an element which was completely lacking in the cool Ingrist approach of Lehmann. [69]

During the decade of the eighties, Osbert became interested in landscape and produced many plein-air paintings and studies. This activity also tended to loosen the grip of the linear orientation of his academic instruction. According to his daughter, "Osbert a oublié tous les musées," as he painted in many sites in the Ile de France and on the coast of Normandy. His eye, like the Impressionists', became trained to record his immediate sensations under direct light. [70] Studies made in the forest of Fontainebleau served as the raw material for his later imaginary landscapes.

At this time, Osbert, like Seurat, was attracted by the art of Millet. Osbert's carnet includes sketches after Millet's works which were exhibited at the time of the Vente A. Sensier in 1877. [71] The impact of Millet's subject matter and style is reflected in two drawings by Osbert, L'Eté (La Moisson) (1886), and L'Accident de Travail (La Mine); [72] they

provide ample evidence that Millet's simplified drawing style inspired not only Puvis and Seurat, but also the young Osbert. (Fig. 61).

In L'Eté, the architectonic quality of the landscape setting is softened by the gentle arabesque described by the poses of the figures, recalling the decorative quality of Puvis' paintings, viz. Le Sommeil (1867). [73] Thus, even in the pre-Symbolist phase of his work, Osbert showed a talent for decorative design. This was noted by a critic in an article entitled, "Osbert, peintre des fresques": "Il se rattache à l'art du Poussin par la noblesse et la tranquillité des contours...Il est lisible pour tous, sans initiation préalable." [74]

However, by the end of the eighties, Osbert felt the need to express nature in more poetic terms. This changed attitude can be traced to his awareness of the recent developments in Symbolist art and literature, and to his friendship with Puvis de Chavannes. [75] As a form of tribute, Osbert added Puvis' name to the list of acknowledged masters in his Salon entries in 1888, although there is no evidence that Osbert ever worked in Puvis' atelier. Mlle. Osbert does not deny the master's impact on Osbert: "...profondément admirateur de ce grand artiste, (mais) il ne chercha jamais à le copier...mais a ce moment-là, tous les jeunes peintres trouverent certaines de leurs inspirations dans cette grande oeuvre qui apportait un souffle nouveau." [76]

Osbert's embrace of idealist art was further stimulated by his contacts with avant-garde artists and writers. On leaving Lehmann's atelier in 1880, Osbert acquired a studio in a remote section of Paris where frequent reunions with his friends were held; among these could be

counted Seurat, Laurent, Séon, and Aman-Jean.[77] After his marriage in 1894, Osbert's studio continued to be a center of Symbolist activity. Osbert's soirées attracted habitues such as Tristan Klingsor, a poet and art critic; Paul Fort, founder of the Théâtre d'Art; Henri Mazel, founder of the periodical L'Ermitage (called "un boulevard du Symbolisme"); the poets Alfred Jarry and Henri Degron, and Andhré and Jacques des Gachons, illustrator and Symbolist writer. Frequent visits were made by the painters Filiger, Daniel de Montfreid, and Séon, as well as the sculptors Alexandre Charpentier and James Vibert. Thus it is clear that during the 1890's Osbert worked within the mainstream of Symbolism.

Osbert's turn to idealism was realized in his painting Harmonie d'automne, exhibited in the Salon of 1889.[78] (Fig. 62) In this work, the artist subordinated his concern with visual truth to the expression of an emotion aroused by nature. The passing of the seasons and the melancholic feelings associated with autumn are evoked by the artist's use of color and light. The fading sun becomes the dominant color note, amplified by the oranges of the leaves, and intensified by the blue and violet shadows. The sensuously modeled nude figure, posed in a quiet woodsy glen, reflects and is softened by the golden light of the setting sun. A harmony based on complementaries unites the figures with the natural elements--the rock, trees, and water. The use of pure colors for their emotive value represented a new direction for Osbert and a rejection of the greys and earth tones of his earlier Spanish-inspired pictures.

Osbert's interest in color and luminous effects is related to the contemporary researches of Seurat and the Neo-Impressionists. Through his

friendship with Seurat, Osbert was familiar with divisionist color theory and the pointillist technique. One of his carnets includes notations from Chevreul's De la Loi du contraste simultané des couleurs. [79] In order to "mettre de l'air dans ses tableaux" he unsystematically appropriated some of Seurat's ideas. [80] Since Osbert was not concerned with capturing scenes of contemporary Parisian life but with quite the opposite --the world of dream--he used divisionist theories idiosyncratically. Rather than employing divided color to more accurately record color vibrations, Osbert used a limited range of complementaries--blues, violets, yellow-ochre--to enhance the mood and symbolic overtones of his painting. However superficial, his use of this technique convinced some contemporary critics that he should be considered a pointillist. [81]

In Harmonie d'automne and in the Symbolist works to follow, Osbert wanted the spectator to know that his concerns lay beyond the realm of the physical world, and thus he depicted the woman with closed eyes, transported beyond the world of reality, similar to the dreaming figures of other Symbolist artists, viz. Redon, Gauguin, and Bernard. [82] Gustave Soulier, a Symbolist critic, discussed Osbert's intentions to convey more than the surface appearance of nature in these paintings of 1888 and 1889:

> ...il voulait...dégager du spectacle de la nature l'émotion qu'il nous communique, et c'est ainsi qu'il s'est trouvé determiné à choisir le matin et le soir comme les heures où l'homme se sent le mieux recueilli en face de lui-même, et où la nature nous semble le plus confidentielle. 83

Harmonie d'automne was considered a turning point for Osbert as it established his emergence as a Symbolist. In his desire to paint poetically, he combined formal elements borrowed from Gustave Moreau and Puvis

--static, isolated figures, radically simplified landscape forms, and the mood of withdrawal--with a pointillist technique. He was also influenced by Péladan's idealist propaganda proliferated at the time of the first Salon de la Rose+Croix, from 1890 on.

Osbert's important painting, Vision (1892), fully realized Rosicrucian ideals. (Fig. 63) He echoed Péladan's beliefs that art "must be the evocator of the mystery, a solitary response in life, like prayer." [84] In this large scale work, a virginal figures dominates a desolate meadow where a few sheep witness her moment of revelation. Dr. Albert Charpentier, a close friend and biographer of the artist, identified the figure as Ste. Geneviève:

> C'est le sentiment biblique des anciens âges, incarné dans une Sainte Geneviève, gardeuse de moutons. Elle a vraiment la foi des simples, cette sainte, et la vision de grandes choses, quelque peu fabuleuses, dans ce décor mysterieux. Il y a là une infinité de rêve dans une largeur d'exécution ou le procedé même s'efface. C'est à notre avis la plus belle oeuvre de M. Osbert. 85

Gustave Soulier disagreed with Charpentier's identification of the young virgin as Ste. Geneviève, for he felt that the subject depicted was not meant to be interpreted literally.

> C'est ni Jeanne d'Arc, ni Ste. Geneviève que l'artiste voulu peindre, mais leur souvenir s'est imposé à lui quand il a rêvé cette image de la ferveur...C'est son propre rêve du foi et l'adoration qu'il a voulu concréter...l'attitude de la pastourelle, humble et debout, les mains jointes et les regards levés vers l'aube éveille bien en nous le sentiment religieux que l'artiste a voulu évoquer. 86

Agreeing with this idea, the Symbolist poet and critic Henri Degron identified the personage as "La Foi sous les apparances d'une vierge cham-

pêtre...Toute la ferveur d'une âme jeune et candide vers un ciel immaculé, vers un Idéal entrevue." [87] He also commented on Osbert's effective use of landscape as a vehicle of mystical sentiment: "Une sérénité religieuse a envahi le paysage; l'ombre vague rôde aux lointains de forêts prochaines." [88] The artist's daughter, Mlle. Yolande Osbert, perceiving Vision as a Symbolist image of Faith, quoted the artist: "C'est, disait-il, un état d'âme." [89] She continued "C'est certainement l'oeuvre symboliste qui représente le mieux le rêve de ce peintre." [90]

Osbert's image of the young virgin represents a curious mixture of the hieratic and bucolic. The figure, placed in the center foreground, is frontal, symmetrical, and passive. An unearthly radiance immerses the figure and the sparse landscape in a limpid blue atmosphere relieved only by the soft golden light simulating a halo, the pale flesh tones and touches of warm color in the meadow. Almost uniform pointillist brushstrokes dematerialize and flatten the forms and unite them with the flat expanses of the open pasture and the dark masses of trees in the upper part of the painting. Puvis' influence appears in the formal simplifications and the pale color scheme adopted by Osbert to suggest mystical communication. A contemporary critic praised the spirituality of Osbert's almost monochromatic use of blue:

> Les jus de réglisse ont fait place à une couleur claire uniformement reposée enveloppant d'une atmosphère bleuie les êtres et les choses. Le spectateur aurait retrouvé la même vision persistante du rêve materialisé de l'irréel devenant tangible. 91

Osbert used the pointillist brushstroke, but his color in this work has little to do with Neo-Impressionist methods. [92]

Osbert's reputation as a Symbolist painter was established with the success of this painting. However, Osbert did not pursue an iconography with Christian overtones. Following Vision, his outlook was more universal; he probed mysterious aspects of nature which he viewed as the primeval source of man's existence. His worship of the supernatural aspects of nature paralleled the ideas expressed in the poetry of Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Stuart Merrill, and other Symbolists. [93]

During the decade of the nineties, Osbert developed an iconographical formula which poetically expressed his nostalgia for a primitive state when nature and humanity existed in harmony. Using the motif of feminine figures in silent forests, Osbert created otherworldly images. In developing his personal vocabulary, Osbert was probably impressed by the unearthly calm of Gustave Moreau, although his formal simplifications were clearly inspired by Puvis. Moreau's watercolor, Le Soir et la Douleur of 1870 prefigures Osbert's paintings not only in its lassitudinous mood, but also in the compositional arrangements of two figures placed at the foot of trees, the crepuscular haze and the reflective waters. [94] (Fig. 64)

Osbert's vocabulary is typified in his painting Les Chants de la nuit (1896). [95] (Figs. 65, 66) In a dim forest sanctuary, three groups of pale-robed women are gathered at the water's edge, in a glade illuminated by the reflection of the rising moon on the still waters. A prevailing bluish tonality, balanced by touches of yellow-ochre, conveys a mood of serenity and withdrawal. The feeling of ritualistic silence arises from the arrangement of the landscape elements. The quiet vertical rhythms of the trees are echoed in the static poses of the figures and balanced by

the horizontals of the water, the groundline of tree-trunks and the undulating mass of the forest. As in Osbert's earlier works, the forms are softened and unified in a vaporous atmosphere created by pointillist touches of color. The figures here are smaller in scale than in previous paintings; still they enhance the quasi-religious meaning. [96] They appear as disembodied shapes, lacking individuality and detail. Their pale draperies suggest their roles as primitive priestesses.

Through this type of imagery, Osbert summoned up a vision of a primordial past, a pure state in which mankind worshiped nature directly. Henri Degron sensed the religious aspect of Osbert's evocative landscapes:

> La vision de l'artiste s'est empreinte de nostalgie et s'est refugiée vers une solitude d'arrière-saison... l'on entre dans la futaie comme on entre dans un sanctuaire. 99

Gustave Soulier also commented on Osbert's predilection for dusky light to enhance the air of mystery: "...et plus qu'aucun autre, Alphonse Osbert a mis dans ces heures tout le mystère d'une Anonciation ou d'un Gethsémane." [98]

Osbert's preoccupation with the iconography of the female figure in landscape placed him among the Symbolist artists who recognized a universal spirit and sacred quality in nature, and for whom Puvis' Bois sacré was a generative image. The divine element residing in nature was given philosophical and religious substance in the theosophical text, Les Grands Initiés by Edouard Schuré, published in 1889. [99] Schuré's syncretic approach and his research into the common spiritual ground of all religions profoundly affected Symbolist artists probing the mysteries of man's existence.

Schuré's vision of the divine in nature and the forest as the site of primeval rites was strong support for the Symbolists committed to the

concept of a universal spirit. Here was justification for them to paint not the external appearance of nature but to seek her inner voices and essences. In their desire to experience nature on a more profound level than the Impressionists had done, Schuré's book was a revelation to the Symbolists. [100] Thus the Bois sacré belonged not only to Puvis but to all artists seeking to express spiritual ideas--from the Nabis with their radical formal means to other artists who remained closer to traditional forms of representation such as Osbert, Séon, Point, Ménard, and Henri Martin. It is our contention that Osbert was profoundly affected by Schuré's explanation of the evolution of religion. Osbert's atavistic paintings of pale-robed women wandering in forest clearings could serve as illustrations for Schuré's text, so perfectly do they incarnate his ideas. (Fig. 67)

According to Schuré, the forest was the site of divine revelation to women, who by their innate sensitivity to the world of the spirit, invoked the invisible and transmitted divine knowledge. Through their visionary faculty, women became priestesses and the forest their sacred precinct. "Le chêne où la femme inspirée a vu l'apparition devient un arbre sacré ...là, sous l'influence magnétique de la lune qui la plonge dans un état visionnaire, elle continue à prophétiser au nom du grand ancêtre." [101]

Osbert's moonstruck landscapes appear to derive their meaning from this text, and his women, carrying lyres and singing, incarnate Schuré's ideas of the links between religion and poetry.

> Au milieu des clairières, (elles) évoquerent les âmes diaphanes des ancêtres...par de magiques incantations dans les brumes flottantes aux transparences lunaires... lorsqu'elle prophétise dans l'état visionaire, son visage

> se transfigure, sa parole devient rythmique et sa voix elevée profère ses oracles en chantant sur une melopée grave et significative...L'idée de la révélation ne pouvait se produire qu'à propos de faits de cet ordre. Du même coup nous en voyons jaillir la religion et le culte, les prêtres et la poésie. 102

Osbert's idyllic landscapes of the 1890's follow the pattern of composition and expression set in Les Chants de la nuit. [103] Osbert continued this formula with only slight variations throughout the rest of his career, beyond the years when Symbolism was a viable aesthetic. [104] This consistency caused the critic Félicien Fagus to remark: "La toujours même clairière, même ciel, même arbres, même couleur, et toujours même femme intarissablement recommencée." [105]

A later example of Osbert's dedication to this imagery is seen in Solitude (1904), where a single figure holding a lyre stands next to a pair of trees beside a still lake. (Fig. 68) The pointillist touch is still evident in parts of the painting except in the flat strokes of bright gold of the reflections in the water. The blues of the earlier paintings have been replaced with mauve and violet, adding a melancholic dimension to this nostalgic reverie. In these later paintings, the figures are often larger and the expanse of water is broader. A constant element is the juxtaposition of the female figure with trees, an archetypal symbolization of woman as forest or earth spirit or fertility vessel. [106]

Besides easel paintings, Osbert painted several mural decorations after the turn of the century. [107] In 1902, Osbert was awarded an important commission to decorate the Thermal Baths at Vichy. This imposing structure, built in 1901 in a Neo-Byzantine style, provided large surfaces for painting on the arched walls supporting the central dome of the Grand Hall.

(Fig. 69) The two panels, Le Bain and La Source, painted in oil directly on the wall, measure 15 meters each and were completed within two years by the artist working unassisted. [108] (Figs. 70, 71, 72) Osbert's mastery of the mural aesthetic is evident in these panels which are well integrated with their architectural setting. The delicate color harmonies extend the airy space of the central hall, and the dominance of soft blues echoes the tinted glass of the facade. Puvis' influence reappears in these broad compositions where the artist has included figures draped "à l'antique," in attitudes which recall those of the master. [109]

Several preparatory drawings of figures in these panels are preserved in the Cabinet des Dessins, Louvre. They show Osbert's skill in drawing classically modeled and draped figures; many are shown both nude and with drapery, yet in the finished paintings there is a curious mixture of classicism and the contemporary. In La Source, there are several identifiable portraits, including those of Osbert's wife and daughter, and even a self-portrait, showing himself in conversation with a local government official and the architects of the building. In the background, the mountains of Auvergne are recognizable. [110] The introduction of the specific and contemporary marks a departure from Osbert's Symbolist works where no hint of the quotidian appeared. By incorporating these references to the external world he was again emulating Puvis, who mixed the classical and the contemporary in his panel Inter Artes et Naturam (1890) in the Musée des Beaux Arts, Rouen. (Fig. 14)

Several present-day historians dismiss Osbert (and other lesser-known Symbolists) as a "Puvisant" without examining in depth his position on the Symbolist era.[111] Their premise is arrived at from the viewpoint of historical perspective but often without evaluation of the Symbolist critical literature which presents a different view of this artist. Osbert's contemporaries, even those who voiced negative criticism, recognized the poetic content of his works and did not discuss the influence of Puvis on his works.

At present, benefiting from recent scholarship in the Symbolist field, we can more accurately assess the extent of Puvis' influence on Osbert. Like Puvis, Osbert's vision was nostalgic with its reference to an unspecified ancient past. Both artists conveyed their atavism using draped figures and generalized settings, although in Osbert's paintings these elements were rendered even more summarily, with less detail and less careful modeling than in Puvis'. (Fig. 1) Osbert's figures haunt secluded groves where no hint of civilization exists, whereas Puvis' landscapes often contain ruins or fragments of architecture which in themselves refer to a classical past.

However, Osbert's compositional ordering and abbreviation of the landscape forms owe much to Puvis; Osbert's use of sparsely foliated trees which form a screen of vertical lines was a compositional device commonly used by Puvis and many other painters of this era.[112]

The feeling of serenity in Osbert's landscapes derives in part from the harmonic ordering and balance of his composition, inspired by Puvis' restatement of classical ideals. Additionally, Osbert adopted from Puvis the motif of a body of water employed as a flat horizontal plane; when the

surface was painted gold as in the Bois sacré it provided an unmodulated reflecting surface.

Despite these borrowings, Osbert's idyllic landscapes are clearly located in the world of dream and unreality; they fulfill the ideals of Symbolist expression and carry to their logical end the proto-Symbolist ideas of Puvis and Moreau.

As Robert Goldwater pointed out, Symbolist artists rejected traditional pictorial techniques and conventional allegory to exteriorize their emotions and to create a mood of reflection through psychic suggestion. [113] Goldwater commented that Puvis hinted at this form with his "thin-spread idyllic suggestion." [114] Puvis' unnatural archaisms and pale colors implied his detachment from the physical world, whereas Osbert's images of the enchanged forest leave no doubt that the artist probed even deeper, using the poetic vocabulary of Symbolism to evoke a world of mystery.

ARMAND POINT (1861-1932)

Like Séon and Osbert, Armand Point was close to Péladan and he contributed annually to the Salons de la Rose+Croix.[115] Péladan's demand for art patterned on the Italianate tradition was met in Point's nostalgic paintings of dreamy maidens. In fact, Point's paintings are so close to their Renaissance models that they could be considered in a historicist rather than a Symbolist context.

In this respect, Point's oeuvre is somewhat problematical as it seemingly exists on the borderline separating academic and Symbolist art.[116] Unlike most of our "Nostalgiques," Point's paintings recall a specific past and thus they appear less ambivalent than most art which traditionally has been called Symbolist. If our present concept of Symbolist art were bound to the narrow interpretation of previous scholars, we would be limited to the artists Aurier identified as "idéistes," i.e., Gauguin and his followers.[117]

However, if we now accept a broader interpretation of the term "Symbolist art," defined by Hans Hofstätter as an art which gives primacy to reflection and poetic suggestion, there is no doubt that Armand Point was a Symbolist. His art was always considered Symbolist by his contemporaries, who saw that his nostalgic evocations of an imagined past emerged within the Symbolist framework.

Armand Point's artistic development was fostered by his intimate contacts with Symbolist writers and artists. Besides his participation in

the Rose+Croix circle, he followed other Symbolist artists in exhibiting only at the Champ-de-Mars and avoided the conservative Salon des Champs Elysées. But because his art did not depart radically from earlier pictorial conventions, it was incompatible with the type of art shown at Les Indépendants. Therefore, he was not considered by Coquiot as a "Nostalgique" although his paintings conform to the retrospective viewpoint of that group of artists. His themes and images always reflect the past; except for portraits "à l'Italien," Point never painted contemporary life. (Fig. 73)

Armand Point sought to recreate the Idealism he found in the early Renaissance tradition. Thus he rejected both Impressionism and Salon art for their attachment to the quotidian and commitment to naturalism. Camille Mauclair, a crusader for Idealism, found his concerns reflected in Point's art:

> ...il proteste éloquement par sa vie, son oeuvre, et ses théories au nom de spiritualisme. Il n'en restera pas moins le plus audacieux théoricien de ce mouvement réactionnaire, le premier qui ait déserté les salons et créé son autonomie avec autant de dignité de caractère que d'intransigeance artistique... L'institut le haïrait...comme il detesta sécretement, l'oeuvre de Gustave Moreau; le classicisme, aussi peu "pompier" que possible, mais stylisé, mais noble... 118

Armand Point was honored in a special number of La Plume dedicated to him in 1901. Like others in the series, it was an anthology of articles reprinted from other periodicals. [119] Point won the respect of Symbolist artists and writers whose spiritual outlook and occult interests he shared. His closest friend was Elémir Bourges, a mystical poet and novelist, through whom Point associated with Mallarmé, Stuart Merrill, and Camille

Mauclair. This circle also included the writers Paul Claudel, Maurice Maeterlinck, Paul Fort, François Herold, Henri de Regnier, Edouard Dujardin, and Jean Moréas, and the artists Louis Anquetin, Emile Bernard, and Leonard Sarluys. [120]

Armand Point was born in Algeria, but received most of his academic training in Paris at the Ecole des Beaux Arts with Cormon and Herst. In 1879 he made his debut in the Salon with paintings of Arab subjects. He later switched to the less conservative Société Nationale des Beaux Arts (Salon du Champs-de-Mars), where he continued to exhibit until 1896. [121]

Point's early paintings of the late eighties were stylistic compromises in the manner of Bastien Lepage combining superficial Impressionist technique with academic formulas. Like many of his contemporaries, Point frequently employed the pastel medium for his landscapes with dreamy young women immersed in vaporous atmosphere. (Fig. 74) These works, which elicited praise from Péladan and Mauclair, won for Point a fellowship to study in Italy. [122] Encouraged by Péladan, Point had already developed a passion for early Italian art. [123] Deeply intellectual, Point had already read the theoretical treatises of Cennino Cennini, Alberti, and Lomazzo, and through them, dedicated himself to the quest for Ideal beauty. [124] Point felt that the ideas of the fifteenth century artists had particular meaning for his own generation when rampant realism had all but destroyed the concept of the noble ideal, and he summed up his ideas in an article, "Primitifs et Symbolistes," published on his return to France. "C'est que nous revenons par une marche naturelle à un état d'âme identique à un besoin de sentiments intenses et nobles." [125]

Point admired the idealist approach of Italians beginning with Cimabue, and studied them to learn their methods of transforming nature into an elevated form of art. [126] He realized that the method of the Primitifs depended on the use of symbols rather than the recording of appearances. Thus he wrote that the artist's task was to find a non-imitative means of expression which would convey his experience of nature to the viewer. "Et partout, ce sont les éternels symboles où l'humanité a généralisé les grandes sentiments qui l'agitent." And, in this context, Point stressed the relevance of the Quattrocentists for his own time:

> Voici le point précis que nous ramène, nous modernes, à Cimabue, à Giotto, et à tous les Primitifs. Violentés par des desirs imperieux d'une Beauté, essence de la vie terrestre, nous devons comme au XIVe siècle reconquérir les formes expressives répandues autour de nous, en reconnaître les vertus singulières et les dégager sous forme de lois, de l'universalité. 127

From his study in Italy, Point returned to France even more alienated by the quotidian aspects of modern, i.e., realist art. To the contemporary he opposed the purity of the "Primitifs": "Ils n'ont pas illustré ni un Bon Bock, ni une Ramasseuse de pommes de terre, ni un Bal de canotiers." [128] Thus Point dedicated the rest of his painting career to recreating the spirit, if not always the letter, of Quattrocento art. In this phase of his work, Point could be considered a prototypical "Nostalgique" whose hatred of modern life committed him to a passionate attachment to past art.

Retreating from society, Armand Point sequestered himself in a house and studio in Marlotte, near Fontainebleau. He led a hermetic life and allowed his meditations on the art of the past to be interrupted only by

contact with a select group of friends and pupils. His friend, the poet Stuart Merrill, described Point's ambiance in typically Symbolist fashion: "Là-bas dans le joli village de Marlotte qu'encadre, domaine de rêve et de mystère, la forêt de Fontainebleau, une maison élève sur la petite rue silencieuse et déserte..." [129]

Because Point's Italianate style of the mid-nineties was so dependent on earlier art, Point was often called a "pasticheur" in the art press. In Revue Blanche, Félicien Fagus wrote: "Ses peintures sont belles, mais belles comme de belles paraphrases paraphrasant étroitement l'art d'une date et d'une date que nous ne comprenons plus. [130] (Author's underlines)

Point defended himself against such attacks by affirming that his dedication to the past did not result in sterile imitation, and that his art was far removed from the academic. While he affirmed his own modernity, he defended his idealist goal to convey a universal and timeless message:

> Je n'imite aucunement les maitres anciens comme un académique copiant platement la lettre, et non pas même l'esprit, de David ou d'Ingres; je prétends que, vivant dans mon temps et impressionné par lui, je ne puis me défendre de sentiments aussi modernes que ceux de tous mes contemporains. Je ne pourrais, même le souhaitant, penser et sentir comme les Primitifs. Je soutiens simplement qu'ils étaient plus logiques, plus serieux et plus artistes que les peintres actuels dans leur facon de traduire leur pensée--et c'est cette facon à quoi je reviens, non parce qu'elle est la leur, mais parce qu'elle me parait préférable. Il n'y a pas d'art vrai, pour moi, dans la notation de l'instantanéité, ...mais dans l'expression stylisée et complète des sentiments autant que possibles invariables de l'âme et de l'esprit humain. 131

At least one critic approved of Point's Neo-Quattrocento stylization and called it a "modern" approach. Raymond Bouyer commented in his Salon

review of 1894: "Goutter Botticelli, c'est à la fois adorer la forme et comprendre la modernité." [132]

This curious interpretation of the term "modern" by some critics of the 1890's poses a problem for present-day art historians. It appears to be an inversion of twentieth-century values, for the Symbolists identified as new and innovative their nostalgic turn to the past, while they considered realism and its variants to be outmoded.

It was in this context that Armand Point's work won admiration and his dependence on earlier artists such as the Italian Primitives, the Pre-Raphaelites, and Gustave Moreau was regarded in a positive light. [133]

Symbolist critics regarded Armand Point as a heritor of the Pre-Raphaelites in France. Burne-Jones and Watts, whose works were exhibited at the Salons and Exhibitions Universelles, were acclaimed by the French, and the writings of Ruskin attracted much attention in the Parisian art world of the '80's and '90's. [134] Armand Point's interest in England paralleled that of his friend Mallarmé who had lived in England in 1862-3, and who maintained his contacts there through correspondence and writing for English journals.

Camille Mauclair, in discussing Point's analogies with the English, stated that Point and the Pre-Raphaelites shared a quasi-religious commitment to spiritual ideals [135] Like Rossetti, Point was convinced of the "silent dialogue of the soul and nature," and the "spiritual being as the center toward which everything else converges." [136]

Mauclair, however, believed that Point surpassed his English forerunners: "avec une nature plus vivante, plus de primesaut malgré tout, et

aussi beaucoup plus de sense pictural, il n'est ni glacé ni blessant par la couleur crue ou ternie comme eux." [137] Point, himself, refused to acknowledge his indebtedness to the English, and he compared their work unfavorably with that of the Italian Primitives. He faulted the English because of their moralizing attitude and peculiar stylistic mannerisms. [138]

Still it appears that Point owed much to Pre-Raphaelite images of women set in landscapes or gardens which, in turn, were derived from the Quattrocentists. In these images, a close-up view of the figure dominates the frontal plane. Her emotional state is reflected in the moody quality of the landscape behind her. Point's Portrait of Mme. Berthelot exemplifies his use of this format which was prefigured in Rossetti's Water-willow (1871). [139] (Figs. 75, 76)

Armand Point was also influenced by the paintings of Gustave Moreau, to the extent that Moreau was sometimes called his master. This was true in figurative terms only since Point never was his pupil. Moreau inspired many artists of the Symbolist generation, not only through his dreamy art, but also in his stated belief that the goal of art was to engage the mental and imaginative faculties of the viewer to depict the purely visual. [140]

The dreamlike stasis of Moreau's figures and the visionary quality of his Leonardesque landscapes deeply impressed Armand Point. However, Point's landscapes of fantasy with Renaissance princesses lack the unrestrained imaginative power and emblematic purity of Moreau's haunting visions. Armand Point's Princesse à la licorne was inspired perhaps by the tapestries of the Musée de Cluny and by the reflective mood and preciosity

of Moreau's Les Licornes. (Figs. 77, 78) However, Point's insistence on detailed Renaissance trappings results in an earthbound image; it misses the magical quality of the Moreau. [141]

In Point's pastel, L'Eternelle chimère (1895), there are echoes of both the Primitives and their latter-day interpreter, Burne-Jones. (Figs. 79, 80) Yet Point's nostalgic composition clearly belongs to the era of Symbolism. All aspects of the work emphasize the mood of detachment; in the reference to the past through the choice of figural type and costume, in her reflexive attitude which extends into the shadowy landscape. Even the precisely-drawn details of plants, trees, costume and coiffure do not detract from the dream-like mood. In establishing a harmonious relationship between the figure and landscape, Point achieved the goal of Gustave Moreau--to make visible the mysterious soul of nature. [142] Point felt that this was the keystone of the art of the Primitives which he considered crucial to Symbolist expression:

> Chez les maîtres du XIVe et XVe siècle ce qu'il est bon de rechercher, c'est l'ésprit de leurs efforts et de leurs conquêtes et l'appliquer à la manifestation de notre âme fatalement différente mais non entièrement autre, et qu'évidemment la nature seule peut nous refléter.
>
> La forme d'un arbre, d'un rocher nous révèle à nous-même aussi bienque le visage d'un homme. C'est le lien mystérieux des choses et des êtres que nous voulons exprimer, nous symbolistes, et nous revenons ainsi à reconstituer une religion, celle de la Nature, le panthéisme des Grecs qui déifiaient les aspects du ciel et de la terre et que animaient les chênes et les fontaines et le vent dans les feuilles printanières. 143

In an article on Armand Point included in a series called "Les Artistes de l'âme," Gustave Soulier noted Point's affinities with Symbolist poets of dream visions, Georges Rodenbach and Henri de Regnier. Citing

Point's paintings of young women in landscapes, he quoted a verse by Leconte de Lisle: "Elle passe tranquille en un rêve divin," and called them "soeurs de la Joconde et des vierges de Botticelli et Ghirlandajo." [144]

In order to faithfully recreate the spirit of Quattrocento art, Point also revived its techniques. [145] He often used tempera to avoid the heaviness and textured brushstrokes of the oil medium and furthermore, it enabled him to emulate the flatness of color and the precise patterns of fifteenth-century materials. He also employed pastel and crayon in preference to the oil medium. (Fig. 80) In all of these forms, Point's predilection for linear art was evident.

Point's theories of linearism followed that of earlier nineteenth century ideologues, from Ingres to Charles Blanc. Blanc had written that line was superior to color "parce qu'il peut exprimer toutes les pensées ...et que les lignes ont un rapport direct avec le sentiment et qu'elles peuvent être expressives, éloquents." [146] Armand Point's pursuit of Idealism led him to subdue the role of color and challenge its domination in the era of Impressionism. Point felt that only through the use of line could the artist achieve a feeling of universal harmony, a truth which was first realized by the Greeks and continued by the Italian Primitives. [147] Mauclair felt that Point's attained the Ideal through the primacy of the linear. "Nous sommes ici en pleine idéalisme absolu...C'est la negation de toute représentation trouvant son fin en elle-même, le principe symbolique et philosophique donne pour base à tout art." [148]

In his nostalgic revival of Quattrocento art, Armand Point represented attitudes which typified an important aspect of Symbolist expression. Many of his contemporaries praised rather than condemned his eclectic

approach toward the Primitives and their nineteenth-century heritors, the Pre-Raphaelites and Gustave Moreau. Soulier summed up the contribution of Armand Point, who, like the poets, conveyed through his idealistic art the nostalgic sentiments of his generation:

> Curieux des confins de l'inconscient et du réflexe, de ces régions imprécises où le sentiment s'alanguit dans la sensation à peine perçue, Armand Point discerne les états d'âme universels, auxquels il donne la tournure particulière à nos cerveaux par la participation du sien propre, et c'est par là que nous reconnaissons en oui une part de nous-mêmes et que son oeuvre correspond aux tendances de notre époque. 149

Nostalgia in Extremis: Botticellism in the 1890's

> ...Alors, pourquoi...tous les symbolistes...les mystiques larvoyants, et les kabbalistes, et les préraphaélites, pourquoi tous ceux qui font des vierges putrides, des princesses inassouvies, des amantes insexuées...se reclament-ils de moi..? Par quelle incompréhensible aberration m'adorent-ils?...Je suis leur dieu, ... tour à tour obscène et angélique, ni homme ni femme. Ils me dressent des autels dans les jardins, dans les parcs, dans les lacs de leur âme! Botticelli!, Botticelli! On n'entend que mon nom parmi les fumées, les cris d'adoration, les soupirs d'extase...Pourquoi m'avoir choisi pour mener ce carnaval, moi, plutôt que Ghirlandajo, ...le divin Piero della Francesca... Luini...Filippo Lippi, Angelico, et jusqu'au vieux Cimbue? Est-ce que'ils n'auraient pu leur fournir des modèles de coiffures et des rites d'attitudes?

Thus spoke Sandro Botticelli returned to life in an article by Octave Mirbeau published in 1896.[150] This mordant satire accurately captures the flavor of the Botticelli mania sweeping Paris in the 1890's. The rediscovery of Botticelli, an artist whose reputation had been neglected for more than two centuries, was documented more objectively by other critics. Léon Rosenthal, who wrote a book on this phenomenon, stated: "Un article de La Vie Parisienne n'est complet s'il n'est parlé de Botticelli!" André Fontainas characterized the artistic milieu:

> Certes nous connaissons moins Giotto ou Simone Memni que Gentile da Fabriano Fra Angelico. Ghirlandajo, et principalement Botticelli en qui nous puisions la doctrine et la révélation...Les femmes adoptèrent le type et la coupe du visage de ses madones penchantes et mièvres, de ses anges aussi dont les regards sont chargés de promesses ambiguës et de harcelantes sollicitations. Ce qui, dans ces personnages demeure indefinissable, nous apparaissait chargé de significations mystérieuses et c'etait la vie latente de symboles que nous y prétendions découvrir. 152

Armand Point's paintings, perhaps more than those of any Symbolist artist, reflected this passion. Mirbeau was of this opinion, for in writing of Botticellism and "les artistes de l'âme" the name of Armand Point appeared most frequently.[153]

The Botticelli revival manifested in the closing years of the century rivalled the interest in other Quattrocento artists shown earlier by Ingres and his followers and by the writer Alexis-François Rio.[154] But while they adored Giotto, Fra Angelico, and Perugino for their qualities of humility and purity, the Botticelli cultists reflected the decadent sensibilities of fin-de-siècle aesthetes.

The art of Botticelli was little-known until relatively late in the nineteenth century due to lack of interest, prejudice, and misattribution. Earlier, scholars studying Quattrocento art ignored him as they focused on the wellsprings of Christian art, which to them meant Giotto's frescoes or those in the Campo Santo, Pisa. The first interest in Botticelli was shown in England in the 1860's by Rossetti, Millais, and Burne-Jones. Following Swinburne's article in 1868, Walter Pater's essay of 1870 marked the official adoption of the artist by the Aesthetic movement, and the establishment of a literary cult devoted to him.[155]

In this circle, the artificiality and elegance of Botticelli's figures were admired, but to Victorian society in general his art appeared clumsy.[156] For Swinburne, these faults became positive attributes: "the somewhat lean and fleshless beauty, worn down it seems by some sickness or natural trouble rather than by any ascetic or artificial sorrow."[157]

Pater found the "sentiment of ineffable melancholy" expressed in Botticelli's madonnas and pagan figures alike. He acknowledged his own debt to Baudelaire's standard of beauty based on mystery and perversity. These ideas colored Pater's perception of the "peevish looking Madonnas, conformed to no acknowledged or obvious type of beauty." As for Venus, Pater sensed "the sadness with which he conceived the goddess of pleasure," who never appeared "without some shadow of death in the grey flesh and wan flowers."[158]

In France, the Decadents adopted the English viewpoint on the perverse nature of Botticelli's art. Jean Lorrain encapsulated the typical exaggerations of the Decadent sensibility in his view of the Primavera as "satanique, irrésistible, et terrifiante."[159] Even a more objective historian, Eugène Müntz, called Botticelli's feminine types sickly and melancholic and noted the weightlessness and imbalance of the figures, the mannered drawing and self-conscious archaisms. In pondering the attraction of this "morbid" art for his own generation, Müntz suggested that the peculiar charm of Botticelli's figures satisfied a public surfeited with the suavity of Raphael.[160]

> Nous nous plaisons à retrouver chez lui le reflet de ce qu'il y a de maladif en nous-même; notre curiosité, blasée par les Vierges idéales de Raphaël, aime à découvrir du piquant dans ces physionomies anémiques. Le mélange de la naiveté et du sentimentalisme; le mélange de l'inexperience et de la distinction, du laisser-aller et du raffinement, n'auraient cependant pas suffi pour subjuguer ainsi notre génération, si un parfum de jeunesse et de candeur ne se dégageait de ces figures enchanteresses...161

Léon Rosenthal also analyzed the Botticelli revival in order to evaluate the artist obscured beneath his myth. Rosenthal recognized the element of effete snobbism in this phenomenon:

> Aimer Botticelli c'est, tout d'abord, se distinguer du vulgaire que ne le connait pas ou ne le comprend pas...Quel plaisir, au Louvre, de s'arrêter avec complaisance devant des tableaux dont la foule s'écarte et de sentir que l'on est supérieur à ceux qu l'on coudoie et que l'on étonne... 162

In his study of Botticelli's art, Rosenthal acknowledged personal mannerisms of the artist. "On pensait alors que c'était vilain, mal peint et ennuyeux," but he attributed this to the esoteric interests of the artist, and the fact that he painted for an elite audience, the Medici circle.

> Sans doute, il ne peignait pas pour tous et réservait à des elus de sens de ses mystérieuses conceptions. Du moins les maîtres francais ou anglais qui se reclament de lui paraissent aujourd'hui bien dédaigneux de la popularité. Notre vanité, est interessée à croire que Botticelli pensait comme eux.[163]

Rosenthal concluded by warning his audience against viewing Botticelli through the veil of nineteenth century aesthetics and through the myriad imitators of his style.[164] He counseled artists not to emulate Botticelli's mannerism but to dedicate themselves to the Neo-Platonic ideal of beauty manifested through Botticelli's graceful linearity. He restated Pater's view that Botticelli "was above all things a poetical painter," and he urged the Symbolists to follow this aspect of the artist in their search to join the sister arts of poetry and painting.[165]

MAURICE CHABAS (1863-1947)

Maurice Chabas, who painted both idyllic landscapes and mystical visions, exhibited in all six Rose+Croix Salons.[166] According to the artist, "L'art doit l'élever l'âme du spectateur et l'aimenter vers les réalities des mondes supérieurs."[167]

During the 1890's, Chabas employed the commonly-used motif of a female figure contemplating a hazy landscape as a metaphor for spiritual revelation. (Fig. 82) However, despite his nostalgic viewpoint and rejection of modern life, Chabas was not included among Coquiot's "Nostalgiques" since he never exhibited with Les Indépendants. Unlike the "Nostalgiques" and the artists in Peladan's circle, Chabas often exhibited in the ultra-conservative Salon des Artistes Français along with his brother, the Salon painter Paul Chabas.[168] Thus, Maurice Chabas is one of those artists active in both academic and Symbolist circles, whose work indicates the difficulty of classifying certain artists in this era.

The Symbolist poet, Gustave Kahn, called Chabas' dreamy women "sèves de la terre."[169] Like other nostalgic painters—Osbert, Séon, and Ménard—Chabas instilled an aura of mystery using the familiar vocabulary of figures lost in reverie, crepuscular lighting, simplified land masses and motionless waters. Their moody quality embodies Amiel's aphorism, "tout paysage quelconque est un etát d'âme."[170] A contemporary critic discussed the spiritualized aspects of Chabas' landscapes:

> De tous ces paysages émane la sérénité, la paix... les choses semblent avoir perdu leur matérialité... A la vie de l'atmosphere et des eaux, de la sylve et des êtres, l'artiste ne consent à emprunter que ses rapports speciaux avec les thythmes intérieurs, déterminant les sentiments nobles, les pensées hautes ...chargée de rêves comme l'atmosphere crépusculaire, splendide et religieuse comme le couchant dans l'éspace profond. 171

Passages such as this evidence the Neo-Romantic flavor of much Symbolist criticism. Writings by Amiel and Sénancour were often quoted, especially with reference to landscapes of Symbolist painters such as Chabas. Léon de St. Valéry quoted Amiel: "Sous les espèces de la nature, ce sont nos paysages intérieurs, les états supérieurs de notre méditation qui nous sont présentés."[172] And Raymond Bouyer quoted Senancour: "La terre féconde, les cieux immenses, les eaux passagères ne sont qu'une expression des rapports que nos coeurs produisent et continient."[173] Kahn pointed out that Chabas used the Breton landscape around Belon "qui semble le promenoir le mieux disposé pour la songerie d'un artiste épris d'au-delà d'un peintre-poète."[174] These gloomy land forms recall those painted by Ménard, similarly based on Breton sites.[175] (Fig. 83)

In his later works, Chabas' mystical beliefs transformed his imagery. Figures were banned and landscape forms became unrecognizable.[176] Huge skies were the stage for the revelation of supernatural visions. (Fig. 84) In addressing himself to these later works, Gustave Kahn analogized them to the hallucinations of Blake and to the sublime vision of Turner.

> La peinture a droit au merveilleux, et le peintre a le choix du merveilleux qu'il veut faire surgir... La vérité n'est pas une...le poète et le peintre ont le droit de peupler l'éspace de créations de leurs ésprits et d'un rêve d'immortalité! 177

Chabas' paintings of heavenly apparitions correspond in certain ways to the visionary landscapes of Charles Dulac.[178] (Fig. 85) One wonders how much influence Dulac's lithographs, exhibited and published during the 1890's, might have had in the transformation of Chabas' iconography from the early figural works to the later abstract compositions.

Despite certain formal analogies, such as the use of color fading to white as it approaches "le centre divin," the religious orientation of

these artists differed.[179] While Charles Dulac's mysticism was intensely Catholic, Chabas' beliefs about universal spirit in nature was based on oriental religions. De St. Valéry wrote that in the last works, Chabas attained "la Connaissance du Grand Principe," possibly indicating a theosophic orientation.[180]

EUGENE GRASSET (1845-1912)

Eugène Grasset, a key figure in the Art Nouveau movement in France, played a major role in the revitalization of the decorative arts. Aside from this activity, he also exhibited at the first Salon de Rose+Croix a painting of Thoura Mazda, indicating his attraction to the occult.[181]

In later paintings he turned to idyllic iconography and transformed the poetic and escapist themes of Symbolist art into the vernacular of Art Nouveau. Because of Grasset's activities in these two spheres of artistic expression, idyllic themes were popularized in book illustrations, the poster, and stained glass.[182] (Fig. 86)

Influenced by the English precursors of Art Nouveau—Morris, Crane, and Dresser— Grasset sought to remove the hierarchial distinctions separating painting and sculpture from the applied arts.[183] Like many Symbolist artists, Grasset realized that the imitation of nature and the idealizing demands of decorative arts were inimical. The term "decorative art," as used then, meant the opposite of descriptive art and it implied an absolute standard of harmony and beauty.[184]

Even before becoming aware of the precocious Art Nouveau formulations of the English artists of the 1880's, Grasset was attracted to the

decorative qualities of Medieval and Japanese art. As an architecture student, he met Viollet-le-Duc, who introduced him to the world of Gothic and Celtic ornament. He later became enamored of Japanese art when he studied the albums of Hokusai, and having traveled in Egypt as a youth, he absorbed other non-Western traditions of stylized ornament.[185]

Grasset's immersion in medieval lore was furthered by an early commission for the illustration of the Carolingian epic, L'Histoire de Quatre Fils d'Aymon (1879-1882).[186] His illustrations of Arthurian legend and fairy tales so closely paralleled the contemporary works of Crane, Ricketts and Beardsley that Meier-Graefe called him the "French (Walter) Crane."[182]

Despite his involvement in the applied arts and his infrequent exhibitions with the Salons, contemporary art critics regarded Grasset's paintings within the framework of Symbolism. Leon Maillard noted the artist's attempts to probe the spiritual truths expressed in nature:

> Plusiers paysages affirment ce culte envers la nature en création perpetuelle des lignes harmonieuses. Il ne lui a pas suffi de saisir un effet, il a fallu que cet effet fût évocateur d'autres impressions extra-matérielles. C'est grande allure de réel supérieur qui s'affirme dans la représentation où la pensée emprunte aux sols, aux verdures, aux architectures, à la clarté des ciels, sa force d'existence et de domination. 188

Grasset's theories of art parallel other Symbolist pronouncements. In an article of 1892, Grasset was quoted:

> Supprimer l'imitation et le pittoresque, et remplacer ces banalités par le style, le style qui est l'expression de la volonté individuelle ou collective et qui peut seul modifier la nature accidentelle dans les oeuvres d'art. 189

Grasset added that in order to achieve style, the artist must "approfondir la nature, l'épouser jusqu'à ce qu'on soit arrivé à la surprendre et à la

dominer."[190] Thus, in his conviction that the role of the artist was to synthesize and stylize his impressions of nature, Grasset shared the approach of such artists as Séon, Denis and other idealists of that generation who bore the imprint of Charles Blanc's teachings.[191]

In the watercolor, Les Femmes musiciennes (1890), Grasset suggested musical harmonies in his integration of the female figures and the idealized landscape. (Fig. 87) Grasset eschewed the misty light chosen by "Nostalgiques" such as Osbert, Séon, Chabas and Le Sidaner to create an atmosphere of mystery. In his paintings as well as in his stained-glass designs and posters, Grasset employed clear illumination to convey an idyllic feeling.

Grasset's well-known calendar pages for La Belle Jardinière (1896) are popularizations of the iconography that for most Symbolists implied a spiritual truth. Grasset's prettified maidens tending idealized gardens are counterparts of the women lost in reverie painted by the Nabis and the "Idéalistes."[192] (Fig. 88) However, in contrast to their immobile Symbolist sisters, Grasset's active young women revive Medieval rites as they perform horticultural labors appropriate to the month symbolized by zodiacal signs on their gowns. Perhaps Botticelli's Primavera, purged of any melancholic interpretation, lies beneath these fantasies of blissful innocence.[193] (Fig. 89)

In this series, Grasset, like other Symbolist artists, employed the decorative principle of the arabesque to create a fluid surface pattern suggestive of delicate beauty. Grasset abjured the formal simplifications of Maurice Denis, Osbert, and Maillol who attempted to create visual equivalents for Symbolist poetry. For Grasset, decoration meant complication;

his richly patterned surfaces and compression of space derive from Medieval tapestries and Persian art.[194] Grasset's paintings of idyllic themes exemplify the blurring of boundaries between Symbolist painting and Art Nouveau.

ANDHRÉ DES GACHONS (1871-1909)

The work of Andhré des Gachons was known only to an elite audience even in his own time, as it was of an ephemeral nature, comprising mostly book illustrations, programs, and posters. The general public saw his work only at the Salons de la Rose+Croix, and occasionally at the Salon du Champs-de-Mars.[195] However, his nostalgic and idyllic watercolors were acclaimed by the inner circle of La Plume. A special issue, comprising numerous articles and illustrations, was published on him. In addition, Gustave Soulier wrote an article on him as part of the series "Les Artistes de l'âme."[196]

Seemingly content to work in a minor key, Andhré des Gachons often collaborated with his brother Jacques, a writer and literary critic for La Plume. With other Symbolist artists and writers they produced a serial, L'Album des legendes, which consisted of medievalizing stories, poems, and illustrations.[197] (Fig. 90) The list of Symbolist artists who also contributed to this publication includes several of our "Nostalgiques": Maurice Denis, Eugene Grasset, Alphonse Osbert, Alexandre Séon, and Paul Ranson. Poets and writers who participated were in the front ranks of Symbolism: Alphonse Germain, Maurice Maeterlinck, Stuart Merrill, Henri Mazel, Adolphe Retté, Georges Vanor, Tristan Klingsor, Henri Degron, and Louis LeCardonnel.

Andhré and Jacques des Gachons also collaborated on a stage

production, Le Prince naïf, which was later published in book form. (Fig. 91) It was performed at Le Théatre Miniscule in the Galeries de la Plume in 1893. This was a synaesthetic production consisting of a poetic reading of the text with musical accompaniment. The decors were of painted glass illuminated from behind on a darkened stage.[198] According to contemporary critics, the printed text of this curious production renders only a fraction of the preciosity of the staged work. It is a pure fairy tale, including the requisite suggestions of evil ("le fantôme noir, le chateau sanglante," etc.) with the ultimate triumph of virtue and purity.

Andhré's illustrations capture the paradisial spirit of the text. (Fig. 92) The landscape setting usually includes a distant setting or a flower-strewn garden. The figures lack modeling, and a shadowless light fills the flattened space. The colors are pale and seem mystically inspired. The anti-naturalistic and decorative approach of the artist dictated the arbitrary use of colors in the pink and violet trees, the green or yellow sky. This use of pictorial equivalents to set a mood follows the Symbolist ideal stated in Maurice Denis' manifesto, and repeats a similar use of color in Denis' early Nabi paintings such as La Dormeuse (1892). Gustave Soulier commented on des Gachons' use of color to allude to emotional states:

> En même temps, il en dégagé le sentiment propre, les correspondances sécrètes que ces apparences éveillent en notre esprit et de là vient la signification intense de joie triomphale ou de nébuleuse mélancolie que revêtent ses paysages de légendes. 199

Soulier felt that Andhré des Gachons' avoidance of a public forum for his art was deliberate. He compared the young artist, who called himself "L'Imagier," to a medieval illuminator in his dedication and working

habits as well as in his pictorial style. Besides the Medieval, Soulier discerned a striving for Botticellian grace.[200] But this critic felt that des Gachons' nostalgic return to the past was creative rather than sterile eclecticism:

> ...les styles divers lui sont une occasion de déployer librement son intarrisable invention, et l'on peut s'amuser à relever dans son oeuvre des details ingénieusement fouillés, la veine surabondante que se révèle dans de minuscules dessins d'étoffes ou de joyaux. Dans ses visites au Louvre, où ses plus longues stations le retiennent dans la salle des Primitifs et devant les fresques de Botticelli, Andhré des Gachons simplement s'âbimer dans la contemplation des vieux maîtres idéalistes et il en rapporte une atmosphère de candeur et de sérénité. 201

Soulier also pointed out the young artist's debt to contemporary artists: Eugene Grasset, Walter Crane, and Puvis de Chavannes. (Fig. 93) He cited the medievalizing subject matter and linear style of the two former artists, and specifically mentioned borrowings from Grasset's vocabulary of stylized botanical motifs. But it was Puvis who taught him the art of harmonic composition, and Soulier concluded with an extravagant pronouncement on Andhré des Gachons' position in the idealist movement: "C'est autre chose que de Puvis de Chavannes vu par le gros bout de la lorgnette."[202]

Another critic, Leon Maillard, did not use hyperbole but he was sensitive to the ingenuousness and the spirituality of des Gachons ethereal figures:

> ...ses personnages ont encore grâce indécise qui est l'aurore de la vie...ses charmants feuillets sont revêtus d'oeuvres impregnées d'un symbolisme clair où court sa candeur, cette si jolie naiveté florale, qui recele les épanouissements...Il touche aux fibres mystérieuses de l'au-delà et les fait vibrer d'un ravissement extra-terrestre. 203

Thus, the work of Andhré des Gachons, a minor and immature talent, reveals another aspect of the nostalgic component of Symbolist expression.

CHAPTER VII

SALONS DE LA ROSE+CROIX

FOOTNOTES

Nostalgiques in the Rose+Croix Circle

1. Salons de la Rose+Croix (London: Piccadilly Gallery, 1968). Introduction and catalogue by Robert Pincus-Witten. Pincus-Witten's spade work in the 1960's brought to light much of this obscure material, preparing the ground for subsequent Symbolist studies and the present revival of this art. His Ph.D. dissertation (1968) Occult Symbolism in France, has been a key work for Symbolist scholarship in recent years, now published (New York: Garland, 1976).

   The uneven quality of the art exhibited in these Salons provoked unfavorable comments from some contemporary critics, and these opinions are often repeated today. On the other hand, certain contemporary critics exalted the paintings because they were so clearly untainted by naturalism.

2. See Pincus-Witten, Occult Symbolism, bibliography, pp. 225-230; Salons de la Rose+Croix (London: Piccadilly Gallery, 1968).

3. Sâr Péladan, "Le Salon de la Rose+Croix," Le Figaro, 2 Sept. 1891; See also Pincus-Witten, Occult Symbolism, p.206.

4. Sâr Péladan, "Le Salon de la Rose+Croix."

5. The complete rules of the Salons appear in Catalogue du Rose-Croix, (Paris: 1892); and Pincus-Witten, Occult Symbolism, Appendix II, p. 211 ff.

6. Other artists whom we have called "Nostalgiques" but who contributed less regularly to the Rose+Croix Salons will be studied elsewhere; e.g., Aman-Jean, Henri Martin, etc.

   The loyalties of all these artists to Péladan did not prevent them from exhibiting also at the Salon National des Beaux Arts, the

Indépendants, Le Barc de Boutteville, and other private galleries and exhibitions such as Les Artistes de L'âme, 1896.

7. Victor Charbonnel, Les Mystiques dans la littérature présente, (Paris: Mercure de France, 1897), p. 77.

8. André Mellerio, Le Mouvement idéaliste en peinture, (Paris: H. Floury, 1896), p. 121.

9. Josephin Péladan, "Alexandre Séon, les grand méconnus," La Revue Forézienne, Jan. 1902, P. 13; J. Péladan, Le Salon, (Paris: Dentu, 1890), p. 39.

Coquiot was not an uncritical admirer of Séon's art, which he found too dependent on Péladan's theories of ideality and too derivative of Leonardo's painting style. Gustave Coquiot, Les Indépendants, (Paris: Ollendorff, 1920), p. 126.

10. Séon's portrait of Péladan was reproduced as a line drawing in the catalogue of the first Rose+Croix exhibition. See Pincus-Witten, Occult Symbolism, pp. 106-109, P. 249. See also Ed. Bertholet, La Pensée et les secrets du Sâr Joséphin Péladan, (Lausanne: P. Genillard, 1955) Vol. III, reproductions of frontispieces and various illustrations. Geneviève Lacambre stated that Séon was one of the founders of the Rose+Croix Salons, however we have not found documentation of this. Symbolism en Europe, (Paris: 1976).

11. Péladan's ideas on landscape were much influenced by his study of Leonardo. His writings on landscape appear in his Salon reviews and in his preface to Leonardo's Traité du Paysage, trans. by Péladan, 1910, p. ix, quoted in Bertholet, La Pensée et les secrets, Vol. III, pp. 148, 153, 197.

12. Péladan, "Alexandre Séon," Revue Forézienne, (1902), p. 13 (hereafter referred to as Rev. Foréz).

13. Péladan implied that Séon carried forward the Ingriste manner of

painters like Chenavard and Janmot, (Ibid. p. 16-17); Pincus-Witten, Occult Symbolism, p. 109. Other contemporary writers commented on the significance of Séon's Lyonnais roots. Fernand Weyl, in an important article on Séon, remarked on the power of suggestion exerted by certain sites in the environs of Lyon which had been given supernatural significance according to local beliefs. The author suggested that these might have predisposed the youth toward a mysterious interpretation of nature and a belief in its animation by spiritual forces. Fernand Weyl, "Alexandre Séon," L'Art et la Vie, Jan. 1894, p. 406.

14. Germain wrote: "Féal au Beau avant tout, Séon cherche à syncretismer les découvertes récentes et les principes idéalistes." Alphonse Germain, "L'Idéal au Salon de la Rose+Croix," L'Ermitage, Jan. - June 1892, p. 211.

Germain's writing was characterized by neologisms and impassioned hyperbole. His reference here is to Seon's use of Chevreul's color theory. See text below.

Germain was a prolific writer and collaborated on several Symbolist revues; viz. L'Art et Critique 1889-1890; L'Ermitage, 1890 on; L'Art et L'Idée, 1891-2; La Plume, 1891-1895. Séon figured importantly in Germain's book, Pour le Beau, Essai de Kallistique, 1893, his most complete statement of Symbolist aesthetics much indebted to the Idealism of Charles Blanc. Germain also showed pastels at Les Indépendants, 1893; see L'Ermitage, Jan. - June 1893, p. 296.

Séon also received praise from other Symbolist critics, Bouyer, Saunier and Weyl.

15. Alphonse Germain, "Alexandre Séon, un peintre idéaliste-idéiste," L'Art et l'Idée, Feb. 1892, p. 108. This sentiment was echoed by Weyl, "Séon," pp. 406-416.

16. Charles Blanc, Grammaire des arts du dessin, (Paris: J. Renouard, 1870).

17. Alphonse Germain, Pour le Beau, Essai de Kallistique, (Paris: E. Girard, 1893), p. 30. This also appears in Alphonse Germain, "Sur un Tableau refusé; Théorie du Symbolisme des teintes," La Plume, May 1891, p. 171. Germain's discussion of the Ideal in painting is dependent on Blanc almost to the point of plagiarism.

18. Ibid.

19. Séon exhibited in the Salon des Artistes Français 1879-1890, 1897-1917; at the Salon Nationale 1890-1896; at Les Indépendants 1888-1889, 1907-1914. He also exhibited at Le Barc de Boutteville, 3rd exposition, Les Artistes de l'âme; G. Petit, 1901 individual exposition.

20. At this time Puvis worked on murals in the Panthéon, the Sorbonne, and for the Museums of Amiens, Lyon, Rouen, as well as on private commissions. Puvis painted Séon's portrait at this time. Illustrated in Puvis de Chavannes et la peinture lyonnaise de XIX siecle, (Musee de Lyon, 1937), introduction by René Jullian.

21. Séon made his Salon debut in 1879 with some drawings; he exhibited two decorative panels in 1881. He received his early training at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Lyon, which was followed by work in Paris in the studio of Henry Lehmann, a pupil of Ingres. Lehmann's pupils also included Seurat, Aman-Jean, Osbert, and Ernest Laurent. Seurat and Séon remained friendly until the death of the former. Séon met the others again later in the Rose+Croix circle.

The drawing style of austere linear contour taught in the Lehmann studio is evident in an early Seurat drawing of classical figures in a frieze-like arrangement, La Séparation (1876), illustrated in Robert Herbert, Seurat's Drawings (New York: Shorewood, 1962) p. 27. This corresponds closely to Seon's La Rivière, illustrated in Pincus-Witten, Occult Symbolism, p. 250.

22. Péladan, "Séon," p. 12. Péladan also stated that Seon painted murals in the Bibliothèque des Deputés but this has not been substantiated. Séon submitted a mural design for the Mairie of Montreuil which was not accepted, illustrated in French Symbolist Painters (London: 1972), #323.

23. See Chapter IV above. As Maurice Denis and most later critics pointed out, Puvis' mural style was influenced by Ingres' pupil Chassériau, especially his murals in the Cour des Comptes, Louvre. See Denis' article "Les Elèves d'Ingres" (1902), reprinted in Théories, p. 121, and Ary Renan, "Théodore Chassériau et les peintures du palais de la Cour des Comptes," GBA, 1898, ser. 3, t. 19, pp. 89-103. See also Aimée Brown Price, "The Easel Paintings of Puvis de Chavannes" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University: 1972), pp. 141 and footnotes, and 187 ff.

24. A concise summary of these concerns was written by Théophile Gautier in 1863, quoted by Price, Puvis de Chavannes, p. 141, also f.n. 66, p. 167. A book devoted to this subject was widely used by artists at the turn of the century: Henry Havard, La Décoration, (Paris: Libr. Charles Delagrave, 1897). Matisse's indebtedness to this book is discussed by John H. Neff, "Matisse and Decoration," (Ph.D. dissertation Harvard University, 1974) p. 3-4. See also Audley Mackworth, "The Relation of the Easel Picture to Decorative Art," The Art Journal, (London: 1901), p. 120. Mackworth stated:

> "A decorative painting must necessarily be symbolic and abstract in treatment; we can have types and personifications in it, we cannot have men and women as they lived...If public buildings want historic records, let them be truthful pictures in frames; if they want decorations, let them be allegories and personifications."

25. In Pour le Beau, p. 31, Germain appears to have confused these correspondences. The finished panels were exhibited in the Exposition Universelle in 1889 and were installed in the Salle early in 1890. The official commission was published in:

Etat des communes: Courbevoie, Notice Historique et Renseignements Administratifs. Montevain: Typographique de l'école d'Alembert, 1906, p. 33-35. See also "Nécrologie," La Chronique des Arts et de la Curiosité, 1917, sem. 2, p. 50 . There are scaled drawings entitled "Mairie de Courbevoie" preserved in the Archives of the Mairie of Colombes. Unfortunately, these drawings bear no signature and although there are designs for eight vertical panels corresponding in outline to the actual panels at Courbevoie, the compositions and drawing style appear completely unlike those that Séon executed. Whether these are earlier ideas drawn by Séon, or the designs of another artist cannot be determined at this time. I am grateful to to Mme. F. Poisson, Conservateur at the Musee Roybet-Fould, Courbevoie, for information leading me to consult this source.

26. See Puvis' panels for the Panthéon, L'Enfance de Ste. Geneviève and the easel painting, L'Enfant prodigue, 1879, (Fig. 30).

27. P. Guigou, "Les Entretiens de Puvis de Chavannes," Interrupta, (Paris: 1898), pp. 267-268, quoted by Price, "Puvis de Chavannes," p. 196.

28. Germain, "Séon," p. 112.

29. Weyl, "Séon," p. 411.

30. This was part of the series for the Musée de Picardie, Amiens, painted in 1865. See Puvis de Chavannes, (Paris: 1976), #50, 51, pp. 71, 72, 78, 79.

31. Price shows a formal reference for Puvis' composition in Gozzoli's Vintage from the Campo Santo, Pisa. Vol, II, #0-2, 3.

32. Raymond Bouyer, "L'Oeuvre de Alexandre Séon," Chroniques d'Art et de la Curiosité, 29 June 1901, p. 188. Séon followed Ingres' doctrine: "Point de couleur trop ardente, c'est antihistorique. Tombez plutôt dans le gris que dans l'ardent..." Ingres, d'après une correspondence inédite , par Boyer d'Agen Paris, 1909, quoted by Price, "Puvis," p. 168.

33. On Séon's contacts with Seurat see text below. Séon met Alphonse Germain in 1890 at gatherings of the L'Ermitage circle. Séon illustrated Henry Mazel's book La Fin des Dieux. Mazel was the publisher of L'Ermitage. See French Symbolist Painters, p. 145.

34. Germain, Pour le Beau, p. 30; "Théorie du Symbolisme des teintes," La Plume, May 1891, p. 171.

35. Germain, "Théorie du Symbolisme," p. 171.

36. Péladan, preface, Leonardo da Vinci, Traité du paysage, p. vii, quoted in Bertholet La Pensée, p. 154. This concept is antithetical to the Impressionist viewpoint summed up by Laforgue in which "Theoretic perspective is replaced by the natural perspective of color, vibration, and contrast...no line, light, relief, perspective or chiaroscuro...all of these are converted into color and must be obtained on canvas solely by vibration of color." Jules Laforgue,

translated and quoted in Linda Nochlin, Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1966), pp. 15-17.

37. Alphonse Germain, "Théorie Chromo-luminariste, exposé et critique," La Plume, Sept. 1891, pp. 285-287. Germain did not explain Séon's theory in detail nor did he accept the whole theory at that date.

38. Weyl, "Séon," p. 410.

39. Ibid.

40. Weyl traced these ideas of symbolic color to popular traditions. Ibid., p. 409.

41. This information appeared in a letter from Dubois-Pillet to Signac in 1889 which stated that Seurat would see no one else but Séon. Quoted in French Symbolist Painters, p. 145.

Information on this relationship is also provided by Gustave Coquiot, Seurat, (Paris: Albin Michel, 1924), p. 44. Seurat's circle of friends from his student days included Aman-Jean, Signac, Angrand, and Séon. Although much of Coquiot's book seems to be gossip, his knowledge of Seurat's early days was supplied by Angrand, who remained on intimate terms with Seurat throughout his life. Angrand recorded in a letter to Coquiot Seurat's relationship with Séon: "Ce cordial comrade (Séon) lui reprochait avec quelque autres, de manque d'esthétique--c'est que notre ami (Seurat) manquait d'imagination."

42. Weyl, "Séon," p. 411.

43. Unlike the thorough documentation of the events surrounding Seurat's career, nothing is available to inform us of Seon's intellectual interests and capacities; we can only surmise that he, as an artist formed in the Ecole des Beaux Arts, was much impressed by Blanc's writings. Certainly his closeness to Germain after 1890 would have reinforced the ideas absorbed in his youth and his discussions with Seurat. Sources for Seurat's knowledge of Blanc abound. See William I. Homer, Seurat and the Science of Painting, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1964), pp. 29ff., 208 ff, 288; Robert Herbert, The Neo-Impressionists, edit. by Jean Sutter, (Greenwich, Conn: New York Graphic Society, 1970), p. 34.

44. Sven Lövgren, The Genesis of Modernism, (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1971), p. 88. Lövgren states that Henry's Sorbonne lectures were popular with a broad cross-section of intellectuals. If Séon did not encounter Henry's ideas directly, he might have been indoctrinated by Seurat in personal conversations. See chapter VI above.

45. In 1891, Germain made reference to Séon's mastery of "Goethe, Chevreul, Rood, and Charles Henry," but noted that he submitted their findings to his own aesthetic. "Séon," p. 108.

46. Weyl, "Séon," P. 410-411.

47. Ibid.

48. Germain concluded that the method of the naturalist served the ends of the Idealist in creating works of enduring beauty.

> " Presenter des lumières d'après les lois optiques, ainsi se résume sa technie. Quant à son esthétique, de même que le philosophe d'Heidelberg, il croit au caractère absolu de la prédominance de l'esprit sur la nature; persuadé de la necessité du choix, féal au Beau avant tout, il réalise avec un gout exquis l'homo additus naturae de Bacon."

Germain, "Théorie du symbolisme," p. 172.

49. Exhibited at Salon National des Beaux Arts, 1891, Salon de la Rose+Croix, 1895. Sections of the poem written by Germain inspired by this painting are quoted in French Symbolist Painters, #22, p. 145. The poem originally appeared in La Plume, June 1892, p. 244.

50. Séon must have been aware of Charles Blanc's theory that line was superior to color, and that "des lignes...ont un rapport direct avec le sentiment..." Charles Blanc, Grammaire, p. 71. Germain distorted this statement to read, "Les couleurs ont des affinities secrètes avec nos sentiments, Pour le Beau, p. 30.

51. Weyl, "Séon," P. 412.

52. Superville's diagrams were reproduced in Blanc, Grammaire, pp. 25-

53. This formal pattern was common during the Symbolist era. See paintings by Osbert, Denis, Henri Martin. They may all have been inspired by Puvis' Bois Sacré and other murals of the 1880's and 1890's. See chapter V.

54. Peladan, "Séon," p. 13.

55. According to Charles Saunier, this is but one of several paintings Séon made on the theme of the poet Orpheus. Charles Saunier, "Alexandre Séon," La Revue Blanche, 1901, pp. 303-304.

56. Price pointed out that Puvis' composition was based on Millet's Hagar and Ishmael (1849). Price, "Puvis," Vol. 2, p. 511.

Alphonse Osbert

57. Letter of Osbert quoted in Pincus-Witten, Occult Symbolism, p. 110.

58. Pincus-Witten's book and dissertation (1968) included the first re-examinations of Osbert's work in recent years.

59. Osbert exhibited at the Salon des Artistes Francais 1878-1890; Salon National des Beaux Arts 1890-1939; Les Indépendants 1889-1895; Le Salon de la Rose+Croix 1892-1896. Private exhibitions were held at Galerie Georges Petit 1895; Le Barc de Boutteville 1891; Les Artistes de l'âme, Théatre de la Bodinière, 1896; Salon des Cent (La Plume) 1896; Salon de l'art nouveau (S. Bing) 1896; St. Germain-en-Laye 1891 (with several Nabis) and many more which are listed in Alphonse Osbert, Musée Eugène Boudin, Honfleur, 5 Aug. - 30 Sept. 1977. Osbert's work was exhibited at the Exposition Universelle, 1900, and he was a founder of the Salon d'automne where he exhibited in 1903, 1905, 1910.

60. Yveling Rambaud, "Osbert, peintre des fresques," Le Journal, 29 Mar. 1899. The epithets are by Gustave Soulier, "Les Artistes de l'âme," L'Art et le Vie, 1896, and Henri Degron, "Alphonse Osbert," La Plume, 1 Mar. 1896, p. 144. These important articles helped to establish Osbert's reputation as a Symbolist.

61. Coquiot, Les Indépendants, p. 125. Osbert exhibited with this group which was the major vehicle for the Neo-Impressionists and Nabis. Osbert served on the committee in 1890 with Seurat, Signac, and Luce. See Osbert, Honfleur, p. 8.

62. Coquiot, Les Indépendants, p. 125-126.

63. Albert Charpentier, Les Hommes d'Aujourd'hui, 14 May 1892, n.p.

64. Degron, "Osbert," pp. 143-144.

65. Soulier, "Les Artistes de l'âme," p. 505.

66. Henri Frantz, "Les Salons de 1901," L'Art Décoratif, June 1901, pp. 94-106. The author's conventional taste is evident from his praise of Bonnencontre, an academic painter of pretty women rendered with photographic accuracy.

67. Mlle. Yolande Osbert, daughter of the artist, clarifies the young artist's relation to these highly regarded academicians. Although Osbert was given the opportunity to study privately with Bonnat, he declined this honor in order to preserve his independence. Even as a youth Osbert disdained "pompier" art. His salon listing includes these artists for they did, on occasion give him advice. Mlle. Yolande Osbert, "Souvenirs de l'époque Symboliste," Honfleur, 1977.

68. See chapter VIII below on Aman-Jean's relationship with Seurat.

69. Osbert's love of Spanish art was confirmed in his trip to Spain in 1883. His early paintings are discussed in Osbert, Honfleur, p. 3.

70. Osbert, Honfleur, p. 3. Conversations with Mlle. Osbert support this. (June 1977).

71. Several Millet drawings were reproduced in L'Art, V. XII, 1878 in an article on this sale. See Osbert, Musée de Maubeuge, 11 Mar. - 15 May, 1978, #498.

72. These drawings are in the Cabinet des Dessins, Musée du Louvre. Osbert submitted these drawings for mural decorations in the Mairie de Pantin in 1886 but the project was not executed.

73. Illustrated in Puvis de Chavannes, (Paris: Grand Palais, 1976), p. 91.

74. Rambaud, "Osbert."

75. Geneviève Lacambre suggests that the frequent meetings of Osbert, Séon, Seurat, and Puvis affected his turn toward Idealism. Symbolism en Europe, (Paris: 1976), p. 159.

76. Osbert, Honfleur, p. 6. Jean Sutter also writes of Puvis' influence in the 1890's, The Neo-Impressionists, (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1970), p. 124. Gustave Geffroy called some of these works "pastiches" of Puvis. La Vie Artistique, (Paris: Dentu, 1892), Vol. I, p. 14.

77. A brief correspondence between Seurat and Osbert is retained in the Osbert archives. The letters do not deal with artistic theory but with more practical matters, i.e., the reunions which were arranged by Osbert. Osbert acted as chairman for the "Dîner amical des anciens de L'atelier Lehmann" which were held annually beginning in 1887. Osbert, Honfleur, p.6.

78. The canvas was slightly changed and then exhibited in the Independants of 1891. Osbert's new style had appeared tentatively in a diptych in the Salon of 1888, Fraîcheur matinale and Mystère du soir. As in Harmonie d'automne, a large nude dominates the natural setting.

79. Osbert, Maubeuge, #50.

80. Osbert, quoted in Honfleur, p. 6.

81. See Georges Lanoë-Villène, Histoire de l'école française de paysage. (Nantes: Société Nantaise, 1905), p. 322. Lanoë lists in this group Seurat, Signac, Luce, Osbert, Van Rysselberghe, and Pissarro. Osbert was an active member of the Société des Artistes Indépendants which, in its early years, was the most important exhibition medium of the Neo-Impressionists. Jean Sutter discusses his historical relationship with Seurat in Lehmann's studio, but does not consider Osbert as a Neo-Impressionist, The Neo-Impressionists, p. 124.

82. See Redon's Les Yeux clos, 1890; Gauguin, Vision after the Sermon, 1888; Bernard, Rêverie, 1889, illustration from the catalogue of the Volpini Exhibition, illustrated in Rewald, Post-Impressionism, p. 291. As noted in our chapter on Séon, it is not inappropriate to recognize connections between the greater and lesser-known artists in the Symbolist period. In the decade following Seurat's death, the artists in our study who were his friends became successful and were well-regarded by most contemporary critics and collectors. The present-day evaluation of "major" and "minor" talents did not exist then; they were respected as Symbolists, despite the contrary opinions expressed by writers such as Mirabeau and Geffroy.

83. Soulier, "Les Artistes de l'âme," p. 504.

84. Osbert, letter quoted in Pincus-Witten, Occult Symbolism, p. 110. Vision, 2.35 x 1.38 m, acquired by the Louvre in 1977, remains in the atelier of Osbert during the lifetime of the artist's daughter, Mlle. Yolande Osbert. The subject also appears in a drawing (1892-3), illustrated in French Symbolist Painters, #191. A sketch in oil (on wood) (1891), listed in Maubeuge cat. #7; a sketch in chalk was made for the Rose+Croix catalogue in 1892. The finished painting was exhibited in the 2nd Salon de la Rose+Croix, 1893, and in the Salon National, 1892.

85. Charpentier, Les Hommes d'aujourd'hui. See also discussion of the iconography of the virginal maiden in Robert Pincus-Witten, "The Iconography of Symbolism," Artforum, Jan. 1970, p. 57.

86. Soulier, "Les Artistes de l'âme," p. 504.

87. Degron, "Osbert," p. 142.

88. Ibid.

89. Present day scholarship extends this controversy between the general and the particular in Osbert's iconography. In Symbolisme en Europe, Geneviève Lacambre stated that in 1899 Osbert himself wrote the title of the painting as Vision de Ste. Geneviève. However, this was for an exhibition of religious art, L'Art religieux de Durendal, (Brussels: 1899).

90. Osbert, Honfleur, p. 13. In conversation with this writer, Mlle. Osbert repeated Soulier's words, that the figure was not meant to represent a specific saint.

91. Rambaud, "Osbert."

92. Rose+Croix Salons, (London: Picadilly Gallery), #83.

93. See Charles Baudelaire, Recueillement, Le Crépuscule du soir Petits poemes en prose, Oeuvres completes, (Paris: 1892), Vol. 4. Ferdinand Herold, Henri de Regnier, Albert Samain, Marc Legrand created poetic analogues to Osbert's paintings.

94. When Robert de Montesquiou wrote about Moreau's painting in 1907 he suggested its source in Baudelaire's Recueillement, (1861). "Sois sage ô ma Douleur, Tu reclamais le Soir; il descend, le voici." This is included in the catalogue entry for this painting in Symbolisme en Europe, 1976, #132, p. 136.

95. This new direction in Osbert's art was noted in a Salon review by Leon Maillard: "Osbert marque une nouvelle étape de son talent dans sa belle composition, Les Chants de la nuit." Leon Maillard, "Salon du Champ de Mars," La Plume, 1 May 1896, p. 327. This painting was exhibited at the Salon de la Rose+Croix, 1897.

96. The earlier works and some later works are characterized by larger figures; see Entretien, 1893; Adieu au soleil, 1893; Mélancolie du bois, 1891.

97. Degron, "Osbert," p. 143.

98. Soulier, "Les Artistes de l'âme," p. 505.

99. Edouard Schuré, Les Grands Initiés, (Paris: Perrin et cie, 1889, 1927).

100. Schuré's text furnished a treasury of ancient legend and myth to the Symbolist generation who were seeking new ways to express eternal truths. The Celtic heritage was particularly meaningful, and the artists of the Pont-Aven school explored the folklore and traditions of Brittany. Gauguin and Bernard's interest in this ancient past was at its peak when Schuré's book was published. With Sérusier as the link, many of these ideas were explored by the Nabis. See George Mauner, The Nabis, (New York: Garland, 1978), p. 243; Jeanne Stump, "The Art of K. X. Roussel," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1972), p. 202 ff. Osbert exhibited with the Nabis in St. Germain-en-laye in 1891. See correspondence with Maurice Denis in archives of Y. Osbert. He also participated in exhibitions at Galerie Le Barc de Boutteville, and at Les Indépendants; both contained many works by the Nabis.

101. Schuré, Grand Initiés, pp. 9-10.

102. Ibid., p. 10-11. Schuré stated that when males assumed the role of priesthood, women were relegated to secondary status. He points out that Celtic druidesses were evidence of this phase of religious evolution.

103. See L'Etang et le forêt, 1895; Le Poème du soir, 1897; Mystère de la nuit, 1897; Charme de l'eau, 1897.

104. In the literary area, there was a backlash against certain excesses of Symbolist poetry beginning in the 1890's, but this internal conflict did not affect most Symbolist artists until after 1900. See chapter on Henri Martin, Maurice Denis. These aesthetic shifts did not Osbert's. For discussion of this phenomenon in the literary area, see Kenneth Cornell, The Symbolist Movement, (New York: Archon Books, 1970), p. 117 ff., 165 ff., 189; and Marcel Raymond, From Baudelaire to Surrealism, (London: Methuen & Co., 1970), pp. 42-53.

105. Félicien Fagus, "Petite gazette d'art," Revue Blanche, April 1899, p. 628-629.

106. In early Indian art, the image of the Yakshi embracing a tree is a personification of the fecundity of the earth. Benjamin Rowland, The Art and Architecture of India, (Baltimore: Penguin, 1970), pp. 80-82. Werner Hofmann, The Earthly Paradise (London: Faber & Faber, 1961), p. 319 ff. discusses a "feminine type of landscape," etc. Heinrich Zimmer states ancient Hindu belief that young woman is human embodiment of maternal energy of nature. Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization, (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 84.

107. Osbert painted mural decorations for a private ville at Vichy, 1900; the Mairie Bourg-la-Reine, 1911; Conservatoire de musique et de déclamation, Paris, 1911; Choir of St. Louis, Vichy 1914-15; Salle des mariages, Mairie de L'Ile St. Denis, 1920. See Honfleur, p. 14-16.

108. This writer's knowledge of the physical setting of these murals is based on an article by Mlle. E. Walther, "La Décor dans les etablissements thermaux et les casinos," Les Monuments Historiques de la France, 1978/1, p. 67 ff. See also Osbert, Honfleur, p. 15.

109. Mlle. Walter mentions Puvis' Bois sacré and Les Demoiselles au bord de la mer, Ibid., p. 14.

110. Ibid.

111. Sutter, editor, The Neo-Impressionists, p. 124; Richard Wattenmaker, Puvis de Chavannes and the Modern Tradition, (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1975), p. 7.

112. See Puvis' L'Hiver and L'Eté, mural paintings for Salon du Zodiaque, Hotel de Ville, Paris, 1891. For the geneology of this compositional device, see Chapter V on Maurice Denis, note 41.

113. Robert Goldwater, "Symbolic Form, Symbolic Content," International Congress of the History of Art, IV, 1961, p. 120.

114. Ibid.

Armand Point

115. Point exhibited in all the Salons de la Rose+Croix except for 1897. He also participated in the exhibition, Les Artistes de l'âme (1896) with Séon, Osbert and other Rosicrucians. His work was also shown in the Salon d'art idéaliste in Brussels directed by Jean Delville (1897); in addition he held two individual exhibitions at Galerie Georges Petit, in 1899 and 1903. See Gisèle Marie, Elémir Bourges ou l'éloge de grandeur (Paris: Mercure de France, 1962), pp. 111-112.

116. See above Chapter I (Introduction) and footnote 6.

117. See Chapter II, p.32 above on Aurier's definition of Symbolism. Aurier distinguished between his favored "idéistes"--those artists who transformed perceived reality into pure Idea through the use of signs or symbols and departed freely from traditional methods. For Aurier, the "idealists" represented exterior reality only and implied that this term referred to academic artists. See Aurier, "Le Symbolisme en peinture, Paul Gauguin," Mercure de France, Mar. 1891, pp. 159-161. This problem has been discussed by Robert Goldwater in Symbolism, (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), p. 9 ff. Despite the flaws of this incomplete book, the ideas on the varieties of Symbolist expression coincide with the assumptions of Hans Hofstätter, "L'Iconographie de la peinture symboliste," Symbolisme en Europe, (Paris: 1976), p. 11. See note 2 above.

118. Camille Mauclair, "Armand Point," La Revue des Revues, 15 May 1900, p. 372. Mauclair spoke hightly of Point in another article, "Quelques peintres idéalistes français," L'Art Décoratif, Sept. 1901. This article also discussed Lévy-Dhurmer, Ménard, Henri Martin, Aman-Jean. The article is illustrated by six paintings by Point. Emile Bernard also praised Point as one of the first to return to the sources of art. See F. Lepeseur, (Pseud.) "Les Artistes renovateurs, Armand Point," La Rénovation Esthétique, Jan. 1906, pp. 144-145.

119. La Plume, Jan. 1901. La Plume had a wide circulation as a Symbolist mouthpeice; it featured poetry, criticism of literature and art, and reviews of exhibitions.

120. Marie, Elémir Bourges, pp. 21, 55. Point's long term friendship and correspondence with Bourges is recorded and discussed. See also Camille Mauclair, Servitudes et grandeurs littéraires, (Paris: Ollendorff, 1922), p. 32; Armand Point et Haute-Claire, (Galerie Georges Petit, 1903), texte par Jacques Daurelle.

121. F. Lepeseur, "Armand Point," p. 145. Emile Bernard (F. Lepeseur, pseud.) stated that Point's Algerian background seemed to color his later art; "son interpretation des maîtres italiens tient autant de la féerie musulmane que la tradition latine, telles de ses saintes sont garnies des bijoux précieux chères aux filles du prophète." One wonders whether it is this or the influence of Gustave Moreau which was more important for Point. See discussion of this influence in text below.

122. Péladan wrote in Les Salons de Joséphin Péladan IXe et Xe Année, (Paris: Dentu, 1890-91) p. 41: "Le jour ou Point appliquera son procedé excellent à des conceptions lyriques, il sera maître... Telle la puissance de l'âme que sa seule presence sans teinte passionant même transforme un panneau et le fait poétique." Mauclair wrote: "C'est un peuple mystérieux et touchant que se lève de l'âme d'un poète et vient vers nous à travers le cristal des cadres." (Mauclair, "Armand Point," p. 361.)

123. Point shared the taste of his generation which had been nourished by the nostalgic art of Puvis and Moreau. Péladan wrote about the Primitives in L'Artiste, 1884-5, and followed with numerous articles on Idealism in Italian art. See bibliography in Pincus-Witten, Occult Symbolism.

124. Point also translated the life of Michelangelo by Condivi into French. Armand Point et Haute-Claire, 1903.

125. Armand Point, "Primitifs et Symbolistes," L'Ermitage, July, 1895, pp. 11-19. Point quoted Baudelaire's Correspondances at the head of this article.

126. Point wrote:

"Le seul souci, c'est de trouver dans la Nature une forme expressive correspondante au sentiment que l'artiste voulait créer à travers les siècles...Les artistes s'ingeniaient donc à trouver, en observant la nature, les éléments nécessaires à créer des scènes vues par l'esprit autres que les spectacles de la vie ordinaire. Ils oeuvraient avec leur coeur, avec leur cerveau avec leur âme tout entière...Ce ne sont pas là des ouvriers d'art plus ou moins habiles, ce sont des poètes, des penseurs et des philosophes."
(Ibid., pp. 12-13.)

127. Ibid., p. 15.

128. Ibid., p. 12.

129. Stuart Merrill in introduction to Armand Point et Haute-Claire, (Galerie Georges Petit, 1899), p. 3.

130. Félicien Fagus, "Armand Point," La Revue Blanche, April, 1899, pp. 629-630. Others who criticized Point negatively were André Fontainas, Mercure de France, 1899, p. 533; J. LeClerq, La Chronique des Arts et de la curiosité, 8 April 1899, p. 123. And although Point was not accused directly of aping Botticelli, it is implied in the hilarious satire by Octave Mirbeau, "Botticelli proteste!" Le Journal, 1896, reprinted in Mirbeau, Des Artistes (Paris: Flammarion, 1922), p. 269 ff. See discussion of these essays in text below, "Botticellism in the 1890's."

131. Point, quoted in Mauclair, "Armand Point," pp. 370-371.

132. Raymond Bouyer, "L'Art et la vie au Salon du Champs-de-Mars," L'Artiste, June 1894, p. 16. Gustave Soulier also approved of Point's "légitime éclectisme" and noted his modern approach. Soulier, "Les Artistes de l'âme—Armand Point," L'Art et la Vie, Jan. 1894, pp. 175.

133. F. Lepeseur, "Armand Point," p. 144.

134. The best summary of the literature documenting this phenomenon is in Jacques Lethève, "La Connaissance des peintres PreRaphaélites Anglais en France," GBA, Mai 1959, pp. 315-326. See also Jean Autret, Ruskin and the French Before Marcel Proust. (Geneve: Librairie Droz, 1965), passim. Important early studies were Taine, Notes sur Angleterre, several editions incl. 1890; Ernest Chesneau, La Peinture Anglaise, 1882; Paul Bourget, "Lettres de Londres," Journal des Debats, 1884. See articles also by Gabriel Mourey and Robert de la Sizeranne, in bibliography.

135. Mauclair, "Armand Point," pp. 371-372.

136. Dante Gabriel Rossetti quoted in Gabriel Mourey, Passé le Detroit, la vie, et l'art à Londres, (Paris: Ollendorff, 1895). This book was published in the same year as Point's article in L'Ermitage on the Primitives, and the exhibition of his works in his new Italianate manner.

137. Mauclair, "Armand Point," p. 372.

138. Point wrote:

> "Il faut renier le mouvement préraphaélite anglais comme similaire à celui des artistes catalogués par la phraséologie à la mode de symbolistes aujourd'hui... Le manierisme anglais, la complication des sentiments moralisateurs, la veulerie des caractères, ne peuvent être mis en parallèle avec la simplicité, toujours forte, des oeuvres des Primitifs italiens."

Point, "Primitifs," p. 15.

139. It seems doubtful that Point could have seen this particular work. However, he knew Rossetti-influenced paintings of Watts and Burne-Jones which were exhibited in Paris during the 1890's. A prototype for Point's dreamy maidens is seen in Burne-Jones' gouche, The Kings Daughter, 1864, now in the collection of MNAM, Paris (Fig. 81).

Rosetti's works were not exhibited in France after their first exposure at the Exposition Universelle of 1855. They remained in

British private collections and were shown together following his death in 1885. However, his work was discussed in French and English aritcles and books from 1869 on. A detailed discussion of his late work appeared in an article by Gabriel Sarrazin in Revue Indépendante, 1884-1885, but it lacked illustrations. Burne-Jones' works were exhibited at the Exposition Universelle, 1889, and annually at the Salons 1890-1895. See Lethève, "Connaissance," GBA, p. 320-325.

There is also the possibility that Rosetti and Point were inspired independently by Quattrocetto paintings. The format popularized by Rosetti appears also in Lévy-Dhurmer's Florence, which was probably directly influenced by Armand Point's portraits. This was suggested by J. Foucart and J. Lacambre in "Autour de Lévy-Dhurmer," Revue du Louvre, #1 1973, p. 65.

140. Julius Kaplan, Gustave Moreau, (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1974), p. 53. Jean Lorrain wrote of Moreau's influence on writers and poets in Sensations et souvenirs (Paris: Bibl, Charpentier, 1895), pp. 63-68.

Moreau's paintings of legendary figures in landscape settings were exhibited during the 1880's, the period of maturation for the young painters who were to become Symbolists. Close correspondences between Point's paintings and Moreau's can be cited in Moreau, Galatée, exhibited in the Salon of 1881 (illustrated in French Symbolist Painters, #145; and in a series of watercolors after the fables of La Fontaine, exhibited in 1886 at Galerie Goupil. See especially The Enamoured Lion, illustrated in Pierre Mathieu, Gustave Moreau, (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1977), #204, p. 150.

141. Point's painting was reproduced in the special number of La Plume, 1901 with a poem by Stuart Merrill inspired by the painting.

142. Gustave Moreau, Cahier III, quoted in Kaplan, Moreau, appendix II, p. 142.

143. Point, "Primitifs," pp. 15-16.

144. Soulier, "Les Artistes de l'âme," p. 10. Point's favorite model was Helene (Lindet) Bertholet, who was also his pupil. Bourges referred to her as "Votre vivant Botticelli." Marie, Elémir Bourges, p. 76.

145. Jean Lorrain felt that this was an important aspect of Point's revival. "C'est un talent qui se renouvelle dans son procédé." Lorrain quoted in Marie, Elémir Bourges, p. 112.

146. Blanc, Grammaire, p. 71. See above Chapter VII on Séon, p. 177.

147. Point's theory was quoted by Stuart Merrill in the exhibition catalogue, Armand Point et Haute-Claire, 1899, p. 6.

> "La loi d'harmonie la plus simple et la plus généralisée c'est l'harmonie des rapports, l'harmonie de la ligne... Depuis l'atelier de Phidias jusqu'a plus humble établi de menuisier, la ligne a été ou doit être souveraine. Par les inflexions infinies dont elle est susceptible, elle correspond à toutes nos pensées, à tous nos sentiments, langage mystérieux que se degage de toute matière. Du plus grand artiste à l'artisan le plus modeste, il y a par la ligne, transmission de pensée dans l'oeuvre créée. Il y'aura donc là une rélation continue entre tous les hommes et un moyen d'entente universelle."

148. Mauclair, "Armand Point," p. 371.

149. Soulier, "Les Artistes de l'âme," p. 177. Armand Point achieved added recognition in the art world of the 1890's for his workshop for the decorative arts. Given its name by Elémir Bourges at its founding in 1896, the workshop of Haute-Claire was considered significant in the burgeoning Art Nouveau movement. Even critics who were of two minds concerning Point's painting and drawing favored the Utopian motivation of the artist in forming this workshop. Emulating William Morris and Walter Crane, Point put into practice his strong convictions on the role of applied art to enrich and beautify man's environment.

At his studio in Marlotte, Point welcomed artisans who lived in a communal society fabricating enamels, ceramics, metal works, embroideries, furniture, tapestries, and bindings. Under Point's direction, these decorative arts were rooted in the Medieval tradition. An exhibition in 1899 in the Galerie Georges Petit included, in addition to Point's paintings and drawings, sixty-three objects of art from Haute-Claire. The preface to the catalogue includes this note:

> "Tous les travaux de Haute-Claire ont été executés entièrement sous la direction artistique de M. Point, par les différents membres de la petite société. Tout le monde collabore, selon ses moyens, à l'oeuvre, avec l'unique souci de faire bien et beau."

Armand Point et Haute-Claire, 1899, p. 15.

Nostalgia in Extremis: Botticellism in the 1890's

150. Mirbeau, "Botticelli proteste!" reprinted in Mirbeau, Des Artistes, pp. 279-280.

151. Leon Rosenthal, Sandro Botticelli et sa reputation à l'heure présente (Dijon: Librairie generale Felix Rey, 1897), p. 5. See also Téodor de Wyzewa, "Une nouvelle biographie de Botticelli," Revue des Deux Mondes, July 1903, p. 457. Wyzewa stated that Botticelli was suddenly considered the greatest Florentine and even the greatest Italian painter, judging by the crowds flocking to see the Birth of Venus in the Uffizi. He stated that Botticelli's feminine types had been popularized in English painting from Gainsborough to the Pre-Raphaelites.

152. André Fontainas, Mes Souvenirs du Symbolisme (Paris: La Nouvelle revue critique, 1928), pp. 97-98.

153. Mirbeau, Des Artistes, pp. 245, 272. Descriptions of painters of "l'âme" clearly fit Point.

154. Rio wrote rather favorably of the Sistine chapel frescoes, but generally disliked Botticelli because he was a pupil of Lippi whom he considered "vulgar and mannered." Alexis-François Rio, The Poetry of Christian Art (London: T. Bosworth, 1854).

Gabriel Mourey wrote of the importance of the Campo Santo for the young Pre-Raphaelites. Mourey, Dante Gabriel Rossetti et les Pré-Raphaélites anglais (Paris: H. Laurens, 1909), pp. 11-12.

155. Swinburne, Notes on Designs of the Old Masters (1864); Essays and Studies (1875). Walter Pater, "Sandro Botticelli," The Renaissance (London: Macmillan, 1899), p. 52 ff. Michael Levey, "Botticelli and Nineteenth Century England," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, 1960, p. 301.

156. Levey, "Botticelli," p. 302.

157. Ibid., p. 303.

158. Pater, The Renaissance, pp. 59, 62-63. Pater knew Baudelaire's Fleurs du mal and also absorbed the perverse sensibility of Gautier through Swinburne. See William Gaunt, The Aesthetic Adventure (New York: Harcourt, Brace; 1945), pp. 61-62. Rosenthal also discussed the influence of Baudelaire. Sandro Botticelli, p. 27.

159. Jean Lorrain, Buveurs des âmes (Paris, 1893), p. 140.

160. Eugene Müntz, Histoire de l'art pendant la Renaissance (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1889), Vol. II, p. 642.

161. Rosenthal, Sandro Botticelli, p. 23.

162. Ibid.

163. Ibid.

164. One wonders if Rosenthal was referring to Armand Point.

165. Pater, The Renaissance, p. 54; Rosenthal, Botticelli, pp. 44, 47.

Maurice Chabas

166. Pincus-Witten, Occult Symbolism, p. 139.

167. Quoted in Léon de St. Valéry, Tendances d'art (Paris: Perrin et cie, 1926), p. 128.

168. Maurice Chabas exhibited intermittently at the Champs Elysées until 1913. He also exhibited with the Salon Nationale des Beaux Arts from 1891-1896. He received academic training from Bouguereau and Robert-Fleury, and lived with his brother Paul. Further biography is included in French Symbolist Painters, London, 1972, p. 34. This was the only major exhibition of Symbolist art in which Maurice Chabas' paintings have been shown within recent years.

169. Gustave Kahn, "Maurice Chabas," Art et les Artistes, July 1923, p. 388.

170. Amiel quoted in Raymond Bouyer, "Le Déclin du paysage," Revue Bleue, 11 Oct. 1902, p. 468.

171. L. de St. Valéry, Tendances, pp. 128-9.

172. Ibid., p. 130.

173. Bouyer, "Déclin du paysage," p. 468.

174. Kahn, "Chabas," p. 384.

175. L. de St. Valéry discussed Chabas and Ménard in the same chapter entitled "Tous les aspects du paysage contemporaine." L. de St. Valéry, Tendances.

176. As noted by Mme. G. Lacambre, the lack of dating of Chabas' easel paintings prevents the formulation of a chronology for these works. One can assume that the early paintings are figural, while the later paintings, following 1900, are more abstract. This sequence is determined by correspondences with murals executed around 1900. French Symbolist Painters, p. 34.

177. Kahn, "Chabas," 388. Léonce de Larmandie, a co-founder of the Salon de Rose+Croix, wrote:

> Chabas, dans son tableau de l'erraticité nous transporta en pleine monde astral avec sa grande chevauchée des âmes dans l'immensité étherée. Il est un des premiers a avoir carrement abordé l'occulte avec son pinceau.

Quoted in Bertholet, La Pensée et les sécrets, Vol. III, p. 174.

178. See Chapter IX on Dulac below.

179. The artist's grandson, P. Chanteaud-Chabas, wrote of this pictorial technique. Preface to Vente catalogue, Maurice Chabas, Versailles, 1 Oct. 1972, n.p. Cf. with Dulac, p. 387.

180. de St. Valéry, Tendances, p. 132.

Eugène Grasset

181. Robert Pincus-Witten, Occult Symbolism, p. 137.

182. Peter Selz recognized that the "melancholy and nostalgic expression" of idyllic themes was a commonplace in Art Nouveau and named, among others, Symbolist painters whose work bears Art Nouveau elements: Grasset, Denis, Bernard, Toorop, and Thorn-Prikker. We would clarify this general statement by pointing out that Grasset incorporated this iconography more consistently and earlier than the other artists Selz named, and his encouragement of the decorative arts influenced other artists in that movement. Grasset's influence was international, affecting Paul Berthon, Andhré des Gachons (see text below), Louis J. Rhead, Will Bradley, and Beardsley. See Peter Selz, Art Nouveau (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1960), p. 16; La Plume, Jan. 1896, pp. 14-21.

183. Applied arts include book illustrations and bindings, glass, jewelry, metal work, pottery, furniture, textile and tapestry designs, posters, and stained glass.

184. In Aurier's definition of Symbolist art, decorative qualities were named last as Aurier implied that all other elements were subsumed in it. See G.-Albert Aurier, "Symbolisme en peinture," Mercure de France, March 1891, p. 155 ff.

Fernand Weyl defined the decorative artist with reference to Grasset:

> "...l'artiste décorateur a un but bien différent de celui du virtuose; il ne pretend point faire valoir son habileté de peintre ou de sculpteur mais simplement impression sur la vue et l'imagination du public en lui présentant des ensembles clairs, intéressants, et harmonieux...Par consequent l'artiste qui se contenterait de copier la nature n'arriverait pas à cette clarté qui est la condition première et sine qua non de la beauté décorative."

Fernand Weyl, Eugène Grasset et son oeuvre (Paris: Editions de La Plume, 1900); p. 156.

185. For biographical material on Grasset, see Weyl, Grasset, p. 155, and French Symbolist Painters, p. 57.

186. Several illustrations appear in the special number of La Plume dedicated to Grasset; 15 May 1894.

187. Julius Meier-Graefe, Modern Art (London: Wm. Heinemann, 1908), Vol. II, p. 27.

188. Leon Maillard, "Eugène Grasset," Eugène Grasset et son oeuvre, 1900, p. 58.

189. Octave Uzanne, "Eugène Grasset," L'Art et l'Idée, 1 Oct. 1892, p. 220.

190. Ibid.

191. See text above on Séon. Grasset's theories come close to Blanc's Idealist theories. See Charles Blanc, Grammaire des arts du dessin, pp. 10-11; 21.

192. See Aman-Jean, Jeune fille au paon, 1894; Roussel, Conversation au jardin, 1893; Denis, Avril, 1892.

193. See text above on Botticellism in the 1890's. See also Grasset, Le Printemps design for a textile 1900, illustrated in French Symbolist Painters, p. 87. (Fig. 88)

194. Weyl commented that Grasset never used classicizing or Renaissance decorative motifs, but like Medieval artists, drew from native botanical specimens. Weyl, Grasset, p. 157. This precedent had been set by the English. See S. Tschudi Madsen, Art Nouveau (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), pp. 78-79. We suggest that Grasset's book, La Plante et ses applications ornamentales, might have inspired Henri Rousseau's out-of-scale, precisely outlined botanical forms. (Paris: Libr. Centrale de Beaux Arts, 1897)

195. He participated in five of the Rose+Croix Salons. See Pincus-Witten, Occult Symbolism, pp. 161-162, fig. 52. Original works by des Gachons are difficult to locate. The surviving few are in private collections. Surviving copies of L'Album des Légendes are extremely rare, and are often in poor state of preservation. None of the recent catalogues on Symbolist art include his work, probably because of its fragility.

196. Gustave Soulier, "Les Artistes de l'âme—André des Gachons," pp. 479-483. This series also included articles on Séon, Osbert, and Point. Biographical information on des Gachons appears in this article and also in Thieme-Becker. See also special number of La Plume, #159, Dec. 1895, pp. 525-559.

197. This modest sized booklet appeared monthly for two years, 1894-1895. See note 195 above.

198. Le Prince naïf was published in Paris: Edmond Girard, edit., 1894. Several reviews of the stage work are included in the special number of La Plume, 1895, pp. 538-539. Some of the stage decors are illustrated in La Plume, #159. The synaesthetic elements of the production correspond to the productions in which the Nabis participated in the early years of the 1890's. See George Mauner, The Nabis (New York: Garland, 1978), pp. 55-58.

199. Soulier, "Les Artistes de l'âme," p. 481.

200. Ibid., p. 480. Soulier felt that Botticelli's paintings contained "un certain symbolisme très simple et très vague d'un sentiment général." See above text on Armand Point and Botticellism in the 1890's.

201. Ibid., p. 482. Soulier noted the archaic affectation of des Gachons' spelling of his first name, "And(h)ré."

202. Ibid., p. 480. Andhré des Gachons paid homage to his "maîtres" in a painting where he depicted, under arches, Puvis de Chavannes, Grasset, Memling, and Botticelli. See fig. 93.

203. Leon Maillard, Notes pour demain: l'imagier Andhré des Gachons (Paris: La Plume, 1892), pp. 7-9. Alphonse Germain criticized des Gachons' pallid, limp figures as evidence of weak drawing. Alphonse Germain, "Andhré des Gachons," La Plume, #159, p. 536.

CHAPTER VIII

"IDEALISTES" AND "INTIMISTES"

Introduction

While many artists of the 1890's can be studied within the context of a particular historical group such as the Nabis, Neo-Impressionists or the Rose+Croix, there were others in the Symbolist camp whose loyalties and aesthetic preferences were less clear. These were the artists whom the critic Camille Mauclair identified as "Idéalistes" and "Intimistes": Henri Le Sidaner, Edmond-François Aman-Jean, Henri Martin, Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer, and Emile René Ménard. Because they did not exhibit at the Independants, these artists were not included in Coquiot's chronicle, but we consider them "Nostalgiques" in their retrospective attitudes and their commitment to poetic rather than descriptive painting. Mauclair favored these artists because he felt that they returned art to the realm of the imagination and poetic reflection, aspects of art which had been neglected during the epoch of Realism. [1]

The painting styles of Mauclair's Idéalistes fell somewhere between the opposing poles of Impressionism and academicism, conforming strictly to neither while retaining affinities to both. Their approach represented a compromise between tradition and innovation; the artists adhered to certain traditional values of representation, yet they were

committed to the Symbolist premise that inner states of mind could be expressed through plastic means. The formal solutions adopted by these artists to clothe their ideas were far less radical than those of the Nabis.

In a flurry of books and articles, Mauclair built the reputations of his artists, using persuasive arguments to justify their connections to the arts of poetry and music as well as their affinities to earlier art where these qualities prevailed. He praised this generation of painters as "les gloires de l'école française," in their search to convey thought and emotion, their dedication to Idealism, and their denial of ephemerality and spontaneity. [2] Mauclair characterized them as "peintres de l'art subtil, mystérieux, et raffiné," influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites, Puvis, and Corot, but closest to Whistler. [3]

For Mauclair, "intimité" was an element of Idealism. According to his definition, the term "intimité" (intimism) indicated the "intrusion of the psychological ideal into the art of painting, a revelation of the soul through the things painted, the magnetic suggestion of what lies behind them through the description of the outer appearance, the intimate meaning (le sens intime) of the spectacle of life." [4]

In his focus on intimist painting, Mauclair illuminated the overlapping concerns of French and Belgian Symbolists. Le Sidaner and Lévy-Dhurmer, in particular, maintained close relationships with

the Belgian poets Maeterlinck, Rodenbach, and Verhaeren, and their art, like some of the Neo-Impressionists ' reflects the rich interchanges between France and Belgium. [5]

Although the art of Mauclair's Idéalistes and Intimistes did not always invoke an antique or Christian past, they may also be considered "Nostalgiques." In contrast to others whose focus was exclusively on the past, these artists were not always hostile to modern life, and often found it an equivalent source for poetic daydreams. Like Maeterlinck, they probed certain rituals of daily life to extract elements of universality and permanence, totally escaping its aspects of triviality and contingency. André Fontainas, another Symbolist critic, characterized them as "artistes isolés dans leur rêve et leur vouloir . . . qui vécurent à l'écart en purs artistes." [6]

The conclusion reached by the directors of a recent exhibition of Symbolist art is relevant to our consideration of the "Nostalgiques" in the following section. As pointed out by Messrs. Foucart and Lacambre, the painting of dreams in a modified traditional style did not necessarily imply the use of a classicizing vocabulary or academic technique. These authors cite as examples of this alternate approach the portraits of Aman-Jean, "devenus évocations hors de temps" and those of Lévy-Dhurmer with their ambiguous blend of dream and reality. [7]

Because the art of the Idéalistes adhered in some ways to traditional pictorial standards, it was acceptable in the official

Salons. Their work was most frequently exhibited in the Salon du Champs-de-Mars (La Société Nationale des Beaux Arts), the more liberal of the two official Salons. Some of these artists also exhibited at the Salon de la Rose+Croix, but since the major part of their work was secular in subject, it was incompatible with Péladan's requirements for sacred and mystical art. Since they never shared the radical forms adopted by the Neo-Impressionists and the Nabis, they did not exhibit at the Independants. [8]

In the early years of the twentieth century these artists continued to paint idealistically, even as Symbolism as an aesthetic had waned. Hostile to Cubism and modernist art stemming from Cézanne, Mauclair continued to support these artists, and their place in the evolution of Symbolism was recorded in the general historical studies of late nineteenth-century art. [9]

HENRI LE SIDANER (1862-1939)

> (La zone) où la musique, le clair de lune et le sentiment ne font qu'un, et cette parole de Shelley c'est tout l'art de Le Sidaner, nostalgique et doux comme son nom d'Armorique.
>
> Camille Mauclair, 1928

Camille Mauclair felt that Henri Le Sidaner was the most promising among the group of painters he called "the Intimists." [10] According to Mauclair, these artists sought to evoke the sense of the "mystery of ordinary existence" through the "latent poetry of things," and this interest in their surroundings set them apart from other Symbolists stimulated by the occult. He felt that the Intimists had "profited from the lessons of Impressionism, but had decided to lead their art back to less brilliant and less superficial regions." [11]

Mauclair traced the geneology of intimism from Dutch seventeenth-century precursors--Vermeer, De Hooch, Terborch--to Chardin and the nineteenth-century artists Prudhon, Millet, Corot, and Carrière. While discriminating between the paintings of the Intimists and the "odious genre picture," Mauclair stated: "The subjects of intimist painting are <u>interior</u>. They are suggestions of sentiment, interpretations of the soul and of Nature, the emotions of man before some aspect of the universe whether . . . an old house, reflections in the water, an evening sky or a silhouette in moonlight." [12]

The paintings of Le Sidaner which most closely conform to Mauclair's definition of intimism are those painted at the height of his career, from 1900 on. Earlier, his iconography had evolved from narrative paintings with religious overtones to dreamy Symbolist landscapes with figures. La Table d'automne (1905), one of many variations on this theme, exemplified the artist's elevation of the ordinary to the level of poetry. (Fig. 94). Here, the aftermath of the evening meal is no slice-of-life image, but is transformed into a dream-like vision. These evocative paintings escape the banal; they appeal to the imagination and stimulate reflection. In this phase of his work, the motifs of deserted gardens and houses constituted the artist's symbolic language. These mysterious images became a metaphor for his notion of escape from the coarseness of the material world. Mauclair interpreted this personal approach to Symbolism: "For a thinking person, every object is a symbol, but a natural symbol, resulting from life itself without the help of traditional allegory." [13]

Mauclair felt that the concept of intimism was summed up in Le Sidaner's "art recueilli."

> We might say that he sees Nature through the crystal of dreams and silence, and at the same time he expresses the life of inanimate objects; he evokes the mystery of somnolent matter with the deep emotion of a great poet . . . . (His works) are the very standard of the degree of the incorporeal that can be expressed in plastic art, and they sum up intimism in its entirety. 14

The northern environment in which Le Sidaner spent most of

his life was reflected in his temperament and predilection for mysterious themes. [15]

Although born in Mauritius, Le Sidaner spent most of his youth in Dunkirk. Around 1880 he was in Paris and in 1884 he studied with Cabanel at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. His predilection for less traditional art, and his admiration for Manet and Monet, soon led him to reject the rigidity of the Ecole. His attitude was recorded by Mauclair: "Je me sentais que j'étais comme empoisonné sans m'en rendre encore exactement compte et je suis parti faire une cure d'air et de nature." [16] During the summers, he worked independently at Etaples (Pas de Calais), isolated from the turbulent artistic milieu of Paris. From 1887 to 1891 he exhibited with the Salon des Artistes Français, but he switched to the more liberal Societé Nationale des Beaux Arts in 1894, reflecting the changes in his aesthetic beliefs broadened by travel and literary interests. [17]

In 1891 he was awarded a fellowship which enabled him to travel to Florence, where he copied the Primitifs, and to Holland, where he was particularly impressed by the greyish light as well as the paintings of the little Dutch Masters. [18]

Le Sidaner's earliest works were melancholic, greyish paintings of religious rituals such as burials, death rites, and processions of orphans. [19] (Fig. 95). However, as he became more interested in Symbolist poetry, his art lost its naturalist orientation and became less narrative. [20] He turned to the theme of young women in hazy land-

scapes favored by the "Nostalgiques" to suggest a divine presence in nature. Like Séon, Osbert, Point, Chabas, and Maurice Denis, Le Sidaner suggested mystical meaning through ambiguity and allusion. Le Dimanche (1898) is typical of these spiritualized paintings. (Figs. 96-97). Here, white-gowned virgins are grouped in a clearing, immersed in a golden light. The simplification of the figural forms and their Pre-Raphaelite ancestry recalls works by another of Mauclair's Idéalistes, Aman-Jean, although this latter artist preferred secular images untinged by religious sentiment. [21]

The gentle religiosity and hushed atmosphere of Le Sidaner's painting is paralleled in a poem by Francis Jammes, Dimanche des rameaux. [22]

DIMANCHE DES RAMEAUX . . .

Dimanche
des Rameaux...
Les blancs hameaux,
les ormeaux,
les sureaux,
les roseaux,
les fuseaux,
les bestiaux
s'endorment
comme
des oiseaux

A l'ombre des feuilles,
les eaux lentes
se recueillent
dimanchement.

Les cloches sonnaient larges
et toutes,
comme des gouttes
d'orage.

Mon coeur fleurissait
et je prosternais
mon ame
inquiète et calme.

Several critics who may have had Jammes' poem in mind, and who would have been aware of Baudelaire's ideas of correspondences and synaesthesia, remarked on the musical element of tolling bells which pervades Le Sidaner's painting. Among these writers was Gabriel Mourey,

a critic who wrote for both English and French art periodicals, and who favored Pre-Raphaelite art and poetry.

> La poésie du dimanche, il l'a chantée aussi en harmonies blanches de la plus adorable suavité! . . . elles sont un choeur blanc de rêves indécis, de figures neigeuses aux yeux naifs qui du sommet de ce promontoire, contemplant la vie; au loin dans la vallée au clocher de l'église à peine visible parmi les brumes fines de l'après-midi qui s'achève, l'angelus du soir sonne. 23

Such lyrical extravagance in critical prose was not unusual during the Symbolist era. But even without Mourey's interpretation, the modifications of Impressionism made by Le Sidaner are apparent. The quoditian aspects of the scene are invested with pseudo-religious significance and poetic emotions are suggested through the hazy ambience and the subtle nuances of color. Le Sidaner's debt to Impressionism and to Monet in particular was noted by his contemporaries. [24]

Monet's Cathedrals were exhibited in 1895, and this series won praise even from the critics most committed to the Symbolist aesthetic. These paintings were recognized as a departure from the premises of early Impressionism toward the painting of an idea. [25]

Le Sidaner's painting shows his superficial adoption of certain Impressionist techniques as a means to his own ends. Unlike the Impressionists, Le Sidaner eschewed the effects of a passing moment and a veristic recording of sunlight and a brilliant color spectrum. He chose instead to paint pearly morning light with closely-valued tones. Le Sidaner's brushstrokes--short, rectangular, and densely

interwoven--are not touches of unmixed color, but subtle whitened colors mixed on the palette--mauve, soft blues, pink, grey-green, and pale yellow. These delicate colors, juxtaposed to present a monochromatic effect, take on a silvery cast, more reminiscent of Whistler and Corot than of Monet. According to Mauclair, the goal of Le Sidaner was "harmonisation, et non véracité ; pour Le Sidaner, la couleur compte avant tout à titre de valeur. Et cette valeur est si juste que le ton, en soi-même, semble aboli." [26] It was in this affinity to Whistler that Mauclair felt the musicality of Le Sidaner's paintings:

> il a évolué vers la musicalité des harmonies picturales et il a créé aujourd'hui à l'ombre de Monet et de Whistler, et bien à lui, une vision nouvelle dont la poésie n'est plus sentimentale . . . mais ainsi dire psychique comme celle de la symphonie elle-même. 27

As a close friend of the artist, Mauclair was able to document Le Sidaner's painting method, which with its long preparation, was the antithesis of plein-airism. [28] Le Sidaner worked in the studio, relying on his trained memory of light effects in landscape. After meditating on an outdoor site for long periods of time, he returned to the studio, where he made pen sketches of the geometrical configuration of a site, and notations of values. He added a ground of fluid washes to the underlying sketch, and finally applied opaque touches of paint densely covering the surface. These small brushstrokes impart an overall surface shimmer which tends to dissolve objects. According to Mauclair, the picture appeared with less clarity

on the surface of the canvas than in the reconstituted image in the mind of the viewer. Invoking Leonardo's idea that painting is "una cosa mentale," he stated that such painting belonged to the realm of the spirit. [29]

The painting, La Ronde au clair de lune (1896) and the closely related lithograph, La Ronde, show Le Sidaner's employment of themes used by other Nostalgiques. [30] (Fig. 98). The young women here, again of Pre-Raphaelite type, are seen dancing with langorous movements in a vaporous atmosphere. The lithograph, La Ronde, shows striking visual parallels to a painting in Louis Janmot's series, Le Poème de l'âme (Fig. 99). As we have pointed out in our study of the paintings of Maurice Denis, Janmot, the mid-century religious painter, inspired the Symbolists with his mystical works. [31] Attached to his painting of figures dancing en ronde, Rayons du Soleil, is a poem which alludes to the autumnal landscape setting and the passage of time:

> Versez les printemps à notre âme
> Et chantez vos rêves d'un jour...
> Avant que de ses doigts moroses
> L'hiver n'ait desseché les roses.

Le Sidaner's apparent borrowing of Janmot's figural types, composition, and mood underscore the parallels between Symbolism and Romanticism. For Janmot and Le Sidaner, the theme of the Ronde, with its reference to Parnassus and the muses perhaps symbolized the fusion of the arts--poetry, painting, music, and dance. The Symbolist generation, under the spell of Wagner and Baudelaire's correspondences, felt that all art was an emanation of universal spirit.

Analogies also appear between Le Sidaner's lithograph and Fantin-Latour's lithographs based on his musical experiences. Fantin's lithograph, The Evocation of Erda (1885), appears as a precursor for Le Sidaner's not only in mood, but in the lithographic technique of striations which dissolve the form in suggestive nuances of light and shade. [32] (Fig. 100).

In his book on Le Sidaner, Mauclair considered the Wagnerian milieu as the context in which all Symbolist art, and particularly that of Le Sidaner, blossomed:

> Il a été un témoin intélligent et attentif de cette nostalgie qui engageait alors tout artiste digne de ce nom a s'enquérir des autres arts et à en transposer les éléments et les prestiges dans le sien propre. Il était predestiné à devenir un musicien et un poète de la peinture et allant très loin dans l'expression de la nuance, sans laquelle les choses 'se seraient que ce qu'elles sont.' 33

Mauclair also pointed out the affinities of Le Sidaner's paintings with the contemporary music of Debussy, Fauré and Reynaldo Hahn. In an article devoted to a discussion of the fusion of the arts, especially music and painting, Mauclair praised Le Sidaner's paintings as prime examples of the affinities between these arts.

> En lui s'unissent la peinture et la musique par une extraordinaire faculté qui lui est propre, celle de faire chanter les tons ... En un art plastique et un art immateriel, Le Sidaner nous montre qu'il y a une conciliation suprème. 34

Le Sidaner's artistic development was greatly stimulated by his stay in Bruges for two years, 1899 and 1900. The other-worldly

aspect of this medieval city was particularly stimulating for Symbolist artists and poets and it was there that Le Sidaner found his true direction. Mauclair felt that Le Sidaner was predisposed to this atmosphere from his knowledge of Symbolist poetry, and that he was the painter best equipped to capture the feeling of the town in visual imagery. "Je songeais souvent qu'il manquait à Bruges son Rodenbach du pinceau, et à mes yex ce devait être Le Sidaner... (Il sut pressentir) ce qu'il y avait de mysticité, de noblesse, et de vie du silence derrière les murs et au fond des eaux." [35] During his stay, Le Sidaner became friendly with the poets who had made significant contributions to Symbolism in Belgium--Maeterlinck, Rodenbach, and Verhaeren. Through them and his participation in the exhibitions of La Libre Esthétique, he met Belgian and Dutch Symbolist artists: Khnopff, Degouve de Nunques, Baertson, and Toorop.

Within this group, there was much cross-fertilization of stylistic and iconographical elements. Gabriel Mourey felt that Le Sidaner's paintings inspired by Bruges held "le mystère intime et le rêve emouvant qui habitent les vieilles pierres planent sur les eaux endormies des canaux, illuminent dans la nuit tombant les fenêtres des humbles maisons." [36] (Fig. 101).

Following his return from Belgium in 1900, Le Sidaner turned to new thematic material in response to the peaceful surroundings of his home in Gerberoy, a village on the Picardy-Normandy border. A new iconography of pure landscape and empty gardens replaced the figure-

in-landscape themes of the mid-nineties. Le Sidaner used the motif of the deserted garden table, a subject which falls between landscape and still-life, as the vehicle for painting poetic ideas. [37] These paintings are dreamy evocations of what one critic called secular "rites of existence." [38]

In La Table (1904) the table in the foreground, bearing the evidence of a recently terminated meal, is the subject of the painting. (Fig. 102). Human activity is merely alluded to in the still-lit oil lamp, the skewed placement of the chairs and the disheveled table linen. Mauclair and other critics attributed the ambience of silence and mystery to the artist's experiences in Bruges. [39]

The crepuscular light is translated into bluish-grey granular particles of paint which softens all forms in a dissolving unity. In these works, the touch of the brush is often smaller, and closer to pointillism than the Impressionist-type stroke of the works dating from the late 1890's. [40] The atmosphere in these paintings also owes its effects of immateriality and silvery shimmer to the late Corot, and to Whistler's and Carrière's landscapes which Mauclair described as "peints sur un miroir avec de éther." [41] Mauclair pointed out Le Sidaner's preference for the twilight hour with its ambiguity and mysterious quality:

> L'heure exquise où la lune qui se présage se mêle au soleil qui s'en va. L'art matérial disparaît, on ne pense ni aux pâtes ni à l'huile, ni à la toile. On voit les pierres, les feuilles, le ciel, l'eau, admirablement exprimés chacun dans sa substance mais on les voit à travers la pensée poétique qu'ils dégagent. 42

The affinities between the silent world painted by Le Sidaner and the poetry of Maeterlinck are particularly striking. Since the artist and writer had met in Belgium these correspondences are not surprising. Their sensitivity to the mysterious aspects of "le vie quotidienne" was voiced by Maeterlinck in his collection of essays, Le Trésor des humbles:

> Toujours est-il que nous constatons dans la vie quotidienne, entre les êtres les plus humbles, des rapports mystérieux et directs, des phénomènes spirituels, et des rapprochements d'âmes dont on ne parlait guère en d'autres temps. 43

Le Sidaner's intimate paintings parallel Maeterlinck's ideas and sum up Mauclair's concept of intimism. Within this narrow frame of reference, the artist selected, with the care of a poet in his choice of words, the accessories which impart a sense of mystery. These clues to a meaning which lies beyond surface appearances remove these paintings from the level of anecdotal genre to that of symbolic expression. The undramatic and the uneventful daily ritual is elevated to a poetic statement.

The haunting atmosphere of these images corresponds in some ways to Marcel Proust's evocation of daily ritual in Remembrance of Things Past. A striking parallel to Le Sidaner's motif of the abandoned dinner table appears in a passage from the novel in which one of Elstir's paintings is discussed:

> Since I had seen such things depicted in water-coulours by Elstir, I sought to find again in reality, I cherished, as though for their poetic

> beauty, the broken gestures of the knives still lying across one another, the swollen convexity of a discarded napkin upon which the sun would patch a scrap of yellow velvet, the half-empty glass which thus shewed to greater advantage the noble sweep of its curved sides, and, in the heart of its translucent crystal, clear as frozen daylight, a dreg of wine, dusky but sparkling with reflected lights, the displacement of solid objects, the transmutation of liquids by the effect of light and shade, the shifting colour of the plums which passed from green to blue and from blue to golden yellow in the half-plundered dish, the chairs, like a group of old ladies, that came twice daily to take their places round the white cloth spread on the table as on an altar at which were celebrated the rites of the palate, where in the hollows of oyster-shells a few drops of lustral water had gathered as in tiny holy water stoups of stone; I tried to find beauty there where I had never imagined before that it could exist, in the most ordinary things, in the profundities of 'still life.' [44]

A problem which has long fascinated literary scholars is the identification of the painter who served as a model for Elstir in Proust's Remembrance of Things Past. Although Elstir's paintings, as described in the novel, seemingly resemble Monet's, the consensus of critical opinion is that the figure of Elstir is a composite of several Impressionist painters. Manet, Degas, Pissarro, Whistler, and Helleu have all been suggested as prototypes because certain aspects of their life and art reappear in Proust's painter.

However, J.-E. Blanche, an artist and critic friendly with

both Proust and Le Sidaner, insisted that the inspiration for the character of Elstir was not an Impressionist at all, but Le Sidaner. In support of his argument, Blanche cited La Table as a painting which rendered the atmosphere of intimacy between the country neighbors in Swann's Way. [45]

Le Sidaner was a painter known to Proustian society, for his name appeared later in the novel, in a discussion focused on the relative merits of Monet and Poussin. One wonders if it was Le Sidaner's success as a fashionable painter which led one of the participants in this conversation to state his preference for Le Sidaner over Monet and later to say that he would seek the opinion of "this hermetic painter" on Poussin. [46]

The case for Le Sidaner's paintings as inspiration for Proust is perhaps strengthened when Proust's own ideas about art are examined. Chernowitz pointed out that Proust was extremely knowledgeable about art and art theories, and was sophisticated in his evaluation of both past and contemporary art. [47]

Proust's sensitivity to the effects of light are evident in many passages in the novel, and it is not surprising that Vermeer was one of his favorite painters. [48] It may be coincidental that Mauclair traced back to Vermeer the intimist viewpoint that he saw embodied in Le Sidaner's paintings of deserted gardens. [49]

Although modern critics conclude that Elstir was, without doubt, an Impressionist, they recognize the disjunction which exists

between Proust's aesthetics and the doctrine of Impressionism. [50] Profoundly influenced by Ruskin's recognition of the spiritual nature of art and de Montesquiou's aestheticism, Proust's own ideals cannot be reconciled with empiricism. [51] For Proust, the primacy of the imagination in the creative process was expressed in the writer's thoughts in his visit of Elstir's studio. On viewing the painter's seascapes, he discussed the power of Elstir's inner dialogue with nature:

> But I was able to discern from these that the charm of each of them lay in a sort of metamorphosis of the things represented in it, analogous to what in poetry we call metaphor, and that, if God the Father had created things by naming them, it was by taking away their names or giving them other names that Elstir created them anew... But the rare moments in which we see nature as she is, with poetic vision, it was from these that Elstir's work was taken. 52

In conversation, Elstir spoke of the necessity of dream:

> When the mind has a tendency to dream it is a mistake to keep dreams away from it... so long as you distract your mind from its dreams, it will not know them for what they are; you will always be taken in by the appearance of things because you will not have grasped their true nature. 53

Proust's aesthetics, like Mallarmé's, were based on suggestion and evocation rather than on description; and his belief in the power of poetic transformation of human experience paralleled the approach of Le Sidaner. [54] The question of whether Le Sidaner's paintings actually affected Proust's creation of Elstir must remain in the realm of conjecture; it is perhaps of lesser significance than our recogni-

tion of the affinities which link these fin-de-siècle artists, the major literary figure and the now-forgotten artist.

EDMOND-FRANÇOIS AMAN-JEAN (1860-1935)

Unlike other "Nostalgiques," Aman-Jean did not flee from "la vie moderne"; he invested the present with poetic feeling and nostalgic sentiment. His imagery consisted of feminine figures lost in revery or fashionable garden parties in idyllic settings. In these modernized fêtes galantes, Aman-Jean manifested his escapist dream.

Aman-Jean's relationship to mainstream Symbolism is ambiguous. In the 1890's he was considered by some critics a "peintre de l'âme" as were Point, Séon, and Osbert. [55] His art reflects the allusive ideals of Symbolist poetry in its nuanced quality and the projection of interior states. However as Symbolism waned in the early twentieth century, Aman-Jean's art became mannered and was valued for its fashionable appeal.

Camille Mauclair included Aman-Jean among his group of Idéalistes because of his poetic concerns, his reflective attitude, and his ability to express universals in his painting of ordinary subjects. [56]

André Beaunier, another Symbolist critic, was also sensitive to the interiorized content of Aman-Jean's art. He pointed out Aman-Jean's affinities with Verlaine, and discussed their common nostalgia for the eighteenth century. [57] Both were inspired by the escapist fantasies of Watteau, and Aman-Jean transferred this idyllic quality to certain aspects of the life he saw around him. But unlike the Impressionists' spontaneity in capturing the appearance of contemporary life,

Aman-Jean's gaze turned inward; his paintings are veiled in vaporous atmosphere which suggest detachment and remoteness. [58] (Fig. 103).

The association of Verlaine's poetry with Aman-Jean became a critical cliché during the 1890's and the early part of the twentieth century. Ségard stated that L'Art poétique by Verlaine became Aman-Jean's Credo , [59] and Dr. François Aman-Jean, the biographer-son of the artist, stated anachronistically that Verlaine's poem could have been inspired by the early work of Seurat and Aman-Jean. [60]

Gustave Coquiot also referred to Aman-Jean as "le peintre de la nuance—picturalement, il répète toujours avec Verlaine:

> ...Rien de plus cher que la chanson gris
> Ou l'Indécis au Précis se joint...
> Car nous voulons la Nuance encor
> Pas la Couleur, rien que la nuance!
> Oh! la nuance seule fiance
> Le rêve au rêve et la flûte au cor! 61

Aman-Jean was a regular visitor at Mallarmé's Mardis, and was inspired by the poet's exhortations for an art of suggestion and evocation. In this circle were artists, writers, and musicians with whom Aman-Jean was to have close personal relationships. He met there the artists Whistler, Maurice Denis, and Bonnard; the poets Rhené Ghil, Pierre Louÿs, Gustave Kahn, Jules Laforgue, André Gide, Henri de Regnier, and Francis Vielé-Griffin among others. [62] Critics of that time saw Aman-Jean in this milieu and considered his paintings of the 1890's within the framework of Symbolism. [63] His contact with Symbolist writers and poets confirmed his dislike for the materialism of most Salon

art; he shared their attitudes on the spiritual idealism of art. [64]

Aman-Jean's friendship with Seurat, which began when they were students in Henri Lehmann's atelier, profoundly affected Aman-Jean's artistic development. They shared a studio in Paris from 1881-1887, and together witnessed the burgeoning of Symbolist art.

Dr. François Aman-Jean, the artist's son, stated that their compatibility resulted from shared artistic experiences and tastes. [65] They both had works rejected by the Salon jury, they both detested academic painting, and in literature, "Goncourt was 'their divinity.'" [66]

In a letter to Coquiot, Aman-Jean remarked on his friendship with Seurat: "Je lui dois beaucoup; nos discussions étaient sans fins, nos séjours à la campagne prolongés." [67]

Coquiot revealed that besides their discussions on art, the young painters shared canvases, brushes and colors: "C'est l'atelier en commun où l'on échangera ses impressions, où l'on accomplira chacun à part soi une tache, où l'un, tour à tour, complètera la travail de l'autre." [68]

The two young artists emulated their idols of the Barbizon school by painting outdoors in regions near Paris and beyond--the coast of Normandy, at Fontainebleau, and in Burgundy--but they rejected the spontaneous approach of the Impressionists. Of these years, Dr. Aman-Jean wrote: "Tous deux traduisent inconsciémment ce passage nécessaire et subtil entre l'impressionisme et le symbolisme." [69]

Both young artists had the opportunity to assist Puvis de

Chavannes by squaring off sketches and enlarging figures in the Bois sacré mural for the Lyon Museum. Dr. Aman-Jean stated that this activity enriched both young artists "spirituellement et plastiquement," and pointed out the affinities that he saw between Puvis' Bois sacré, Seurat's Grande Jatte, and Aman-Jean's later decorative panels in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs. "Dans ces trois tableaux, la grandeur de l'attente est sembable pour ces silhouettes immobilisées et comme stylisées par l'attention de leurs pensées." [70]

Achille Ségard, a Symbolist critic who wrote a standard work on decorative painting, commented on Puvis' impact on Aman-Jean: "La fréquentation de Puvis et son enseignment oral furent très utiles à M. Aman-Jean." [71]

In 1890, Aman-Jean published an article on Puvis' mural in the Grand Ampithéatre of the Sorbonne. He praised Puvis' synthesis of form and color, and he mentioned the serenity and the "mystère" of his landscapes. [72] These are the very qualities that he sought to instill in his own landscapes.

By the end of the eighties, Aman-Jean and Seurat had grown apart. Their art also diverged; it reflected their new interests and allegiances. Seurat had assumed the intellectual leadership of the Neo-Impressionists, and with Signac was supported by the Revue Indépendante group headed by Fénéon and Kahn. In the meantime, Aman-Jean continued to attend Mallarmé's soirees, and he became friendly with Péladan, Huysmans, and Paul Adam. His art reflected the mystical ideals

of this circle. In 1892 and 1893. he exhibited in the Salons de la Rose+Croix. [73]

Some critics remarked on his emulation of the art of the Primitives, especially Botticelli and other Florentines, while others noted a predilection for the painterly techniques and idyllic mood of the Venetians. [74]

Aside from his brief association with the Rose+Croix, Aman-Jean's oeuvre during the nineties consisted of portraiture or the depiction of women in interiors or in garden settings. In his easel paintings the figure dominates, whereas in the large decorative paintings and murals, landscape plays a greater role. In both formats, Aman-Jean's paintings are permeated with a mood of withdrawl and dreaminess.

In his discussion of Portrait d'une jeune fille (Miss Hella Carmichael, 1906), Camille Mauclair wrote of Aman-Jean: "féministe très délicat, poète de la douceur triste, décorateur de tapisseries charmantes, dessinateur très sur et coloriste subtil." [75] (Fig. 104). Aman-Jean's female figures are all of a type; they are young, fragile, and withdrawn. Jacques-Emile Blanche, analogizing them to English paintings, described them as "des jeunes femmes maladives et languides, dont la taille de roseau disparaît sous les vaporeuses mousselines Liberty. Ces soeurs françaises des vierges préraphaéliques anglaises et des créoles de Chassériau." [76]

These are not penetrating psychological studies of individuals, but are generalized images of an inward state of mind. Gabriel

Mourey, an art critic devoted to the Pre-Raphaelites and their artistic progeny, stated that Aman-Jean had captured "l'âme de l'éternel féminin," and Roger Marx called him "l'analyste impeccable de la féminité." [77]

Mauclair identified a new attitude adopted by some portraitists and called it "Leonardesque." Although the critic did not discuss Aman-Jean as one of these artists who tended to replace the specificity of this genre with suggestiveness and generalization, his remarks could be applied as well to the work of Aman-Jean:

> La femme récemment peinte se tient dans la pénombre... C'est l'amie pensive, la confidente touchée elle aussi de nos névroses, de nos excès de pensée.... Maintenant, pour les artistes amoreux de songe et de symbole, elle tend à en représenter le secret. Par une exquise et impérissable convention, elle représente l'élément psychique de l'humanité. 78

André Beaunier pointed out that Aman-Jean expressed his philosophy of universal harmony by immersing his subjects in a vaporous atmosphere that blurred specific features. To this artist, these figures held no meaning as individuals but only as humans linked to each other and their surroundings by a universal spirit. Thus all elements, whether in landscape or in indoor settings, existed for the sake of unity and decorative harmony.

Aman-Jean's use of the figure of a pensive young woman as a metaphor for his own introspective interests surely derives from Whistler, as does his use of silvery and atmospheric tones. [79] Look-

ing beyond the example of the English artist, Aman-Jean studied Velasquez's paintings, and wrote a small book on him. The muted harmony of pastel colors in Portrait d'une jeune fille--pink, cream, and greyish green--resembles Velasquez's delicate palette. Aman-Jean wrote of this master's use of color which had inspired his own:

> Le tableau du coloriste sera peu coloré des tons crus de la palette; la couleur, cependant, y sera partout imprécise et présente, dans toutes les ombres, dans tous les reflets, la lumière plus grise sera vraiment harmonisée à son ombre à son reflet. 80

André Beaunier praised the painting of a young woman in a garden setting, Jeune fille au paon (1895). (Fig. 105). He was sensitive to Aman-Jean's poetic orientation and noted that it was far removed from "literary art" for it lacked anecdote and allegorical reference. [81] The feeling of mystery and secrecy which permeates the figure and the landscape inspired another critic to write: "Sans doute sont-elles des exilées dont la nostalgie est assez puissante pour recréer autour d'elles le pays dont elles rêvent et dont elles sont séparées." [82]

The silence of the generalized landscape forms corresponds to the reflective attitude of the woman; the unity of mood linking the figure to nature implies the presence of universal spirit and harmony. [83]

Camille Mauclair commented on Aman-Jean's painterly brushstrokes which repeat the curvilinear patterns of the figure and landscape forms. [84] The ballooning shapes of the dress and the feathery

sweep of the peacock's tail are echoed in the curves of the path and the distant arcade, thus unifying the surface of the decorative painting.

Aman-Jean responded to the example of Puvis who incorporated the broad design and simplifications of the mural aesthetic in his easel paintings.[85] In this painting, Aman-Jean similarly applied the rules of decorative painting to remove all hints of the mundane from his painting.[86]

This work was painted following Aman-Jean's return from Italy, when Venetian influences caused his palette to become brighter. He renounced the greyish tonality of his earlier works in favor of a delicate color harmony: yellow, green, turquoise, pink and violet. These hues do not radiate the brilliance of Impressionist color, but appear slightly muted as if seen through the filter of clouds rather than in strong sunlight.[87] Aman-Jean's use of color, owing something also to Puvis de Chavannes, reflects the taste of the time for nuanced rather than saturated hues. Contemporary critics often alluded to poetry and music when discussing Aman-Jean's use of color. Louis Vaudoyer analogized his colors to flowers:

> Le bleu du myosotis et de l'ancolie, les roses à la fois frais et cendreux de la rose du Bengale, les verts argentins de l'olivier, les jaunes pales du centre de la paquerette s'y unissent et s'y répondent en symphonies murmurées. 88

The peacock in this painting is an obvious borrowing from

Whistler although the artist transformed its meaning to convey the idea of beauty. Another more obvious use of this symbol appears in the triptych, Beauté of 1897 where Aman-Jean juxtaposed two peacocks and a female figure. [89]

Aman-Jean often worked in pastel, as the medium was particularly suited for his experiments in the use of expressive color. He was but one of the many artists who created a renaissance of this medium at the end of the nineteenth century, perhaps influenced by Degas.

Aman-Jean's pastel style is exemplified in La Robe rose (1902), which depicts a woman seated in a mysterious landscape. (Fig. 106). The melancholic expression of her face is heightened by her seemingly uncomfortable, crouched position and the disturbing forms of the landscape indicated in hasty ambiguous strokes. Through the use of color and compressed space, the artist invested the landscape with a feeling of tension that expands the mood of the human figure. Aman-Jean's pastel expresses Poussin's dictum that nature should reflect the emotions of the human drama enacted within it. [90]

A contemporary critic might well have been thinking of this pastel when he wrote of Aman-Jean, "Il donne la vie à ses personnages, à ses paysages, autant par l'émotion qu'il leur insuffle que par ses qualités proprement picturales." [91]

Aman-Jean's pastel technique and feminine imagery were perhaps influenced by Degas' portraits and late pastel drawings. Aman-Jean's use of brilliant color--in this case, bright pink, orange, and

white--and the bold striations of the crayon resemble Degas' late pastels. Furthermore, an awareness of Degas' portraits seems evident in the psychological intensity of Aman-Jean's figure. The melancholic expression, although mitigated somewhat by the sensuous color, recalls Degas' expressive portraits such as Melancholy. [92]

The mood of introspection is also present in Aman-Jean's graphic works which repeat his favored subject, the delicate young woman seen through a hazy atmosphere. In Sous les fleurs (1897), as in many others, the image is restricted to the head, the natural focus for these works concerned with the interior life, with dream and contemplation. [93] (Fig. 107). The dissolution of the facial forms in the play of softly hatched lines add a sense of mystery and remoteness. Close to the head are floating flower forms, included as a symbolic reference to the fragile beauty of the woman or as a synaesthetic stimulus to correlative senses.

In the early years of the twentieth century, Aman-Jean completed many commissions for mural decorations. These include several panels in the Salle 1900, Musée des Arts Décoratifs: Le Dejeuner sur l'herbe, and its pendant, La Comédie (1909); La Confidance and L'Attente. [94] (Figs. 108, 109, 110).

The murals in Salle 1900 are thematically consistent and appear to have been inspired by Victor Hugo's Fête chez Thérèse, a popular work which included the description of a costume party "assemblée dans un parc." [95] In Aman-Jean's up-dating of the fête galante,

groups of fashionably dressed figures idle langorously in park settings. The muted, dream-like quality of these paintings is analogous to the atmosphere of Verlaine's evocative poetry. Although contemporaneity is hinted in the modish costumes and specific physiognomy, an air of detachment from the present dominates. A gentle melancholy is also felt with the realization of the frailty of earthly pleasures.

Far from the bright sunlight of Impressionist paintings, the colors in these panels are seen through a diffused greyish light which disallows sharp tonal contrasts and deep shadows. Subtly nuanced colors, which have an oddly faded appearance, add to the feeling of unreality. Unlike Manet's or Monet's informal picnic scenes, Aman-Jean's Dejeuner sur l'herbe shows a will to compositional order. The figures are mere adjuncts to the sweeping curvilinear rhythms of the landscape forms. Léonce Bénédite, director of the Luxembourg Museum in 1900, called Aman-Jean "un décorateur véritable" and recognized his spiritual interests: "... ses figures, avec le charme savoureux de colorations très expressives, un certain aspect d'êtres un peu irréels ou lointains, comme s'il y avait juste ce qu'il faut des apparences pour donner le portrait concrèt de l'âme." [96] Other critics praised Aman-Jean's decorative paintings and discussed his reliance on the arabesque as a compositional structure. [97] By using this term, they emphasized Aman-Jean's aspirations toward musicality and his ideal of a non-descriptive art.

In Aman-Jean's idyllic paintings the feelings of joy and sad-

ness co-exist. This ambivalence toward human experience is echoed in contemporary Symbolist poetry. Guy Michaud pointed out Francis Vielé-Griffin's juxtaposition of these conflicting moods in Joies: "tout est triste de joies." There are passages in this poem that form striking parallels to Aman-Jean's imagery: "Joies à peine naissantes, joies en demi-teintes... rêve d'amour que l'oiseau chante, rêve... des roses et des lys aussi frêles que ses joies, et ces dames vaporeuses et sans âmes." [98]

In his poeticized vision of contemporary life, Aman-Jean sought to extract meaning and to eternalize ephemeral pleasures. He expressed his beliefs of universal harmony in the metaphor of figures in serene landscapes. Unlike other "Nostalgiques" he did not invoke archaic imagery; rather, he reshaped the present through his imagination. He aestheticized secular rituals and transformed them into symbols of harmony and beauty.

HENRI MARTIN (1860-1943)

Henri Martin's idyllic landscapes of the 1890's show his commitment to the poetics of Symbolist art, while those painted after 1900 reflect a more direct approach to nature. This shift in his aesthetic outlook parallels the internal changes which marked the later phase of Symbolist literature, when the subjective dream of the Beyond was replaced in a pantheistic embrace of nature.

Sérénité (1897) is a nostalgic painting which indicates Martin's rejection of the everyday world. (Fig. 111). In both form and content, this painting incorporates Camille Mauclair's standard of Idealism; inner meanings and poetic feeling are paramount.

After 1900, Martin's easel and mural paintings also convey idyllic sentiment, but they do not evoke a poetically yearned-for past; the pastoral subject expresses the artist's homage to regional rural life. Although these paintings of earthly labor show some idealization, they also share the naturalism of agrarian paintings by Pissarro, Jules Breton, and Bastien Lepage. In some ways, Martin's bucolic paintings are closer to them than they are to his earlier Symbolist idylls animated by muses and flying figures.

At the hinge of the century, Martin was acclaimed as a muralist. Camille Mauclair awarded him a place in his trinity of French decorative painters made up of Puvis de Chavannes and Albert Besnard.[99] But with the advances of twentieth-century modernism, Martin suffered

the neglect that relegated many artists of his generation to oblivion.

Although his Symbolist paintings were permeated with nostalgic yearning, Martin was not among Coquiot's "Nostalgiques" because he avoided the Independants. Martin was a Symbolist who could be considered a "borderline academic" because he exhibited at the official Salon (Le Champs Elysées) while participating in the Salons de la Rose+Croix. His art never departed radically from conventional pictorial standards, even when it was clearly inspired by Symbolist ideals. [100]

As a young artist, he received academic training from his master, Jean-Paul Laurens, a fellow Toulousan who was a highly respected Salon painter. [101] However, his adherence to conventional standards lessened as he discovered the poetry of Baudelaire and Poe. As he made new friends among Symbolist artists and writers, he adopted their new aesthetic ideals. [102]

Martin's paintings of the early nineties were inspired by Baudelaire's pessimistic poetry. In L'Homme entre la vice et la vertue (1892), Vers l'abime (1897), and Chacun à sa chimère (1891), this literary source is reflected. (Figs. 112, 113).

Henri Martin's commitment to Idealism is evident in the decorative cycle he painted in the Salle des Illustres, le Capitole de Toulouse. In these serene visions of mysterious ritual, Martin recaptured the spirit of a hallowed past. The panels commemorated the venerable troubadour tradition of that city. Native landscapes form the setting for his nostalgic paintings of ancient legend. [103]

Martin's decorative murals for this chamber include two wall panels which depict the troubadors' founding of the Academie de Jeux Floraux and a ceiling panel showing the apotheosis of Clemence Isaure, the benefactress of the Academie. The Academie was founded in 1323 as "La très gaie compagnie du Gai Savoir"; prizes of flowers were distributed for the winning verses in a poetry competition. [104]

Although this legend had been painted earlier by the Romantics Deveria and Johannot, Martin disregarded their versions and researched the subject himself in medieval manuscripts. He paid homage to Dante and Giotto by depicting the troubadours dressed in flowing robes and Florentine caps. He set the visionary scenes in forests that recall the Pineraie of Dante's exile. [105]

This is the setting for the panel, Les Troubadours, where two young poets listen to secrets imparted by a venerable poet. [106] (Fig. 114). Above them float three muses carrying lyres. Clemence Isaure donnant aux troubadours la charte de fondation des Jeux Floraux (1898) is the corresponding wall panel which depicts the legendary moment when the sponsor appeared before the troubadours. (Fig. 115).

In Martin's image, Clemence Isaure appears as a virginal vision chastely draped in white, accompanied by muses floating around her. This apparition appears above a statue of Athena mounted on a column banked with flowers. Clemence holds a violet to her heart with one hand, and with the other the parchment charter of the Academie. The troubadours, garbed in red robes, are grouped among the tall pines,

as the vision mysteriously appears. Martin unified the scene with the light of the setting sun which is reflected in the colors of the trees, the ground and the figures. [107]

The ceiling painting, L'Apothéose de Clemence Isaure depicts the benefactress escorted by the muses of poetry and crowned by the muse of glory. According to a native critic, Martin captured the characteristic hue of the sky of the Midi against which these figures are set. [108]

The ubiquitous presence of winged figures in Martin's paintings stimulated contemporary critics to compare him to Puvis de Chavannes. Like this acknowledged master, Martin often employed the figures of nymphs and muses allegorically to embody the idea of poetry. [109] But if Martin was indebted to Puvis it was in his pursuit of Idealism rather in formal terms. While Puvis rendered his dream by using bold archaisms and simplifications, Martin's style was, at best, a compromise between academic naturalism and divisionism.

Martin's use of flying figures to enhance the unreal aspects of his imagery was praised by some critics while others attacked his repetitious use of this device. [110] Léonce Bénédite defended Martin's dependence on this formula and discussed other manifestations of this vocabulary. [111] Earlier, Puvis and Gustave Moreau had departed from accepted conventions of painting when they introduced these heavenly beings in their dream-like paintings. For Moreau, as for the ancients, the lyre was a symbol of harmony and it signaled the reign of pure

spirit and intelligence. In Puvis' paintings, lyre-bearing muses also implied "all-embracing universal harmonies." [112] (Fig. 116).

Following the example of these artists, Henri Martin also employed the muse and her lyre; this became an essential motif in his paintings of the 1890's. [113] Martin enhanced the sense of mystery in the Toulouse panels by his use of this device. For Henri Martin, the lyre was essential to the painting of poetic subjects as it also symbolized divine inspiration. The muse herself represented the emanation of ideal beauty. Yet when she appeared alone, in an introspective attitude, she became a metaphor for dream as an escape from reality. [114] (Fig. 117).

In recognition of his talent as a muralist, Martin was awarded an important commission to decorate a chamber in the rebuilt Hotel de Ville in Paris. [115] This monument of the Belle Epoque constitutes a museum of mural art as it includes paintings by the most respected decorative artists of the time: Puvis de Chavannes, J.-P. Laurens, and Albert Besnard are among others represented there.

Henri Martin's paintings in the Hôtel de Ville are fair indications of official taste in the 1890's. (Figs. 118, 119). They sum up the aesthetic compromise which endeared the artist to conflicting factions of the art public. By including portraits of official artists in his decorative scheme and by not venturing too far from the academic style of correct drawing, Martin remained in favor with the art establishment.

On the other hand, Martin found approbation among the Symbolists. Critics such as Paul Adam, Camille Mauclair, and Roger Marx lavished praise on him. They appreciated his other-worldly subjects, his poetic orientation, and his free use of color for expressive purposes.

Martin's decoration of the Salle d'introduction consists of two long friezes with pendentives between arched door openings. They are surmounted by a large ceiling painting depicting Apollo and the muses. In the frieze are figures personifying the creative arts: painting, sculpture, poetry, and music. They are attended by their These figures are only partially allegorical as Martin gave them the likenesses and modern dress of living artists. Thus he personified painting by a portrait of J.P. Laurens, while scupture was represented by Jean Dampt, and music by Debussy. But there reality ended as these artists, daydreaming in the course of their work, were posed in front of a "paysage de rêve," an enchanted forest inhabited by winged muses, symbols of the artists' inspiration and creative power.

Paul Adam praised Martin's synthesis of contemporary life and the realm of the imagination.

> Ces artistes, ces nymphes, ne sont pas autre chose que des créatures momentanées par lesquelles s'exprime le génie qui passe le long de la frise, s'insuffle en chaque figure, l'illumine de même sorte. Cette synthèse est manifestée si clairement que, parmi les groupes de figures ailées, les personnages en costume moderne ne produisent pas de tache facheuse. 116

Paul Adam also pointed out that Martin's synthesis of the real and the unreal was aided by use of the divisionist method--small touches of pure color juxtaposed to achieve vibrant color effects. Adam concluded that the pointillist technique, developed by Seurat and Signac in smaller scale easel paintings, could be used to good effect in decorative murals. He pointed out that color, applied in pure unmixed touches, retained its freshness when seen from a distance, while the uniform texture countered any tendency toward illusionism and thus enhanced the flatness of the wall surface. [117]

The academic faction did not attack Martin's use of pointillism because he employed it superficially. Unlike Seurat and Signac, Martin imposed this technique on a drawing style that was never distorted nor radically simplified and on subjects which flattered bourgeois tastes. [118]

The colors in the frieze and the ceiling paintings are clear and bright, notably different from the subdued range of colors in the paintings by Puvis, L'Eté and L'Hiver, located in the adjoining Salle du Zodiaque. The sky in Martin's ceiling painting is blue and airy, set off by the green, red, and yellow-orange of the muses' robes. The colors in the frieze present a similar lively effect. Behind the screen-like effect of the tree trunks, which are reddish in the light of the setting sun, and the dark green pine needles, a mauve-colored sky reflects nacreous hues on the pale gowns and wings of the hovering muses. [119]

The blend of dream and reality which typified Martin's approach in the 1890's gave way to a greater awareness of nature in his mural paintings after 1900. Gone were the muses and the lyres, the ambience of dream, and the dependance on Symbolist themes. Martin's new heroes emerged from the rural or urban scene of his own experience and his paintings celebrated earthly joys. In Les Faucheurs (also referred to as Les Moissoneurs) the central panel of the mural decoration in the Capitole de Toulouse, Henri Martin eternalized the rustic life of his native region. (Fig. 120). This decorative ensemble in triptych form, completed in 1903, was widely acclaimed and brought Martin more public commissions in Toulouse and Marseille, plus many in the private sector. [120]

Calling Les Faucheurs "un poème naturiste," Mauclair felt that the spirit of the Georgics had been recreated in Martin's depiction of earth-bound labor. His feeling for his native region appears in the sun-drenched field and the brilliant colors of southern vegetation. [121]

The theme of labor acquired a timeless aspect and symbolic significance through the simplified rendering of the forms and gestures of the figures. The harmonious integration of man and nature is implied in the rhythmic relationships of their placement in the expansive landscape setting. In addition to the laborers, the round of dancing girls and the nursing mother incorporate the spirit of joy and fecundity in nature.

Ségard noted that the early sketches for this panel included

the figures of a poet and a muse. In the final version, these figures do not appear; evidently the artist felt them unnecessary, as the spirit of nature herself was manifest in its "majestic simplicity." [122]

Gustave Soulier also praised the panel when it was exhibited at the Salon of 1903:

> (Cette peinture) qui répand le plus puissamment l'odeur de la terre, où l'on sent le mieux passer le soleil et l'air et tout le tremblement des arbres et de l'herbe—c'est magistral triptych qu'a peint Henri Martin... 123

Indeed, in both subject matter and in painting technique, Martin introduced innovations in mural painting that carry this genre far from the Puvisian model still followed by many of his contemporaries. Puvis' predilection for archaic drawing, flattened shapes, matte surfaces and pale chalky colors had become part of a common syntax for decorative painting which Martin chose to ignore.

Ségard also praised Martin's three-part mural for its clear arrangement whereby the spectator could immediately grasp the intended meaning. [124] For beyond the apparent dedication to nature, Martin's mural painting is an allegory of the seasons of the year linked to the passage of life. The central panel with its harvesters and golden colors symbolizes summer, maturity, and fecundity, while the panel on the left symbolizes Spring, and the panel on the right, with its dull coloration symbolizes Autumn and old age. (Figs. 121, 122).

The scene on the left depicts a shepherdess and a young man conversing in a landscape which continues the contours of the central

panel. The landscape background appears continuous also in the panel at the right in which an old woman tends her goats. The colors and light, however, differ from that of the sunny central panel. The left panel shows youthful figures in a verdant glade, with trees in flower in a cool morning light; while the greyish light of a clouded sky, bare trees, and dull earthy colors form an antithesis in the right panel.

In an article on these mural paintings, Henri Marcel quoted Petrarch as a source for the analogy of the seasons and the passage of life, commonly used in the Symbolist era. "O gioventù, primavera della vita, O primavera, gioventù dell'anno!" [125] Thus in the final analysis, Martin's imagery—ostensibly an ode to nature—still accords with the Symbolist expression of universal ideas.

Here, as in earlier mural decorations, Henri Martin used a pointillist technique to convey the fresh appearance of the landscape suffused with meridional sunlight. [126] As we have noted earlier, with reference to turn-of-the-century art in general, this technique was not confined to the immediate followers of the Seurat-Signac circle but was used with varying degrees of success and originality by Symbolists and other artists who wished to avoid the slickness of academic painting technique. Contemporary critics often mentioned Pissarro in conjunction with this phase of Martin's work because of their common sympathy for the laboring class, and their adoption of the divisionist painting technique. [127]

After the critical and public acclaim won by Les Faucheurs,

Henri Martin continued his successful career as a muralist in the early years of the twentieth century.[128] A pair of decorative paintings in the Sorbonne, Crépuscule and L'Etude (1907-8) again express Martin's attachment to nature.[129] (Figs. 123, 124). Still, Crépuscule seems poetic; it shows Martin's concept of rustic life as idyllic. Virgilian ideals are invoked in the figure of the old shepherd and his flock—timeless figures symbolizing bucolic simplicity—while serenity pervades the landscape unified by the glow of the setting sun. The companion panel, L'Etude, shows intellectual life as the pendant to the simple experience of nature. Here, figures in modern dress listen to Anatole France lecturing in a sun-dappled grove. As in Les Faucheurs, Martin used a vivid color harmony and short choppy brushstrokes to convey the effect of sunlight.[130] In this later phase of his career, Martin left behind the spiritual ideals of his earlier Symbolist paintings as he gradually returned to painting themes based on nature.

Martin's change from Symbolism to his later preoccupation with nature closely paralleled the internal changes which affected Symbolist poetry during the nineties. By 1895, the Symbolist aesthetic, epitomized in the poetry of Mallarmé and his circle, was under attack by several factions. An early reform had begun in 1891 in the Ecole romane, reflecting the new conservative outlook of Jean Moréas and Charles Maurras. Subsequent manifestations of disenchantment with the excesses of subjectivity, mysticism, and pessimism continued during the last decade of the century.[131]

Another form of criticism against the original premises of Symbolism took shape in the young generation of poets who adopted the name "Naturisme" for their program. The term was coined by Maurice Le Blond and their new approach was summarized in his "Essai sur Naturisme" (1896). [132] Le Blond charged the earlier generation with deliberate obscurity in their preoccupation with the unreal, and appealed for a new art of clarity and simplicity, and a pantheistic philosophy based on a direct study of nature:

> Enough! Baudelaire and Mallarmé have been admired long enough!... Our elders preached the cult of unreality, the art of the dream, the search for the new shudder. They loved venomous flowers, darkness and ghosts, and they were incoherent spiritualists. As for ourselves, the Beyond does not move us, we profess a gigantic and radiant pantheism. We will rejuvenate our individuality in a universal embrace. We will return to Nature. We will seek healthy, divine emotion... 133

These ideas were in wide circulation by the latter half of the nineties, appearing in the ephemeral periodicals founded by members of this group, and also in the well-established Symbolist press, viz. L'Ermitage, Mercure de France, and La Plume. [134]

Naturism had its roots in regionalist centers--in the Midi, notably in a group of young writers in Toulouse (L'Ecole Toulouse), in 1892. They were characterized as "un nouveau confrère anti-symboliste et anti-mystique" when their work appeared in L'Ermitage. [135]

The presence of this literary ferment, centered in Toulouse prior to its wider manifestation in Paris, anticipated the later artistic

phase of Henri Martin. Although his early decorative cycle, Les Troubadours at Toulouse (1893) was still bound to the mystical ideals of Symbolism, the revolutionary ideas in the poetic community there may have triggered the later change in Martin's aesthetic. When Mauclair referred to Les Faucheurs as "un poème naturiste" he made clear Martin's new interest.

In his mural paintings after 1900, Martin appears to have taken to heart Le Blond's statements:

> Il ne peut y avoir de vie authentique que dans une 'joyeuse acceptation du monde'... cette acceptation est acte d'une gravité religieuse... le poète est celui qui sait 'considerer le ciel, le monde avec les yeux de Dieu lui-même'... Les humbles, dans les gestes quotidiens de la vie... le paysan dans son champ... sont les acteurs de cette grandiose célébration... leur travail... est le véritable centre de leur destin qui fait de chacun d'eux à la fois, un ange, un symbole et une force. 136

Thus Henri Martin's evolution from Symbolism to "Naturisme" can be understood in light of developments in contemporary poetry. His art of the 1890's was clearly indebted to the poetic ideals of Baudelaire and other Symbolists. His later turn to nature and human experience shows that he continued to be affected by the changing Symbolist aesthetic. These new tendencies, found in the poetry of Paul Fort, Verhaeren, and André Gide, exerted a powerful appeal for the generation which bridged the centuries. According to Marcel Raymond, these ideas which developed out of the necessity to revitalize Symbolism were significant in the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth cen-

tury. The humanism and élan vital of Whitman, Nietszche, and Bergson emerge from this milieu.[137] The art of Henri Martin must be evaluated in this context.

LUCIEN LÉVY-DHURMER (1865-1953)

> Oui, la nature vit en nous et c'est notre âme qui l'anime. Telle est, du moins, la poétique de 1902. Le paysage contemporain sera donc un paysage psychologique, inventé pour des psychologues subtils, et qui ont souffert. 138
>
> Raymond Bouyer

In an article summarizing the state of French art in the last year of the century, Roger Marx, a critic sympathetic to Symbolist art, followed the example of Camille Mauclair in classifying certain artists in a group which he called "l'école nouvelle." He characterized them as artists who sought "l'union de la vérité et du rêve," who passed on to others "le privilège du sentiment, de penser, d'aimer..." The artists he considered under this umbrella were essentially those named earlier by Mauclair, with the addition of Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer among the newcomers. [139]

Lévy-Dhurmer's works are filled with nostalgic references and when landscape was not his prime subject, he used it, as did his contemporaries, as an emotive accessory. Because he did not start painting seriously until the mid nineties, Levy-Dhurmer was not recognized as a Symbolist as early as some other "Nostalgiques." After his exhibition at the Galerie Georges Petit in 1886, he was called by various critics "un mystique... un symboliste... un peintre de l'âme," but reproached by others for his eclecticism. [140] This change stemmed

in part from his late appearance in the arena of Symbolist art. Critics were distressed by his borrowings from contemporaries as well as his dependence on Italian Renaissance art. [141]

Thus one can find echoes of Botticelli and Leonardo in Lévy-Dhurmer's imagery which may have been inspired by the nostalgic paintings of other idealists such as Armand Point, Aman-Jean, and Le Sidaner who, in turn, emulated the Primitives, the Pre-Raphaelites, Moreau, and Puvis de Chavannes. [142]

Lévy-Dhurmer's absence from Paris during the ascendancy of Symbolist art was due to his activities in the designing and manufacture of porcelain. Although he received an academic training and excelled in drawing and painting, he worked instead as a ceramicist from 1887 to 1895. [143] His work in that medium was significant in the burgeoning of Art Nouveau, and it was recognized by his contemporaries as a formative influence when he turned to painting. [144]

After a trip to Italy in 1895 where he showed the typical enthusiasm for Renaissance masters, he returned to Paris and concentrated on painting. He was friendly with Symbolist poets, especially Henry Cazalis, a disciple of Mallarmé, who introduced him to others in that circle.

He subsequently became friendly with Georges Rodenbach, the Belgian poet who was close to Mallarmé during his Paris years. Rodenbach's Symbolist poetry and his novel, Bruges-la-morte (1892), reflected the introspective viewpoint of Belgian Symbolist artists and poets

such as Khnopff, Mellery, Toorop, and Degouve de Nunques.[145]

In the late nineties, Lévy-Dhurmer's compositions often consisted of a foreground figure shown in bust or partial torso form against a landscape background. Because of the pervasive moody quality of these works, they were called "evocations" by a contemporary writer.[146]

Le Silence, a pastel of 1895, typifies this format. (Fig. 125). According to Achille Ségard, this work was "plus épris du rêve que des réalités."[147] The veiled figure dominating the surface plane employs the traditional gesture of fingers on lips, adding a literalness to the title. This image corresponds to Maeterlinck's concept of the primordial and universal idea of silence:

> Le secret de ce silence-là qui est le silence essentiel et le refuge inviolable de nos âmes, ne se perdra jamais, et si le premier-né des hommes rencontrait le dernier habitant de la terre, ils se tairaient de la même façon dans les baisers, les terreurs ou les larmes, ils se tairaient de la meme façon dans tout ce qui doit être entendu sans mensonges, et malgre tant de siècles, ils comprendraient en même temps comme s'ils avaient dormi dans le même berceau, ce que les lèvres n'apprendront pas à dire avant la fin du monde... 148

Although there is little area given to the nocturnal landscape behind the figure, extensive space is implied. The desolate setting is permeated with an eerie stillness. The dark sky is pierced by pinpoints of stars; the water is illuminated by sharp white light. A monochrome harmony of blue tones unites the veil, sky, water, and shadows of the flesh, emphasizing the unreality of the sibylline figure.

Lévy-Dhurmer recorded his debt to Leonardo, the source

of his mysterious image:

> Et je regarde beaucoup la Joconde, oui, pour me souvenir qu'on peut obtenir des effets enormes avec le moins de gestes possible, le mouvement n'est pas dans l'essence de l'art. Les choses éternelles sont celles devant lesquelles on peut s'asseoir. 149

A master of the pastel technique, Lévy-Dhurmer used the medium to heighten the visionary quality of this apparition. Although some lines are present in the highlighted folds of the drapery, the flesh areas emerge impalpably from the subtly nuanced transitions between warm and cool tones. The sky, rocks, and water also appear magical as the artist avoided any personalized touch of the chalk.

When this work was seen in Lévy-Dhurmer's first exhibition, it elicited enthusiastic critical response. Segard discerned in this enigmatic image "quelque chose d'ancien et hiératique" and analogized it to the desert. [150] Félicien Fagus felt a relationship to Osbert in the prevalent bluish tones and the aura of mystery. [151] (Fig. 127)

In a lengthy study of Lévy-Dhurmer, Leon Thévenin commented on the symbolic elements of his nocturnes:

> (L'oeuvre) révélait avant toutes choses les séductions de la nuit et ses vaporeuses tendresses--son oeuvre traduisait la fantaisie du clair-obscur-et comme faculté dominante, apparaissait en lui l'intelligence du mystère, l'intelligence de cette énigme qui fait notre tourment, et qui créa les symboles et les mythes et les plus belles oeuvres d'art... c'est le côte nocturne de l'âme qu'il ouvre encore à notre rêve...

> jardin d'une vie nuancée où s'épanouit un infini de songe, occulte universe en qui toute lumière s'éclipse ou toute vision devient un leurre. 152

Other "evocations" are similar in compositional structure, but are more ambiguously positioned between the realms of dream and reality. In the paintings, Notre Dame de Penmarc'h (1896) (Fig. 128) and Florence (Fig. 129) the iconic aspect of the figure contrasts with the truthful portrayal of facial features and with the specificity of the landscape backgrounds. [153] An actual stretch of Breton coastline is depicted in the landscape portion of Notre Dame de Penmarc'h. A contemporary critic spoke of its power to stir the imagination of the viewer. "(C'est) comme un poème profonde et triste... se découvrant à nous tels qu'ils nous apparaissent dans nos souvenirs." [154] Another critic commented on the artist's choice of that particular site to enhance the austere feeling of the unnaturally stiff pose of the figures. "This scene has the dryness and harshness of the Brittany landscape which unfolds itself mournfully before our eyes. (The figure group) has a sort of Celtic rigidity. M. Lévy-Dhurmer knows how to interpret religious themes in a thoroughly modern manner."[155]

Lévy-Dhurmer used a similar pictorial format in the portrait of the Symbolist poet Georges Rodenbach (1895). (Fig. 130). This pastel represents a successful balance between exterior verisimilitude and interior character. Furthermore, there is a symbiosis between the portrait and the landscape elements.

Lévy-Dhurmer's debt to Leonardo is once again evident in the

caressing penumbra of the cityscape which gives it a psychologial presence. Like the portrait head itself, the background seems impalpable and dream-like. By making the landscape a mataphor for introspection, the artist embodied Rodenbach's own conception of Bruges, "comme un personnage essentiel associé aux états d'âme."[156] Yet combined with the artist's nostalgic recapturing of the medieval and melancholic aspects of the city, there is also topographical truth in his image of houses and canals.[157]

As in the "evocations", the portrait in bust form is placed centrally and close to the surface plane. However, because of its likeness and its meshing with the landscape, it appears less iconic. The pastel medium seemingly transforms physical fact into spiritualized image. The facial features, while truthfully rendered, are softened and slightly blurred by the limpid atmosphere that pervades the entire space. Although the colors of Bruges are greyed and dull, conveying the feel of a dead, sunless climate, the colors in the head are fresh and true to the Nordic traits of the poet. Ségard commented on the affinities linking the artist and the poet:

> Tous les deux sont méditatifs. Ce sont des peintres de la nuance. Ils ont des âmes d'hommes du Nord. Ils préfèrent l'odeur des bois et le parfum des fleurs dans la douceur du crépuscule à l'heure délicieuse où l'âme d'elle-même s'élève tandis que les objets se décolorent et que les paysages prennent une attitude récueillie." 158

Mauclair praised Lévy-Dhurmer's portraits for their probity as well as for their mastery of the pastel medium:

> (Ces sont) d'un mystère, d'un charme, d'une idéalité

> rêveuse unis à la science la plus vraie... (il est) un maître dans l'art d'exprimer sur une physionomie les sentiments les plus complexes et sa manière à la fois vaporeuse et serrée le rend inimitable." 159

The portrait of Pierre Loti, subtitled Le Fantome d'Orient (1896) shows a similar juxtaposition of portraiture and evocative landscape. (Fig. 131). Here, the exotic setting of Loti's novels is suggested by the writer's costume and the shadowy outlines of Constantinople that emerge behind him in the dim evening light. Unlike the specific references to corners of Bruges in the Rodenbach protrait, the Hagia Sophia is merely suggested. The mysterious penumbra is punctuated by pinpoints of light and their reflections. In a letter, Lévy-Dhurmer identified these lights as the souls—"petites âmes tremblotantes"—of Loti's characters. [160]

Lévy-Dhurmer often relied on mythical female figures to communicate universal meaning. Thévenin pointed out that Lévy-Dhurmer's painting of subjects like Circe, Leda, Medusa and certain allegorical figures revived the pagan spirit of the Renaissance. He also felt that the paintings of Eve and other nudes attested to his concept of women as emanations of natural earth forces.[161]

Like other "Nostalgiques", Lévy-Dhurmer also was drawn to the theme of seasonal and life cycles.[162] In the pastel L'Automne (1898), the season of decline is symbolized in the Botticelli-like female figure shown in half-torso form.[163] (Fig. 133) Behind her, the sky is lit by a fiery sinking sun, signifying the passage of time. Garbed in a dull orange

robe that corresponds in color to the faded leaves of the grape vine framing her head, she incorporates the idea of harvest. Yet the idea of decay is also implicit; it appears in the falling leaves in the frame within a frame and the bluish grey of flesh tints. Here, the complimentary colors—blue, blue-green, and dull orange—do not create optical vibration because of the greying of all tones. Lévy-Dhurmer's symbolic use of color corresponds to that of Séon, whose theories were articulated early in the decade by Alphonse Germain.[164] According to Thévenin, Lévy-Dhurmer chose faded colors to express the "morbidesse délicieuse qui suggerait en lui le mystère des choses."[165]

The preference for autumnal themes by fin-de siècle artists and poets was discussed in an article by Raymond Bouyer entitled "Le Déclin du paysage—méditation d'automne." Bouyer discussed the contemporary predilection for crepuscular effects, sunsets, and greyish tones, and concluded that it was a reaction against Impressionist sunlight. Although he did not mention Lévy-Dhurmer specifically, his ideas appear particularly applicable to this pastel:

> Ce mot crépuscule...caractériser le sentiment et le paysage d'a present soudain obscurcis après quel midi sans rival et quel été sanspareil! L'automne et le soir, ces deux magiciens apparentes dans la decadence conviennent aux sensations, aux productions d'une age transitoire, exalte dans l'incertitude...
>
> Le paysage actuel a quelque chose d'automnal...Le paysage de nos jours a quelque chose d'ancien d'un peu retrospective et réflechi, comme si le dilettante se retournait vers le passé plus subtil, faute de trouver sa nourriture spirituelle parmi les siens, dans le temps présent. 166

In the strange landscape pastel, Ma Mère, un soir a vu la

ville d'Ys (1897), Lévy-Dhurmer again represented the theme of decadence.[167] (Fig. 134). The image of the ruined city of Breton legend, submerged in creeping aqueous vegetation stands mid-way between the imaginary dreamscapes of Gustave Moreau and the visionary fantasies of Redon and Surrealism. This evocation of a legendary past through the medium of landscape fulfills Baudelaire's pleading for the employment of the imagination in landscape painting.[168]

Lévy-Dhurmer's portraits and "evocations" of the later 1890's are further evidence of the Symbolists' use of landscape, whether idyllic, mystical, or "intimist" for the expression of spiritual or emotional ideas. The desire of all these artists, whether addressing themselves to religious or to secular themes, was to invest their images with their awareness of the universal spirit or harmony linking man to nature.

EMILE-RENE MENARD (1862-1930)

> Castagnary frémirait; mais l'idéal de notre vieux Poussin reconquiert la fin d'un siècle incrédule, et, traité longtemps de 'monstruosite' par les poètes écoeurés devant les poncifs d'école, le paysage historique reparaît victorieusement. 169
>
> Raymond Bouyer

The idyllic landscapes of Emile-Rene Menard show that Hellenism was still a significant factor in fin-de-siècle art. In Symbolist art and literature, Classicism was à la mode, witnessed by the Ecole romane poets and painters who reinterpreted Poussin and the antique past. Besides Ménard, other artists--Puvis de Chavannes, Maurice Denis, Maillol, Roussel, and Séon capped the century-long affair with Hellenism.[170] These Symbolist artists were praised by their contemporaries for upholding the French tradition of Classicism.

Ménard, to be sure, was a nostalgic artist, but he could not be included among Coquiot's "Nostalgiques" because he did not exhibit with the Independants.[171] Several critics focussed on him as the heritor of Poussin. Camille Mauclair included him in his group of Idéalistes and saw in Menard's landscapes a rebirth of Arcadian spirit:

> Ses paysages dénotent une filiation toute classique, celle de Poussin, de Vernet, de Claude Lorrain. Ils en ont la tonalité dorée, le souci du style décoratif, la sereine lumière, l'aspect ample et noble. Ils évoquent des paysages de l'Ile-de-France ou les aspects de la campagne grecque, et leurs prairies d'emeraude servent de décors soit à de grands troupeaux, soit à

> des nymphes aux belles formes qu'on dirait vivantes
> en Arcadie, aux temps virgiliens. 172

Achille Ségard also placed Ménard in the mainstream of French tradition: "il a les qualités de notre XVIIe siecle; l'ordre, la logique, l'émotion sincère mais disciplinée, la pureté du style, l'art parfait de la composition, le gout de la magnificence et l'habilité d'exécution."[173]

To these critics, Ménard's paintings admirably synthesized aspects of both Claude and Poussin. His landscapes, influenced in structure by Poussin's paysage composé show a sense of solidity and serenity, while their idyllic qualities continue Claude's lyricism. Although Ménard's vocabulary was classically inspired, his landscapes were not "historical"; seldom do they contain specific mythic references.[174] Instead a "golden-age" mood is evoked, through his metaphoric integration of human and natural elements. (Figs. 135, 136).

While these writers praised Ménard's return à l'art classique, they also considered his idyllic landscapes within the context of Symbolist aesthetics. Ségard pointed out that Ménard's nostalgic paintings were not sterile academic imitations of classicism but addressed that tradition in a new way.[175] Ménard's classical landscapes belonged to their own time, and reflected a modern sensibility; their projection of an ideally peaceful vision provided a panacea for the malaise of modern life.

Mauclair named him an Intimiste as well as an Idéaliste because of the affecting quality of his Arcadian paintings.[176]

Recognizing that Ménard did not share the Intimists' preoccupation with domestic life, Mauclair stated that all art could be considered "intimist" if it incorporated a deeply felt experience of the artist. In this sense, his definition also applies to Ménard: "Ce sont des suggestions, des sentiments, des interpretations de l'âme et de la nature, les émotions d'un homme devant un aspect de l'univers, que cet aspect soit...un reflet dans l'eau, un ciel du soir...une silhouette passant dans le clair de lune."[177] Referring specifically to Menard, Mauclair wrote, "car toute nature est envisagée par lui au point de vue de l'émotion dont elle enrichit la conscience...il est vrai mais point réaliste...(il est) plein de rêves et son art n'est que songes..."[178]

André Michel, the distinguished French art historian, attributed the lack of pedantry in Menard's classicized landscapes to the artist's sensitivity to Barbizon painting.[179] In his study of Ménard's style, Michel borrowed the phrase of Bacon, L'Homo additus naturae, just as Alphonse Germain had used it in his praise of Alexandre Séon's work.[180] Both critics were indebted to Charles Blanc who had used the phrase translated as "l'homme ajoutant son âme à la nature" in his definition of Idealism in order to emphasize the role of the imagination in the transformation of base nature into art.[181] Michel realized that Ménard was an artist who followed Blanc's precepts for painting "avec le style". He pointed out that Ménard synthesized observed nature, Poussinesque structure, and poetic feeling and therefore typified the modern approach to landscape.

> Cette fusion du naturalisme et de la poésie qui fut faite la beauté du paysage moderne. Il appartenait à l'art français de comprendre et de prouver que le naturalisme le plus fervent n'est pas incompatible avec le style et que 'le style' ne saurait se ramener à une simple et vaine calligraphie. 182

Although he was always preoccupied with the immaterial, Ménard's inward gaze excluded Christian references. His philosophy was pantheistic, his ideals of beauty and harmony were those of pagan antiquity.

Ménard's dedication to the antique seems natural when seen in the context of his illustrious family. His uncle, Louis Ménard (1822-1901) achieved fame as a poet and philosopher while working as a chemist. Called "le philosophe païen", he was considered a key figure in mid-century Hellenism for his studies of ancient culture. His work inspired the Parnassian poets Banville, Leconte de Lisle, and Hérédia. Gautier referred to him as "cet Athénien né deux mille ans trop tard."[183]

Emile-René's father, René Joseph Ménard (1822-1887) was a painter and writer on art. He exhibited at the Salon as a pupil of Rousseau and Troyon, and with his brother Louis Ménard, was friendly with other Barbizon painters--Dupré, Diaz, and Millet. In addition, he was a director of Gazette des Beaux-Arts.[184] It was the mission of Emile-René to combine his uncle's Hellenism with his father's talent for painting. Raymond Bouyer felt that he transposed "ces suggestives pensées dans les Rêveries d'un païen mystique dans la langage plus concret de la peinture."[185]

Emile-René Ménard received academic training in the ateliers of

Baudry and Bouguereau, but countering this was his conception of landscape based on his boyhood visits to Fontainebleau and the artist friends of his family.[186] His admiration for Barbizon painting persisted in his maturity, and his belief that landscape could have spiritual content followed Rousseau's ideas.

Among the Barbizon artists, Théodore Rousseau was the most introspective. He had written that the painter's task was to show the soul below the surface appearance of nature and thus to move the spectator:

> La composition c'est ce qui est en nous, entrant dans la realité extérieure des choses...il y a composition quand les objets représentés ne le sont pas pour eux-mêmes, mais en vue de contenir sous une apparence naturelle les echos qu'ils ont réveillés dans nos âmes.
> Le tableau doit être préalablement fait dans notre cerveau. Le peintre ne le fait point naître sur la toile; il enlève successivement les voiles qui le cachaient... 187

While some critics narrowly considered Ménard a painter of "le paysage historique et classique", others such as Louis Aubert recognized elements of naturalism within Ménard's timeless settings. Aubert identified certain passages as "terre de notre sol, de nos climats", for the flavor of certain sites in Brittany, Normandy, and Fontainebleau where Ménard had sketched persisted in finished paintings,[188] (Fig. 137).

Aubert was perhaps referring to elements like the majestic trees often shown silhouetted against luminous skies, in a manner analogous to Rousseau.[189] (Fig. 138). These huge trees form part of the setting in the decorative paintings for the Faculté de Droit, Université

de Paris, which include, La Vie Pastorale (1908), L'Age d'Or (1908), and La Ronde de Nymphes (1913). (Figs. 135, 136, 138).

Ménard's landscapes often include small ponds or coastal inlets with still, unmoving surfaces; they recall the marshy waters and calm rivers of Rousseau, Dupré and Daubigny. (Fig. 139). Ménard used this natural element as Osbert did, to instill a feeling of serenity by their repetition of the horizontal, and to provide a source of reflected light. The critic Robert de la Sizeranne commented on the similar treatment of water by the Barbizon landscapists: "L'eau était pour eux une ligne d'horizon, une finale, un accord tenu à la fin des harmonies du paysage; elle n'était pas elle-même une symphonie,"[190]

Contemporary critics often alluded to Corot when discussing Ménard as a pastoral painter. Although Corot had adopted the silvery palette when Ménard met him in the seventies, Ménard was more impressed with his earlier landscapes, classical in structure and inhabited with woodland figures.[191]

Ménard's affinities with Corot appear most striking in his paintings and pastels of the female nude. Ménard's bathers, whose status he elevated by calling them nymphs or dryads, are posed in simple attitudes in secluded settings; they are objects of pure contemplation. (Fig. 140). Mauclair referred to the quiet pose of one of Ménard's nymphs: "le torse a la noblesse de l'amphore vivante qu'il doit suggérer."[192] From Corot, Ménard learned to unify his picture by sensitive adjustments of light and color values and to give primacy to the ensemble rather than to individual

elements. Thus Ménard's nudes, enveloped in hazy atmosphere lose their importance as physical objects; linked to the landscape they become symbols of an ideal harmony in nature.

Paul Adam, a Symbolist poet and critic, commented on the serene quality of Ménard's paintings.

> L'oeuvre donne le repos d'une certitude. Il y a communion entre les rythmes des choses et la beauté calme des nymphes joliment modelées. Accord entre la conscience et la nature, par le sens des harmonies. 193

Mauclair discussed in more specific terms the correspondance between the forms of the figure and those of the natural setting.

> Mais on surprend très bien le moment ou le peintre insiste sur certaines attitudes pour aller chercher, dans le paysage ambiant la prolongation des gestes humains; la draperie qui glisse imite, par ses plis les reflets de l'eau, l'ombre d'un pin ondule selon le rythme d'une jambe infléchie, tout, sans manièrisme, est rectifié par une subtile intelligence. 194

In the pastel Nymphe au crépuscule (1913), (Fig. 141) the figure is softly modeled by light and color which flows through the body into the water and sky. The delicate nuances of blue, green, and violet merge with the warm flesh tones to extend the luminous areas opposed to the dark masses of vegetation. The pale pink and opalescent hues of the sky are reflected in the water, and contrasted to the dull earth colors. An eerie stillness and sense of mystery arise from the range in tonal value, from very light to dark.[195]

Ménard used the medium of pastel frequently, for finished works such as this one as well as for studies.[196] Like other "Nostalgiques",

Ménard did not use this medium to capture ephemeral effects but to impart a sense of permanence. In the texture of densely built-up strokes there is no trace of the virtuoso nor even the personal calligraphy of the artist. Along with other "Nostalgiques"—Aman-Jean, Le Sidaner, Roussel, Lévy-Dhurmer—Ménard exhibited annually with the Société des Pastellistes français in the 1890's and early 1900's. In a review of the exhibition of 1897, Ménard's work was given highest praise for "conception originale, noblesse de style, harmonie voluptueuse de couleur."[197]

In Harmonie du soir (1899), and Ronde de nymphes (1913), La Baie d'Ermones (1903), and Paysage Breton, Ménard incorporated a motif borrowed from Claude Lorrain, the disk of the setting sun or the moon over water. (Figs. 142, 138, 137, 143). In these paintings, Ménard's waters are not animated with lambent reflections; in contrast to Claude's, they are still and flat with the light contained in a quiet pattern.[198]

Ménard's vision of a bucolic paradise often included the agrarian figure of the cowherd and his drove. In Vision antique (1911) an idle cowherd, playing his flute, is set in an expansive landscape. (Fig. 144). This image corresponds to a poem by Maurice du Plessys:

> Tel, gardien du noir fleuve, un pâtre ami des lunes
> Rêve, la flûte aux dents, sous les feux de la nuit. 199

While Troyon's paintings of cattle grazing in Barbizon meadows might have stimulated Ménard's imagination, this lowly genre was transformed in Ménard's evocative interpretation. Aubert pointed to their distant ancestors in antiquity:

> Que l'on rapelle les taureaux qui sur les Gobelets de Vaphio, les boeufs de Geryon sur le vase d'Euphronios et les étonnants animaux qui sur les monnaies de villes grecques étaient un souvenir de leurs origines agrestes... 200

Mauclair also discussed Ménard's elevation of the herd:

> ...et les beaux troupeaux qu'il arrête au sommet des collines sont pour lui arcadiens aussi bien que bretons, et ni plus ni moins vivants que les ruines d'un sanctuaire écroulé dans l'herbe vorace. 201

Despite his classicizing approach, Ménard was often linked to a group of realistic Breton painters who were known as La Bande Noire or Les Nubiens. Among these were Charles Cottet, Lucien Simon, André Dauchez, and René Prinet. The name of the group arose from the somber tonality and melancholic mood of their paintings, adopted in reaction to the vibrant colors and spontaneity of Impressionism.[202]

Ménard and this group would appear to have little in common in terms of style and subject matter. However, like the Bande Noire, Ménard's compositions show unchanging aspects of nature and his use of color is far removed from Impressionism. In addition, they all were spellbound by the Breton landscape which appeared as setting for their clearly different interests. Whereas Cottet and others depicted local traditions in this provincial setting, Ménard transposed Breton sites into timeless Arcadian visions. L. De Fourcaud discussed Ménard's attachment to this countryside: "Il aime ces terroirs silencieux et sauvages qui portent en eux un principe de style et commandent à l'artiste de longues méditations."[203]

Ménard's obsession with the past continued throughout his career,

and his landscapes show little or no stylistic changes. However, around 1900 his view of antiquity shifted slightly, he began to include specific monuments in landscapes which formerly escaped precise identification.[204] Still, these architectural remnants, like his pastoral figures, were veiled in a hazy light. The grandeur of landscape was still his prime concern; panoramic settings often diminished the scale and significance of Greek and Egyptian monuments.[205] (Fig. 145).

Ménard's evocation of the past through the images of its monuments continues the Romantics' preoccupation with decadence.[205] But unlike their pessimistic interpretation of ruins, Ménard offered a new vision of this unretrievable past; like his nymphs and cowherds, these witnesses of former civilizations symbolized man's harmonic existence in nature.[207]

In these nostalgic paintings, Ménard used a lighter tonal range with more extensive sky areas than in his earlier paintings of forest glades where a dark tonality dominated. This was noticed by Aubert: "(il y a) une lumière ardente et tendre sur ces vieilles pierres qui resistent au temps destructeur."[208]

Ménard received several important commissions for decorative paintings in the first decade of the twentieth century: for the Bibliothèque des Hauts Etudes, and the Amphithéatre des Sciences Physiques of the Sorbonne (1906), and for the Faculté de Droit, Université de Paris (1908-1913). Inevitably these classicizing murals were compared to those of Puvis de Chavannes whose status as master of this genre remained undiminished in

the early years of the twentieth century.[209] Following Puvis' mural aesthetic, Ménard created serene compositions in which the sweep of the landscape harmoniously incorporates the figures. Paul Jamot wrote of the emotive power of these panels: "la seule beauté des lignes et des mouvements... parlerait à notre imagination."[210]

In his retention of classical order, Ménard epitomizes the progression of the French landscape tradition from its seventeenth century roots to its restatements in the nineteenth century by the "Néo-classiques", Chassériau, Corot, and Puvis de Chavannes.[211]

The relationships between Chassériau and Puvis have been studied by historians beginning with Maurice Denis, but the analogies between Chassériau and Ménard have not been probed. In Chassériau's committment to the pastoral ideal, evident in his comments, "penser à Vigile" and "prendre Poussin pour modèle", one can see a prefiguration of Ménard's interests.[212] The retrospective exhibition of his works in 1897 at Durand-Ruel probably inspired many Symbolists.

Chassériau's Venus marine could be considered a precursor of Ménard's dreamy nymphs, although here there is a reversal of the figure-landscape relationship favored by Ménard. (Fig. 147). Rather than emphasizing landscape, Chassériau gave primacy to the figure. Continuing the atmospheric painting and dissolving contours of Prud'hon, Chassériau instilled a dreamy ambiance. The forms and colors of the mountains and sky—chalky blue shot with rosy hues—reappear in Ménard's landscapes. Most importantly, the mood of introspection conveyed by the figure and

landscape would have appealed to Ménard and other Symbolists.

Jean-Jacques Henner was another painter of idyllic landscapes whose work could have affected Ménard's nostalgic visions. Henner, a successful academician, was rarely mentioned as a possible influence on Ménard and other Symbolist painters.[213] Because of the cleavage between the Symbolists and Salon artists, critics with Symbolist loyalties might have hesitated to make connections between Ménard's landscapes and Henner's idyllic paintings. (Fig. 148). But Bouyer placed Ménard together with Henner and Puvis as painters of timeless subjects. Bouyer wrote:

> ...Les Dryades de M. René Ménard nous apportent la robuste et reconfortant senteur du bois sacré...
> ...Après Henner et Puvis de Chavannes, le poète René Ménard ajoute sa traduction personnelle à nos reminiscences de la Grèce divine. 214

With the benefit of historical perspective, we can conclude that Ménard and other Symbolist painters of idyllic subjects learned much from Henner, an artist who did not always conform to academic standards. Henner's standard repertoire of nymphs in landscape, painted in a pseudo-Leonardesque sfumato are indeed prefigurations of Symbolist idyllic landscapes. These lyrical paintings depart from most academic production in their avoidance of excessively realistic detail and coy sentiment. They are more generalized in appearance and poetic in feeling as the figures and landscapes are bathed in a murky penumbra. Henner's preoccupation with Virgilian motifs, anticipated the nostalgic outlook of many Symbolist artists. Despite his monotonous repetition of themes and compositions, Henner's contribution to the Symbolist generation should be re-examined.

A poem by Lafenestre was appended to the notice of Henner's La Fontaine in the catalogue of the Salon of 1880. This poem could also serve as a pendant to paintings by Ménard.

> Heure silencieuse où la Nymphe se penche
> Sur la source des bois qui lui sert de miroir,
> Et rêve, en regardant mourir sa forme blanche
> Dans l'eau pale où descend le mystère du soir. 215

Ménard's Hellenism must be considered in the context of the classical revival at the turn of the century, as an artistic counterpart to the new direction evident in the literary sphere. Like the Naturist movement, l'Ecole romane challenged the dominance of Mallarméean Symbolism, and set new goals of artistic expression.[216]

Both literary groups attacked premises at the core of Symbolist doctrine—its metaphysical probing and concern with the infinite, the cultivation of rare sensations, and the emphasis on irrationality and dream—which they felt led to excesses of egoism, corruption of language, and obscurity of meaning. These protests originated in the Southern provinces where poets articulated their dissatisfaction with the domination of the Northern sensibility in Parisian mainstream Symbolism. The cry from the provinces was taken up by writers close to the heart of Symbolism who decried the infiltration of Teutonic ideals—medievalism, Wagnerism, the cultivation of mystery, instinct, and imagination--all of which were rejected as foreign to the classic French spirit of reason, order, and clarity.[217]

As a spokesman for the Romanists, Charles Maurras urged a return to classical concepts of beauty based on harmony, form and style.[218] In a

key article titled "Barbares et Romans", Maurras invoked ancient hostilities and stated the supremacy of Hellenic culture. "It is proper to call barbarian that which is alien to classical letters not only because it is outside the common Helleno-Latin treasure but also because it is foreign to higher humanity. One cannot conceive an idea or a dream that was not created by the Mediterannean,"[219]

Maurras was influential in reviving classical ideals through his program which focussed on the Graeco-Latin tradition in its original form or in its revivals during the Renaissance and la grand siècle. The art of the seventeenth century in France was commonly accepted as equivalent to that of the age of Pericles for its continuation of Hellenist ideals. As defined by Littré, the term "classic" may refer to either of these traditions:

> "Classique" par opposition à romantique, qui est conforme ou qui se conforme aux règles de composition et de style établies soit par les auteurs de l'antiquité grecque et latine, soit par les auteurs classiques du XVII e siècle. 220

Henri Peyre defined in more specific terms the meaning of "classical" when applied to artistic style:

> Classique signifie un art de mesure, de lucidité, d'ordre, d'equilibre, et de santé en face de l'art nouveau que l'on juge excessif et violent, obscur, et malade. 221

The French had long conceived of themselves as exclusive heritors of the "Greek Miracle" through the bridging of seventeenth-century classicism.[222] This set of mind was summarized by André Gide: "Je ne connais, depuis l'antiquité, d'autres classiques que ceux de France. Le classicisme me parait à ce point une invention française...c'est dans

son art classique que le génie de la France s'est plus pleinement réalisé."[223]

According to Henri Peyre, the turn to classicism in the twentieth century embodied a denial of the present as well as the immediate past. The embrace of the seventeenth century meant a rejection of the nineteenth century..."romantisme, naturisme, naturalisme ou symbolisme."[224]

Peyre correctly detected the spirit of nationalism which lay behind the revival of classicism..."Car se dire classique aujourd'hui... c'est...exprimer sa nostalgie pour une époque où la France était incontestablement la premiere puissance de l'Europe..."[225]

Indeed, the handmaiden to classicism was extreme conservatism in political and religious affairs. The nineties were a time of reaction, popular anti-Dreyfusism, nationalism, monarchism, and neo-Catholicism. Maurice Barres and Charles Maurras, originally leaders of the literary crusade for classical order, had the distinction of spearheading the movement for new political order and the re-establishment of monarchic rule.[226]

The annals of Symbolism disclose that Jean Moréas was one of the prime movers of the Ecole romane. In a strange about-face, the spokesman for the Symbolists and author of the manifesto retreated from his earlier embrace of Mallarméean aesthetics and published the charter of the "Romanic" poets in 1891.

> The French Romanic School affirms the Greco-Latin principle, the fundamental principle of French letters which flourished in the eleventh, twelfth,

> and thirteenth century with Ronsard and his school, and in the seventeenth century with Racine and La Fontaine...The French Romanic school restores the Gallic chain, which was broken by romanticism and its Parnassian, naturalist, and symbolist descendance. 227

The Ecole romane was an ephemeral group formed by writers who left no great works as testimony to their efforts, but the ideas of Maurras and his circle aroused some French intellectuals and they did affect poetry written after 1895.[228] As Marcel Raymond noted, there was a new sense of form and Hellenic references proliferated. A "Romanized Mallarméism" appeared as a compromise style, i.e., a combination of the former Symbolist style and the classicizing elements urged by Moréas and Maurras.[229]

It is in the context of this classical revival and waning Symbolism that the art of Ménard must be considered. In his serene visions of a timeless world which retain the Symbolist flavor of dream, the return to order demanded by the traditionalists was materialized.

CHAPTER VIII

IDEALISTES AND INTIMISTES

FOOTNOTES

Introduction

1. Camille Mauclair, "Quelques peintres idéalistes francais," L'Art Décoratif, Sept. 1901, p. 224. Mauclair, a poet himself, was a disciple of Mallarmé, and was active in both literary and art circles during the Symbolist epoch. His criticism appeared in numerous Symbolist periodicals, and he was a prolific author of books on Symbolist art and literature. Although he accepted certain Impressionists such as Degas and Monet, he hated Cézanne and his basic conservatism developed into a reactionary stance in his later years. He condemned modern art (Cubism) because it replaced the psychological basis of Symbolist art with "meaningless geometrization."

2. Mauclair discussed the idealist strivings of these artists: "Chez tous s'affirme le besoin d'énonciation de l'âme la secrète conviction que la peinture n'est pas un art extérieur, mais qu' elle dépasse infiniment la joie des belles couleurs et des belles surfaces pour atteindre, comme les lettres et la musique, au plan supérieur... où tous les aspects devoilent leur vérité seconde— et cette vérité éternelle, c'est le profond." Ibid., p. 234.

3. Camille Mauclair, L'Art indépendante français sous la troisième république (Paris: Renaissance du livre, 1919), p. 20.

4. Camille Mauclair, Les Etats de la peinture francaise (Paris: Coll. Payot, 1921), p. 112. Camille Mauclair, The Great French Painters (London: Duckworth & Co., 1903), p. 130. Mauclair included in this category Le Sidaner, Aman-Jean, Vuillard, Lévy-Dhurmer, Ménard, Laurent, Cottet, and others. J.-E. Blanche also discussed the meaning of this term and traced its sources. See Les Arts Plastiques (Paris: Les Editions de France, 1931), pp. 116-118.

5. See Chapter VI on Neo-Impressionism for relationship of Cross, Signac, Van Rysselberghe, and Verhaeren.

6. André Fontainas, Histoire de la peinture française au XIXe s. (Paris: Librarie de France, 1922), p. 265.

7. We are very much indebted to recent French scholarship which has so effectively expanded our knowledge of previously neglected Symbolist art. For the ideas discussed here, see Autour de Lévy Dhurmer, Visionnaires et Intimistes en 1900 (Paris: Grand Palais, 1973); introduction by Foucart & Lacambre, pp. 8-9; and Foucart & Lacambre, "Autour de Lévy-Dhurmer," Revue du Louvre, 1973, #1, p. 66.

8. Henri Martin and Lévy-Dhurmer also exhibited a few times at the conservative Salon des Champs Elysées.

9. Their works were discussed by critics and historians, although their groupings do not always follow Mauclair's patterns. These general texts surveying the development of late nineteenth century painting do not fail to recognize the contribution of these artists. (See bibliography for full citation.) G. Mourey, Des Hommes devant la nature, 1902; Ségard, Peintres d'aujourd'hui, Les Décorateurs, 1914; T. Klingsor, La Peinture, 1913, 1921; L. Dimier, L'Histoire de l'art, le XIXe s., 1926; A. Fontainas, La Peinture francaise dans le XIX & XX s., 1922; H. Focillon, La Peinture au XIX et XX c., 1928; R. Cogniat, L'Art contemporain , edit. by Rene Huyghe; J.E. Blanche, Les Arts Plastiques, 1931.

In early twentieth-century exhibitions they were often shown together. See Paris, Galerie G. Petit 1917: Aman-Jean, Le Sidaner, Henri Martin, René Ménard; G. Petit 1920: Aman-Jean, Le Sidaner, Martin; G. Petit 1925: Aman-Jean, Ménard.

LE SIDANER

10. Camille Mauclair, The Great French Painters (London: Duckworth Co., 1903), p. 130. This text was repeated in Mauclair, Les Etats de la peinture française (Paris: Payot , 1921), p. 112. Our quotes are from the earlier English text. See also Mauclair, "La Peinture musicienne et la fusion des arts," Revue Bleue, 30 April 1902, p. 301; Mauclair, "Formation de l'école française; les peintres d'intimité," La Revue, Sept. 1901, pp. 25-35.

11. Mauclair, The Great French Painters, p. 130.

12. Ibid., p. 133. Le Sidaner was not cited by Coquiot in Les Indépendants, because he never exhibited with that society.

13. Ibid., p. 134.

14. Ibid., p. 130.

15. Le Sidaner's art and life support Taine's theories of the impact of racial, cultural, and geographical factors on artists; his art conforms to that defined by Taine as the "Northern" type. See Hippolyte Taine, Lectures on Art, trans. by J. Durand, Vol. 2, 1877; and Taine, Art in the Netherlands (The Philosophy of Art), trans. by J. Durand (New York: H. Holt, 1873). Perhaps influenced by Taine, critics of the 1890's were sensitive to the aesthetic differences between Southern (Meridional) and Northern (Septentrional) artists. The Southern taste favored classical values of clarity and order in form, light, and color. According to Leon de St. Valery, their works appear more calm and confident. Northern artists displayed emotional feeling, and often pessimism (induced by dealing with a hostile Nature), and their works are characterized by hazy light, and greyish colors. Léon de St. Valéry, Tendances d'Art (Paris: Perrin et Cie., 1926), p. 8.

See also Charles Chassé, Le Mouvement symboliste (Paris: H. Floury, 1947), pp. 155-156, on Symbolism as Northern and Nordic opposed to Classicism which was Southern and Mediterranean. For biographical material see Camille Mauclair, Le Sidaner (Paris: H. Floury, 1928) and Le Sidaner, Musée de Dunkerque, 1974.

16. Mauclair, Le Sidaner, p. 15.

17. Le Sidaner exhibited at Le Libre Esthétique in Brussels in 1898 and 1901, La Société Nouvelle from 1900 on, The Société des Pastellistes Français, and held individual exhibitions starting in 1897. By the 1920's he participated in several international exhibitions.

18. Mauclair, Le Sidaner, p. 16.

19. The most important of these early works are La Communion en Extremis, 1889, Promenade des Orphelines, 1888, Benediction de la Mer, 1891; all illustrated in Le Sidaner, Dunkerque. These paintings reflect the influence of Bastien-Lepage in their subject matter and superficial use of an Impressionist brushstroke, but the colors remain within a greyish range. These works are similar to works of the Bande Noir--Cottet, L. Simon, etc. See text on E. Ménard, below, p. 319 , and note 202.

20. During these years, he was friendly with Henri Martin and Ernest Laurent, the latter an alumnus of Lehmann's studio and an artist on close terms with Osbert, Aman-Jean, and Séon. These connections allow us to assume that Le Sidaner was a participant in Symbolist circles at this time. G. Lacambre, in Symbolisme en Europe (Paris, 1976), calls the works of 1896-1900 clearly Symbolist, in contrast to the intimist domestic scenes which preoccupy the artist after 1900. p. 108.

21. See Aman-Jean, Jeune fille au pâon (Fig. 105) and text on Aman-Jean below, p. 282.

22. Jammes, a Neo-Catholic poet, published this poem in the collection, De l'Angelus de l'aube a l'angelus du soir, 1898, the same year that Le Dimanche was exhibited. See Francis Jammes, Oeuvres, Vol. I (Paris: Mercure de France, n.d.), p. 56 ff.

23. Gabriel Mourey, Des hommes devant la nature et la vie (Paris: Ollendorff, 1902), pp. 74-75. J. Rais also mentioned the sound of bells, "Henri Le Sidaner," Art et décoration, sem. 1, 1903, p. 123; G. Lacambre cites the prevalent references to bells in Symbolist art and literature, in the paintings of Toorop, Schwabe, and in writings of Laforgue, Huysmans. See Symbolisme en Europe (Paris, 1976), p. 108. Mauclair continually referred to Le Sidaner as a "musical painter": "il temoigne pleinement de l'union de la peinture et de la musique." Mauclair, "La Peinture musicienne," p. 301.

24. Henri Marcel, "Henri Le Sidaner," GBA, Aug. 1909, p. 133. Marcel noted that Monet's Nympheas, recently exhibited, gave a new meaning to the term "Impressionism." Mauclair admitted the impact of Monet on all painters in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Le Sidaner, p. 50.

25. Raymond Bouyer, "L'Art et la beauté aux Salons de 1898," L'Artiste, Jan-Mar. 1898, p. 188.

26. Mauclair, Le Sidaner, p. 75. Italics are his.

27. Camille Mauclair, "Formation de l'école française," pp. 34-35.

28. Mauclair, Le Sidaner, pp. 73-75.

29. Ibid., p. 82.

30. La Ronde appeared in L'Estampe Moderne in April 1899. According to the catalogue of the Dunkirk exhibition of 1974, the painting of this title has disappeared. In Mauclair's book, Le Sidaner, the lithograph is reproduced with the title of the painting. A related large fusain, Ronde de jeunes filles, depicts a variation of these works. The elegant figures in these compositions seem to prefigure Osbert's painting, Musique et Danse (1900).

31. See discussion of Louis Janmot in Chapter V on Maurice Denis. See also footnotes 48, 49, Chapter V, and Appendix. This poem also appears in Louis Janmot, Le Poème de l'âme (Musee des Beaux Arts, Lyon, 1976). See also Daniel Ternois, "Louis Janmot et l'ecole mystique lyonnaise," Cahiers d'histoire, pp. 107-109.

32. Fantin-Latour's lithographs inspired by musical subjects are visionary and influenced the Symbolists from the early 1880's on.

33. Mauclair, Le Sidaner, p. 84.

34. Mauclair, "La Peinture musicienne," p. 301. Jacques-Emile Blanche also remarked on the parallels between the art of Le Sidaner, the poetry of Albert Samain, and the music of Reynaldo Hahn. Calling him a "paysagiste intime," he also linked him to Monet. Blanche, Les Arts Plastiques, p. 118.

35. It was on Mauclair's urging that Le Sidaner visited Bruges. Mauclair, Le Sidaner, p. 27.

36. Gabriel Mourey, Des Hommes, p. 74. The medieval buildings and canals of Bruges were painted by these artists. See Painters of the Mind's Eye (New York, 1974), #6, #27. The motif of darkened houses with lit windows also appears in works by Baertson and Degouve de Nunques. See also Une Fenetre, by Louis W. Hawkins, in Symbolisme en Europe, #60, p. 78. Le Sidaner's feminine figures recall the dreamy Pre-Raphaelite types painted by Khnopff and Toorop.

37. This became a formula for Le Sidaner in the early years of the twentieth century. One cannot deny the monotonous quality of this aspect of his work.

38. Marcel, "Le Sidaner," p. 127.

39. J. Uzanne, "Le Sidaner," Figures contemporaines, tirées de l' album Mariani (Paris: Floury, 1896-1908).

40. Le Sidaner was included as a "conservative artist" by Robert Herbert in Neo Impressionism (New York: S.R. Guggenheim Museum, 1968), p. 68. Although he noted the "substantial quality" of his work, he called him a "petit maître" and follower of Neo-Impressionism like Henri Martin. Although Herbert saw the existence of divisionism in the use of some fresh color tones juxtaposed with their complementaries, he noted the overall muted effect contributed by the extensive areas of greyish tones. See #37, The Table in the Garden, 1904. It is also interesting that in the 1930's Le Sidaner was considered as a part of Seurat's following. His work was included in a large exhibition in Paris, Seurat et Ses Amis, 1933.

41. Mauclair, Le Sidaner, p. 104. See Carrière's landscapes, illustrated in French Symbolist Painters (London, 1972), #22, 23.

42. Mauclair, "La Peinture musicienne," p. 301.

43. Maurice Maeterlinck, "Le Reveil de l'âme," Le Trésor des humbles (Paris: Mercure de France, 1931), p. 36. Le Sidaner illustrated Maeterlinck's poems set to music by Gabriel Fauré, Les Septs filles d'Orlamonde. See Henri Le Sidaner, Musée de Dunkerque, 1974.

44. Marcel Proust, Within a Budding Grove, Remembrance of Things Past, Vol. 1 (New York: Random House, 1934), p. 653.

45. Blanche, quoted in Proust and his Time (London: Wildenstein, 1955), p. 35. Blanche's claim is supported in our juxtaposition of Le Sidaner's paintings and the prose passage by Proust. However Ironside's demonstration of the formal similarities which exist between the described seascapes by Elstir and actual paintings by Monet is convincing. See Robin Ironside, "The Artistic Vision of Proust," Apollo, Mar. 1975, p. 201.

46. Marcel Proust, Cities of the Plain, Remembrance of Things Past, Vol. II, pp. 148, 151-152. This was pointed out by Maurice Chernowitz, Proust and Painting (New York: International University Press, 1945), p. 65.

47. See Ironside, "Artistic Vision of Proust," p. 201 ff.; Chernowitz, Proust and Painting, pp. 43, 100 ff. Proust never revealed the source of his imaginary painter. Chernowitz points out that "Elstir" is an anagram of Whistler. See also Barbara J. Bucknall, The Religion of Art in Proust (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1969), p. 64 ff. The suggestion that Le Sidaner was the model for Elstir appears in the text by Yvon Bizardel, Exposition Rétrospective Henri Le Sidaner (Paris: Musée Galliera, April 1948), n.p. The author points out correspondences between Le Sidaner and the fictional artist. He noted that both Proust and Le Sidaner "se sont émus devant les mêmes paysages, devant le même atmosphères."

48. In the novel, both Swann and Bergotte show great admiration for Vermeer. Chernowitz, Proust, pp. 39, 45.

49. Mauclair, The Great French Painters, p. 133.

50. Ironside, "Artistic Vision of Proust," p. 206; Chernowitz, Proust, pp. 116 ff.

51. Like many Symbolist artists, Proust was deeply impressed by Ruskin's ideas on art as religion, and his love of Gothic art and the Italian Primitives was stimulated by his reading of Ruskin. Chernowitz, Proust, p. 13 ff.

52. Proust, Remembrance, Vol. I, p. 628.

53. Ibid., p. 634.

54. However, it has been pointed out that despite Proust's admiration for Mallarmé, Maeterlinck, and de Regnier, he was never closely linked to Symbolist groups, and wrote "Against Obscurity," an essay in 1896 (La Revue Blanche), condemning certain Symbolist practices. Germaine Brée, The World of Marcel Proust (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1966), pp. 33-34.

AMAN-JEAN

55. Henri Berenger, "Edmond Aman-Jean, Les Artistes de l'âme," L'Art et la Vie, Dec. 1893, p. 34.

56. Camille Mauclair, "Quelques peintres idéalistes," p. 234.

57. André Beaunier, "Aman-Jean," Art et Décoration, Vol. 11, 1902, p. 134.

58. Ibid., p. 135.

59. Achille Ségard, Les Peintres d'aujourd'hui, Les Décorateurs (Paris: Ollendorff, 1914), Vol. 2, p. 87.

60. The poem was written in 1874, but not published until 1884. See Dr. Francois Aman-Jean, L'Enfant oublié, Chronique (Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1963), p. 13. This text reappears in part in the author's preface to the catalogue, Souvenir d'Aman-Jean (Paris: Musée des Arts décoratives, 1970), pp. 9-42. Both texts contain inaccuracies and prejudiced viewpoints. Aman-Jean painted two portraits of Verlaine in 1891.

61. Gustave Coquiot, Seurat (Paris: Albin Michel, 1924), p. 25. Aman-Jean was not included in Coquiot's group of "Nostalgiques" because he never exhibited at Les Indépendants.

62. F. Aman-Jean, L'Enfant oublié, p. 58.

63. J.-L. Vaudoyer, writing later, commented on Aman-Jean as a Symbolist: "ce peintre, comme ces musiciens, subit forcement... a l'influence du Symbolisme..." ("Aman-Jean," Revue de l'art ancien et moderne, Jan. 1926, p. 38.) The notion that Aman-Jean's paintings of the 1890's represent his allegiance to Symbolism is characteristic of recent scholarship. See J.-P. Bouillon, "Expositions: Maurice Denis, Aman-Jean," Revue de l'Art, #13, 1971, pp. 102-105; Thérèse Burollet, "Souvenir d'Aman-Jean," L'Information de l'Histoire de l'Art, Sept. 1971, p. 179.

64. Aman-Jean never exhibited at the Salon de Champs-Elysées, but he did exhibit with the slightly less conservative Salon du Champ-de-Mars.

65. F. Aman-Jean, L'Enfant oublié, p. 10. Robert Herbert pointed out their similar drawing style during these years, which consisted of a rich chiaroscuro inspired by Rembrandt, a very different approach than the linear style taught by Lehmann. See Chapter VII on Séon, above, p.177. Seurat's portrait of Aman-Jean, 1882-3, is one of his best-known drawings. Robert Herbert, Seurat's Drawings (New York: Shorewood, 1962), p. 62.

66. Coquiot, Seurat, p. 29. Aman-Jean's interest in the eighteenth century, stimulated by the Goncourts and Verlaine, did not surface in his work until the decorative paintings from the mid-nineties on.

67. Ibid., p. 26.

68. Ibid., p. 26.

69. F. Aman-Jean, L'Enfant oublié, p. 12. Dr. Aman-Jean discussed the meeting between Van Gogh and the young artists. (Ibid., p. 14.) An anecdote regarding this visit is repeated by Jean Sutter who corrected the date to read 1887. (Jean Sutter, edit. The Neo-Impressionists [New York, 1970], p. 18.) Dr. Aman-Jean also documented a visit to Degas, who advised them after seeing their studies, "Bien, maintenant il faut mentir." (F. Aman-Jean, Ibid., p. 15.)

70. Ibid., p. 15. Ségard stated that Puvis was a witness at Aman-Jean's wedding in 1893. Les Décorateurs, Vol. 2, p. 94.

71. Ségard, Les Décorateurs, p. 94.

72. Edmond-François Aman-Jean, "Puvis de Chavannes," Art dans les Deux Mondes, 29 Nov. 1890, pp. 9-11.

73. Aman-Jean designed a poster for the 1893 Salon de la Rose+Croix titled "Inspiration." His works of the early 1880's often had religious subjects: e.g. two versions of Jeanne d'Arc, 1888; Ste. Geneviève devant la ville de Paris, 1885. See Robert Pincus-Witten, Occult Symbolism in France (New York: Garland, 1976), pp. 151-152.

According to Dr. F. Aman-Jean, he exhibited at the Rose+Croix because it provided an alternate showcase for his art since his paintings had been rejected in the Salon des Champs Elysées. He also stated that Aman-Jean's relationship with Péladan and his circle cooled following his marriage in 1893. (F. Aman-Jean, L'Enfant oublié, p. 61).

During this period, Aman-Jean published an article on Fra Angelico. See "Fra Angelico de Fiesole, le bienheureux peintre," L'Artiste, Dec. 1893, pp. 38-39. This interest links him to Maurice Denis and Charles Dulac. See Chapter V, Maurice Denis, p. 85-86; Chapter IX, Dulac, p. 371 . Aman-Jean's interest in the Primitives was furthered during his visits to Italy and the Netherlands in 1880 with Henri Martin and Ernest Laurent. (F. Aman-Jean, preface, Souvenir d'Aman-Jean, 1970, p. 15.)

74. Berenger, "Aman-Jean," p. 36. Aman-Jean painted several works with Venetian settings; e.g. Venise (1896) and Les Venétiennes (1898).

75. Camille Mauclair, Les Etats de la peinture française, p. 122.

76. Blanche, Les Arts plastiques, p. 190.

77. Mourey, Des hommes, p. 292; Roger Marx, "Les Salons de 1899," Rev. Encycl., July 1899, p. 552.

78. Camille Mauclair, Albert Besnard (Paris: Librarie Delagrave, 1914), pp. 117-118. Aman-Jean was friendly with Besnard and they exhibited together in La Société Nouvelle, La Société des Pastellistes français, as well as at the Champs-de-Mars. See F. Aman-Jean, Souvenir, p. 32.

79. Rossetti's and Burne-Jones' paintings of women could also be cited as influences on Aman-Jean. See Jacques Lethève, "La Connaissance des PreRaphaélites anglais en France," GBA, 1959, pp. 315-328. Aman-Jean had met Whistler at Mallarmé's Mardis, and his work was well-known in France. Paintings such as the White Girl, Little White Girl, and Portrait of Mrs. Leyland are precursors of Aman-Jean's dreaming women.

Ségard stated that Aman-Jean and Whistler shared the "Northern" predilection for crepuscular landscapes. (Ségard, Les décorateurs, Vol. 2, p. 100.) See discussion of the "Northern" sensibility, in text above, on Le Sidaner, p262 and footnote 15 .

80. Edmond-Francois Aman-Jean, Velasquez, 1913, quoted in Emile Langlade, "Edmond Aman-Jean," Artistes de mon temps, Vol. 3, 1936, p. 26.

81. Beaunier, "Aman-Jean," p. 136.

82. J.-L. Vaudoyer, "Aman-Jean," p. 40.

83. Langlade felt that the artist's village of Chateau-Thierry inspired his landscape settings, and accounted for the spiritualized content of these works: "il en a subi l'emprise que ses figures s'en réssentent et apparaissent comme enveloppées d'une sorte de voile au travers duquel l'âme de ses personnages s'irradie." Artistes de mon temps, Vol. 3, p. 28.

84. Mauclair, "Les peintres idéalistes," p. 229. Mauclair stated: "L'Adieu, un des succès de la Société nationale de cette année, resume bien son manière, son gout pour les symphonies de tons et la facture changéante et séductrice, la distinction un peu grêle de sa vision, et surtout la recherche de quelques grands contours, cernés par des linéaments significatifs."

85. See Puvis de Chavannes, Le Pauvre pêcheur and Jeunes filles au bord de la mer. (Figs. 13 and 15.)

86. Ségard felt that Aman-Jean's sense for decorative art permeated both his easel and mural works. Les Décorateurs, p. 67.

87. Beaunier, "Aman-Jean," p. 139.

88. Louis Réau also made this point: "Avec ses teintes fanées et ses nuances mourantes, cet art delicat et quelque peu neurasthénique est accordé à l'unisson des romances de Verlaine, des petites drames de Maeterlinck, des phrases musicales de Debussy." Quoted in Langlade, Artistes de mon temps, p. 28.

89. This connection was made by Mme. G. Lacambre in Symbolisme en Europe, p. 28.

90. Poussin's theories were discussed in Watelet's Dictionnaire de Peinture (1792). The importance of this later text for landscape painters was discussed by Claude Roger-Marx, Le Paysage français de Corot à nos jours (Paris, 1952), p. 92 . See Chapter III above, P. 48.

91. Valentin Marquetty, "Aman-Jean," Art et les Artistes, June 1926, p. 298.

92. See Degas, Dancers (1903), reproduced in John Rewald, History of Impressionism (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1973), p. 567. See also Lemoisne, Degas, Vol. II, p. 357. The analogy between the works of Degas and Aman-Jean was suggested by Mme. Lacambre in Autour de Lévy-Dhurmer (Paris, 1973), #8.

93. Sous les fleurs was printed in L'Estampe Moderne, 1897.

94. There are two versions of La Confidance, dated 1894 and 1903. The early version is illustrated in Autour de Levy-Dhurmer, #5. Aman-Jean also painted Le Parc, a large tapestry design for the Hotel de Ville Chateau-Thierry (1903) and Les Quatre éléments for the Ampitheatre of the Ecole Supérieure de Chimie, Sorbonne, 1912.

95. This source was suggested by Ségard, Les Décorateurs, p. 124. It is known that Verlaine was also inspired by this work as well as by the Goncourts.

96. Bénédite, "La Peinture décorative au Salon de 1899," p. 180.

97. Ségard, Les Décorateurs, pp. 64, 70. See Chapter II above on Symbolist Era, p. 32 .

98. Guy Michaud, Le Message poétique du Symbolisme (Paris: Libr. Nizet, 1961), p. 389.

HENRI MARTIN

99. Camille Mauclair, "Henri Martin," L'Art et les Artistes, Jan. 1921, p. 147.

100. He did not exhibit at the Salon du Champs-de-Mars (Le Société Nationale des Beaux Arts) as did most of the "Nostalgiques." On the issue of Symbolists as "borderline academics," see Chapter I, p. 7 , footnote 6. Martin exhibited eight works with mystical subjects in the first Salon de la Rose+Croix, 1892. Among them was Jeune sainte, illustrated in French Symbolist Painters, #125. See Pincus-Witten, Occult Symbolism, p. 132.

101. J.P. Laurens was chosen to paint a mural in the Panthéon, one of the highest honors of that day. Henri Martin made his salon debut in 1883 with a painting of Paolo and Francesca, a popular subject among the Romantics and the Symbolists. See Ségard, Les Décorateurs, Vol. 2, p. 20.

102. Martin traveled to Italy in 1885 with Aman-Jean and Ernest Laurent. Like many of the Symbolists he was enamored of the Italian Primitives. See footnote 73 , above. In the early nineties, he was friendly with Péladan. See Ségard, p. 20.

103. In 1938, Martin was honored by the Académie des Jeux Floraux for this decorative cycle completed in 1893. This academy is the oldest literary society in Europe, founded in 1323. In a special numer of L'Art Méridional, Martin was called "le peintre occitan," i.e., a painter in the poetic tradition of Languedoc (langue d'oc). See J.-R. de Brousse, "Henri Martin," L'Art Méridional, #41, Jan. 1939, p. 3.

104. The Académie was also known as "la collège de la gaie science." See Nouvelle Petit Larousse Illustré, 1933, p. 1465.

105. J.-R. de Brousse, "Henri Martin." The author noted that since Dante lived between the epoch of the great troubadours and the founding of the Gai Savoir, these elements were not an anachronism by Henri Martin. De Brousse compared the poetry and sincere feeling of Martin's paintings to the sentimental and false works by the "fades jouvencaux Romantiques." De Brousse also notes that J.-P. Laurens, Martin's teacher, had also painted "La premier Fête des fleurs," but this work postdates Martin's.

106. De Brousse noted that the ancient poet bears the features of Maillol, a boyhood friend of Martin's. Ibid.

107. De Brousse, "H. Martin," states that the bearded poets are portraits of Martin's friends, the artists Jean Rivière and Jean Juares. This ensemble is also discussed in Ségard, Les Décorateurs, p. 20. A related painting, Inspiration (1895), originally in the Musée d'Amiens, now also in Toulouse, is similar in subject matter but was not part of the decorative scheme.

108. Antonin Fajol, "Henri Martin et son oeuvre," L'Art Méridional, Jan. 1939, p. 10.

109. See Puvis de Chavannes, La Rêve, Le Bois sacré, and decorative murals in the Boston Public Library, illustrated in Puvis (Paris, 1976), pp. 230, 235.

110. Both Ségard and Mauclair criticized Martin's ubiquitous nymphs and muses, although Mauclair found the same fault in Puvis' paintings. He pointed out that both artists used this device to symbolize "la lumière divine." Ségard, Les Décorateurs, p, 38, Mauclair, "H. Martin," p. 146.

111. Léonce Bénédite, "La Lyre et les muses par Henri Martin," Art et Décoration, Jan. 1900, pp. 1-10.

112. Ibid., p. 2. Reference to this article appears in French Symbolist Painters, p. 73.

113. Bénédite cited Martin's use of this motif in earlier works, e.g. Nuit de mai (1882), Nuit d'octobre (1888), and Chacun à sa chimère (1891). Bénédite, "La lyre," p. 4. Benedite also recorded the remark supposedly made by Puvis on seeing Martin's paintings: "Celui-là sera mon héritier." See also Bénédite, "La Peinture décorative au Salon de 1899," Art et Décoration, 1899, p. 172.

114. Bénédite also discussed these single figures of muses: "C'est pourquoi, elles sont douces et mélancholiques, car leur être n'est exprimi de la vie que par la couleur.., elles savent que la vie est triste mais elles nous disent que le rêve est permis.... Elles éveillent au fond de notre esprit, dans leur sensualisme delicat que se mele à leur grâce austère, dans leur geste expressif toujours juste et mesuré, dans leur vol silencieux, toutes sortes de résonnances lointaines." "La Lyre," p. 10.

115. Le Salle d'Introduction nord de Salle des Fêtes, 1896.

116. Paul Adam, "Les Salons de 1896," GBA, July 1896, p. 107.

117. Ibid.

118. Ségard discussed the differences between Martin and Neo-Impressionism. See Les Décorateurs, p. 33. Mauclair discussed Martin's "borrowed pointillism" in Trois crises de l'art actuel (Paris: Bibl. Charpentier, 1906), p. 272. Robert Herbert called Martin a "quasi-academic camp follower" in Neo-Impressionist and Nabis in the Collection of A.G. Altschul (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery), p. 11.

119. This scheme is discussed by Ségard, Les Décorateurs, p. 26 ff; Bénédite, "La Lyre," p. 8.

120. Ségard, Les Décorateurs, p. 6 ff. See footnote 30 below.

121. Mauclair, "Henri Martin," p. 146.

122. Ségard, Les Décorateurs, p. 11.

123. Gustave Soulier, "La Peinture au Salons," L'Art Décoratif, Jan-June 1903, p. 207. Soulier felt that the grand harmony of the whole united all the parts of the ensemble. He further commented that Martin did not resort to stylized archaisms and muted color: "Ca sera là un superbe ensemble 'de décoration,' où pourtant pour acquérir un caractère décoratif on n'a pas cru devoir dégonfler les personnages, les dessécher sur le mur, ni décolorer ces verdures saines et franches."

124. Ségard, Les Décorateurs, p. 5.

125. Henri Marcel, "Les Peintures de Henri Martin pour le Capitole de Toulouse," Art et Décoration, May 1906, p. 145.

126. In a letter, Martin wrote of his devotion to nature as a subject after having spent much time studying it intensely, and his preference for the pointillist technique.

"Ma préoccupation du rendu de l'atmosphère s'augmentait plus tard, après trois mois passés à la campagne, en tête à tête avec la nature. Poursuivant ses divers effets, je fus emmené à la peindre différemment. La pleine lumière, éclatante et diffuse, estompant les lignes des personnages et du paysage m'obligea impérieusement à la traduire comme je pus, mais autrement que par des taches débordantes par le pointelle, par la décomposition du ton.

Je sais que mon procédé irrite bien des gens, mais qu'importe le procédé! Qu'importe la formule! Je ne pretends pas en avoir découvert une decisive, une définitive. Chaque jour je cherche dans tous les sens voulant trouver mieux."

Statement transmitted by his friend B. Marcel, critic for La Dépêche de Toulouse, quoted in Valmy-Baysse, Henri Martin (Paris, 1910), n.p.

127. See J.-E. Blanche, Les Arts plastiques, p. 181; Fajol, "Henri Martin," p. 10. Mauclair, "Henri Martin," p. 146.

128. In 1904, he painted murals of urban life in the Conseil d'état, Marseilles: Le Travail, with the side panels L'Etude and Le Prévoyance. In 1906 he painted Les Bords de la Garonne for the Capitole de Toulouse, also in triptych form. This painting depicting Toulousans promenading includes portraits of J.P. Laurens, Jean Jaures, and Bellery-Fontaines. There is no trace of Symbolism nor poetic content; the work is in the domain of naturalism.

129. These panels are placed in the Galerie des Sciences, a very inhospitable space for proper viewing of large scale works. L'Etude is also called La Lecture, La Vie intellectuale, and Sous les oliviers in early accounts. See Ségard, Les Décorateurs, p. 304. Crépuscule is similar in compositional structure and mood to works by Ménard, such as Pensée antique and Bucolique.

130. The brushstroke is active, irregular and more elongated than in earlier pointillist works. The colors--greens, pinks, white, blue—constitute a vibrant color harmony. Ségard acknowledged Martin's skill as a decorative painter and his ability to render

light effects but he found his portrayal of the interior life superficial. Ibid., p. 56.

131. Kenneth Cornell, The Symbolist Movement (New York: Archon Books, 1970), pp. 119 ff, 163 ff.

132. Maurice Le Blond, Essai sur Naturisme (Paris: Mercure de France, 1896).

133. Maurice Le Blond, trans. and quoted in Marcel Raymond, From Baudelaire to Surrealism (London: Methuen, 1970), p. 49. See also Michel Décaudin, La Crise des valeurs symbolistes (Toulouse: Privat, 1960), pp. 35 ff, 65. Andre Billy, L'Epoque 1900 (Paris: Edit. Jules Tallandier, 1951), p. 206 ff.

134. See Cornell, The Symbolist Movement, pp. 165, 172. These ideas appeared in L'Effort (1896-1898), Le Rêve et l'Idée (1896), Le Livre d'Art (1896), as well as in the periodicals mentioned in the text.

135. See "Les Essais des jeunes," 1892, quoted in Andre Billy, L'Epoque 1900, p. 34.

136. Michel Le Blonde in Documents sur le Naturisme, 1895, and Essai sur le Naturisme, quoted in Décaudin, La Crise, p. 65.

137. Raymond, Baudelaire to Surrealism, pp. 42, 51.

LEVY-DHURMER

138. Raymond Bouyer, "Le Déclin du paysage," Revue Bleue, 11 Oct. 1902, p. 469.

139. Roger Marx, "Les Salons de 1899," pp. 552-553.

140. See the critics F. Polak, H. Eon, and R. Boylesve quoted by Mme. Geneviève Lacambre in "Autour de Lévy-Dhurmer," Revue du Louvre, #1, 1973, p. 30.

141. Tristan Klingsor (L. Leclère) had classified a number of painters as "eclectiques" in his study of 1921. His use of the epithet referred to the dependence of the whole generation on the art of the Impressionists and Puvis as well as on their more distant antecedents, ranging from the Italian Primitives to the artists of the seventeenth century. His discussions included the work of Henri Martin, Le Sidaner, Ernest Laurent, Ménard, Emile Bernard, Anquetin, and Maurice Denis; among these he named a few who transcended the act of borrowing: viz. Ménard, Denis, and Bernard. See Tristan Klingsor, La Peinture (Paris: F. Rieder et Cie., 1921).

142. Lévy-Dhurmer's affinities with Aman-Jean were discussed by Charles Saunier, "Beaux Arts, petits Salons, Lévy-Dhurmer," Rev. Encycl., 18 Feb. 1896, p. 97. Jean Lacambre and Jacques Foucart discuss his relationship with Armand Point in "Exposition Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, Autour de Lévy-Dhurmer," Revue du Louvre, #1, 1973, pp. 63-66.

143. Lévy-Dhurmer exhibited in the Salon from 1882-1887; his Salon debut was a copy of Cabanel's Birth of Venus painted on a porcelain plaque. His training in the academic method was furthered by his own work in the atelier of Raphael Collin, a pupil of Cabanel, who was also a highly regarded academician.

144. From 1887-1895, Lévy-Dhurmer worked with Clement Massier in the manufacture of faience in the Midi, and subsequently became director of the factory. Camille Mauclair later remarked on the importance of this training in his later painting career. See "l'Art décoratif en France," La Nouvelle Revue, 15 Feb. 1896, pp. 736-738. Jacques Sorrèze noted the influence of metallic glazes used in his ceramics which he translated in the backgrounds of some paintings. See "Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer," R.A.A.M., April 1900, p. 126. Gustave Soulier noted the unity of his work through his expert decorative sense, "Lévy-Dhurmer," Art et Décoration, Jan. 1898, pp. 2-3.

His ceramics from this era were signed "L. Lévy." He added his mother's name at the time of his first exhibition of paintings at G. Petit to avoid confusion with other painters named Lévy.

145. See Painters of the Mind's Eye (New York Cultural Center, 1974), introduction by Francine-Claire Legrand.

146. This term was used by Félicien Fagus in "Exposition Lévy-Dhurmer," Revue Blanche, Jan. 1900, p. 64; it was again used by the organizers of the exhibition, Autour de Lévy-Dhurmer, Jacques Foucart and Jean Lacambre. See also Revue du Louvre, 1973, #1, p. 64.

147. Achille Ségard, "Lévy-Dhurmer," La Revue Illustreé, 15 Dec. 1899, n.p.

148. Maurice Maeterlinck, "Le Silence," Trésor des humbles (Paris: Mercure de France, 1931), pp. 17-18. (Essay first published in 1896.) If Lévy-Dhurmer did not know Maeterlinck personally he would have been aware of his works through his friendship with Rodenbach.

The immediate precursors of Lévy-Dhurmer's image were Préault's Silence (1851) and Khnopff's pastel Silence (1890)—see Fig. 126; Autour de Lévy-Dhurmer (Paris, 1973), #58, p. 42. Mme. G. Lacambre suggests the relationship to images by Redon, especially his later familiar work of 1911.

It is doubtful that Lévy-Dhurmer saw Khnopff's Le Silence (1890) since it was not exhibited in Paris until 1900. However, it may have been discussed with Lévy-Dhurmer by George Rodenbach, a close friend of both Lévy-Dhurmer and Khnopff. Khnopff's image may have been inspired by Rodenbach's poem Du Silence of 1888. Rodenbach published a volume of verse entitled La Regne du Silence in 1891. See note below. On the relationship of the Belgian artist and poet, see Leslie Morrissey, "Fernand Khnopff, The Iconography of Isolation" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1974), p. 90.

The iconography of silence is traced in detail by Susan Canning, "Fernand Khnopff and the Iconography of Silence," Arts, Dec. 1979, pp. 170-176.

Le Silence is reproduced in color in P. Jullian, Connaissance des Arts, 1973, Jan.-June, p. 78.

149. J. Uzanne, Figures contemporaines de l'album Mariani, t. IV.

150. Ségard, "Lévy-Dhurmer," n.p. See also reviews by Soulier and Sorrèze, footnote 144 above.

151. Fagus in "Exposition Levy-Dhurmer," p. 64 wrote: "Le reste, évocations d'un symbolisme cherché, et un peu court (Parfois rappelant titres, présentation, idées et jusqu'au même bleu, tel Le Silence, Osbert) fait voisiner la Grèce, l'Evangile, la Bretagne, les légendes, les bois et leurs frissons... le mystère y est commodement suggeré par le flou des silhouettes noyées dans un penombre versicolore, les problèmes de l'âme par une figure aux yeux battus, et qui ubiquite avec indiscretion." The possibility of a reciprocal influence on Osbert exists; see Osbert, Enigma (1898), which appears unique in Osbert's oeuvre. See Fig. 127.

152. Leon Thévenin, La Renaissance païenne (Paris: Leon Vanier, 1898), pp. 5-7.

153. Florence recalls both Quattrocento portraits and those of Lévy-Dhurmer's contemporary, Armand Point. Point's portrait of Mme. Philippe Berthelot, ca. 1896, predicts the compositional format of Lévy-Dhurmer's "evocations" (Fig. 75); but whereas the landscape backgrounds of the latter portray specific places, Point's do not, and are employed for a more generalized evocation of mood. The similarity of Point's portraits and Lévy-Dhurmer's paintings was pointed out by the directors of the Lévy-Dhurmer exhibition in 1973. See J. Foucart and J. Lacambre, "Autour de Lévy-Dhurmer," Revue du Louvre, #1, 1973, p. 65. See also Chapter VII on A. Point, p. 213.

154. Henry Eon, La Plume, Feb. 1896, p. 132.

155. Henri Frantz, The Salon of 1900, The Decennial Exhibition, trans. by Clarence Wason (Paris: Goupil, 1900), p. 75.

156. Autour de Lévy-Dhurmer, Visionnaires et Intimistes en 1900 (Paris: Grand Palais, 1973), p. 44.

157. Mme. Lacambre identified specific buildings of Bruges. She stated that Lévy-Dhurmer's painting was based on photographs and on the vignette by Khnopff which appeared in the first edition of Rodenbach's novel. See Autour de Lévy-Dhurmer, p. 49.

158. Ségard, "Lévy-Dhurmer," n.p. He also suggested that Lévy-Dhurmer's pastel, Le Silence, was inspired by Rodenbach's collection of poems, Le Regne du silence (1891).

159. Mauclair, "Quelques peintres idéalistes français," p. 232.

160. Autour de Lévy-Dhurmer, cat.#68, p. 49. An interesting parallel to this form of a darkened strip of land pierced by flickering lights which reflect in water appears in Charles Dulac's lithograph Le Lac Bleu (La Lavandiere, Tyrol) for the Suite de Paysages (Fig. 132). There is no documentation for this plate, but it probably was exhibited with the others of the series in the exhibition at Le Barc de Boutteville, 1896. It is possible that Lévy-Dhurmer saw this plate; but the artists did not know each other and they frequented different circles in Paris. Lévy-Dhurmer's pastel was exhibited in the Salon des Champs Elysées in 1897.

The painters of Bruges similarly used tiny lights penetrating nocturnal darkness to evoke a sense of mystery, but their vision was restricted to familiar surroundings. The device of lighted windows in darkened houses was probably first used by Degouve de Nunques in La Maison rose (La Maison du mystère), 1892, and La Nuit à Bruges (both illustrated in Painters of the Mind's Eye, #3, p. 31; #6, p. 34). These works no doubt stimulated the French Symbolists L.W. Hawkins and Le Sidaner, both living in Belgium in 1898-99. See Le Foyer, by Hawkins, Autour de Lévy-Dhurmer, #23, p. 23, and Le Sidaner's many twilight views of closed-up houses on empty streets and canals. See also Le Beguinage, Courtrai, Ibid., #28, p. 33. It is likely that these artists also knew the pastel portrait of Loti, exhibited in Paris in 1897 (before their Belgian visits) which may have impressed them with its feeling of mystery, if not the exotic setting.

161. Thévenin, La Renaissance païenne, pp. 10-14. See Autour de Lévy-Dhurmer, cat. #73, 64, 70.

162. See Puvis' decorations in the Salle du Zodiaque, Hotel de Ville, Paris, L'Eté and L'Hiver (1892). Illustrated in Puvis (Paris, 1976), #193, 194, p. 216. See also Séon, Le Mairie de Courbevoie, Chapter VII, pp. 181 above; Henri Martin, Les Faucheurs, pp. 295-296 above; Eugène Grasset, La Belle Jardinière, Chapter VII, p. 225 , above. Maurice Denis, Avril, p. 96.

163. See Bouyer, "Le Déclin du paysage," pp. 464-469. His quotation of Baudelaire accords with the sunset motif painted by Lévy-Dhurmer. "(La nature)... elle est romantique à l'heure des couchants tumultueux que Baudelaire a décrit d'un trait: 'le soleil s'est noyé dans son sang que se fige...'"

164. See Chapter VII on Séon, pp. 186 , above.

165. Thévenin, La Renaissance païenne, p. 12. See also Autour de Lévy-Dhurmer, cat. #76. This design was also executed in tapestry. Mme. Lacambre suggests the influence of Gustave Moreau in the painting of the sky and sinking sun. During the late 1890's, Lévy-Dhurmer lived on the same street as Moreau and probably had visited his atelier.

166. Bouyer, "Le Déclin du paysage," pp. 464-469. (Author's underlining.)

167. Mme. Lacambre noted that this theme was à la mode in Paris since the revival in 1888 of Lalo's Le Roi d'Ys. See Autour de Lévy-Dhurmer, #78.

168. Charles Baudelaire, "Salon on 1859," Art in Paris. Trans. and edit. by Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon, 1970), pp. 155 ff, 194, 200 ff.

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169. Raymond Bouyer, "Un Salonnier aux salons de 1899," L'Artiste, Jan-Mar. 1899, p. 170.

170. See Chapter V on Denis, Maillol, and Roussel; Chapter IV, pp. 64-65.

171. The only subjects from contemporary life painted by Ménard were portraits. He painted portraits of the painters Charles Cottet and Lucien Simon, the literary critic André Chevrillon, and his famous uncle, Louis Ménard. Ménard exhibited consistently at the Salon du Champs-de-Mars (Le Salon Nationale des Beaux Arts.)

172. Mauclair, Les Etats de la peinture francaise, p. 124.

173. René Ménard (Paris: Galerie Georges Petit, 1914), text by Achille Ségard, p. 16.

174. Achille Ségard, "René Ménard, Painter of the Classical Landscape," The Studio, April 1909, pp. 175-184. See also Louis de Fourcaud, "René Ménard," L'Art et les Artistes, t.9, 1909, p. 18. Fourcaud also challenges opinion that labels his paintings "paysages historiques." In his early career, Ménard painted some "historic" landscapes with subjects based on the Bible or Greek myth. See Adam et Eve, Ruth et Boaz, Homère, Jugement de Paris, in André Michel, Peintures et pastels de René Ménard (Paris: Libr. Armand Colin, 1923). However, later he felt that landscapes without literal references to legend could more perfectly convey a sense of beauty.

175. Ménard, Galerie G. Petit, p. 20. Ségard wrote: "Ses oeuvres sont en accord avec notre histoire, avec nos gouts héréditaires, avec notre tradition classique, enrichie et renouvelée par une vision personelle de la nature et des hommes. A notre époque si étrangement nervreuse et agitée, elle donnent l'impression du calme, de la certitude, et de la sérénité.... c'est un anneau de la chaine que les Français ont le droit d'ésperer interminable."

Camille Mauclair also denied any connection between Ménard and Salon art. "René Ménard," R.A.A.M., Jan-June 1914, p. 38. See also footnote 56 below.

176. Mauclair, "Formation de l'école française," p. 33. Mauclair stated: "Devant les tableaux de M. René Ménard plus que devant l'oeuvre de tout autre contemporain j'ai éprouvé ce qu'on appelle le songe, qui veut dire pour moi la lente dérivation de l'âme dans son abîme intérieur après que l'esprit s'est senti pleinement satisfait de la technique de l'oeuvre contemplée." See also Introduction to this chapter above, pp257ff; and discussion of intimism in sections above on Le Sidaner and Aman-Jean. See also Mauclair, The Great French Painters, p. 133, and Les Etats de la peinture française, pp. 124-125.

177. Mauclair, Les Etats, p. 125.

178. Mauclair, "René Ménard," pp. 41-42.

179. Michel, Peintures de René Ménard, pp. 6-7.

180. Ibid. See also Alphonse Germain, "Sur un tableau refusé, Théorie du symbolisme des teintes," La Plume, 15 May 1891, p. 171. See Chapter VII on Séon above, p. 186 .

181. Charles Blanc, Grammaire des arts du dessin (Paris: J. Renouard, 1970), p. 10.

182. Michel, Peintures de Ménard, p. 7.

183. Raymond Bouyer, "René Ménard," Art et Décoration, Jan-June 1914, p. 174. On Louis Ménard, see Henri Peyre, Louis Ménard (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932), p. 472. See also Louis Ménard, Le Polythéisme Hellenique, 1863, and Rêveries d'un païen mystique, 1876.

184. René Joseph Ménard was associated with Gazette des Beaux-Arts from 1869 on and contributed 33 articles.

185. Bouyer, "René Ménard," p. 175.

186. Ménard studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in 1878, and at the Academie Jullian in 1880. See Emile-René Ménard, Symbolisme intime (Paris: Galerie Tanagra, 1975-6), p. 7.

187. Théodore Rousseau, quoted in André Michel, "A Travers les Salons, les paysages," Notes sur l'art moderne (Paris: A. Colin, 1896), p. 246.

188. Louis Aubert, "L'Oeuvre de René Ménard," La Revue de Paris, 1 July 1914, p. 24. Several of Ménard's carnets are preserved in the Cabinet de dessins, Musée du Louvre. They show careful line drawings of trees, rocks, shrubbery, etc. and precise notations of luminosity and color. Two of these, dating from 1917 and 1921, show sketches made at Varengeville and Africa. The sketches are the raw materials of his finished paintings and pastels which were composed from memory.

189. Ibid. See also Gaston Migeon, "René Ménard," Art et Décoration, 1902, p. 101. This critic also discussed the influence of Rousseau on Ménard.

190. Robert de la Sizeranne, "L'eau dans le paysage et les Salons de 1903," Revue de Deux Mondes, 1903, t.3, p. 671.

191. Of course Ménard knew paintings by other "Néo-Classiques": Edouard Bertin, Caruelle d'Aligny, Louis Français, Louis Cabat, Paul Flandrin, and others whose works were in the Louvre and the Luxembourg museum. See Le Musée du Luxembourg en 1874 (Paris: Grand Palais, 1974).

192. Mauclair, "René Ménard," p. 42.

193. Paul Adam, "Les Salons," GBA, May 1896, p. 24. See also Migeon, "René Ménard," p. 102.

194. Mauclair, "René Ménard," p. 41.

195. Ménard's use of tonal contrasts is similar to Osbert's. Both artists instill a mysterious atmosphere by juxtaposing pale figures against the dark forest background.

196. See catalogue included in Michel, Les Peintres de Ménard. The number of pastels almost equals that of paintings.

197. O.F., "Petites expositions, les pastellistes," La Chronique des Arts et de la curiosité," 10 April 1897.

198. Ménard's somewhat iconic rendering of the sun and its columnar reflection seems to be common among Symbolist artists. See Charles Dulac, Cantique, plate 2 (Fig. 154). Edvard Munch further abstracts this motif in many paintings, e.g. The Voice (1893).

199. Maurice de Plessys, from Dedicace à Apollodore, quoted in Raymond, From Baudelaire to Symbolism, p. 47. This large pastel in the Petit Palais exists in smaller versions.

200. Aubert, "L'Oeuvre de Ménard," p. 40.

201. Mauclair, "René Ménard," p. 41.

202. On the Bande Noir, see Jacques Dupont, "La Bande Noir," Histoire de l'art contemporain , edit. by R. Huyghe (Paris: Libr. F. Alcan, 1935), pp. 60-64. These Breton painters depicted localized genre subjects--laborers, fisherfolk, and religious festivals--against a barren Breton landscape. They were influenced by Cazin and Bastien-Lepage in their realistic approach, their subject matter and their melancholic mood. Cazin, a highly esteemed painter in

his day, was frequently praised for his melancholic paintings which somehow anticipated Symbolist interests. Redon found that only he and Puvis discarded naturalism, and André Michel found him a "melancholic Corot." See Redon, A Soi-Même (Paris: H. Floury, 1922), pp. 143-145; A. Michel, Notes sur l'Art Moderne, p. 249 ff.

Charles Cottet, unknown today, enjoyed a tremendous reputation among the avant-garde at the turn of the century for his realistic and often tragic paintings of Breton life. Ménard, a good friend of his, painted his portrait in 1892.

203. de Fourcaud, "René Ménard," p. 18.

204. From 1897 on, Ménard journeyed to various ancient sites, and sketched decaying monuments in Sicily, Italy, Greece, Palestine, and Egypt.

205. See illustrations of Terre antique: le temple et le golfe, studies for Sorbonne murals, in Autour de Lévy-Dhurmer, #111, 113.

206. See discussions of the mal-du-siècle, pessimism, and decadence in Koenraad W. Swart, The Sense of Decadence in Nineteenth Century France (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1964), pp. 6 ff, 72 ff, 134. See also Roland Mortier, La Poétique des ruines en France (Geneva: Libr. Droz, 1974), pp. 224-227.

207. Aubert, "L'Oeuvre de Ménard," p. 31.

208. Ibid.

209. Mauclair, "René Ménard," p. 38. Cf. Puvis, Vision antique, Fig. 1 and Ménard's Pensée antique, Fig. 146.

210. Paul Janmot, "Salons de 1906," GBA, t. 35, 1906, p. 372.

211. As pointed out earlier, Puvis revived the mural tradition and instilled the feeling of dream and unreality in the classical landscape. His innovations set him apart from the stricter adherents of classicism. See Chapter III, pp. 53-54, Chapter IV, p. 65.

212. Léonce Bénédite, "Theodore Chassériau et la décoration de la Cour des Comptes," Art et Décoration, 1898, s.l, p. 25. Chassériau's influence on Puvis is discussed by Denis, Théories, p. 127; Meier-Graefe, Modern Art, Vol. 2, p. 48; French Symbolist Painters, p. 101.

213. Exceptions are found in the articles by Bouyer, cited in following note, and Mauclair, "René Ménard," p. 42.

214. Raymond Bouyer, "René Ménard," B.A.A.M., 21 Feb. 1914, p. 62.

215. Lafenestre poem quoted in Musée Jean-Jacques Henner, Paris, p. VI.

216. See discussion of Naturism in section on Henri Martin above, pp. 299-301.

217. The Northern sensibility in art was found in the misty paintings of Whistler, Carrière, Aman-Jean, and Le Sidaner. Their art was discussed by many critics, as "septentrionelle." See discussion of Taine's theories of racial differences in art, in section on Henri Le Sidaner above, p. 261, note 15 .

218. Raymond, Baudelaire to Symbolism, p. 44.

219. Maurras' text appeared originally in La Plume, July 1891, and Rev. Encycl. 26 Dec. 1896; trans. and quoted in Raymond, Baudelaire to Surrealism, p. 46.

220. Littré quoted in Robert Rey, La Renaissance du sentiment classique (Paris: Les Beaux Arts, 1931), p. 4.

221. Henri Peyre, "Le Mot classique," French Classicism, edit. by Jules Brody (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1966), p. 109.

222. Luigi Foscolo Benedetto, "The Legend of French Classicism," French Classicism, p. 135.

223. André Gide, Incidences (Paris: NRF, 1924), p. 40.

224. Henri Peyre, Qu'est-ce que le Classicisme? (Paris: Libr. E. Droz, 1942), p. 175. In his study of Classicism and its revivals, Peyre wrote of the perennial attraction of Greece for those oppressed by the evils of the present: "La haîne ou le dégout du présent inspirent la plupart de nos retours au classicisme.... Le rêve hellénique est en effet l'expression poétique d'un besoin de libération...

Il est rare pourtant que cette admiration rétrospective pour la Grèce et ses éternelles créations reste purement froide et impersonnelle.... il se mêle une aspiration sentimentale, un désir d'échapper au present et de fuir le monde moderne dans un rêve... Certains, las de l'inquiétude, réelle ou supposée de la vie contemporaine... se plaisent à chercher un asile auprès de la "sérénité grecque."

(Ibid., p. 176), also Henri Peyre, Bibliographie critique de l'Hellenisme en France de 1843-1870 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932), pp. 6, 7.

225. Peyre, Qu'est-ce que Classicisme, p. 174.

226. John Cruikshank, edit. French Literature and its Background, Vol. 5 (Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 177.

227. Moréas, trans. and quoted in Raymond, Baudelaire to Surrealism, p. 42. Ernest Raynaud, a Romantic poet, rationalized the creation of this new group by attacking the Romantic-Symbolist aesthetic: "Il faillit réagir contre cette barbarie de style, cet effondrement de la pensée, ce pessimisme dissolvant et stérile--c'est là la triple raison d'être de l'école romane."

"L'Ecole roman français," Mercure de France, May 1895, p. 133. And Raymond de la Tailhede versified the program of the Romantic poets:

> Et nous rétablions, abrités de l'outrage
> Athène éternelle et l'antique renom
> Latin des Gaules au pays de notre nom
> Et de notre courage.
>
> (La Plume, Feb. 1892), quoted in W. Kenneth Cornell, "La Plume and the Poetry of the 1890's," Yale Romanic Review, Vol. 18, 1941, p. 346.)

228. For a critical view of Moréas' Les Stances, see Décaudin, La Crise, p. 110.

229. Raymond, Baudelaire to Surrealism, pp. 46-47. The author cites poetry by Paul Valéry, M. Du Plessys and other members of the Ecole romane. He cites the Hellenic orientation appearing in works of P. Louys and others, viz. Les Chansons de Bilitis (1894) and Aphrodite (1896).

CHAPTER IX

THE MYSTICAL LANDSCAPE: CHARLES-MARIE DULAC (1865-1899)

> "Pour le paysagiste Dulac, la nature est le livre qui contient la parole de Dieu." 1
>
> Maurice Denis, 1905

> "Pour moi, je poursuis mon affaire et mon affaire ne me paraît pas anti-artistique; servir, louer Dieu, chercher à le faire aimer davantage avec ce qu'il vous a été donné de comprendre et de savoir faire. ...Je suis un intermédiaire bienheureux." 2
>
> Charles Dulac, letter from Assisi, 1897

Charles-Marie Dulac expressed his yearning for a Christian paradise in his mystical landscapes. Like the "Nostalgiques" he turned from the present, but his preoccupation with religious ideals led Coquiot to include him with the "Peintres sacrés" along with Maurice Denis, Charles Filiger and Georges Desvallières. [3] A fervent Catholic, Dulac believed in an eternal paradise attainable through faith, and he expressed his ideal in images of landscape, empty of figures.

In recent Symbolist studies, attention to landscapes with religious overtones has been focussed on Maurice Denis and on various artists of the Rose+Croix circle. Charles-Marie Dulac is relatively unknown today, partly because he remained on the periphery of mainstream

Symbolism. He had a short career which was terminated by a premature death. His religious art was enthusiastically embraced by a small group of Neo-Catholic artists and writers, but it gained little notice outside that circle. Among his fervent supporters were the influential writers J.-K. Huysmans, Alphonse Germain, Henry Cochin, and Maurice Denis. [4]

Charles Dulac and Maurice Denis were both members of the Société de St. Jean, a religious organization which sponsored a posthumous exhibition of Dulac's work in 1905. [5] On the occasion of this exhibition and the publication of Dulac's letters, Denis published an article on Dulac in which he emphasized the religious orientation of this artist. Denis used as a springboard the theory of Georges Lanoë, that modern landscape painting had become the sole repository for religious idealism. [6] Denis elaborated on this thesis in his discussion of Charles Dulac's art.

> ...(les paysagistes)... Ce sont eux, prétend-il, qui savent le mieux dégager le divin des choses, et en l'absence de maîtres inspirés par le Dogme Chrétien, comme Fra Angelico ou Rembrandt, ce sont eux qui perpetuent dans l'art le sens religieux. ...Dulac n'était pas un paysagiste ordinaire. Si remarquable que fut son métier, n'enfaisait que le moyen d'une oeuvre évocatrice de ses états d'âme. [7]

Dulac and Denis shared a nostalgia for the hallowed countryside of Tuscany and Umbria where they both had found spiritual and artistic awakening. Denis articulated their feelings about this earthly

paradise:

> ...l'air y est si léger et la lumière si douce, et telle est aussi la perfection des formes de La Terre que l'âme éprouve là devant une immense béatitude; le détachement de tout, est comme un avant-goût du paradis. Nul spectacle n'est plus propice à la meditation, à l'extase... Ses études d'après nature sont comme les compositions de lieu de ses exercices spirituels, comme les thèmes de ses oraisons. [8]

In his conclusion, Denis named the guiding spirits of Dulac's art: "...comme j'ai vu dans ses tableaux un peu du regard de Corot, j'aperçois dans ses lettres un peu de l'âme de St. François d'Assise."

Preceding Denis' eulogy of this artist, J.-K. Huysmans and Henry Cochin had contributed importantly to the critical literature supporting Dulac's art in the 1890's. Both writers were influential in the Neo-Catholic movement in Paris, and they stressed Dulac's contribution to contemporary religious expression. Huysman's managed to discuss Dulac's lithographs in his novel, La Cathédrale, and stated that this original art represented "l'espoir de la peinture mystique de notre temps." [9]

Alphonse Germain, the Symbolist critic who especially favored Alexandre Séon, also admired Dulac's mystical landscapes, and mentioned him in his book on St. Francis. Germain placed Dulac in the context of the nineteenth-century religious art and characterized the young artist: "(un) mystique épris de la nature, mort très jeune avant d'avoir pu réaliser ce qu'il promettait...(voir) ses lithographies, notamment celles du Cantique des Creatures." [10]

Other critics too saw Idealism and originality in Dulac's elevation of the landscape genre to a religious level. Auguste Marguiller praised his synthetic approach which revealed "l'état d'âme." He also considered him in the French tradition of Poussin, Watteau, and Puvis de Chavannes.

> Pourtant, ce ne sont la que des paysages. Mais ces paysages ne sont pas seulement des interprétations de la réalité; ce sont de véritables compositions ou l'ordonnance générale, le décor du ciel, de la terre et des eaux, la symphonie des tons, ont été combinés, récréés en un ensemble idéal et significatif par le cerveau et le coeur de l'artiste, ... En cela, Dulac, quoique son originalité de forme et de sentiment repugne à toute etiquette d'école, est un des meilleurs représentants du mouvement de réaction tente depuis dix ans, au nom des droits de la pensée, contre les abus d'un réalisme impassible autant qu'exact. [11]

Ambroise Vollard also characterized Dulac as a true Franciscan. In his memoirs, Vollard wrote of the memorial exhibition organized by Henry Cochin and Huysmans in his gallery in April, 1899. He also discussed Dulac's prayerful approach to painting:

> Dulac, âme franciscaine, concevait l'oeuvre d'art comme un élan vers Dieu. Aussi, à l'example de Fra Angelico avant de prendre ses pinceaux, se mettait-il en prières, attendant l'inspiration. De bons juges étaient, au reste, d'avis que les deux peintres n'avaient de commun que cet acte de piété. [12]

Prosper Dorbec, an art historian concentrating on nineteenth-century art, wrote that Charles Dulac had contributed significantly to the genre of "religious landscape."

> ...sous la main de Charles Dulac, elles (les formes de la nature) parleront par elles-memes et elles seules, et deviendront des interprètes directs des élans de la pensée vers l'infini... N'ya-a-til pas eu là, dans l'art pictural, comme, l'éclosion d'un genre qui n'a presque appartenu qu'au dernier siècle: le paysage religieux? [13]

Charles-Marie Dulac was born in Paris 1865 in humble circumstances. Lacking the education and training of many Symbolist artists, he remained simple and unsophisticated; his art sprang from his strong religious convictions and unquestioning faith. His published letters, which reveal his intimate thoughts about life and art, show both crudeness and gracefully expressed religious sentiment.

His artistic training began at the Ecole Nationale des Arts Décoratifs, which enabled him to earn his living as a painter-decorator in a wall-paper factory, and then as a painter of décors for the theater and the Opera. [14]

Around 1887, he painted in the ateliers of Humbert, Gervex, and later with Karbowsky and Roll. [15] Several biographers mention Carrière and Puvis in connection with his training period, but this cannot be substantiated as fact. [16]

He entered the Salon in 1889, exhibiting portraits and still-lifes. Around 1890, he traveled in Brittany, Normandy, Burgundy, and the Alsace, rendering landscape in oil sketches, pastels and chalk drawings. His catalogue for the years 1891-1894 records paintings of landscapes in the environs of Paris and its Northern provinces. [17]

The early landscapes in oil, many of them snow scenes, are filled with a melancholic mood. They show the artist's preference for greyish harmony and the softly veiled light of morning or twilight.[18] The studies made in the Northern provinces show broader, more sweeping compositions, with strongly silhouetted and simplified landscape masses.

He also painted the cathedral at Vézelay; views of the interior, the cloisters, and the portals. (Fig. 149) When these works were exhibited (1892-1894) they were admired by Huysmans and other critics:

> Les tableaux, rapportés de Vézelay, admirés pour la plupart aux Salons, de 1892-1894, forment une suite particulièrement expressive et belle, sont comme les chants d'un poème où palpite toute l'âme de l'antique abbatiale. 19

When Dulac joined the Société de St. Jean, his art began to reflect his zealous dedication to Catholicism. He was influenced by its founder, Rev. Charles Clair, whose mission was to unite and convert painters and sculptors, and to encourage religious painting. To this end this priest held weekly dinners at which discussion of secular art was forbidden. Dulac took the Third Order of St. Francis in 1890, and after death, was buried in his monk's habit. At the time of his conversion, he changed his name to read Marie-Charles Dulac.[20]

Henry Cochin, his close friend and biographer, saw a turning point in Dulac's art resulting from his conversion and also from the first attacks of lead poisoning, the degenerative disease to which he succumbed in 1898 at the age of 33. This "grande crise morale" turned his art in the direction of greater subjectivity and spiritualism.

From 1892 on, Dulac concentrated on lithography, developing his compositions from the landscape studies made on his sketching trips. He published several of these plates as a series, Suite de paysages (1892-1893). The finished plates retain their link to nature despite the artist's will toward simplification and idealization. The iconic stylization and profound mysticism of his later works are not yet in evidence.

Most of these lithographs were grouped in series and issued in small numbers during the 1890's. [22] The foreword to the Suite de paysages shows the artist's intention to idealize nature:

> Ces quelques planches sont le résultat modeste de mes premieres recherches. Elles inaugurent une suite de paysages dans lesquels je cherche à exprimer les émotions fugitives que donnent les divers aspects de la nature. Idéaliser le plus possible, sans pourtant dénaturer les formes réeles, tel est mon but. [23]

The motifs in these lithographs seem to have been chosen for their expressive possibilities. [24] Dulac shared with most "Nostalgiques" the belief that landscape was a viable medium for the expression of personal and poetic feeling. In this sense, his landscapes conformed to Péladan's demands for "le paysage musical ;" however, Dulac never exhibited at the Rose+Croix Salons. [25]

Les Cygnes is one of the evocative images based on stately deserted parks. (Fig. 150) A mysterious mood is created by the empty spaces and the sharp tonal contrasts. [26] In Le Canal a foreboding still-

ness pervades; the tonal contrasts are formed by the luminous sky and the reflections in the still water of the dark masses of foliage.[27] (Fig. 151)

Violent moods of nature are captured in plates which depict vast terraces or knolls on which huge trees with tangled masses of foliage are silhouetted against an agitated sky.[28]

Another plate, L'Escalier à Versailles (Des 100 marches) depicts the majestic form of the grand stairway of the Orangerie at Versailles. (fig 152) The choice of an architectural motif is an anomaly in this series devoted to landscapes. Like other "Nostalgiques," Dulac perceived Versailles as a haunting reminder and symbol of a glorious but vanished past. Le Sidaner and Lévy-Dhurmer also painted the park and its architecture with melancholic overtones.[29] (Fig. 153)

It is evident in the Suite de paysages that Dulac had mastered the technique of lithography. It was a medium uniquely suited to his particular vision. Lithography allowed for subtle chromatic effects and a wash-like fluidity and transparency which would have been impossible to achieve in oil painting. Dulac took advantage of these properties in his efforts to idealize and spiritualize nature. He created ethereal effects from his use of nuances of delicate color and subtle gradations of tone.[30]

Due to the flexibility of the lithographic process, which allows for different color printings, the artist was able to vary the emotional effect of each plate by changing the color harmony.

The series, Cantique des créatures, printed in 1894, represents the mature achievement of Dulac's lithographic oeuvre, in terms of technique as well as content. These plates reflect Dulac's belief that Divine spirit is revealed in nature. Stylistically they show a more synthetic approach; forms are more simplified, colors are paler, showing a further distancing from sources in nature.

The series consists of nine plates, each titled with a verse from the Canticle of Brother Sun by St. Francis of Assisi. From this date until the time of this death in 1898, Dulac also worked on Le Credo, a series of plates based on quotations from the Old Testament. Of this series, only three plates were completed, although there are drawings and unfinished lithographic plates which furnish further evidence of his visionary mysticism. [31]

In addition to the lithographs, Dulac's catalogue also lists paintings and sketches of various sites in Italy and the Midi, which form the record of his travels undertaken to restore his endangered health. [32] Many of these paintings especially the ones from 1897 and 1898, were studies for works which he planned to complete in Paris. [33] Despite the encroachments of the disease. Dulac's works dating from this time show no deterioration of his capacities. He gained fresh inspiration each time he retraced the path of St. Francis and according to his friend Cochin, "L'âme s'enrichissait sans cesse de pensées nouvelles." [34]

J.-K. Huysmans first saw Dulac's lithographs when they were exhibited at the Galerie Le Barc de Boutteville in 1896. This leading writer eulogized the artist in an article on the current state of religious painting and devoted a long passage in his novel, La Cathédrale to his new discovery. [35] In a letter, Huysmans wrote: "Of all our pious painters, young Dulac is the only one with any talent... I'm delighted to be able to praise somebody and show that Catholic art, though it has fallen so low, is not yet completely dead."[36]

In the article in L'Echo de Paris, Huysmans again stated that the work of Dulac was far superior to the uninspired level of contemporary religious art. [37] Discussing Dulac's lithographs, the author noted that the artist's tentative attempts at idealization in the earlier series, the Suite de paysages, had developed into mystical professions in the Cantique des Créatures. The text of this article was incorporated in his novel, La Cathédrale, in which Durtal, the voice of the author, examined the religious art of the "Primitifs."

This lengthy passage describes plates in the latter series; additionally it conveys Huysman's rapturous appreciation of Dulac's art:

> Among the religious youth of today no one is to be found equal to the presentment of Church subjects. "Only one," said Durtal, thinking it over, "gave any hope of such powers for he stands apart from the rest, and, at any rate, has the talent."
>
> He rose and went to turn over his portfolios, picking out the lithographs by Charles Dulac.

> This artist had begun with a series of landscapes, idealizing nature, at first with a timid hand-extravagantly large pools, and trees with leaves that looked like wild wigs tossed by the wind; then he had produced a rendering in black and white of a Canticle of the Sun, or of Creation, and had poured out in nine plates, printed in different states of tone, that effluence of mystical feeling which in his first set was still latent and undecided.
>
> The rather hackneyed dictum that a landscape is a "state of mind," was strictly appropriate to this work; the artist had stamped his faith of these views, studied, no doubt, from nature, but seen, it was evident, not by the eyes alone, but by a captivated spirit singing in the open air Daniel's hymn and David's psalm, as interpreted by St. Francis, and repeating after them the thought that all the Elements shall sing to the glory of Him who created them.
>
> Among these plates two were genuinely inspiring; that with the title, Stella Matutina, and the other with the words, Spiritus Sancte Deus; but another, the broadest, the most decisive and the simplest of them all, bearing the title, Sol Justitiae, seemed best of all to set forth the individual sympathies of the artist... The idea of justice, to which that of mercy answers as its inevitable echo, was symbolized in the serene solemnity of this expanse lighted up by the glow of a kindly season and mild atmosphere.
>
> Durtal drew back to get a more complete view of the work as a whole.
>
> "There is no denying it," said he; "this artist has the instinct, the subtle sense of aerial space, of expanse; he has a comprehension of waves flowing under immense skies, from this plate the Catholic spirit bursts out, works its way and slowly penetrates our soul..." 38

In 1898, the artist and the writer met, and Huysmans invited Dulac to join his proposed religious community of artists and writers in Ligugé, near Poitiers. Huysman's Catholic refuge never materialized, for within the month (December, 1898) that Dulac was planning to move from

Paris to Ligugé, he became acutely ill and died. In a letter to Emile Bernard, Huysmans wrote: "Did you ever know in Paris an amazing, pure soul, a painter of great talent - little Charles Dulac? He just died... he was an artist and a saint." [39]

In April, 1899, a memorial exhibition of Dulac's work was held at Vollard's gallery, sponsored by his friends. Among them were: Aman-Jean, Carrière, Denys Cochin, Henry Cochin, Maurice Denis, J.-K. Huysmans, Henri Lerolle, Roger Marx, Moreau-Nelaton, Roll, and Vollard. [40]

In the catalogue to this exhibition, Huysmans wrote of Dulac's ascetic life and the Franciscan ideals that inspired his religious devotion and his art. He pointed out that Dulac, following St. Francis's rejection of the material, did not seek recognition in the art world. Huysmans quoted Dulac: "Je n'ai pas besoin d'être compris par personne, du moment que je plais à Notre Seigneur, cela me suffit." [41]

Dulac echoed Huysman's distaste at the state of religious art. After receiving a copy of Huysman's article in L'Echo de Paris, he wrote:

> Tout ce qu'il dit est juste, il y avait là une vérité à dire. C'est bien dit; je ne vois pourtant pas là un remède, mais c'est un point posé... [42]

Earlier Dulac expressed these sentiments in greater detail in a letter to a priest in Paris:

> A vous donc, je puis dire combien, combien je souffre de voir en art se commettre les erreurs

> continuelles par des artistes que l'on n'a pas instruits et voir tomber en admiration devant des sottises les gens les plus éduqués, fort instruits, hommes vraiment spirituels. A quoi cela tient-il? Le Christ, dont vous me parlez, c'est une horreur; anti-décoratif, une plate imitation de peinture grecque, mal comprise; aucun sentiment, et cela plait à des gens qui dévraient chercher partout cette vie de Dieu qui anime tout et fait vivre tout.
>
> Mais vous le savez, ce qui fait l'artiste, ce n'est pas l'artiste; c'est ceux qui prient. Et ceux qui prient n'ont que ce qu'ils demandent; aujord'hui on ne leur met pas dans l'idée de chercher davantage... je trouve que vraiment le Seigneur n'est pas servi par la manifestation du Beau, qu'il n'est pas loué par les Beaux Arts en rapport des grâces qu'il tient à leur actif, qu'il y a eu même peché rejetant ce qui etait saint et à notre disposition et en prenant ce qui était souillé. [43]

When he was in Assisi, Dulac worked on the decoration of a small chapel, assisted by some painters whom he felt were naive in matters concerning art, but redeemed by their sincere faith. He preferred these unpolished artists to those who idealized in the name of "art," perhaps intending a slur on Salon painters of religious themes or those idéalistes in the Rose+Croix Salons. In a letter, Dulac wrote:

> Ce qui est bon pour moi, c'est d'en trouver qui cherchent en Dieu, qui desirent en art quelque chose qui l'exprime; pour ceux qui cerchent à trouver l'idéal de ce qu'ils croient artistique, je les mets de côté. Si l'on ne modele pas comme Raphaël, l'on est un croûton; de même pour d'autres, si l'on ne peint pas plat avec serti comme les primitifs. ...

> ...pour moi, je cherche à suivre ce qui me conduit; je le poursuis en art et j'espère le conserver toujours, cet amour de Dieu que la Grâce m'a contraint à ne pas dédaigner. [44]

The plates in the series Cantique des créatures show Dulac's ability to infuse landscape with transcendental meaning. His awesome response to nature, seen as the Création, is evident even without the addition of the liturgical text which accompanies each plate. In his preface to the catalogue of the exhibition at Le Barc de Boutteville, Henry Cochin remarked on the spiritual power of Dulac's imagery:

> (Dulac)...vous ne tombez jamais dans ce travers de mêler la littérature à la peinture; on ne doit pas non plus l'y meler en parlant de vous. Que le spectateur se mette en presence de votre oeuvre et qu'il s'efforce, s'il en est capable, de sentir et de comprendre ce que vous avez senti et compris. Cela suffit. [45]

Rev. Charles Clair, S.J., also praised Dulac's sprirtuality and alluded to his absorption of the "edenic" vision of St. Francis:

> Né dans le doux paradis de l'Ombrie dont le ciel pur, la terre féconde, les eaux abondantes rapellent l'antique Eden, ...François, en revenant à la primitive innocence semblait avoir recouvré l'empire d'Adam sur la nature dans laquelle il vénérait à chaque pas les vestiges de Dieu. 46

The nine plates in this series follow St. Francis' praise of Divine Creation in his Canticle of Brother Sun. Dulac felt a spiritual kinship with the saint as he too adored nature as the manifestion of the Creator residing in all of his creations. [47] Huysmans felt that

the mystical interpretation of landscape could be traced to St. Francis:

> L'idée meme du paysage mystique, du paysage traduisant avec des horizons et les sites des passages des Ecritures est une idée Franciscaine, car elle dérive en droite ligne de St. François. [48]

The Canticle begins:

> Most high, Omnipotent Lord,
> Praise, glory and honor be given to thee with one accord!
>
> To Thee alone, most high does praise belong,
> Yet none is worthy to make of Thee his song. 49

The first plate of the series, entitled Le Commencement, bears the legend "Sancta Trinitas, Unus Deus." (Fig. 154) The series begins with an extra-terrestrial immage. The upper half of the plate is filled with rays of light falling from a source above, while below, the tiny globe of earth is tossed about in a chaotic and limitless sea of vaporous clouds. In the version in the Cabinet des Estampes at the Bibliothèque Nationale, the ground of the print is a soft putty-green, the rays of light are pure white, and the cloud-like forms are also drawn in white and light brown crayon. [50]

The second plate is dedicated to the sun, Le Soleil, corresponding to the title of St. Francis's poem. (Fig. 155) The caption below the plate, "Jesu Sol Justitiae" underscores the analogy between Christ and the sun found in the last two lines of the verse:

> Be praised, my lord, with all thy works whate'er
> they be,
> Our noble brother Sun especially,
> Whose brightness makes the light by which we see
> And he is fair and radiant, splendid and free,
> A likeness and a type, most high of Thee.

Here, earth, water, and sky, seem to extend into infinity, the recession on land marked by groups of little trees. At the central point on the horizon, the first rays of a rising sun reflect on motionless water. The colors of the plate are pale yellows and soft green which convey the freshness of dawn light. A limpid atmosphere softens the forms and unites them in space.

The caption, "Jesu Sol Justitiae" corresponds to a note which Dulac included under his "Studies for the Credo" in the catalogue entries for 1894. A passage from Malachi is cited: "But unto you that fear My name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings." [51]

There is an additional reference in a letter from 1897 in which Dulac stated that the soul is nourished by the light of truth just as our physical being requires the light of day.

> Il vous suffrit d'être convaincu que cette lumière de vérité, que ce soleil de Justice se décompose, s'analyse et est aussi sensible à l'âme que l'est l'astre du jour lui-même pour nos corps; que personne n'obtiendra la foi par ses propres forces, pas plus qu'on ne peut faire luire selon son désir, le soleil quand il pleut. [52]

Although the belief that the sun was the embodiment of the Divine stems from ancient Eastern religions, Dulac applied a specific Christian meaning in his image, for he saw in the eternal cycle of the sun's rise and fall, the analogy to the resurrection of Christ. [53]

The third plate in the series, La Lune, is captioned "Stella Matutina." (Fig. 156)

> Be praised, my Lord for Sister Moon and every star,
> That Thou has formed to shine so clear from Heaven afar.

In this landscape, a peninsula of land extends horizontally and is marked by trees whose massed foliage is softly silhouetted against the broad expanse of a luminous sky and reflected in the still waters. In the Cabinet des Estampes, Bibliothèque Nationale, this plate exists in three versions, each differing in color; pale greens, pale brownish tones, and soft grey and white tones.

The caption, "Stella Matutina" (Morning Star) probably refers to the text of Revelations XXII, 16, "I Jesus have sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star." [54]

Plate four, entitled Le Vent, bears the caption, "Spiritus Sancte, Deus." (fig. 157)

Be praised, my Lord, for Brother Wind and Air
Breezes and cloud and weather foul or fair
To everyone that breathes Thou givest a share.

This scene is based on earlier studies made at Vézelay; the motif of a single tree or cluster of trees silhouetted against the sky was included in the Suite de Paysages (also as Le Vent), and even earlier, existed as Etude d'arbres, Bourgogne .[55] The massive terrace extends to an isolated promontory where a cluster of trees, violently twisted by a wind squall, is silhouetted against a lurid sky. The stormy intensity is conveyed not only in the tonal contrasts, but also in the linear agitation of the unraveled clouds, drawn in a nervous calligraphic style.

This plate, depicting a convulsive moment in nature, recalls earlier Romantic landscapes of Paul Huet, Theodore Rousseau, Camille Corot, and Jean-François Millet. There are striking formal analogies between Dulac's treatment of nature's turbulence and a painting by Paul Huet in the Louvre, La Grande Marée d'équinoxe aux environs de Honfleur. (Fig. 158) This work of 1861, was acquired by the state in 1896.[56] Since Dulac's Etude d'arbres and the plates based on it in the Suite de paysages and the Cantique predate the acquisition, we must assume that Dulac could have known Huet's painting only from a reproduction during the years that he was working on Le Vent.

Both Huet and Dulac created unforgettable images of omnipotent nature. Huet, in a characteristic mood of despondency, wrote of his work: "Voici un chien de temps et des chiens d'arbres... il est peu fait pour les dames a ombrelles, et cette pluie qui tombe si drue pourrait bien me retomber sur les dos." [57]

The motif of the storm-tossed uprooted tree was not uncommon among nineteenth-century landscapists. It appeared in Millet's Le Coup de vent (1871-1873) and Corot's Windswept Landscape, (1865). (Fig. 159; 160) Both of these could also have been inspired by Huet's Grande Marée, exhibited in the Salon of 1861. [58] Dulac would have known Huet's L'Inondation à St. Cloud (1855) in the Louvre, and perhaps Les Ormes de St. Cloud (1823). (Fig. 161) Dulac might have been especially impressed with the study of the latter work with its disregard of human scale within the natural order. [59] (Fig. 161 A) In Bosquet d'arbres, Dulac similarly elongated the trunks of the trees; the closer group are of such exaggerated height that they pass beyond the upper framing edge of the plate, and the tangled upper branches show a disturbing tension. [60] (Fig. 162) In Dulac's woods, as in Huet's, one can discern tiny figures, again out of scale with the towering height of the trees, a neo-Romantic device to emphasize the supra-human aspects of nature.

Plate five entitled Le Feu et L'Eau, is inscribed, "Jesu, puritas Virginium, Jesu, lux vera."

Be praised my Lord for Sister Water, sure

None is so useful, lowly, chaste and pure
Be praised my Lord for Brother Fire whose light
Thou madest to illuminate the night,
And he is fair and jolly and strong and bright.

Dulac's print depicts a fisherman's houseboat tied up parallel to the banks of a river. Vaporous atmosphere envelops the boat, the surrounding land and the sparsely foliated trees. Stillness prevades the scene, disturbed only by slight ripples in the water. In the Cabinet des Estampes print the colors are pale green and tan on a muted putty-green ground. There is a corresponding painting, listed in the Dulac catalogue as Etude pour le Feu et l'eau, 1894. (Fig. 163) The colors in the painting are closely valued like Corot's: silvery-green tones in the land and tree masses which harmonize subtly with the pinkish-blues of the luminous sky and water. The nuanced colors and generalized shapes convey both tranquility and timelesness. Unlike the lithograph where transparent layers of color seem to float like veils, the surface of the painting is built up of closely-placed opaque brush strokes. Still the effect remains luminous.

Maurice Denis remarked on Dulac's resemblances to Corot:

> Construit avec une rigoruse comprehension de l'ensemble et peintes d'après un systeme de valeurs de ton qui rappelle la solidité et la delicatesse de Corot, ce sont des oeuvres d'une valeur d'art tres objective. [62]

Like other Symbolist artists, Dulac was impressed by the paintings of Puvis de Chavannes. Puvis had elevated landscape beyond its function as a naturalistic backdrop to the status of an independent expressive element. His methods of simplification and personal use of color stimulated Dulac's efforts. Following this lead, Dulac continued Puvis' ideals, using landscape alone to carry the spritual message of the artist. [63] The simplication of forms in L'Eau et le feu, and in the iconic compositions of the Cantique, e.g. Le Soleil, La Voie benie, are surely Symbolist messages of Christian faith.

The title of the painting, L'Eau et le feu, gives a clue to the artist's elemental concept of nature. His depiction of water as a still and unmoving mass, expressive of calm and silence corresponds to that of other Symbolist painters such as Osbert, Ménard, Maurice Chabas, and Point. It is yet another proof of the distance that exists between the idyllic and meditative qualities of Symbolist landscape and the Impressionists' interest in effects of flux and spontaneity.

The symbolic meaning of water for Dulac was noted by Rev. P. Louis in his preface to the volume of the artist's letters. [64] Dulac was aware of the traditional ideas, dating from antiquity, of the sanctity of water as a cleansing and purifying agent, but he intended to impart the Christian meaning of water as the medium of baptism. In this rite, it had the power to remove original sin, to insure purity of soul, and thus was symbolic of chastity. In a letter, Dulac, inspired by the

Fontaine de Vaucluse wrote on the sanctity of water as a life-giving emanation of Christ'spirit:

> ...Cette eau si pure, ce cristal bleuté abondant et vif, animant les usines, fertilisant ces plaines, n'est'ce pas là le symbole de ce qui donne la vie à nos âmes? N'a t'il pas dit, exprimant les douleurs de sa croix, 'qu'il s'est répandu comme l'eau'; plus j'y pense, plus le symboles se multiplient et je remercie d'y avoir été amené en carême et en semaine sainte. [65]

It was perhaps his faith in the restorative power of water that determined Dulac's frequent choice of a setting in which water appears as a natural element. [66] (Fig. 164)

The sixth plate, La Terre, is subtitled, "Jesu, via et vita nostra; Jesu thesaurus fideliem." (Fig. 165)

> Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Earth, our Mother
> Who nourishes and gives us food and fodder
> And the green grass and flowers of every color.

The melancholic mood which pervades this symbolic representation of man's labors appears at variance with the spirit of the Canticle. Here, Dulac linked the representation of man's earthly labor, the plowman, with that or organized religion, the chapel, as Millet did in L'Angelus.

Millet's painting had attracted public attention in 1889 when it figured prominently in the the Secrétan sale; it was then

exhibited, and several articles were devoted to it.[67] Some of these ideas may have affected Dulac's later choice of the agrarian theme as a universal symbol of earthly activity.

Dulac's interpretation of the role of human labor was far removed from the moralistic approach of Millet. Formally, too, these works inhabit different worlds, as Dulac's figure here is reduced in materiality and in scale to appear insignificant in the scheme of nature. The expressionistic content of this image, evidenced in the tonal contrasts, the majestic trees and clouds again recalls Romantic prototypes.[68]

La Terre is a motif which Dulac had used in earlier plates. In the Cabinet des Estampes version, the background is of putty green, similar to other plates, with brownish tones of varying intensity in the trees and the chapel, and pure white in the linear patterns of the clouds and sky. As this plate was published (in tones of sepia and tan) in the Album des Peintres-Lithographes, it was perhaps one of Dulac's better-known works.[69]

Plate seven is entitled La Voie bénie. (Fig. 165) The last three plates, the most mystical in the series, do not correspond to verses of St. Francis; these compositions refer allusively to Christian doctrine through the appended latin text-in this plate, "Jesu, corona sanctorum omnium, Jesu sapientia aeterna."

In this plate, a cathedral nave is created of natural elements straight rows of slender trees form the exterior walls and separate the

wider space of the nave from the aisles. The tree tops form a natural vault which frames, at a central perspective point deep in space, a luminous cross, corresponding to the placement of the altar. Then slight elevation of the nave in the foreground is marked by a short flight of steps. The horizontality of this man-made architectural element contrasts and balances the repeated verticals of the elongated trees, thus creating an element of stability and a feeling of tranquility.

The steps which lead the eye ultimately to the cross at the end of the nave are a pictorial motif that Dulac had used earlier, as in the Le grand Escalier de l'Orangerie de Versailles, a plate which was included in the Suite de paysages.[70] (Fig. 152) The motif is used symbolically in both instances; in the earlier plate it evokes a nostalgia for a vanished grandeur in the secular sphere. In La Voie bénie, the steps, now much diminished in scale, serve as the entry to a higher reality, the sacred ground of the nature-cathedral. Various color printings of this plate exist; each version demonstrates Dulac's sensitive use of subtle nuances of color to suggest other-wordly ideas.

The agitation of the upper area, filled with linear convolutions contrasts with the serenity of the sanctuary below. The silence here corresponds to that envisionsed by Dulac in his vision of Heaven:

> Plus on s'approche du Trone, du centre, où est Celui qui est... un grand silence. Et ce silence est d'une harmonie indefinissable parce qu'il est compose de tous les sons les plus riches. [71]

Dulac's symbolic ordering of nature to conform to a cathedral plan evokes many visual and literary associations. Among these is the "forest theory" of the origin of Gothic architecture, which stated the idea that the upper branches of parallel rows of trees arched together to suggest the form of the first nave. Various interpretations of this theory were formulated from the Renaissance on. It was nostalgically revived in the Gothicism of the Romantics, notably in Chateaubriand's Génie du Christianisme (1801):

> Forests were the first temples of God, and in forests men grasped their first idea of architecture. This art had to vary according to climates... The forests of the Gauls passed in their turn into the temples of our fathers, and our oak forests have thus preserved their sacred origin. These vaults incised with leaves, these socles that support the walls and end brusquely like broken tree trunks, the coolness of the vaults, the shadows of the sanctuary, the dark aisles, the secret passages, the low doors, all of this makes us conscious of religious awe, the mysteries, and the divinity... The Christian architect, not satisfied with building forests, wanted, as it were to imitate their murmurs, and by the help of the organ and suspended bronze he has associated with the Gothic temple the noise of the winds and the thunder that rolls through the depth of the forests.72

Chateaubriand's poetic image combining nature with man-made creation stimulated other literary explorations of this theme. A Neo-Romantic parallel appeared in J.-K. Huysman's novel about Chartres, La Cathédrale (1898).[73]

In a chapter exploring the origins of the Gothic style, Huysmans recounted his visit to the ruined abbey at Jumièges, and to the nearby triple alley of trees that approximated the image of the nave and aisles. [74] After visiting this wonder of nature, the author concurred with the opinion of Chateaubriand, that indeed, the source of Gothic architecture lay in nature.

> Il est a peu près certain pour moi, poursuivit Durtal, que l'homme a trouvé dans les bois l'aspect si discuté des nefs et de l'ogive. La plus étonnante cathédrale que la nature ait, elle-même batie, en y prodiguant l'arc brisé de ses branches, est à Jumièges. Là, près des ruines magnifiques de l'abbaye qui a gardé intactes ses deux tours et dont le vaisseau decoiffé et pavé de fleurs rejoint un choeur de frondaisons cerclé par une abside d'arbres, trois immenses allées, plantées de troncs séculaires, s'étendent en ligne droite; l'une, celle du milieu, très large, les deux autres, qui la longent, plus étroites; elles dessinent la tres exacte image d'une nef et de ses bas-cotés, soutenus par des piliers noirs et voutes par des faisceaux de feuilles. L'ogive y est nettement feinte par les ramures qui se rejoignent, de même que les colonnes qui la supportent sont imitées par les grands troncs. [75]

The parallel between this passage and Dulac's lithograph is indeed striking. However, a causal relationship is difficult to establish, as the first personal contact between the artist and writer was not until 1898, the year when the novel was published. [76]

This was also two years after Huysmans first saw Dulac's lithographs in the exhibition at the Galerie Le Barc de Boutteville,

May, 1896. As noted above, Huysmans had praised Dulac's art in the Echo de Paris article, in 1897, and incorporated that text in the novel. Thus we must conclude that if the formation of trees at Jumièges was the inspiration for Dulac's image, it stemmed from his own knowledge of it. It is probable that he visited it himself in his travels around nothern France in the early 1890's, although there is no documentation to confirm this hypothesis. [77] He would no doubt, also have heard of it from his friends and associates in the Société de St. Jean.

Visual prototypes for the general form of Dulac's image can also be found in sphere of secular landscape painting. A painting by Théodore Rousseau, L'Allée des Chataigners (1841) predicts Dulac's compositonal scheme--an alley of trees which converges at a central vanishing point, with tangled branches arching together at the top of the picture. [78] (Fig. 167) The trees are seemingly animated by a powerful inner force, and the whole painting bears the expressionistic quality typical of Rousseau's landscapes. Although this painting was in private collections in the 1890's, it was engraved in 1842, and thus it could have been known by Dulac. Another possible source exists in the engraved illustration of Le Parc de Chantilly included in Charles Blanc's Grammaire des arts du dessin, the book known to all artists and particularly relevant to the Symbolists for its elevation of idealized art. [79] (Fig. 168)

It may be coincidental that many of Dulac's compositions are similarly organized, i.e. the central perspective point with a central light, and depth of focus.[80] However, in contrast to these secular images, Dulac's vision appears weightless and ethereal; it is a rejection of the earthly in favor of the spiritual.

The upper areas of the plate, filled with convoluted, swirling lines recall the tumultuous sky of Van Gogh's Starry Night although this particular painting was not seen by Dulac.[81] However, other landscapes of St. Rémy by Van Gogh were exhibited in 1892, and could have suggested these agitated forms. One could also point to an influence of the wave patterns of Japenese art which were a commonplace in the vocabulary of Art Nouveau.[82]

Dulac's conception of nature as a revelation of the Divine shows connections with German Romantic philosophy and the painting of Caspar David Friedrich. Both artists emphasized the transcendental in nature by using pictorial means of iconic symmetry, mysterious light and soft color.[83] Since Dulac could not have known Friedrich's paintings, the formal similarities must have arisen from their common belief in the sanctity of nature.[84]

Friedrich's realization in pictorial terms of the Divine spirit in nature was stimulated by the philosopic writings of Schelling and the von Schlegels. Dulac too reflects the spiritualization of nature voiced by French Romantics such as Chateaubriand and Sénancour which was later restated by the Symbolists Baudelaire, Mallarmé and Verlaine.

The correspondences in philosphical orientation and literary forms which link the French Symbolists and the German Romantics was the subject of an article published in 1891 by Jean Thorel, in one of the leading Symbolist periodicals. The author quoted Schelling: "La nature est pour l'artiste ce qu'elle est pour le philosophe, le monde idéal apparaissant sans cesse sous des formes finies, le pâle reflet d'un monde que n'est pas hors de sa pensée, mais en lui-même." While Thorel's remarks and conclusions were directed to Symbolist literature, his conclusions on Idealism and the interiorization of experience were also applicable to painting. [85]

Another example of the formal parallels between Dulac and Friedrich is found in La Mort corporelle, plate eight of the Cantique, and the Cross at Rugen, (1815) by Friedrich. [86] (Fig. 169, 170) Appended to the lithograph is the text, "Auxilium christianorum, Jesu refugiam nostrum." As in Friedrich's composition, the dominant cross marks a vertical axis placed off center. In Dulac's series, this plate is the most reduced in color; one version is on dull taupe-grey on a dull grey-green ground, another is even more somber in tones of greys and black. The desolate mood and the air of finality in this image corresponds to the pessimism expressed in Friedrich's snow scenes with ruins. [87]

Plate nine, Le Chant final is captioned, "Jesu candor lucis aeternae, causa nostrae laetitiae." (Fig. 171) This image marks a

return to the cosmic setting of the first plate in the series, thus completing the cycle of creation, life, death, and resurrection.

In an indefinable zone of nebulous atmosphere, the basic elements of air and water are energized by a mysterious power. Brilliant rays of light fan out from a semicircular aura which is echoed in the watery area below by wispy swirls of sea-foam and mist. Of all the plates in the series, the ambiance of Le Chant final is the most ethereal, and like the first plate, it transcends human experience. The closing plate presents an awesome finale to Dulac's spiritual program.

The increasing mysticism of the last plates of the Cantique prefigures the visionary quality of the plates which Culac intended to include in his ultimate statement, Le Credo. His work on the series was halted by his death in 1898; by then, he had completed only three plates.[88]

In formal terms, the plates for Le Credo vivant are further removed from nature than the compositions in the Cantique des creatures. These are imaginary landscapes in which elements from the observed world are transformed to convey scriptural meaning. Dulac's syntax of natural elements: trees, flowers, earth, sky, and water issued from his memory, then were arranged in a perfectly ordered universe. His reverence for Divine Creation fills these paradisial gardens. Dulac's vision clearly embodies Symbolist doctrine as formulated by

Charles Morice: "Ainsi entendu, l'Art n'est que le révélateur de l'Infini; il est le moyen même d'y pénétrer. Il y va plus profond qu'une Philosophie, il y prolongue et répercute la révélation d'un Evangile..." [89]

J.-K. Huysmans praised the plates for the Credo for their originality and detachment from reality:

> (ils) s'évade completement de la réalité et s'avance aussi loin qu'il est permis à la peinture d'aller; il s'efforce de traduire avec des féeries d'eaux et de fleurs...rien n'est plus étrangement indoue que cette flore qui tient du lotus et du nenuphar ...rien n'est plus enfantinement simple que ce lagunes, que ces longs bassins qui rappellent ceux de Rambouillet, que cette vegétation d'âmes en fleurs qui palpitent sous l'infini d'un ciel.[90]

The plate titled Le Credo vivant: Les Tulipes (Credo I) has at least two variations. [91] (Fig. 172) There is a preparatory drawing in gouache which bears the title Le Jardin de Seigneur. [92] Two passages from the Old Testament are quoted as the source for this paradise garden. They are included in "Notes Pour le Credo" headed by the text, "Descendit ad inferos, tertia die ressurexit a mortuis."

Isaiah II, 3:

> For the Lord hath comforted Zion:
> He hath comforted all her waste places,
> And hath made her wilderness like Eden,
> And her desert like the garden of the Lord;
> Joy and gladness shall be found therein,
> Thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.

Malachi IV, 2:

> But unto you that fear My name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings [93]

In the gouache drawing, the preparation for the final plate, the sun appears as a disk centered within a radiant aureole. In completed lithograph, the sun has been transformed into a cross of blazing light piercing the hazy atmosphere of infinite space. This change of image was probably in the Notes, under the latin heading, "Ascendit ad coelos, sedet ad dexteram Dei Patris Ominpotentis, inde venturus est judicare vivos et mortuos."

Matthew XXIV, 27:

> For the lightning comes from the East and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of man...

Matthew XXV, 30:

> Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

The colors of the plate are in the warm range. The ground delicate yellow-gold, the land areas are of a darker yellow, the lilies are pink, the tulips white and pink, outlined in dark red, as are the flowering bushes. The colors decrease in intensity in a carefully controlled aerial perspective, implying infinity.

The plate, Credo II, Le Jardin fleuri, probably corresponds to the text from Song of Songs which is found under the heading in the Notes,"Credo in Spiritum Sanctum, sanctam Ecclesiam Catholicam, sanctorum communionem, remissionem peccatorum." (Fig. 173)

> Song of Songs, IV, 15:
>
> Thou art a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters,
>
> Song of Songs IV, 12:
>
> A garden shut up is my sister, my bride;
> A spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

Both passages refer to the Virgin Mary and the Immaculate Conception.

The promise of eternal life is rendered pictorially in an iconic compositional framework which Dulac had used previously symmetrical forms receding to a central point in infinite space. It appears that Dulac decided against the image suggested in the second verse above (IV, 12), a closed-off garden, in favor of the other passage. The fountain mentioned there was transformed into an image of flowing waterways, symbolic of the four streams of living waters-eternal life through Christ.[94] The softly curving contours of the garden are marked by waterlilies, plants which symbolize death and resurrection in their natural daily cycle. As in the plate, Credo I, Les Tulipes this is a garden beyong human experience, an edenic vision of serenity and beauty.

The Cabinet des Estampes has both a finished plate and a preparatory drawing. Both are on a grey gound with a soft blue tone

uniting the almost equal areas of sky and water. The blossoms of the flowering trees are white, the stalks and leaves are green, as are the lily pads. The predominantly cool tones of this plate form a contrast to the warm color range of Credo I. The two compositions share similar patterns of land and water; in Credo I, they run horizontally, in Credo II, they recede into space along the vertical axis. Thus these plates, considered together, represent Dulac's ideal of a paradise garden, synthesizing opposites of color and form in a unity of religious feeling.

Another plate, Le Divine Palmerai is not numbered, but it can be assumed to belong to this series. (Fig. 174) The catalogue lists a study identified by a text from Ecclesiasticus XXIV, 14: "I was exalted like a palm tree in Engaddi (in Dulac's French text, read Cadès), and in the "Notes pour Le Credo," this verse is repeated, with the textual addition," and as a rose plant in Jericho." Huysmans referred to this composition as a painting, but related to the lithographs for Le Credo:

> Une avenue de palmiers fantastiques, couleur de sang, au bout de laquelle jaillit, en un explosion, une croix de feu, Ces éssais devaient servir, paraît-il à une interpretation colorée du Credo...
> Ces oeuvres sont pour moi...des néumes de peinture, des notes qui se prolongent, qui se répetent sur la même idée, sur le même mot, qui peignent cet exces de la joie intérieure que les paroles ne sauraient rendre. 95

As in plate seven of the Cantique, La Voie benie, Dulac created a nature-sanctuary, with palm-like trees arranged symmetrically

on either side of the central axis. In an inventive variation of the species, the artist depicted the palms with a double level of leaves which fan out in a regular lotus shape pattern. The setting in the foreground is formalized with narrow paths of water bisecting lawns on the vertical and horizontal axes of the plate. From their intersection a blazing white cross radiates. In the distance the palm trees become a dense impenetrable forest with faintly indicated vertical thrusts suggestive of Gothic vaulting. Curiously, the density of the slender trees suggest the interior of a Mosque rather than a basilica-plan Christian church. The presence of Christ is symbolized in the radiant cross, as well as in the palms with are symbolic of His suffering and martyrdom. The trees are draped with delicate trailing vines, perhaps symbolizing the linking of Christ and the church, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." [96] The cool harmony of blue-grey and green enhance the mood of detachment and silence of this sacred ground.

In Dulac's lithographs a new dimension of Symbolist landscape was revealed. "Le paysage mystique" and the dream of a Christian paradise attainable through faith provided a counter-weight to the Hellenists' invocation of the Golden Age. Dulac's dedication to the Franciscan ideals in his life and art casts new light on the nostalgic attitudes of the Symbolist epoch.

CHAPTER IX

THE MYSTICAL LANDSCAPE

CHARLES-MARIE DULAC

FOOTNOTES

1. Maurice Denis, "Propos. Sur les lettres et paysages de Marie-Charles Dulac," L'Occident, Dec. 1905 , p. 305.

2. Marie-Charles Dulac, Lettres de Marie-Charles Dulac (Paris: Libr. Bloud et cie., 1905). Some letters are published as "Lettres de Marie-Charles Dulac,"Notes d'Art et d'Archéologie, 1904, 1905.

3. Gustave Coquiot, Les Indépendants (Paris: Ollendorff, 1920).

4. See discussion in text below. Dulac contributed regularly to the Salon du Champ-de-Mars (1890-1899) and the Independants (1893-1899). Some of his lithographs were published in L'Estampe Originale and Les Peintres-Lithographes. Auguste Marguillier wrote on the eve of Dulac's memorial exhibition: "Il y a quatre mois mourait à Paris un jeune peintre dont la disparition fit peu de bruit, dont les obsèques n'eurent rien d'officiel, mais qui-chose meilleur-fut pleuré sincèrement par tous ceux qui le connaissaient et qui voyaient en lui un des plus nobles artistes de l'heure présente." Auguste Marguillier, "Charles Dulac," GBA, April, 1899, p. 322.

5. G.B., "VIe Exposition de La Société de Saint-Jean," Notes d'Art et d'Archéologie, April 1906, pp. 76-87. No catalogue survives from this exhibition, but this article presents a summary of the works and excerpts from earlier critical articles.

6. Denis, "Propos," p. 305. Denis referred to Georges Lanoë, Histoire de l'école francaise de paysage (Nantes: Société Nantaise, 1905).

7. Ibid., p. 306.

8. Ibid., p. 307.

9. J.-K. Huysmans, quoted in André Girodie, "Marie-Charles Dulac," Le Bulletin d'Art Ancien et Moderne, 1906, p. 102

10. Alphonse Germain, L'Influence de St. François d'Assise sur la civilization et les arts (Paris: Libr. Bloud, 1907), p. 61. See also Ernest Renan, Nouvelles Etudes d'histoire religieuse (Paris: Calmann Levy, 1884), pp. 325-336. Renan discussed the attraction of St. Francis during the age of materialism. "François d'Assise nage pour nous dans une lumière aussi etherée que Jesus..."

11. Marguillier, "Dulac," p. 329.

12. Ambroise Vollard, Souvenirs d'un marchand de tableaux (Paris: Albin Michel, 1937), p. 242

13. Prosper Dorbec, L'Art du paysage en France (Paris: H. Laurens, 1925), pp. 161-162. Dorbec traces the legacy of Chateaubriand and Lamartine with respect to the romantic worship of the divinity revealed in nature. A passage quoted from the journal of an obscure landscapist, Joseph Pagnon, is very much in the spirit of the writings of Dulac. As heritors of the writers mentioned above, Dorbec discusses besides Dulac, Millet and François Benouville.

14. Biographical material on Dulac is found in In Memoriam Marie-Charles Dulac (Paris: Vollard, 1899), preface by Henry Cochin; also in Robert Refoulé, "Marie-Charles Dulac," Memoires de la Société d'Agriculture, Sciences, Belles-Lettres et Arts d'Orleans, Ve Serie, t. 19, 1924, p. 278; also André Girodie, "Biographies Alsaciennes" Revue Alsacienne Illustrée, Vol. IX, 1911, pp. 84-87; Thieme-Becker, Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Kunstler (Leipzig, 1914), Vol 10, pp. 106-107.

15. All of these artists were associated with the Salon des Artistes Francais, and were medal winners in the late 1860's to 1880's. They had highest reputations in the world of official painting and were, in the case of Roll and Humbert, the recipients of official decorative commissions (Hotel de Ville and Panthéon respectively). Gervex was the most "liberal," as he was friendly with Renoir, Monet, and Degas, and later exhibited at the Salon National des Beaux-Arts.

16. Refoulé stated "il fit la connaissance de deux grands artistes qui devinrent aussitôt et restèrent jusqu'à la fin ses amis intimes."; in "Dulac," p. 279. However, this cannot be proven. Aimée Brown Price informed this writer that there are no records in Puvis' archives that Dulac was his student. Other writers state that Dulac "sought advice" from Puvis and Carrière; see Cochin preface In Memoriam, p. 9; Auguste Marguillier, Meister der Farbe, 1913, and André Girodie, "Biographis Alsaciennes, Charles Dulac," pp. 82-83. There are references to visits to Puvis in Dulac's Lettres. See Oct. 1895, and Feb. 1896, in Notes d'Art et d'Archéologie, 1904 pp. 57, 106.

17. Dulac's catalogue appears in Lettres, Appendix, I and II, pp. 150-156.

18. Marguillier, "Dulac," p. 326. One of these landscapes is illustrated in the Catalogue illustré du Salon Nationale des Beaux Arts, 1892, #50.

19. Marguillier, "Dulac," p. 326. Huysmans was particularly moved by Dulac's paintings of this cathedral. He noted that few have been able to capture the "soul" of the church itself. He rhapsodized about Dulac's work here: "Ce qu'il faut avoir l'âme en paix pour peindre de la sorte!... Un Vue du cloître de Vézelay qui est un alleluia de lumière passant entre les colonnes de la galerie monastique et alternant comme chanté par deux choeurs, en des rais de soleil et d'ombre, couchées sur le pavé du sol." J.-K. Huysmans, De Tout (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1908), pp. 134-135.

20. Refoulé, "Dulac," p. 279. See also Dulac, Lettres, preface by Rev. Père Louis, p. ix.

21. Henry Cochin in preface to exhibition, In Memoriam Marie-Charles Dulac, p. 7. Cochin, a widely respected Dante scholar, first interested Dulac in traveling to Italy and in following the path of St. Francis.

Dulac had contracted lead poisoning through his hands while painting theatrical decors. The disease caused him much pain and ultimately settled in a crippling paralysis.

22. The Suite de paysages (1892-1893) is limited to 100 prints of each plate, but only 40 albums of 8 plates each were printed and then 30 albums with varied color printings. The Cantique des Créatures, albums of 9 plates included 60 complete runs, and 20 additional with color variations. There was an additional printing of 8 of these plates in 1896. This information is supplied in Exposition de Marie-Charles Dulac, Chez le Barc de Boutteville, 11 May-4 June 1896, preface by Henry Cochin.

23. Dulac, quoted in Marguillier, "Dulac," p. 330.

24. The plates in this series are identified in the catalogue, not by title, but by their remarque, a pictorial device in outline placed below the framing edge of the print in the center. The use of this device was fairly common in the 1880's and 1890's. It is usually recherché in nature and used as a footnote. (This information was generously given by Miss Elizabeth Roth, Prints Division Curator, New York Public Library.) The subject shown in the device relates in an oblique fashion to the subject matter of the print. Thus, Le Poisson is depicted as the remarque to Bords d'un Canal. La Chauve-Souris to a slightly different version of the Canal, Le Lys to the Bassin avec Cygnes, Les Pavots to the Parc avec bassin.

25. Péladan's requirements for idealized landscapes called for the inclusion of ennobling figures. See text above, Chapter III, p. 54 ; Chapter VII on Séon, p. 177.

26. The parks of Versailles and St. Cloud inspired many of the plates, some of which are in Suite de paysages. Les Cygnes was illustrated in Léonce Bénédite, "La Lithographie Originale," La Revue de l'Art (Dec. 1899), p.p. 440-460. See also other versions of park scenes in plates at Prints Division, New York Public Library (in following notes abbreviated to NYPL).

27. In Prints Division, NYPL, there are two versions of this plate. One with Le poisson (remarque) below: grey on greenish ground, with two figures on left bank, with whirlpool in water. The other with La Chauve-Souris (remarque) below: sienna tones on yellow-green ground, figures on right, no whirlpool. (see Fig. 151) The Print Room at the Metropolitan Museum has a version printed in brownish tones on cream ground, no remarque, 2 figures at left, and whirlpool in water. There is a painting, corresponding to this composition in the Musée de St. Denis, Rheims, Le Canal, 1894.

28. This motif began as a study, Etude d'arbres Bourgogne, and was later included in the Suite de paysages with the title Le Vent. It served as the basis for the composition, Le Vent, which appears in the series Cantique des créatures. The plate Etude d'arbres was issued in L'Estampe Originale, April-June, 1893, #13. NYPL Prints Division has duplicate prints of this plate (Numbered #53, and #80, in tones of soft pink earth of beige ground, with brown and blue-grey drawing in sky and tree. The Metropolitan Museum print room owns #73, same colors as above. The same plate in the Cabinet des Estampes, Bibliothèque Nationale, is entitled Etude d'arbres Bourgogne.

29. This rare plate (only 7 examples) was seen at the Cabinet des Estampes, titled, L'Escalier à Versailles ou Des 100 Marches. There are also 2 related incomplete plates, done in line only, and with smaller stairway. This composition is related to the plate La Voie bénie, Cantique des créatures. (Fig. 165) See discussion below. pp. 381ff. The motif of the grand escalier was often chosen by artists of this period, perhaps out of nostalgia for the golden age of the Louis XIV reign. See treatments by Henri Le Sidaner, Les Marches du Palais, Le Bassin du Parterre d'eau, Versailles, Les Marches de Trianon, illustrated in Camille Mauclair, Henry Le Sidaner (Paris: G. Petit, 1928), pp. 201, 118, 84. (Fig. 153) See discussion of nostalgia for the seventeenth century, pp. 5, 105, 312.

30. Dulac shared the Symbolists' preference for muted colors. His plates are predominantly soft grey-green, rose, grey-blue, pale yellow, and light yellow-green.

31. The Cantique des créatures, Le Credo plates, and some loose drawings are in the Cabinet des Estampes, Bibliothèque Nationale. A variation of Credo I and some plates from the Cantique are in the private collection of M. Georges Martin-du-Nord, Paris. I am grateful to him for allowing me to view them.

32. Catalogue, in Lettres, App. II, p. 156. Dulac traveled in the Midi, near Villeneuve-les Avignon, and in Italy in 1895, 1896, and for longer stays in 1897 and 1898.

33. His intention is noted in a letter from Assisi, May 1898. Lettres, p. 135.

34. In Memoriam, preface by Cochin, p. 10.

35. J.-K. Huysmans, La Cathédrale (Paris: P.V. Stock, 1898), pp. 382-383; see note 37 below.

36. Letter dated March 1, 1897, quoted in Robert Baldick, The Life of J.-K. Huysmans, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955). p. 246.

37. J.-K. Huysmans, "Peinture religieuse," L'Echo de Paris, 24 Nov. 1897, p. 1.

38. J.-K. Huysmans The Cathédral, (London: Kegan Paul, 1937), pp. 265-266, originally published, 1898.

39. On Huysmans' plans for the community at Ligugé, and his account of Dulac's final hours see Baldick, Huysmans, pp. 273-275. See also Helen Trudgian, L'Esthétique de J.-K. Huysmans (Paris, 1934), pp. 315-317. Huysmans' letter is quoted in French Symbolist Painters, London,

39. 1972, p. 44. It also appears in Lettres à Emile Bernard (Brussels: Edit. de la Nouvelle Revue Belgique, 1942), p. 216.

40. See In Memoriam Marie-Charles Dulac (Paris: Galerie Vollard, 1899).

41. Ibid, Preface by J.-K. Huysmans, p. 15.

42. Lettres, p. 125. (March 1898).

43. Ibid, p. 116. (Dec. 1897).

44. Dulac worked on the Chapel of St. Madeleine, a Franciscan convent on Mt. Subiaco. His comments were written in a letter of August 1898. Lettres, pp. 147-148.

45. Exposition de Marie-Charles Dulac, 1896, préface de Henry Cochin, p. 4

46. Le Cantique des créatures, foreword by Rev. Charles Clair, S.J. Album in the collection of Cabinet des Estampes, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

47. In a letter Dulac explained the title of St. Francis' Canticle (25 June 1897): "et il appelle le soleil son frère, parce qu'il reconnait qu'ils sont fait tous deux de la même main, qu'ils ont le même Seigneur à louer..." Lettres, p. 90. See also Edward A. Armstrong, Saint Francis, Nature Mystic (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 229.

48. Huysmans, preface to In Memoriam, p. 15.

49. This English version of the Canticle, is by F.C. Burkitt. Translated in The Song of Brother Sun in English Rime, London, 1926, and is quoted in Armstrong, St. Francis, p. 228. All selections quoted in text below are from this source.

50. All the plates from the Cantique des créatures were seen at the Cabinet des Estampes, Bibliothèque Nationale, unless noted.

51. Lettres, App. I, p. 151. "Notes pour le Credo," 1894. This quote is listed as Malachi IV, 2, but should read Malachi III, 20.

52. Ibid., p. 119. From Villeneuve, 31 Dec. 1897.

53. Dulac was not the only artist to use the image of the sun to convey Divine presence. As pointed out by Robert Rosenblum, artists from Runge to Van Gogh fall into this category, but the closest parallels to Dulac's compositions are found in the oeuvre of Caspar David Friedrich. Friedrich's Sea with Sunrise, 1826, shows remarkable formal analogies to Dulac's composition. It is illustrated in Robert Rosenblum, Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition (New York: Harper, 1975), p. 23. I am indebted to Prof. Rosenblum's discussion of Friedrich's landscapes as a basis for my own conclusions on Dulac's mystical landscapes. See text below for further discussion of the links between these artists, pp.386 ff. and notes 83,84.

54. On this iconography see Frederick E. Hulme, Symbolism in Christian Art (New York: Macmillan Co., 1909), p. 215. However, the star can also be associated with the Virgin Mary. See also Arnold Whittick, Symbols, Signs and Their Meanings (Newton, Mass: Charles T. Branford, 1961), pp. 265-266. A figural representation of Stella Matutina was painted by Georges Rouault, 1895. There is a pendant figure, Stella Vespertina. (Musee d'Avallon) reproduced in Pierre Courthion, Georges Rouault (New York: Abrams, 1962), p. 66. I am indebted to K. Porter Aichele for this reference.

55. See note 22 above. In the Cabinet des Estampes, (B.N.) there is a related plate called L'Orage (a rare proof), with a figure placed on the promontory near the tree, and a cannon in a trench below. The predominant colors are gloomy grey with brown calligraphic lines drawn over.

56. Paul Huet, Grande marée d'equinoxe aux environs de Honfleur, (R.F. 1066 bis) Salon of 1861; replica of painting of Salon of 1838, acquired by donation, 1896.

57. Huet quoted in Pierre Miquel, Paul Huet, de l'aube romantique a l'aube impressioniste (Sceaux: Edit. de la Martinelle, 1962), p. 20. Critics of that era—Burger, Gautier, and Chesneau commented on the elements of terror in this painting. Excerpts in Equivoques (Paris: Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1973), n.p.

58. See Jean-Francois Millet (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1976), #144, pp. 212-213. (Catalogue by Robert Herbert.)

59. One can only conjecture that Dulac saw Huet's study of for Les Ormes à St. Cloud, now in the Petit Palais. His predisposition to see nature as pure creation, without human relevance, is a facet of the rebirth of Romantic transcendentalism in the Symbolist era.

60. The plate, Bosquet of Trees was included in L'Estampe Originale, Oct. - Dec. 1894. All plates seen were in black and grey tones. The use of tiny figures, deliberately out of scale to emphasize the towering height of the trees, is seen in other works such as Les Cygnes, and untitled Park scene, in Print Room, New York Public Library.

61. This painting is presently in the Préfiguration du Musée d'Orsay, Musées Nationaux.

62. Denis, "Propos," p. 306.

63. See Cochin, preface to In Memoriam, p. 4. Cochin wrote of the spirituality of Dulac's landscapes and spoke of his relationship to Puvis: "Comme les maîtres que vous (Dulac) aimez Puvis de Chavannes et Eugène Carrière, vous êtes peintre at exclusivement peintre."...

64. Lettres, preface by P. Louis, p. xix.

65. Lettres, p. 127 (April 1898). There is an unfinished plate Le Torrent at the Cabinet des Estampes which may have been inspired by this site which had also inspired Petrarch.

66. Two paintings, both dated 1898, reflect this preoccupation with large areas of sky and water. Coucher de Soleil, Musée de St. Denis, Reims, and Paysage (Avignon) Musée de Brest. The former is illustrated in French Symbolist Painters, London, 1972, #54, the latter is illustrated in Ex. cat., Autour de Lévy-Dhurmer, (Paris, 1973), #20.

The inclusion of fire in the title is problematic. Dulac did not discuss fire as a symbolic element in the letters, nor did it figure in a literal sense in these works. Perhaps the cosmological component, the universal opposite of water, which also refer to the flames in the aureole of Christ, is symbolized simply by the time of day chosen, the dawn, the light and warmth that breaks the darkness of night.

67. J.-F. Millet, p. 89. In addition, Herbert notes that the painting was often reproduced in the art publications of the early 1890's, and that, in addition, an etching of the work was issued and widely distributed at that time.

68. See Théodore Rousseau, Le Rageur, vieux chêne dans le gorges d' Apremont (1852), illustrated in Pierre Miquel, Le Paysage Français, 1824-1874 (Maurs-la-jolie: Edit.de la Martinelle, 1975), vol. 3, p. 455.

69. See catalogue, Appendix II, Lettres, p. 155. As noted in our text, some lithographs were exhibited at the Champ-de Mars, but they are not listed by title in the catalogues of that Salon; none are illustrated in the catalogues. It appeared as #4, Album des Peintres-Lithographs, 1894.

70. See note 29 above.

71. Cochin, preface, In Memoriam, p. 8.

72. René Chateaubriand, Génie du Christianisme, 1801, part III, chapter 8, quoted in Paul Frankl, The Gothic (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960). p. 482. Frankl traces the tree-theory from the Renaissance on.

73. Huysmans, La Cathédrale (Paris: Libr. Plon, p. 1937), pp. 47-48. Originally published 1898, see note 35 above.

74. According to James Laver, J.-K. Huysmans, The First Decadent (New York: Citadel Press, 1955), p. 188, Huysmans visited Jumièges in Sept. 1896. Prof. William Clark has informed the writer that this forest formation no longer exists; the trees were cleared to give access to the restored abbey house.

75. Huysmans, La Cathédrale (1937), pp. 47-48.

76. According to Baldick, the two men did not meet until October 1898, at which time they discussed the plans for Ligugé. Since his death occurred within two months, Dulac's contact with Huysmans was of brief duration. (Life of Huysmans, p. 237.)

77. In De Tout, (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1908), p. 126, Huysmans charted Dulac's travels in Northern France. He pinpointed his visits to the Benedictine Monasteries at Pierre-qui-Vire and St. Wandrille, both in the vicinity of Jumièges. This gives further ground to the supposition that Dulac knew the Tree-formation from his own experience. It is also possible the Dulac knew Chateaubriand's writing. Although he was not intellectual, he might have been attracted to the book for its spiritual content.

78. See Théodore Rousseau, Musée du Louvre, 1968, #19, p. 29. The suggestion of the relationship of this painting to Fromentin's text was made by Helene Toussaint in this catalogue. See note 80.

79. Charles Blanc, Grammaire des arts du dessin, etc. (Paris: J. Renouard, 1870), p. 339.

80. See Le Canal (Fig. 151), La Voie bénie (Fig. 165), Le Soleil (Fig. 154), and Le Credo II (Fig. 172). Besides the visual sources cited, a passage in Eugene Fromentin's important book, Les Maîtres d'autrefois (Paris, 1876) might have affected Dulac's compositional ideas. This passage corresponds closely to Rousseau's Allée des chataigners as well as to Dulac's composition: "Every Dutch painting is concave; I mean that it consists of curves described round a point determined by the interest of the picture; of circular shades around a dominating light. It is drawn, colored, and illumined like an orb, with a strong, powerful base, a vanishing ceiling and rounded corners converging to the centre; from which it follows that it is deep and that there is a distance between the eye and the objects reproduced in it. No painting leads with greater certainty from the foreground to the background, from border to the horizons." Eugene Fromentin, The Masters of Past Time (New York: Phaidon Press, 1948), p. 103.

81. Starry Night was not exhibited until 1905 (Amsterdam), although a few works by Van Gogh could have been seen at the Independants from 1888 on, and in 1892 at Le Barc de Boutteville. The Works of Vincent Van Gogh, catalogue by G.B. de la Faille (New York: Reynal & Co., 1970). See also John Rewald, Post Impressionism (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1962), p. 537 and note 30. This source lists the pictures gathered by Emile Bernard for Van Gogh's memorial exhibition. See illustrations 347, 359.

82. Art objects from Japan were seen in the Japanese Pavillion, Exposition Universelle, Paris, 1889, and in the exhibition at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, 1890.

83. See note 53 above. See Cross and Cathedral in Mountains, in Helmut Börsch-Supan, Caspar David Friedrich (New York: George Braziller, 1974).

84. The works of Friedrich were not shown in France until recent times, and during the nineteenth century, they were not reproduced in a medium which would have been available in France. There is, however, an early account of Friedrich's work, which could have been known to a small circle of French Romantic artists. David D'Angers, a close friend of Huet, Delacroix, and Victor Hugo, visited Friedrich in his studio in 1834, and transcribed this account in his Journal. He also describes a visit to Weimar where he found other paintings by Friedrich. Interestingly, in a visit to Swiss Saxony, he saw, as he toured the forests, what he felt could be natural prototypes (rocks) for Gothic vaults. In this respect, he typifies the Romantic nostalgia for the Gothic age, a prefiguration of Symbolist nostalgia for the age of faith as seen in the works of Huysmans and Dulac discussed in the text of this chapter.

Les Carnets de David d 'Angers, I, 1828-1837 (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1958), pp. 327-33. These writings were not published until 1875, and only in fragmentary fashion at that date. This writer does not suggest that this text was widely known; its value is seen in the implications it would have had in David d'Angers immediate circle in Paris, and the analogies between Friedrich's attitude toward nature and that of the French Romantics. See also Pierre Miquel, Paul Huet, in which the links between Huet and David are discussed.

85. Jean Thorel, "Les Romantiques allémands et les Symbolistes français," Entrétiens Politiques et Littéraires, July-Dec. 1891, p. 101.

86. Illustrated in Börsch-Supan, Friedrich, plate 14.

87. Ibid., plate 8, Abbey Under Oak Trees.

88. Lettres, App. I, p. 151. These notes include the text that was appended to the plates in the Cantique.

89. Charles Morice, La Littérature de tout à l'heure, Paris, 1889, pp. 33, 65; quoted in Rookmaaker, Gauguin and 19th Century Art Theory (Amsterdam: Swets and Zeitlinger, 1972), p. 145.

90. Huysmans, preface to In Memoriam, p. 15.

91. Jean Adhémar and Jacques Lethève, Inventaire du fonds français après 1800 (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, Dept. des Estampes, 1964). Although the three extant plates of the Credo correspond to the passages of Scripture included in "Notes pour le Credo," they are not identified by title in the catalogue of 1984. Our juxtaposition of plates and scriptural text is hypothetical.

92. The gouache drawing is in the Musée Nationale d'Art Moderne. There is another version in a finished plate in the collection of M. Georges Martin-du-Nord. This plate has concentric circular forms and land and water areas.

93. The second passage, Malachi IV, 2, also refers to plate two of the Cantique, Le Soleil. (Sol Justitiae.)

94. See Heather Child and Dorothy Colles, Christian Symbols, Ancient and Modern (New York: Scribners and Sons, 1972), p. 180.

95. Huysmans preface, In Memoriam, p. 15.

96. Child and Colles, Christian Symbols, p. 204.

CHAPTER X

THE BRIDGE TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Luxe, calme et volupté and Neo-Impressionism

Nostalgic images of a happier past were not buried with the passing of the nineteenth century. Indeed, Matisse's Arcadian paintings of 1905-1906 are evidence of the continuing interest in this subject matter. [1]

Matisse's Luxe, calme et volupté is a key work in this phenomenon; it acts as a bridge between the centuries, carrying forward Symbolist poetics, idyllic iconography, and the technical program of late Neo-Impressionism. (Fig. 174). Recent Matisse scholars have identified this painting as a harbinger of the thematic and technical direction of Matisse's future art. [2]

Seeking to attain greater expression through bolder effects of color and line, Matisse worked with Signac and Cross in St. Tropez during the summer of 1904. He chose to experiment with their technique because it represented to him "the secession from the empiricism of the preceding eras." [3] His idyllic painting, Luxe, calme et volupté, the product of that summer's work, was thus intimately connected to the ideology of Signac and Cross.

As discussed earlier, their art reflected greater subjectivity and freedom in the decade following Seurat's death. Like the Symbolists, these Neo-Impressionists sought to continue Seurat's idealistic approach to art. [4] Their goal of synthesis, articulated by Signac and realized in Cross' pastoral paintings, provided the path that Matisse was to follow and further develop in the early years of the new century.

Luxe, calme, et volupté is Matisse's restatement of the poetic idealism of Cross' paintings L'Air du soir (1894) and La Plage ombragée (1902). [5] (Figs. 38, 44). It shares the Arcadianism and the littoral setting of these paintings, and like the former, derives its hedonistic spirit and title from Baudelaire. Furthermore, Matisse must have admired Cross' ability to capture the dazzling light of the Midi in the saturated hues of his later image of bathers. [6] But, as is well known, Matisse's experiments with Neo-Impressionism resulted in innovations that carried him beyond the pictorial freedoms of his mentors. [7]

Cross recognized Matisse's poetic intentions when he viewed the finished Luxe, calme et volupté at the Independants in 1905, and later when it hung in Signac's villa. In a letter he stated:

> Naïvement s'y étale une préoccupation d'harmonies de lignes et de teintes obtenues (avec plus ou moins de bonheur) par le mélange optique, et cette toile musicale pour ainsi dire, se peut regarder longuement. 8

Because of its idyllic theme, the geneology of Luxe, calme et volupté has been extensively probed by Matisse scholars. [9] We also propose a consideration of Van Rysselberghe's L'Heure embrasée as a forerunner, in view of its idyllic mood, its formal resemblances, and its suggestions of modernity. [10] (Fig. 45).

Although there is no proof that Matisse actually saw this painting, he would no doubt been aware of it because of Van Rysselberghe's close friendship with Cross, and the considerable attention given to it at its exhibition in 1897. [11]

It is difficult to assess the impact of L'Heure embrasée on Matisse. On one hand, he could appreciate its Arcadian suggestions, but on the other, he would have found its specificity incompatible with its assumptions of Ideality. In his own Neo-Impressionist painting, Matisse was able to avoid this tension by his compositional order, radical simplification, and free brushstrokes. Even though he included one figure in contemporary dress, Matisse's painting is closer in spirit and technique to Cross' pastoral paintings than it is to Van Rysselberghe's. Still, L'Heure embrasée, a modernized paradise, should be considered as part of the chain linking Matisse with the nostalgic Idealism of the past century.

Luxe, calme et volupté: Genealogy of the title

Following the example of Cross in L'Air du soir, Matisse turned to Baudelaire to set the mood of Luxe, calme et volupté. [12]

Scholars have long regarded Matisse's title, a quote from Baudelaire, as concrete evidence of his own poetic intentions. [13] We do not challenge this assumption, but would suggest additional sources which may have affected Matisse's choice of this particular verse.

Our examination of Salon art around 1900 has presented the possibility that Matisse's decision to use a title based on Baudelaire's couplet arose not from his contact with Symbolist or Neo-Impressionist artists but more from conservative sources. Curiously, a decorative panel by Emile-Victor Prouvé with the title L'Ile heureuse or L'Invitation au voyage was exhibited in the Salon National des Beaux Arts in 1903. (Fig. 175). Engraved on the wood frame of the panel was the couplet:

> Là, tout n'est qu'order et beauté,
> Luxe, calme et volupté. 14

Prouvé's painting depicts a modernized Cythera with debts to Besnard and Rodin. [15]

Since Matisse did not record his opinions on the art exhibited in the various Salons of the 1890's, one could speculate that his reactions were negative. However, Matisse clearly stated to Apollinaire that he was open to all artistic experience:

> I have never avoided the influence of others. I would have considered this a cowardice and a lack of sincerity toward myself. I believe that the personality of the artist develops and asserts itself through the struggles it has to go through when pitted against other personalities. 16

Still one would doubt that Prouvé's pompous mural would merit more than a second glance by Matisse, were it not for the juxtaposition of Baudelaire's couplet with the hedonistic imagery. Thus it is possible that when Matisse worked in St. Tropez on his idyllic painting, the Baudelaire-inspired subject had already been suggested by Prouvé's panel.

Prouvé's other decorative paintings are idyllic scenes of figures in landscape, enacting the joys of familial life. They bear suitable Symbolist titles such as La Vie, La Joie de vivre, Sejour de paix et joie.[17] Prouvé's statements on the function of art reflect Symbolist ideals and predict the attitudes which Matisse set forth in Notes of a Painter: "Nous voulons son domaine de l'art tres étendu, sans limites... Nous le voulons pour la joie de tous... et tous les besoins de la vie car... il doit être la révélation la plus claire, la plus rayonnante de l'harmonie universelle."[18]

It is not our purpose to make formal connections between paintings by Matisse and Prouvé but rather to corroborate earlier suggestions that Matisse, through his idyllic iconography, perpetuated Symbolist ideals in the twentieth century.

POSTSCRIPT

> C'est égal, l'art du paysage inaugure un nouveau chapitre.... Or aujourd'hui plus qu'hier, il est évident qu'après Impressionnisme, un nouveau chapitre de l'histoire esthétique commence. 19
>
> Raymond Bouyer

Bouyer's remarks, published in two leading periodicals, highlighted the changes in landscape painting of the 1890's as the era of naturalism waned and Idealism gained converts. The Symbolists challenged the prevailing empiricist basis of landscape painting and they criticized Impressionism for its ephemerality. They perceived that landscape belonged to the Idealist tradition and should express universal meaning rather than record exterior appearances.

For them, landscape elements used alone or with figures became the medium for mood and poetic feeling. The Symbolist landscape, no longer enslaved by nature, became a projection of the artist's état d'âme.

To escape the present and attain universality, the nostalgic Symbolists probed the past. Inspired by the idealized paintings of Puvis de Chavannes and Gustave Moreau, they looked beyond them to the earlier landscape art of Poussin, Claude, and the Italian Primitives. Here they found models for "le paysage de style," Bouyer's antidote to excesses of naturalism.

Among the various camps of Symbolist art, there could be no single pictorial manner. These artists were, however, bound by their common aspirations toward poetic painting; they all embraced the ideals of suggestion and evocation promulgated by Mallarmé, Moréas, Aurier, and Maurice Denis.

Our study began as an expansion of Coquiot's group, "Les Nostalgiques." Beyond the few exhibitors at the Independants that he identified as escapists from contemporary society, we have included other Symbolists and Neo-Impressionists to show that nostalgic attitudes were indeed significant in Symbolist expression. The phenomenon of fin-de-siècle nostalgia transcends the Franco-centric focus of our study. The nostalgic evocation of the past and the theme of the idyllic landscape became commonplace as the Symbolist wave expanded throughout Europe and America. The relationship of these manifestations with the French are topics worthy of further study.

We have studied "Les Nostalgiques" in order to illuminate the complexity of artistic expression in the 1890's. We have shown that the idyllic landscape served as a common iconographical choice for painters of varying talents and loyalties, and thus was significant in its own day. By 1900, the artists in this study were mature, and even those who had shown radical tendencies in the early years of Symbolism were by then among the conservatives. To be sure, Denis, Maillol, Roussel, and Ménard reflected the then-new stance of Neo-Classicism; and Henri Martin echoed the Naturisme of poets, but none

followed the challenge of the young Fauvists. For the most part, the "Nostalgiques" did not alter their aesthetic viewpoint nor their pictorial manners to incorporate new ideas emerging in the early decades of the twentieth century.

Yet Matisse's art, even beyond Luxe, calme et volupté, continued a nineteenth-century feeling for the idyllic, as discussed by Ellen Oppler and John Elderfield.[20] In establishing the idyllic landscape as a significant aspect of Symbolist painting, the art of the "Nostalgiques" can be seen as another link in the chain binding the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Through the "Nostalgiques" the romantic yearning for the past was made modern.

CHAPTER X

THE BRIDGE TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

FOOTNOTES

1. John Elderfield, Matisse in the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1977), p. 36. Idyllic elements in Matisse's work were discussed earlier by Alfred Barr, Matisse, His Art and His Public (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1951), pp. 53-54, 59-60; Ellen Oppler, Fauvism Reexamined (New York: Garland, 1976), pp. 174-177; John Elderfield, Fauvism (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1975), p. 97 ff.

2. Oppler stated that Luxe, calme et volupté became a "life-time aesthetic motto" for Matisse (Fauvism Reexamined, p. 177). Elderfield called this work "virtually a manifesto for the thematic direction of Matisse's future art" (Matisse in the Collection of M.O.M.A., p. 36). See also Barr, Matisse, p. 60.

3. Henri Matisse, "Modernism and Tradition" (1935), reprinted in Jack P. Flam, edit. Matisse on Art (London: Phaidon, 1973), p. 72. Matisse first experimented with divisionism in 1899. The Sideboard and Table (1899) is a less orthodox adaptation of this technique than his later effort.

   The studies for Luxe, calme et volupté were begun in the summer of 1904, and the painting was completed during the following winter. It was exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants in the spring of 1905, and purchased by Signac. See Barr, Matisse, p. 67; Oppler, Fauvism, pp. 102-103; Elderfield, Fauvism, p. 19; Elderfield, Matisse, p. 36 ff; Isabelle Compin, Henri-Edmond Cross (Paris: Quatre Chemins, 1964), p. 67.

4. See Chapter II, p. 31, and footnote 42. See also Chapter VI pp153-154.

5. See references to these works in Chapter VI pp.156-158, 159. See Compin, Cross, pp. 49, 67, 192-193; Elderfield, Matisse, p. 179. n. 25. See also Françoise Cachin, Paul Signac (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1971), p. 86; Claire Frèches-Thory, "La

Donation Ginette Signac," Revue du Louvre, #2, 1978, p. 110. Matisse knew both of Cross' works well. L'Air du soir, owned by Signac, was hanging in his villa in St. Tropez. Interestingly, Signac purchased Luxe, calme et volupté in 1905 and hung it as a pendant to the work which had figured importantly in its genesis. Compin, Cross, p. 67. See footnote 6 below.

6. La Plage ombragée was not in Cross' studio at the time of Matisse's stay, as it had been commissioned by Count Kessler, and it was already in Germany, but some of the studies for it were still in Cross' possession. However, Matisse had seen the finished painting in the Salon des Indépendants in 1903 when he served on the hanging committee. As noted in the footnote above, Cross' L'Air du Soir was hanging in Signac's villa. See Compin, Cross, pp. 67, 192. See also Catherine Bock, "Matisse and Neo-Impressionism" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, 1977), p. 245.

7. Detailed formal analysis of Luxe, calme et volupté appears in Barr, Matisse, pp. 59-60; Oppler, Fauvism, p. 103; Elderfield, Matisse, p. 36 ff; Bock, "Matisse and Neo-Impressionism," pp. 247-249. Bock pointed out that Matisse borrowed the poses of the two reclining nudes at the left of Cross' Plage Ombragée. Matisse's deviation from Neo-Impressionist methods of color division and brushstroke is discussed in all the above sources. Compin discussed Cross' practice of giving darker tonal values to cool colors, a formula which Matisse did not follow. See Compin, Cross, p. 44.

8. Cross in letter to Angrand, 1905, quoted in Compin, Cross, p. 67.

9. Beyond its obvious links to idyllic imagery extending back to the Renaissance, it has been shown to have connections with many neglected sources in the nineteenth century. See Frank Anderson Trapp, "Art Nouveau Aspects of Early Matisse," Art Journal, Fall 1966, p. 5 ff. See also Albert Kostanevich, "La Danse et la musique by Henri Matisse," Apollo, Dec. 1974, pp. 504-513; Elderfield, Fauvism, p. 97 ff.

10. None of the writers cited in the above notes suggests Van Ryssel-berghe's and Prouvé's paintings as possible inspiration for Matisse. To our knowledge, these connections in our text have not been made

previously, neither in the critical literature of 1900 nor in recent studies. Perhaps the early acquisition of L'Heure embrasée by a German museum removed it from the focus of French criticism.

Both Barr and Elderfield cite Matisse's reference to contemporaneity in the modishly dressed woman. See Barr, Matisse, p. 60; Elderfield, Matisse, p. 38.

11. See Chapter VI above, pp. 162-163.

12. Cross was inspired by Baudelaire's Harmonie du soir for his painting, Air du soir. See Chapter VI above, p156.

13. Barr's statement has been repeated by all later scholars. Barr, Matisse, p. 60.

14. The painting is now in the Musée de l'Ecole de Nancy. Emile-Victor Prouvé (1858-1943) was a Nancy artist known especially for his decorative murals, portraits, and graphic works. He was also a sculptor and a decorative artist and made book bindings, embroidery, etc. He collaborated with Emile Gallé and was instrumental in establishing the School of Decorative Arts in Nancy, of which he became president, succeeding Gallé, in 1913. See Madeleine Prouvé, Victor Prouvé (Paris-Nancy: Edit. Berger-Levrault, 1958); Centenaire de Victor Prouvé (Nancy: Musée des Beaux Arts, 1958). The mural painting is listed and illustrated in Le Catalogue Illustré du Salon National de 1903, #1063: "toile décorative, décor de M.E. Vallin-Panneau décorative. (Baudelaire couplet quoted.) It was also illustrated in Gustave Soulier, "La Peinture aux Salons," L'Art Décoratif Jan-June, 1903.

15. Albert Besnard was one of the most successful and universally admired muralists of his day, especially known for his use of vibrant color and exciting brushwork. He also painted L'Ile heureuse (with no mention of Baudelaire), a large decorative painting in Musée des Arts Décoratifs (1902). See French Symbolist Painters (London, 1972), p. 25; Camille Mauclair, Albert Besnard (Paris: Libr. Delagrave, 1914); Achille Ségard, Les Peintres d'Aujourd'hui, Les Décorateurs, Vol. I.

Prouvé's admiration of Rodin is evident in his inclusion of Rodin's statue, The Kiss, in the park-like setting of his decorative mural. This homage enhances the erotic mood of the panel. See also M. Prouvé, Victor Prouvé, on Prouvé's admiration for certain contemporary artists (p. 20)

16. Henri Matisse quoted in an interview by Guillaume Apollinaire, "Interview with Henri Matisse" (1907), quoted and translated by Barr, Matisse, p. 101.

17. These are reproduced in Madeleine Prouvé, Victor Prouvé and Centenaire de Victor Prouvé. Prouve's daughter characterized his art: "Son idéal de la vie heureuse, saine harmonie entre la nature revivifiante et l'humain dans ce qu'il a de plus pur." Victor Prouvé, pp. 55-56.

Another curious coincidence links Matisse and Prouvé. Prouvé painted a decorative mural for the stairway of the Mairie of Issy-les-Moulineaux, the suburb of Paris where Matisse lived with his family in 1909. This panel, La Vie, had been exhibited in the Salon on 1897, where Matisse no doubt saw it.

18. Victor Prouvé quoted in Centenaire de Victor Prouvé, p. 9.

19. Bouyer, "Une évolution dans l'art du paysage," L'Ermitage, May 1896, p. 302; Bouyer, "Le Paysage dans l'art," L'Artiste, Jan. 1893, p. 20.

20. See Oppler, Fauvism, pp. 176-177; Elderfield, Matisse, pp. 39, 89. One could perhaps extend this train of thought to other twentieth-century masters; e.g. Picasso's 1905 paintings, and to idyllic works by Derain in 1905-1906.

APPENDIX

LOUIS JANMOT AS A PRECURSOR OF SYMBOLIST PAINTING

Emile Bernard's painting, Madeleine au Bois d'amour (1888) has been recently acquired by the Musées Nationaux through the donation of the artist's descendants. (Fig. 177) This has brought renewed attention to a significant Symbolist painting, one which holds particular relevance to this study of the idyllic landscape.

Recently, scholars have suggested several sources for Bernard's painting. Among them are Puvis de Chavannes' Le Rêve (1883), and Klinger's etching, The Beginning of Springtime (1879), both of which anticipate the Symbolists' preoccupation with images of reverie.[1] (Figs. 116, 178) In formal terms, these works show clear analogies to Bernard's painting in their landscape setting, composition, and willful simplifications.

Still we would suggest another, earlier source which also prefigures the mood and composition of Bernard's Madeleine; i.e., Louis Janmot's painting, La Solitude from the series, Le Poème de l'âme (1854). (Fig. 179)[2] The citation of this work allows us to see Bernard's painting and its Symbolist descendants as heritors of the Romantic legacy. Janmot's image of a dreaming androgynous youth set in a moody landscape seemingly gave birth to a generation of introspective figures.

Janmot's image of the solitary dreamer refers, in turn, to earlier Romantic paintings. In mood and pose, it recalls the prototypical La Mélancolie (1801) by Constance Charpentier.[3]

Thus Bernard's large-scale work (54" x 64") can be considered a summary statement of this Romantic theme presented in the infancy of Symbolist art. The relationship of this work to its host of Symbolist followers is only now being probed.[4]

The possibility of a causal relationship linking Bernard to Janmot lends substance to our contention that Janmot's art has been overlooked as a source for Symbolist artists, especially those with mystical leanings. In this instance, as well as those discussed in the corpus of this study, Janmot's poetic landscapes provided thematic as well as formal inspiration for the artists of the 1890's.

FOOTNOTES

APPENDIX

1 See Symbolisme en Europe, Paris, etc., 1976, #7; Elisabeth Walter, "Madeleine au Bois d'Amour par Emile Bernard," Revue du Louvre, #4, 1978, pp. 286-291. Klinger's etching and Puvis' painting were both exhibited in Paris in the 1880's.

2 See Chapter V on Denis, p. and notes 48-50; see Chapter VIII on Le Sidaner, p. and note 31. See illustrations 11, 99.

3 La Mélancolie, Musée de Picardie, Amiens. Illustrated in Equivoques, Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1973, catalogue by Olivier Lepine.

4 Bernard's painting was known to the Gauguin circle in Pont-Aven, but it was not exhibited during the 1890's and it has remained in private collections until now. It is thus difficult to determine whether other Symbolist painters of introspective figures, such as Henri Martin, Aman-Jean, Séon, Osbert, Point, Chabas, etc., ever saw it. It is more possible to conclude that Maurice Denis would have seen it.

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I Books
II Articles

C. IMPORTANT EXHIBITIONS AND SALES CATALOGUES

(Arranged chronologically)

A. DOCUMENTS, MEMOIRS, WRITINGS, AND EARLY HISTORIES OF THE PERIOD

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1. Puvis de Chavannes, Vision Antique.

2. Puvis de Chavannes, Inspiration chrétienne.

3. Puvis de Chavannes, Le Bois sacré cher aux arts et aux muses.
4. Maurice Denis, Soir Trinitaire.

5. Denis, Triple portrait de Marthe fiancée.

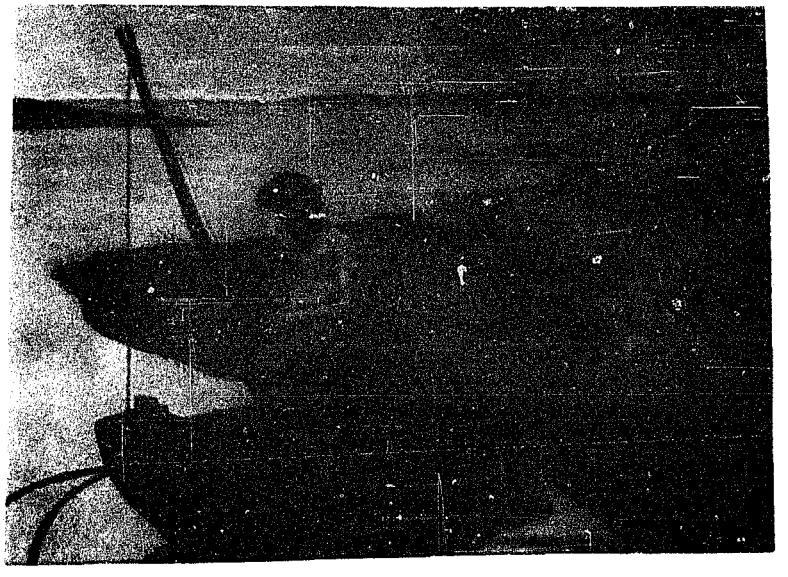
6. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Rosa Triplex.

7. Rosetti, The Blessed Damosel. 8. Denis, Procession sous les arbres.

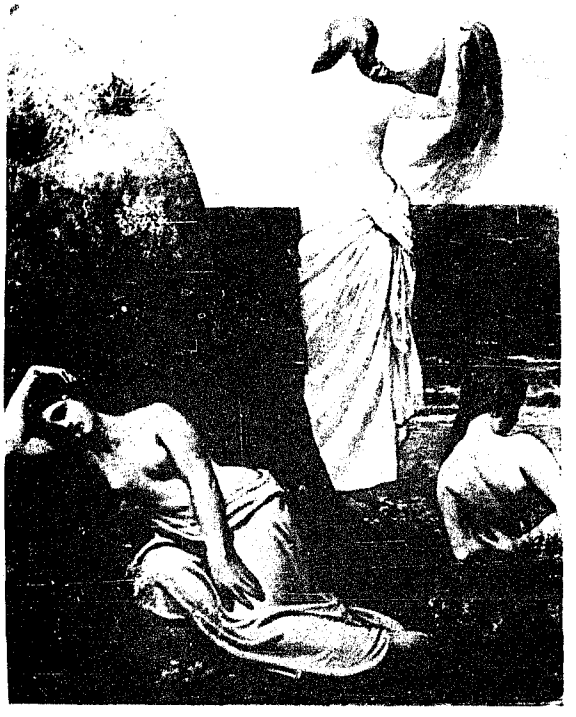
8a. Denis, Le Mariage, drawing.

9. Denis, Marche de Fiançailles.

10. Denis, Le Verger des vierges sages. 11. Louis Janmot, Première communion.

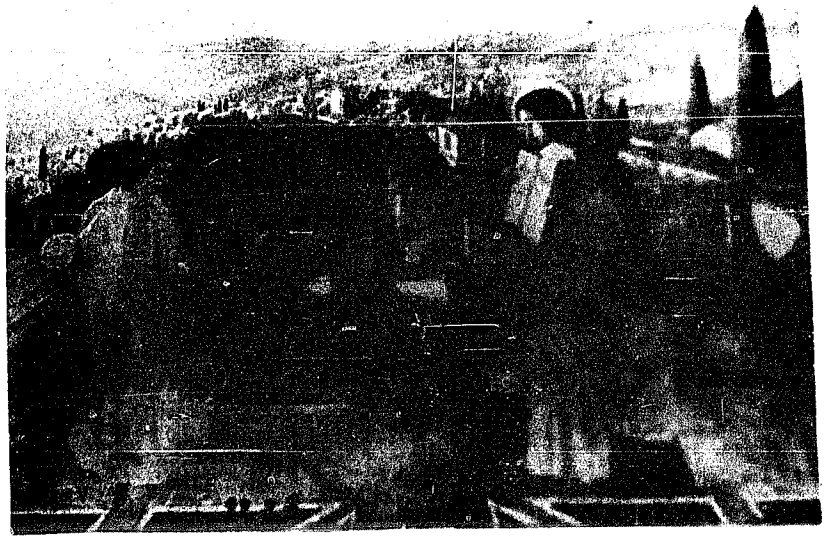


12. Denis, Avril. 13. Puvis, Le pauvre Pêcheur.



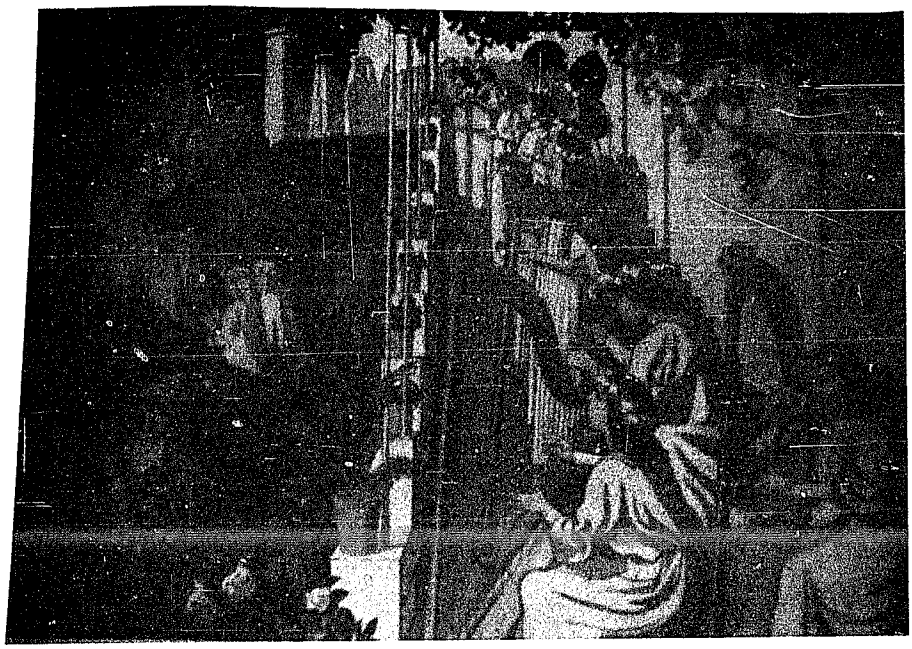
14. Puvis, Inter Artes et Naturam. 15. Puvis, Jeunes filles au bord de la mer.

16. Denis, Mlle. Yvonne Lerolle en trois aspects.
17. Denis, L'Echelle dans le feuillage.



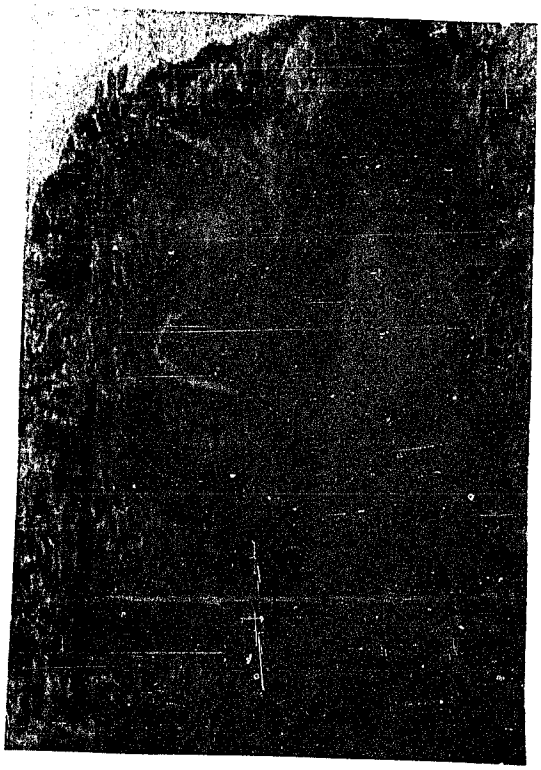
18. Denis, Annonciation aux chaussons rouges.
19. Denis, Sinite parvuolos venire ad me.

20. Denis, Jeu de volant.



21. Denis, L'Eternel été. 22. Denis, Madone au jardin fleuri.

24.



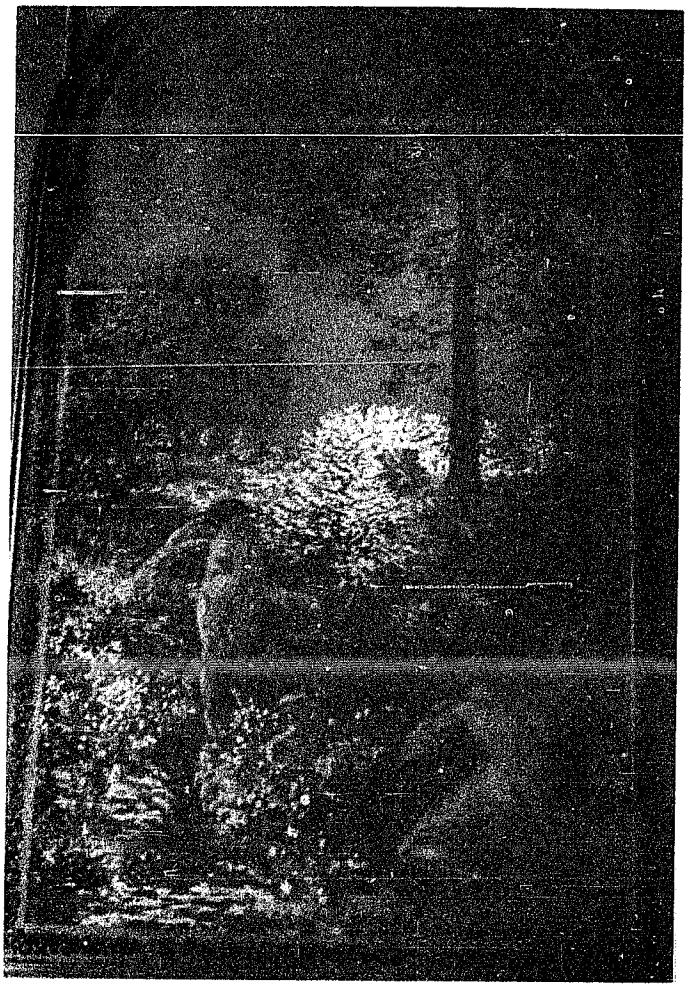
23.

23. K.-X. Roussel, Vierge au sentier. 24. Roussel, Les Saisons de la vie.

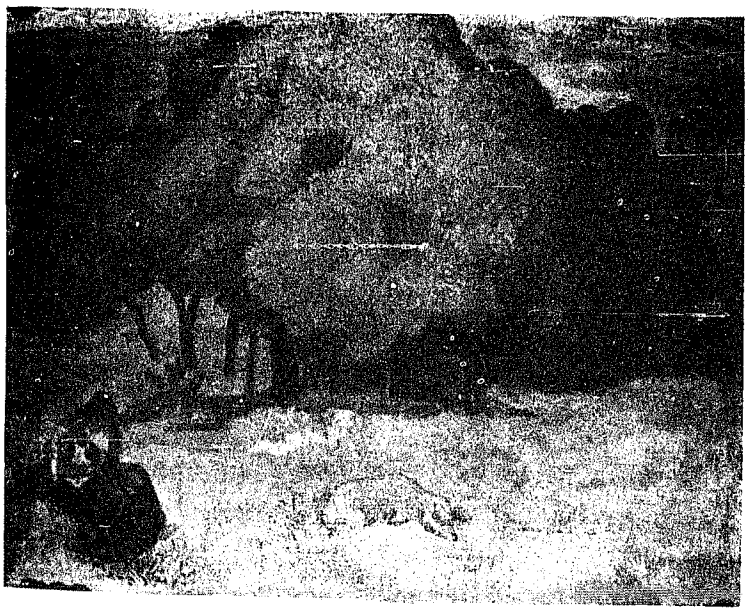
25. Roussel, Réunion de dames.

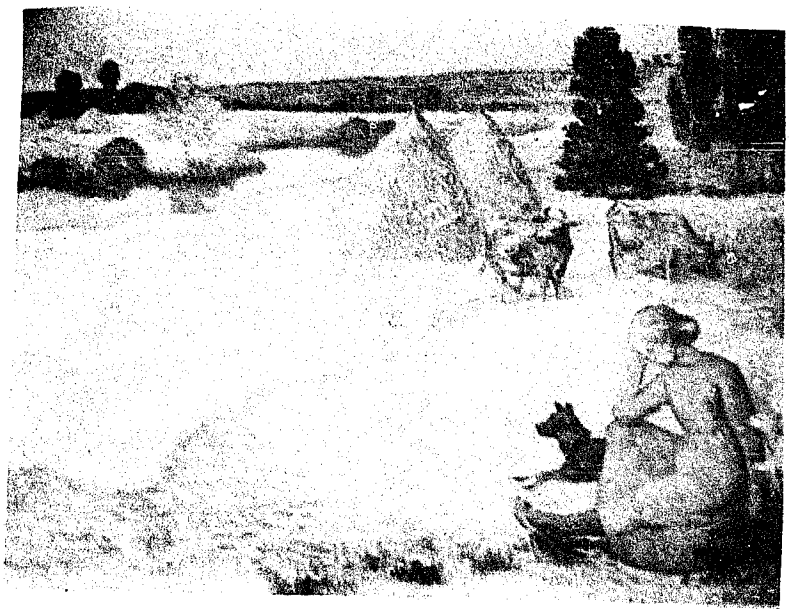
26. Roussel, Femmes dans la campagne, pastel

27. Roussel, Les Baigneuses. 28. Roussel, Venus et l'Amour au bord de la mer.

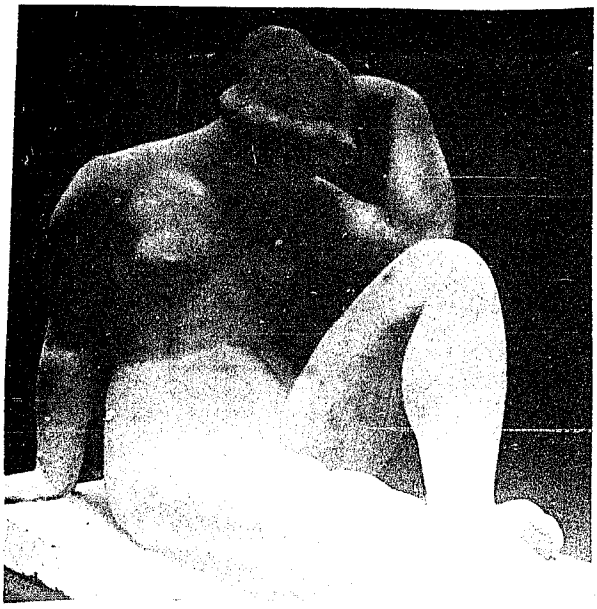


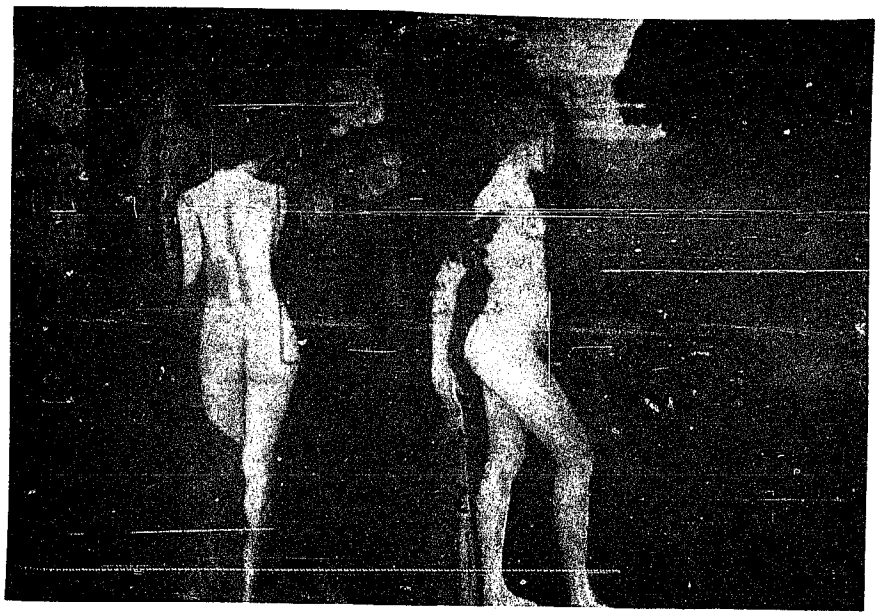
29. Roussel, L'Enlèvement des filles de Leucippe. 30. Puvis, L'Enfant prodigue.





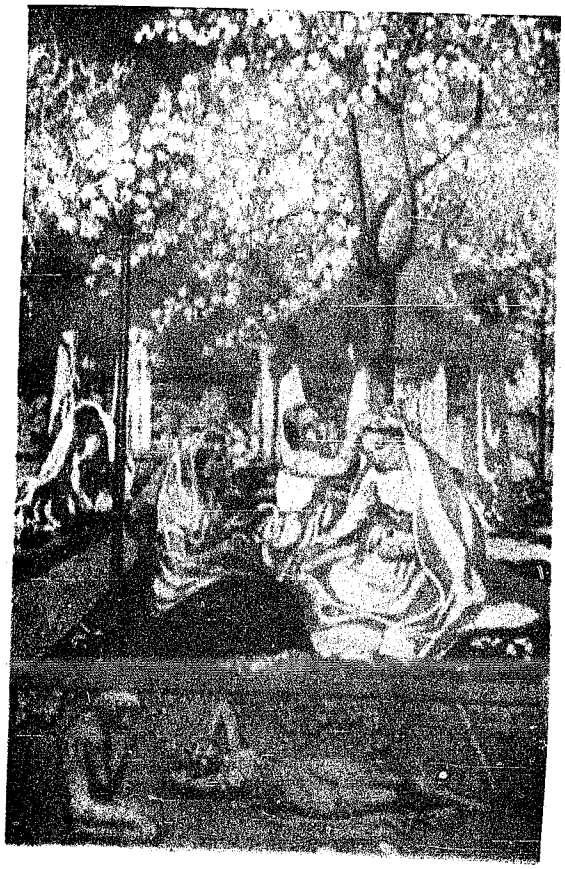
31. Maillol, L'Enfant prodigue. 32. Maillol, Gardeuse des vaches.

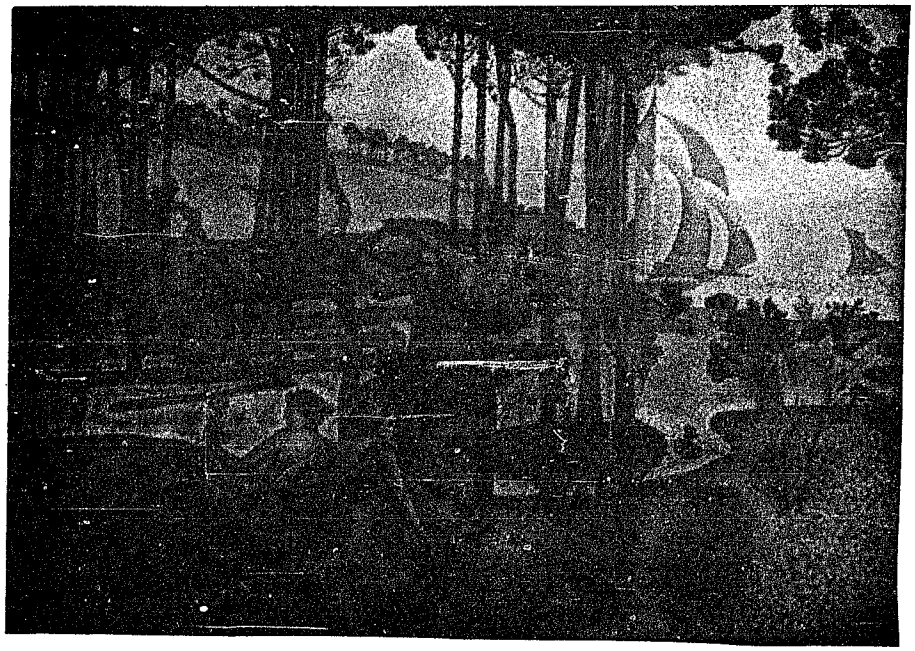




33. Maillol, La Méditerranée, plaster. 34. Maillol, Deux baigneuses.

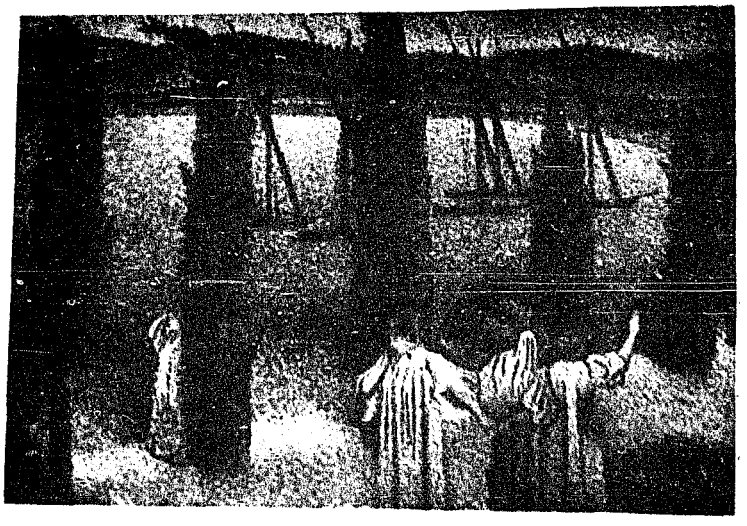
35. Maillol, Le Jardin enchanté, tapestry.
36. Maillol, Musique pour la princesse qui s'ennuie.



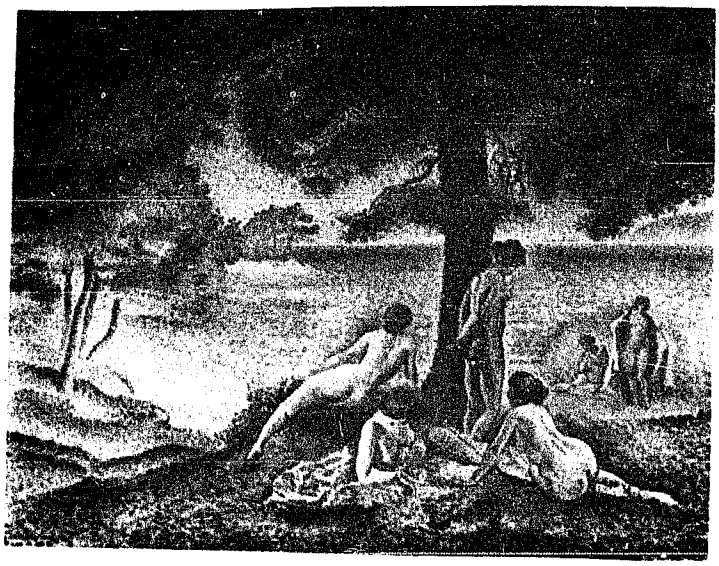


37. Denis, L'Eternel printemps, decorative panel.
38. Henri-Edmond Cross, L'Air du soir.

39. Puvis, Doux Pays. 40. Cross, La Pointe de Galère.

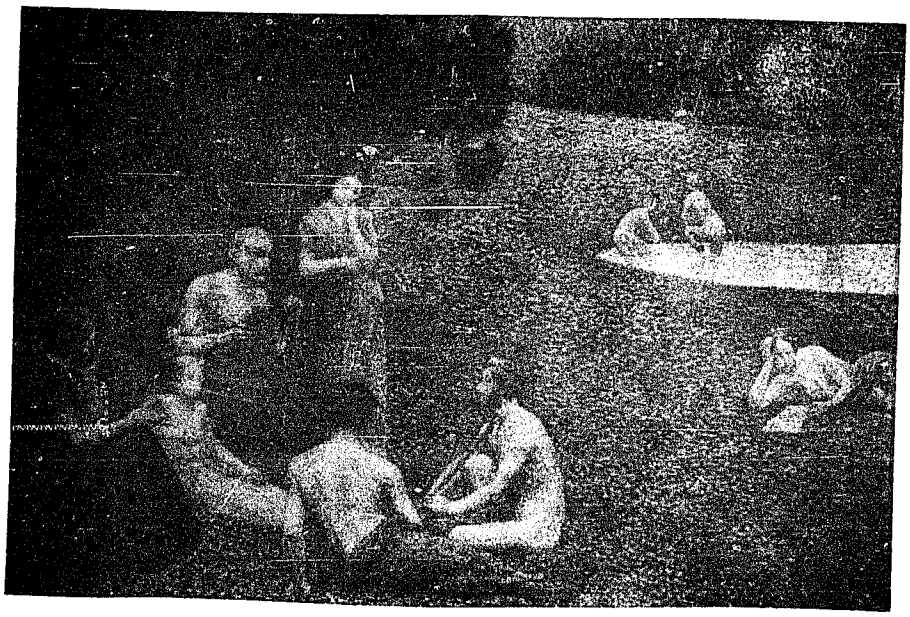


41. Denis, Illustration, Voyage d'Urien. 42. Cross, Nocturne.

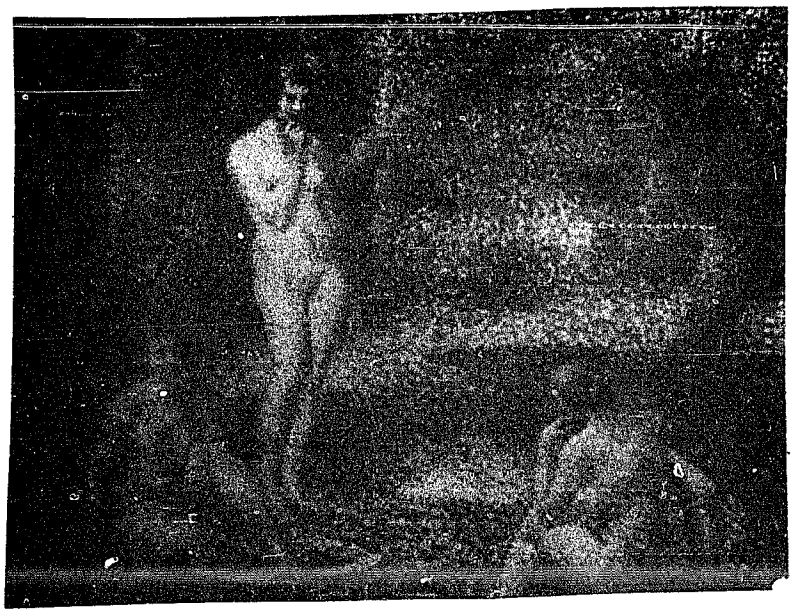


43. Signac, Au Temps d'harmonie, study. 44. Cross, La Plage ombragée.

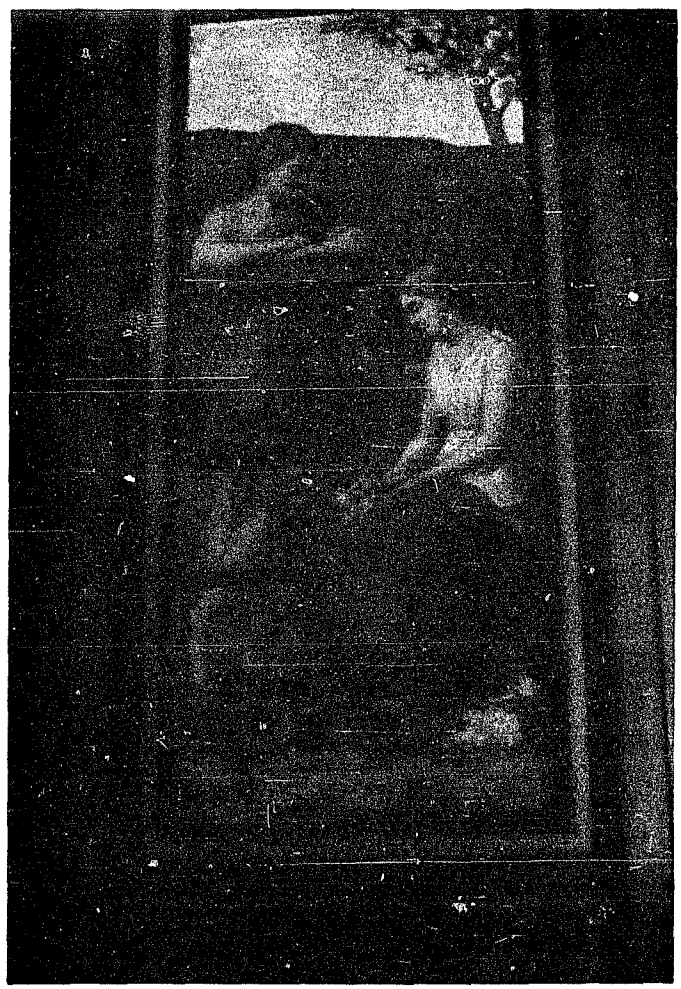
45. Theo van Rysselberghe, L'Heure embrasée. 46. Cross, Bords méditerranéens.



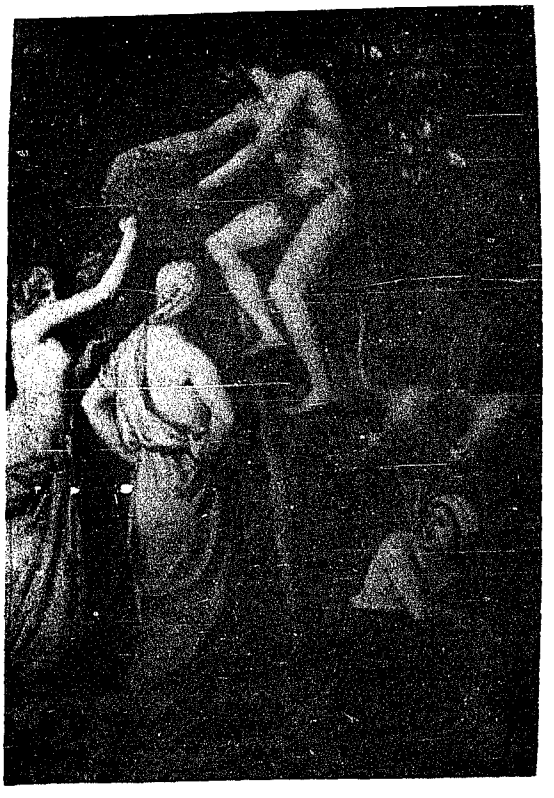
47. Van Rysselberghe, La Plage à St. Clair. 48. Hippolyte Petitjean, En Arcadie.



49. Petitjean, Au bord de l'eau. 50. Petitjean, Les Baigneuses.

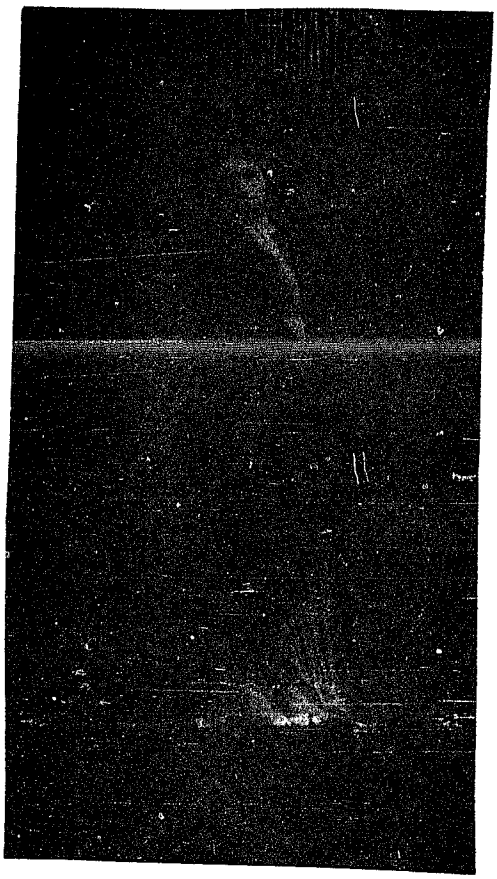


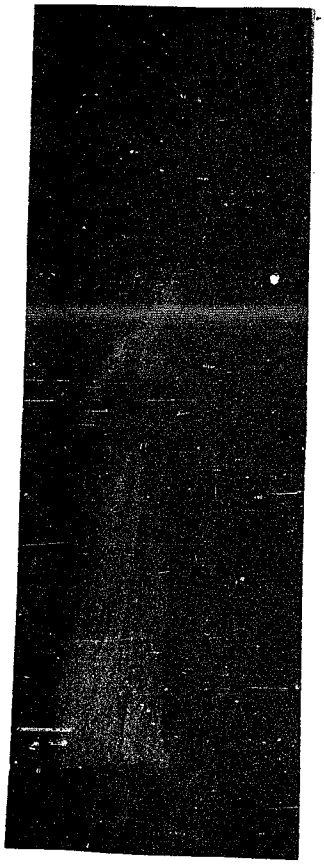
51. Petitjean, drawing. 52. Alexandre Séon, decorative panel (La Cour).



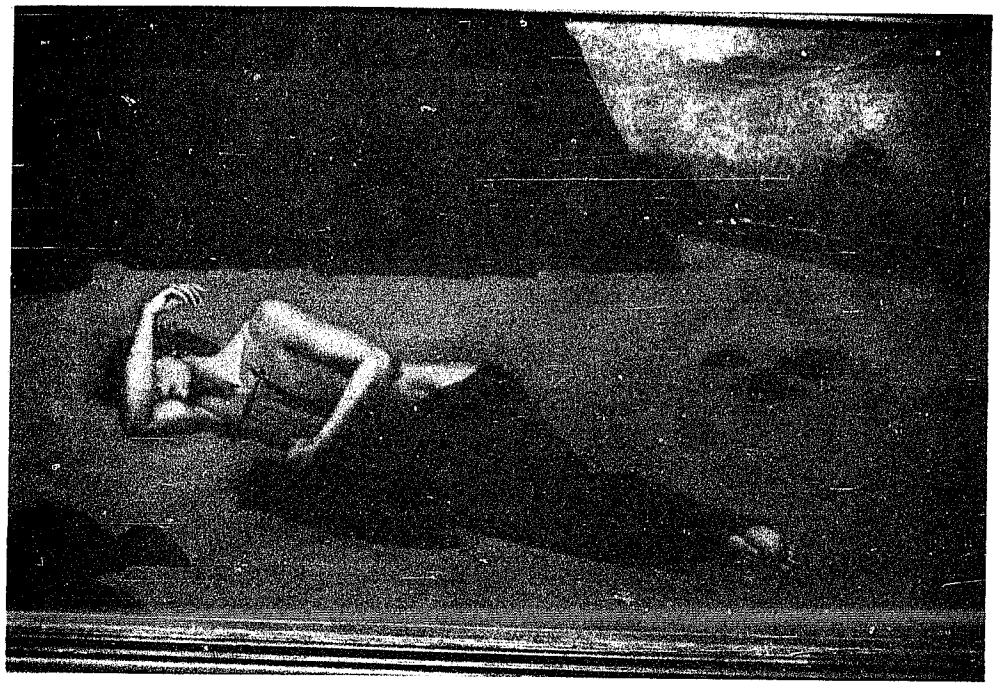
53. Seon, decorative panel (La vie familiale).
54. Puvis, The Wine Press, sketch for Ave Picardia Nutrix.

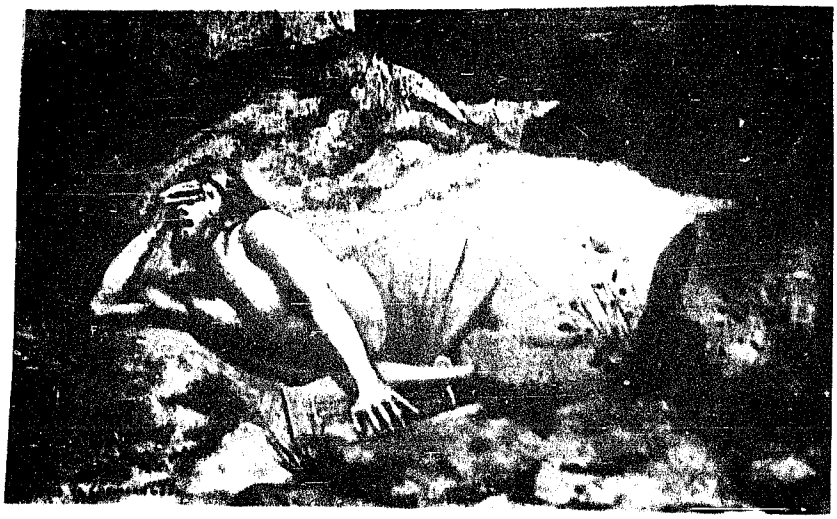
55. Séon, Désespoir de la chimère. 56. Seón, La Fée, colored pencil.



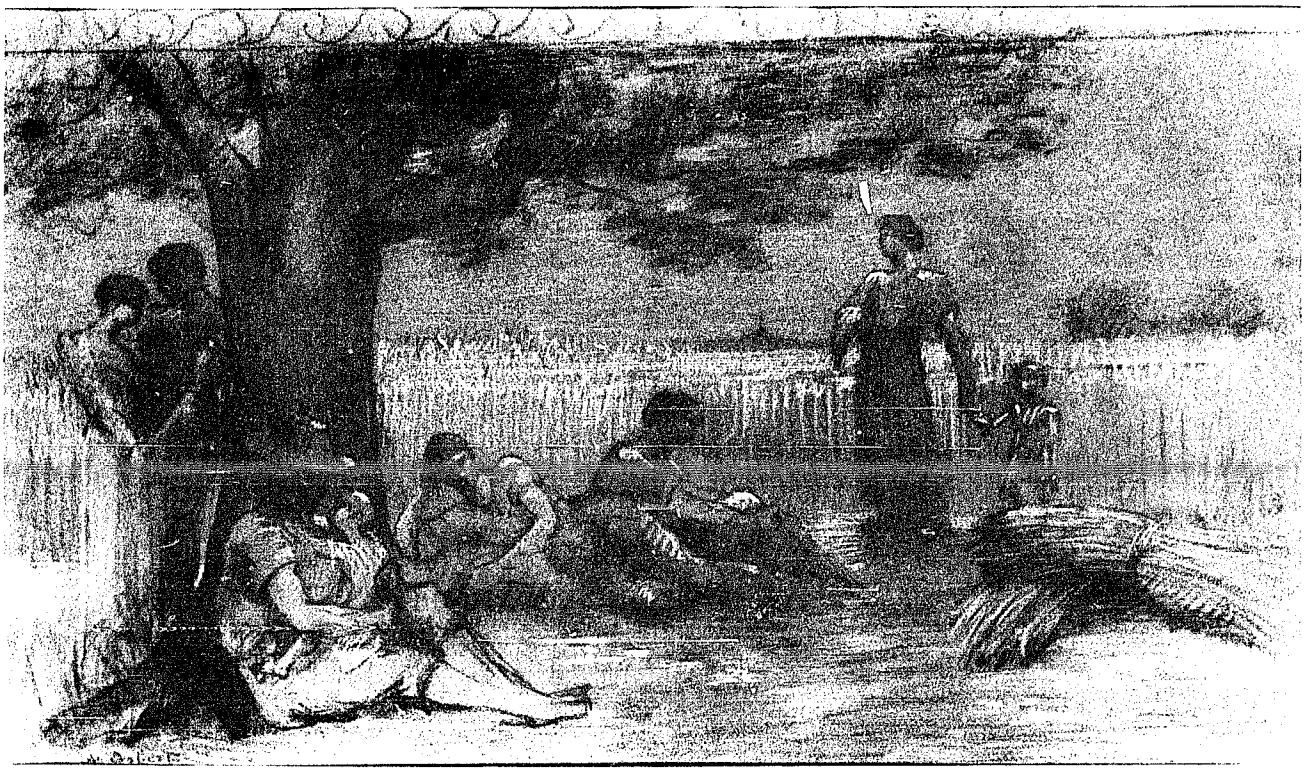


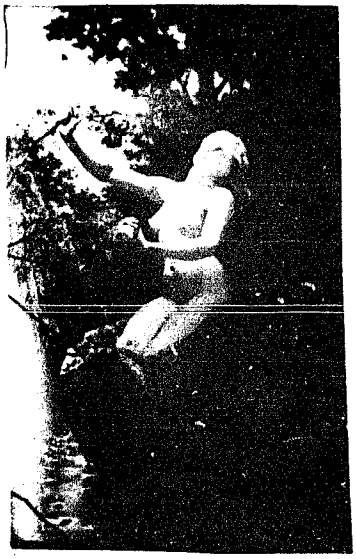
57. Séon, Rêverie. 58. Séon, Une Passante.



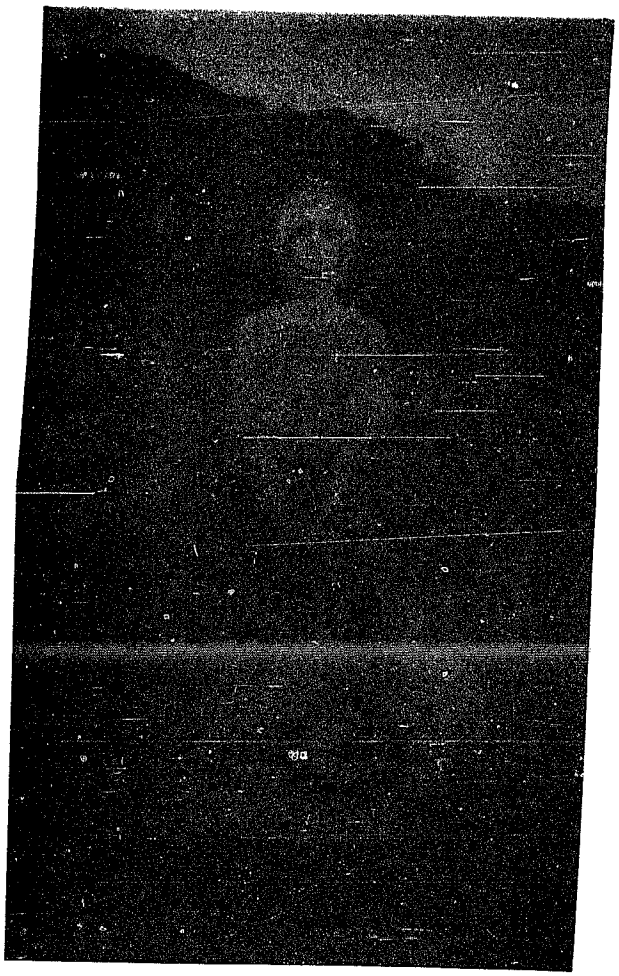


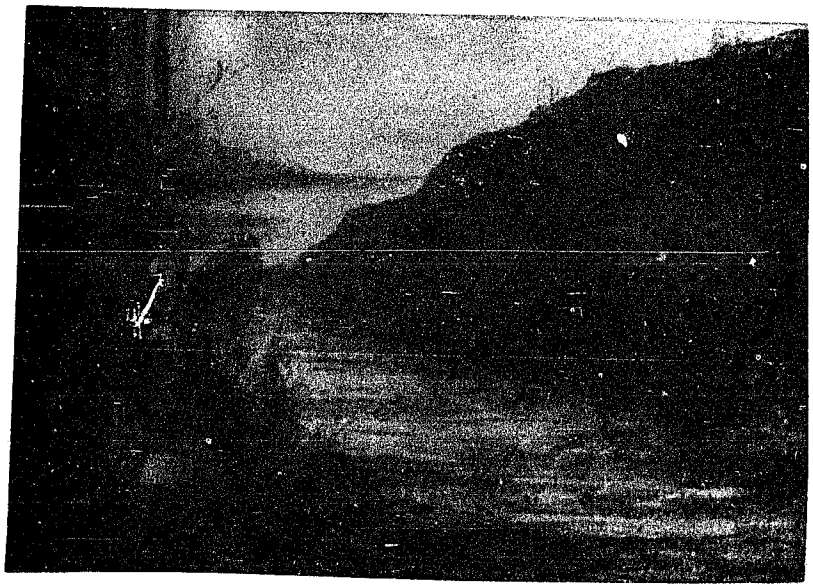
59. Séon, Lamentation d'Orphée. 60. Puvis, Orphée.



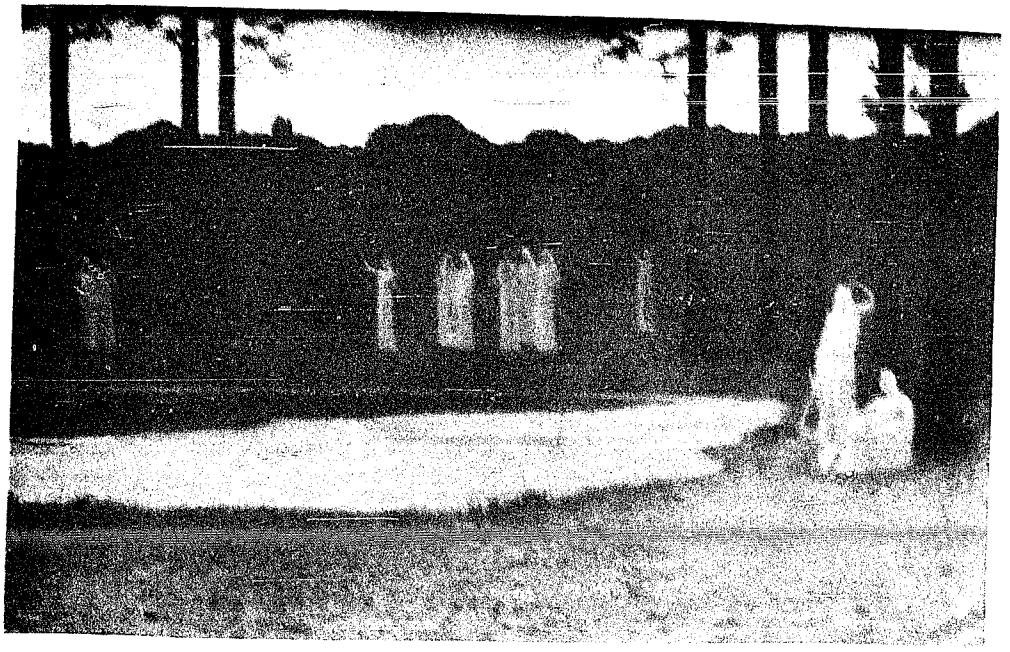


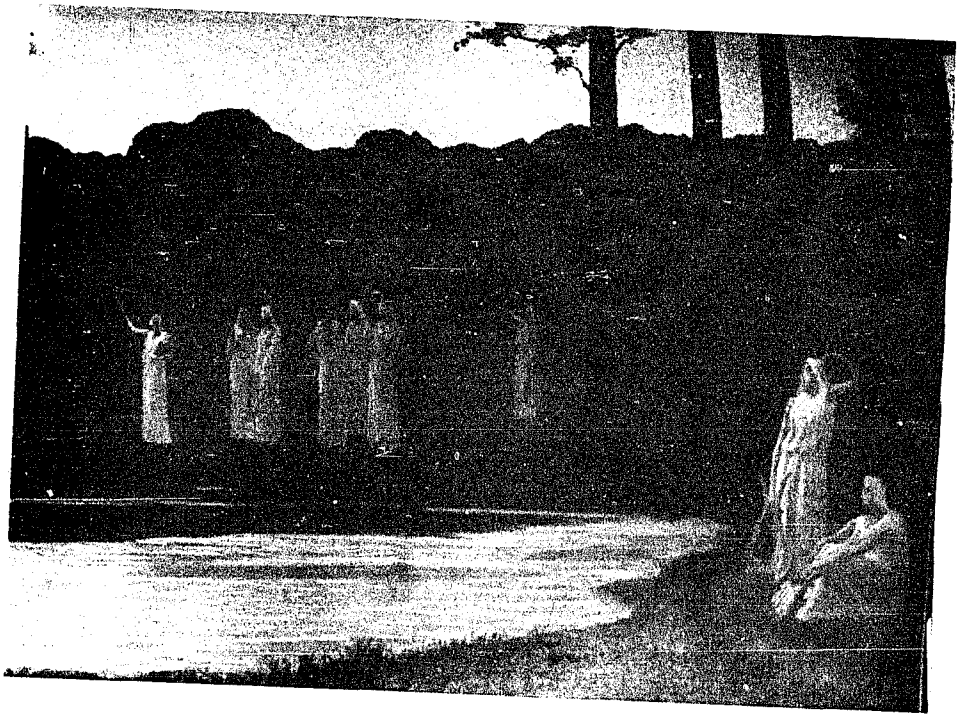
61. Alphonse Osbert, L'Eté, drawing. 62. Osbert, Harmonie d'automne.



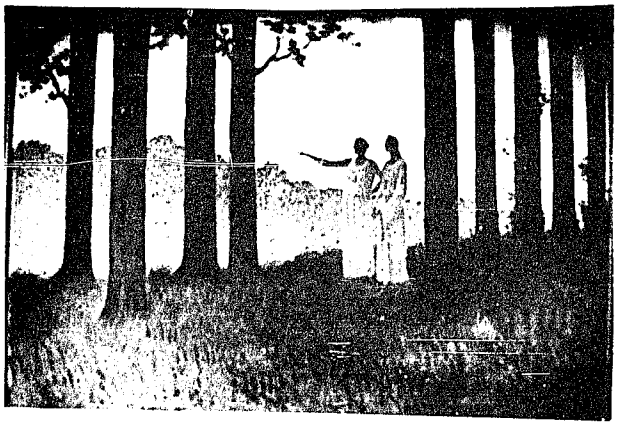


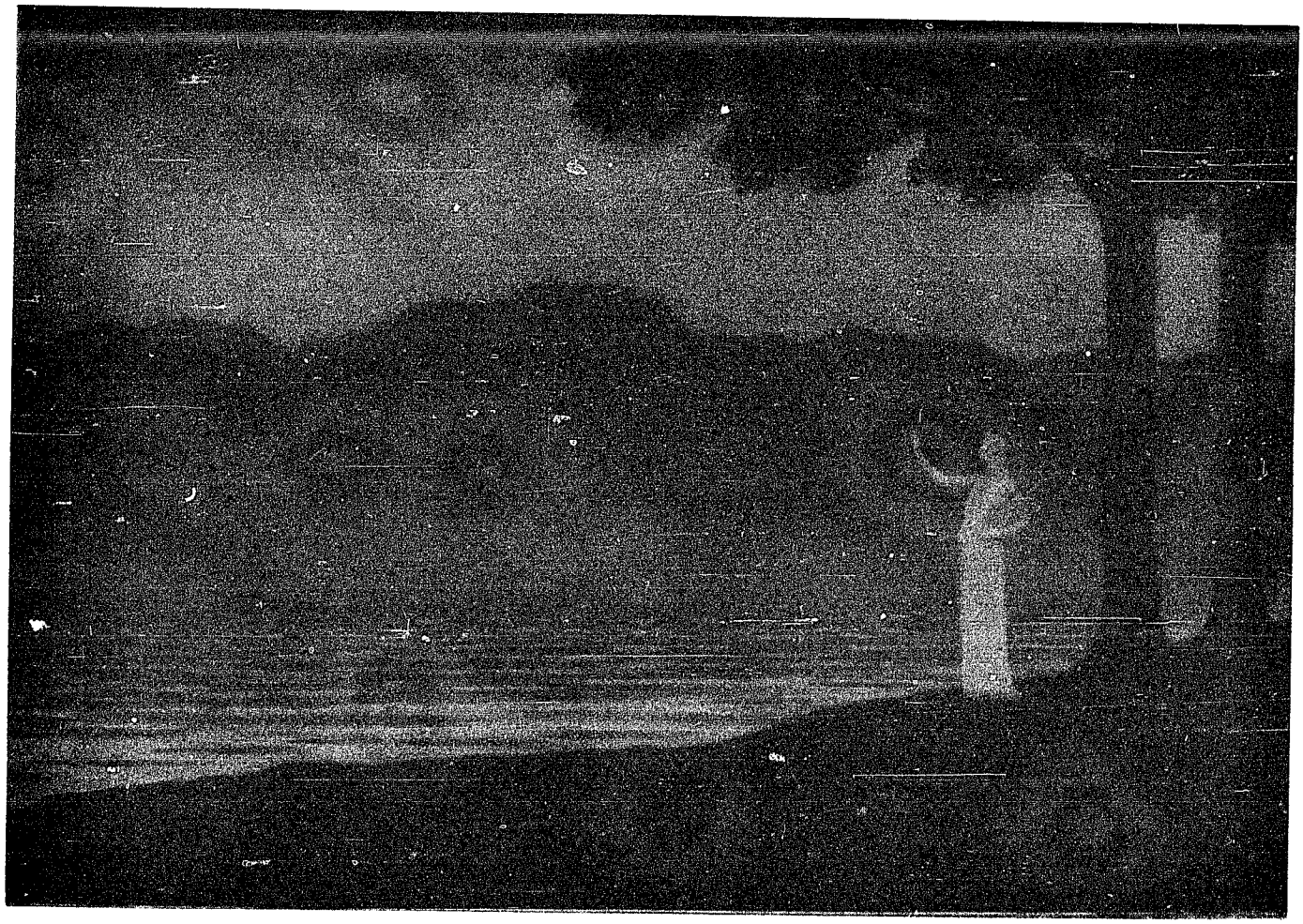
63. Osbert, Vision. 64. Gustave Moreau, Le Soir et la douleur, watercolor.



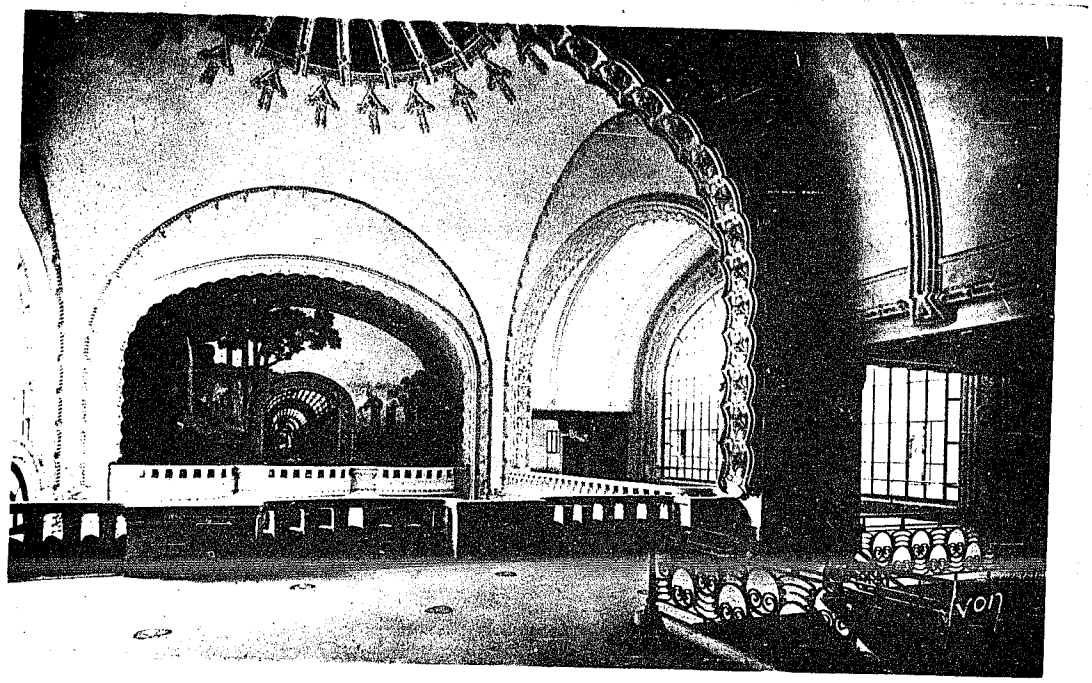


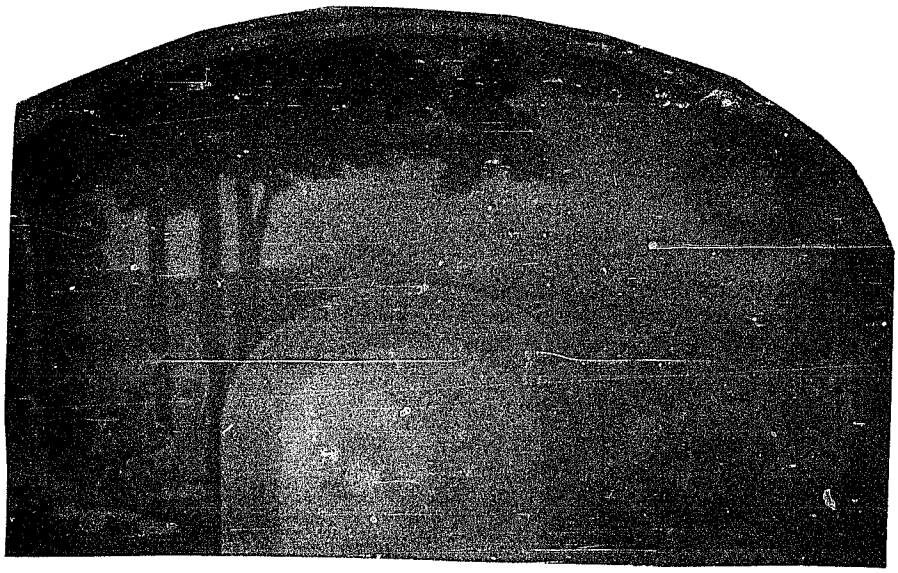
65. Osbert, Chants de la nuit. 66. Chants de la nuit, detail.



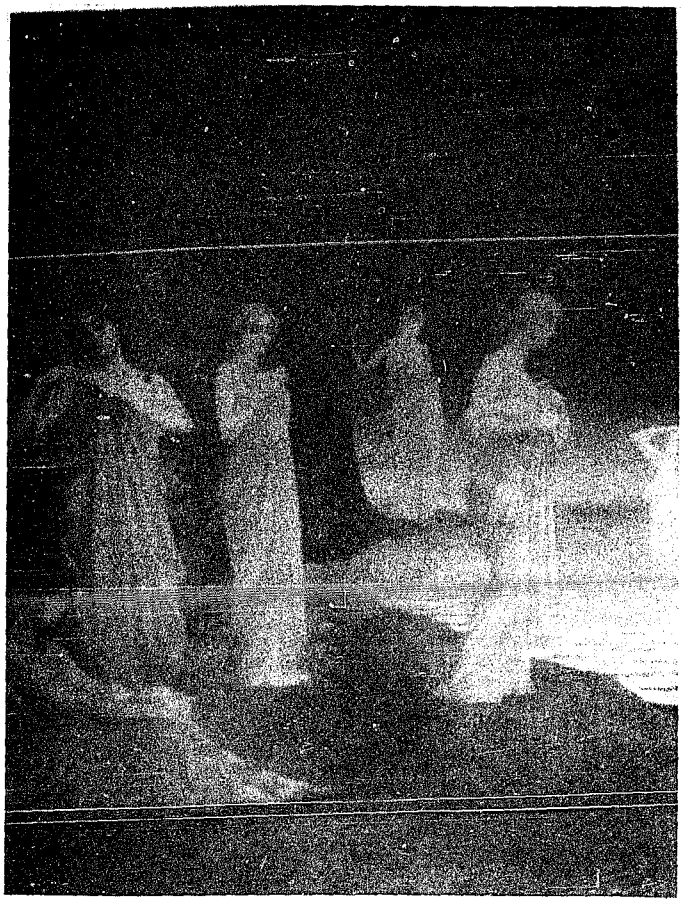


67. Osbert, Mystère dans la nuit. 68. Osbert, Solitude.





69. Le Hall du Grand Etablissement Thermal. 70. Osbert, La Source, panel.



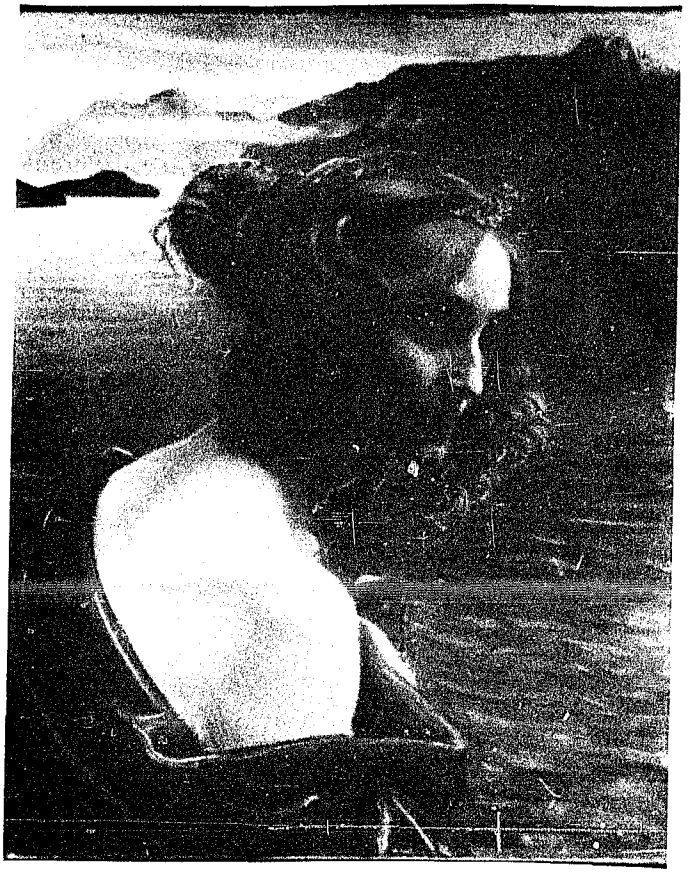
71. Osbert, Le Bain, detail, decorative panel. 72. Osbert, Le Bain, detail.

73. Armand Point, La Sirène. 74. Point, Caresse de soleil.

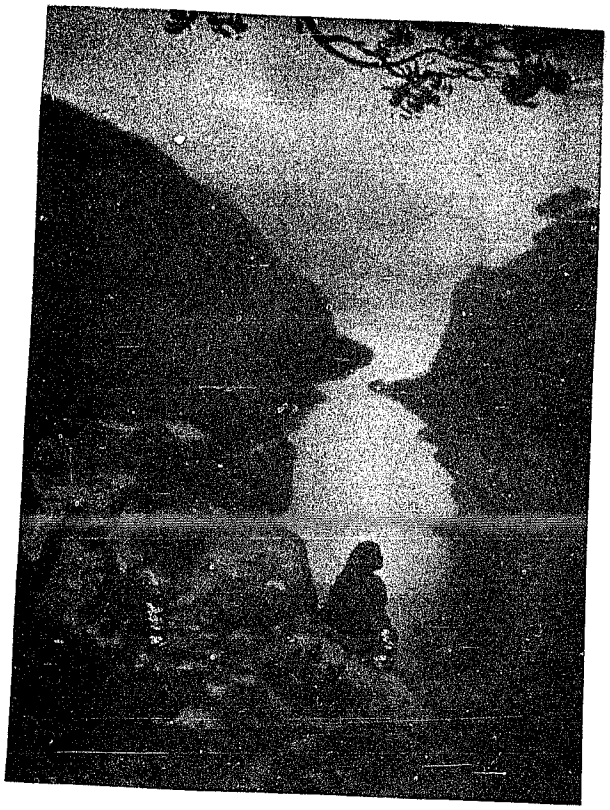
75. Point, Portrait de Madame Berthelot. 76. Rossetti, Water willow.

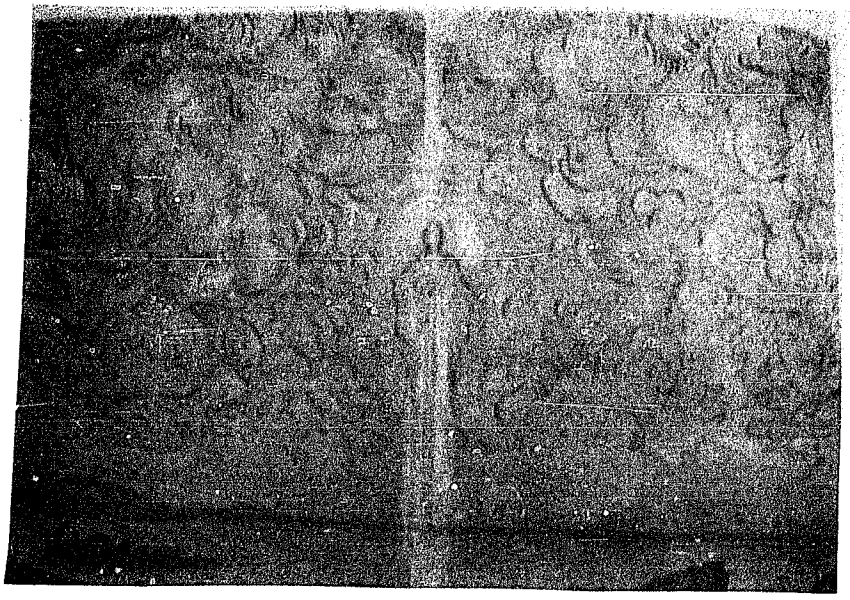
77. Point, Princesse à la licorne. 78. Gustave Moreau, Les Licornes, water-color, tempera and oil.

79. Point, L'Eternelle chimère. 80. Edward Burne-Jones, The King's Daughter.

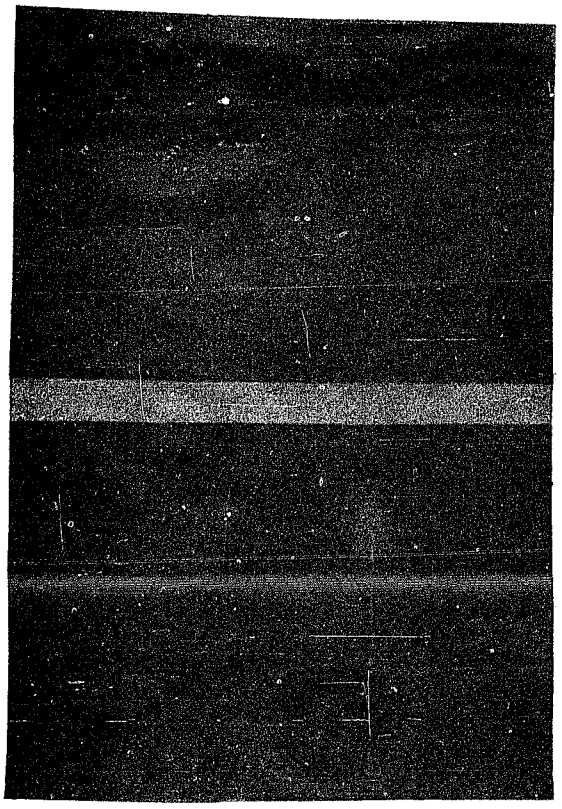


81. Point, Portrait de Madame Bertholet, pastel. 82. Maurice Chabas, Méditation.



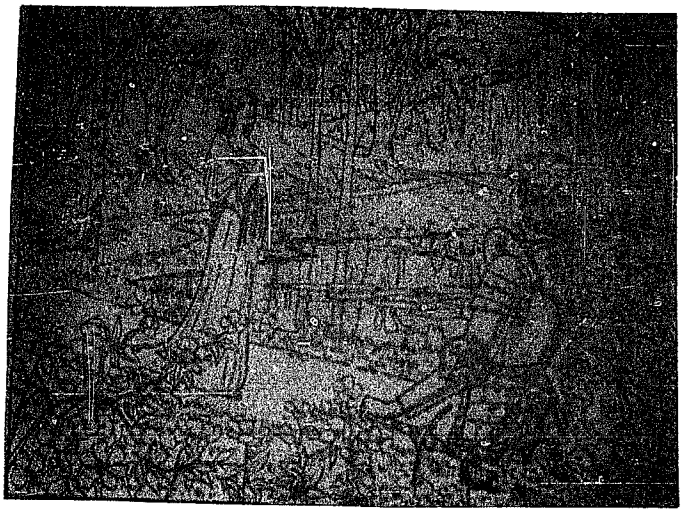


83. Chabas, Le Golfe. 84. Chabas, Paysage mystique.



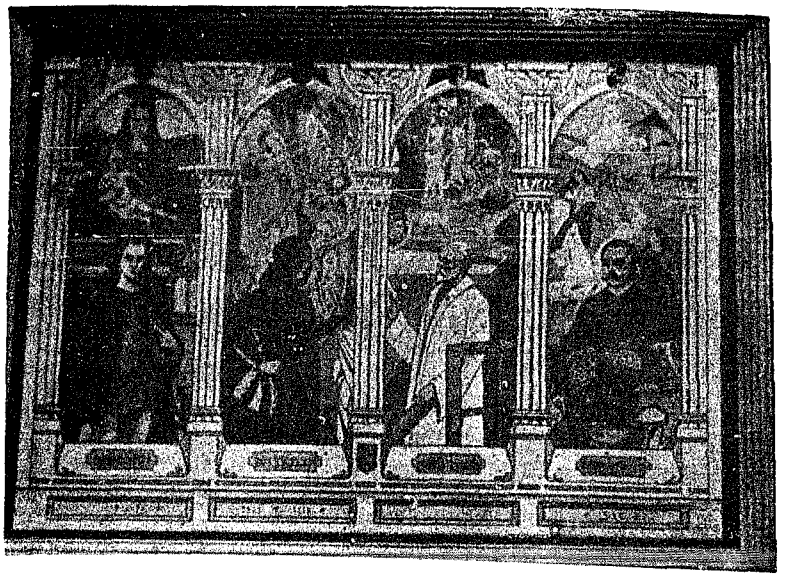
85. Chabas, visionary painting, untitled. 86. Eugene Grasset, stained glass.

87. Grasset, Les Femmes musiciennes.
88. Grasset, La Belle Jardiniere, calendar page.



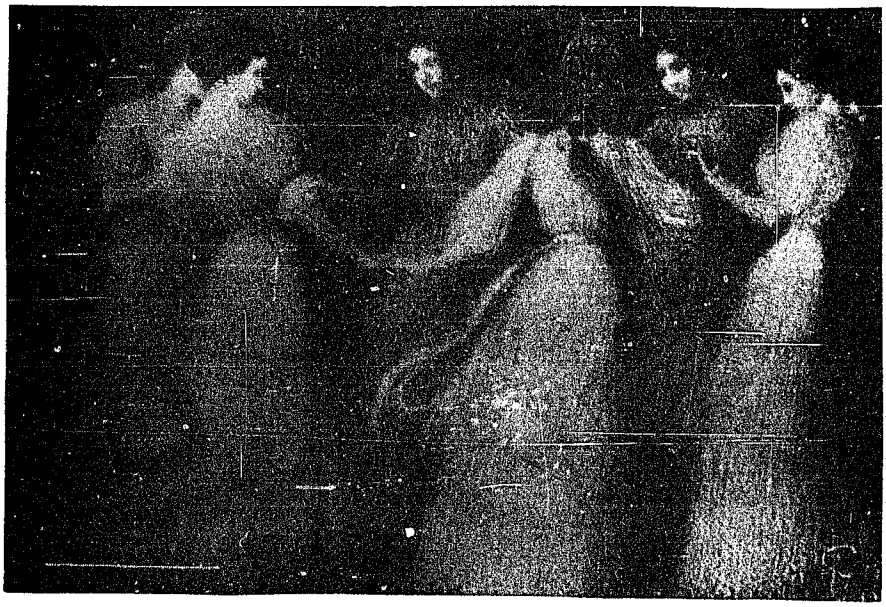
89. Grasset, Printemps.
90. Andhré des Gachons, illustration, Légende par Gustave Soulier, Sur le chemin de la pitié, watercolor.

91. des Gachons, illustration for le Prince naïf.
92. des Gachons, illustration for le Prince naïf.



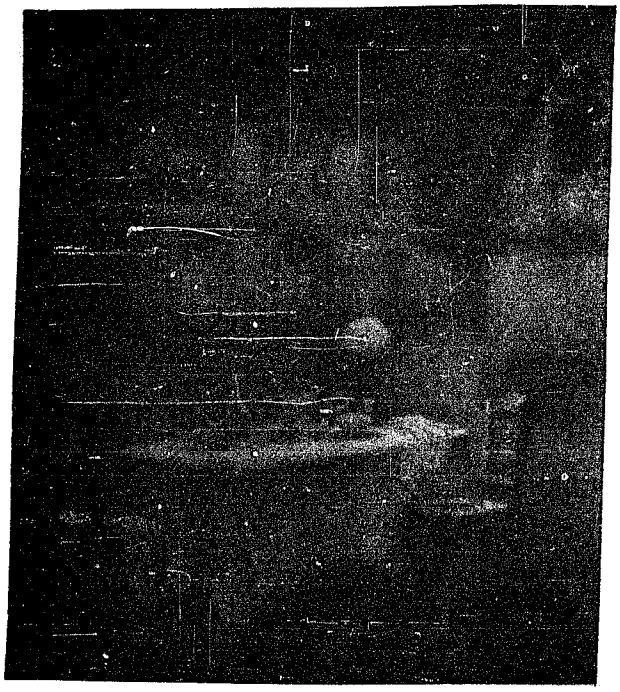
93. des Gachons, Mes maîtres. 94. Henri Le Sidaner, La Table d'automne.

95. Le Sidaner, Promenade des orphelines. 96. Le Sidaner, Le Dimanche.

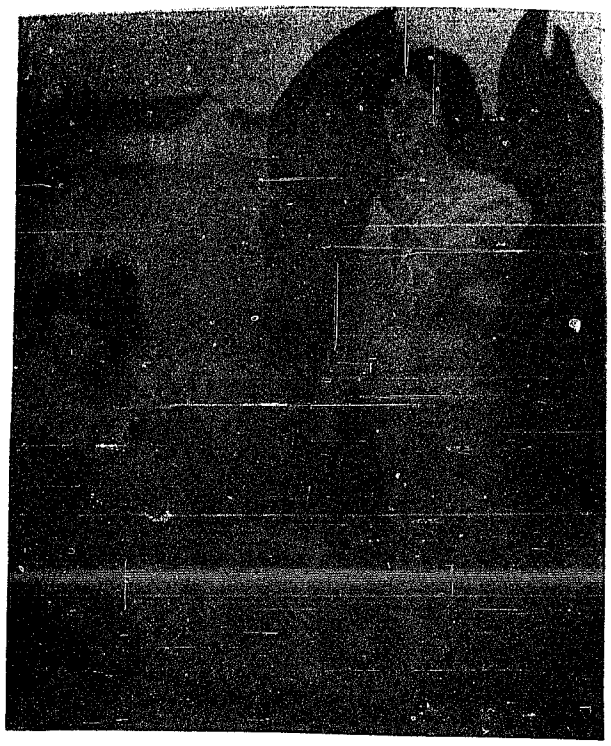


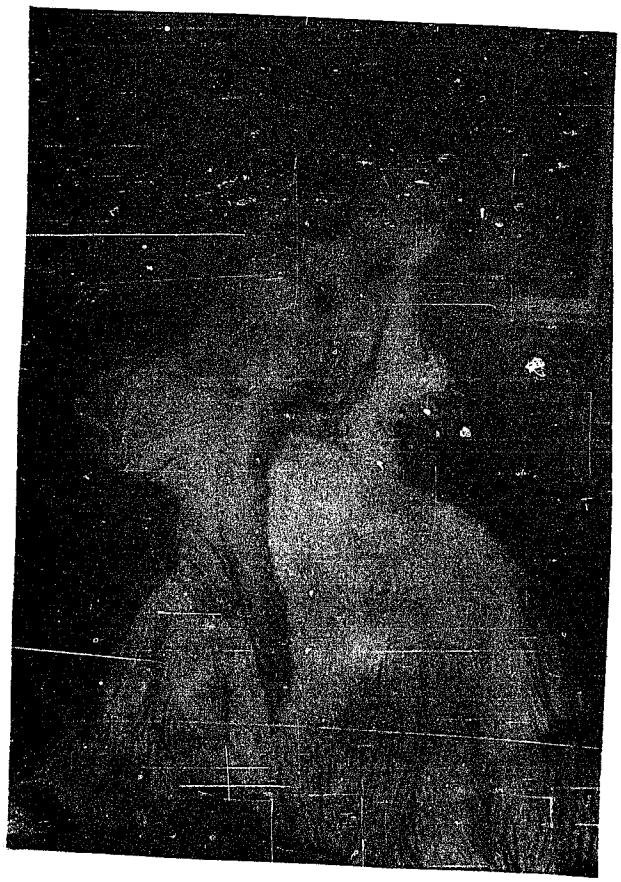
97. Le Sidaner, Le Dimanche, detail. 98. Le Sidaner, La Ronde.

99. Janmot, Rayons de Soleil. 100. Fantin-Latour, Evocation d'Erda, lithograph.



101. Maisons sur le canal. 102. Le Sidaner, La Table.

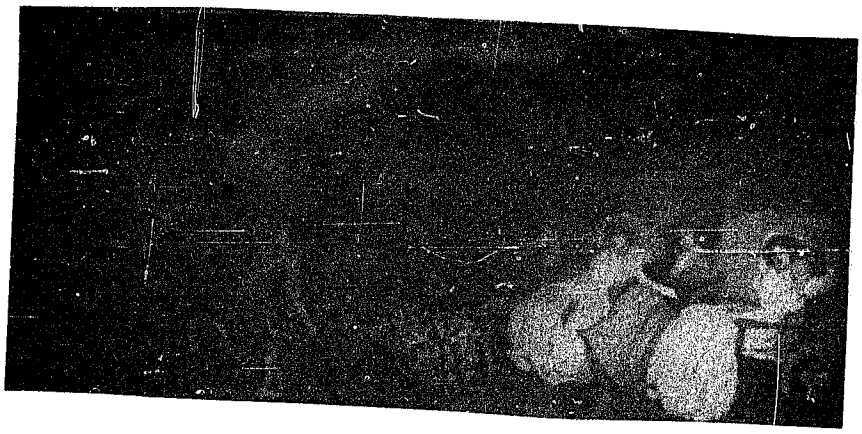




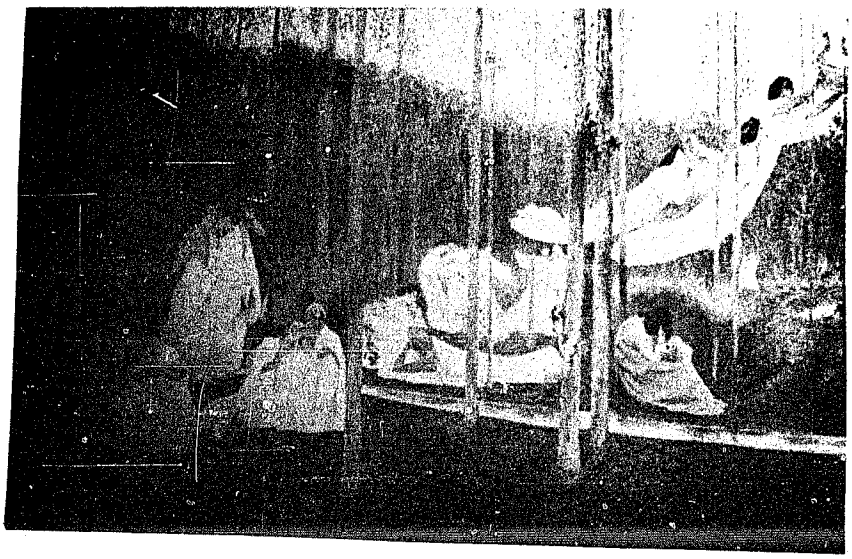
103. Edmond Aman-Jean, Les Venétiennes. 104. Aman-Jean, Portrait d'une jeune fille (Miss Hella Carmichael)

105. Aman-Jean, Jeune fille au paon. 106. Aman-Jean, Le Robe rose, pastel.

107. Aman-Jean, Sous les fleurs, color lithograph.
108. Aman-Jean, Dejeuner sur l'herbe.

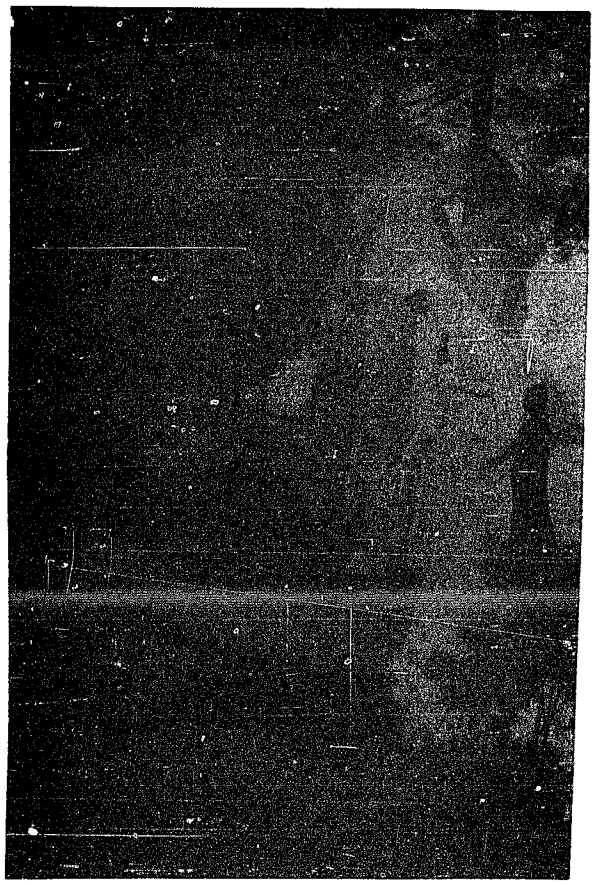


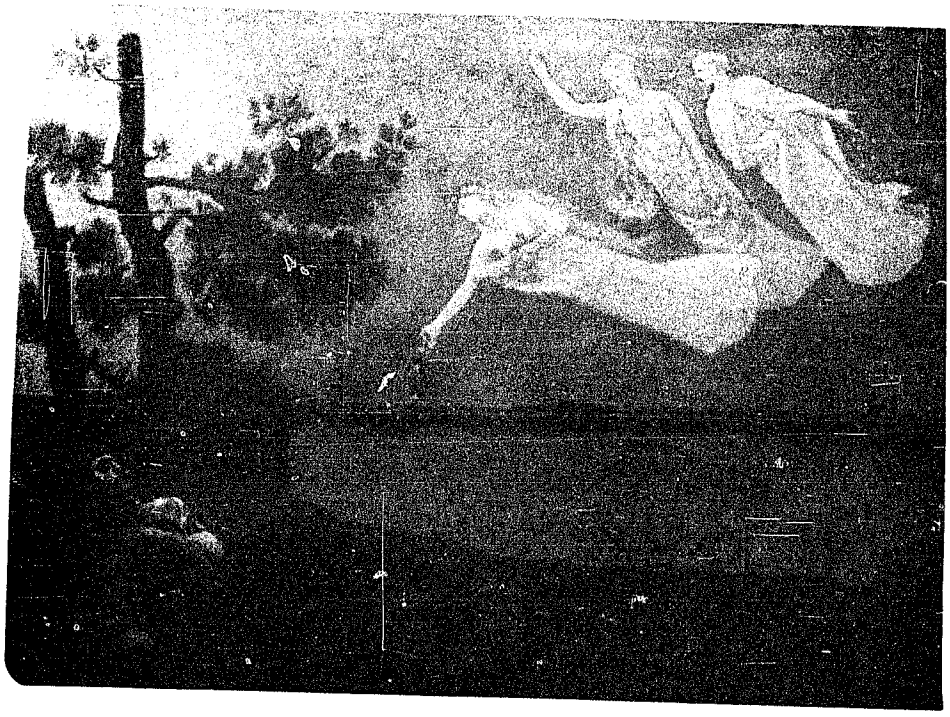
109. Aman-Jean, La Comédie. 110. Aman-Jean, La Confidance.



111. Henri Martin, Sérénité. 112. Martin, L'Homme entre vice et vertue.

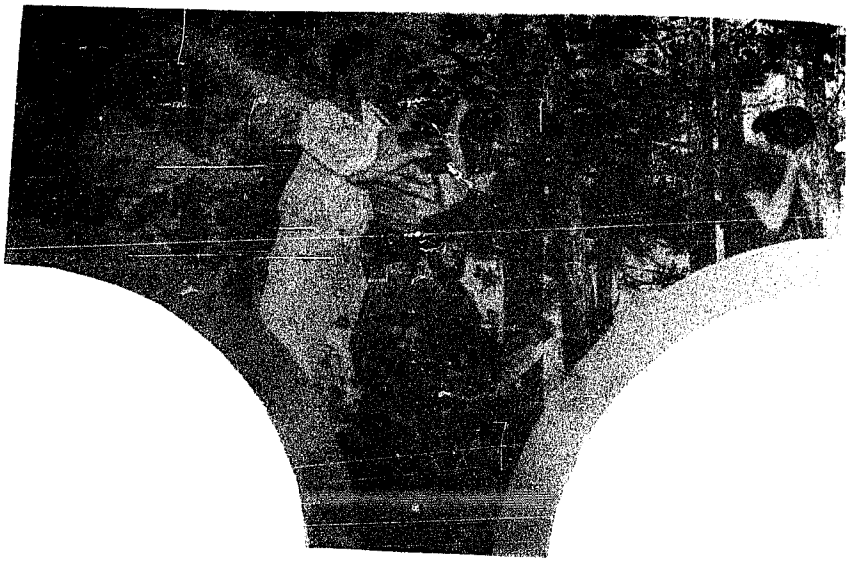
113. Martin, A chacun sa chimère. 114. Martin, Les Troubadours.



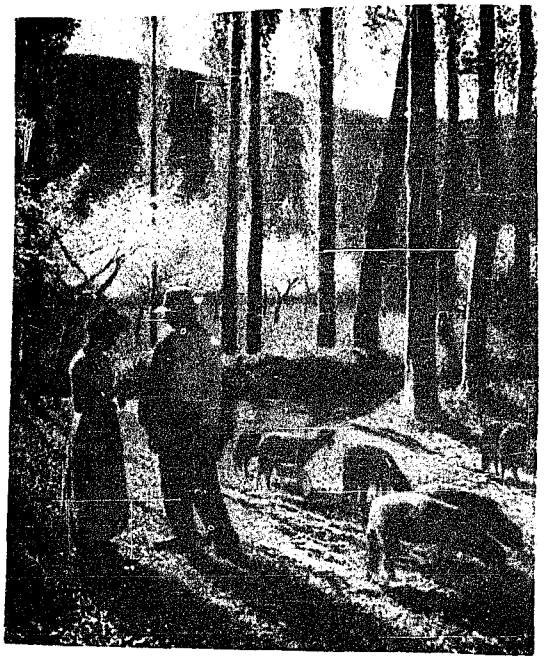


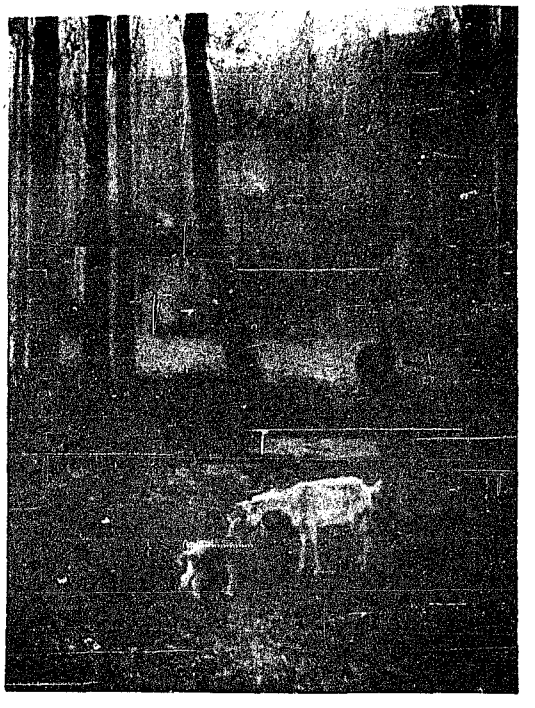
115. Martin, Clemence Isaure donnant le charte. 116. Puvis, Le Rêve.

117. Martin, Méditation.



118. Martin, La Peinture, decorative painting.
119. Martin, La Sculpture, decorative painting.

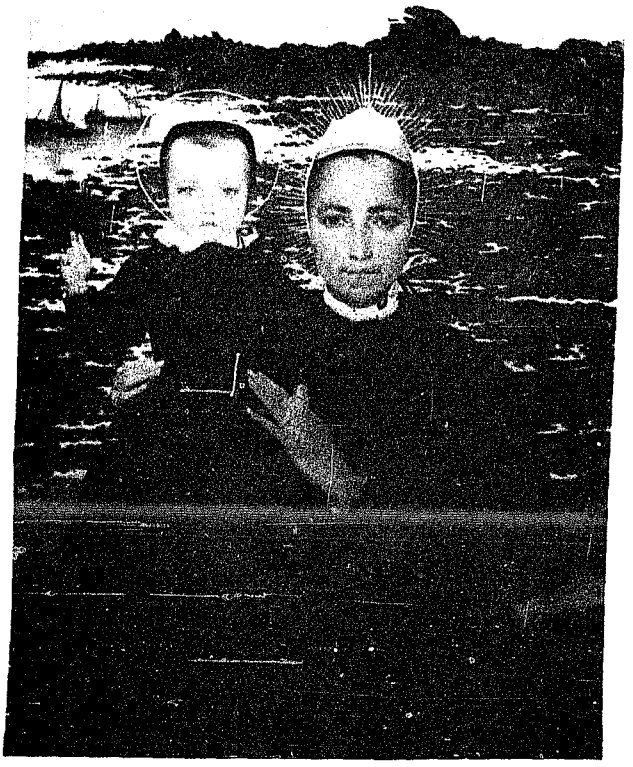




120. Martin, Les Faucheurs (les Moissoneurs), central panel of triptych.
121. Martin, Les Faucheurs, left panel of triptych.
122. Martin, Les Faucheurs, right panel of triptych.

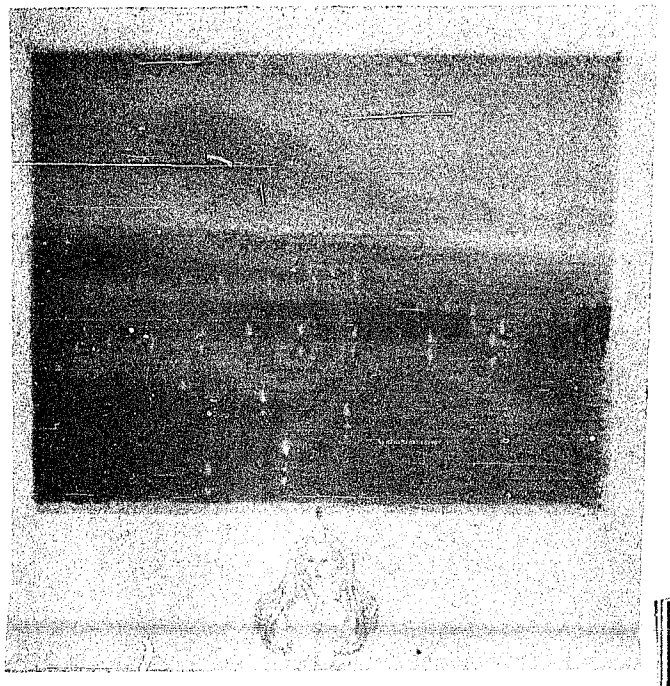
123. Martin, Crépuscule, decorative painting. 124. Martin, L'Etude, decorative painting.

125. Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer, Le Silence, pastel.
126. Fernand Khnopff, Le Silence, pastel. 127. Osbert, L'Enigme.

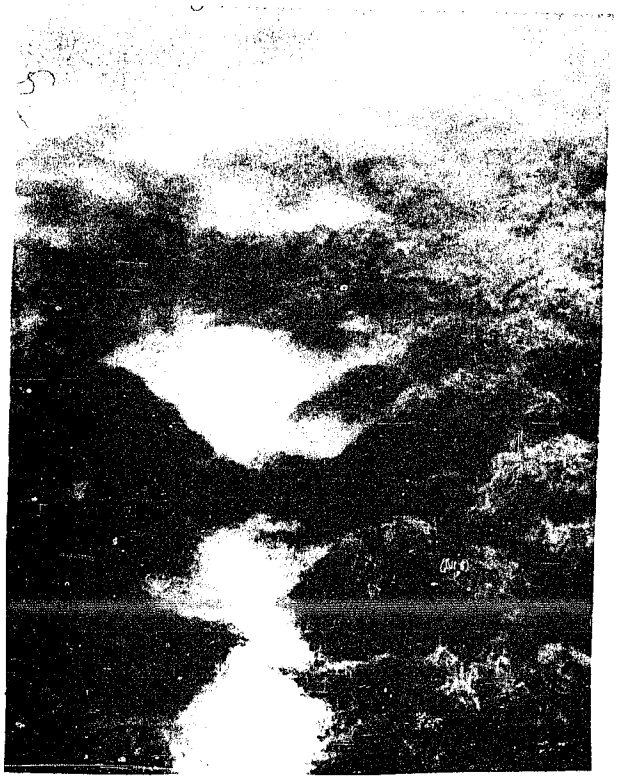


128. Lévy Dhurmer, Notre Dame de Penmarc'h. 129. Lévy-Dhurmer, Florence, pastel.

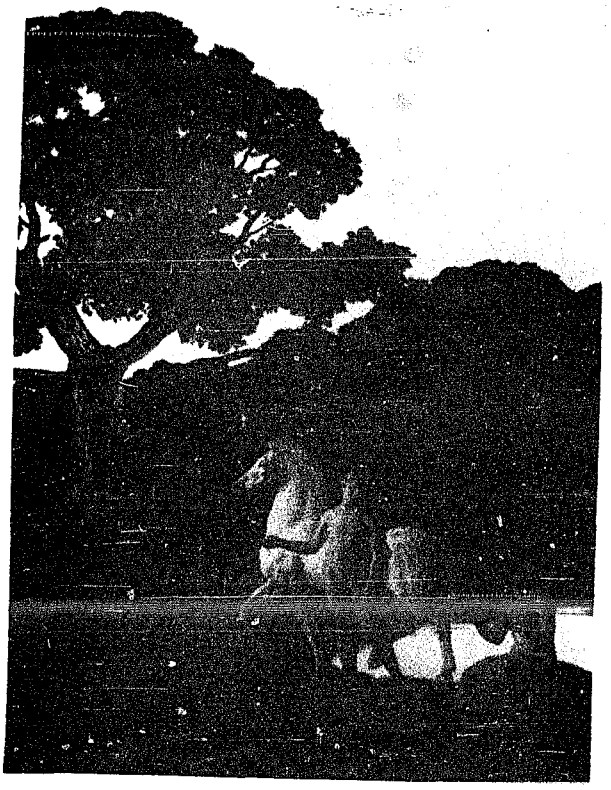
130. Lévy-Dhurmer, Portrait of Georges Rodenbach, pastel.
131. Lévy-Dhurmer, Portrait of Pierre Loti.



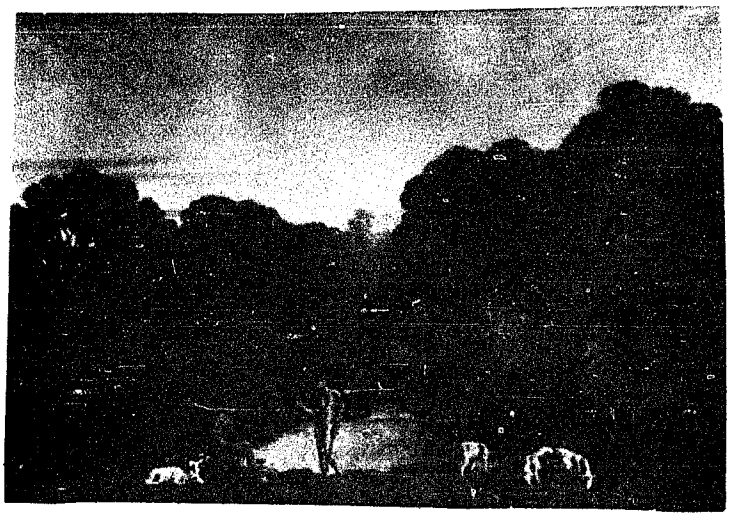
132. Charles-Marie Dulac, Le Lac bleue, lithograph.
133. Levy-Dhurmer, L'Automne, pastel.



134. Lévy-Dhurmer, Ma mère, un soir a vu la ville d'Ys, pastel.
135. Emile-Rene Ménard, La vie pastorale, decorative panel.



136. Ménard, L'Age d'Or, decorative panel. 137. Ménard, La Baie d'Ermones, pastel.

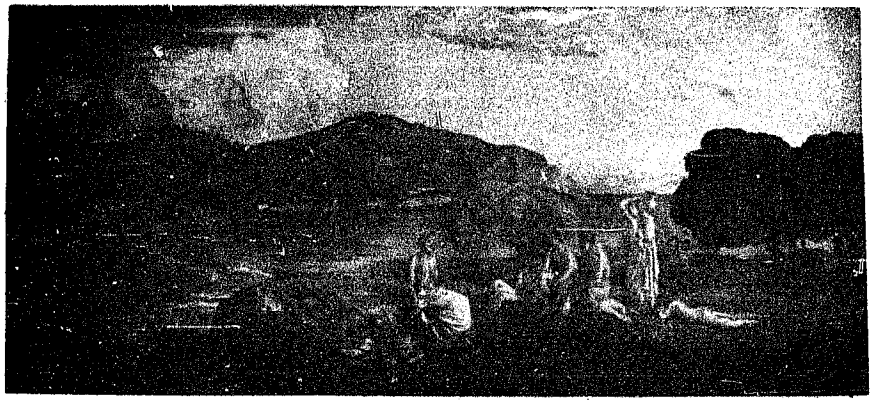


138. Ménard, Ronde de nymphs, decorative panel. 139. Ménard, Bucolique.

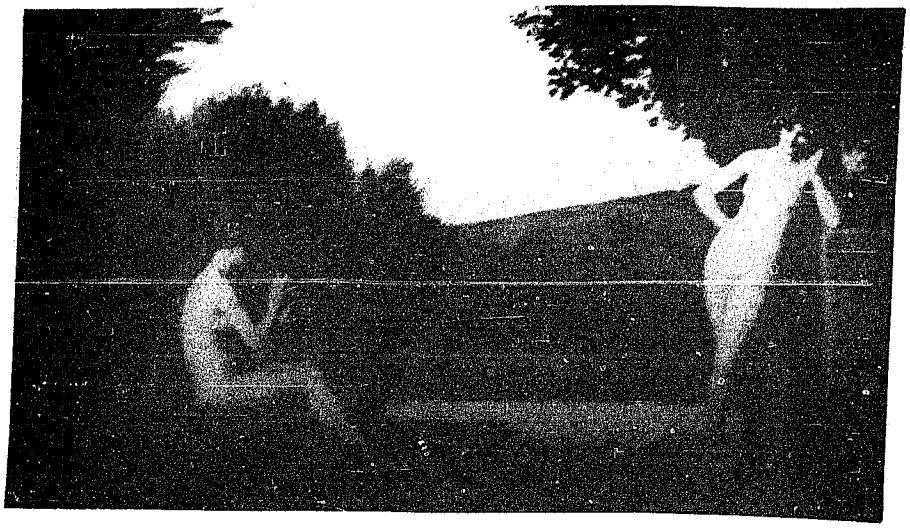
140. Ménard, Nus au crepuscule. 141. Ménard, Nymphe au crepuscule.

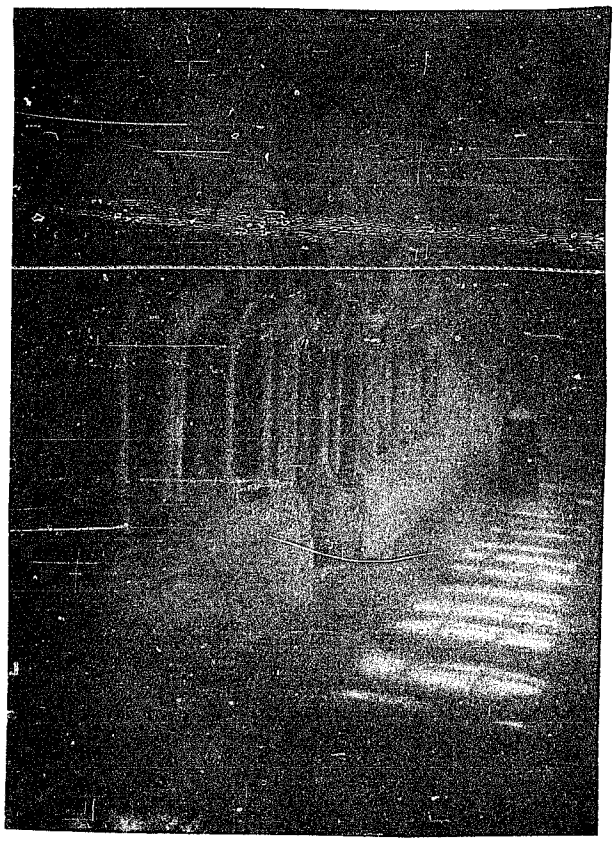
142. Ménard, Harmonie du soir. 143. Ménard, Paysage Breton.

144. Ménard, Vision antique, decorative panel, pastel sketch.
145. Ménard, Les Pyramides.



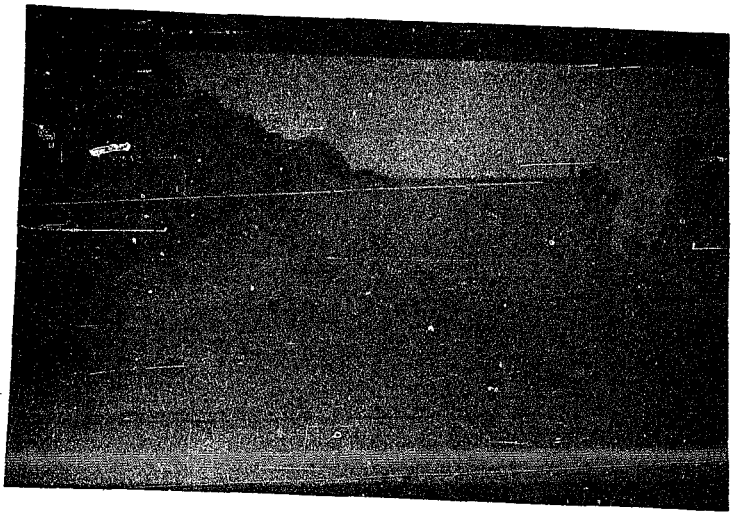
146. Ménard, Pensée antique, decorative panel.
147. Théodore Chassériau, Venus Marine.

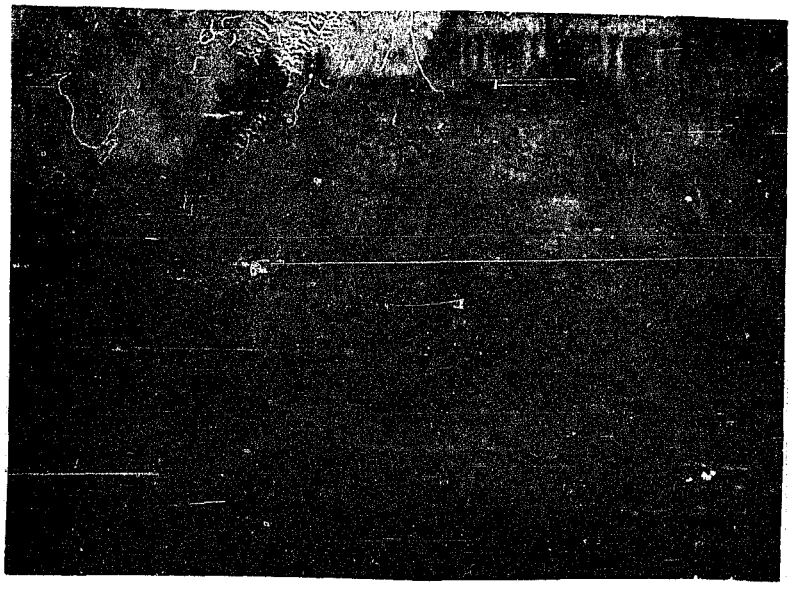




148. Jean-Jacques Henner, Eclogue. 149. Charles Marie Dulac, Le Cloître Ensoleilée.

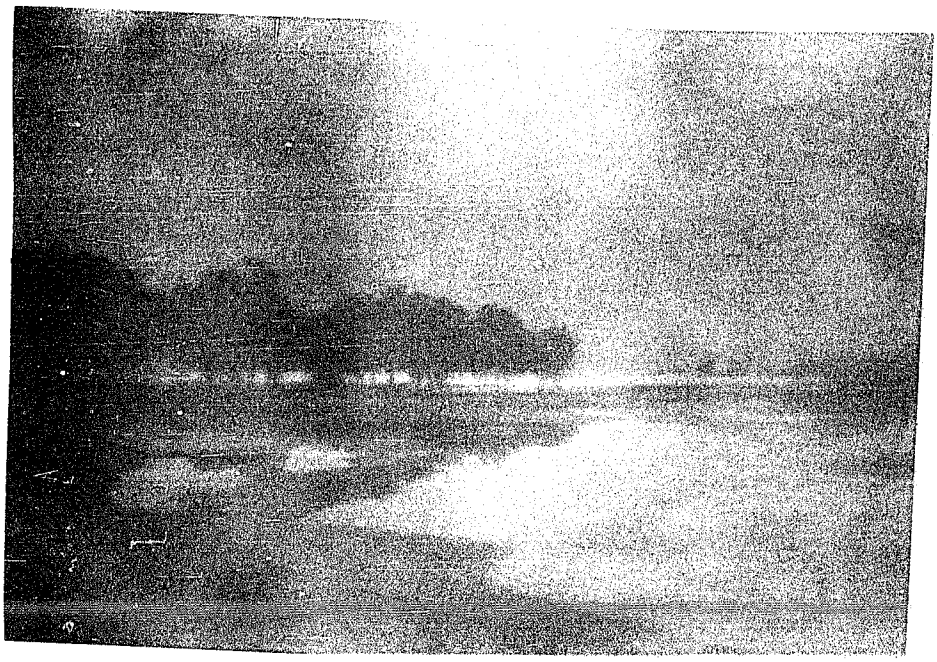
150. Dulac, Les Cygnes, lithograph from Suite de paysages.
151. Dulac, Le Canal, lithgraph from Suite de paysages.



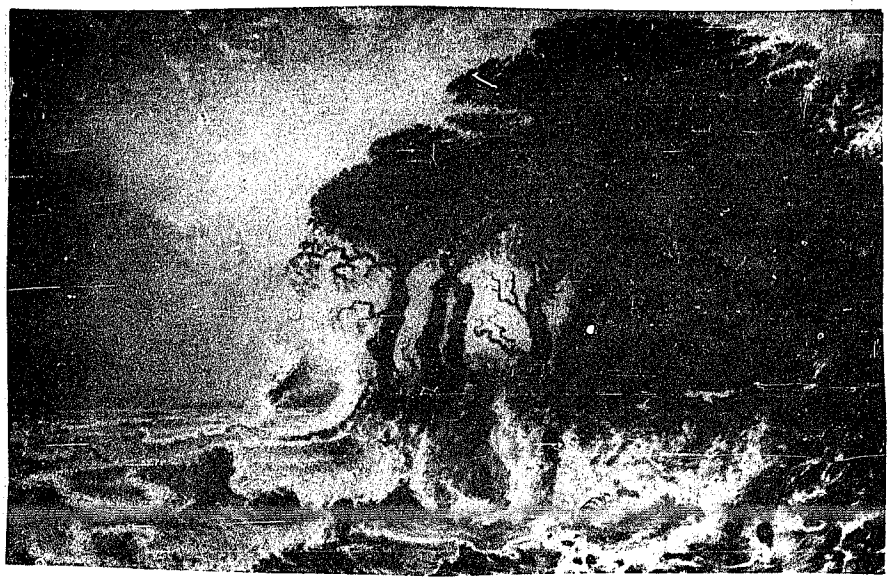


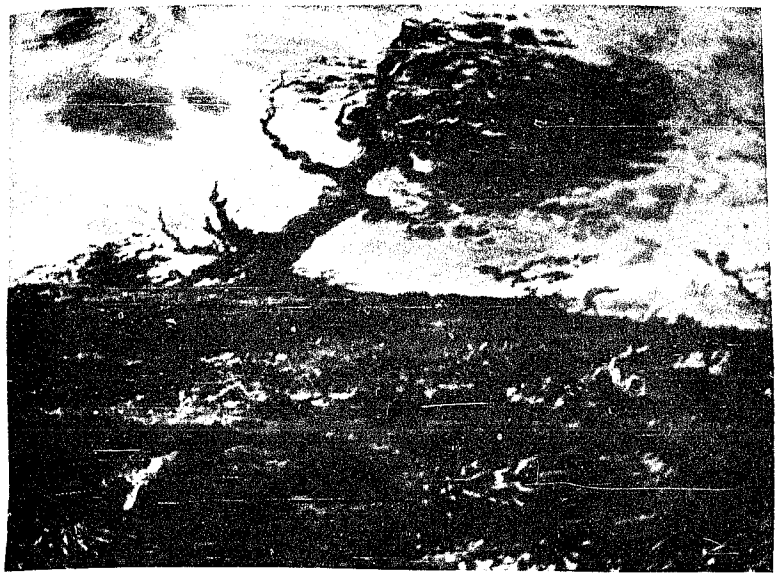
152. Dulac, L'Escalier à Versailles, lithograph.
153. Le Sidaner, Les Grands Dégrès, Versailles.

154. Dulac, Le Commencement, plate I, Cantique des créatures.
155. Dulac, Le Soleil, plate II, Cantique des créatures.



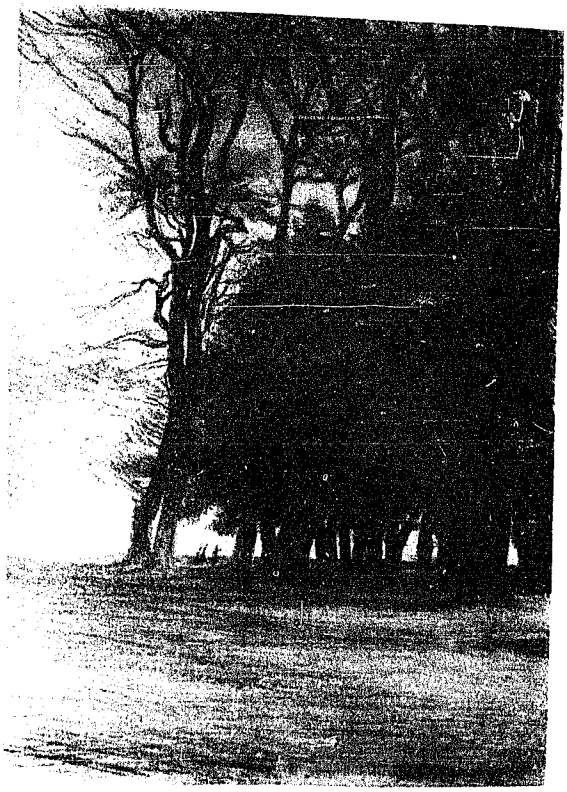
156. Dulac, Stella Matutina, plate III, Cantique des créatures.
157. Dulac, Le Vent, plate IV, Cantique des créatures.





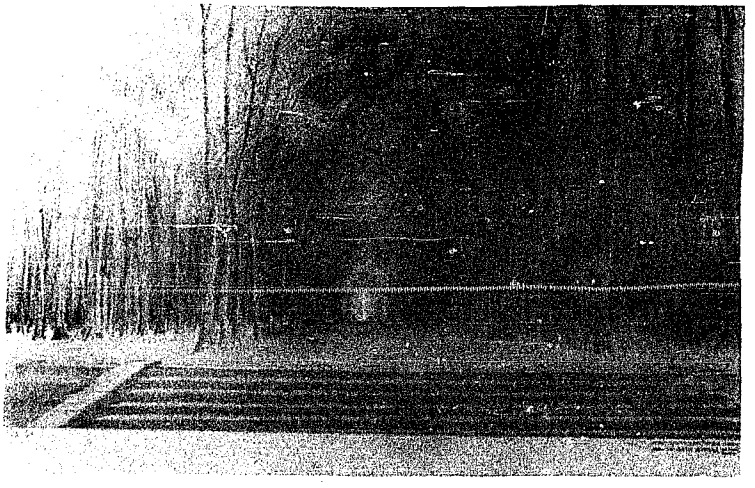
158. Paul Huet, Grand Marée d'équinoxe, aux environs de Honfleur.
159. Jean-Francois Millet, Coup de Vent.

160. Camille Corot, Windswept Landscape. 161. Huet, Inondation à St. Cloud.

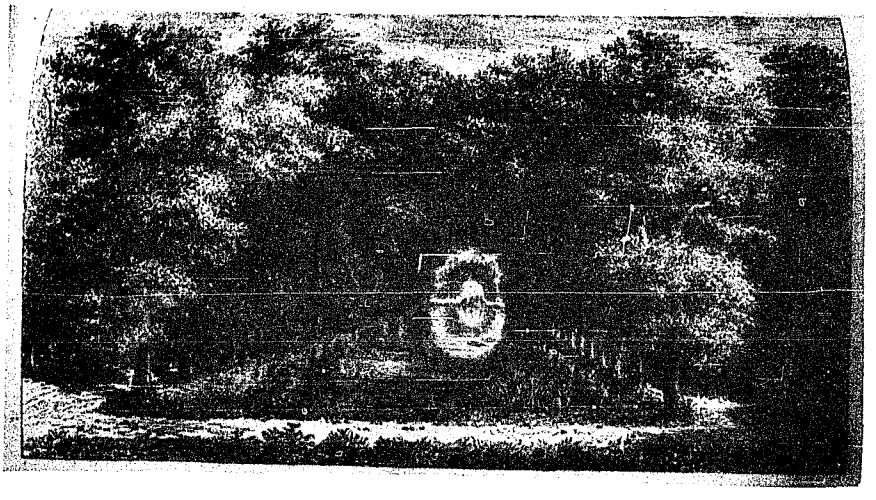


161a. Huet, study for Les Ormes de St. Cloud.
162. Dulac, Bosquet d'arbres, Suite de paysages, lithograph.

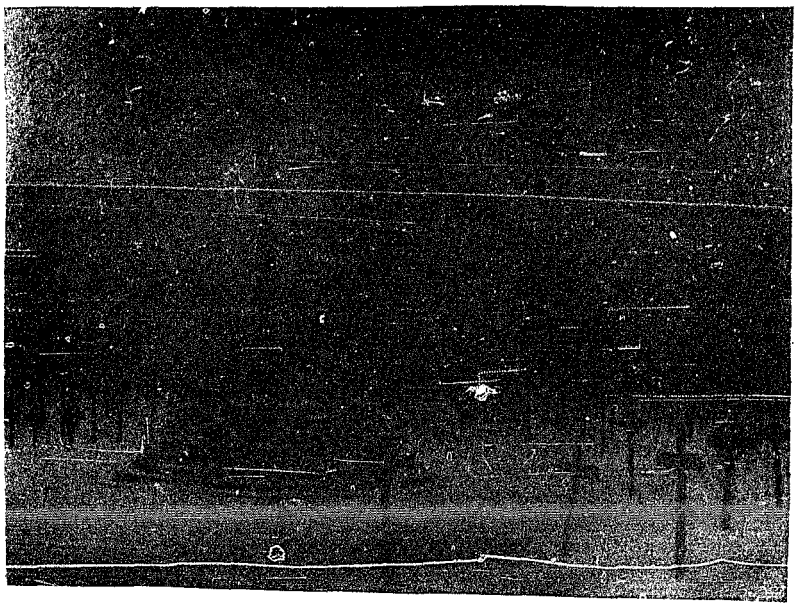
163. Dulac, L'Eau et le feu, study for plate V, Cantique des créatures.
164. Dulac, Paysage d'Avignon.



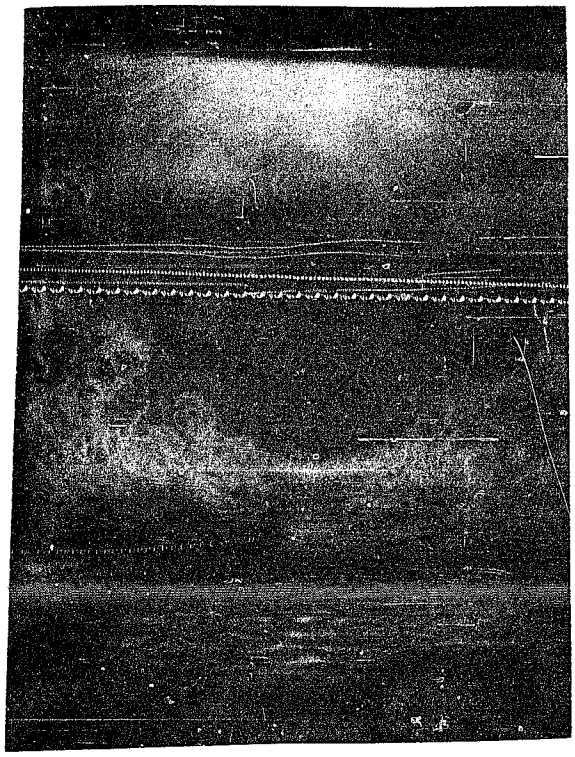
165. Dulac, La Terre, plate VI, Cantique des créatures.
166. Dulac, La Voie benie, plate VII, Cantique des créatures.



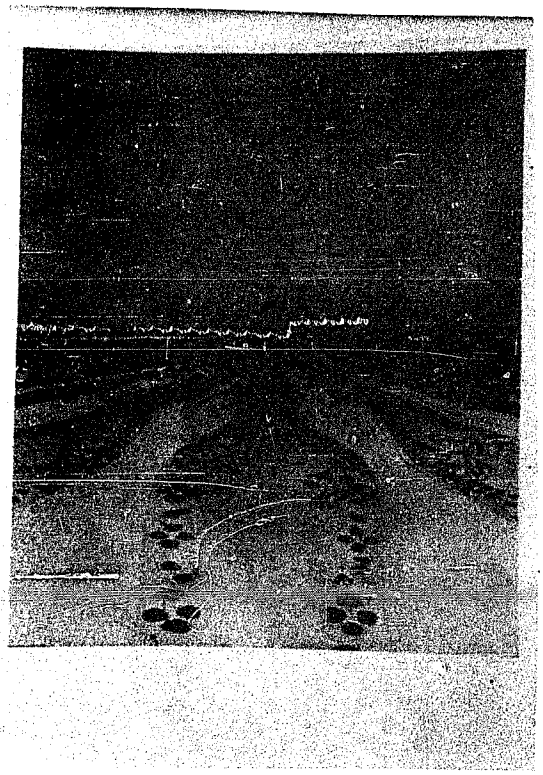
167. Théodore Rousseau, Allée des Chataigners.
168. Parc de Chantilly, engraving.

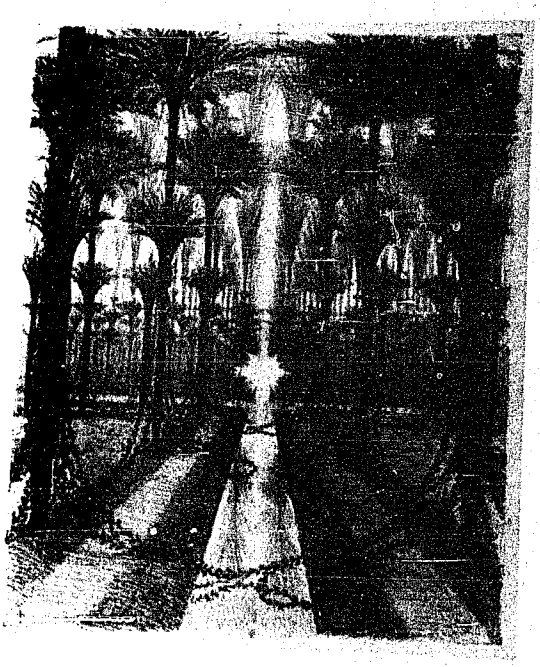


169. Dulac, La Mort corporelle, plate VIII, Cantique des créatures.
170. Caspar David Friedrich, Cross at Rugen.

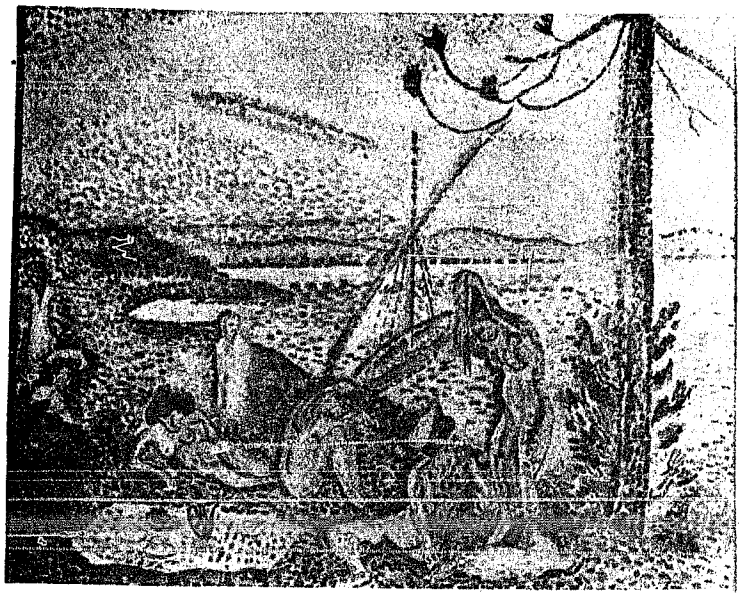


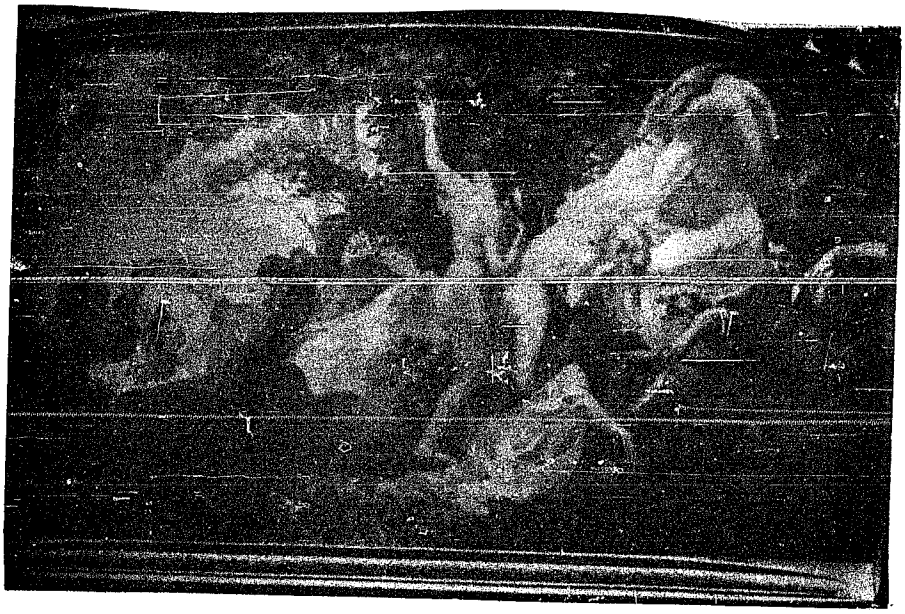
171. Dulac, Le Chant final, plate IX, Cantique des créatures.
172. Dulac, Les Tulipes, Le Jardin de Seigneur, plate.



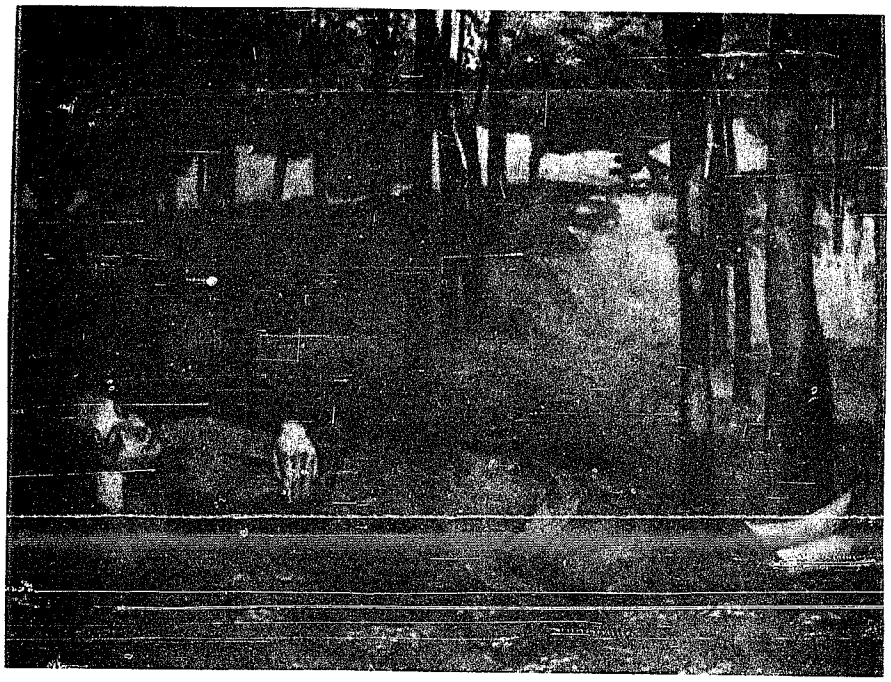


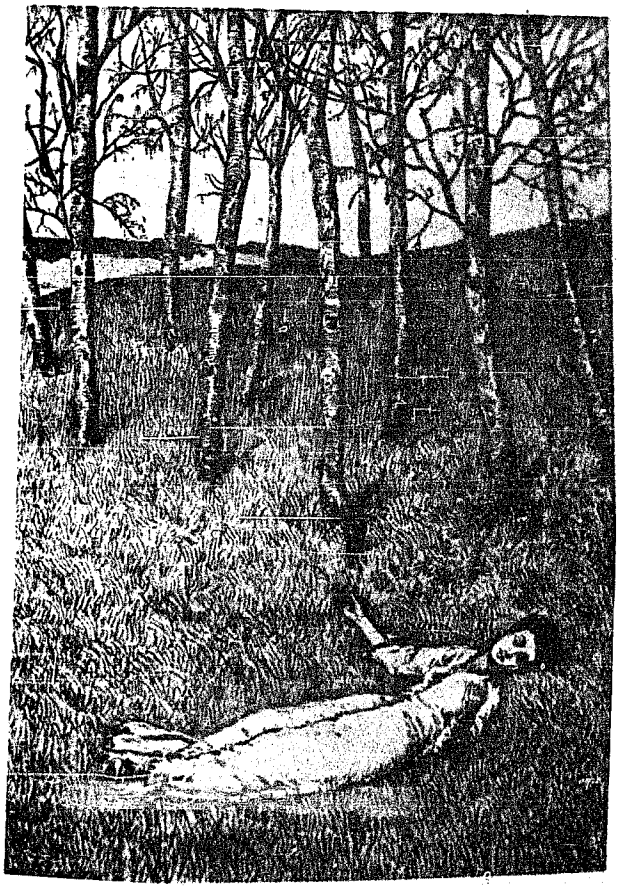
173. Dulac, Le Jardin fleuri, plate, Credo II.
174. Dulac, Le Divine Palmeraie, plate, Credo III.



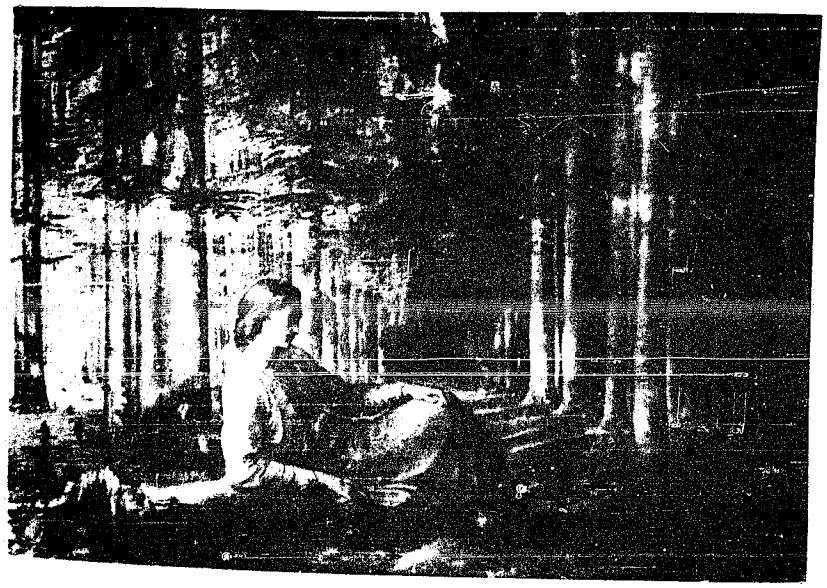


175. Henri Matisse, Luxe, calme, et volupté.
176. Victor Prouvé, L'Ile Heureuse (L'Invitation au voyage).





177. Emile Bernard, Madeleine au Bois d'Amour.
178. Max Klinger, Dream of Springtime, etching.



179. Louis Janmot, Solitude (Le Poème de l'âme).