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WRITERS ON PAINTING:
A STUDY OF THE THEORY AND CRITICISM OF THE VISUAL ARTS IN ZOLA, WILDE, JAMES, AND PROUST AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THEIR FICTION

by

HENRY KRAWITZ

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

1976

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

May 12/76
date

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Introduction

In attempting to delimit the scope and aims of the present study, I have chosen to proceed by means of negative example, i.e., to state clearly which aspects of the art/literature question will not be discussed in the succeeding four chapters.

To begin with, since the emphasis throughout is upon the understanding and utilization of painting exclusively from the writer's perspective, the controversy surrounding Horace's ut pictura poesis is intentionally avoided.[1] Wishing to side neither with the Abbé Batteux nor with Lessing, I prefer to follow, in the words of Jean Seznec, "another approach, at once more modest, and possibly more rewarding: the purely 'factual' one."[2] This approach consists of an in-depth study of each writer's contacts with the visual arts and an examination of all relevant art criticism by the author in question. I then proceed to a consideration of the embodiment of aesthetic theories and fictive or real paintings within the novelist's fictional oeuvre.

Although the painter as a fictional character does play a prominent role in several of the novels to be discussed--most notably in Emile Zola's L'Oeuvre--his importance in the present context is not so much that of a fully rounded character as that of a mouthpiece or spokesman for the author's

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aesthetic doctrines; specifically, his works are examined to determine the author's understanding of various artistic periods and/or painterly styles. In a sense, when Theodore R. Bowie states, in his early study devoted to the figure of the artist in French fiction, that "one whole side of the question, pertaining to the esthetic principles on which all this literature is based, has been deliberately omitted,"[3] he is defining the province of the present undertaking.

Another important point to bear in mind is the manner in which this investigation is carried out. Since a paralleling of the visual and verbal arts is never of major concern, no attempt is made to present a stylistic or close textual analysis of a given passage to determine whether or not it owes anything to similar experiments in the realm of painting. To take a concrete example, although Henry James's The Ambassadors offers a wealth of material to suggest that the writer was strongly influenced by the French Impressionist vision in his description of Paris and its environs, this novel is passed over in favor of The Wings of the Dove and The Sacred Fount, where paintings rather than verbal approximations of visual art are presented. Similarly, Marcel Proust's presentation of Elstir's fictive painterly oeuvre is selected for treatment rather than the "nymphéas de la Vivonne" passage in Du Côté de Chez Swann or the Impressionist-inspired seascapes in A l'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs. In other words, the approach adopted in each chapter is thematic rather than stylistic, my concern being with the painting--whether real or imaginary[4]--and the

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multiple uses to which it is put by the writer.

The works of several authors were originally considered for inclusion. For example, Joris-Karl Huysmans's breviary of decadence, A Rebours, seemed quite promising at first glance. Could one ask for a more virtuosic passage than that describing Des Esseintes's rapture before the Moreaus and Bresdins hanging in his private collection? The problem with the use of paintings here is simply that they appear in an episodic manner and are not integrated with the rest of the narrative. Huysmans intends no overarching symbolic scheme in his description of these works; they are merely another illustration of the decadent hero's aesthetic preferences.[5]

At the other extreme are the ideological/metaphysical novels of Sartre and Kafka. In the case of the former, Roquentin, the anti-hero of La Nausée, confronts les salauds in the official portraits hanging in the museum at Bouville. Sartre is here using paintings as an ideological weapon; the trompe-l'oeil effects achieved by the various portrait painters to make their subjects appear in a more flattering light are merely another instance of the deceit and uncertainty which Roquentin encounters in his daily existence.[6] In the case of Kafka, most notably in The Trial, the surrealistic landscapes of the painter Titorelli, his portraits of judges and court officials, and the mysterious allegorical picture of a knight in armor which the hero, Joseph K., discovers in the cathedral are all rather intriguing yet ultimately mystifying examples of fictional paintings at

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the service of the author's metaphysical view of existence. Unlike the four writers finally selected for treatment--viz. Zola, Wilde, James, and Proust--there is no body of aesthetic/art criticism available to determine, if possible, what Kafka actually intended these paintings to represent, nor would such an endeavor prove of any significant value in elucidating the meaning of the novelist's unsettling studies of human despair.

With the possible exception of Zola, each of the writers to be discussed clearly belongs to the "aesthetic" camp of fiction. Chronologically, the period encompassed by the works of these four writers (L'Oeuvre [1886]; The Picture of Dorian Gray [1891]; The Sacred Fount [1901] and The Wings of the Dove [1902]; A l'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs [1918]) is rather narrow. Although this might lead the reader to expect a mutually illuminating Weltanschauung in terms of the aesthetic theories and artistic preferences of each writer, no attempt has been made in the present study to prove that any manner of "influence" can be traced from, say, Wilde to James or from James to Proust.[7] In other words, despite the fact that one or more of the writers in question may have been exposed to the same art critics (e.g., Ruskin, Pater) or artistic movements (e.g., Impressionism, Symbolism), these facts are simply noted in the course of examining each writer's aesthetic development and exposure to the visual arts, with only incidental connections or parallels indicated when pertinent.

Each chapter therefore represents a complete and

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autonomous whole, i.e., another exploration of the impact of the visual arts upon the aesthetic development and fictional work of a given writer. For the sake of clarity and consistency, the following formula has been adopted. After a brief introduction setting forth the aims of the chapter, the works to be discussed, and the rationale behind a visual arts approach to a particular writer's oeuvre, a section entitled "Of Painters and Periods" outlines the novelist's contact, if any, with the actual métier of the painter. While this is not an absolute necessity in order for the writer to effectively demonstrate his acquaintance with and utilization of the visual arts in his fictional works, it does show that he has some comprehension of how the mind of a painter operates and, furthermore, that he is aware of the different means by which each artist achieves his intended effect.[8] In the case of Zola, James, and Wilde, all of whom went on to become professional art critics, a knowledge of the painter's craft was an invaluable resource and a necessary qualification for practicing their livelihood and for accurately judging the technical accomplishments of individual painters and national styles.

The writer's first contacts with examples of visual art (e.g., drawings, watercolors, oils) and his tastes during his formative years are next surveyed to give some indication of the scope and breadth of his knowledge in this area and to show how his tastes underwent a continual process of change and maturation. This material, usually organised according to national schools, is followed by the

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writer's individual preferences for certain painters within each school. In most instances, an overview of the writer's understanding of these diverse painters and periods concludes this section; an attempt is made to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the writer as an art critic, i.e., whether or not, on balance, he correctly interpreted the art of his own time and/or the works of earlier masters.

The section which then follows, entitled "The Critical Heritage," is, in essence, a survey of the major concepts of aesthetic/art criticism to which the author in question was exposed. The aesthetic doctrines of Ruskin, Pater, Whistler, etc., are examined insofar as they help explain the nature of the particular novelist's aesthetic outlook and artistic preferences. If any question of direct influence exists, it is dealt with here; the writer's originality--or lack of it--in the realm of aesthetics and art criticism becomes self-evident from such a comparative analysis. (In the case of Proust, this section is preceded by "The Lessons of the Masters," wherein the writer's critical essays on a select group of painters point up some of the central aesthetic concepts in Proust's oeuvre.)

The focus of the second half of each chapter shifts from an examination of the writer's aesthetic formation and an analysis of his critical views on art and painters to a discussion of how the foregoing material receives a fictional embodiment. Whereas in the chapters devoted to Zola and Wilde (where, in each case, a single work is selected for treatment) it was feasible and instructive to dovetail

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critical concepts found in the salon criticism and the essays on aesthetics with the critical pronouncements of the fictional characters in order to point up the manner in which the writer applied what he had absorbed from various sources to his own craft, this was not easily accomplished in the case of James and Proust. For the former, it was necessary to illustrate some of James's major aesthetic concepts by turning to several shorter or longer works, each of which incorporated a significant aspect of the writer's attitude towards the visual arts. In the case of Proust, the problem was simply that the writer never conceived of his art criticism and his essays on aesthetics as separate from his task as a writer of fiction, and therefore never bothered to assemble or organize his scattered reflections into a unified, well-defined body of art criticism. The best illustration, therefore, of Proust's conscious application of art theory to fiction remains the sections of A la Recherche devoted to the painter Elstir and his imaginary museum of artistic masterpieces.

In the final section, an attempt is made to examine a narrower and more specialized aspect of the writer's interest in the visual arts, viz. his fascination with the portrait as a means of exploring the psychology of his fictional characters.[9] Since all of the writers discussed are still "traditional" in the sense that they present recognizable characters in specific situations (unlike the practitioners of the nouveau roman), it is possible for the novelist to place his knowledge of painting at the service of plot,

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characterization, structure, etc. By introducing a suggestive icon at strategic points in the action, the writer can make the symbolic image serve as a catalytic agent in precipitating a prescribed pattern of events (e.g., The Wings of the Dove). Its repeated use throughout a longer work (e.g., Dorian Gray) can provide a framework or overarching structure, i.e., it can serve as an organizational element which pulls together the various strands of the narrative. In a more subtle manner, the various reactions of a group of fictional characters to a particular image (e.g., The Sacred Fount) can serve as a guidepost to the reader, a means whereby he or she can gain a deeper understanding of the psychological factors underlying the outward behavior of the characters in their dealings with one another. The writer can also make the portrait serve as a revelation to the individual characters themselves, i.e., it can help them to better understand the nature of their longings, drives, and impulses, holding up a mirror of truth to the self-deceivers and reaffirming the basic honesty and sincerity of those who are able to accurately interpret the hidden meaning behind a particular portrait. These elements may appear singly or in combination, depending upon the skill with which the novelist is able to integrate the portrait with the rest of the narrative and the degree to which he can invest this painted image with a symbolic dimension.

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Footnotes

[1] For examples of the practical application of this alternate approach to specific historical periods, genres, and individual writers or painters, see: Chauncey B. Tinker, Painter and Poet: Studies in the Literary Relations of English Painting (Cambridge, Mass., 1938)[not consulted]; Helmut A. Hatzfeld, "Literary Criticism Through Art and Art Criticism Through Literature," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 6, i (Sept. 1947), 1-21; Jean H. Hagstrum, The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Gray ([Chicago, Ill.]: Univ. Chicago Press, 1958); Wylie Sypher, Four Stages of Renaissance Style: Transformations in Art and Literature 1400-1700 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1955) and Rococo to Cubism in Art and Literature (New York: Random House, 1960)[both not consulted]; and, finally, Mario Praz, Mnemosyne: The Parallel Between Literature and the Visual Arts[The A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, 1967], Bollingen Series, XXXV:16 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970).

For a general theoretical discussion of the subject, see: Rene Wellek, "The Parallelism Between Literature and the Arts," English Institute Annual-1941 (New York: AMS Press, 1965), pp. 29-63[repr. of 1942 edn.]; G. Giovannini, "Method in the Study of Literature in its Relation to the Other Fine Arts," JAAC, 8 (March 1950), 185-95; Wallace Stevens, "The Relations between Poetry and Painting," The Necessary Angel: Essays on Reality and the Imagination (New York: Vintage, 1951), pp. 157-76; Susanne K. Langer, "Deceptive Analogies: Species and Real Relationships Among the Arts" and "Imitation and Transformation in the Arts," Problems of Art: Ten Philosophical Lectures (New York: Scribner's, 1957), pp. 75-89 and 90-107 resp.; finally, see the entire issue of New Literary History[special no.: "Literary and Art History"], 3, iii (Spring 1972), 433-587.

[2] Seznec, "Art and Literature: A Plea for Humility," NLH, 3, iii (Spring 1972), 571.

[3] Bowie, The Painter in French Fiction: A Critical Essay (Chapel Hill: Univ. N. Carol. Press, 1950), pp. 3-4. See, also, Charles F. Hofmann, "Le Peintre dans le Roman Français, 1830-1890," Diss., Yale, 1958 (97pp.)[not consulted].

[4] The recently published study by Jeffrey Meyers, Painting and the Novel ([New York]: Barnes & Noble/Harper & Row, 1975), is solely concerned with real paintings and their conscious utilization by several nineteenth and twentieth century writers. In his brief introduction, the author states: "Through numerous specific allusions we know

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what visual images the novelists had in mind when making their analogies. Their visualisation was based on paintings they knew well and determined by their memories and impressions ... by looking at them with the same attention and intensity as the novelists, we can attempt to see what they saw and make that ideal correspondence between their visual images while writing and those in our minds while reading." Meyers continues: "This correspondence concerns the widest implications of perspective--the way an author shapes his vision of the world and enforces his way of seeing on the reader ... Through a careful examination of the paintings the novelists used as sources of inspiration we can see how the paintings are transformed by their imagination and can understand how their creative process works." (pp. 1-2) Meyers's study, in this writer's opinion, suffers from a too literal approach to its subject and a rather superficial treatment of the novels chosen for inclusion. It gives almost no consideration to the aesthetic theories of the various writers, nor does it successfully integrate the episodes in which the paintings appear with the rest of the novel. Except for the chapter entitled "Bellini, Giotto, Mantegna, Botticelli and Swann's Way" (pp. 96-111), which was published as a journal article ["Proust's Aesthetic Analogies: Character and Painting in Swann's Way," JAAC, 30, iii (Spring 1972), 377-88], I did not consult Meyers's book while writing my own study.

[5] Cf. François Fosca [pseud. Georges de Traz], "Introduction," De Diderot à Valéry: Les Ecrivains et les Arts Visuels (Paris: Albin Michel, 1960), p. 8: "...les tableaux n'ont été pour [Huysmans], comme pour tant de littérateurs, que des prétextes à des exercices de style, qui bien souvent donnent des artistes qu'il examine une idée complètement fausse." While Fosca's title outwardly appears to cover the same territory as the present study, his biases are readily apparent from the total exclusion of Zola from any serious consideration and the ranking of Proust among "Les Amateurs." Fosca is concerned solely with the ideal qualities which he feels an art critic should possess, regardless of the context (i.e., a fictional work) in which aesthetic pronouncements are made.

[6] See the book-length study by George H. Bauer entitled Sartre and the Artist (Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, 1969) [not consulted].

[7] Note, for example, that Bruce Lowery entitles his study Marcel Proust et Henry James: Une Confrontation (Paris: Plon, 1964). Given the very limited evidence to prove that any direct influence was possible (even though the two writers were contemporaries), Lowery wisely restricts himself to indicating the many points of similarity and difference in the writers' aesthetic outlooks and fictional practices.

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[8] Cf. Fosca, De Diderot à Valéry..., p. 11: "Les véritables critiques d'art seront ces peintres qui savent ce que c'est qu'écrire, et les écrivains qui savent ce que c'est que peindre. Je n'entends pas par là qu'ils soient capables d'exécuter un tableau comme le ferait un homme du métier, mais qu'ils aient étudié à fond le langage qu'est la peinture, réfléchi sur les problèmes qu'il pose, se soient rendu compte de la façon dont fonctionne le cerveau d'un peintre. Il faut qu'ils soient des peintres passifs...."

[9] The only exception is the chapter on Zola, where portraits are examined as part of Claude Lantier's total output rather than in isolation; to Zola, all of Lantier's works function as a symbolic reflection of the painter's aesthetic and psychological development at a given moment in his artistic career.

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Chapter One

Emile Zola and Painting

"Une oeuvre d'art est un coin de la création vu à travers un tempérament."
(Salon de 1866: "Mon Salon")

Since its publication in 1885-6, L'Oeuvre has enjoyed a considerable reputation as a roman à clef. The bulk of the controversy generated by the novel has centered on the true identity of the painter-hero, Claude Lantier, with the critics and art historians taking sides either for Paul Cézanne or Edouard Manet. It is unfortunate that so much time and effort has been wasted upon an aspect of the novel which, admittedly, does not merit such in-depth consideration. Zola himself, responding to an accusation of plagiarism made by a local newspaper, flatly declared: "Quand [sic] à faire des personnalités, non: j'ai l'horreur du 'roman à clef,' où l'on prend des personnages sur le vif; cela me semble une mauvaise action."[1]

As a result of this frantic search for models and possible sources of influence, relatively little space has been devoted to a study of the novel as an accurate reflection of the art world at that time, i.e., the period encompassed by the Salon des Refusés of 1863 up until the advent of Symbolism and fin-de-siècle decadence. The present

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chapter represents an attempt to rectify this situation, to shed some light upon the nature of Emile Zola's knowledge of the painters and artistic movements of the latter half of the nineteenth century. The first section is devoted, in part, to an examination of Zola's physical attributes, i.e., his sensory equipment and his early attempts at painting. The balance of this section traces the evolution of Zola's artistic tastes; his fluctuating opinions of individual artists are carefully examined. The next section studies the gradual formation of Zola's aesthetic, from early pronouncements in letters to mature salon criticism. This is followed by a section devoted to an examination of Emile Zola's art criticism as it is reflected in L'Oeuvre; parallel and divergent texts are placed side by side in an attempt to disclose the manner in which Zola infused his novel with some of his official views as an art critic. Lastly, the major paintings scattered throughout the novel are studied, not to discover their true model(s), but rather to demonstrate the stylistic evolution of the painter hero, from early Naturalism through a period of Impressionism to a final Symbolist phase. As a result of this investigation, Zola's contribution to the field of aesthetics and art criticism, as well as his achievement in the genre known as the novel of the painter/artist, will, I hope, emerge with a greater degree of clarity and accuracy than was previously possible.

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Of Painters and Periods:

Zola seems to have possessed a remarkable visual receptivity, among other sensory attributes. When questioned by a certain Docteur Saint-Paul as to his special qualities, the writer replied: "Mes souvenirs visuels ont une puissance, un relief extraordinaire, ma mémoire est énorme, elle me gêne. Quand je revois les objets que j'ai vus, je les revois tels qu'ils sont réellement avec leurs lignes, leurs formes, leurs sons; c'est une matérialisation à outrance; le soleil qui les éclaire m'éblouit presque; l'odeur me suffoque, les détails s'accrochent à moi et m'empêchent de voir l'ensemble."[2] Although this visual quality may have been intense, it would appear that its effect was of rather short duration.[3] Despite this fact, such a visual receptivity must have been of immense value to Zola throughout his career as a writer and art critic. In addition to relying upon painter friends for documentation, Zola seems to have had an unquenchable thirst to see as much as possible at first hand. "Je suis affamé de choses vues," he once confessed.[4] To be able to vividly recall and describe the numerous paintings on exhibit at the annual salons was a quality not typical of the average reviewer. It has been argued, in connection with Zola's visual abilities, that the writer's shifting tastes and preferences for certain artists at different stages in their careers was the result of a myopic condition.[5] While there may have been a physical basis for Zola's changing opinions of individual painters and their styles, it would be more

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logical to attribute this change in taste to a corresponding growth and maturation of Zola's earlier aesthetic beliefs.

Although there is practically no evidence to support the view that Zola harbored any deep desire to pursue even a casual career as a painter, there are isolated instances of the writer's early attempts to try his hand at painting. According to Henri Mitterand, "il [s'est] essayé un jour à dessiner deux baigneuses de Jean Goujon, dans l'atelier de Villevielle."[6] F.W.J. Hemmings relates that "vers 1858 il aida Cézanne à peindre certain paravent qui a été conservé jusqu'à ce jour."[7] These isolated instances are mentioned, not to prove that Zola was in any way or manner a painter, but merely to counter the charges of those critics who have insisted that Zola knew nothing of the actual métier and creative effort of the artist.

Zola seems to have cared little for the art of earlier centuries. Throughout his letters, essays, and salon criticism, there is virtually no mention of the great masters of the past; when their names are dropped, it is usually in connection with a modern painter: "Courbet est le seul peintre de notre époque; il appartient à la famille des faiseurs de chair, il a pour frères, qu'il le veuille ou non, Véronèse, Rembrandt, Titien."[8] The only exception which Zola permitted in his limited canon was for the painters of the Renaissance--and Michelangelo in particular. While on a visit to Rome in 1895 to accumulate information

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for his next book, Rome, Zola finally came face to face with his ideal painter, one whose work seemed to best express his need for individual style or tempérament in a work of art: "Une oeuvre énorme qui me va au coeur, dont j'ai rêvé toute ma vie ... Rien n'est plus beau au monde. C'est le temple du génie."[9] The reason for Zola's preference for the art of the Renaissance and that of his own century lay in his belief that only during these two epochs was the human personality most forcefully expressed in art. Since Egyptian art, Greek art, and religious art produced in Europe in the Middle Ages was largely an anonymous or joint experience, it was immediately discredited in the eyes of this art critic. While it is difficult for the modern student of art history to accept such an extremely limited view, Zola's unswerving belief in the individual spirit made this choice virtually inevitable. He remained convinced of the necessity of this distinction for his own aesthetic doctrine, and held firmly to this view well into his latest critical writings.

Zola's early predilection for specific painters presents an embarrassing situation when confronted with his later opinions of these same artists. To the young Zola writing in 1860, the works of Greuze represented the height of painterly accomplishments.[10] Also high on his list were the fanciful and imaginary works of Ary Scheffer, whom Zola praised as a true poet in paint;[11] ironically, the same painter was later to become the butt of Zola's most bitter criticism of the spiritual or idealist element in art.

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While Zola appreciated the book illustrations which Gustave Doré had executed for Cervantes's Don Quixote and other classics, he pointed to the danger the artist was courting by relying exclusively upon his inner dreamworld for inspiration. In 1865 Zola had called Doré an improvisateur. His facile technique and the immensity of his creative output were further signs of imminent decline. His style was limited, relying solely upon light and shadow, and he merely strove after dramatic and picturesque effects.[12] Zola branded Doré as a hopeless idéaliste in art. In his subsequent criticism of this painter, Zola bemoaned the fact that Doré had not remained content with small-scale works, where his dreamy effects were at least partially successful. For the salons of 1875 and 1876 Doré submitted huge canvases depicting such epic themes as Dante and Vergil Visiting the Seventh Circle in Hell and Christ Entering Jerusalem. Zola accused him of ignoring the laws of anatomy and urged him to take pen in hand and lay down his brush. A later appraisal of Doré's talent occurred in the art critic's salon review for 1880. The painter was pictured as hopelessly locked away in his atelier, painting trees which he had not seen at first hand, living off his own dreams, totally separated from reality.

The twin figures of Ingres and Delacroix seem to hover over the pages of Zola's salon criticism and novel like mythic deities. To this critic, they represented the end of a glorious era in art. Writing in 1876, Zola confessed: "Je ne puis qu'évoquer les grandes ombres de Delacroix et

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d'Ingres, ces génies obstinés, disparus du monde sans avoir trahi leurs dons. Ces géants n'ont pas laissé d'héritiers, et nous attendons toujours les génies de l'avenir."[13] While he never elaborated upon the métier and individual qualities of each painter, Zola did drop suggestive hints in the form of broad formulas: "...Ingres accoupla la formule moderne à l'ancienne tradition; Delacroix symbolisa la débauche des passions, la névrose romantique de 1830...."[14] It was this latter quality which Zola was subsequently to employ with such great effect in L'Œuvre, making it a contributing factor to the fictional painter's decline. Just as Delacroix represented the spirit of Romanticism, so Ingres embodied the perfect expression of classical restraint. Although the painters were diametrically opposed on stylistic grounds, Zola somehow regarded them as coequals, each being a master in his own right.

Courbet's name was often coupled with those of Ingres and Delacroix to form an august trinity. As the representative of the realist/naturalist school of art, Courbet was admired as a painter of flesh, a solid craftsman, and a direct descendant of the great artists of the Renaissance. Zola's attitude towards this painter oscillated between extreme admiration and utter contempt. In 1865 he warned Courbet not to be captivated by Proudhon's socialist theories, nor to turn his art into a vehicle for social reform or moral uplift. With the painter's submission of such works as La Femme au Perroquet and La Remise de Chevreuils to the salon of 1866, Zola uttered his sense of dismay at

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Courbet's wish to cater to the prettified tastes of the public. His earlier, darker, more powerful style, typified by such works as Le Convoi d'Ornans and La Baigneuse, had given way to a softer, more delicate manner: "Il y a douceur et sourire; Courbet, pour l'écraser d'un mot, a fait du joli!"[15] This disappointment was further aggravated in 1868, when Zola noticed a lighter, blonder note "infecting" the style of the realist painter. Although he never doubted Courbet's technical accomplishments, Zola could not easily accept the change taking place in the painter's palette. The blond note which signalled the emergence of a new epoch in art for the painters of L'Oeuvre was apparently a sign of artistic decline when applied to Courbet.

With the death of Gustave Courbet in 1877, Zola's opinion of the painter changed radically. All his earlier criticisms now seemed to be forgotten. Courbet was once again the masterful painter of everyday life. In his salon review for 1878, Zola was literally bursting with praise for this artist: "Courbet exprime l'aspiration au vrai--c'est l'artiste acharné au travail, asseyant sur une base solide la nouvelle formule de l'école naturaliste. Nous n'avons pas de peintre plus honnête, plus sain, plus français."[16] Zola also congratulated Courbet on his choice of contemporary subjects, comparing him with Veronese in his decision to paint the great men of his own time. In his salon article for 1880, Zola gave Courbet the status of a "classic" painter. While the artist did not create a revolution in form, relying for the most part upon traditional

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techniques, he nevertheless made Realism a worthy successor to earlier artistic movements. Zola's preface to the 1884 exhibition catalogue of Manet's works firmly established Courbet's direct descent from Ingres and Delacroix.

It was Edouard Manet who represented for Zola a truly startling and revolutionary change in the manner in which the painter viewed his surroundings: "Après Courbet, il est la dernière force qui se soit révélée, j'entends par force une nouvelle expansion dans la manière de voir et de rendre."[17] Zola, accompanied by the painter Guillemet and the critic Duranty, paid his first visit to Manet's atelier in February 1866. Thereafter, he became a frequenter of the café Guerbois, where Manet and his painter friends of the Batignolles quarter discussed their views on art. Zola's salon review for 1866 was devoted, in large part, to a detailed analysis of Manet's painterly technique. The critic described the artist's talent as one consisting of simplicité and justesse. His manner of seeing relied upon the tache. His careful juxtaposition of tones showed that he was conscious of the law of values in painting. Zola then discussed individual paintings by Manet which he admired--Le Dîner (Déjeuner) sur l'Herbe, Olympia, and Le Joueur de Fifre--all of which reflected the everyday world and its regular inhabitants. The section on Manet ended on the following victorious note: "La place de M. Manet est marquée au Louvre...."[18]

Zola devoted his entire salon article of 1867 to a study of Manet's artistic accomplishments. In addition to

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reiterating the various techniques employed by the painter, Zola also discussed the blond note which bathed Manet's figures in a clear and gay atmosphere. He noted "une grâce un peu sèche, mais charmante," which reflected the elegant salonnier and dandy in Manet. Yet he refused to accept the rapprochement with Baudelaire's poetry, insisting that ideas or literary inspiration played no role in Manet's paintings. Zola did, however, admit the Japanese influence in the painter's works; both types of art aimed at an overall effect of simplicity and understated elegance, relying upon large, decorative masses and flat surfaces to achieve these ends. The expression which Zola felt most succinctly expressed Manet's talents was simply un peintre analyste.[19]

In his salon review for 1868, Zola described his frequent visits to Manet's studio to pose for his own portrait. He stressed the fact that the painter refused to invent the slightest detail, wishing only to study his subject at first hand in order to capture an exact likeness based upon direct visual observation. Manet was now described as un naturaliste, Zola evidently wishing to stress the scientific aspect of the painter's technique. The art critic found still other terms with which to describe Manet's achievements in the field of art; his salon article for 1875 termed the painter "un artiste moderne, un réaliste, un positiviste ... le peintre le plus original de son temps, le seul depuis Courbet qui se soit distingué par des traits vraiment originaux annonçant cette école naturaliste que je rêve pour le renouveau de l'art et l'élargissement de la création humaine."[20]

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With the exception of an erroneous substitution of Manet's name for Monet's in the French translation of Zola's salon article for 1879 (originally published in the Russian periodical Le Messager de l'Europe), wherein the art critic had criticized the painter for his flawed technique, Zola never felt the sense of disappointment in Manet which he had experienced with Courbet. The only critical statements which Zola ever uttered against Manet occurred in the preface he had written for the 1884 exhibition of Manet's works: "...il n'était pas toujours maître de sa main ... Les doigts n'obéissent pas toujours aux yeux...."[21] Yet even this criticism could be taken to mean that the painter's ambitions were so large that he was unable to keep up with their concrete realization. Of all the artists whom Zola had championed, Manet remained the closest to the critic's ideal image of what a contemporary painter should be.

Zola's attitude toward Paul Cézanne and his works has intrigued art historians and students of Naturalism from the painter's and writer's own time down to the present. While there is much room for speculation as to what was left unsaid by Zola--and the reasons for his silence--there is certainly less of a chance of misinterpreting the art critic's views of his painter friend if only those statements which were actually recorded are taken into consideration.

In an early letter to his friend Baille (Aug. 1861?) Zola remarked of their mutual acquaintance: "Paul peut avoir le génie d'un grand peintre, il n'aura jamais le

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génie de le devenir. Le moindre obstacle le désespère."[22] But Zola never doubted that a touch of genius did, in fact, reside in Paul Cézanne's qualities as a painter. It was merely a matter of nurturing and developing this talent, of finding the proper technical formula with which to express his revolutionary vision. When, in 1867, an art critic employed by Le Figaro made light of Cézanne's paintings, comparing his subject matter to that of pig's feet, Zola rallied to the painter's defense. Those critics who insist upon viewing Zola's attitude toward Cézanne as one of despair or indifference are quick to forget this major declaration of faith. In a letter addressed to the editor of Le Figaro, Zola insisted: "Il s'agit d'un de mes amis d'enfance, d'un jeune peintre dont j'estime singulièrement le talent vigoureux et personnel ... M. Paul Césanne [sic] n'a pas le moindre pied de cochon dans son bagage artistique...."[23]

Nor was Cézanne forgotten or ignored for long stretches of time, as some critics have alleged. True, Zola did feel a sense of uneasiness when friends inquired as to Cézanne's whereabouts and activities, but this may have been a protective reaction rather than one prompted by shame. When, in 1870, Théodore Duret asked Zola for Cézanne's current address, the writer replied: "Il est dans une période de tâtonnements ... Attendez qu'il se soit trouvé lui-même."[24] In an article entitled "Une Exposition: Les Peintres Impressionnistes," published in Le Sémaphore de Marseille in 1877, Zola devoted a full paragraph to

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his friend Cézanne, placing his name between those of Monet and Renoir. Zola informed his readers that Cézanne "est à coup sûr le plus grand coloriste du groupe. Il y a de lui, à l'exposition, des paysages de Provence du plus beau caractère. Les toiles si fortes et si vécues de ce peintre peuvent faire sourire les bourgeois, elles n'en indiquent pas moins les éléments d'un très grand peintre. Le jour où M. Paul Cézanne se possédera tout entier, il produira des oeuvres tout à fait supérieures."[25]

What Zola mistook for a lack of technique was actually Cézanne's radical transformation of nature into its basic components--the sphere, the cylinder, and the cone. The painter's simplified treatment of nature, particularly with respect to landscapes, was regarded by Zola as a sign of incompleteness or lack of finish. It was this unfortunate misinterpretation of Cézanne's aims which led the art critic to conclude, in his salon of 1880, that his friend represented "un tempérament de grand peintre qui se débat encore dans des recherches de facture...."[26] When Cézanne persisted in his stubborn attempts to find his own means of expression, Zola interpreted this behavior as a refusal, on the part of the painter, to find a suitable technique. The art critic's general sense of disillusion and despair with the art world in 1896 led him to characterize Cézanne as a "grand peintre avorté."[27] The term was admittedly extreme, but so was Zola's reaction to the fin-de-siècle atmosphere which pervaded the exhibition halls he now entered with revulsion and disgust.

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Monet, like Courbet before him, was also the victim of Zola's changing tastes and shifting moods. The painter's submission of Camille, a work belonging to Monet's realistic, pre-Impressionist phase, to the salon of 1866 drew nothing but praise from the art critic: "...voilà un tempérament, voilà un homme dans la foule de ces eunuques ... Ici, il y a plus qu'un réaliste, il y a un interprète délicat et fort qui a su rendre chaque détail sans tomber dans la sécheresse."[28] In 1868, Zola classed Monet among the painters he considered to be actualistes, i.e., those who drew their inspiration from their surroundings, finding in the streets and parks of Paris an unending source of subject matter. The art critic singled out the painter's marine subjects for special appreciation, complimenting him on his remarkable treatment of water and reflections. Zola ended his discussion of Monet's talents on the following optimistic note: "...je le félicite encore davantage de savoir peindre, d'avoir un oeil juste et franc, d'appartenir à la grande école des naturalistes. Ce qui distingue son talent, c'est une facilité incroyable d'exécution, une intelligence souple, une compréhension vive et rapide de n'importe quel sujet ... Je n'attends de lui rien que de bon, de juste et de vrai."[29] By 1876, Zola had decided that Monet was the uncontested leader of the Impressionists.

Having reached the height of esteem in Zola's eyes, Monet's reputation could only decline. The painter's radical experimentation involving the dissolution of

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painted objects under the effects of pure sunlight and atmospheric effects led Zola to doubt Monet's technique. In the aforementioned 1879 article published in Le Messager de l'Europe, Zola bemoaned his loss of confidence in Monet's technical abilities. He pointed to "la difficulté qu'il rencontre dans l'exécution--je veux dire que sa main n'égale pas son oeil. Il n'a pas su se constituer une technique ... Si le côté technique chez lui égalait la justesse des perceptions, il serait le grand peintre de la seconde moitié du XIX^{e} siècle ... Un instant [les impressionnistes] avaient mis de grandes espérances en Monet; mais celui-ci paraît épuisé par une production hâtive; il se contente d'à peu près; il n'étudie pas la nature avec la passion des vrais créateurs."[30] What Zola mistook for facility and sketchiness was actually a breakthrough in the visual recording of natural phenomena in paint. Since Zola demanded that the artist spend long and arduous hours perfecting the painterly execution of his works, Monet's rather loose brushwork and blurred effects were regarded as a betrayal of the painter's métier. The final death knell was sounded in 1880; Zola branded Monet a renegade, one who had shied away from official exhibitions and displayed his works at independent showings along with other "unknown" artists. He predicted the same bleak future for Monet as he had done for Cézanne. Unless the painter treated his craft with more respect and eased off on his rather hasty production of what Zola considered to be mere preparatory sketches, he would

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never prove himself worthy of the title of leader of the Impressionists.

One of the so-called renegades with whom Monet had decided to exhibit was Auguste Renoir. Zola considered him to be a master portraitist. The art critic described the painter's clear tonalities and subtle modulations in terms of "un Rubens éclairé du soleil brillant de Vélasquez."[31] Théodore Rousseau was an artiste manqué in Zola's eyes. His early studies of nature had shown real promise. With a gradually increasing interest in the minute rendering of details, however, Rousseau seemed to lose a part of himself, viz. his tempérament. His paintings became an overworked, overstudied affair, "une photographie puissamment colorée...."[32] Camille Pissarro was one of the few artists whose reputation never wavered in Zola's eyes. The latter praised the painter's down-to-earth approach to nature, his search for truth, his strong will, and his profound knowledge of the painter's craft. Pissarro's works exuded an almost epic sense of grandeur despite the simplicity of the means employed to achieve this effect. Zola best expressed his opinion of this painter in an article written in 1868: "...il n'est ni poète ni philosophe, mais simplement naturaliste, faiseur de cieux et de terrains."[33]

Jongkind was likewise a painter for whom Zola reserved the warmest words of praise. He preferred the artist's melancholy scenes of Dutch landscapes, their humid, almost misty quality, with their characteristic low horizon line in the far distance. He also saw in Jongkind a first-rate

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painter of Parisian city life, one who captured Zola's own love for the bustling yet endearing metropolis. Jongkind, like Pissarro, worked over his canvases with extreme care and unending patience to produce an effect of utter simplicity and charm. Although Fantin-Latour similarly spent many hours preparing his canvases for exhibition, Zola found his style to be too studied, too soft and pleasing for his own tastes. His scientific knowledge of color was undeniable. He was certainly a naturalist painter in the sense that he relied upon visual observation as the basis for his works. His respect for nature was obvious. Yet the final effect of Fantin-Latour's paintings was somehow disconcerting to Zola.

Zola always remained rather reticent in his bestowal of praise upon Degas. He admired the painter's inquisitive nature, his attraction for such modern subjects as ballet rehearsals, races, bathers, and laundresses. Paradoxically, having condemned the sketch in the finished works of Monet, Zola insisted that it was the perfect medium for Degas. He seemed to feel that Degas would never amount to more than a minor, albeit talented, painter. He lacked the force and tempérament of a Monet. Degas was consequently not to be chided for specializing in quick sketches and simplified designs. His brush would never produce truly creative and original works of art; it were best if he restricted himself to chalk and crayon. Degas would remain a sketcher. Zola's mature opinion of the painter's talent is contained in a letter addressed to Joris-Karl Huysmans.

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In a rather cruel phrase, Zola characterized the painter as "un constipé du plus joli talent."[34]

The reasons behind Zola's admiration for the works of Puvis de Chavannes have never been properly understood. As early as 1875, Zola praised the painter as a decorator in the grand manner. He considered Puvis one of the greatest fresco and mural painters of the century. Part of the reason for this attraction certainly lay in the painter's lack of academic training. Zola considered him a precursor, a loner, a painter who seemed to have sprung up out of nowhere and bloomed overnight. What the art critic admired most in Puvis' huge canvases and murals was the artist's simplification of line, his use of uniform tones and subdued coloration. The resultant effect was a noble severity of style. Despite his proto-Symbolist tendencies and the somewhat literary subject matter of his works, Zola insisted that Puvis always remained a faithful disciple of nature; however allegorical his paintings might appear, one could always see the image of humanity beneath the symbol.

In total contrast to Puvis' art, Gustave Moreau's paintings seemed to have forsaken the human element entirely. Zola viewed the painter's style and subject matter as a reaction against the realism of an earlier epoch. Just as he had warned Doré of the dangers he was risking by relying exclusively upon his own dreamworld, Zola now criticized Moreau for attempting to capture his nightmare world and visionary hallucinations on canvas. Like Puvis,

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Moreau lacked a single teacher from whom he had appropriated his unique style; his eclectic borrowings ranged from the works of Mantegna and earlier primitive masters to exotic and florid styles of defunct civilizations. Nor did he seem to have any direct descendants or disciples. As a professor at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Moreau taught such famous pupils as Matisse and Rouault; but each of his students seemed to develop a personal and individual style of his own. Zola could not accept Moreau's Symbolist theories of art, nor could he understand the elaborate fantasies which the painter attempted to express in his works. He saw Gustave Moreau as the epitome of the fin-de-siècle artist, concerned only with the hidden meanings behind the everyday world of reality which the art critic accepted at face value.

Art historians have long been puzzled by Zola's total disregard of such painters as Vincent Van Gogh and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. In the case of the first artist, Joy Newton has demonstrated that the titles of Zola's novels played an important role as recurring motifs in Van Gogh's early canvases. Even more remarkable is the closeness of the painter's aesthetic doctrines to those of Zola. Van Gogh's definition of a work of art--"L'art, c'est l'homme ajouté à la nature"--is almost a verbal transcription of Zola's own formula. Their analogy for a work of art devoid of temperament is similarly identical: (Zola:) "Si le tempérament n'existait pas, tous les tableaux devraient être forcément de simples photographies."

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(Van Gogh:) "Le reflet de la réalité dans le miroir, si c'était possible de le fixer avec couleur et tout, ne serait assurément un tableau, pas davantage qu'une photographie."[35] Van Gogh's love of peasants and rural scenes, subjects which he had first discovered in Millet's canvases, was certainly related to the art critic's admiration for the earthy, realistic works of the early Courbet. It may have been Van Gogh's technique—his rather violent and expressionistic handling of the brush and his choice of bright colors juxtaposed in symbolic relationships—that forced Zola to exclude this painter from his critical commentary.

The absence of the name Toulouse-Lautrec in Zola's official art criticism is another enigma requiring further investigation. Surely, if there was one painter who best captured the atmosphere of Parisian night life, that artist was Lautrec. Perhaps it was precisely because he seldom ventured into the out-of-doors for his subjects that Zola preferred to view Manet and Jongkind, rather than Lautrec, as true painters of Paris and its environs. The fact that Lautrec, like Van Gogh, was a fervent admirer of Zola's novels merely adds a further twist of irony to the whole affair.[36]

Zola's attitude toward the art and artists of his time shifted from early optimism to eventual despair. The salon criticism documents the various stages of this transformation. In 1866 his faith was still intact; he could write, with relative assurance: "Je ne nie pas

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notre époque, au moins. J'ai foi en elle, je sais qu'elle cherche et qu'elle travaille. Nous sommes dans un temps de luttes et de fièvres, nous avons nos talents et nos génies."[37] Only two years later, however, the art critic was forced to admit the following state of affairs holding sway in the Parisian art world: "Nos artistes ne sont plus des hommes larges et puissants, sains d'esprit, vigoureux de corps, comme étaient les Véronèse et les Titien. Il y a eu un détraquement de toute la machine cérébrale. Les nerfs ont dominé, le sang s'est appauvri, les mains lasses et faibles n'ont plus cherché à créer que les hallucinations du cerveau."[38] By 1875, Zola could no longer make out the dominant styles of his time. "Chacun pour soi," he noted in his article for that year, "telle est la devise. Plus de dictateurs de l'art, une foule de tribuns tâchant d'entraîner le public devant leurs oeuvres."[39] Despite this mélange of dissonant and conflicting styles, Zola naively clung to the belief that a David, a Samson would arise and create order out of chaos: "Je crois pourtant que l'art est tout-puissant. Quand un génie paraîtra, il subjuguera les esprits et fera l'éducation de toute une génération ... l'anarchie de l'art, à notre époque, ne me paraît pas une agonie, mais plutôt une naissance."[40]

The year 1878 saw the pendulum of Zola's critical thought swing to the opposite extreme: "Il n'y a plus de génies," he sadly confessed, "il ne reste que des élèves camouflés de façon plus ou moins adroite. C'est la queue ...

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notre école traverse en ce moment une crise. Les maîtres ne sont plus, les disciples étouffent sous des formules vieillies."[41] It should be noted that this remark was made four years after the first Impressionist exhibition held in Nadar's studio in 1874. The group which had once held out so much promise for a glorious future proved a disappointment to the aging art critic. "Le grand malheur," observed Zola in his salon review for 1880, "c'est que pas un artiste de ce groupe n'a réalisé puissamment et définitivement la formule qu'ils apportent tous, éparse dans leurs oeuvres. La formule est là, divisée à l'infini; mais nulle part, dans aucun d'eux, on ne la trouve appliquée par un maître. Ce sont tous des précurseurs, l'homme de génie n'est pas né."[42]

The final blow was to come sixteen years later, in 1896. Fin-de-siècle decadence and mysticism turned Zola's dream of a savior into a living nightmare:

> ...ce sont vraiment des oeuvres déconcertantes, ces femmes multicolores, ces paysages violets et ces chevaux orange, qu'on nous donne, en nous expliquant scientifiquement qu'ils sont tels par suite de tels reflets ou de telle décomposition du spectre solaire. Oh! les dames qui ont une joue bleue, sous la lune, et l'autre joue vermillon, sous un abat-jour de lampe! Oh! les horizons où les arbres sont bleues, les eaux rouges et les cieux verts! C'est affreux, affreux, affreux![43]

It is ironic if one compares these remarks with those made in 1867, when Zola was zealously defending the then revolutionary style of Manet. One is forced to accept the fact that Zola was not as progressive as he had made

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himself out to be. Had he not preached open-mindedness in the face of innovation? Did he not write: "L'originalité, voilà la grande épouvante. Nous sommes plus ou moins, à notre insu, des bêtes routinières qui passent avec entêtement dans le sentier où elles ont passé. Et toute nouvelle route nous fait peur, nous flairons des précipices inconnus, nous refusons d'avancer. Il nous faut toujours le même horizon; nous rions ou nous nous irritons des choses que nous ne connaissons pas"?[44] Clearly, Zola had fallen into his own trap.

This brief survey of Zola's critical estimate of the art and artists of his own time points to both the acute perceptions and the glaring shortcomings of the art critic. On the positive side, one must flatly reject the frequent accusation that Zola was an "outsider" looking in on the activities of his painter friends. "Au contact des oeuvres et des hommes," writes Antoinette Ehrard, "c'est une formation directe et vivante que reçoit le jeune critique, formation qui n'a rien de livresque et qui conduit tout spontanément à l'action."[45] Even before he had arrived in Paris, Zola developed intimate friendships with the aspiring artists of his native Provence. In addition to Cézanne, the group included Baille, Roux, the sculptor Solari, and the poet and future art critic Valabrègue.[46]

From 1860 to 1870, Zola maintained a close connection with the Parisian art scene. He frequented the café Guerbois (the café Baudequin of L'Oeuvre), met the local

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artists of the Batignolles quarter, took regular trips to the Louvre and smaller art galleries, was introduced to the atelier Suisse by his friend Cézanne, visited the studios of Courbet and Manet, and was even painted alongside such figures as Manet, Monet, Renoir, Sisley, Zacharie Astruc, and Duranty in compositions by Bazille and Fantin-Latour.[47] With the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, the bonds which tied Zola to these painters, critics, and writers were regrettably loosened. Writing to his painter friend Antoine Guillemet in 1874, Zola complained: "Je ne vois personne, je n'ai pas la moindre nouvelle. Manet, qui fait une étude à Argenteuil, chez Monet, est introuvable. Et comme je ne mets pas souvent les pieds au café Guerbois, mes renseignements s'arrêtent là."[48]

If Zola was deprived of the physical presence of these painters, he still had their works to keep him company. It is a fact that his cabinet de travail was filled with Impressionist canvases.[49] While writing one of his novels, Zola could simply look around the room to gain inspiration for an impressionistic description of Paris. At the time of his death, Zola owned works by Delacroix, Fantin-Latour, Boudin, Guys, Jongkind, Cézanne, Guillemet, Pissarro, as well as other masters.[50] He was therefore never completely cut off or isolated from his painter friends; the visual record of their accomplishments was always close by his side.

But what of Zola's position as an art critic? How

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accurately did he judge the painters of his day? Was Goncourt simply being vindictive and bitter (he had always insisted that Zola had stolen most of his ideas from Manette Salomon) when he wrote the following apprais-al in his Journal: "Quant aux idées révolutionnaires en art de Zola, c'est partout un rabâchage patent des tirades et des 'morceaux de bravoure' de Chassagnol et des autres"?[51] The latter's comments are obviously tinged with emotionalism and show a biased judgment. But even when viewed from a purely objective standpoint, Zola's critical apparatus tends to weaken under the gaze of the modern critic. "Zola writes less about what he sees than what he wants the work to say, or what he be-lieves it says,"[52] argues Gaëtan Picon; the point is cer-tainly well taken. Zola had placed the artist's tempera-ment above the mere photographic reproduction of an ex-ternal view of reality. Perhaps it was his own tempéra-ment, his subjective personality, which prevented him from seeing what was actually before his eyes. It is ironic, in a sense, that Zola's search for objectivity and scientific accuracy would eventually lead him to make the extremely personal judgments he was attempting to avoid. How could he fail to see that any study of the human personality as it is reflected in a work of art would inevitably lead to individual beliefs? In the light of this reasoning, his early definition of the art critic's role in society loses much of its validity: "...notre rôle, à nous juges des oeuvres d'art, se borne à constater

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les langages des tempéraments, à étudier ces langages et à dire ce qu'il y a en eux de nouveauté souple et énergique. Les philosophes, s'il est nécessaire, se chargeront de rédiger des formules. Je ne veux analyser que des faits, et les oeuvres d'art sont de simples faits."[53]

Equally serious deficiencies are pointed out by John Rewald: "La sensibilité de l'oeil manquait à Zola, son goût n'était pas extrêmement fin, et sans doute était-il incapable de trouver une satisfaction intégrale dans une réalisation picturale...."[54] But it is curious to note that the same critic fails to realize that the fictional painter's last phase, his decadent or Symbolist period, does not show Zola's ignorance of the Impressionist mode, as this critic would have us believe, but is purposely intended to illustrate the decline in Claude Lantier's artistic genius, from the solidity and firmness of his "healthy" naturalistic phase to the sickness and inwardness of his erotic imaginings and mystical dabblings.

Emile Zola may have lacked the technical acumen necessary for effective art criticism. His aesthetic may have been based upon a handful of seemingly simplistic beliefs. But he was honest in his evaluations, held firm to his ideals, and recognized the shortcomings of his profession.[55]

The Critical Heritage:

It has frequently been stated that Zola's ideas on art grew out of his conversations with painters, both in

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Provence and Paris. While there is no reason to doubt that the future art critic did, in fact, gather a tremendous amount of information about painting in this fashion, it would be wrong to conclude that the process only moved in one direction. The Zola-Cézanne relationship is a case in point. No one would deny that it was Cézanne who first introduced Zola to the atelier Suisse, as well as to Pissarro, Bazille, and Monet. Likewise, it was Cézanne who took the author of L'Oeuvre on a personally escorted tour of the Salon des Refusés in 1863. Where the evidence is lacking, however, is in the period (1852-1860) preceding these Parisian experiences, those early years when Cézanne and Zola were fellow students at the Collège d'Aix-en-Provence. In the opinion of F.W.J. Hemmings, "il est douteux que Cézanne soit pour grand'chose dans l'évolution du sens critique chez Zola à cette période [i.e., 1861] ... Cézanne n'était pas encore capable d'un grand discernement. L'éducation artistique de Zola et de Cézanne semble donc s'être poursuivie parallèlement mais indépendamment."[56]

Zola's letters to Cézanne are crucial for any understanding of the author's development as an art critic; they present the fledgling writer-critic in a state of uncertainty as to his future ideas on art, still clinging to the Romantic theories of an earlier epoch. In one of his earliest letters, Zola argues for the acceptance of poetry in art: "Que voulez-vous donc dire avec ce mot de réaliste?" he asks of Cézanne. "Vous vous vantez de ne

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peindre que des sujets dénués de poésie! Mais chaque chose a la sienne, le fumier comme les fleurs ... l'art est un ... spiritualiste, réaliste ne sont que des mots ... la poésie est une grande chose ... hors de la poésie il n'y a pas de salut."[57] Here is the champion of Ary Scheffer and Gustave Doré, visionaries of art, as well as the slavish admirer of the tearful, melodramatic, and sentimental art of Greuze. Zola is not so much concerned with the physical representation of reality as he is with the spirit which lies behind and beyond material objects. In a subsequent letter to Cézanne, he illustrates this belief with a specific example: "...l'art ne s'arrête pas aux plis d'une étoffe, aux teintes rosées d'une vierge. Vois Rembrandt; avec un rayon de lumière, tous ses personnages, même les plus laids, deviennent poétiques."[58]

Nor is Zola familiar, at this point, with the technical aspects of painting. He places the subject or idea above the act of creation: "Lorsque je vois un tableau," he writes, "moi qui sais tout au plus distinguer le blanc du noir, il est évident que je ne puis me permettre de juger des coups de pinceau. Je me borne à dire si le sujet me plaît, si l'ensemble me fait rêver à quelque bonne et grande chose, si l'amour du beau respire dans la composition. En un mot, sans m'occuper du métier, je parle sur l'art, sur la pensée qui a présidé à l'oeuvre."[59] It is interesting to note that, six years later, Zola would condemn any attempt to impose an abstract ideal (e.g., "l'amour du beau") upon a work of art.

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Even at this early date, however, Zola was conscious of the necessity for form in art. It would be false to assume that he condoned the painting of ideas and feelings on canvas with a total disregard for the more formal elements. While warning Cézanne that form was not everything, Zola also stressed the lesson which the painter Frenhofer, the hero of Balzac's Le Chef d'Oeuvre Inconnu, learned at such great cost:

> Loin de moi la pensée de mépriser la forme. Ce serait sottise; car sans la forme on peut être grand peintre pour soi, mais non pour les autres. C'est elle qui fixe l'idée, et plus l'idée est grande, plus la forme doit être grande aussi. C'est par elle que le peintre est compris, apprécié; et cette appréciation n'est favorable qu'autant que la forme est excellente ... C'est te dire que le métier est tout et n'est rien; qu'il faut absolument le savoir, mais qu'il ne faut pas perdre de vue que le sentiment artistique est aussi essentiel. En un mot, ce sont deux éléments qui s'annulent séparés, et que réunis font un tout grandiose. 60

One of the most important early aesthetic pronouncements by Zola occurred in a lengthy letter, dated 18 August 1864, addressed to the poet-critic Antony Valabrègue. In it the future art critic defined his theory of artistic perception. Using the image of a window as a suitable analogy, Zola wrote: "Toute oeuvre d'art est comme une fenêtre ouverte sur la création; il y a, enchâssé dans l'embrasure de la fenêtre, une sorte d'Ecran transparent, à travers lequel on aperçoit les objets plus ou moins déformés ... Ces changements tiennent à la nature de l'Ecran. On n'a plus la création exacte et réelle, mais la création modifiée par le milieu où passe

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son image."[61] There then followed a first draft of his classic definition of a work of art: "Nous voyons la création dans une oeuvre à travers un homme, à travers un tempérament, une personnalité." Carrying this theory of the Ecran/Tempérament to its logical end, Zola argued that objective reality was an impossibility in any work of art or product of the human mind: "On dit qu'on rabaisse ou qu'on idéalise un sujet. Au fond, même chose. Il y a déformation de ce qui existe. Il y a mensonge. Peu importe que ce mensonge soit en beau ou en laid ... Le mot 'Art' n'est-il pas d'ailleurs opposé au mot 'Nature'?"[62] If Zola's detractors had read this last statement with greater care, they would not have accused the art critic of wishing to reduce painting to a scientific formula, to the fundamental processes of optical perception. Summarizing his views on artistic creation, Zola concluded: "Ainsi, tout enfantement d'une oeuvre consiste en ceci: l'artiste se met en rapport direct avec la création, la voit à sa manière, s'en laisse pénétrer, et nous en renvoie les rayons lumineux, après les avoir, comme le prisme, réfractés et colorés selon sa nature."[63] (emphasis mine)

In the latter half of the letter, Zola went on to describe the three types of écrans--the classical, romantic, and realistic. The first he characterized as "un verre grandissant qui développe les lignes et arrête les couleurs au passage." The linear art of Ingres, with its muted coloration, is a representative example of this type of painting. The second he characterized as "un

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prisme, à la réfraction puissante, qui brise tout rayon lumineux et le décompose en un spectre solaire éblouissant." Delacroix's lush coloration and painterly style immediately comes to mind. The third, écran, the realistic, Zola saw as coming after the classic and romantic periods in art; he defined it as "une vitre unie, très transparente sans être très limpide, donnant des images aussi fidèles qu'un Ecran peut en donner." While the art critic labelled this type of visual perception as being most deceptive (since it negated its very existence by purporting to reflect reality as it actually appears), he nonetheless chose it as his ideal: "Toutes mes sympathies, s'il faut le dire, sont pour l'Ecran réaliste: il contente ma raison, et je sens en lui des beautés immenses de solidité et de vérité ... je préfère l'Ecran qui, serrant de plus près la réalité, se contente de mentir juste assez pour me faire sentir un homme dans une image de la création."[64]

The letter to Valabrègue is also important for the light it sheds upon Zola's early conception of artistic genius and his opinion of rules and schools in art. Making use of the same image, Zola defined the leader of a school as "un Ecran très puissant, qui donne les images avec une grande vigueur. Une école est une troupe de petits Ecrans opaques d'un grain très grossier, qui, n'ayant pas eux-mêmes la puissance de donner des images prennent celle de l'Ecran puissant et pur dont ils font leur chef de file."[65] While this rather simplistic definition is not worthy of the mature art critic, it does

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indicate Zola's growing dislike for systems, schools, and official academies. More important, it points to his constant preoccupation with the nature of artistic genius. Having defined rules as "instruments de mensonge," Zola goes on to establish the proper relationship between these rules and the man of genius:

> Les règles n'ont leur raison d'être que pour le génie, d'après les oeuvres duquel on a pu les formuler; seulement, chez ce génie, ce n'étaient pas des règles, mais une manière personnelle de voir, un effet naturel de l'Ecran ...[Le génie] est de sa nature de n'être d'aucune école, et d'en créer de nouvelles au besoin ... Les artistes de génie naissent et grandissent librement; les disciples les suivent à la trace. Les écoles n'ont jamais produit un seul grand homme. Ce sont les grands hommes qui ont produit les écoles. 66

It is precisely for this reason that Zola's art criticism is dotted with the names of individual artists rather than those of schools. Michelangelo, Delacroix, Courbet, Manet--these are his heroes; the Renaissance, Romanticism, Realism, and Naturalism merely serve as convenient backdrops.

Zola's article "Proudhon et Courbet," published in 1865, marks the next stage, after the letters, in the writer's development as an art critic. The occasion for the article was the posthumous publication of Proudhon's Du Principe de l'Art et de sa Destination Sociale. Using the latter's theories as a grinding wheel against which to sharpen his own arguments, Zola launched a wholehearted attack upon Proudhon's socialist doctrines and

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their application to art. He criticized Proudhon for refusing to acknowledge the individual element, i.e., the human personality, in his definition of art: "Une représentation idéaliste de la nature et de nous mêmes, en vue du perfectionnement physique et moral de notre espèce."[67] Zola's response to such an abstract definition was quite succinct: "Il faut que je retrouve un homme dans chaque oeuvre, ou l'oeuvre me laisse froid. Je sacrifie carrément l'humanité à l'artiste ... Si l'oeuvre n'est pas du sang et des nerfs, si elle n'est pas l'expression entière et poignante d'une créature, je refuse l'oeuvre, fût-elle la Vénus de Milo. En un mot, je suis diamétralement opposé à Proudhon: il veut que l'art soit le produit de la nation, j'exige qu'il soit le produit de l'individu."[68] It was for precisely this reason that Zola opted for the art of the Renaissance and that of his own time; Proudhon, by contrast, glorified the art of earlier epochs, those periods during which the stamp of an individual creator had not yet left a recognizable impression.

The balance of Zola's article was devoted to a study of Courbet and the relationship between his paintings and the socialist theories of Proudhon. Zola emphatically denied the moral or social aim of Courbet's art. He preferred to see the painter rather than the humanitarian which Proudhon had made him out to be: "...si Courbet prêche, il prêche dans le désert, et ... s'il mérite notre admiration, il la mérite seulement par la façon dont il a saisi et rendu la nature ... Je ne crois pas

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que vous devez exiger de l'artiste qu'il enseigne, et, en tout cas, je nie formellement l'action d'un tableau sur les meeurs de la foule."[69] According to Zola, Proudhon's philosophical approach to art totally ignored the technical accomplishments of a painter. Just one year after he had denied any true understanding of the painter's craft, Zola was now challenging Proudhon's position on the very same grounds:

> Proudhon a vu comme moi les tableaux dont je parle, mais il les a vus autrement, en dehors de toute facture, au point de vue de la pure pensée. Une toile, pour lui, est un sujet ... Il commente, il force le tableau à signifier quelque chose; de la forme, pas un mot ... il reste philosophe, il ne veut pas sentir en artiste ... Il ne voit pas que Courbet existe par lui-même, et non par les sujets qu'il a choisis ... L'objet ou la personne à peindre sont les prétextes; le génie consiste à rendre cet objet ou cette personne dans un sens nouveau, plus vrai ou plus grand. [70]

Zola had always stressed the individualistic qualities of art. His Romantic inheritance prevented him from viewing art and artistic movements as a rational, collective process. It was therefore not surprising to find him challenging Proudhon's sincerity on an emotional level as well. The article concluded with the words: "J'aime Courbet absolument, tandis que Proudhon ne l'aime que relativement ... Son art <u>rationnel</u>, son réalisme à lui, n'est à vrai dire qu'une négation de l'art, une plate illustration de lieux communs philosophiques. Mon art, à moi, au contraire, est une négation de la société, une affirmation de l'individualité, en dehors de toutes règles et de toutes nécessités sociales."[71]

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One year after he had written his article on Proudhon and Courbet, Zola published an important essay on Taine entitled "L'Esthétique Professée à l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts"; it appeared in La Revue Contemporaine on 15 February 1866. According to Henri Mitterand, "il la méditait depuis longtemps. C'est pour lui comme une manière de reconnaître sa dette envers l'auteur des Essais de Critique et d'Histoire, qui lui a révélé Stendhal et Balzac, lui a enseigné la relativité de l'art, et lui a fourni une méthode d'analyse applicable dans le roman comme en critique."[72] This statement is borne out by Zola's admission (several months after the publication of the earlier essay): "Je me reconnais comme l'humble disciple de M. Taine ... Je crois qu'il a formulé la seule méthode possible en critique. Il y a introduit l'exactitude de la science, avec toute la liberté de l'artiste personnel et vivant. En un mot, il a définitivement posé des lois larges et formelles qui n'ont plus besoin que d'être vulgarisées."[73]

Zola, however, was not as content with Taine's aesthetic as this statement might lead one to believe. He saw Taine as two men: on the one hand, he was a compatriot of Rubens and Michelangelo, "une de ces créatures puissantes et emportées tordant leurs membres de marbre sur le tombeau de Médicis";[74] on the other, he regarded him as a systematic thinker, a cold and calculating scientist. "Pour moi," observed Zola, "il est trop savant. Toutes ses allures systématiques lui viennent de la science.

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Je préfère le poète, l'homme de chair et de nerfs, qui se révèle dans les peintures."[75]

Even more disconcerting to Zola was Taine's avoidance of the human personality in his discussions on art, as well as his stress upon external conditions and foreign influences to explain a painter's characteristic style; Zola had previously stated his indifference to such elements in his essay on Proudhon and Courbet.[76] Now he was forced to deny the validity of Taine's method when applied to individual works: "Pour les oeuvres collectives, le système de M. Taine fonctionne avec assez de régularité; là, en effet, l'oeuvre est évidemment le produit de la race, du milieu, du moment historique; il n'y a pas d'éléments individuels qui viennent déranger les rouages de la machine. Mais dès qu'on introduit la personnalité, l'élan humain libre et déréglé, tous les ressorts crient et le mécanisme se détraque."[77]

Zola's ambivalent attitude towards Taine's aesthetic doctrines may have been the result of conflicting forces within the author's own mind. Although he considered himself a humble disciple who owed his master a great debt for having introduced him to the fine art of criticism, Zola felt constrained to censure his predecessor when the latter's theories tended to stifle his own belief in the supremacy of the individual element in art. Taine's definition of a work of art--"L'oeuvre d'art a pour but de manifester quelque caractère essentiel ou saillant, partant quelque idée importante plus clairement

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et plus complètement que ne le font les objets réels. Elle y arrive en employant un ensemble de parties liées, dont elle modifie systématiquement les rapports"[78]--was wholeheartedly welcomed by Zola precisely because it gave the human, individual element the greatest degree of flexibility. "La définition de M. Taine contente mes besoins de réalité, mes besoins de personnalité; elle laisse l'artiste indépendant sans réglementer ses instincts, sans lui imposer les lois d'un beau typique, idée contraire à la liberté fatale des manifestations humaines."[79] Taine's avoidance of an ideal by which to measure a work of art was a principle which Zola himself championed in his mature art criticism. Although the earlier critic had a tendency to stress the scientific and rationalistic elements in his aesthetic doctrines--often at the expense of the personal, emotive qualities--he nevertheless won favor in Zola's eyes because his aim was to find truth and life in art, his system being simply a means to this end. "Je l'aime, cette méthode, parce qu'elle apporte la vérité ... Elle dit hautement que l'oeuvre est d'autant plus grande qu'elle est plus vivante; elle laisse à tous la liberté de produire selon sa nature, ne voyant dans une oeuvre ni qualités ni défauts, mais simplement une manifestation du génie humain."[80]

Taine, unlike Proudhon, never forced art to serve an auxiliary purpose, whether it be philosophical, social, or psychological; it never became a handmaiden to any ideological concept. True, both Taine and Proudhon stressed

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the collective nature of artistic production, yet the former never denied the importance of the individual element in art. His aim was simply to explain the nature of this original talent by linking it to a particular place and moment in history. Proudhon, on the contrary, negated the value of the human personality and relegated it to a position of servitude for the good of all mankind. While Zola could theoretically accept the possible influence of heredity upon an artist, having himself used this fact as a partial explanation of Claude Lantier's decline in L'Oeuvre, he was unable to accept a theory which flatly rejected the importance of the individual personality in art; tempérament, in Zola's view, was the lifeline which was keeping Proudhon's masses afloat.

Baudelaire's name is not frequently coupled with that of Zola. In terms of their fictional works, the poet and the novelist would appear to have been situated at opposite ends of the literary spectrum. Yet in their role as art critics they shared many related concepts. F.W.J. Hemmings has demonstrated that their salon reviews were chronologically linked; Baudelaire began his career as an art critic by championing Romanticism and ended it with a denunciation of Realism; Zola accepted Realism and pitted it against fin-de-siècle mysticism, decadence, and Symbolism. Their mutual admiration for the art of Delacroix also linked the two art critics. Both, moreover, were champions of the landscape painters.

Even more striking, however, is their identical

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use of art-historical terms. In Baudelaire's salon review of 1846, for example, the art critic speaks of "l'admirable servilisme des naturalistes"[81]--twenty-two years before Zola had used the term in his review of 1868 to describe Manet's art. Baudelaire came quite close to Zola's definition of the term tempérament when he stated emphatically: "Qui n'a pas de tempérament n'est pas digne de faire des tableaux, et,--comme nous sommes las des imitateurs et surtout des éclectiques,--doit entrer comme ouvrier au service d'un peintre à tempérament."[82] And what is one to make of Baudelaire's definition of a beautiful painting--"la nature réfléchie par un artiste"[83]--in the light of Zola's definition? Both critics, finally, were defenders of modernité in art, Baudelaire choosing Constantin Guys as the painter of modern life, Zola preferring Manet.

Despite these similarities--and one cannot speak of any direct influence to explain them--the backgrounds of the two art critics were quite different. As Hemmings has pointed out, Baudelaire's training as an art critic was a gradual process which encompassed vast and diverse periods and styles; Zola's education in the arts was, by comparison, limited and discontinuous. For Baudelaire, the act of contemplating a work of art was an extremely private and personal experience, whereas for Zola the public was always in the back of his mind. While the former could delight in the esoteric meanings which a painting might suggest, the latter dreaded the hermetic

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tendency of a work by Doré, Scheffer, or Gustave Moreau. Baudelaire rejected any system in art, arguing that "un système est une espèce de damnation qui nous pousse à une abjuration perpétuelle."[84] While Zola refused to accept the rigid hierarchies established by Proudhon and Taine, he nevertheless fell victim to his own set of limited yet stringently enforced principles.

Zola's review of Baudelaire's Curiosités Esthétiques (published by Lévy in 1868) contains the novelist's personal reactions to the poet/art critic. One of his first comments concerns the importance of the imaginative faculty in Baudelaire's salon criticism: "L'imagination, chez lui, juge l'art beaucoup plus que la raison. Il voit la peinture en littérateur."[85] Although Zola had chided Taine for his rationalistic tendencies, the tone in this passage seems equally critical of Baudelaire's more imaginative, literary view of art. It must be remembered that Zola had always insisted (in his mature criticism) that ideas had no place in a work of art. Would it therefore be appropriate for an art critic to come to a painting with his own literary preferences? Hardly established as an art critic himself, Zola had the temerity to predict that Baudelaire's "critiques d'art ne resteront pas comme des jugements solides et justes."[86] What intrigued and disturbed him most, however, was the nature of Baudelaire's personality, which he had the acuteness to perceive as the key to his artistic preferences, each illuminating the other: "Cette personnalité

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est, selon moi, très difficile à déterminer. Rien de plus délicat que de faire dans Baudelaire la part du tempérament et la part de l'affectation."[87]

In a follow-up article written one month later, Zola reviewed a third volume of Baudelaire's complete works. Apparently, he had still not resolved the mystery of Baudelaire's preferences in art; the very title of the poet's collection of essays remained an enigma to him: "...ce troisième volume des oeuvres complètes de Baudelaire, intitulé je ne sais pourquoi: L'art romantique, contient de bien étranges jugements sur les contemporains Delacroix, Théophile Gautier, Richard Wagner, Rouvière, etc."[88] One of the primary reasons why Zola must have found Baudelaire's criticism disturbing was the poet's refusal to treat each creative artist systematically, preferring instead to discuss the painter or writer in a referential, poetic, intuitive fashion. "L'auteur des Fleurs du mal s'est donné un mal infini pour échafauder une esthétique poétique qui serait un trop mauvais instrument d'analyse. A quoi bon aller chercher si loin, lorsqu'en parlant de Balzac, il avait trouvé la vérité unique: une oeuvre n'est que le produit d'une individualité."[89] Whereas Zola stubbornly clung to the belief that the work of art was the clearest reflection of the artist's personality, with both relating to each other on a one-to-one basis, Baudelaire was aware of a more subtle network of correspondences which linked the music of Hector Berlioz to the paintings of Delacroix, or the works

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of the latter to the novels of Walter Scott. Baudelaire was not afraid to go outside a work of art to shed more light upon its deeper meaning. Zola felt that such a course of action would only lead to greater confusion; only within the distinctive personality of the artist could one discover the key to his works.

A Summing Up:

Zola's romantic and individualistic aesthetic, rejecting as it did any abstract notion of an ideal in art and refusing to accept any inherited set of rules, appeared revolutionary to early art historians and critics. François de Hérain, writing in 1943, could not restrain his feeling of admiration for Zola's accomplishments in the field of aesthetics:

> Jamais la critique n'a proposé d'une façon plus claire l'idéal à conseiller aux artistes: l'exaltation du tempérament, l'amour du naturel, l'excitation à peindre la vie, la liberté par rapport aux traditions, la peinture dégagée de la littérature, mais surtout la peinture s'adressant aux yeux plutôt qu'à l'esprit. Tel est l'ensemble qui constitue, pour l'époque, une profession de foi révolutionnaire.... [90]

Yet even this enthusiastic critic was forced to add: "En effet, ce que Zola avait réclamé c'était moins la transformation d'une vision qu'un changement dans les sujets, l'abandon du romantisme en faveur de son propre réalisme et le maintien de la vraisemblance."[91]

More recent critics of Zola's aesthetic have challenged

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the very foundation--the act of visual perception--upon which it rests. Gaëton Picon, in a closely reasoned and perceptive article, has concluded that "Zola [did] not realize that painting can remodel the world, starting not from given models but from zero."[92] It was precisely this refusal to acknowledge the intangible as a source of inspiration for the artist[93] which prevented the mature Zola from appreciating the art of Scheffer, Doré, and Moreau. It was also the reason for the art critic's love of Manet's paintings, which were always based upon the careful study of an actual model.

Zola's aesthetic, a hybrid of intellectual and emotional elements, was never properly fused to form an integral whole. In Hemmings' words, "Zola never succeeded in reconciling intellectually his demand for submission to objective reality (naturalism) with his equally strongly held craving for 'originality' which could manifest itself only by an aesthetic refashioning of reality or, in Baudelaire's phrase, by 'a protest against Nature.'"[94] Zola was therefore the unwitting prisoner of his own system, claiming to give the artist's tempérament the greatest degree of flexibility, yet forcing him to base his works only upon concrete reality, that which could be visually perceived by the naked eye.

"L'Oeuvre" and the Salon Criticism:

One of Claude Lantier's earliest theoretical statements is concerned with the subject of light: "C'était

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une de ses théories, que les jeunes peintres du plein air devaient louer les ateliers dont ne voulaient pas les peintres académiques, ceux que le soleil visitait de la flamme vivante de ses rayons."[95] Light, in fact, becomes the central leitmotif of the novel. The theoretical discussions among the painters, the long promenades through the streets of Paris, the recurring image of a golden sunset--all these examples revolve around the question of light. In his salon review for 1876, "Deux Expositions d'Art au Mois de Mai," Zola was quick to stress the importance which light had assumed in recent years: "...le symptôme le plus révélateur c'est le grand jour qui pénètre partout, ce sont les ateliers lâchant la peinture au plein air, sous les clairs rayons de soleil."[96] This insistence upon radical change and innovation stamps Claude as a revolutionary right at the outset. The opposition between "les jeunes peintres du plein air," as the artist refers to them, and "les peintres académiques" will form the crux of the novel.

Lantier is a modernist, one who seeks inspiration in his contemporary milieu; he considers the art of the past a hindrance to complete and original artistic expression: "Il en arrivait à déclamer contre le travail au Louvre, il se serait, disait-il, coupé le poignet, plutôt que d'y retourner gâter son oeil à une de ces copies, qui encrassent pour toujours la vision du monde où l'on vit." (II,51) Zola had said as much in his salon article of 1868, "Mon Salon," when he declared: "Il

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faut être de son âge, si l'on veut créer des oeuvres viables."[97]

Just as important is the object or subject which the painter wishes to depict. Formerly, academic salons had rigidly established set categories--the still life, the historical fresco, the landscape, the portrait--and ranked them in a hierarchical value system. For Claude, however, there can be no external imposition of abstract values on a work of art:

> Est-ce que, en art, il y avait autre chose que de donner ce qu'on avait dans le ventre? est-ce que tout ne se réduisait pas à planter une bonne femme devant soi, puis à la rendre comme on la sentait? est-ce qu'une botte de carottes, oui, une botte de carottes! étudiée directement, peinte naïvement, dans la note personnelle où on la voit, ne valait pas les éternelles tartines de l'École, cette peinture au jus de chique, honteusement cuisinée d'après les recettes? Le jour venait où une seule carotte originale serait grosse d'une révolution.
>
> (II,51-2)

Zola had argued for the same return to common sense and naturalness in his defense of Edouard Manet. The very title of his article of 1867, "Une Nouvelle Manière en Peinture," pointed to the need for simplicity and direct observation without recourse to predetermined formulas. Zola's description of Manet's painterly technique is almost a literal transcription of Claude's argument:

> ...il prit un objet quelconque, un être ou une chose, le plaça dans un coin de son atelier, et se mit à le reproduire sur une toile, selon ses facultés de vision et de compréhension. Il fit effort pour oublier tout ce qu'il avait étudié dans les musées; il tâcha de ne plus se rappeler les conseils qu'il avait reçus, les

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> oeuvres peintes qu'il avait regardées. Il n'y eut plus là qu'une intelligence particulière, servie par des organes doués d'une certaine façon, mise en face de la nature et la traduisant à sa manière. [98]

The need for an actual model, whether an object or a living person, was one of Zola's cardinal rules. Claude Lantier's preparatory sketches for his early work, Plein Air, illustrate this point. Having agreed to a preliminary sitting for the central nude in the canvas, Christine, Claude's mistress, does not return for a lengthy interval. The painter, whose artistic practice depends upon the visual rendering of a living person, is driven to the point of desperation: "...c'était surtout à la figure centrale, à la femme couchée, que le peintre travaillait: il n'avait plus repris la tête, il s'acharnait sur le corps, changeant de modèle chaque semaine, si désespéré de ne pas se satisfaire, que, depuis deux jours, lui qui se flattait de ne pouvoir inventer, il cherchait sans document, en dehors de la nature." (IV,120) This need to go outside observable reality to some spiritual ideal will eventually lead Claude to the brink of failure. The same need for a factual basis for his art was likewise stressed by Manet. In his salon review for 1868 Zola recounted the sessions he spent in the painter's atelier while posing for his portrait. "Souvent, quand il traitait un détail secondaire, je voulais quitter la pose, je lui donnais le mauvais conseil d'inventer. --Non, me répondit-il, je ne puis rien faire sans

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la nature. Je ne sais pas inventer."[99]

Because the hereditary legacy of the Rougon-Macquart family courses through his veins, Claude is frequently subject to attacks of extreme exhilaration and despair. When the former state of mind gets the upper hand, the artist's statements frequently resemble the youthful pronouncements of Zola. During a Thursday evening gathering at Sandoz's (Claude's writer friend) place, for example, the painter has occasion to exclaim:

> Ah! la vie, la vie! la sentir et la rendre dans sa réalité, l'aimer pour elle, y voir la seule beauté vraie, éternelle et changeante, ne pas avoir l'idée bête de l'anoblir en la châtrant, comprendre que les prétendues laideurs ne sont que des saillies des caractères, et faire vivre, et faire des hommes, la seule façon d'être Dieu!
>
> (III,106-7)

In his salon article of 1866 Zola made the same plea for sanity in the choice of subject matter and urged an uncompromising devotion to life: "Par grâce, peignez, puisque vous êtes peintres, ne chantez pas. Voici de la chair, voici de la lumière: faites avec cela un Adam qui soit votre création. Vous devez être des faiseurs d'hommes et non pas des faiseurs d'ombres."[100]

One of the highlights of the novel is the scene of the Salon des Refusés, where Claude's Plein Air is both an endless source of ridicule for the bourgeois gallery-goers and, at the same time, the banner under which the other plein air painters rally. The incomprehension of the crowd, their mocking disparagement of every innovative effort on the part of the younger artists, causes Sandoz

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to shout: "Ah! race ennemie, stupidité de bourreaux!" (V,171) This is not far from Zola's own opinion of the masses who flocked to such revolutionary exhibitions. In his essay on Manet the art critic observed: "La foule...est un grand enfant qui n'a pas la plus petite conviction et qui finit toujours par accepter les gens qui s'imposent ... On ne corrigera jamais le public de ses épouvantes."[101]

Despite this pessimistic conclusion, the same scene offers hope that a new epoch in the history of art has finally arrived. Utilizing the image of a window, Lantier optimistically reflects upon the future of this new style in painting:

> C'était comme une fenêtre brusquement ouverte dans la vieille cuisine au bitume, dans les jus recuits de la tradition, et le soleil entrait, et les murs riaient de cette matinée de printemps! La note claire de son tableau, ce bleuissement dont on se moquait, éclatait parmi les autres. N'était-ce pas l'aube attendue, un jour nouveau qui se levait pour l'art? (V,173)

In his salon article for 1876 Zola had hailed the advent of Impressionism in equally glowing terms, speaking of the movement as the new art of the future.[102] One cannot help feeling, however, that the art critic praised the movement more for its reaction against the official, academic style than for its inherent qualities as a distinctive and different technique. Several critics have accused Zola, not totally without justification, of having sided with the Impressionists because of his combative spirit rather than as a result of his just appreciation

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of their art.

Claude's determination to succeed at all costs, his unwillingness to compromise his ideals in the face of reality, contribute in large part to his disastrous end. Part of the explanation certainly lies in his pathological condition--Zola never lets the reader lose sight of the fact that his hero is descended from a long line of sick individuals. Yet his persistence in the face of defeat is also the result of Zola's philosophical and moral outlook. Claude's realization that his post-Bennecourt winter cityscapes will never prove acceptable to the jury is all the more reason for his submission of such works to the official salon. "Après avoir juré qu'il ne tenterait jamais plus d'exposer, il établissait maintenant en principe qu'on devait toujours présenter quelque chose au jury, uniquement pour le mettre dans son tort; et il reconnaissait du reste l'utilité du Salon, le seul terrain de bataille où un artiste pouvait se révéler d'un coup." (VIII,279) In his salon review of 1880, "Le Naturalisme au Salon," Zola had expressed the same opinion with respect to Claude Monet. Instead of flaunting his works in the faces of the official jury, the painter had retreated from the field of battle, thereby greatly lessening his own reputation as a promising artist of the future. The passage in question ended with the following assertion: "Le grand courage est de rester sur la brèche, quelles que soient les fâcheuses conditions où l'on s'y trouve."[103]

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Claude's final Symbolist phase is an illustration of Zola's plea for the absence of ideas in a work of art. "Rien n'est fâcheux comme la peinture d'idées," he would subsequently write in his salon review for 1896, "Peinture."[104] The giant nude dominating Lantier's Apotheosis of Paris is a blatant violation of the Zolaesque esthetic. "Comment un peintre moderne," asks Sandoz in bewilderment, "qui se piquait de ne peindre que des réalités, pouvait-il abâtardir une oeuvre, en y introduisant des imaginations pareilles?" (IX,322) For Zola painting remained the reflection of the real world as expressed through an individual artistic temperament. The art critic could only look upon the intermingling of the real and the imaginary with disparagement. As early as 1866 Zola had already expressed his aesthetic preferances for the vital, the living, the real as opposed to the morbid, the fantastic, the grotesque:

> Ce que je demande à l'artiste, ce n'est pas de me donner de tendres visions ou des cauchemars effroyables; c'est de se livrer lui-même, coeur et chair, c'est d'affirmer hautement un esprit puissant et particulier, une nature âpre et forte qui saisisse largement la nature en sa main et la plante tout debout devant nous, telle qu'il la voit.[105]

Claude's artistic decline, Zola seems to imply, is as much the fault of a lack of an effective artistic formula as it is the result of his hereditary lesion of the eyes.

Yet Zola also felt that there was something inherently wrong with the entire structure of the jury-salon system itself, an organization which he felt

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contributed substantially to the sense of failure and rejection besetting his artistic contemporaries. At one of their last Thursday evening reunions, the crumbling band of painters discusses this very issue: "...n'était-ce pas une honte, ces médailles, ces croix, toutes ces récompenses qui déshonoraient l'art, tant on les distribuait mal? Est-ce qu'on devait rester d'éternels petits garçons en classe? Toutes les platitudes venaient de là, cette docilité et cette lâcheté devant les pions, pour avoir des bons points!" (XI,462) The entire scene of the charité, where Claude's Enfant Mort, supported by the sly Fagerolles and the venerable Bongrand, is finally accorded a place in the salon exhibit, is an exposé of the ruthless machinations of the jurors. In his salon review for 1866 Zola had sadly confessed: "...un salon de nos jours n'est pas l'oeuvre des artistes, il est l'oeuvre d'un jury." He then went on to demand immediate reforms in the electoral procedure:

> Il faut rétablir énergiquement les choses dans leur réalité. Il faut dire à ces juges, qui vont au Palais de l'Industrie défendre parfois une idée mesquine et personnelle, que les Expositions ont été créées pour donner largement de la publicité aux travailleurs sérieux. Tous les contribuables paient, et les questions d'écoles et de systèmes ne doivent pas ouvrir la porte pour les uns et la fermer pour les autres. 106

L'Oeuvre does not merely posit value judgments. Were it simply an indictment of his own generation, without explanation, then Zola would rightfully deserve the appellation of cynic, pessimist, and nihilist. The

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novel goes beyond mere criticism. It seeks to understand the causes of this supposed decline in artistic excellence. Quite early in the work, in fact, Claude Lantier puts his finger upon the primary reason for his inability to create: "Ah! nous y trempons tous, dans la sauce romantique. Notre jeunesse y a trop barboté, nous en sommes barbouillés jusqu'au menton. Il nous faudra une fameuse lessive." (II,57) This theme, a veritable leitmotif, is sounded on almost every page of the novel. It receives its final variation in the dialogue between Sandoz and Bongrand; the former, referring to Claude's unfortunate end, concludes: "...son mal n'était pas en lui seulement, il a été la victime d'une époque ... Oui, notre génération a trempé jusqu'au ventre dans le romantisme, et nous en sommes restés imprégnés quand même, et nous avons eu beau nous débarbouiller, prendre des bains de réalité violente, la tache s'entête, toutes les lessives du monde n'en ôteront pas l'odeur." (XII,494-5) Zola had obviously arrived at a hasty conclusion in his essay on Manet. He had underestimated the lingering ability of Romanticism in writing: "La race chevelue de 1830 a même, Dieu merci! complètement disparu, et nos peintres sont devenus ce qu'ils doivent être, des gens vivant comme tout le monde."[107] Sandoz, however, was not so optimistic. Despite the intervening generation, represented by the realist painter Bongrand, the writer felt that the pernicious influence of Romanticism was still in the air: "Même après la vôtre," he told Bongrand, "notre génération est trop encrassée de lyrisme pour laisser des

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oeuvres saines. Il faudra une génération, deux générations peut-être, avant qu'on peigne et qu'on écrive logiquement, dans la haute et pure simplicité du vrai." (XII,495) Yet Sandoz was convinced that an antidote of sorts did, in fact, exist: "Seule, la vérité, la nature, est la base possible, la police nécessaire, en dehors de laquelle la folie commence...." (XII,495) Zola had said substantially the same thing in an article published in La Tribune in 1869. "En art," he had written, "tout ce qui n'est pas vivant est mauvais. La vie seule féconde une oeuvre, la rend éternelle de vie et d'intérêt."[108]

The Paintings of Claude Lantier:

Although there is a great deal of controversy surrounding the question of Claude Lantier's painterly style and the model(s) which served Zola as a source of inspiration for his painter-hero, most critics agree that Claude's artistic evolution can be divided into three broad stages: an early attempt at realistic and naturalistic subjects, followed by an Impressionist idyll (at Bennecourt) and a corresponding lightening of tone and brightening of color, ultimately leading into a decadent, Symbolist phase. Using this general pattern as a guide, an examination of some of Lantier's major works now follows.

Claude's early style, similar in many ways to Cézanne's first romantic efforts, serves to highlight the radical nature of his experiments in form and color.

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"Jamais [Christine] n'avait vu une si terrible peinture, rugueuse, éclatante, d'une violence de tons qui la blessait comme un juron de charretier, entendu sur la porte d'une auberge." (I,22) If anything, this type of art certainly illustrates Zola's concept of the artist's tempérament; the personality of the painter leaves its impress upon these scenes of external reality. The same holds true for Claude's youthful sketches of the countryside surrounding Plassans, where vivid colors and strong sunlight tend to predominate:

> Les murs de l'atelier étaient justement couverts d'une série d'esquisses, faites là-bas par le peintre, dans un récent voyage. C'était comme s'ils avaient eu, autour d'eux, les anciens horizons, l'ardent ciel bleu sur la campagne rousse. Là, une plaine s'étendait, avec le moutonnement des petits oliviers grisâtres, jusqu'aux dentelures roses des collines lointaines. Ici, entre deux coteaux brûlés, couleur de rouille, l'eau tarrie de la Viorne se désséchait sous l'arche d'un vieux pont, enfariné de poussière, sans autre verdure que des buissons morts de soif. Plus loin, la gorge des Infernets ouvrit son entaille béante, au milieu de ses écroulements de roches foudroyées, un immense chaos, un désert farouche, roulant à l'infini ses vagues de pierre. (II,48)

Despite the violence of the colors and the broad application of paint in these works, Zola also discloses the fact that Claude Lantier had received a basic academic training. His anatomical studies are proof of this heritage: "Du bout de sa brosse, il indiquait une académie peinte, pendue au mur, près de la porte. Elle était superbe, enlevée avec une largeur de maître; et, à côté, il y avait encore d'admirables morceaux, des

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pieds de fillette, exquis de vérité délicate, un ventre de femme surtout, une chair de satin, frissonnante, vivante du sang qui coulait sous la peau." (II,52) One is reminded of Zola's baptism of Courbet as a "painter of flesh," as well as his insistence upon the artist's traditional technique, an inheritance from such masters as Titian, Veronese, and Rubens. Claude's careful observation of the human form and his faithful and detailed rendering of visual impressions clearly mark him as a naturalist painter at this stage in his career.[109]

Lantier's first major work, Plein Air (frequently associated with Manet's Déjeuner sur l'Herbe), is the ultimate expression of the naturalist aesthetic in art. Zola's description of the painting captures the essence of this style:

> C'était une toile de cinq mètres sur trois, entièrement couverte, mais dont quelques morceaux à peine se dégageaient de l'ébauche. Cette ébauche, jetée d'un coup, avait une violence superbe, une ardente vie de couleurs. Dans un trou de forêt, aux murs épais de verdure, tombait une ondée de soleil; seule, à gauche, une allée sombre s'enfonçait, avec une tache de lumière, très loin. Là, sur l'herbe, au milieu des végétations de juin, une femme nue était couchée, un bras sous la tête, enflant la gorge; et elle souriait, sans regard, les paupières closes, dans la pluie d'or qui la baignait. Au fond, deux autres petites femmes, une brune, une blonde, également nus, luttaient en riant, détachaient, parmi les verts des feuilles, deux adorables notes de chair. Et comme au premier plan, le peintre avait eu besoin d'une opposition noire, il s'était bonnement satisfait, en y asseyant un monsieur, vêtu d'un simple veston de velours. Ce monsieur tournait le dos, on ne voyait de lui que sa main gauche, sur laquelle il s'appuyait, dans l'herbe.
>
> (II,36-7)

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The key phrase, "une violence superbe, une ardente vie de couleurs," establishes the tone of the entire work. The emphasis upon light ("une ondée de soleil...une tache de lumière...la pluie d'or"), counterbalanced by an equal number of darker indications ("épais...sombre...vert... une opposition noire"), plus an emphasis upon the description of flesh ("une femme nue...deux adorables notes de chair") establish this as a typically naturalist work.

Since Zola wished to attribute Claude's eventual failure, in part, to a physical abnormality, he developed the notion of the chaste artist possessed by the painted flesh on his canvases. (II,61) In addition, he also appropriated the traditional motif of the painter's mistress/model and her opposition to the painted image: "Cette peinture, [Christine] ne la comprenait pas, elle la jugeait exécrable, elle se sentait contre elle une haine, la haine instinctive d'une ennemie." (IV,120) Claude's frustrated attempts at capturing the perfect combination of flesh tones for the nude gracing the center of his composition ultimately lead him to wish to destroy his masterpiece, much as the painter Basil Hallward threatens to do for his own work in Oscar Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray:

> ...d'un élan, dans une crise de folle rage, il voulut se jeter sur sa toile, pour la crever du poing ... A pleine main, il avait pris un couteau à la palette très large; et, d'un seul coup, lentement, profondément, il gratta la tête et la gorge de la femme. Ce fut un meurtre véritable, un écrasement: tout disparut dans une bouillie fangeuse. Alors, ...il n'y eut plus, de cette femme nue, sans poitrine et sans tête,

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> qu'un tronçon mutilé, qu'une tache vague de cadavre, une chair de rêve évaporée et morte.
>
> (II,64,70)

Just as Dorian Gray is unable to face the horror of his putrescent portrait locked away in the schoolroom, so Claude dreads a return to his studio, the scene of his artistic failures: "Son atelier lui semblait un lieu d'horreur, où il ne pouvait plus vivre, comme s'il y avait laissé le cadavre d'une affection morte. Non, non, monter les trois étages, ouvrir la porte, s'enfermer en face de ça: il lui aurait fallu une force au-dessus de son courage!" (III,80)

When Claude sees his Plein Air on exhibit at the salon (usually identified as the famous Salon des Refusés of 1863), he is struck by the changes in the canvas resulting from the altered lighting of the exhibition hall: "Elle avait jauni sous la lumière blafarde de l'écran de toile; elle semblait également diminuée, plus brutale et plus laborieuse à la fois...." (V,168) The most radical change, however, is noted by the public: "Tiens! un savonnage: les chairs sont bleues, les arbres sont bleus, pour sûr qu'il l'a passé au bleu, son tableau! Ceux qui ne riaient pas entraient en fureur: ce bleuissement, cette notation nouvelle de la lumière semblaient une insulte." (V,169-70) It is this new interpretation of light, its refraction and separation into its basic components, which marks the transition in Claude's artistic evolution from a purely naturalistic/realistic, detailed style to a looser, impressionistic

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treatment of light and color.

Claude Lantier is a champion of light, of the out-of-doors. Several critics have taken his insistence upon direct sunlight as a firm declaration of his Impressionist leanings. While Zola may have attributed several Impressionist theories to his artist-hero,[110] it is only after the Bennecourt idyll that Claude's style even begins to resemble the works of the Impressionists. The *ébauche* of the novel insists that the hero must oppose the sketchy, unfinished style of these *plein air* painters.[111] Yet in his choice of subject matter, i.e., his dream of capturing the spirit of Paris on huge murals, Claude comes quite close to resembling many of the Impressionists:

> Ah! tout voir et tout peindre, reprit Claude, après un long intervalle. Avoir des lieues de murailles à couvrir, décorer les gares, les halles, les mairies ... Ce ne sont pas les sujets qui manqueront...Hein? la vie telle qu'elle passe dans les rues, la vie des pauvres et des riches, aux marchés, aux courses, sur les boulevards, au fond des ruelles populeuses; et tous les métiers en branle, et toutes les passions remises debout, sous le plein jour; et les paysans, et les bêtes, et les campagnes ... Oui! toute la vie moderne! Des fresques hautes comme le Panthéon! Une sacrée suite de toiles à faire éclater le Louvre!
>
> (II,55-6)

Claude had attempted just such a study during his naturalistic period, a painting depicting two *gamins* perched atop a pile of vegetables at Les Halles. His grandiose vision, a fatal Romantic inheritance, turned this *sacrée machine*, as he termed it, into a disaster. (II,51) Despite this shortcoming, Claude's range of subjects

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certainly identifies him with the Impressionists. One thinks immediately of Degas--the jockeys, the milliners, the laundresses--or Childe Hassam and his numerous scenes of Parisian city life. It is the everyday quality of these subjects, their naturalness and simplicity, which Zola wished to contrast with the historical and antique subjects of the academic painters, the pastry-shop quality which the works of Bouguereau and Cabanel exuded.

Claude's removal to Bennecourt marks a significant shift in his style. One of the most dramatic changes is reflected in his decision to paint out-of-doors, to sketch his subjects right at the scene in direct sunlight. While Plein Air certainly represented a new stage in Lantier's stylistic evolution, it had nevertheless been executed under the artificial conditions of an atelier. In his Bennecourt sketches, by contrast, Claude's works reflect the immediate influence of his changing environment. The painter's wish to capture the changing atmospheric conditions of the weather and the nuances of direct sunlight parallel the Impressionist studies popularized by Monet: "...il s'échauffa, l'idée de peindre une figure habillée en plein soleil finit par le hanter; et, dès ce moment, sa femme fut sa victime ... Il la peignit à vingt reprises, vêtue de blanc, vêtue de rouge au milieu des verdures, debout ou marchant, à demi allongée sur l'herbe, coiffée d'un grand chapeau de campagne, tête nue sous une ombrelle, dont la soie cerise baignait sa face d'une lumière rose." (VI,206-7) Claude's

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palette is likewise affected by his new surroundings: "Après cette année de repos en pleine campagne en pleine lumière, il peignait avec une vision nouvelle, comme éclaircie, d'une gaieté de tons chantante. Jamais encore il n'avait eu cette science des reflets, cette sensation si juste des êtres et des choses, baignant dans la clarté diffuse." (VI,209)

By the third year of his stay at Bennecourt, however, Claude longs to return to Paris. One of the first subjects he paints is a winter cityscape; the newly acquired scientific approach to light is unmistakable:

> ...il peignait un fond de misère, des masures basses, dominées par des cheminées d'usine; et, au premier plan, il avait mis dans la neige une fillette et un voyou en loques, qui dévoraient des pommes volées ... L'oeuvre, quand elle fut posée sous la clarté morte du vitrage, l'étonna lui-même par sa brutalité: c'était comme une porte ouverte sur la rue, la neige aveuglait, les deux figures se détachaient, lamentables, d'un gris boueux. (VIII,278)

Although the subject recalls Claude's earlier naturalistic study of two children at Les Halles, the painting is executed in a style which reflects Claude's increasing preoccupation with the effects of light. This fact is clearly demonstrated in the contrasting subject which the painter chooses for the following year: "Il choisit un bout du square des Batignolles, en mai: de gros marronniers jetant leur ombre, une fuite de pelouse, des maisons à six étages, au fond; tandis que, au premier plan, sur un banc d'un vert cru, s'alignaient des bonnes et des petits bourgeois du quartier, regardant trois

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gamines en train de faire des pâtes de sable ... Cette fois, le tableau lui parut moins rude, la facture avait un peu de l'adoucissement morne qui tombait du vitrage." (VIII,279) Despite Claude's attempts at softening his tonal effects and modifying his style, the work is rejected by the jury.

As a reaction against the repeated rejection of his paintings by the official salon jury, Claude decides to execute a painting which embodies his mood of revolt. The treatment of light and color in this work is so extreme that forms appear to dissolve under the impact of bright sunlight. Here is how Zola describes this revolutionary work:

> Le sujet qu'il traita fut un coin de la place du Carrousel, à une heure, lorsque l'astre tape d'aplomb. Un fiacre cahotait, au cocher somnolent, au cheval en eau, la tête basse, vague dans la vibration de la chaleur; des passants semblaient ivres, pendant que, seule, une jeune femme, rose et gaillarde sous son ombrelle, marchait à l'aise d'un pas de reine, comme dans l'élément de flamme, où elle devait vivre. Mais ce qui, surtout, rendait ce tableau terrible, c'était l'étude nouvelle de la lumière, cette décomposition d'une observation très exacte, et qui contrecarrait toutes les habitudes de l'oeil, en accentuant des bleues, des jaunes, des rouges, où personne n'était accoutumé d'en voir. Les Tuileries, au fond, s'évanouissaient en nuée d'or; les pavés saignaient, les passants n'étaient plus que des indications, des taches sombres mangées par la clarté trop vive. (VIII,280)

In his exaggerated use of color and light, Claude has stepped beyond the confines of Impressionist technique. Although his subject is still typical of these painters, the manner in which it has been executed already hints

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at his imminent decline. It is just a short step to the painter's final Symbolist phase.

Claude's hypnotic fascination with the Ile de la Cité as the perfect subject for a masterpiece leads him into the treacherous and deadly area of idealism in art. The symbolic content of the preliminary sketch which he describes to Christine foredooms his effort to failure right at the outset. "...j'ai pour premier plan le port Saint-Nicholas, avec sa grue, ses péniches qu'on décharge, son peuple de débardeurs. Hein? tu comprends, c'est Paris qui travaille, ça! des gaillards solides, étalant le nu de leur poitrine et de leur bras... Puis, de l'autre côté, j'ai le bain froid, Paris qui s'amuse, et une barque sans doute, là, pour occuper le centre de la composition; mais ça, je ne sais pas bien encore, il faut que je cherche ... Naturellement, la Seine au milieu, large, immense...." (VIII,294) As if to reinforce the note of imminent disaster, Zola points to the breakdown of the painter's technique. Recalling the final illegible and unrecognizable masterpiece of Balzac's Frenhofer, Claude Lantier's sketch consists of a mass of tangled lines and discordant elements: "Du crayon, à mesure qu'il parlait, il indiquait les contours fortement, reprenant dix fois les traits hâtifs, crevant le papier, tant il y mettait d'énergie. Elle, pour lui être agréable, se penchait, affectait de s'intéresser vivement à ses explications. Mais le croquis s'embrouillait d'un tel écheveau de lignes, se chargeait

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d'une si grande confusion de détails sommaires, qu'elle n'y distinguait rien." (VIII,294-5) Unable to paint his subject firsthand, the canvas's huge dimensions making this physically impossible, Claude is forced to sketch portions of his great work at the scene, subsequently transferring these, piecemeal fashion, to the canvas rigged up in his studio. This indirect and time-consuming process is also a factor contributing to the failure of the artist's work.

Sandoz's chance discovery of a substitution in the painting discloses Claude's lifelong obsession with sexuality expressed in the form of painted flesh: "...il demeura stupéfait en apercevant, à la place de la barque conduite par un marinier, une autre barque, très grande, tenant tout le milieu de la composition, et que trois femmes occupaient: une, en costume de bain, ramant; une autre, assise au bord, les jambes dans l'eau, son corsage à demi arraché montrant l'épaule; la troisième, toute droite, toute nue à la proue, d'une nudité si éclatante qu'elle rayonnait comme un soleil." (IX,321-2) Zola's depiction of Paris as a siren luring Claude Lantier to his destruction is now combined with the image of the nude seated on the prow of the ship: "...un symbolisme secret ... lui faisait incarner dans cette nudité la chair même de Paris, la ville nue et passionnée, resplendissante d'une beauté de femme." (IX,323) Interwoven throughout this episode is the additional motif of the rivalry between living model and painted nude.

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Zola's description of Claude's growing indifference to Christine makes use of this idea: "Le tableau immense se dressait entre eux, les séparait d'une muraille infranchissable; et c'était au-delà qu'il vivait, avec l'autre." (IX,333) Claude's state of mental imbalance, moreover, is reflected in his exaggerated concern with the scientific application of color to a work of art: "...lorsqu'il revenait maintenant à l'observation directe, la tête bourdonnante de cette science, son oeil prévenu forçait les nuances délicates, affirmait en notes trop vives l'exactitude de la théorie; de sorte que son originalité de notation, si claire, si vibrante de soleil, tournait à la gageure, à un renversement de toutes les habitudes de l'oeil, des chairs violâtres sous des cieux tricolores. La folie semblait au bout." (IX,339-40) Zola spares no effort in chronicling Claude's downward path. He goes from painting original and daring works to detestable "travaux de commerce"; these are followed by slavish copies and "portraits à vingt-cinq francs"; still in desperate need of money, the painter finally resorts to executing works "au numéro." (IX,341)

Like Frenhofer, Claude becomes enamored of his ideal nude: "Un véritable amour s'était emparé de lui, il parlait d'elle ainsi que d'une personne, avait de brusques besoins de la revoir, qui lui faisaient tout quitter, comme pour courir à un rendez-vous." (IX,347) This pathological state of affairs is compounded by the fact that Claude is obsessed by the image of the reclining nude which had plagued him in Plein Air; it is the same

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woman which he has been repainting ever since. Sandoz is particularly troubled by the incongruous fusion, in a single work, of a realistic scene (i.e., the débardeurs unloading sacks of plaster) with a truly surrealistic vision of painted flesh.

The death of Claude's son Jacques provides the painter with his last chance to paint a truly naturalistic work and thereby save himself from destruction. Claude soon overcomes his initial sense of grief and begins to regard the lifeless corpse as an interesting sujet: "Ce dessin exagéré de la tête, ce ton de cire des chairs, ces yeux pareils à des trous sur le vide, tout l'excitait, le chauffait d'une flamme. Il se reculait, se complaisait, souriait vaguement à son oeuvre." (IX,366) The completed work harks back to Claude's earlier, more forceful style: "C'était un des bons morceaux de jadis, un chef-d'oeuvre de clarté et de puissance, avec une immense tristesse en plus, la fin de tout, la vie mourant de la mort de cet enfant." (IX,366-7) Sandoz persuades Claude to submit the work to the annual salon. After much coaxing and wheedling, the painter Fagerolles, a member of the selection committee (and a former hanger-on of Claude's band of artists), manages to have the work accepted as a charité. Having vainly attempted to locate his work at the exhibition, Claude finally discovers his tiny canvas tacked up near the ceiling. Zola's naturalistic description of the painting verges upon the macabre in its lurid details; one is reminded of Géricault's studies of corpses and decapitated heads:

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> Ah! l'Enfant mort, le misérable petit cadavre, qui n'était plus, à cette distance, qu'une confusion de chairs, la carcasse échouée de quelque bête informe! Etait-ce un crâne, était-ce un ventre, cette tête phénoménale, enflée et blanchie? et ces pauvres mains tordues sur les linges, comme des pattes rétractées d'oiseau tué par le froid! et le lit lui-même, cette pâleur des draps, sous la pâleur des membres, tout ce blanc, si triste, un évanouissement du ton, la fin dernière! Puis, on distinguait les yeux clairs et fixes, on reconnaissait une tête d'enfant, le cas de quelque maladie de la cervelle, d'une profonde et affreuse pitié.
>
> (IX,404)

Although this incident recalls earlier fictional treatments of the same motif,[112] its originality lies elsewhere. Zola has consistently utilized the works of his painter-hero as a metaphor for the artist's moral and spiritual decline. The various styles of the paintings, taken collectively, chart the ups and downs of Claude's mental disposition in barometer-like fashion. As Theodore Bowie has rightly observed, "Zola transfers this theory [of artistic temperament] into his fictional building up of the character of Lantier and never fails to enlighten us as to the development of his personality, betrayed by the paintings expressing specific experiences ... When Lantier paints L'Enfant Mort, a subject presented to him by the circumstance of his son's death, this fact is of the utmost psychological importance. The tragedy has affected Lantier as an artist as well as a human being; since the two are not separable, any and all experiences are transmutable into art...."[113]

L'Enfant Mort is merely a naturalistic interlude in Claude's Symbolist, decadent phase. He soon returns to

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his previous obsession: "...il n'existait qu'un horizon, la pointe de la Cité, cette vision qui le hantait toujours et partout, ce coin unique où il laissait son coeur." (XI,430) Zola's hero is not merely the victim of a hereditary lesion of the eyes. He is also under the spell of otherworldly, mystical forces which disclose themselves in "cette sorte de sommeil magnétique qui le raidissait, les regards fixes, très loin, au-delà des murs. Sa face se tendait, une attention convulsée la portait en avant: il voyait certainement l'invisible, il entendait un appel du silence ... Il avait des yeux élargis de somnambule, des gestes précis et raides, ... projetant contre le mur une grande ombre fantastique, aux mouvements cassés d'automate." (XI,465 & XII,472 resp.) While laboring under this hypnotic state, Claude focuses upon the central figure of his great work--the nude. Zola's description of this painting recalls Huysmans's verbal portrait of Gustave Moreau's femme fatale (Salomé) in A Rebours as well as Mallarmé's Hérodiade:

> ...il peignait le ventre et les cuisses en visionnaire affolé, que le tourment du vrai jetait à l'exaltation de l'irréel; et ces cuisses se doraient en colonnes de tabernacle, ce ventre devenait un astre, éclatant de jaune et de rouge purs, splendide et hors de la vie. Une si étrange nudité d'ostensoir, où des pierreries semblaient luire, pour quelque adoration religieuse, acheva de la fâcher ... il se baissa encore pour tremper son pinceau, et fit flamboyer les aines, qu'il accusa de deux traits de vermillon vif ... fleurissant de carmin le nombril....
>
> Qui donc venait de peindre cette idole d'une religion inconnue? qui l'avait fait de métaux,

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> de marbres et de gemmes, épanouissant la rose mystique de son sexe, entre les colonnes précieuses des cuisses, sous la voûte sacrée du ventre? Etait-ce lui qui, sans le savoir, était l'ouvrier de ce symbole du désir insatiable, de cette image extra-humaine de la chair, devenue de l'or et du diamant entre ses doigts, dans son vain effort d'en faire de la vie? (XII,474,475,480)

Just as Zola had condemned Gustave Moreau for seeking inspiration beyond the visible world, he now condemned his hero to commit suicide before his abortive work. Claude Lantier's preoccupation with the unreal, his pathological attraction for painted flesh, and his exaggeration of the scientific principles underlying his métier ultimately spelled defeat and failure for the artist.

By tracing the evolution of Claude's painterly style--from an earthy naturalism, through a period of light and color, to an exaggerated use of all these elements in a symbolic subject--Zola has provided the reader with a graphic index, a visual record of his hero's emotional and spiritual development. The paintings in the novel exist on two levels: 1) as self-contained works which can be analyzed purely in terms of artistic criteria (e.g., treatment of light and color, perspective, brushwork, etc.) and 2) as metaphorical signposts indicating the artistic fate which Zola has charted for his fictional painter. It is this double aspect which has made L'Oeuvre a complex and challenging literary/artistic document.

The charge has frequently been made that Claude

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Lantier's paintings are no more than verbal approximations of artistic creations. Setting aside the question as to whether or not Zola intended Claude's works to recall actual paintings by Manet, Cézanne, and Monet, it seems that the fictional artist's works themselves are not convincing to some readers. John Rewald, one of the first critics to make this accusation of lack of verisimilitude, denied the basic premise of the hero as painter: "Claude Lantier n'est pas impressionniste, il n'appartient à aucune école, car au fond, il n'est même pas peintre; il est le fils d'un romancier et il n'arrive jamais à se soutraire à l'influence de son père: Emile Zola."[114] Henri Mitterand, writing in 1966, renewed the same argument when he insisted that "Claude se sert des outils du peintre, mais il sent et pense en écrivain. Bien mieux, ou bien pis, son tableau naît et se développe à la manière des romans de Zola...."[115] Pierre Daix, the latest critic to make this charge, has presented the most subtle and cogently reasoned argument to date:

> Il ne vient simplement pas à l'idée de Zola qu'il puisse y avoir une vérité artistique de la peinture comme il y en a une de la littérature, une vérité dans la peinture, et pas seulement dans sa confrontation avec la nature.
> C'est la source de l'échec de Zola. La peinture échappe à son roman parce que le roman ne la respecte pas, ne la traite pas en réalité autonome ... Pour Zola, la vérité de la peinture n'est pas dans le travail du peintre,[116] elle est dans ce que les spectateurs en voient. Et l'écrivain n'est-il pas meilleur spectateur du tableau que le peintre? ... le roman n'est que le roman de l'homme Claude Lantier, pas le roman de l'oeuvre de Claude ... Le vrai problème est que Zola ne pouvait pas lui inventer une peinture et du même coup ne pouvait pas inventer un personnage de peintre. 117

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While these arguments are valid up to a certain point, they are unreasonable in their demand for an "authentic" presentation of "real" works. Zola had always insisted upon the psychological foundation of his novel. He did not wish to rewrite Manette Salomon, as his letter to the Figaro, dated 25 July 1885, bears witness: "Goncourt a bien raison de ne pas s'émouvoir. L'Oeuvre ne sera pas du tout ce qu'on a annoncé. Il ne s'agit nullement d'une suite de tableaux sur le monde des peintres, d'une collection d'eaux-fortes et d'aquarelles accrochées à la suite les unes des autres. Il s'agit simplement d'une étude de psychologie très fouillée et de profonde passion."[118] As to the charge that Zola did not present the actual process of artistic creation, it is doubtful that any writer has ever captured this state of mind with any degree of accuracy. Not until the twentieth century, with the appearance of such writers as James Joyce, Marcel Proust, and Virginia Woolf, was the novel able to even begin to suggest, through the use of metaphor, the intimate connection between artistic and verbal expression.

If Zola's novel has held the interest of readers ever since its publication in 1885-6, it is probably not as a great work of fiction that it has aroused such a considerable difference of opinion. Allan Pasco is probably correct in his conclusion that "the thèse overpowers the roman."[119] Yet as an experiment in artistic/literary relations, a document capturing the spirit of the latter

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half of the nineteenth century, L'Oeuvre is most assuredly a success. It remains, in the words of Robert Niess, the "most valuable book for knowledge of the art world between 1863 and 1885, and its documentary basis gives it real significance as an inside history of the times."[120]

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Footnotes

[1] Anon., "Un Nouveau Plagiat," Le Voltaire, lundi, 3 mai 1886. Cited by Patrick Brady, "Les Clefs de L'Oeuvre de Zola," Australian Journal of French Studies, 1, iii (Sept.-Dec. 1964), 264.

[2] Dr. G. Saint-Paul, Le Langage Intérieur et les Paraphrasies.(Paris, n.d.), p. 85. Cited by Joy Newton, "Emile Zola Impressionniste (II)," Les Cahiers Naturalistes, 13, no. 34 (1967), 133.

[3] According to Ernest Seillière, "le relief de l'image qui, d'abord, se montrait d'une exactitude et d'une intensité inouïes s'effaçait peu à peu pour disparaître enfin, de sorte que sa mémoire pouvait être caractérisée à la fois par la puissance énorme du souvenir et par sa fragilité." Emile Zola (Paris, 1923), p. 16.

[4] Cited by Fernand Doucet, L'Esthétique d'Emile Zola et son Application à la Critique (Den Haag, 1923), p. 128.

[5] For a detailed discussion of this question, see: Jean Adhémar, "La Myopie d'Emile Zola," Aesculape, 33 (Nov. 1952), 194-7. This article was unavailable to the present writer. Rodolphe Walter, "Emile Zola et Claude Monet," Les Cahiers Naturalistes, 10, no. 26 (1964), 56, has applied this fact to explain Zola's disenchantment with Monet's later, hazy style. He argues that Zola approved of Monet's early works because coquetry prevented him from sporting a monocle, thus preventing him from discovering the nature of the painter's brushwork. It seemed to complement his own vision (i.e., flou). When Zola began wearing a monocle later in life, he was more aware of a lack of precise detail in Monet's canvases.

[6] Mitterand, "Notes et Variantes; Etude de L'Oeuvre; La Rédaction et la Publication," L'Oeuvre d'Emile Zola, Oeuvres Complètes, ed. Henri Mitterand (Paris, 1966), IV, p. 1343.

[7] Hemmings, "Emile Zola Critique d'Art," Salons d'Emile Zola, ed. F.W.J. Hemmings & Robert J. Niess (Genève/Paris, 1959), p. 9. For additional information, including a photograph of the actual screen, see: Ch. Pérusseaux, "La Première Oeuvre de Cézanne? Un Paravent Peint avec Zola," Les Lettres Françaises, 28 août 1956.

[8] "Proudhon et Courbet," Mes Haines (Paris, 1928), p. 31.

[9] Cited by René Ternois, "Michel-Ange, Raphaël Vus par Zola," Les Nouvelles Littéraires, no. 1601, 8 mai 1958, p. 1.

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[10] Letter to Cézanne, 16 January 1860: "Dernièrement, j'ai découvert chez une de mes connaissances une vieille gravure enfumée. Je la trouvais délicieuse et je ne m'étonnai pas de mon admiration lorsque je la vis signée du nom de Greuze ... Je me connais fort peu en dessin, je ne sais si la gravure est bonne, mais je sais qu'elle me plaît. D'ailleurs, Greuze a toujours été mon favori...." Correspondance (1858-1871) (Paris, 1928), pp. 29-30.

[11] Ibid., 25 March 1860, p. 52: "...Scheffer était un amant passionné de l'idéal, tous ses types sont purs, aériens, presque diaphanes. Il était poëte dans toute l'acception du mot, ne peignant presque pas le réel, abordant les sujets les plus sublimes, les plus délirants."

[12] "Gustave Doré," Mes Haines, pp. 69-77.

[13] "Deux Expositions au Mois de Mai," Salons, p. 178.

[14] "L'Ecole Française de Peinture à l'Exposition de 1878," Salons, p. 200.

[15] "Salon de 1866: Mon Salon," ibid., p. 75.

[16] "L'Ecole Française...," ibid., p. 200.

[17] "Exposition Manet de 1884," ibid., p. 262.

[18] "Salon de 1866: Mon Salon," ibid., p. 68.

[19] "Salon de 1867: Une Nouvelle Manière en Peinture: Edouard Manet," ibid., p. 92.

[20] "Salon de 1875: Une Exposition de Tableaux à Paris," ibid., p. 158.

[21] "Exposition Manet de 1884," ibid., pp. 259-60.

[22] Correspondance (1858-1871), p. 218.

[23] Letter to F. Magnard, 12 April 1867. Cited in Mon Salon. Manet. Ecrits sur l'Art, by Emile Zola, ed. A. Ehrard (Paris, 1970), p. 119.

[24] Cited by Hemmings, "Emile Zola Critique d'Art," p. 12.

[25] Mon Salon..., p. 282.

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[26] "Le Naturalisme au Salon," Salons, p. 242.

[27] Cited by Hemmings, loc. cit.

[28] "Mon Salon," Salons, p. 71.

[29] "Mon Salon," ibid., p. 132.

[30] "Nouvelles Artistiques et Littéraires," ibid., p. 227.

[31] "Salon de 1876: Deux Expositions...," ibid., p. 196.

[32] "Exposition Universelle, 1867: Nos Peintres au Champ de Mars," ibid., p. 114.

[33] "Salon de 1868," ibid., p. 127.

[34] 10 May 1883. Correspondance (1872-1902) (Paris, 1929), p. 595.

[35] Letters to Théo, June 1879 and June 1888 resp. Cited by Joy Newton, "Zola et L'Expressionnisme: Le Point de Vue Hallucinatoire," Les Cahiers Naturalistes, 17, no. 41 (1971), 5, 6.

[36] See Hélène et Jean Adhémar, "Zola et la Peinture," Arts, no. 389, 12-18 décembre 1952, p. 10.

[37] "Salon de 1866: Mon Salon," Salons, p. 62.

[38] "Salon de 1868: Mon Salon," ibid., p. 121.

[39] "Salon de 1875: Une Exposition...," ibid., p. 150.

[40] Ibid., pp. 152, 168.

[41] "L'Ecole Française de Peinture...," ibid., pp. 213, 220.

[42] "Le Naturalisme au Salon," ibid., pp. 242-3.

[43] "Peinture," ibid., p. 267.

[44] "Une Nouvelle Manière en Peinture...," ibid., p. 101.

[45] Ehrard, "Introduction," Mon Salon. Manet. Ecrits sur l'Art d'Emile Zola, p. 12.

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[46] Doucet, op. cit., p. 114. See, also, Maurice P. Boyé, "Un Ami de Jeunesse de Zola et de Cézanne, Antony Valabrègue, Poète et Historien d'Art," Rolet, 18 décembre 1952 & 22 janvier 1953. This article was not available to the present writer.

[47] Both paintings were executed between 1869 and 1870. Bazille's more relaxed composition, set in the painter's atelier on the Rue La Condamine, depicts Zola chatting with Renoir, Monet, and Manet. Fantin-Latour's more formal grouping is entitled Atelier aux Batignolles. See F.W.J. Hemmings, "Zola, Manet, and the Impressionists," PMLA, 73, iv (Sept. 1958), 407.

[48] Correspondance (1872-1902), p. 419.

[49] See Joy Newton, "Emile Zola Impressionniste (I)," Les Cahiers Naturalistes, 13, no. 33 (1967), 41.

[50] For a detailed listing of Zola's possessions, consult the catalogue Vente Emile Zola... (Paris, 1903), pp. 7-14.

[51] Cited by Mitterand, "La Rédaction et la Publication," p. 1385.

[52] Picon, "Zola's Painters," [trans. J.L, Logan] Yale French Studies, no. 42 (1969), 130.

[53] "Salon de 1867: Une Nouvelle Manière en Peinture: Edouard Manet," Salons, p. 90.

[54] Rewald, "Zola Critique d'Art," Cézanne et Zola (Paris, 1936), p. 40.

[55] Had not Zola written, as early as 1866, "J'ai ma petite théorie comme un autre, et, comme un autre, je crois que ma théorie est la seule vraie"? "Salon de 1866: Mon Salon," Salons, p. 60.

[56] Hemmings, "Emile Zola Critique d'Art," pp. 12, 14.

[57] 16 January 1860. Correspondance (1858-1871), p. 53.

[58] 16 April 1860. Ibid., p. 59.

[59] 26 April 1860. Ibid., pp. 60-1.

[60] Ibid., pp. 61-2.

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[61] Correspondance (1858-1871), pp. 249-50. The use of a window or mirror as a suitable analogy for the process of artistic perception was certainly not original with Zola. Stendhal had used the mirror image in his art criticism; Proust was subsequently to modify the same image in his theory of "le pouvoir réfléchissant" of the artist.

[62] Ibid., p. 250.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid., pp. 254-6.

[65] Ibid., p. 251.

[66] Ibid., pp. 252-3.

[67] Cited by Zola in "Proudhon et Courbet," Mes Haines, p. 23.

[68] Ibid., pp. 24, 27.

[69] Ibid., pp. 29-30.

[70] Ibid., pp. 31-2.

[71] Ibid., pp. 32-3.

[72] Mitterand, Zola Journaliste... (Paris, 1962), p. 46.

[73] This evaluation occurs in an article entitled "Livres d'Aujourd'hui et de Demain," originally published in L'Evénement on 25 July 1866; it has been reprinted in L'Atelier de Zola: Textes de Journaux (1865-1870), ed. Martin Kanes (Genève, 1963), p. 49.

[74] "M.H. Taine, artiste," Mes Haines, p. 159. It would appear that Zola changed the original title of his article for inclusion in his collected volume of essays.

[75] Ibid., p. 160.

[76] "...je ne nie pas l'influence du milieu et du moment sur l'artiste, mais je n'ai pas même à m'en inquiéter. J'accepte l'artiste tel qu'il me vient." "Proudhon et Courbet," Mes Haines, p. 25.

[77] "M.H. Taine, artiste," op. cit., p. 174.

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[78] Cited by Zola in "M.H. Taine, artiste," op. cit., p. 175.

[79] Ibid., p. 176.

[80] "Livres d'Aujourd'hui et de Demain," L'Atelier..., p. 51.

[81] Cited by Hemmings, "Emile Zola Critique d'Art," p. 40.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid., p. 41.

[85] "Livres d'Aujourd'hui et de Demain," originally published in Le Gaulois on 10 January 1869; reprinted in L'Atelier..., p. 111.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.

[88] The article appeared on 8. February 1869; reprinted in L'Atelier..., p. 120.

[89] Ibid.

[90] de Hérain, "Emile Zola," Les Grands Ecrivains Critiques d'Art (Paris, 1943), pp. 122-3.

[91] Ibid., p. 124.

[92] Picon, "Zola's Painters," p. 140.

[93] Cf. the following early statement, originally published in L'Evénement on 8 May 1866: "...je suis très difficile pour les oeuvres de pure imagination, n'ayant pu encore comprendre la nécessité du rêve, lorsque la réalité offre un intérêt si humain et si poignant." Reprinted in L'Atelier..., p. 41.

[94] Hemmings, "Zola, Manet, and the Impressionists," p. 412. Baudelaire's phrase ironically recalls Zola's early remark in the Ecran letter to Valabrègue: "Le mot 'Art' n'est-il pas d'ailleurs opposé au mot 'Nature'?" Correspondance (1858-1871), p. 250. Cf.,also, the following statement which occurs in Zola's salon review for 1866: "Le mot 'art' me déplaît; il contient en lui je ne sais quelles idées d'arrangements nécessaires, d'idéal absolu. Faire de l'art, n'est-ce pas faire quelque chose qui est en dehors de l'homme et de la nature?" Salons, p. 61.

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[95] Zola, L'Oeuvre, Livre de Poche (Paris, 1967), I, p. 15. Subsequent references to this edition of the novel are acknowledged immediately following the quoted passage; chapter number, in Roman numerals, is followed by page number(s), in Arabic numerals. (e.g., I,15)

[96] Salons, p. 193.

[97] Ibid., p. 143.

[98] Ibid., pp. 87-8.

[99] Ibid., p. 125.

[100] Ibid., p. 63.

[101] Ibid., p. 101.

[102] Ibid., p. 195.

[103] Ibid., p. 239.

[104] Ibid., p. 268.

[105] Ibid., p. 61.

[106] Ibid., pp. 50-1.

[107] Ibid., p. 85

[108] "Causerie," La Tribune, 19 Sept. 1869; reprinted in L'Atelier..., p. 200.

[109] Cf. Zola's remark: "J'en fais naturellement un naturaliste...." Cited by Patrick Brady, "La Peinture de Claude Lantier...," Revue des Sciences Humaines, n.s., fasc. 101 (janv.-mars 1961), 90. Zola's rather indiscriminate use of the terms naturaliste and réaliste has led to a considerable degree of confusion. Brady makes the following distinction: "Le terme 'naturalisme' était déjà employé depuis longtemps en peinture, 'réalisme' étant adopté surtout par Courbet comme un nouveau synonyme. Zola emprunte l'ancien terme pour décrire la nouvelle littérature, surtout comme il la concevait lui-même, donnant ainsi au terme 'naturalisme' des prétentions scientifiques servies par une expression vigoureuse, presque épique. Par conséquent, quand il utilisa le même terme pour décrire la nouvelle peinture, il espéra y trouver les mêmes caractères: une observation 'scientifique' de la réalité, exprimé d'une façon large et puissante." Ibid., pp. 92-3.

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[110] Cf. the ébauche of the novel: "Je prendrai ... pour Claude ... quelques théories des impressionnistes, le plein-air, la lumière décomposée, toute cette peinture nouvelle qui demande un génie pour être réalisée...." Cited by Rewald, Cézanne et Zola, pp. 130-1.

[111] "Mais je reviens aux impressionnistes: Claude s'élèvera contre leur travail hâtif, le tableau fait en deux heures, l'esquisse qui contente." Cited by Brady, "La Peinture de Claude Lantier...," p. 92.

[112] Zola may have had Gustave Flaubert's L'Education Sentimentale in mind when he came to sketch the details of this scene. In Flaubert's novel, the artist Pellerin is asked to paint a portrait of Rosanette's dead child. For both artists, the subject is nothing more than a still life: "...peu à peu (l'artiste en lui l'emportant), [Pellerin] déclara qu'on ne pouvait rien faire avec ces yeux bistrés, cette face livide, que c'était une véritable nature morte, qu'il faudrait beaucoup de talent ... Ah! une idée! un pastel! Avec des demi-teintes colorées, passées presque à plat, on peut obtenir un beau modelé, sur les bords seulement. Il envoya la femme de chambre chercher sa boîte; puis, ayant une chaise sous les pieds et une autre près de lui, il commença à jeter de grands traits, aussi calme que s'il eût travaillé d'après la bosse." Gustave Flaubert, L'Education Sentimentale, Le Livre de Poche (Paris, 1965), troisième partie, IV, pp. 445-6. As with all the other paintings in the novel, it is also quite possible that Zola had a specific painting in mind which served him as a model for Claude's work. According to Pierre Courthion, "[Dubois-Pillet] avait peint un enfant mort, et c'est précisément cet Enfant Mort, la toile exposée à la première manifestation de la Société des Indépendants en mai 1884 dont parle Zola dans L'Oeuvre, comme d'une peinture de Claude Lantier...." "Petite Note sur Zola Critique d'Art," Europe, 46, nos. 468/9 (avril-mai 1968), 253.

[113] Bowie, The Painter in French Fiction (Chapel Hill, 1950), p. 28.

[114] Rewald, Cézanne et Zola, p. 134.

[115] Mitterand, "Etude de L'Oeuvre," op. cit., p. 1358.

[116] Cf. Zola's remark in a letter to Van Santen Kolff dated 6 July 1885: "Je veux surtout étudier comment pousse l'oeuvre d'art...." In a later letter to the same correspondent, dated 26 July 1885, Zola added: "C'est en effet l'histoire d'une oeuvre, la genèse et le drame de l'oeuvre dans le cerveau d'un artiste." Cited by Mitterand, op. cit., pp. 1379 and 1382 resp.

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[117] Daix, "Comment Lire L'Oeuvre d'Emile Zola," Les Lettres Françaises, no. 1200, 20-26 sept. 1967, pp. 3-4.

[118] Cited by Mitterand, "La Rédaction et la Publication," op. cit., p. 1380.

[119] Pasco, "The Failure of L'Oeuvre," L'Esprit Créateur, 11, iv (Winter 1971), 55.

[120] Niess, Zola, Cézanne, and Manet: A Study of "L'Oeuvre" (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1968), p. 216.

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Chapter Two

Oscar Wilde and Painting

"All art is at once surface and symbol."
(Preface to The Picture of Dorian Gray)

Early critics of Wilde's novel concentrated most of their efforts upon the search for sources and influences.[1] Treating the work in the manner of a jigsaw puzzle, they were not content until every "piece" had found its proper place in the overall design. The list of writers from whom Wilde is said to have borrowed characters or incidents--including Balzac, Poe, Maturin, Gautier, Disraeli, and Huysmans--was endless. Dorian Gray was rightly considered a veritable repository of Romantic and decadent themes.

The comparatively recent publication of two collections of Wilde's critical essays and short reviews[2] attests to a growing interest in the formal doctrines and aesthetic theories of this outspoken yet perceptive critic. Scholars are placing increasingly greater emphasis upon Wilde as an aesthetician rather than simply as a dandy.

The present chapter is based upon the above distinction. Roughly the first half of the chapter is given over to an examination of the extent of Wilde's knowledge of

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individual painters and collective artistic movements. The writer's technical proficiency in the visual arts is then discussed, followed by a brief survey of the major critical concepts of those individuals chiefly responsible for Wilde's aesthetic formation. Some of the major ideas expressed in the critical essays comprising Intentions, as well as those contained in the shorter reviews and lectures, are analyzed in order to gain a fuller and more accurate understanding of Wilde's aesthetic philosophy.

In the second half of the chapter, the emphasis shifts to the novel. The relationship between the critical essays and the aesthetic pronouncements of the fictional characters is explored to show how much the latter is indebted to the former. Lastly, the portrait-motif in Dorian Gray is studied both as a functional (i.e., structural) device and as a symbolic image. As a result of this investigation, Wilde's understanding of the painter's craft and his contribution to the field of aesthetics will gradually emerge from a close reading of the novel and selected critical texts.

Of Painters and Periods:

Wilde appears to have begun collecting art objects at a rather early age. While attending Magdalen College at Oxford (1874), according to Albert J. Farmer, "[Wilde] remplit son appartement de gravures rares, de meubles anciens, et en décora les murs avec des plumes de paon."[3] This desire for precious objets d'art and decorative or beautiful items remained with him throughout most of his life.

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Writing to Lord Alfred Douglas from Reading Prison, Wilde bemoaned the fact that "all my charming things [are] to be sold: my Burne-Jones drawings: my Whistler drawings: my Monticelli: my Simeon Solomons...."[4] This need to be surrounded by his prize possessions seems almost to have been pathological. A change of residence, for example, was usually followed by frantic letters addressed to friends, asking that his beloved pastels and watercolors be sent to him forthwith. Contrary to the commonly held opinion (i.e., the image of the dandy/aesthete presented in Gilbert and Sullivan's Patience), Wilde's interest in the visual arts was certainly more than the passing flirtation of a dilettante.

The question of Wilde's practical knowledge of the painter's craft is a difficult one to resolve. His letters, particularly those written to his parents from Italy, contain small pencil sketches which elucidate the text. Robert Ross, in a prefatory remark to his edition of Wilde's collected works, insisted that his friend's draftsmanship was not that of an amateur; he prided himself on the fact that several of Wilde's early attempts at drawing remained in his personal possession.

Writing before the publication (1962) of Wilde's collected letters, George Woodcock denied that the author in question possessed any training, ambition, or skill as a painter.[5] The rather sophisticated watercolor by Wilde, reproduced in the Hart-Davis edition of the letters,[6] would tend to debunk this statement. One should add that,

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in addition to self-instruction, Wilde could have picked up first-hand knowledge of painting during his frequent visits to the studios of painter friends.[7] Based upon the available evidence, therefore, one is led to the conclusion that although Wilde may never have seriously entertained the thought of pursuing a career as either a painter or a draftsman, his practical understanding of both these crafts contributed to the formulation of his ideas on art and aesthetics.

A popular misconception is that Wilde knew only the art of his own period. The four painters mentioned by Wilde in his letter from Reading Prison might be interpreted by some readers as proof of the writer's rather limited tastes in the visual arts. This would be to confuse Wilde's <u>personal</u> preferences, i.e., those paintings which he obtained for his private collection, with his much broader acquaintance with the painterly styles of earlier periods.

While travelling in Italy, a result of having won a literary competition at Oxford, Wilde had the opportunity to see the artistic treasures of the Italian masters at first hand. His letters to his mother mention the works of Titian, Tintoretto, Bellini, Bonifazio, Raffaelli, Corregio, Perugino, and Bernardino, among others. This is how the twenty-one-year-old student described the impression made on him by Giotto's frescoes:

> In the middle of a rich vineyard stands the Baptistery, the great work of Giotto; the walls covered entirely with frescoes by him; one wall the life of Mary, the other the life of Christ;

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> the ceiling blue with gold stars and medallion pictures; the west wall a great picture of Heaven and Hell suggested to him by Dante ... Of the beauty and purity of sentiment, the clear transparent colour, bright as the day it was painted, and the harmony of the whole building, I am unable to tell you. He is the first of all painters.[8]

Nor were Wilde's tastes restricted to Italian art. The German painters were high on his list; he admired the portraits by Holbein housed in the Ambrosian Library in Milan[9] and was intrigued by Albrecht Dürer's drawings, particularly those which elevated the common object to a symbolic level.[10] The engravings of the seventeenth-century Dutch genre painter Jan Steen were known to Wilde. Spanish artists were also not ignored; writing from Rome in the last year of his life, Wilde noted: "I have been three times to see the great Velásquez of the Pamfili Pope: it is quite the grandest portrait in the world. The entire man is there."[11]

Not only did Wilde admire these masters. He consciously appropriated their artistic effects and incorporated them in his own fiction. To take a concrete example, in The Duchess of Padua Wilde wished to create a sense of mystery for the dungeon scene in the last act of the play; he consequently informed his collaborator that he had included gambling soldiers to "give a sort of 'Salvator Rosa' effect" and thereby relieve the depressing gloom of the shadowy scene.[12] Similarly, for his short story entitled "The Portrait of Mr. W.H." (1877), Wilde described an old miniature, stressing its stylistic affinities with the

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portraits of Clouet; the minute description of the subject's costume and pose could only have been written by someone who had spent a considerable amount of time before the works of this early French master. This brief survey of Wilde's knowledge of various national schools and individual painters should dispel the notion that his tastes were exclusively Pre-Raphaelite or Whistlerian.

Wilde's lifelong devotion to French culture is a matter of common knowledge; the fact that Salome was originally written in French and received its first performance abroad is usually cited in support of this view. Wilde's attachment to French painters can easily be documented. Writing from Corfu, the young aesthete compared the twisted and writhing motion of a grove of olive trees to the sinuous curves characteristic of the drawings of Gustave Doré.[13] While staying in Paris in 1883, Wilde had numerous occasions to visit the salons and ateliers of prominent and/or fashionable society painters.[14] He also met Degas during that year,[15] and was a participant at Mallarmé's mardis. Wilde's letters mention the misty landscapes of the later Corot and the opalescent shimmer of Daubigny's morning scenes.[16] He attended the Meissonier exhibition of 1884 in the company of his wife, Constance,[17] as well as the Paris Exhibition of 1900. Wilde met the painter Armand Point in Rome later that same year.[18] He also appears to have kept abreast of the Belgian fin-de-siècle artists, as is evident from the following letter concerning a suitable illustrator for his Ballad: "... why not try some of

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the jeunes Belges--Khnoppf [sic] for example," he suggests to his publisher. "I want something curious--a design of Death and Sin walking hand in hand, very severe, and mediaeval."[19] While it is true that seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French painters are conspicuously absent from Wilde's recorded remarks, he nevertheless amassed a considerable amount of detailed information concerning French painters of his own century.

The question of Wilde's knowledge of oriental art presents the same difficulties as those encountered in the estimation of his technical abilities as a painter. To conclude that Wilde, like Bunthorne in Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta Patience, knew only of sunflowers and blue china is to commit a gross oversimplification. Edouard Roditi chooses 1882, the year of Wilde's famous American tour, as the decisive turning point in the writer's attitude towards Chinese and Japanese art. Prior to his visit to San Francisco's Chinatown, Wilde had expressed contempt or indifference towards Chinese or Japanese art objects. Yet Roditi concludes that, "unfortunately, he never attained any real knowledge or appreciation of the finer productions of Far Eastern art. His antiquarian discriminations, in this field, barely developed beyond some talk of blue china or of Japanese prints by Hokusai or Hokkei...."[20] Despite this rather harsh judgment, one must insist that Wilde's comprehension of the decorative element in Japanese art, plus his understanding of the practical application of this primarily two-dimensional, flat style to Western art,

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reveals a sensitivity to form and design rarely encountered in mere collectors of bibelots. In a review of Walter Crane's illustrations for Flora's Feast, Wilde touched upon this question:

> ...there is a danger of modern illustration becoming too pictorial. What we need is good book-ornament, decorative ornament that will go with type and printing, and give to each page a harmony and unity of effect. Merely dotting a page with reproductions of water-colour drawings will not do. It is true that Japanese art, which is essentially decorative, is pictorial also. But the Japanese have the most wonderful delicacy of touch, and with a science so subtle that it gives the effect of exquisite accident, they can by mere placing make an undecorated space decorative. There is also an intimate connection between their art and their handwriting or printed characters. They both go together, and show the same feeling for form and line.... [21]

Wilde may not have appreciated Ming vases with the discriminating eye of a connoisseur, but he was certainly aware of the decorative element in oriental art; the tendency towards abstraction and surface design, whether on Japanese wallpaper or Chinese scrolls, complemented Wilde's own preoccupation with the stylization of art.

The Critical Heritage:

Wilde would probably have been the first to acknowledge his debt to his critical mentors in the field of aesthetics and art criticism. "True originality," he once remarked, "is to be found rather in the use made of a model than in the rejection of all models and masters. 'Dans l'art comme dans la nature on est toujours fils de quelqu'un'...."[22]

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It has frequently been alleged that Wilde's critical aperçus on aesthetics and painting represent nothing more than a mass of ideas gleaned from disparate sources. Whistler's spiteful attacks upon Wilde's stature as a critic after their parting of ways, couched in caustic wit and rapierlike invective, did much to discredit Wilde in the eyes of his contemporaries. Writing to the committee of the National Art Exhibition, Whistler asked: "What has Oscar in common with Art? except that he dines at our tables and picks from our platters the plums for the pudding he peddles in the provinces. Oscar--the amiable, irresponsible, esurient Oscar--with no more sense of a picture than of the fit of a coat, has the courage of the opinion--of others![23]

Although Wilde consistently refuted such charges of plagiarism, he was unable to deny the fact that most of his critical doctrines represented a modification, or restatement, of previously held theories. In their pioneer studies of the Aesthetic Movement in Victorian England, both Albert J. Farmer and Louise Rosenblatt have clearly traced the derivation of most of Wilde's ideas on painting and aesthetics back to predecessors or the critical writings of contemporaries. Moreover, they both concluded that Wilde simply represented, in the eyes of the public, the clearest and most obvious spokesman for the doctrine of art for art's sake, though not necessarily its most original thinker. Given this fact, it may still prove useful to examine some of the formative influences which Wilde

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underwent, both at Oxford and among contemporaries, in order to highlight some of his principal aesthetic doctrines and thereby arrive at a clearer estimation of his actual achievement in the field of aesthetics and art criticism.

Robert Merle has characterized Ruskin's role in Wilde's aesthetic development as that of a cristallisateur. The influence which Ruskin exerted upon an entire generation of Oxfordians (while serving as Slade Professor of Art from 1869 to 1879 and again from 1883 to 1884) cannot be underestimated. Long after he had rejected Ruskin's ethical theories of art, Wilde was obliged to confess his great debt to the master: "...the dearest memories of my Oxford days," he wrote to Ruskin, "are my walks and talks with you, and from you I learned nothing but what was good. How else could it be?"[24] Although Wilde, the author of countless witty epigrams and paradoxical statements, was known to be a poseur, one senses a basic sincerity and honesty in the phrases he addressed to his mentor at Oxford.

In one of his earliest pieces of true art criticism, viz. a review of the opening of the Grosvenor Gallery (1877),[25] Wilde dispayed a Ruskinian affection for the Pre-Raphaelite painters. He praised Burne-Jones's use of literary allusions, calling him "a dreamer in the land of mythology, a seer of fairy visions, a symbolical painter ... an imaginative colourist...."[26] Like his master, Wilde complimented the Brotherhood on its highly finished technique, its rich and consummate skill in creating a wealth of minute detail covering every inch of the canvas.[27]

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The titles of Wilde's American lectures--"House Decoration"; "Art and the Handicraftsman"; "Decorative Art in America"--reflect yet another aspect of Ruskin's aesthetic doctrine, viz. his belief in the beauty of hand-fashioned objects, his elevation of the artisan's craft to the level of an art form in its own right. Wilde's repeated plea to his American audience is for a beautification of the common object, whether it be a cup and saucer or a horsehair sofa, through the application of suitable designs and motifs. His stress upon the social aim of art is also a direct inheritance from Ruskin; in "The English Renaissance of Art," while insisting that the central aim or purpose of art is always one of aesthetic perfection, Wilde also notes that "it is for the critic to create for art the social aim, too, by teaching the people the spirit in which they are to approach all artistic work, the love they are to give it, the lesson they are to draw from it."[28]

In this connection, Aatos Ojala has convincingly demonstrated that the writings of William Morris served as a bridge between Ruskin and Wilde.[29] The date of publication of Morris's lectures (1882), collected under the title Hopes and Fears For Art, coincides with Wilde's American lectures. In addition to chronological evidence, Wilde's letters to Morris reflect a tone of admiration which would also tend to confirm such a sharing of ideas.[30]

Although Wilde adopted several important ideas in Ruskin's aesthetic philosophy, he was not content to remain a mouthpiece for the Arts and Crafts Movement. His radical

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departure from the Ruskin-Morris school was signalled in 1882 by the publication of a kind of manifesto entitled "L'Envoi," which was originally intended as a preface to his friend Rennell Rodd's collection of poems, Rose Leaf and Apple Leaf. Wilde was acutely aware of the importance of this document,[31] realizing that it marked a new stage in his aesthetic development. Rejecting the art of the Pre-Raphaelite painters on the ground that it was too literary and intellectual, Wilde now championed the work of Whistler and Albert Moore, praising their handling of line and color, and stressing the abstract qualities of their paintings and their satisfying effect upon the aesthetic sense. In a crucial passage of the preface/manifesto, Wilde clearly outlined the differences between the new school and the old:

> Now, this increased sense of the absolutely satisfying value of beautiful workmanship, this recognition of the primary importance of the sensuous element in art, this love of art for art's sake, is the point in which we of the younger school have made a radical departure from the teaching of Mr. Ruskin--a departure definite and different and decisive ... in his art criticism, his estimate of the joyous element of art, his whole method of approaching art, we are no longer with him; for the keystone to his aesthetic system is ethical always. He would judge of a picture by the amount of noble moral ideas it expresses; but to us the channels by which all noble work in painting can touch, and does touch, the soul are not those of truths of life or metaphysical truths. [32]

Following this argument to its logical end, Wilde concludes that an art devoid of ethical considerations, i.e., one lacking a sense of social responsibility, must therefore be concerned solely with its own artistic perfection,

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having no other aim than that of producing aesthetically pleasing effects. Wilde's definition of a painting, preceding the more famous pronouncement of the Nabi painter Maurice Denis by almost eight years,[33] represents the ultimate expression of the art for art's sake school: "Nor, in its primary aspect, has a painting, for instance, any more spiritual message or meaning for us than a blue tile from the wall of Damascus, or a Hitzen vase. It is a beautifully coloured surface, nothing more, and affects us by no suggestion stolen from philosophy, no pathos pilfered from literature, no feeling filched from a poet, but by its own incommunicable artistic essence...."[34]

Wilde's shift from aesthetic socialism to aesthetic individualism (the terms are Ojala's) did not occur in a vacuum, nor was the change an overnight phenomenon. In characterizing Ruskin's role in Wilde's aesthetic development as that of a cristallisateur, Merle was careful to add that it was only by measuring his own beliefs and instinctive reactions to art against those of his master that Wilde was able to achieve any degree of growth as an aesthetic thinker and art critic.[35] If Ruskin and Morris acted as Wilde's tutelary guides for the early part of his aesthetic journey, Pater and Whistler must certainly have performed the same function for the balance of Wilde's artistic pilgrimage.

Wilde's interest in the aesthetic doctrines of Walter Pater date from the latter's "Conclusion" to his Studies in the History of the Renaissance (1873). To subsequent

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generations of Oxfordians, these few pages represented the distillation of the new spirit gradually emerging in art and literature. Wilde's review of Pater's Appreciations (1889) contains the following declaration of aesthetic faith: "...Mr. Pater's essays became to me 'the golden book of spirit and sense, the holy writ of beauty.' They are still this to me."[36]

It is hardly possible to read Wilde's critical essays and short reviews without hearing echoes of Pater's aesthetic precepts. If Wilde does not directly acknowledge a quotation from Pater,[37] then he "borrows" freely from Pater's terminology, either consciously or unconsciously. In his "Envoi" preface, for example, Wilde defines the element shared by Romantic poetry and the paintings of Whistler or Moore as "fiery-coloured momentariness," thus recalling the flamelike imagery in Pater's "Conclusion" as well as the latter's emphasis upon the fleeting and transitory nature of human perception. In an essay entitled "Pen, Pencil, and Poison" (1889), Wilde asserts that "the first step in aesthetic criticism is to realize one's own impressions."[38] This is a word-for-word restatement of a Paterian formula expressed in the "Preface" to the Renaissance.[39] In "The Critic as Artist" (1890), an essay whose purpose it is to prove that the critic's art is actually superior to that of the painter or poet, Wilde argues (through his spokesman Gilbert) that Ruskin's descriptions of Turner's sunsets or Pater's conception of Leonardo's Mona Lisa are more significant than the actual works

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themselves because this type of criticism "treats the work of art simply as a starting point for a new creation."[40] According to Pater, "the best sort of criticism [is] imaginative criticism, that criticism which is itself a kind of construction, or creation...."[41] Wilde's choice of music as the most perfect art, fusing form and content into an indistinguishable unity,[42] is a blatant appropriation of Pater's dictum that all the arts aspire to the condition of music. Additional examples would merely confirm the fact that Pater rather than Ruskin remained Oscar Wilde's true master, the individual to whom he owed the greatest literary and critical debt.[43]

Whereas Wilde's relationship with Pater remained one of mutual and lifelong admiration, the same cannot be said for Whistler. The seesaw pattern of their friendship has provided critics with an intriguing illustration of literary/artistic relations during the last decades of the nineteenth century.

Wilde's earliest critical appraisal of Whistler's art occurs in the Grosvenor Gallery review of 1877. Since Wilde was basically still operating under the influence of Ruskin's aesthetic doctrines--and had not yet been overwhelmed by the sparkling wit and forceful personality of the American Impressionist painter--his remarks tended to be rather negative. Whistler's "arrangements" were discussed in a mocking and flippant manner; they obviously did not appear to merit this critic's undivided attention.

With the subsequent arrival of Wilde upon the London

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scene, however, the tone of his art reviews altered dramatically. The second Grosvenor Gallery review (1879) was filled with words of praise for Whistler's artistic accomplishments. During the early 1880's, Wilde and Whistler were constantly together.[44] A serious rift in their relations occurred on the occasion of Wilde's "Lecture to Art Students" (1883) at the Royal Academy. Whistler had supposedly provided Wilde with a considerable degree of assistance, i.e., in the form of aesthetic concepts and basic ideas concerning art, and was not satisfied with the latter's veiled compliment at the conclusion of the lecture. Charges of plagiarism were bandied about. Wilde now used his reviews as a platform from which to launch attacks against Whistler's aesthetic theories. In "Mr. Whistler's Ten O'Clock" (1885), for example, Wilde disputed the painter's claim that an artist is not dependent upon society, his genius having nothing whatever to do with his particular milieu. He also flatly denied Whistler's claim that the painter is the best judge of painting.[45] In "The Butterfly's Boswell" (1887), Wilde sought to elevate the poet's craft above that of the painter by insisting that the former's domain encompassed all of life's richness and complexity, whereas the latter's talents were limited to what could be visually reproduced on canvas. The break in the Wilde-Whistler relationship was never cemented; the two gradually drifted apart and lost sight of one another.

Critics have remained divided over the question of the degree of Wilde's indebtedness to Whistler in the field

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of aesthetics. The fact that the latter's "Ten O'Clock" lecture was only delivered in 1885, or that his book, The Gentle Art of Making Enemies, was published as late as 1893, does not prove that Wilde's ideas predated those of Whistler; the painter had repeated his aphorisms to all his acquaintances, never bothering to keep a written record of their original formulation. Wilde could thus easily have discovered these ideas "floating in the air" of Whistler's studio.

Birgit Borelius, siding with Ojala, feels that the principal ideas expressed in "The Decay of Lying" (1889)--viz. art never expresses anything but itself; all bad art is the result of a surrender of its imaginative freedom to life; nature imitates art--are ultimately derived from Whistler's "Ten O'Clock." This critic also insists that the painter's lecture was the starting point for Wilde's critical dialogue entitled "The Critic as Artist."[46] Gerda Eichbaum, one of the early investigators of the Wilde-Whistler controversy, reached the conclusion that Wilde's aesthetic concepts, however characteristic of the period they appear to be in their general outlines, could never have been formulated without the direct influence of Whistler.[47] Siding with neither Wilde nor Whistler, Richard B. Glaenzer attempted to establish the following distinction: although both thinkers were basically united in their total rejection of all intellectual or ethical considerations in art, they each took a different position with respect to the proper place of the artist. According to Glaenzer's interpretation,

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"Whistler sought to isolate Art and the artist. The sacred precinct of Beauty and its priest were, in his eyes, beyond the ken of the vulgar; and beyond their reach should both remain. Wilde, on the other hand, deemed it praiseworthy and possible to educate the masses to an appreciation of the beautiful."[48] Although their aesthetic beliefs were not identical on all points, Wilde and Whistler engaged in a free exchange of ideas; each profited, to a greater or lesser extent, from the intellectual presence of the other. The exact nature of their mutual indebtedness, however, will never be conclusively determined.

A Summing Up:

Having examined Wilde's knowledge of painters and artistic periods, explored the extent of his own technical proficiency in the painter's craft, and pinpointed the critical influences which helped shape his aesthetic beliefs, the overriding question of Wilde's achievement as an art critic still remains to be answered.

Among contemporaries, Whistler's charges of ineptness were counterbalanced by Pater's moderate praise of Wilde's achievement: "...on the whole I think your [criticism] very just, and [it is] certainly very pleasantly expressed. [It] shows that you possess some beautiful, and, for your age, quite exceptionally cultivated tastes: and a considerable knowledge too of many beautiful things."[49] Yeats, using Whistler's accusation to support his argument, insisted that it was precisely this objective distance from

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the painter's craft which served as Wilde's source of strength and conviction in his role as art critic.[50] Richard Le Gallienne, a close friend of Wilde's, argued that "his technical knowledge of artistic method, especially handicraft, give[s] us a sense of sure-footedness, a pre-Raphaelite distinction of impression very quickening to the imagination...."[51]

In the midst of this chorus of praise, however, there were also discordant notes sounded by individuals who were not in the Whistler "camp." Arthur Symons labelled Wilde a poseur on three counts: as an aesthetician, a poet, and an artist.[52] An anonymous reviewer of the critical essays comprising Intentions expressed the thought lurking in the minds of many of Wilde's readers when he asked: "May we not suspect them to be the result of a facile formula, a process of word-shuffling, rather than of genuine insight into the facts of art and life?"[53]

Early twentieth-century critics, removed as they were from the questions of immorality which plagued Victorian readers, were better able to assess the true worth of Wilde's corpus of critical writings. One of the more significant expressions of opinion came from abroad; it was contained in an article by Paul Souday entitled "L'Esthétique d'Oscar Wilde," published in Le Temps (1912). Souday's prophetic statement--"It is probably as an esthetician that Oscar Wilde has the greatest chance of maintaining a place in literary history"[54]--seems to have been borne out by the relatively recent publication of Wilde's critical

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essays and art reviews.

Writing in 1913, Holbrook Jackson characterized Wilde as an extremist in the field of aesthetics, one who pushed Gautier's doctrine of art for art's sake and Whistler's concept of Art as the model for Nature to their logical and ultimate limits.[55] Two years later, Alice Wood published an article which, in addition to establishing Wilde's position as a critic (rather than as a dramatist or poet), also demonstrated the close connection between Wilde's criticism and the Impressionist, post-Impressionist, and neo-Impressionist movements in art.[56] Lastly, one should recall H.L. Mencken's description of Wilde as "a man haunted by ineffable magnificences of color, light, mass and line, a rapt and garrulous drunkard of the eye."[57] While this remark does not convey any notion of Wilde's critical objectivity, it certainly captures the latter's devotion to the visual arts.

Recent critics have expressed conflicting opinions concerning Wilde's place in the pantheon of aesthetic criticism. A mixed evaluation is contained in George Woodcock's The Paradox of Oscar Wilde. While conceding that Wilde possessed an acute sense of design and was partially responsible for the limited success of such painters as Condor, Ricketts, Shannon, and Rothenstein,[58] Woodcock nevertheless concludes that Wilde's art criticism remains superficial at best: "...he rarely has anything penetrating to say on this subject, and seems to have discussed it partly because of Ruskin's influence, and partly because he felt the arts

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so clearly bound together that the true connoisseur must be able to pass his opinion in every province.[59] His views on painting were rarely important, and not often original...."[60]

Aatos Ojala's massive study of Wilde's role in the Aesthetic Movement represents a much more favorable view of the Victorian writer's achievement in the field of aesthetics and art criticism. Although Ojala does admit that Wilde's legitimate art essays would comprise a very slender volume, he refuses to accept this fact as proof of Wilde's inability to express valid opinions on the painting and sculpture of early masters and contemporary artists. He argues instead for the acceptance of Wilde, if not as a full-fledged art critic,[61] then as an active participant in the aesthetic issues of the day, a perceptive and vocal spokesman rather than a mere passive collector or dilettante.

Wilde's reputation as a witty conversationalist is accepted without question. His bons mots aimed at Victorian society are still relevant today. As a dramatist and social satirist, he will long be remembered as the author of The Importance of Being Earnest, a classic social comedy. His importance as an aesthetician and art critic, on the other hand, has only gradually gained recognition. From the vantage point of the mid-twentieth century, Wilde's involvement in the aesthetic issues and artistic movements of his own time now looms larger than ever before. He has carved a niche for himself in the pantheon of aesthetic criticism, his name coming after Ruskin and Pater.

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"The Picture of Dorian Gray" and the Lesson of "Intentions":

In the first chapter of this study, the intimate connection between Zola's salon criticism and his novel L'Oeuvre was examined. The clear, unambiguous language of the essays left little doubt as to Zola's views on a particular painting, artist, or period. In the case of Wilde, whose characteristic device was the paradox and whose intended aim was to mystify and subsequently convince his readers, the line of reasoning adopted in the critical essays on aesthetics and the art criticism is considerably more tortuous. Despite this inherent difficulty, several of Wilde's more perceptive critics have noted definite parallels between the statements made by the fictional characters in Dorian Gray and the author's critical remarks in the short art reviews and longer essays.[62]

The section which follows is concerned with an investigation of the above relationship. Its purpose is neither to prove that Wilde was consistent in his thinking nor to establish exact parallels between texts, but simply to trace the transposition of Wilde's critical doctrines on painting from one genre (i.e., the critical essay, dialogue, or review) to another (i.e., the novel).

In the first chapter, the shadow cast by a flight of birds leads the omniscient narrator into a discussion of movement in the visual arts. This "momentary Japanese effect" reminds Lord Henry Wotton, Dorian's aesthetic preceptor, of "those pallid jade-faced painters of Tokyo who,

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through the medium of an art that is necessarily immobile, seek to convey the sense of swiftness and motion."[63] Wilde recognized this paradox and discussed it in his critical writings. Barring supernatural intervention, as in Dorian Gray, Wilde argued that "the image stained upon the canvas possesses no spiritual element of growth or change ... Movement, that problem of the visible arts, can be truly realised by Literature alone."[64] Wilde's remark, possibly intended as a reaction against Whistler's elevation of the painter above the poet, leaves itself open to attack by those critics who might argue in favor of music as a mobile and changing art form.

The question as to whether art should ideally constitute a reflection or mirror image of life is raised next. The narrator observes: "As the painter looked at the gracious and comely form he had so skillfully mirrored in his art, a smile of pleasure passed across his face, and seemed about to linger there." (I,1-2) (emphasis mine) This statement would tend to contradict the dictum expressed in the preface to the novel, viz. "It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors." (xx) The whole concept of mirroring, in fact, is alien to Wilde's comprehension of the artistic process.[65] Having inherited the organicist theories of Coleridge and the English Romantics, Wilde viewed art in terms of the radiating lamp rather than the reflective mirror. The implication, therefore, is that the painter Basil Hallward, by employing a realistic style, has somehow betrayed the ideals of a higher form of

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art.

Basil's subsequent confession, "I really can't exhibit it. I have put too much of myself into it" (I,2), is an admission that he has violated the tenets of his artistic credo; it raises the problem of the relationship of the artist to his creation. One of the cornerstones of Wilde's aesthetic philosophy is the concept of temperament, i.e., the belief in the personality of the artist as a major factor in the artistic process.[66] That indefinable quality, combined with artistic perfection, makes a work of art what it is. Though Wilde praises individualism in "The Soul of Man Under Socialism,"[67] he also intimates that the artist runs the risk of revealing too much of himself in his work and thereby "contaminating" his ideals. Pushed to an extreme, the overcharged canvas becomes a record, not of the sitter, but rather of the artist himself. This is the theory which Hallward attempts to convey to his friend Lord Henry. (I,5) Paradoxically, "The Decay of Lying" stresses this transference of emotion from painter to canvas as a virtue, a sign of excellence: "The only portraits in which one believes," according to Wilde, "are portraits where there is very little of the sitter, and a very great deal of the artist."[68]

Ideally, however, the artist's personality should blend into the work and not display itself in an overt fashion. Hallward is adamant on this point: "An artist should create beautiful things, but should put nothing of his own life into them. We live in an age when men treat

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art as if it were meant to be a form of autobiography. We have lost the abstract sense of beauty." (I,11) Wilde expressed much the same view in his criticism of the Impressionists: "[They] insist on treating painting as if it were a mode of autobiography invented for the use of the illiterate," he wrote in "The Critic as Artist," "and are always prating to us on their coarse gritty canvases of their unnecessary selves and their unnecessary opinions, and spoiling by a vulgar overemphasis that fine contempt of nature which is the best and only modest thing about them."[69] The artist, he continues in the same essay, must be able to recognize the importance of his own personality or temperament in the creation of a work of art, but he must never make this element explicit or obvious; it must gradually emerge from his technique.[70]

Basil Hallward sees in Dorian Gray the catalytic element responsible for a change in his style: "...his personality," he tells Lord Henry, "has suggested to me an entirely new manner in art, an entirely new mode of style. I see things differently, I think of them differently. I can now re-create life in a way that was hidden from me before." (I,10) He then goes on to sketch in the details of this new style: "...he defines for me the lines of a fresh school, a school that is to have in it all the passion of the romantic spirit, all the perfection of the spirit that is Greek. The harmony of soul and body ... We in our madness have separated the two and have invented a realism that is vulgar, an ideality that is void." (I,10)

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In his earliest critical writings, Wilde had suggested just such a fusion of the two antithetical strains in art. "The English Renaissance of Art" (1882) contains a basic formulation of this concept: "It is really from the union of Hellenism, in its breadth, its sanity of purpose, its calm possession of beauty, with the adventive, the intensified individualism, the passionate colour of the romantic spirit, that springs the art of the nineteenth century in England...."[71] Just as the painter in Dorian Gray had discovered a way of reconciling the two in the ideal portrait of his sitter, so Wilde came to regard the art of Byzantium as the meeting place of these differing schools.[72]

In the second chapter, Lord Henry, using words quite similar to those pronounced by Lambert Strether to Little Bilham in Gloriani's garden ("Book Fifth" of Henry James's The Ambassadors), urges Dorian to "Live! Live the wonderful life that is in you! Let nothing be lost upon you." (II,22) His vulgarization of Pater's balanced epicurean ideal[73] to the level of a libertine search for sensation is only aggravated by a subsequent remark: "The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible...." (ibid.) Wilde had preached a totally different philosophy in his art criticism.[74] There he had insisted that the painter is not obligated to reproduce the visible aspects of reality on his canvas; his artistic vision, i.e., the particular manner in which he views the world under pictorial conditions, is far more important than the actual subject perceived. Wilde may have inherited this doctrine

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from Whistler; it would subsequently find a central place in Marcel Proust's theory of artistic perception.

Lord Henry's observation that the completed portrait "was certainly a wonderful work of art, and a wonderful likeness as well" (II,24) also represents an aesthetic blunder of considerable magnitude. Had not Wilde insisted that "the primary aesthetic impression of a work of art borrows nothing from recognition or resemblance. These belong to a later and less perfect stage of apprehension"?[75] Wilde's ironic parodying of his own aesthetic principles is likewise evident in Basil Hallward's threat to destroy his creation: "What is it," he insists, "but canvas and color?" (II,27) Wilde's abstract definition of a painting as a beautifully colored surface can be heard in this wish born of anger and desperation.

Lord Henry, however, is not always assigned the role of devil's advocate; many of his comments are extremely acute and perceptive. In attempting to explain how such a philistine as Hallward (the expression is Dorian's) could paint such a beautiful work of art, Lord Henry propounds the following theory: "Basil...puts everything that is charming in him into his work. The consequence is that he has nothing left for life but his prejudices, his principles, and his common sense. The only artists I have ever known, who are personally delightful, are bad artists. Good artists exist simply in what they make, and consequently are perfectly uninteresting in what they are." (IV,55) The truth of this theory is tested and proven by Proust's narrator

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in his encounters with the writer Bergotte and the painter Elstir. In each case, the aura surrounding the work of art fails to illuminate its creator; the latter remains a rather pedestrian individual, much to Marcel's disappointment.

The seventh chapter describes a visit by Dorian, Lord Henry, and Hallward to a performance by the actress Sybil Vane, the young man's first love. The occasion gives Basil an opportunity to voice his opinion on the value of dramatic or visual art: "To spiritualize one's age--that is something worth doing. If this girl can give a soul to those who have lived without one, if she can create the sense of beauty in people whose lives have been sordid and ugly...she is worthy of all your adoration, worthy of the adoration of the world." (VII,81) This idealistic note is also sounded in Wilde's art criticism. In condemning the Impressionists for their subservience to the world of natural phenomena, he contrasts them with the Archaicistes, who "try to see something worth seeing...not merely with actual and physical vision, but with that nobler vision of the soul which is as far wider in spiritual scope as it is far more splendid in artistic purpose."[76] (emphasis mine) Wilde does not insist that art contain a spiritual message; he does, however, demand that the painter turn his gaze within and seek inspiration there.

In the eighth chapter, Dorian is prodded into remorse for his actions by the visual alterations in his portrait. Before learning of Sybil Vane's suicide (the result of Dorian's callous treatment of her), he tells Lord Henry:

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"I want to be good. I can't bear the idea of my soul being hideous." The latter replies sarcastically: "A very charming artistic basis for ethics, Dorian! I congratulate you on it. But how are you going to begin?" (VIII,96) Well might he ask. It was Wilde's firm contention that the realms of ethics and art were separate and distinct. Had he not broken with Ruskin for precisely this reason? Echoes of this doctrine can be found on almost every page of his aesthetic criticism. In "The English Renaissance of Art," for example, Wilde spelled out the consequences of this confusion for the work of art: "...any element of morals or implied reference to a standard of good or evil in art is often a sign of a certain incompleteness of vision, often a note of discord in the harmony of an imaginative creation; for all good work aims at a purely artistic effect."[77] Wilde was not simply content with separating art and ethics, however; he also insisted upon ranking them. "Aesthetics," he argued, "are higher than ethics. They belong to a more spiritual sphere. To discern the beauty of a thing is the finest point to which we can arrive. Even a colour sense is more important, in the development of the individual, than a sense of right and wrong."[78] It is easy to understand how some of Wilde's contemporaries regarded such statements as a direct assault upon the moral foundations of Victorian society.

In the ninth chapter of the novel, Basil Hallward divulges the reasons underlying his secret attraction for Dorian. "You became to me," he tells his model, "the

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visible incarnation of that unseen ideal whose memory haunts us artists like an exquisite dream ... I had seen perfection face to face." (IX,112-13) It is evident from this confession that the painter is echoing Wilde's belief that "the artist seeks to realise, in a certain material, his immaterial idea of beauty, and thus to transform an idea into an ideal."[79] Basil has likewise followed Wilde's program in painting Dorian as Paris, Adonis, and Narcissus, among others. "...It had all been what art should be--unconscious, ideal, and remote." (IX,113)[80]

Where Hallward appears to have gone astray, however, is in his choice of a final incarnation of his model: "...I determined to paint a wonderful portrait of you as you actually are, not in the costume of dead ages, but in your own dress and in your own time. Whether it was the Realism of the method or the mere wonder of your own personality, thus directly presented to me without mist or veil, I cannot tell." (ibid.) Contrary to the aesthetic theories of Baudelaire and the Impressionists, which accepted the contemporary scene as a fit subject for art, Wilde feared that such a nearness to actuality would ultimately overwhelm and destroy the painter's creative abilities. He pointed to the dangers of relinquishing an ethereal quality in "The Decay of Lying": "The moment Art surrenders its imaginative medium," wrote Wilde, "it surrenders everything. As a method Realism is a complete failure, and the two things that every artist should avoid are modernity of form and modernity of subject-matter. To us, who live in the

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nineteenth century, any century is a suitable subject for art except our own."[81] Judged solely on aesthetic grounds, therefore, Basil Hallward's portrait of Dorian Gray was destined for failure. The realism of its method and the contemporary dress of its sitter were both elements not in its favor.

Although the painter had confessed to putting too much of himself into the portrait, he also acknowledged the fact that some part of the artist's emotions are not transferred directly onto the canvas: "Even now," he tells Dorian, "I cannot help feeling that it is a mistake to think that the passion one feels in creation is ever really shown in the work one creates." (IX,113-14) In other words, once the work of art has been completed, it may not necessarily serve as an accurate transcription of the artist's emotions at the time of creation.[82] Basil pushes this view to untenable lengths, however, when he reasons that the abstract nature of art, i.e., its basic components of form, line, and color, actually disguises the artist's personality instead of revealing it. (IX,114) On one level, this view appears to contradict the painter's earlier belief that the work of art always reflects some aspect of its creator's personality. In a more general sense, Basil's remark does not mesh well with Wilde's dictum that "the more abstract, the more ideal an art is, the more it reveals to us the temper of its age."[83] Given the dramatic circumstances surrounding Hallward's statement (viz. his confession in Dorian's presence), the painter is not to be credited with

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cool-headed reflection and consistency of thought. These somewhat antithetical views are meant to chart the painter's indecision as to whether or not he should exhibit Dorian's portrait. Wilde could only agree with Hallward insofar as his theory coincides with the Keatsean view that beauty resides in the eye of the beholder; the meaning of a work of art is not always clear to its creator.[84]

The eleventh chapter represents Wilde's attempt to rival Huysmans's cataloguing of Des Esseintes's various experiments with precious stones, flowers, perfumes, church raiment, and rare books. It also contains a restatement of Lord Henry's Paterian doctrine of a new hedonism. Dorian's worship of visual beauty appears in the "subtle symphonic arrangements" (cf. Whistler) of his table decorations for evening affairs. (XI,128) Fashion, likewise an integral aspect of his new philosophy, is defined as the fantastic achieving a momentary sense of universality. (As an editor of Woman's World from 1887 to 1889, Wilde knew whereof he spoke; like Mallarmé, he achieved some degree of success as an arbiter of female attire.) Dandyism, representing "an attempt to assert the absolute modernity of beauty" (XI,129), also assumes a central role in Dorian's hedonistic lifestyle.

The ultimate aim of Lord Henry's ordered and reasoned aesthetic philosophy would be a "spiritualizing of the senses." (ibid.) Passionate experience, not its by-products, would be the end goal. According to Dorian, "[this philosophy] was to teach man to concentrate himself

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upon the moments of life that is itself but a moment." (XI,130) The echoes of Pater are too strong to be dismissed. Had he not preached "getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time"[85] in the "Conclusion" to the Renaissance? Had he not insisted, before Wilde, that "not the fruit of experience, but experience itself is the end"?[86] Had he not warned against the establishment of rigid systems of philosophical thought?[87] In calling Pater "an intellectual impressionist,"[88] Wilde was actually defining the new aesthetic philosophy of his fictional hero.

In chapter eighteen, the accidental killing of Sybil Vane's brother gives Lord Henry an opportunity to air his views on the relationship between art and crime. Had the killing been intentional, he argues, the subject would have been more interesting from a psychological point of view and more attractive from an artistic standpoint. (XVIII,204) His subsequent equation of crime (for the lower classes) and art (for the leisure class) as "simply a method of procuring extraordinary sensations" (XIX,212) underscores the inherent traits shared by each.

In "The Critic as Artist," Wilde had remarked upon the unlimited potential of psychological exploration, noting a dearth of morbidity in current fiction: "We have merely touched the surface of the soul," he observed, "that is all. In one single ivory cell of the brain there are stored away things more marvellous and more terrible than even they have dreamed of, who...have sought to track the soul into its most secret places, and to make life confess its dearest

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sins."[89] Wilde instinctively sensed that the pathological or criminal aspect of human psychology was secretly more attractive to the staid Victorian reader and consequently offered the most dramatic possibilities for artistic treatment.

Wilde's essay on Thomas Wainewright, "Pen, Pencil and Poison: A Study in Green" (1889), stressed the formation of an artistic personality through the cultivation of evil for its own sake. Its subtitle hinted at the intimate connection in Wilde's aesthetic philosophy between a vivid color sense and an individual's unadulterated fascination with evil. This relationship was further developed in a letter which Wilde sent to the editor of the St. James Gazette: "Good people," he wrote, "belonging as they do to the normal, and so, commonplace, type, are artistically uninteresting. Bad people are, from the point of view of art, fascinating studies. They represent colour, variety and strangeness. Good people exasperate one's reason; bad people stir one's imagination."[90] This was certainly not a novel concept. For one thing, Wilde's essay on Wainewright was modelled upon De Quincey's earlier study of the same individual. Where Wilde differed from the latter, however, was in his conscious effort to make his own life conform to such a theory.

When, in the penultimate chapter of the novel, Dorian accuses Lord Henry of having poisoned him with a book,[91] the latter replies, as did the author of Dorian Gray, that "art has no influence upon action. It annihilates the

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desire to act. It is superbly sterile. The books that the world calls immoral are books that show the world its own shame." (XIX,217) Wilde had selected as the motto of his new aesthetic philosophy the doctrine that art is concerned solely with its own expression, that the most beautiful things are those which do not concern us, i.e., which do not weigh us down with ethical or moral ideas. Dorian Gray was intended as the embodiment of this new philosophy, Lord Henry represented its most outspoken proponent, and Basil Hallward was its unwitting martyr.

Whether or not Wilde was successful in transposing some of the major critical doctrines expressed in Intentions to a fictional medium is open to question. (Pater considered this endeavor only partially successful.[92]) The point of the preceding analysis has simply been to demonstrate that many of Wilde's aesthetic doctrines did, in fact, find their way into the novel. Were it not for this theoretical framework, Dorian Gray would probably have remained just another example of Victorian melodrama and potboiler fiction. In its present state, however, it has secured for itself lasting recognition as a minor classic of decadent, fin-de-siècle literature.

The Role of the Portrait in "The Picture of Dorian Gray":

Wilde seems to have thought of his novel as an experiment in visual expression. "My story is an essay on decorative art," he informed the editor of the Daily

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Chronicle. "It reacts against the crude brutality of plain realism."[93] Responding to an admirer of the novel, Wilde characterized Dorian Gray as "that strange coloured book of mine...."[94] He advised Lord Alfred Douglas to pay particular attention to "the note of Doom that like a purple thread runs through the gold cloth of Dorian Gray...."[95] These statements would seem to suggest that an appreciation of the visual elements of the novel--especially the portrait of the protagonist--are central to an understanding of Wilde's artistic accomplishments in The Picture of Dorian Gray.

Wilde's critics have painstakingly examined the various literary sources from which the author of Dorian Gray might have appropriated the portrait-device. The most frequently mentioned names are those of Maturin, Balzac, Poe, Disraeli, and Rossetti.[96] It is evident to any conscientious reader of the novel that Wilde might have borrowed elements from any or all of these writers. Charles Robert Maturin was a blood relation of the Wilde family (he was Wilde's great-uncle). His novel Melmoth the Wanderer (1820) had struck a responsive chord in the young Oscar, who later considered it a major influence in his life.[97] The episodic reference to a hidden portrait in Maturin's novel merely serves as a traditional Gothic device; it is soon forgotten amidst the more spectacular events of the tangled, melodramatic narrative.

When Wilde reviewed an English translation of a portion of Balzac's La Comédie Humaine, he praised the French

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novelist's gift for characterization and complimented the writer on his ability to create dynamic situations.[98] Although La Peau de Chagrin substitutes the skin of an ass for a portrait, the idea of a shrinking object might have suggested the disfigurement-motif in Dorian Gray. Poe's "The Oval Portrait" contains the notion that the work of art "drains" the lifeblood of its sitter, a variant of which was subsequently utilized by Zola in L'Oeuvre; it might have suggested the reverse process to Wilde. Poe's short story entitled "William Wilson" is, properly speaking, closer to the Doppelgänger tradition of Romantic fiction. Disraeli's Vivian Grey appears to have provided no more than a last name for Wilde's fictional hero; an incident in this novel involving the death of a young man as a result of having permitted an artist to paint his portrait is not found in Dorian Gray. Lastly, Rossetti's early short story entitled "Hand and Soul" might have suggested the mystic connection between Dorian and his portrait. The painters in both works are guided by an almost superhuman source of inspiration; each portrait seems to capture the very soul of its sitter.

Despite these superficial resemblances, no single work contains all the elements found in Dorian Gray. Wilde never hesitated to appropriate a motif or a technical device for his own ends. What he stressed, however, was the use made of this borrowed material, i.e., its refashioning in the hands of a later writer.[99]

Less attention has been focussed upon the appearance

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of paintings in Wilde's works written prior to the publication of the novel. In "The Model Millionaire" (1887), Wilde had already made use of a studio setting complete with painter, model, and observer-friend. Although no finished portrait is actually described, the theme of deception plays a dominant role throughout. "The Portrait of Mr. W.H." (1889), a strange combination of Shakespeare criticism and detective fiction, marks a further advance in the use of a painting. The mysterious portrait of a young man plays a significant role in determining the identity of the individual (W.H.) to whom Shakespeare's sonnets were supposedly addressed. Although Roditi is correct in assuming that a letter could have been substituted for the painting,[100] Wilde's choice of a visual image is still significant in terms of his growing interest in the utilization of paintings in a fictional context.

Stéphane Mallarmé was one of the first readers of Dorian Gray to stress the central importance of the portrait in the novel:

> J'achève le livre, un des seuls qui puissent émouvoir, vu que d'une rêverie essentielle et des parfums d'âme les plus étranges s'est fait son orage. Redevenir poignant à travers l'inouï raffinement d'intellect, et humain, et une pareille perverse atmosphère de beauté, est un miracle que vous accomplissez et selon quel emploi de tous les arts de l'écrivain! "It was the portrait that had done everything." Ce portrait en pied, inquiétant, d'un Dorian Gray, hantera, mais écrit, étant devenu livre lui-même.[101]
>
> (emphasis mine)

Wilde must certainly have been aware of the "integrating" action of the portrait. It is precisely the manner in

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which he has made a visual object serve as the focal point of the action that distinguishes Dorian Gray from its predecessors. The painting is no longer an isolated incident; it is a referential symbol penetrating into every corner of the plot, a constant reflection of the thoughts and impulses of the central character. The subtle transformations of Dorian's portrait, from a golden-haired Narcissus to a bloated, aging Silenus, hold the reader's attention from first chapter to last.

Wilde ironically undermined the aesthetic significance of the portrait (and the novel as a whole) by associating it with Dorian's conscience.[102] In the seventh chapter, Wilde had written: "The picture, changed or unchanged, would be to him the visual emblem of conscience." (VII,91) This statement opened the doors to simplistic interpretations, leading some critics to compare Dorian Gray and his portrait with Stevenson's Jeckyll-Hyde and Poe's double in "William Wilson."[103] Dorian Gray was admired, or despised, for all the wrong reasons. The Faustian elements in the novel were exaggerated, the characters were neatly aligned on the side of good or evil, and Dorian was simply regarded by Victorian readers as a corrupt individual fully deserving of God's wrath and the punishment meted out to him at the conclusion of the novel.[104]

A step in the right direction was taken by Pater when he viewed Dorian Gray in the light of the aesthetic philosophy expressed in Wilde's Intentions. The emphasis now shifted from Dorian to Lord Henry and Basil Hallward as

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mouthpieces for the author's aesthetic beliefs. Although Albert J. Farmer failed to see in the painter more than the illustration of an artistic attitude, he did recognize the importance of aesthetic doctrines in the novel. The new interpretation which gradually emerged claimed that Dorian had pledged his soul to the spirit of Art, urged on by the "aesthetic" tempter Lord Henry. Basil Hallward's significance has only been recognized by recent critics. In calling his article "A Tragedy of the Artist," Houston A. Baker, Jr. shifted the emphasis from Dorian to the painter. According to his reading of the novel, Hallward is made responsible for the entire chain of events; it is his emotional involvement with his model and the reflection of this secret in the portrait that leads to the corruption of an artistic ideal, viz. that which is embodied in the person of Dorian Gray.[105]

Wilde's novel may represent the tragedy of an artist who has allowed personal feelings to interfere with his craft, but it is not a Künstlerroman in the tradition of Gottfried Keller's Der grüne Heinrich or even Zola's L'Oeuvre. Nor is it a Bildungsroman, since there is hardly any significant growth or development in Dorian's outlook on life and his relations with others. As Jan B. Gordon has rightly perceived, "rather than the growth of an artist, what we find is the growth of Dorian as a work of art...."[106] This interpretation would certainly help to explain the rather puzzling observation of an early critic of the novel who insisted that there was more reality behind the painted

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image than its living model.[107] By viewing the novel from an aesthetic/visual angle, the central importance of the portrait-device will become apparent.

As the novel opens, the reader's attention is gradually focussed upon the portrait by means of ever-narrowing vistas: from the garden, through the open door, into the studio, to the center of the room, where a painter stands before a full-length portrait he is in the process of completing. This "chinese-box" structure[108] is proof of Wilde's serious concern with the composition and arrangement of individual scenes. He has been likened to a scenic designer or stage technician;[109] Wilde's description of Lord Henry Wotton, discovered sprawled across a divan in a pose of seeming abandon and idleness, and his careful attention to the bric-a-brac filling Basil Hallward's studio are good instances of the writer's concern with scenic effects. Unlike Zola, who describes Lantier's atelier with a wealth of realistic detail, Wilde evokes the exotic atmosphere of Hallward's studio by means of a few, well-chosen, highly picturesque details (e.g., Persian saddlebags, silk curtains, honey-colored blossoms of a laburnum).[110] This concern with particulars rather than panoramic views is typical of Dorian Gray as a whole.

Wilde consciously abstains from any technical description of Basil's skill. Except for such occasional and general remarks as "the sweep and dash of the brush on the canvas" (II,24) or "his fingers were straying about among the litter of tin tubes and dry brushes" (II,27), there is

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no attempt made to specify or delineate the actual process of creation. Knowing full well that the insertion of a detailed description of the portrait at this point in the narrative would destroy the suspense which has gradually been built up, Wilde prefers to suggest the beauty of the image by means of contrast. Earlier, Lord Henry had described the sitter as "wonderfully handsome, with his finely curved scarlet lips, his frank blue eyes, his crisp gold hair." (II,16) Dorian now stands before his portrait and ruminates upon Lord Henry's warning that he will soon grow old: "Yes, there would be a day when his face would be wrinkled and wizen, his eyes dim and colorless, the grace of his figure broken and deformed. The scarlet would pass away from his lips, and the gold steal from his hair. The life that was to make his soul would mar his body. He would become dreadful, hideous, and uncouth." (II,25) Wilde has not only prefigured the supernatural transformations in the portrait, he has also suggested the beauty of the original image in a manner which direct description could never have accomplished.

The slashing of the fateful canvas in the final scene of the novel is also foreshadowed in Hallward's desperate wish to destroy the object which has led him to quarrel with his two best friends; he searches for "the long palette knife, with its thin blade of lithe steel. He had found it at last. He was going to rip up the canvas." Dorian's outcry, "Don't, Basil, don't! ... It would be murder! ... It is part of myself. I feel that" leads the painter to

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make the following ambiguous response: "Well, as soon as you are dry, you shall be varnished, and framed, and sent home. Then you can do what you like with yourself." (II,27) This confusion between art and life forms the very core of the novel. Not only is the inanimate portrait imbued with a sense of life; the sitter actually takes on the traits of art. "Here," observes Jan B. Gordon, "art (the portrait by Basil Hallward) and Dorian's life each begin to participate in the 'life' of the other so that education and stylization become confused. At stake is a simultaneous aestheticizing of life and an infusion of the life impulse into static art...."[111] In other words, Dorian's subsequent hedonistic lifestyle, similar in many ways to that of Huysmans's hero, can actually be considered as an attempt to make of himself a work of art. The portrait would consequently serve as a visual record of Dorian's experiences as well as an index of his successes and failures.[112]

Although Wilde appears to allow the portrait to drop from view, he is careful to remind the reader of its importance on several occasions. In the fourth chapter, for example, Dorian pays Lord Henry a call and invites him to attend a dramatic performance by Sybil Vane. In the course of their conversation, the mention of Basil's name leads Dorian to remark: "...he has sent me my portrait in the most wonderful frame, specially designed by himself...." (IV,55) The night of the performance Lord Henry tells the painter: "Your portrait of him has quickened his appreciation

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of the personal appearance of other people. It has had that excellent effect, among others." (VI,73) It is not until the seventh chapter, however, that the painting is actually described in detail:

> As he was turning the handle of the door, his eye fell upon the portrait Basil Hallward had painted of him. He started back as if in surprise ... In the dim arrested light that struggled through the cream-colored silk blinds, the face appeared to him to be a little changed. The expression looked different. One would have said that there was a touch of cruelty in the mouth. It was certainly strange. He turned round, and, walking to the window, drew up the blind ... The quivering, ardent sunlight showed him the lines of cruelty round the mouth as clearly as if he had been looking into a mirror after he had done some dreadful thing ... He rubbed his eyes and came close to the picture and examined it again. There were no signs of any change when he looked into the actual painting, and yet there was no doubt that the whole expression had altered. It was not a mere fancy of his own. The thing was horribly apparent.
>
> (VII,89)

This initial change in the portrait occurs just after Dorian has rejected Sybil Vane's profession of love. Ironically, the passionate force of Dorian's attraction for her ("I loved you because you...gave shape and substance to the shadows of art" [VII,86]) destroyed Sybil Vane's abilities as an actress ("You taught me what reality is ... You had brought me something higher, something of which all art is but a reflection" [VII,85]). The "lines of cruelty round the mouth" of the painted image, moreover, echo Wilde's description of Dorian at the time of his rejection of Sybil's advances: "She crouched on the floor like a wounded thing, and Dorian Gray, with his beautiful eyes, looked down at her, and his chiseled lips curled in exquisite

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disdain." (VII,87) (emphasis mine)

This intimate connection between deed and image, between act and idea, has led Epifanio San Juan, Jr. to conclude: "In setting a portrait, a work of art, at the center of the action, Wilde effects the interplay of natural perception and moral judgment in the novel."[113] There is thus no longer any need for authorial commentary. The painting serves as a register more efficient, perhaps, than any Greek chorus in a classical tragedy. "From the moment the portrait registers a curve on its lips," continues San Juan, "we can intuitively forecast the limit to this magic, and the recognition and catastrophe that will soon follow."[114] As if to further cement the bond between living flesh and painted image, Wilde ends the chapter with the statement: "A sense of infinite pity, not for himself, but for the painted image of himself, came over [Dorian Gray]." (VII,91) The identification between model and portrait is now complete.

Wilde's matter-of-fact description of the grotesque transformations in the portrait demands a willing suspension of the reader's disbelief. Although the supernatural element is certainly present, Dorian Gray does not play itself out exclusively in the Gothic atmosphere of Maturin's novel or the enchanted realm of Balzac's narrative. Wilde's interest in scientific doctrines and Darwinism also finds its way into the novel.[115] Witness, for example, the scientific and objective manner in which Dorian examines his portrait:

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> That such a change should have taken place was incredible to him. And yet it was a fact. Was there some subtle affinity between the chemical atoms that shaped themselves into form and color on the canvas, and the soul that was within him? Could it be that what that soul thought, they realized? --that what it dreamed, they made true? (VIII,94)

And, again:

> Might there not be some curious scientific reason for it all? If thought could exercise its influence upon a living organism, might not thought exercise an influence upon dead and inorganic things? May, without thought or conscious desire, might not things external to ourselves vibrate in unison with our moods and passions, atom calling to atom in secret love of strange affinity? (VIII,104-5)

In a subsequent scene Dorian blackmails Alan Campbell, a former acquaintance and student of medicine, into surgically and chemically disposing of Basil Hallward's lifeless corpse. Thus art and science intersect under the most unlikely circumstances. The factual and the supernatural, the real and the fictive--all elements commingle in Wilde's curious narrative.

The contrast between the aging portrait and the ever-youthful Dorian is a device which Wilde employs repeatedly to heighten or intensify the visual and dramatic force of his narrative. Dorian's rejection of a screen as a suitable means of concealing the portrait leads him to stash the painting in an old abandoned schoolroom located in the upper reaches of the house. While standing before the canvas, Wilde's hero engages in a philosophical disquisition on the ravages of time: "The cheeks would become hollow or flaccid. Yellow crows-feet would creep round the fading

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eyes and make them horrible. The hair would lose its brightness, the mouth would gape or droop, would be foolish or gross, as the mouths of old men are. There would be the wrinkled throat, the cold, blue-veined hands, the twisted body...." (X,122) This naturalistic description of decay is immediately followed by another verbal portrait of the vibrant and energetic figure of the young Dorian: "[He would] stand, with a mirror, in front of the portrait that Basil Hallward had painted of him, looking now at the evil and aging face on the canvas, and now at the fair young face that laughed back at him from the polished glass. The very sharpness of the contrast used to quicken his sense of pleasure ... He would place his white hands beside the coarse bloated hands of the picture, and smile. He mocked the misshapen body and the failing limbs." (XI,127) By playing one image against another, Wilde creates a source of tension and dramatic contrast. This collage-like superimposition of contrasting images might be thought of as an updated version of the "double" in Romantic fiction.

Dorian's description of the family portrait gallery in the eleventh chapter owes its existence to Huysmans's novel A Rebours.[116] In each case, detailed descriptions of paintings serve as visual equivalents for the decadent hero's precarious state of mind. Passing each portrait, Dorian speculates on the nature of his inheritance from the various individuals depicted on canvas: "Was it young Herbert's life that he sometimes led? Had some strange

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poisonous germ crept from body to body till it had reached his own?" (XI,141) This pivotal scene also permits Wilde to deploy his gifts as a painter in prose, a verbal portraitist of exceeding skill; word and image are intertwined so as to become virtually indistinguishable:

> Here, in gold-embroidered red doublet, jeweled surcoat, and gilt-edged ruff and wristbands, stood Sir Anthony Sherard, with his silver-and-black armor piled at his feet ... Here, from the fading canvas, smiled Lady Elizabeth Devereux, in her gauze hood, pearl stomacher, and pink slashed sleeves. A flower was in her right hand, and her left clasped an enameled collar of white and damask roses. On a table by her side lay a mandolin and an apple. There were large rosettes upon her little pointed shoes ... These oval heavy-lidded eyes seemed to look curiously at him. What of George Willoughby, with his powdered hair and fantastic patches? How evil he looked! The face was saturnine and swarthy, and the sensual lips seemed to be twisted with disdain. Delicate lace ruffles fell over the lean yellow hands that were so overladen with rings ... And his mother with her Lady Hamilton face, and the moist wine-dashed lips ... She laughed at him in her loose Bacchante dress. There were vine leaves in her hair. The purple spilled from the cup she was holding. The carnations of the painting had withered, but the eyes were still wonderful in their depth and brilliancy of color. They seemed to follow him wherever he went. (XI,142-3)

Throughout the lengthy and detailed description of these portraits, Wilde manages to drop visual hints recalling the various aspects of Dorian's own picture. The iconographic symbols embedded in Lady Elizabeth Devereux's fading portrait (e.g., flower, mandolin) suggest the theme of _vanitas_ and the brevity of life. George Willoughby's grotesque appearance--his "saturnine and swarthy" face, his "sensual" and "twisted" lips--is almost a double for the portrait stashed away in the old schoolroom; even the

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detail describing the "lean yellow hands that were so overladen with rings" gains in significance if one recalls the fact that at the conclusion of Dorian Gray the servants are only able to identify the shrivelled and deformed corpse as their master after they have examined the numerous rings on its hands. (XX,223) In addition to the withered carnations (vanitas) and the overturned wine cup (sensuality) in the travestied portrait of his mother, Dorian is particularly fascinated by her eyes: "They seemed to follow him wherever he went." He was equally convinced that his own portrait "was watching him, with its beautiful marred face and its cruel smile. Its bright hair gleamed in the early sunlight. Its blue eyes met his own." (VII,91)

Unlike the description of the portrait gallery of ancestors at the opening of A Rebours, which merely serves as a convenient device for introducing the theme of decadence and degeneration, Wilde's use of the same motif functions on another level: it is an immense visual symbol, subsuming all the known elements of Dorian's portrait; moreover, it recalls both the past and foreshadows future events; lastly, it has the effect of integrating the various strands of the novel into a concrete, visual whole.

Basil's discovery of the portrait in the thirteenth chapter and his subsequent murder at the hands of its model together represent a dramatic climax in the narrative. Wilde once again toys with the contrast between youth and age, beauty and ugliness, in his description of the painter's reaction to his own creation: "There was still some

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gold in the thinning hair and some scarlet on the sensual mouth. The sodden eyes had kept something of the loveliness of their blue, the noble curves had not yet completely passed away from the chiseled nostrils and from plastic throat." (XIII,155) Wilde's use here of concrete detail to convey the impression of an ultrarealistic painting has led Lewis J. Poteet to consider the portrait-device an elaborate joke intended to poke fun at the author's personal stand against representational painting.[117] This is precisely the reaction which the fictional painter first expresses: "It was some foul parody, some infamous, ignoble satire." (ibid.) Unfortunately, his own signature in the left-hand corner of the canvas prevents him from accepting this rather convenient explanation.

The theme of the interpenetration of life and art is further developed in a subsequent exchange between Basil and Dorian:

> [B]"You told me you had destroyed it."
> [D]"I was wrong. It has destroyed me."
> [B]"I don't believe it is my picture."
> [D]"Can't you see your ideal in it?"said Dorian, bitterly.
> [B]"My ideal, as you call it...."
> [D]"As you called it."
> [B]"There was nothing evil in it, nothing shameful."
> (XIII,156)

Whereas Poteet argues that Dorian, acting as an independent agent, has done his own bit of "repainting" (i.e., he has assumed Basil's role as artist and is thus responsible for his personal fate), Houston A. Baker insists that Dorian represents an artistic ideal which the painter had initially corrupted; the reasoning behind the latter's argument

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runs as follows: "The fact that Dorian's corruption shows only on Hallward's canvas emphasizes this point. Hallward's initial self-consciousness and mishandling of the ideal have doleful consequences, and it is significant that the artist himself introduces Dorian to Lord Henry. The chain of events seems to be: self-consciousness of the artist, corruption of the ideal, and a hedonistic pursuit of exquisite sensation. Basil Hallward sets the entire sequence in motion."[118]

If one simply accepts the view that the painter is the prime agent in the catastrophe, Wilde's novel is consequently stripped of much of its aesthetic import. It is only when one considers Dorian's hedonistic philosophy as a serious attempt to make his life resemble a work of art that the novel represents a significant contribution to the literature of the fin de siècle. The tragedy of the artist is a common enough theme in modern fiction; the work of art as focal point of a novel is less frequently encountered.[119]

Dorian's discovery of bloodstains on one of the hands of the portrait (XIV,173), a visual record of his heinous deed, builds to a dramatic climax in the final chapter of the novel. Wilde, rivalling Poe's description of creeping horror in "The Masqued Death," creates an image of almost surrealistic intensity: "The thing was still loathsome--more loathsome, if possible, than before--and the scarlet dew that spotted the hand seemed brighter, and more like blood newly spilled ... It seemed to have crept like a

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horrible disease over the wrinkled fingers. There was blood on the painted feet, as though the thing had dripped--blood even on the hand that had not held the knife." (XX,221-2) Dorian's desperate resolve to destroy the painting is preceded by a series of reflections which outline the cause-and-effect pattern behind the novel as a whole: "As [the knife] had killed the painter, so it would kill the painter's work and all that that meant. It would kill the past, and when that was dead, he would be free. It would kill this monstrous soul-life, and, without its hideous warnings, he would be at peace. He seized the thing and stabbed the picture with it." (XX,223)

Several explanations have been offered for what follows, viz. the putrefaction of Dorian's body and the consequent restoration of the portrait to its original state of pristine beauty. San Juan, for example, sees the element of time as the key to unlock this riddle: "...when he stabs the picture, Dorian commits a contradiction--he defies the power of time which ruins the portrait, but from which he himself is liberated. His remorse exists, curiously enough, in time. When he ceases to be a spectator of life and acts violently, he puts an end to the suspension of time; he destroys his beauty and the reason for his existence."[120]

Jan B. Gordon, however, chooses to interpret this chain of events in terms of aesthetics; he views Dorian's act of destruction as a moral and epistemological necessity. If self-projection (i.e., Basil Hallward's placing too

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much of himself into the portrait) has corrupted artistic activity, then self-denial is the only means of aestheticizing the world. According to this view,

> Dorian Gray degenerates into the permanence of art which has become the sole, bizarre record of self-sacrifice. His personal growth has very definite limits, the limits circumscribed by the painting which records all past sins of the aesthete's growth. When Dorian finally fulfills artistic prophecy by "setting his days to music," the clock rotates backward and the seasons follow in inverse order: development of being has become art that remains perpetually young. [121]

Whether or not one chooses to view the final chapter of the novel in either of these terms--and even the purely supernatural explanation found in Gothic melodrama cannot be ruled out entirely--the fact remains that the portrait determines the course of events from first page to last. Dorian Gray may have been the dupe of Lord Henry's aesthetic theories, but he was certainly correct in his assumption that "it was the portrait that had done everything." (XX,221) Wilde's unique contribution to the literature of the 'nineties is summed up in this crucial phrase.

Unlike Zola's L'Oeuvre, in which paintings function in a seismographic manner, i.e., visually charting the fluctuations in the painterly styles and, by extension, the psychological moods of the artist, Wilde's novel centers all the action around a single object. (In this regard, one could argue that it is closer in treatment to Henry James's The Golden Bowl.) The single visual symbol,

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placed in the exact center of the narrative, performs several vital functions: it integrates the action; relates the characters to one another; eliminates the need for authorial comment; and predetermines the structural pattern of the novel as a whole. That Wilde's Dorian Gray is carefully structured, one might almost say classical in design and economy of means, has been noted by more than one critic.[122] Wilde's minute revisions of the first version (which originally appeared in Lippincott's Magazine in 1890) are proof of the author's concern with the formal aspects of his novel.[123]

The portrait, more than any other element in Dorian Gray, gives form and coherence to the work. It is not merely a convenient device for Wilde. In addition to dramatically illustrating one of his most basic aesthetic doctrines, viz. the supremacy of art over nature, it also serves as a referential symbol for the reader. "From the reader's viewpoint," writes San Juan, "the picture suggests the treatment of angle and distance--the ways of telling and showing--which make up the perennial issues of the aesthetics and criticism of fiction."[124] Wilde's achievement, in short, lay in his realization of the formal uses to which a visual work of art might be put within a fictional context. His self-proclaimed goal, one will recall, was "[to write] an essay on decorative art." In both a literal and symbolic sense, Wilde accomplished just that. For it was his constant belief that "all art is at once surface and symbol."[125]

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Footnotes

[1] See, e.g., Walter Fischer, "'The Poisonous Book' in Oskar [sic] Wildes Dorian Gray," Englische Studien, 51 (1917/18), 37-47; Bernhard Fehr, "Das gelbe Buch in Oskar [sic] Wildes Dorian Gray," Englische Studien, 55 (1921), 237-56; H. Lucius Cook, "French Sources of Wilde's Picture of Dorian Gray," Romanic Review, 19, i (Jan.-March 1928), 25-34; and, finally, Oscar Maurer, Jr., "A Philistine Source for Dorian Gray?" Philological Quarterly, 26 (Jan. 1947), 84-6.

[2] Stanley Weintraub, ed., Literary Criticism of Oscar Wilde (Lincoln, Nebr., 1968); Richard Ellmann, ed., The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde (New York, 1969). Subsequent references to these two collections will appear in an abbreviated fashion (e.g., Lit. Crit. and Artist as Critic, resp.).

[3] Farmer, Le Mouvement Esthétique et "Décadent" en Angleterre (1873-1900) (Paris, 1931), p. 125.

[4] Letter dated Jan.-March 1897. The Letters of Oscar Wilde, ed. Rupert Hart-Davis (New York, 1962), p. 451. Subsequent references to Wilde's letters refer to this edition.

[5] Woodcock, The Paradox of Oscar Wilde (New York, 1950), pp. 120-21.

[6] Letters, facing p. 62. The watercolor in question bears the following inscription: "For Florrie. September 1876. View from Moytura House. Oscar F. Wilde." Basing his information upon an earlier critic (viz. Sherard), Aatos Ojala adds that "while an undergraduate Wilde attempted to render himself proficient in painting, but...nothing that he ever painted has survived." Aestheticism and Oscar Wilde, 2 vols. (Helsinki, 1954/5), I, p. 47. The first half of this statement is expressed in rather vague terms; the latter half is clearly false. Robert Merle also sees some degree of technical training behind Wilde's art criticism: "...Wilde, dessinateur lui-même dans sa jeunesse, s'intéressa de tout temps à la peinture, et y apporte des lumières qui, à lire certains de ses articles sur le sujet, ne paraissent pas négligeables." Oscar Wilde (Paris, [1948]), p. 247.

[7] Besides Whistler, Beardsley, and Burne-Jones, Wilde numbered among his painter friends Charles Conder, Walter Sickert, William Rothenstein, J.E. Millais, and William

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Morris. His favorite book designers and illustrators, Ricketts and Shannon, must certainly have provided him with first-hand information. An essay such as "London Models" (Artist as Critic, pp. 109-15) could not possibly have been written by someone who had not frequented painters' studios.

[8] Letter dated 23 June 1875. Letters, p. 9.

[9] See the letter to his mother dated 24-25 June 1875. Letters, p. 10. In an essay entitled "The Decay of Lying," Wilde's spokesman has the following to say concerning this painter's portraits: "Holbein's drawings of the men and women of his time impress us with a sense of their absolute reality. But this is simply because Holbein compelled life to accept his conditions, to restrain itself within his limitations, to reproduce his type and to appear as he wished it to appear." Lit. Crit., p. 191.

[10] Cf. the following letter (4 Oct. 1880) to Hermann Vezin: "...a rare and splendid art, to make all common things symbolic of the leading idea, as Albert [sic] Dürer loved to do in his drawings." (emphasis Wilde's) Letters, p. 72.

[11] Letter dated 21 April 1900. Ibid., p. 823.

[12] Letter dated 23 March 1883. Ibid., p. 141. An earlier statement in the same letter provides additional evidence of Wilde's technical skills: "As regards the scenery and the costumes, I have already made drawings of both: I have indicated the scenery before each act briefly."

[13] Letter to his mother dated April 1877: "What strikes one is extreme age, and the twisted broken writhing in pain such as Gustave Doré loves to draw." Letters, p. 36.

[14] Cf. the following letter (9-10? April 1883) to the painter Jacques-Emile Blanche: "J'aime tant voir votre atelier, avec sa porte bleue de paon, et la petite chambre verte et or, car c'est pour moi une fraîche oasis de beauté dans le désert de Louis seize que je trouve à Paris." Letters, p. 145.

[15] Cf. the following letter (c.12 Feb. 1894) to W.E. Henley: "You asked me about Degas. Well, he loves to be thought young, so I don't think he would tell his age. He disbelieves in art-education, so I don't think he will name a Master. He despises what he cannot get, so I am sure he will not give any information about prizes or honours. Why say anything about his person? His pastels are himself." Letters, p. 352.

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[16] Cf. the following letter (May-June 1883) to R.H. Sherard: "...you should be here [i.e., London]: one can only write in cities, the country hanging on one's walls in the grey mists of Corot, or the opal mornings that Daubigny has given us." Letters, p. 147.

[17] See the letter (3 June 1884) written by Constance Wilde to her brother. Letters, pp. 156-8.

[18] Cf. the following letter (21 April 1900) to Robert Ross: "Armand Point, the French painter, a bad Botticelli-Jones artist, is here, and has promised to do me a tabella votiva." Letters, p. 823.

[19] Letter (4 Sept. 1897) to Leonard Smithers. Letters, p. 637.

[20] Roditi, "Oscar Wilde's Poetry as Art History," Poetry, 67, vi (March 1946), 336.

[21] Wilde, "Some Literary Notes," Reviews [vol. 13 of the Collected Works], ed. Robert Ross (London, 1969), p. 392. Cf. the following letter (c.15 July 1882) to Charles Eliot Norton: "When I had the privilege of dining with you you spoke to me...of Professor Morse, the Japanese traveller. As I am going to Japan myself it would be of great service to me to get any instructions or letters from him which would enable me to see their method of studying art, their schools of design and the like ... I am so anxious to see the artistic side of Japanese life...." Letters, pp. 123-4.

[22] Wilde, A Critic in Pall Mall: Reviews and Miscellanies, ed. E.V. Lucas (New York/London, [1919]), p. 272. The same thought is expressed in another of Wilde's aphorisms: "It is only the unimaginative [artist] who ever invents. The true artist is known by the use he makes of what he annexes, and he annexes everything." Reviews, p. 29.

[23] Letter dated 17 Nov. 1886. Reprinted in Wilde, Letters, p. 191.

[24] Letter dated May 1888. Ibid., p. 218.

[25] Farmer, Le Mouvement Esthétique..., p. 126, characterized the Grosvenor Gallery as "[une] sorte de salon dissident où étaient exposées les peintures de la nouvelle école, [et qui] était assiégée par d'ardents admirateurs."

[26] Wilde, "The Grosvenor Gallery," Miscellanies [vol. 14 of the Collected Works], ed. Robert Ross (London, 1969), p. 6.

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[27] Even after Wilde had completely rejected the "literary" art of Rossetti, Hunt, and their disciple Burne-Jones, he still praised these painters for the clarity of their execution. In a letter (16 April 1900) to Robert Ross, Wilde described the effect which the symmetrically arranged lemon groves and orange gardens of Palermo had on him in terms of these painters: "I became again a Pre-Raphaelite," he wrote, "and loathed the ordinary Impressionists, whose muddy souls and blurred intelligences would have rendered but by mud and blur those 'golden lamps hung in a green night' that filled me with such joy. The elaborate and exquisite detail of the true Pre-Raphaelites is the compensation they offer us for the absence of motion...." Letters, p. 820.

[28] Wilde, "The English Renaissance of Art" (1882), Miscellanies, p. 263.

[29] Ojala, Aestheticism and Oscar Wilde, I, pp. 76-82.

[30] Cf. the following letter (March-April 1891) to Morris: "I have always felt that your work comes from the sheer delight of making beautiful things: that no alien motive ever interests you: that in its singleness of aim, as well as in its perfection of result, it is pure art, everything that you do ... I have loved your work since boyhood: I shall always love it." Letters, pp. 290-91.

[31] In a letter (19 Feb. 1882) to a Mr. Stoddart, Wilde explicitly refers to this manifesto: "The preface you will see is most important, signifying my new departure from Mr. Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelites, and marks an era in the aesthetic movement." Letters, p. 96.

[32] Wilde, "L'Envoi: Rose Leaf and Apple Leaf," Miscellanies, pp. 30, 32.

[33] According to Denis, "it must be remembered that any painting--before being a war horse, a nude woman, or some anecdote--is essentially a flat surface covered with colors arranged in a certain order." Quoted by John Rewald, Post-Impressionism: From Van Gogh to Gauguin, 2nd edn. (New York, 1962), p. 518.

[34] "L'Envoi...," Miscellanies, pp. 32-3.

[35] Merle, Oscar Wilde, p. 234.

[36] Wilde, "Mr. Pater's Last Volume [Appreciations]," Artist as Critic, pp. 229-30.

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[37] Wilde's first Grosvenor Gallery review of 1877, although still written under the spell of Ruskin and Pre-Raphaelitism, refers directly to Pater's definition of color as "a spirit upon them [i.e., natural things] by which they become expressive to the spirit...." "The Grosvenor Gallery," Miscellanies, p. 6. Wilde even took it upon himself to speak for Pater, as is evidenced by the following written response to a reader's query: "I have been obliged to explain what I mean by imaginative colour, and what Mr. Pater means by it. We mean thought expressed by colour such as the sleep of Merlin being implied and expressed in the colour. I do not mean odd, unnatural colouring. I mean 'thought in colour.'" Letter dated May-June 1877. Letters, p. 39.

[38] Wilde, "Pen, Pencil, and Poison: A Study in Green," Artist as Critic, p. 326.

[39] Cf. Pater's dictum: "...in aesthetic criticism the first step towards seeing one's object as it really is, is to know one's own impression as it really is, to discriminate it, to realize it distinctly." Quoted by Daniel G. Hoffman and Samuel Hynes, eds., English Literary Criticism: Romantic and Victorian (New York, 1963), p. 283.

[40] Wilde, "The Critic as Artist," Artist as Critic, p. 367.

[41] Quoted by Gerald Monsman, "Pater's Aesthetic Hero," Univ. Toronto Quarterly, 40, ii (Winter 1971), 144.

[42] Cf. the following statement by Wilde contained in a letter (Jan.-March 1897) to Lord Alfred Douglas from Reading Prison: "Music, in which all subject is absorbed in expression and cannot be separated from it...."

[43] Farmer, Le Mouvement Esthétique..., p. 251, cites Wilde as stating: "C'est à Walter Pater...que je dois tout." For a more detailed analysis of Pater's influence upon Wilde's critical thinking, see: E. Bendz, "The Influence of Walter Pater and Matthew Arnold in the Prose-Writings of Oscar Wilde," Diss. Leipzig, 1914; E.J. Bock, Walter Paters Einfluss auf Oscar Wilde (Bonn, 1913). (both not consulted)

[44] According to Gerda Eichbaum, "die Freundschaft zwischen Wilde und Whistler, die bald nach Wildes Erscheinen in den Londoner Salons begann, schien zunächst unerschütterlich zu sein. Zwei Jahre hindurch waren die beiden unzertrennlich, niemals tauchte der eine ohne den anderen in der Gesellschaft auf." "Die persönlichen und literarischen Beziehungen zwischen Oscar Wilde und James Mac [sic]-Neill Whistler," Englische Studien, 65 (1930/1), p. 223.

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According to Birgit Borelius, "a stream of visitors came to [Whistler's] studio. Wilde sat there for hours on end and was a constant guest at the famous Sunday lunches." Oscar Wilde, Whistler and Colours (Lund, 1968), p. 13.

[45] Wilde, "Mr. Whistler's Ten O'Clock," Artist as Critic, p. 15.

[46] Borelius, op. cit., pp. 33, 43-4. Since Wilde demonstrates that the critic is superior to the painter or poet, Borelius's claim can hardly be substantiated. This doctrine, moreover, is expressed in Pater's, not Whistler's, aesthetic writings.

[47] Eichbaum, op. cit., p. 221.

[48] Glaenzer, "Introduction," Decorative Art in America, by Oscar Wilde, ed. R.B. Glaenzer (New York, 1906), pp. xxi-xxii.

[49] This opinion was expressed in a letter dated 19 July 1877. It is reprinted in Wilde, Letters, p. 47. The occasion for this remark was Wilde's Grosvenor Gallery review of 1877, a copy of which was sent by the author to Pater. Almost fifteen years later, in a signed review of Wilde's Dorian Gray, Pater's tone of halfhearted praise had changed to one of sincere admiration: "[Mr. Wilde] carries on, perhaps more than any other writer, the brilliant critical work of Matthew Arnold. The Decay of Lying, for instance, is all but unique in its half-humorous, yet wholly convinced, presentment of certain valuable truths of criticism." Quoted by Karl Beckson, ed., Oscar Wilde: The Critical Heritage (New York, 1970), p. 83. Subsequent references to this collection will appear in an abbreviated fashion (e.g., Critical Heritage).

[50] The statement appears in Yeats's preface to Wilde's The Happy Prince and A House of Pomegranates. It reads as follows: "It was precisely because he was not of it by birth and by early association that he caught up phrases and adjectives for their own sake, and not because they were a natural part of his design, and spoke them to others as though it were his duty to pass on some password, sign or countersign." Quoted by Roditi, "Oscar Wilde's Poetry as Art History," p. 322.

[51] Le Gallienne, signed review, Academy (4 July 1891); reprinted in Critical Heritage, p. 102.

[52] This harsh judgment is contained in Symons's celebrated essay entitled "An Artist in Attitudes," which appears in his Studies in Prose and Verse. Quoted by Farmer,

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Le Mouvement Esthétique..., p. 249.

[53] Unsigned review, Pall Mall Gazette (12 May 1891); reprinted in Critical Heritage, p. 90.

[54] Souday's article is reprinted in Critical Heritage, p. 386.

[55] Jackson, The Eighteen Nineties; the relevant passage is reprinted in Critical Heritage, p. 335.

[56] Wood, "Oscar Wilde as a Critic," North American Review (Dec. 1915); reprinted in Critical Heritage, pp. 347-54.

[57] The statement occurs in Mencken's introduction to Wilde's A House of Pomegranates (New York, 1918); reprinted in Critical Heritage, p. 381.

[58] Wilde provided Ricketts and Shannon with many commissions to illustrate his works. According to Hart-Davis, Letters, p. 249 note 2, "Ricketts designed the title-page and binding of The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891) and of the limited edition of Wilde's Poems (1892), the binding of Intentions (1891) and Lord Arthur Savile's Crime (1891). Ricketts and Shannon jointly designed and decorated A House of Pomegranates (1891). Ricketts designed The Sphinx (1894) and the binding for the Collected Edition of 1908. Shannon designed the binding for Lady Windermere's Fan (1893), A Woman of No Importance (1894), The Importance of Being Earnest (1899) and An Ideal Husband (1899)." As for Rothenstein, cf. the following letter (9 June 1897) by Wilde to the painter: "I hope you never forget that but for me you would not be Will Rothenstein: Artist. You would simply be William Rothenstein, R.A. It is one of the most important facts in the history of art." (emphasis Wilde's) Letters, p. 605.

[59] Wilde had said as much in his article entitled "Mr. Whistler's Ten O'Clock": "For there are not many arts, but one art merely; poem, picture, and Parthenon, sonnet and statue--all are in their essence the same, and he who knows one, knows all." The relevant passage is reprinted in Artist as Critic, p. 15.

[60] Woodcock, The Paradox of Oscar Wilde, p. 138.

[61] According to Ojala, Wilde referred to himself as "Professor of Aesthetics and Art Critic" soon after he had graduated from Oxford. Aestheticism and Oscar Wilde, I, p. 74. This was certainly a rather pretentious title for someone who was just beginning his aesthetic apprenticeship.

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[62] In Farmer's opinion, "ce serait se méprendre sur le sens du roman que d'y voir surtout un récit merveilleux. La fiction n'est que le prétexte qui permettra à l'écrivain de présenter une doctrine dont les principes seront exposés, expliqués, par la voix des interprètes et par les événements auxquels participent ces êtres imaginaires. Cette doctrine est celle des essais ... Ce n'est là, à tout prendre, que le commentaire ingénieux des pages essentielles d'Intentions." (emphasis Farmer's) Le Mouvement Esthétique..., pp. 182-4. According to Roditi, "most of Wilde's creative works can be analyzed, to some extent, as critical works. Lord Henry, in The Picture of Dorian Gray, expounds very much the same doctrines of art and of life as Ernest in the critical dialogue on The Critic as Artist...." This critic, moreover, even goes so far as to consider the novel a failure as a representative work belonging to the macabre school of fiction: "The thread of its narrative," writes Roditi, "is too frequently interrupted by Wilde's esthetic preaching, by useless displays of esthetic erudition, by unnecessary descriptions of works of art and by paradoxical table-talk which have little bearing on the plot, except where Lord Henry dazzles and convinces Dorian." "Criticism as Art," Oscar Wilde (Norfolk, Conn., 1947), pp. 82 and 118 resp. Finally, cf. the following statement by Lewis J. Poteet: "It is my contention...that with the portrait-motif as with the other structural elements derived from the Gothic novel, Wilde expresses and tests the theory of art and the artist of the Intentions." "Dorian Gray and the Gothic Novel," Modern Fiction Studies, 17, ii (Summer 1971), 245.

[63] Wilde, The Picture of Dorian Gray, ed. Harry Shefter (New York, 1972), I, p. 1. All future references are to this Washington Square Press edition of the novel. Such references will be acknowledged in an abbreviated fashion (chapter in Roman numerals; page(s) in Arabic numerals) immediately following the quoted passage.

[64] Quoted by Guido Glur, Kunstlehre und Kunstanschauung des Georgekreises und die Aesthetik Oscar Wildes (Bern, 1957), p. 56.

[65] In a review entitled "Art at Willis's Rooms" (1887), Wilde explicitly stated that art "must not content itself simply with holding the mirror up to nature, for it is a re-creation more than a reflection, and not a repetition but rather a new song." Miscellanies, p. 91. A variant of this idea is also contained in a letter dated 16 Dec. 1896: "A mirror," writes Wilde, "will give back to one one's own sorrow. But Art is not a mirror but a crystal. It creates its own shapes and forms." Letters, p. 415.

[66] Wilde also stressed temperament as a necessary quality for the aesthetic critic; in the essay entitled

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"The Critic as Artist" one can read as follows: "Temperament is the primary requisite for the critic--a temperament exquisitely susceptible to beauty, and to the various impressions that beauty gives us." Artist as Critic, p. 394. Temperament also figures prominently in Zola's definition of art.

[67] According to this essay, "Art is Individualism, and Individualism is a disturbing and disintegrating force. Therein lies its immense value. For what it seeks to disturb is monotony of type, slavery of custom, tyranny of habit, and the reduction of man to the level of a machine." "The Soul of Man Under Socialism," Artist as Critic, p. 272. Proust similarly viewed habit and repetition as the bane of artistic creation.

[68] Wilde, "The Decay of Lying," ibid., p. 316.

[69] Wilde, "The Critic as Artist," ibid., p. 397. In "The Decay of Lying," however, Vivian, Wilde's spokesman, had praised the Impressionists for revealing the world to us in a more poetic light, superior to mere nature: "Where, if not from the Impressionists," he asks Cyril, "do we get those wonderful brown fogs that come creeping down our streets, blurring the gas-lamps and changing the houses into monstrous shadows? To whom, if not to them and their master, do we owe the lovely silver mists that brood over our river, and turn to faint forms of fading grace curved bridge and swaying barge? The extraordinary change that has taken place in the climate of London during the last ten years is entirely due to a particular school of Art." Lit. Crit., p. 187. This point will also be stressed by Proust's narrator and fictional painter; in A la Recherche it is Renoir's art which serves as an example of how painterly styles can change our perception of reality and the physical environment.

[70] "The Critic as Artist" also contains Wilde's definition of technique: "Technique is really personality. That is the reason why the artist cannot teach it, why the pupil cannot learn it, and why the aesthetic critic can understand it. To the great painter, there is only one manner of painting--that which he himself employs." Artist as Critic, p. 401. In his earlier essay entitled "Lecture to Art Students" (1883), Wilde had stressed the fact that technique must not be narrowly defined as "finish" or "brushwork." It must remain an invisible yet integral part of the overall aesthetic effect. Miscellanies, pp. 320-21.

[71] Wilde, "The English Renaissance of Art," Miscellanies, p. 244.

[72] Wilde's description of this ideal fusion occurs in

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a review of Lefébure's history entitled Embroidery and Lace, a book which provided the author of Dorian Gray with the necessary background information for the novel's eleventh chapter. "In Byzantium," writes Wilde, "the two arts met--Greek art, with its intellectual sense of form, and its quick sympathy with humanity; Oriental art, with its gorgeous materialism, its frank rejection of imitation, its wonderful secrets of craft and colour, its splendid textures, its rare metals and jewels, its marvellous and priceless traditions." "A Fascinating Book," Reviews, p. 330. (Oriental art, in this context, is synonymous with romantic art in the definition contained in "The English Renaissance of Art.")

[73] Monsman makes the following distinction in his article: "The essential difference between Wilde's dandy and Pater's hero lies just here in their characteristic temperamental variations. The emotional control of Pater heroes has as a practical consequence a balanced approach toward 'self-culture.'" "Pater's Aesthetic Hero," p. 149.

[74] Cf. the following: "The visible aspect of life no longer contains for us the secret of life's spirit. Probably it never did contain it." "The New President [of the Royal Society of British Artists]" (1889), Artist as Critic, p. 128.

[75] The statement occurs in Wilde's essay entitled "A House of Pomegranates: I" (1891), Miscellanies, p. 162.

[76] The phrase occurs in "The Critic as Artist," Artist as Critic, p. 398. Cf. the following statement by Wilde, in which he explicitly voices his concern with the mystical in art: "...I am conscious now that behind all this beauty, satisfying though it may be, there is some spirit hidden of which the painted forms and shapes are but modes of manifestation, and it is with this spirit that I desire to become in harmony. I have grown tired of the articulate utterances of men and things. The Mystical in Art, the Mystical in Life, the Mystical in Nature--this is what I am looking for. It is absolutely necessary for me to find it somewhere." Quoted by Glur, Kunstlehre..., p. 45. This statement, which is totally at variance with Wilde's earlier doctrine of art for art's sake (which denied that there was a spiritual dimension in art), would appear to reflect the new philosophy of the former inmate of Reading Prison.

[77] Wilde, "The English Renaissance of Art," Miscellanies, p. 267. Wilde seems to have confused this issue on only one occasion. In the essay entitled "Pen, Pencil and Poison: A Study in Green" (1889), he discussed the life and career of the aesthete Thomas Griffiths Wainewright. Wilde noted that "his crimes seem to have had an important effect upon

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his art. They gave a strong personality to his style, a quality that his early work certainly lacked." Artist as Critic, p. 338. If it is true, as Wilde had insisted in "The English Renaissance of Art," that art should not be conditioned by good or evil impulses, then it would hardly be possible for a conscious practitioner of evil to "improve" his art in this manner, i.e., through a cultivation of wickedness for its own sake. The entire essay has frequently been viewed as a veiled autobiographical confession.

[78] Wilde, "The Critic as Artist," Artist as Critic, p. 406. Lord Henry presents a variation of the same argument in his rebuttal of Dorian's accusation that he (i.e., Lord Henry) values beauty far too much: "I admit that I think that it is better to be beautiful than to be good. But on the other hand no one is more ready than I am to acknowledge that it is better to be good than to be ugly." (XVII,193) His remark is both flippant and charming despite the seriousness of the basic issue.

[79] This view is expressed in "A House of Pomegranates: II" (1891), Miscellanies, p. 163. Cf. the following remark contained in the essay entitled "House Decoration" (1882): "The artist is not dependent on the visible and the tangible. He has his visions and his dreams to feed on." Ibid., p. 283.

[80] Cf. Wilde's statement in "The Critic as Artist": "...I see that the beauty of the visible arts is, as the beauty of music, impressive primarily, and that it may be marred, and indeed often is so, by any excess of intellectual intention on the part of the artist." Artist as Critic, p. 368. This theory would accord well with Wilde's Hellenic or classical doctrine of art (see fn. 72).

[81] Wilde, "The Decay of Lying," ibid., p. 319.

[82] Cf. Wilde's observation in "The Critic as Artist": "For when the work is finished it has, as it were, an independent life of its own, and may deliver a message far other than that which was put into its lips to say." Ibid., p. 368. Dorian, likewise, is afraid to sit for Basil a second time; he also realizes that "there is something fatal about a portrait. It has a life of its own." (IX,115)

[83] Wilde, "The Decay of Lying," ibid., p. 314.

[84] In "The Critic as Artist" Wilde observes that "the meaning of any beautiful created thing is, at least, as much in the soul of him who looks at it, as it was in his soul who wrought it. Nay, it is rather the beholder who lends to the beautiful thing its myriad meanings...." Ibid., p. 367. Wilde utilized the same argument in his defense of

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Dorian Gray against charges of immorality; he maintained that the reader imposed his own real or imagined evils upon the work, that only a prurient mind would fail to find any redeeming quality in the novel. See the letter dated 26 June 1890 in Letters, p. 259.

[85] Quoted by Hoffman and Hynes, eds., English Literary Criticism..., p. 288. Cf. Lord Henry's statement: "We can have in life but one great experience at best, and the secret of life is to reproduce that experience as often as possible." (XVII,199)

[86] Ibid., p. 287.

[87] Dorian notes that this new hedonism "was to have its service of the intellect, certainly; yet it was never to accept any theory or system that would involve the sacrifice of any mode of passionate experience." (XI,129) Cf. Pater: "The theory, or idea, or system, which requires of us the sacrifice of any part of this experience...has no real claim upon us." Quoted by Hoffman and Hynes, eds., op. cit., p. 288.

[88] The phrase occurs in Wilde's review entitled "Mr. Pater's Imaginary Portraits" (1887). His understanding of Pater's impressionistic mode of criticism is revealed in the same essay: "[Pater] does not weary us with any definite doctrine or seek to suit life to any formal creed. He is always looking for exquisite moments and, when he has found them, he analyses them with delicate and delightful art and then passes on, often to the opposite pole of thought or feeling, knowing that every mood has its own quality and charm and is justified by its mere existence." Lit. Crit., p. 59.

[89] Wilde, "The Critic as Artist," Artist as Critic, p. 402.

[90] Letter dated 26 June 1890. Letters, p. 259.

[91] Cf. the following letter (15 April 1892) to E.W. Pratt: "Dear Sir, The book in Dorian Gray is one of the many books I have never written, but it is partly suggested by Huysmans's A Rebours ... It is a fantastic variation on Huysmans's over-realistic study of the artistic temperament in our inartistic age. Faithfully yours, Oscar Wilde." Letters, p. 313.

[92] Pater expressed this opinion in a signed review entitled "A Novel by Mr. Oscar Wilde," which appeared in the Bookman (Nov. 1891): "In Dorian Gray," wrote Pater, "[Wilde] is true certainly, on the whole, to the aesthetic philosophy

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of his Intentions; yet not infallibly, even on this point: there is a certain amount of the intrusion of real life and its sordid aspects...." Pater's review is reprinted in Critical Heritage, p. 84. Pater was probably thinking of such episodes as the domestic life of the Vane family and Dorian's visits to the opium dens of London. Both scenes, moreover, reflect Wilde's utilization of melodramatic conventions.

[93] This view is expressed in a letter dated 30 June 1890. Letters, p. 264.

[94] Letter dated 12 Feb. 1894. Ibid., p. 352.

[95] Letter dated Jan.-March 1897. Ibid., p. 475.

[96] For a discussion of the portrait-motif in Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer, see Poteet, "Dorian Gray and the Gothic Novel," pp. 239-48; see, also, Roditi, "Fiction as Allegory," Oscar Wilde, p. 115ff. For an analysis of the use of the portrait-motif in Poe's "The Oval Portrait" and "William Wilson," see Eino Railo's The Haunted Castle: A Study of the Elements of English Romanticism (New York, 1964), pp. 305-6. Railo also discusses Rossetti's "Hand and Soul" and "Saint Agnes of Intercession." (p. 306) For a broader and more general investigation of the implications of the portrait-motif, see Jan B. Gordon's "The Imaginary Portrait: Fin-de-Siècle Icon," Univ. Windsor Review, 5, i (Fall 1969), 81-104. Disraeli's use of the portrait-motif in Vivian Grey is briefly discussed by Charles J. Nickerson in "Vivian Grey and Dorian Gray," TLS [London], no. 3520, 14 August 1969, p. 909.

[97] Cf. the following letter (4 Jan. 1900) to Louis Wilkinson: "...I sometimes have my letters inscribed with the name of a curious novel by my grand-uncle, Maturin: a novel that was part of the romantic revival of the early century, and though imperfect, a pioneer...." Letters, p. 813.

[98] The review in question first appeared in the Pall Mall Gazette on 13 September 1886; it is reprinted under the rubric "Balzac in English" in Lit. Crit., pp. 9-12.

[99] Wilde's variation upon the devil-pact motif in Dorian Gray is a case in point. In a letter dated 30 June 1890, Wilde discusses the "idea of a young man selling his soul in exchange for eternal youth," while recognizing the fact "that [it] is old in the history of literature" yet still remains an idea "to which I have given new form...." Letters, p. 263. For a discussion of the parallels existing between Goethe's Faust and Wilde's novel, see Domenick Rossi's "Parallels in Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray and Goethe's

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Faust," College Language Assoc. Journal, 13, ii (Dec. 1969), 188-91. Ted R. Spivey also touches upon this relationship in his article entitled "Damnation and Salvation in The Picture of Dorian Gray," Boston Univ. Studies in English, 4, iii (Autumn 1960), 162-70.

[100] Roditi, Oscar Wilde, p. 113. Another significant reference to the utilization of paintings in a fictional context occurs in Wilde's review of Alice Corkran's work entitled Margery Merton's Girlhood. Wilde first discusses the new "art-literature" which Ruskin (in prose) and Browning (in poetry) have helped to propagate. He then turns to an examination of the story in question, which centers on a picture of Joan of Arc painted by the heroine. Referring to Ruskin and Browning a second time, Wilde observes: "Theirs was the seed of this new literature, and theirs, too, its flower; but it is pleasant to note their influence on Miss Corkran's little story, in which the creation of a picture forms the dominant motif." (emphasis mine) "Literary and Other Notes" (1888), Reviews, p. 265.

[101] Mallarmé's letter to Wilde, dated 10 Nov. 1891, was prompted by the latter's presentation of a copy of Dorian Gray to the French poet. It is reprinted in Letters, p. 298 note 1.

[102] This connection was stressed by the author on at least two separate occasions. In a letter (26 June 1890) to the editor of the St. James Gazette, Wilde explained: "Dorian Gray, having led a life of mere sensation and pleasure, tries to kill conscience, and at that moment kills himself." Letters, p. 259. The same idea reappears in a letter (30 June 1890) addressed to the editor of the Daily Chronicle: "It is finally to get rid of the conscience that had dogged his steps from year to year that he destroys the picture; and thus in his attempt to kill conscience Dorian kills himself." Letters, p. 264.

[103] Cf., for example, Railo's simplistic reading of the novel: "...the artist transfers to canvas, as by magic, the entire personality of his sitter, thus creating the latter's double ... The portrait thus represents the evil half of his being as Mr. Hyde does the evil in Dr. Jeckyll. In this manner Wilde brings to light an idea that had probably always lain behind the portrait-theme--that the picture constituted in some mysterious way the sitter's double, living a parallel life and reflecting his personality." The Haunted Castle..., p. 307.

[104] Wilde himself considered the moralistic element in Dorian Gray its most serious defect. True, he had defended his novel against charges of immorality by stating that "it is a story with a moral. And the moral is this: All excess,

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as well as all renunciation, brings its own punishment." This defense is contained in a letter (26 June 1890) to the editor of the St. James Gazette (cited earlier). Letters, p. 259. Yet on another occasion Wilde insisted that his artistic goal was to keep the moral element subordinate to the dramatic presentation of his subject, a task which he found rather difficult to achieve. The latter view is expressed in a letter (30 June 1890) to the editor of the Daily Chronicle (cited earlier). Letters, p. 263.

[105] Baker, "A Tragedy of the Artist: The Picture of Dorian Gray," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 24, iii (Dec. 1969), 349-55. Cf. the following interpretation by Epifanio San Juan, Jr.: "If Basil practically introduces the novel to us in his capacity as the maker of the miraculous portrait, he also concludes the novel as a victim of his own creation. His existence images the complete circuit of Dorian's action." The Art of Oscar Wilde (Princeton, N.J., 1967), p. 65.

[106] Gordon, "'Parody as Initiation': The Sad Education of Dorian Gray," Criticism, 9, iv (Fall 1967), 371.

[107] Julian Hawthorne, signed review in Lippincott's Magazine (1890); reprinted in Critical Heritage, p. 80.

[108] The term is borrowed from Gordon's "The Imaginary Portrait...," p. 100.

[109] According to Mario Praz, "Wilde's point of view... is always scenic; he sees things as in stage perspective; he is all the time arranging his characters, his landscapes, his events, and making them pose." The Romantic Agony (Cleveland/New York, 1950), p. 345.

[110] Cf. Farmer, Le Mouvement Esthétique..., p. 195: "Lorsque l'écrivain évoque l'atelier de Basil Hallward, il s'efforce moins de poser un décor que de créer une atmosphère...." This statement would tend to contradict Praz's earlier remark.

[111] Gordon, "The Imaginary Portrait...," p. 83.

[112] Poteet has suggested the interesting view that Dorian is his own artist as well as the subject of a work of art. He argues that the hero's various aesthetic adventures result in a change in the features contained in the portrait and are therefore a kind of "repainting" of the original canvas. "Dorian Gray and the Gothic Novel," p. 246. Cf. Dorian's remark: "He would laugh at anyone who tried to taunt him. He had not painted it. What was it to him how vile and full of shame it looked?" (XI,139)

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[113] San Juan, Jr., The Art of Oscar Wilde, p. 73.

[114] Ibid., p. 59.

[115] Cf. Wilde's description of Dorian's scientific interests: "...he inclined to the materialistic doctrines of the Darwinismus movement in Germany and found a curious pleasure in tracing the thoughts and passions of men to some pearly cell in the brain or some white nerve in the body, delighting in the conception of the absolute dependence of the spirit on certain physical conditions, morbid or healthy, normal or diseased." (XI,132) Cf., also, the following statement expressed in "The Critic as Artist": "In one single ivory cell of the brain there are stored away things more marvellous and more terrible than even they have dreamed of, who...have sought to track the soul into its most secret places, and to make life confess its dearest sins." Artist as Critic, p. 402.

[116] Gordon, "The Imaginary Portrait...," p. 86, has also noted this parallel; he does not develop it at any great length, however.

[117] Poteet, "Dorian Gray and the Gothic Novel," p. 246.

[118] Baker, "A Tragedy of the Artist...," p. 353.

[119] Cf. San Juan, Jr., The Art of Oscar Wilde, p. 50: "The portrait, not Dorian Gray, emerges finally as the authentic hero. After all it is not life but art that inspires Dorian as well as Basil Hallward and, indirectly, Lord Henry."

[120] Ibid., p. 70.

[121] Gordon, "The Imaginary Portrait...," p. 95.

[122] San Juan, Jr., op. cit., p. 51, presents the following skeletal outline in his study: "There are actually two parts to the basic action concerning the nature and destiny of Dorian's character: the first part before Chapter XI, which consists of the exposition (I-III) and the Sybil-Dorian relation (IV-X); the second part after Chapter XI, which includes the climactic murder of Basil, Jim Vane's death, and the resolution (XII-XX). Cf. Farmer, Le Mouvement Esthétique..., pp. 193-4: "Le souci de faire avant tout oeuvre d'art est visible dans la construction du roman ... L'effort de Wilde tend vers la conclusion [sic for concision?], la clarté, la fermeté des contours, et, dans le sens classique du terme, le Portrait de Dorian Gray est un livre composé."

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[123] For a more detailed discussion of Wilde's structural and linguistic revisions, see the article by Isobel Murray entitled "Some Elements in the Composition of The Picture of Dorian Gray," Durham Univ. Journal (June 1972), 220-31 (not consulted); see, also, Donald L. Lawler's article, "Oscar Wilde's First Manuscript of The Picture of Dorian Gray," Studies in Bibliography [Univ. Virginia], 25 (1972), 125-35.

[124] San Juan, Jr., op. cit., p. 73.

[125] Wilde, "Preface" to The Picture of Dorian Gray, p. xx.

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Chapter Three

Henry James and Painting

> "...nothing in a work of art can take the place of representation, nothing in a picture take the place of painting." ("The New Gallery" 1897)

As a theoretician of the art of the novel and a practitioner of the psychological narrative, Henry James has been duly fêted and lauded. Yet the stress has usually fallen upon "novel" rather than "Art" in critical discussions of James's major works. With the exception of two book-length studies,[1] few of James's critics have chosen to interpret and analyze his fiction exclusively from the visual/artistic angle.[2]

The Jamesian universe is composed of complex social relationships and ambiguous moral choices. Any key, therefore, which is offered to the reader/critic in the hopes of furthering understanding of a given text should not be ignored. The fact that Henry James professed a lifelong devotion to the visual arts and served as a professional art critic for a period spanning almost three decades (1870-97) must certainly have influenced both the form and content of his fictional writings. Granted, then, that the visual arts are central to

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a better understanding of James's novels, what better way to examine his texts than in the light of his art criticism? "Not only does he constantly echo his intimate knowledge of the visual arts in the novels," writes James Bowden, "but he also makes extensive use of the arts to define and to illustrate the themes of his novels. It is in this use that the primary interest lies, for the visual arts, particularly in the light of the value which James himself found in them, provide a means of interpretation which is most helpful to the reader."[3]

Following this basic assumption, the present chapter represents an attempt to interpret several key scenes in James's fiction in the light of his aesthetic theories and formal art criticism. As background, James's early attempts at painting and his knowledge of the painter's craft are examined. His tastes in various artistic periods and preferences for individual painters and national schools are charted by means of his official art reviews, collected under the title The Painter's Eye,[4] as well as in his letters, essays, and notebook entries. Those individuals from whom James seems to have assimilated basic ideas on aesthetics and art criticism are surveyed in order to shed light upon the originality--or lack of it--of James's own pronouncements in the field of art. This is followed by a discussion of several fictional works which seem to embody or incorporate James's aesthetic doctrines within a narrative framework. The latter portion of the chapter is given over to an intensive investigation of key scenes in The Sacred Fount (1901), The Wings

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of the Dove (1902), The Sense of the Past (1917), and the short yet significant tale entitled "The Story of a Masterpiece." (1868) More specifically, it is the use of the portrait as the symbolic center of each work which is studied here; these paintings, as will be demonstrated, serve as a catalytic element in furthering the action and, more important, they deepen and intensify the sense of moral awareness of those characters who are confronted by their symbolic message. By means of the constant interplay between James's critical pronouncements on art and his embodiment of the latter in a fictional context, it is hoped that both a greater appreciation of James's tastes in art and a deeper understanding of the thematic content of his longer works will subsequently emerge.

Of Painters and Periods:

Writing to his youngest brother in 1882, Henry James inquired: "...are you painting in Cambridge? That is a resource that I advise you to cultivate, the more things one can do the better."[5] James was speaking from practical experience, for he had actually tried his hand at painting. His earliest recollection of the visual impulse occurs in A Small Boy and Others, where, according to Viola Winner, "he describes his practice of filling three pages of lined paper with 'scenes' and then illustrating them on the fourth unlined page, thus casting his dramatis personae."[6] Thomas Sergeant Perry, a friend of the Jameses, recalls that during one of his frequent visits to their Newport residence he observed that the young Henry James "devoted himself to the

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conscientious copying of a leaf and very faithfully drew a little rock that jutted above the surface of the Lily Pond."[7]

More sophisticated attempts were to occur in the Newport studio of the American painter William Morris Hunt, where Henry's brother William was being groomed for a professional career as a painter. Henry was naturally drawn into his brother's orbit[8] and experimented by copying antique casts and tossing off sketches and drawings. Whatever else James might have gleaned in the way of aesthetic theories and ideas, it is certain that he must have gained a technical understanding of at least the rudiments of the painter's craft and his artistic jargon in Hunt's studio. According to Winner, the young Henry James managed to develop enough of a technique to enable him to paint landscapes en plein air in the company of the painter John La Farge, another member of the Newport group.

These examples should provide adequate proof that James had more than just a secondhand knowledge of the painter's craft. He was to enter studios throughout the better part of his life, both as observer and as subject.[9] Like Zola and Wilde, James realized that, were he to pursue his studies in this area, he would never arrive at any degree of professionalism. Yet the experience remained valuable in the sense that it gave him some degree of insight into the painter's craft, enabling him to train his eye for the subsequent venture into art criticism. Equally important, it gave James a technical vocabulary[10] and a unique approach to literature which he would apply to such great effect in his theoretical writings and fictional creations.

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Henry James's contact with art occurred long before his numerous trips abroad. In his autobiographical volumes he resurrects the aura of wonder which reigned in the family household: "Didn't [various artists] more or less haunt our family fireside, and give us also the sense of others, landscapist Cropseys and Coles and Kensetts and bust-producing Iveses and Powerses and Moziers, hovering in an outer circle?"[11] According to Umberto Mariani, "two Tuscan landscapes, one by Cole and one by Lefèvre, and a bust from an American studio in Rome, 'conversation pieces' in the Jameses' New York parlors, had been the first Italian images to touch the boy's vivid imagination, and their romantic tone marked the first direction of his feeling for Italy."[12] Attending art exhibitions in large museums and smaller galleries seems to have been a regular routine in the James family. Winner estimates that James "must have seen in New York a considerable number of contemporary German, American, and French canvases."[13] If one adds to this direct-viewing experience a regular diet of etchings by Gavarni along with other illustrated books, one can easily understand the young James's receptivity to the art of Europe.

Henry James's acquaintance with Charles Eliot Norton, the American art scholar, during his Harvard years must certainly have stimulated the young man's appetite for European culture. In a late essay James recalled his fond visits to the home of his mentor and friend: "...the pilgrimage to the Shady Hill of those years had, among the 'spoils,' among pictures and books, drawings and medals, memories and relics

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and anecdotes, things of a remote but charming reference, very much the effect of a sudden rise into a finer and clearer air and of a stopgap against one's own coveted renewal of the more direct experience."[14]

All these visual experiences, however, were but preludes to the grand encounter. The Louvre, which James considered "the most hushed of all temples,"[15] was to become the shrine to which the mature writer returned again and again, both in his daily life as well as in his fictional creations. James's mysterious "dream-adventure"[16] in the Galerie d'Apollon, recounted in his autobiographical works, underscores the intensity with which the future art critic responded to the visual arts. The Louvre represented James's initiation into Style. During his frequent visits, he began to gain some insight into the secret workings of the artistic process, the transmutation of intangible thoughts into concrete realities. The artistic vision was gradually being revealed to him, though the actual transfer of the painter's intimate vision to canvas still remained shrouded in mystery.[17]

James's early tastes in art were those of an untrained and unsophisticated gallery-goer. He preferred the oversized,[18] anecdotal, highly finished works of the Düsseldorf school, Emanuel Leutze's Washington Crossing the Delaware being his favorite painting at this time. The Hudson River School--and the works of Thomas Cole in particular--must certainly have whetted his appetite for the grandiose and the colossal. The historical paintings of Delaroche were also prized by the young James. It would appear that, at this early stage in his apprenticeship, he was more interested in the "trappings"

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of a particular work, i.e., the psychological dimension or the literary aspect of a painting, than in the more abstract concerns of pattern, line, and color. This passion for representation was to remain with him throughout his career as an art critic.

James's discovery of the art treasures of Europe marked a turning point in his critical development. No longer restricted to special gallery shows and temporary museum exhibitions, he could now savor the "Old Masters" at first hand. According to Robert Gale, a statistical survey of James's fictional references to various national schools of painting would disclose the following: "Quantitatively, the Italian painters win easily over the next two nationalities combined. English and French groups tie for next place, with Flemish following, then German and Spanish, and finally a solitary Dutch and a lone American trailing at the end."[19] Generally speaking, this breakdown would also hold true for James's corpus of art criticism.

Italy, which James once referred to as "that country of the delicate hand and the insinuating chisel,"[20] remained the writer's favorite spot in Europe. From the early tale "Travelling Companions" (1870) to the massive novel The Golden Bowl (1904), Italy served most frequently as the setting for his fictional works. James seems to have viewed Italy as the fountainhead of beauty, the one place where the aesthetic principle was most pronounced. The danger to the creative artist of remaining in such a place for too long a period of time, of surrendering to the enchanting spell which Rome,

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Florence, or Venice could weave so well, was apparent to James.[21] Yet in his role as observer he was free to glut himself on the treasures which the Uffizi and other Italian museums held out to him.

James's tastes in Italian art were, with few exceptions,[22] restricted to the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century artists of the Renaissance. Of earlier masters James seems to speak with an air of disparagement, pinpointing their shortcoming in the fact that their "conceptions were still a trifle too large for their means. The pictorial vision in their minds seems to stretch and strain their undeveloped skill almost to a sense of pain."[23] Nevertheless, he is still able to admire the honest and forceful effort of Giotto, whom he considered a "grim and beautiful master...a genius supremely expressive,"[24] one who might have rivalled the great Michelangelo had he lived at a later point in time. The coupling of these two names, representing the extremes of severity of line and form versus an imaginative and dramatic interplay of color and light, discloses an interesting fact vis-à-vis James's response to Italian art as well as the art of other countries: "...there is a curious dualism in his responses [to art]," writes Winner. "On the one hand, he valued monumentality, symmetry, proportion, and clearly defined contours and lines ... and explicitly denigrated or ignored the fully developed baroque. On the other hand, he keenly enjoyed the picturesque in art and in scenery: shifting color, light, and tone.... James seemed to combine a painterly vision with a linear feeling for form."[25] Taking this important distinction into

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consideration, his other preferences among Italian Renaissance artists become more readily understandable.

James's response to the art of Leonardo da Vinci unmistakably bears the stamp of a literary mind. He considered The Last Supper "the most majestic and most luckless of frescos ... the saddest work of art in the world," and compared its gradual decay to "the slow extinction of a human organism." According to James, the picture exemplifies the truth that "there is no limit to the amount of substance an artist may put into his work." Of Leonardo's technical accomplishments James had little to say except that "the painter's conception [was] not immeasurably less complex than that implied, say, by his own composition."[26] Judging by these and other comments,[27] it would appear that James saw in Leonardo's works a harmonious balance between intellectual intention and physical execution, two qualities which the tragic hero of "The Madonna of the Future" was unable to reconcile.

If Leonardo represented the tragic example in Italian art, Raphael served as James's comic pendant: "...he foresaw no complaint against fate ... he looked at the world with the vision of a graceful optimist,"[28] wrote James. Admiring the serene and graceful portraits hanging in the Pitti Palace, he could not fail to note the "easy, various, bountiful genius"[29] that produced works of such perfection with apparent effortlessness. Equally high on James's list of elegant portrait painters was Andrea del Sarto. While he realized that the works of this master were second-rate in terms of slickness of execution and calculated effects, James admired the qualities of "moral agitation" and "luxurious

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gravity"[30] which suffused the troubled faces on his canvases. Consciously seeking this psychological dimension in art--and in portraits in particular--it is not surprising that James found the later mannerist painter Bronzino so much to his taste, enough to make one of his portraits the central focus of The Wings of the Dove.[31]

Sandro Botticelli represented a special case to James. Alone among the early Florentine artists, Botticelli seemed to possess what James variously referred to as "imagination," "invention," or "inventive fancy." Attempting to define this trait more completely, the art critic explained it as a conscious desire "to play tricks with the actual, to sport and wander and explore on its own account." The modernity of Botticelli's types, moreover, linked him to the Pre-Raphaelite painters: "He endeavored much more than the other early Florentines to make his faces express a mood, a consciousness, and it is the beautiful preoccupied type of face which we find in his pictures that our modern Pre-Raphaelites reproduce, with their own modifications."[32]

If James professed a fondness for the art of the early Florentine painters, he was equally attracted to the richness of color and texture of the Venetian school.[33] Venice seemed to him the ideal location for the efflorescence of this style: "Everything the eye rests on is effective, pictorial, harmonious--thanks to some inscrutable flattery of the atmosphere.... The light here is, in fact, a mighty magician, and, with all respect to Titian, Veronese, and Tintoret, the greatest artist of them all."[34]

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Titian was discovered quite early in James's career. The enthusiasm with which the young American greeted the works of this Italian master can be gathered from the following excerpt contained in a letter addressed to John La Farge: "Ah, John! What a painter. For him, methinks, I'd give you all the rest."[35] James considered Titian's Bacchus and Ariadne "a thing to go barefoot to see...." Yet the ardent fervor which he had expressed in a burst of praise soon cooled to one of disillusion; writing to La Farge from Venice several months later, James was forced to admit: "Titian I like less here than in London and elsewhere. He is strangely unequal."[36] What had appealed to the young James was the drama and spectacle of Titian's enormous canvases, the "properties" of the scenic designer--light, color, form--blending to create an overpowering effect. In his subsequent art criticism, however, James was to disclose the inherent weakness of Titian's huge paintings; he characterized him as "[an] artist whose apprehension, infinitely deep and strong when applied to the single figure or to easily balanced groups, spends itself vainly on great dramatic combinations--or, rather, leaves them ungauged."[37]

Veronese, like Raphael before him, expressed a joyous view of life through his works. Considering him to be "the happiest of painters," James singled out The Rape of Europa as "the happiest picture in the world." What he particularly admired was the expression of "temperament," the artist's personal sense of joy suffusing every detail in the work. In Veronese's canvases James could indulge his senses, he

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could give himself completely to the visual sense: "The mixture of flowers and gems and brocade, of blooming flesh and shining sea and waving groves, of youth, health, movement, desire--all this is the brightest vision that ever descended upon the soul of a painter."[38] It is especially significant that James sought to surround Milly Theale, the doomed heroine of The Wings of the Dove, with a series of Veronese-like tableaux; the contrast between external splendor and spiritual despair could not have been more dramatically presented.

Of all painters, Tintoretto came closest to embodying James's artistic ideal, viz. a perfect fusion of realism and idealism, of the desire to represent and the modifying effect of the artist's imagination upon the image drawn from the real world. Speaking of Tintoretto's huge Crucifixion, James observed that "no single picture in the world contains more of human life ... there is no other vision of so intense a reality, an execution so splendid."[39] What James particularly admired in Tintoretto's works was the ability of the painter to embody the spiritual aspect of life in a material creation. This fact helps us to understand what the art critic meant when he concluded that Tintoretto's "indefatigable hand never drew a line that was not, as one may say, a moral line."[40] Whereas the works of Titian were decorative and poetic, those of Tintoretto were prophetic. Comparing Tintoretto's feeling for life with that of Shakespeare, James decided that "Tintoretto's great merit ... was his unequalled distinctness of vision. When once he had conceived

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the germ of a scene, it defined itself to his imagination with an intensity, an amplitude, an individuality of expression, which makes one's observation of his pictures seem less an operation of the mind than a kind of supplementary experience of life."[41] When F.O. Matthiessen said that James "saw both with and through his eye,"[42] he was echoing what James had previously noted vis-à-vis Tintoretto's artistic creations. The art critic was subsequently to adopt this painter as his tutelary guide in his own field of artistic endeavor.

If Italy was the spiritual home of the aesthetic principle to James, France represented the country where the plastic element was most pronounced: "The plastic is implied in the French conception of things, and the studio is as natural a consequence of it as the post-office is of letter-writing. Vivid representation is the genius of the French language and the need of the French mind. The people have invented more aids to it than any other, and as these aids make up a large part of the artist's life, he feels his best home to be in the place where he finds them most."[43] Whereas in England and America the painter's activities are acknowledged in theory, only in France, according to James, is practical recognition also part and parcel of the artistic vocation. If the blurred outlines, rich color, and dramatic interplay of light and shadow of the Venetian painters satisfied James's need for the picturesque in art, the clearness and precision of French painting provided a balanced counterpoint.[44]

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James's tastes in French art were restricted, for the most part, to the modern period. One seventeenth-century artist whom he held in especial esteem was Claude Lorrain. The reasons behind his fondness for the works of this painter are not difficult to discover. Claude's canvases reflected the beloved landscapes of Italy which James had visited so frequently during the course of his travels.[45] As the founder of the Romantic style of landscape painting, Claude's idealized scenes, bathed in an atmosphere of light and vastness, must certainly have appealed to James's taste for the picturesque.[46] Lastly, Claude Lorrain's frequent recourse to biblical and classical subject matter appealed to the literary qualities which James unconsciously stressed in his art criticism.[47]

James had little to say on the subject of eighteenth-century French painters. Whereas Boucher and Fragonard were merely masters of prettiness, Watteau combined a sense of elegance and grace with a poet's understanding of the human emotions. What had become affected and mannerist in the hands of lesser artists remained fresh and spontaneous in Watteau's canvases. James was paradoxically attracted to the unreality of these "visionary picnics." Rivalling Verlaine's Fêtes Galantes, the art critic's description of the atmosphere pervading these works discloses a delicate and sensitive style: "His piping chevaliers and whispering countesses loom out of the clouded canvas like fancied twilight ghosts in the garden of a haunted palace."[48] So great was Watteau's hold on James's imagination that he originally

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planned to have Ralph Touchett describe himself to Isabel Archer in The Portrait of a Lady in terms of a Watteau chevalier; he later substituted Lancret for Watteau in order to avoid a too obvious example of this painterly style. As for Jean Baptiste Greuze, James found his workmanship solid, his manner charming, and his coloration sober.[49]

In his treatment of French academic painters, James remained strangely ambivalent. He criticized Gérôme for the "hardness" of his works, their lack of moral import, and the sentimental sterility which they displayed. He was to art what Flaubert, the author of Salammbô, was to literature, yet his attempt at archaeological exactitude proved far inferior.[50] The cleverness and skillfulness of Bouguereau mystified James: "It is a standing wonder," he observed, "that a man can paint at once so finely and so perversely."[51] Delaroche, whom James had idolized in his youth, seemed too clever and calculating in his pictorial effects to rise above the vulgarity of his execution. Decamps was guilty of intellectualizing his oriental subjects to the point of obscuring the truth. His search for picturesque effects was too obvious, yet James confessed that Decamps was "a painter of whom I never tire ... he has an element of magic, of independence of fancy ... No painter plays with effects of light so delicately, and on the whole so unerringly, as Decamps. He shrinks from none of the atmospheric mysteries and complexities."[52] Similarly, the precision and skill exhibited in Meissonier's huge canvases prompted James to label him "the prince of miniaturists." His fidelity to historical

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detail, while admirable in its attempt at exactitude and completeness, somehow did not "come off" in the end. What was lacking, James suggested, was an imaginative impulse uniting the various parts of his large canvases. Despite the superficial brilliance of Meissonier's execution, his paintings lacked a moral or spiritual idea which might animate or enliven his compositions.[53]

If these painters sinned in the direction of literalness of execution, Ingres was guilty of a too selective approach to art. His ideal forms were so far removed from nature that they no longer reflected that breadth of vision which James demanded in all great art: "To satisfy the requirements of the character now represented by the term 'painter,' it is necessary to look at Nature in the most impartial and comprehensive manner, to see objects in their integrity, and to reject nothing."[54] While James upheld the principle of selectivity in art, the necessary filtering process by means of which the random impressions of the real world are transmuted into a work of art, he stressed the fact that the artist should expose himself to as much of life as possible. In this sense, therefore, Ingres was a failure: "He looked at natural objects in a partial, incomplete manner. He recognized in Nature only one class of objects worthy of study--the naked human figure; and in art only one method of reproduction--drawing."[55]

If Tintoretto represented the ideal painter in James's eyes, his admiration for the art of Eugène Delacroix was equally strong. He had, as a young man, watched his brother

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William attempt to imitate Delacroix's technique in charcoal and crayon drawings. As a fledgling art critic, James hesitated before the genius of Delacroix, not knowing whether to view the painter's loose brushwork and vivid coloration as a major defect or a prime virtue. He admired the energy expressed in the works, feeling that one actually gained a sense of the creative process. Delacroix's Dante and Virgil was, in his opinion, "one of the very finest of modern pictures."[56] In an 1872 essay James pointed to Delacroix's major strength: his imagination. The painter saw, in James's words, with "the light of the mind." Delacroix's ability to capture the "mystery of a scene" through an imaginative fusion of disparate elements was only equalled by Turner.[57] By 1876 Delacroix's works had become important enough to warrant a separate essay. James admired the imaginative force of his Death of Sardanapalus, seeing in the painter's treatment of flesh "a more delicate and more spiritual Rubens." The Entombment of Christ, the only modern religious picture which James felt had been painted in good faith, embodied those qualities which the art critic came to expect of this painter: "...[a] singular profundity of imagination and [an] extraordinary harmony of colour."[58] In 1880 James had tempered his praise of Delacroix by admitting that he lacked the science and skill of a Titian or a Tintoretto. Yet he was tied to the latter by virtue of his treatment of color and compositional arrangement. Both painters "composed" their works, using color and light much as a composer might do for a musical work.[59] Their ability to fuse the dissimilar into

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a poetic whole was another quality which they shared. James termed such artists "synthetic," as opposed to merely "analytic" painters. Delacroix's ability to accomplish this feat lay in the totality of his vision: "He saw his subject as a whole; not as the portrait of a group of selected and isolated objects, but as an incident in the continuity of things and the passage of human life."[60] Nor Did Delacroix simply "see"; he also "reflected," a quality which James felt was essential to the success of every great painter. Just as Tintoretto had never drawn a line which was not a moral line, James argued that the "moral tone" in Delacroix's art was part and parcel of his greatness. Although the art critic could admire the coloristic range and draughtsmanship of this French painter, he sincerely believed that the degree of feeling and human interest which Delacroix expressed through his works was his real achievement. This ability to perceive the essence of a scene or personality distinguished him from the academic painters, whose works remained trite by comparison. Both had used the Orient as the subject of their best works, but whereas a painter such as Gérôme was content to reproduce the surface of Eastern life, Delacroix disclosed its substance. In one of his later essays devoted to this painter, James recalled the strange combination of qualities which had first attracted him to Delacroix's works in 1868: the impulsive, energetic, richly imaginative colorist and vigorous master of the brush, on the one hand, and the reflective, contemplative, deeply moral and psychologically perceptive poet-painter on the other. In this art critic's opinion,

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the unusual combination of masculine and feminine traits which Delacroix's finest paintings displayed indicated "the presence of a high artistic ideal, untouched by the vulgar or the trivial."[61]

James's lengthy essay on Daumier is an instance of his fallibility in artistic judgment. Having been exposed at a very impressionable age to Gavarni's etchings of aristocratic and fashionable personages, it is not surprising that James took Daumier to task for failing to treat other levels of society besides the bourgeoisie: "Daumier reproduces admirably the particular life that he sees, because it is the very medium in which he moves. He has no wide horizon; the absolute bourgeois hems him in, and he is a bourgeois himself, without poetic ironies, to whom a big cracked mirror has been given. His thick, strong, manly touch stands, in every way, for so much knowledge."[62] James was not merely critical of Daumier's subject matter and directness of approach; he actually felt that the artist's perception of humanity and its foibles was marked by a spirit of negativism and despair. He preferred Gavarni's more literary, sentimental, witty, and condescending attitude. On the positive side, however, James acknowledged Daumier's high degree of concentration, his forceful use of the pencil, and the monumentality of his creative output. Despite the artist's restricted use of certain segments of society as the butt of his caricatures, Daumier was still able to achieve "a certain simplification of the attitude or the gesture to an almost symbolic generality.... Daumier's figures are almost always either foolish, fatuous

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politicians or frightened, mystified bourgeois; yet they help him to give us a strong sense of the nature of man."[63] His profound understanding of drawing and his scientific comprehension of human anatomy gave his works a sense of relief and character which bore the unmistakable stamp of genius.

If James was capable of elevating Gavarni above Daumier, he was equally capable, in his early art criticism, of failing to recognize the merits of the French Impressionists. Singling out no artist in particular, James wrote a harshly critical review of their collective efforts after visiting an exhibition at Durand-Ruel's. What he objected to most strenuously was their lack of selectivity, their simplification of the visual field, the absence of any moral or reflective element in their works, and their total disregard of the traditional hierarchy of subject matter.[64] Unlike the Pre-Raphaelites, who labored over their canvases and infused their works with moral and/or aesthetic questions, the Impressionists appeared to James to reject "meaningful" art in favor of a loose and random treatment of the artist's immediate perceptions.

Despite James's early refusal or inability to see the technical accomplishments of the French Impressionist painters, he, like Zola before him, was deeply affected by the visual revolution which they had achieved.[65] Just as the author of La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret was to utilize the atmospheric effects and subtle interplay of light and color typical of Impressionist canvases, James was to make one of the central scenes of The Ambassadors an Impressionist painting come to life.

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His gradual abandonment of the Ruskinian art criticism and artist tales of the 1870's and 1880's in favor of a more progressive style in painting is documented in his later criticism. In the travel essay entitled "New England: An Autumn Impression," written in 1905, James described a large house "in which an array of modern 'impressionistic' pictures, mainly French, wondrous examples of Manet, of Degas, of Claude Monet, of Whistler, of other rare recent hands, treated us to the momentary effect of a large slippery sweet..."; in the same essay he compared Cape Cod with a "pictured Japanese screen or banner, a delightful triumph of 'impressionism' ...."[66] Although the term was still considered by James to be a bit unorthodox (as is evidenced by the need for quotation marks), he had eventually "come round" to acknowledging the technical accomplishments of the Impressionists.

The Symbolist school of painters, however, was an entirely different matter. Choosing Gustave Moreau as the most representative member of this group, "the apostle of a new and strange treatment of mythological subjects," James reacted to this type of art with mixed emotions. Moreau's meticulous craftsmanship must have pleased him, as did the detailed canvases of the Pre-Raphaelites. While Moreau failed to equal the coloristic achievements of Delacroix, he displayed an imaginative treatment of his subjects and commanded a wide acquaintance with classical and biblical lore. What James objected to, however, was the excessive use of the "fantastic" in his art: "Too much of the arbitrary in a picture," he had once written, "is as uncomfortable as a little

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is indispensable."[67] One might reasonably ask, in this connection, whether the author of The Sacred Fount was not guilty of the same excess!

Henry James's opinion of British art was, as a whole, rather unfavorable.[68] What he objected to most was the "story-telling" or "anecdotal" aspect of so much of that nation's art, especially among the academic painters and members of the Royal Academy. In addition, James felt that the heavily moral slant of British art, a result of the rigid Protestant ethic, supplanted the plastic element so vital to the free expression of the artistic impulse.[69] When James had applied the term moral to the art of Tintoretto and Delacroix, he had intended it to signify the artist's reflection upon the larger issues of life, his deep sympathy with the human condition. The moral element in British art, according to James, represented a narrower perception of life in terms of a rigid code of ethical behavior.

Among eighteenth century British artists, James admired the portraiture of Reynolds, Romney, and Gainsborough. Hogarth was certainly known to the critic who had studied the art of caricature and social satire in the works of Gavarni and Daumier. But the bulk of James's criticism was devoted to nineteenth century painters. Turner's works had been known to James sinne his earliest museum visits.[70] If, in 1869, he had criticized the painter's lack of taste (in the Jamesian sense, a term designating a degree of moral refinement and moderation), it was probably because the young James

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idolized the landscapes of Claude, with their framing devices and carefully composed vistas. By 1873 James had recognized the mastery of Turner in the creation of atmospheric effects. The key to his art, according to the art critic, lay in his imaginative faculty. Describing this quality variously as "spiritual emotion," "transfiguring vision," or simply "idealism," James admired the solidity of execution and subtle gradations of light and color in the works of "this mightiest of all painters of landscape."[71]

James's attitude towards the British academic painters, consisting of a mixture of admiration and scorn, was much the same as his opinion of their French counterparts. Lord Frederick Leighton's finished and polished works represented the plastic element at its best; his sense of beauty was exquisite, yet his paintings ultimately projected an aura of superficial charm. Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema's skillful reconstruction of ancient Roman costumes and paraphernalia and his careful manipulation of compositional details reflected, according to James, a very "cultured" and "elevated" form of art. A painter such as Frith was guilty, in this art critic's estimation, of the worst abuses of the anecdotalist school of painting. Ford Madox Brown's treatment of human emotions, his stark and sincere approach towards his subject, was admirable, but a painting such as his Farewell to England remained a patchwork quilt of isolated details, devoid of relief and subtlety.[72]

The works of G.F. Watts were an entirely different matter. Here was an artist who managed to combine the imaginative or

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idealistic element with a solid, finished style of execution. In 1877 James had been bursting with admiration for Watts's achievement, finding his allegorical approach to his subjects quite remarkable. Only one year later, however, the art critic had changed his previously held opinion; he now regarded these subjects as "too big and too mystical" and pointed to a "certain dense confusion" as marring Watts's ultimate achievement. While this artist always remained for James a superb portraitist, his frequent excursions into the esoteric or fantastic dimension in art made him a suitable target for the art critic who had condemned the works of Gustave Moreau on the same grounds. Watts's abortive efforts were additional proof to James that "nothing in a work of art can take the place of representation, nothing in a picture take the place of painting. Mr Watt's [sic] imagination strikes me as productive just in proportion as his subject is concrete."[73]

The Pre-Raphaelite group of painters appear with great frequency in the pages of James's art criticism. Ruskin had championed their style in his books and essays; James had been exposed to the latter as early as his Newport days. One of the chief disciples of this group was the painter Burne-Jones, a friend of Charles Eliot Norton and, later, of James himself. When the writer first saw a Burne-Jones painting depicting the enchantress Circe preparing a secret poison for Ulysses, he was at once attracted to the literary subject and the picturesque manner in which the scene was rendered.[74] When, in 1875, James wished to refute the charge levelled at

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him by painters, i.e., that his critical approach to art was far too literary, he simply pointed to Burne-Jones as his counterpart--the perfect example of the poet-painter. Despite James's admiration for Burne-Jones's use of color and his laborious execution, he gradually came to regard the subject matter of the Pre-Raphaelites and their disciples as being divorced from life, too concerned with intangibles. Writing to Norton in 1886, James complained: "...I don't understand [Burne-Jones's] life--that is, the manner and tenor of his production--a complete studio existence, with doors and windows closed, and no search for impressions outside--no open air, no real daylight and no looking out for it. The things he does in these conditions have exceeding beauty--but they seem to me to grow colder and colder--pictured abstractions, less and less observed."[75] Despite the artist's repeated use of the dark-haired, wide-eyed, square-jawed female type, James held that Burne-Jones's art represented the opposite extreme of the vulgar art of his academic contemporaries, a truly aristocratic, refined, and reflective form of expression. Although James became increasingly disenchanted with Burne-Jones's niggling, minute brushwork and the flatness of his figures, the painter's dream-world of ethereal beings lost in reverie amidst lush Italian landscapes evoked fond memories for the art critic.[76]

A co-founder of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was the painter Sir John Everett Millais, whom James knew personally. In his art criticism of the 1870's and 1880's, James found Millais's productions rather uneven. Although his brushwork reflected a sense of vigor and manliness, the

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painter's handling of his subject matter seemed vulgar in its smugness and subservience to public tastes. Whereas Lord Leighton's pictures represented the plastic element at its best, Millais shirked this aspect of painting in favor of an extra-pictorial dimension. As a portraitist, however, James had only praise for Millais's "psychological painting." Whether he was rendering the likeness of the famous, such as his portraits of Lord Shaftsbury and Gladstone, or the simple country folk, as in The Blind Girl, Millais was able to capture the shifting emotions of the sitter by means of a careful study of facial expression and attitude. To James, great portraiture was synonymous with a realistic representation of the model: "The thing has the great quality," he said of Millais's portrait of Gladstone, "--it lives, it looks, it expresses something."[77]

Whereas James had found the man Burne-Jones much more comprehensible than the artist, he experienced the opposite problem with the painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti, to whom he was introduced (in 1869) by Charles Eliot Norton. Finding Rossetti rather "unattractive" and somewhat bored by the visitors to his studio, James nevertheless praised the large portraits of moody yet seductive women which adorned the painter's walls.[78] What he could not dismiss from his thoughts was the personality of their creator, "the great (if great!) and strange and more or less sinister D.G. Rossetti...."[79]

William Morris was, by contrast, a prime example of the healthy and robust man of genius. Strongly under the influence, in 1869, of Ruskin's praise of handmade objects and

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craftsmanship in general, James could only marvel at the talent and ingenuity which Morris, a poet as well as an artist, displayed in his creation of stained glass windows, tapestries, tiles, ecclesiastical vestments, and wallpaper designs. Part of James's fascination with the art of William Morris must be attributed to the latter's strangely attractive wife, Rossetti's most frequent model and the epitome of Pre-Raphaelite feminine beauty.[80] Feeling somewhat ashamed of his early devotion to the quaint and archaic strains of Pre-Raphaelite art, James was subsequently to make the love of this type of beauty the butt of his irony in "The Author of Beltraffio" and other artist tales belonging to his earlier period. As for the works of the painter William Holman Hunt, a co-founder of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood along with Millais and Rossetti, James admired the finished quality of Hunt's workmanship but felt that his paintings lacked inspiration and therefore remained prosaic rather than appealing.

Aubrey Beardsley remained a mystery to James. On the one hand, he was an extremely personal, sensitive, patient, and intelligent individual, an opinion which James formed as a result both of personal contact with the artist and a careful reading of his letters. Yet James's tone changed to one of extreme anger whenever he discussed the artist's works: "...I hated his productions," he wrote André Raffalovich in 1913, "and thought them extraordinarily base--and couldn't find (perhaps didn't try enough to find!) the formula that reconciled this baseness, aesthetically, with his being so perfectly a case of the artistic spirit."[81] Winner has

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suggested that it was the erotic element in Beardsley's art which blinded James to Beardsley's consummate draughtsmanship and decorative talents. For James, great art was always imbued with the qualities of taste and moral refinement. Beardsley's exploration of Victorian sexual hypocrisy was apparently too blunt to appeal to the "discriminating" tastes of this art critic.[82]

Henry James's opinion of American art was formed by his conviction that the true source of beauty, culture, and artistic achievement could only be found on European soil. The American public, James felt, had not been exposed to the centuries of viewing that its European counterpart considered a birthright. "We are simple as yet," wrote James in 1874, "in our appreciation of the arts...."[83] Yet this quality of "underexposure" was also responsible for the freshness and vigor with which American artists tackled their subjects. He was pleased by the letter his brother William had sent him, in which he described the "artistic spontaneity and sensibility" of the American school of painting at a Philadelphia exhibition. James, who was covering the art scene in Paris at the time, could only respond: "My chief impression of the Salon was that four-fifths of it were purely mechanical, (and de plus vile)."[84]

Having been nurtured on the works of the Hudson River School, the young James felt that the strength of American art lay in its treatment of landscape rather than in its attempts at capturing the human physiognomy in paint.[85] The

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chief representative of this Romantic school of painting was Thomas Cole, whom James had nicknamed "the American Turner."[86] This appelation provides a clue to the quality which James admired in Cole's canvases, namely, their imaginative, larger-than-life, grandiose conception of nature. The art critic was later to admire the same theatrical rendering of nature in the "velvety vistas and gemlike vegetation" of Frederick Church, whose laborious and painstaking technique James praised.[87] The master of moonlit landscapes and night scenes, Washington Allston, was considered by James to be superior to Romney. In a lower key, the art critic could also appreciate the quieter moods evoked in the landscapes of Eastman Johnson. James praised the lovingness with which this painter rendered objects, his brushwork resembling "a sort of lithographic stippling" and his choice of subject matter reflecting a homely, Dutch sort of humility.[88] Winslow Homer represented the perfect example of the nonliterary artist, concerned only with the depiction of external reality: "To see, and to reproduce what he sees, is his only care; to think, to imagine, to select, to refine, to compose ... all this Mr. Homer triumphantly avoids."[89] Although he believed that a painting should bear some resemblance to its subject, James insisted that the transforming powers of the artist's imagination should modify and reconstruct the perceived image. Homer's "perfect realism," his choice of banal and detestable subjects, and the large masses of subdued color which blotted his canvases did not appeal to the art critic who championed a "selective" form of realism.[90] James found the perfect counterpart to the prosaic art of Homer in the poetic

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and suggestive paintings of John La Farge. Having studied alongside this painter in the studio of William Morris Hunt, James was intimately acquainted with the subject matter and painterly style of this artist. Unlike Homer, who painted what he saw, La Farge opened himself up to the suggestive qualities of a scene, permitting his imaginative faculty to cross the borderline separating the actual and the ideal. His was an intellectual frame of mind, one with which the art critic could easily identify.

Henry James's early incomprehension of the art of James Abbott McNeill Whistler is another instance of the art critic's basically conservative tastes. Writing in 1877, James aligned himself with the other Philistine critics of the day in denouncing Whistler's paintings as pale copies of earlier masters. Failing to take note of the painter's experiments in color and formal arrangement, James merely regarded these subjectless works bearing musical titles as lifeless creations: "To be interesting," he wrote, "it seems to me that a picture should have some relation to life as well as to painting. Mr. Whistler's experiments have no relation whatever to life; they have only a relation to painting."[91] In a subsequent article published the following year, James continued to consider Whistler's paintings as mere "objects" rather than full-scale pictures. Ironically, the art critic's stress upon the decorative qualities of the paintings was precisely one of the aims which the American artist had sought to attain through his formal experiments. James considered Whistler's manner and style as a reflection of the Impressionist doctrine;

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since he had condemned the latter school for its lack of reflection and lowly subject matter, he felt that Whistler's art also failed to take note of the fact that "a picture is not an impression but an expression...."[92] James's rather factual reporting of the famous Ruskin-Whistler court trial reveals that the art critic did not condemn all of the painter's oeuvre, finding only the paintings "eccentric and imperfect" while the etchings were "altogether admirable."[93] Whistler's subsequent publication of a small pamphlet condemning art criticism as a useless activity was reviewed by James; he considered the arguments "suggestive" if not entirely convincing. The novelist had also suffered the incomprehension of the critics and could easily sympathize with Whistler's complaint against "literary" art critics.[94]

The year 1882 marked a turning point in James's attitude toward Whistler's art. Still finding his paintings "amusing," James nevertheless praised the artist's Harmony in Gray and Black, No. 1 ("Whistler's Mother") as "a masterpiece of tone, of feeling, of the power to render life...."[95] In choosing the subject-oriented rather than the abstract title, James had failed to praise the work for its subtle arrangements of rectangular shapes and restricted color harmonies. What he saw in this painting was a likeness to some individual, a portrait in the traditional sense of the term. Despite the fact that James had finally come round to praising Whistler as an artist of merit, he did so on his own terms.

Between 1882 and 1897, the year James published his third and final comment upon Whistler's art, the art critic had come

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to recognize the talent of this progressive painter. No longer the laughing stock of the London art scene, Whistler had now achieved a considerable degree of recognition from official circles. In praising Whistler's portrait of Henry Irving as the Philip of Tennyson's Queen Mary, James singled out a quality of "melancholy meditation" pervading the work; the psychological insight of the painter was undoubtedly what James meant by this phrase. Considering Whistler's works aristocratic in their rarefied and select treatment of various subjects, James ended his review with the conviction that Whistler's works would ultimately find their appointed niche in the great museums of the world.[96] Because of James's conservative and traditional training as an art critic, he was unable to grasp the experimental nature of Whistler's artistic activities. He had arrived at a proper estimation of the artist's talents only after public opinion had sanctioned such a choice.

Despite James's early opinion that the strength of American art lay in landscape painting rather than portraiture, his preference for the human physiognomy over the inanimate object led him to single out several American artists who had excelled in this genre. One of the earliest was John Singleton Copley, whose distinctive and vibrant portraits of New England personalities James greatly admired. While Copley did not merit a place alongside Holbein, James nevertheless stressed the painter's clear and forceful rendering of his subjects, his ability to achieve the moderate goals he had set for himself. If his paintings appeared a bit too hard

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and definite, it was a sign that the painter's imagination, his power of suggestiveness, was a trifle weak. "That adventurous vision of the indefinite which has brushed with its wing all the very greatest works of art is never reflected here,"[97] James remarked of Copley's portrait of Mrs. Skinner, a work belonging to his American period. The painter's subsequent transplantation to London would result in a more idealized form of portraiture and a greater interest in dramatic or historical subjects.

Another artist whose portraits James admired was the Cincinnati-born Frank Duveneck. Dubbing him the "American Velásquez," the art critic was once again drawn to the directness and unadorned quality of the painter's naturalistic subjects. Extremely limited in color range, his portraits managed to completely capture the personality of the sitter down to the least little detail.[98]

The works of John Singer Sargent, however, were most highly prized by James. The lengthy analysis of his painterly style, written in 1893, provides several clues to the art critic's ideal conception of painting. Placing the emphasis of Sargent's schooling in the cosmopolitan circles of Paris rather than America, James goes on to isolate "style" as the keynote of Sargent's manner. The painter seems to grasp the essence of his subject in the first moment of visual perception: "...perception with him is already by itself a kind of execution.... It is as if painting were pure tact of vision, a simple manner of feeling."[99] Rather than paint his immediate impression, Sargent, unlike the Impressionists with whom he

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has been grouped, does not engage in a simplification of his subject; instead, he combines his quick perception with an element of "brooding reflection" which James defined as "the quality in the light of which the artist sees deep into his subject, undergoes it, absorbs it, discovers in it new things that were not on the surface, becomes patient with it, and almost reverent, and, in short, enlarges and humanizes the technical problem."[100] What James admired was Sargent's synthetic vision, his ability to combine the wealth of detail presented to his field of vision into a selective yet integrated interpretation of the same subject. Unlike the Impressionists, moreover, the quality of Sargent's impressions seemed more vital, energetic, and active, although he, too, could be guilty of choosing an ignoble or "ugly" subject for treatment. The breadth and freedom of his brushwork conveyed to the art critic a sense of inventiveness and freshness, an ongoing experimentation with the various possibilities inherent in the creative process. The finished works thus represented a kind of cumulative record of the artist's struggle with his subject and provided the viewer with a privileged insight into the resolution of an artistic dilemma. The only danger which James saw in all this was a facility, a precociousness, which threatened to shorten the painter's career. Like Athena, Sargent had seemingly bypassed the preliminary agonies and strains of birth, having developed his exceptional talents overnight. If he could burn slowly with a hard, gemlike flame, as Pater had written, his genius would be assured of a long and fruitful career.[101]

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Henry James's opinion of Dutch and Flemish art might best be likened to the fable of the tortoise and the hare, with Italian art representing the latter. Whereas the Italian artists were born with a natural sense of grace and brio, this quality was merely accidental in their Northern counterparts. James contrasts the patience and conscience of the Dutch and Flemish painters with the style and flair of the Italian masters. By setting themselves a limited yet attainable goal, the Dutch realists managed to achieve perfection on a small yet noteworthy scale. Here were artists who were able to faithfully preserve the look and feel of a scene or person without lapsing into mere reportage or anecdotalism. James in his art criticism never tired of praising the "perfect accord between the aim and the result" of Dutch art, where "the whole subject is grasped by the treatment; all that there is of the work is enclosed within the frame. Essentially finite doubtless: but the infinite is unsubstantial fare, and in the finite alone is rest."[102] For the art critic who demanded a living likeness in his portraits, he could do no better than to peruse the masterpieces of Dutch and Flemish portraiture. Likewise for landscape painting, where James marvelled at the mirror images created by these artists: "...when you are looking at the originals, you seem to be looking at the copies; and when you are looking at the copies, you seem to be looking at the originals. Is it a canal-side in Haarlem, or is it a Van der Heyden? Is it a priceless Hobbema, or is it a meagre pastoral vista, stretching away from the railway track? The maid-

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servants in the streets seem to have stepped out of the frame of a Gerard Dow, and appear equally adapted for stepping back again."[103] The painstaking brushwork and attention to detail evident in such paintings were qualities which endeared these artists to James.

Among portrait painters, James singled out the aristocratic manner of Sir Anthony Van Dyck, praising the elegant, dignified bearing of his subjects and the painter's consummate technique. At the opposite extreme, the "hit-or-miss rapidity" of Frans Hals's brushwork was also admired for its ability to convey a sense of "energy and a certain gross truth."[104] Rembrandt, whose psychological insights and careful delineation of facial expressions seemed ideally suited to James's demand for deeper significance in portraiture, was not among the art critic's best-loved painters. What he objected to in this artist were the pseudointellectual pretentions, the abuse of chiaroscuro, and the attempt at profundity by means of sleight-of-hand tricks involving dramatic light effects. James may be forgiven for comments such as these, but to state that Rembrandt "was really not, strictly speaking, a painter" is to go a bit too far. "He was perfectly arbitrary," James continues, "and he kept on terms with observation only so long as it suited him. This may be verified by reference to any of the most delusively picturesque of his works."[105] Coming from an art critic who had praised the poetic and imaginative transformations of a John La Farge over the dry-as-dust realism of a Winslow Homer, this statement seems to run counter to James's demand for a

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selective optic. Unlike Fromentin, who had called Rembrandt "a pure spiritualist--an ideologist," James saw this painter's field of vision encompassing "the known, the familiar, the common, the homely. His subjects, his scenes, his figures are almost all taken from the common life, and where they are not they are brought into it." Rembrandt's characteristic manner, according to James, was his ability to invest the ordinary with a sense of the extraordinary by means of skillful manipulation of light and shadow. It was his execution, rather than his conception, that James greatly admired.[106] Despite these criticisms, however, the art critic was not blind to the psychological insight and humanitarian qualities of Rembrandt's great portraits. Admiring one such depiction of an old and wizened turbaned gentleman, James concluded: "The picture is full of that profundity of life which we find in Rembrandt's greatest works."[107]

James felt most at home with the genre painters and "minor" Dutch realists whose sense of observation and attention to detail gave the art critic grist for his critical mill. A Gerard Dou depicting a peasant woman paring carrots brought tears to his eyes as a result of the simplicity and directness with which the subject had been rendered.[108] The combination of a polished finish and a detailed treatment of an earthy or humble subject seemed to be qualities which James prized in the works of Teniers, Ostade, and Steen. A sense of humor and a positive attitude towards life were the common legacy of all these painters of the vie intime. While the New England moralist in James may have been offended, at times, by

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the crude manner in which the sexual relations of these peasants and humble folk were recorded,[109] the art critic could only marvel at the skill with which the painter encompassed whole episodes of human existence, including brief moments of joy or sadness, in such small-scale, unpretentious works. Although he cared less for landscape painting, James found much to admire in the tranquil scenes of open fields and shady woods of Hobbema and Ruysdael; he once referred to the latter as "[the] most delightful of Dutch painters...."[110]

In total contrast to these restrained and miniaturistic works, the art of Peter Paul Rubens outraged James's sense of propriety. Here was one painter who could find no favor in this critic's eyes, an artist who was guilty of every conceivable gross error of subject matter and treatment. This "painter of rosy brawn" and "carnal cataracts" who produced "monstrous flowers of art,"[111] was, in James's opinion, a nonreflective and nonselective painter: "Rubens, to my sense, absolutely did <u>not</u> think ... Our deepest interest, as to an artist, depends on the way he deliberates and chooses ... [Rubens] never waits to choose; he never pauses to deliberate."[112] In addition to the large scale of most of his works, Rubens's baroque fusion of the true and the false, his energetic and tension-filled compositions which threatened to burst the frames enclosing them, plus the acres of flesh and nudity all conspired to make this painter the <u>bête noire</u> of the art critic. He was, to put it in the simplest Jamesian terms, a "vulgar" artist.[113] In contrast to Fromentin's "emotional" espousal of Ruben's art, James viewed the latter's painterly style as

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superficial and cheap, the painter's energy and temperament failing to compensate for a lack of profundity and delicacy. Rubens allowed his art to sever its ties with reality; he cut the cord which held the balloon of the imagination to a secure mooring on earth, and for this act he could not be forgiven.

James had little to say concerning German art, but the few comments he did make were extremely negative. Visiting Darmstadt in 1873, he observed: "Early or late, German art rarely seems to me a happy adventure."[114] Whereas Italian art, according to James, possessed an innate feeling for corporeal beauty, Northern art, with its sense of inwardness and its preoccupation with the spiritual, saw its primary task in the cataloguing of the grotesque aspects of human existence. A typical artist was Martin Schongauer, whom James considered a "ruthless caricaturist of humanity ... he leaves us wondering from what monstrous human types he can have drawn his inspiration."[115] Much closer to James's ideal conception of portraiture were the works of Holbein, whose dignified and elaborately clothed subjects were painted with great finish and a high degree of psychological insight. Unlike other German painters, "Holbein had, at least, an ideal of beauty of execution, of manipulation, of touch. Anything firmer, finer, more suggestive of the fascination of what is vulgarly called 'niggling' with brush and pencil it would be difficult to conceive."[116] In addition to its superb technical finish, Holbein's art reflected a "wholesome human substance," having an edifying effect upon the viewer which the moral

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component of James's aesthetic doctrine could heartily espouse.[117] Despite the art critic's youthful fondness for the anecdotal, dramatic exaggerations of the Düsseldorf school, James's mature opinion of Emmanuel Leutze's Washington Crossing the Delaware and other modern works belonging to this style of painting reflected a serious distrust of all such products of the ready-made, tried-and-tested-formula school of art. Speaking of several large examples of the modern German landscape school of painting, James observed: "These blooming views of Switzerland and Italy seemed to me the most dishonest things in the world ... [they] were extremely clever; the art of shuffling away trouble has rarely been brought to greater perfection. It is evidently an elaborate system; there is a school; the pictures were all from different hands, and the precious recipe had been passed round the circle."[118] Lacking an imaginative thinking-out and reordering of reality, such works did not deserve to be called art.

If the German artistic temperament, with its flights into the fantastic and the grotesque, remained basically alien to James, he was at least able to discover one trait in the Spanish school of painting which he had admired in the Dutch: its down-to-earth realism. In contrast, however, to the Dutch joie de vivre, Spanish art reflected an attitude towards life which was much more sombre and subdued. With the exception of a brief mention of Goya, James's recorded comments on Spanish art are primarily devoted to seventeenth-century artists.

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Velásquez, whom James considered "one of the most powerful of painters," combined an eye for imitation with an added sense of style: "His men and women," wrote James, "have a style which belongs to his conception of them quite as much as to their real appearance." Velásquez remained for James a prime example of a painter's painter, one whose mastery of the brush determined his fate. Despite his cold colors, the "noble gravity and solidity" of his creations gave his paintings a sense of reality which could only be the product of long and sincere reflection on the part of the artist.[119]

James's attitude towards the art of Murillo was mixed. On the one hand, he admired the painter's "ease, his grace, his dusky harmonies, his beggars and saints, his agreeable Spanish savour," but felt that this subject matter was not supported by a great amount of technical proficiency: "His drawing, though often happy, is uncomfortably loose, and his intentions, somehow, fatally vague."[120] Here was a painter who thought with his heart rather than with his head, one whose hand was never guided by academic rules and theories. What impressed and, at the same time, irritated James was this painter's utter sincerity and unaffected piety, the lack of any tension or intellectual thought in his art. His mild and mellow color harmonies reflected an art which was content to remain in the shade rather than to seek out the bright sunshine. Although he was not as forceful and sure of his means as was Velásquez, his sincere and humble approach endeared him to James.

If Murillo's art was basically feminine in tone, Fran-

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cisco Zurbarán's "genial, honest, and masculine painting" represented the opposite quality. James admired the bonhomie of Zurbarán's shepherds, their basic honesty and simplicity reflecting a firm footing in the soil of reality. Lacking a sense of color, as did most of his compatriots, Zurbarán nevertheless made skillful use of oppositions of light and shadow to underscore the emotional qualities of a scene.[121] As for Ribera, James found his brand of stark naturalism and his subsequent espousal of mysticism utterly distasteful: "Ribera at his best is never agreeable, though he was handsomely endowed with the painter's temperament...."[122] The morbid subject matter of this painter reflected a lack of taste which James's New England temperament could not easily stomach.

In one of his travel essays, James described the mellowing process to which every critic, including himself, is subject: "We do, in fact, as we grow older, unstring the critical bow a little and strike a truce with invidious comparisons.... We perceive a certain human solidarity in all cultivated effort, and are conscious of a growing urbanity in our judgments--a sort of man-of-the-world disposition to take the joke for what it is worth, as it passes ... in museums and palaces we are alternate radicals and conservatives. On some days we ask to be entertained; on others, Ruskin-haunted, to be edified."[123] This analysis might be applied, with some modifications, to James's survey of the various national schools of painting. The "joke," as he called it, might have

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referred to the paintings of the Impressionists or the subjectless canvases of Whistler, both of which James eventually came to accept and admire--even if he did so for the wrong reasons. Essentially conservative in his choice of "Old Masters" over contemporary artists, James nevertheless championed the works of a Duveneck and a Sargent. His criticism has most frequently come under attack for its extrapictorial, literary bent; critics have argued that he failed to come to terms with the technical métier of the artist and did not understand the artistic elements, i.e., line, color, form, design, which confronted him in a work of art.[124] James was fully aware of this charge and countered it by pointing to the dangers inherent in the criticism of, say, Eugène Fromentin, who delved so deeply into the creative process and utilized terminology of such a technical nature that the layman, whom James considered to be his prime audience, frequently lost sight of the point of the entire discussion. Nevertheless, James was guilty of those descriptive excesses which he criticized so harshly in the British "anecdotal" school of painting. Nor were his tastes and choices infallible. He failed to recognize the genius of Daumier, Rubens, and Rembrandt, among others. His only excuse, if there can be any, was his reliance upon personal impressions and subjective reactions, which James insisted were legitimate sources of critical judgment. Ironically, his concern with "taste" and "judgment" frequently blinded him to the technical innovations of many avant-garde painters, Whistler being the prime example; too caught up in his search

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for a recognizable subject, James failed to see the woods for the trees. His criticism was at its best when, as in the essay on Delacroix, he adopted an unorthodox approach which crossed the barriers separating the arts to make a point (e.g., Delacroix's "orchestration" of colors and forms), or when he singled out one essential feature of an artist's manner which reflected the whole of his achievement (e.g., Tintoretto's "distinctness of vision"). His "felicity of expression," in the words of one critic,[125] managed somehow to enable the reader to overlook the fact that he was saying nothing that was startlingly different or new. Held back by the double fear of public opinion and his status as an amateur, James seldom took the leap which would have made his art criticism more than just the informative and descriptive collection of essays it actually represents.

The Critical Heritage:

Among the early formative influences which helped shape James's mature aesthetic doctrines was the brief period of time he spent in the Newport studio of William Morris Hunt. In the fourth chapter of Notes of a Son and Brother James speaks of the "truly fertilising action" which this painter exerted both on himself and his brother William, creating an almost "irresistible contagion" of thoughts and ideas.[126] In addition to the obvious technical side of the painter's craft which Hunt revealed to the young James, the artist also taught the future art critic to seek the deeper, hidden meanings in art. According to Winner, "the impress of Hunt

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on James's imagination was not so much what he said but what he was--'the living and communicating Artist'.... Though James held the conventional view that some subjects are intrinsically better than others, his stress on the value of the artist's power to penetrate through surfaces to the inner reality was surely reinforced by Hunt's example."[127] James's admiration for the art of Tintoretto, particularly its ability to express the spiritual through physical or material means, was in all probability an outgrowth of Hunt's teachings.

More significant than Hunt's example, however, was the presence of the painter John La Farge, who must be given credit for opening James's eyes to the possibilities of literature as a viable and productive craft. He introduced the writer-to-be to the world of Balzac and encouraged him to undertake a translation of Mérimée's "La Vénus d'Ile." To the young James La Farge represented more than just a skillful painter; he was, in the novelist's own words, "the type--the 'European,' and this gave him an authority for me that it verily took the length of years to undermine."[128] Here was an individual who combined the best of both worlds, a learned and cultured reader as well as a sensitive and poetic recorder of the visual scene. In La Farge James found living proof that he would not have to give up his interest in painting to pursue a literary career.

Another such individual was the writer-painter Eugène Fromentin, whose Dominique was brought to the attention of Henry and William James by none other than La Farge himself.[129]

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Since James reviewed Fromentin's Les Maîtres d'Autrefois in 1876, we can ascertain several points of similarity and difference in the aesthetic doctrines of these two critics. It comes as somewhat of a shock to find James condemning Fromentin for his literary bent: "We have always had a decided mistrust of literary criticism of works of plastic art,"[130] writes James with apparent seriousness. That he is primarily criticizing Fromentin's literary style rather than the content of his art criticism becomes evident in the next passage: "...over-subtlety is M. Fromentin's fault: he attempts to say too many things about his painters, to discriminate beyond the point at which discriminations are useful ... it is rather a too eager analysis of the material work itself, a too urgent description of it, a too exhaustive enumeration of its constituent particles."[131] Yet was not James himself guilty of the same fault? Did not a good two-thirds of each of his art reviews, especially those involving portraits, consist of a minute description of the costume of the sitter, the arrangement of the décor, and the circumstances surrounding the creation of the work? James's conviction that "pictures ... are meant before all things to be enjoyed"[132] is directly related to his conception of the art critic's role as an "honest and intelligent mediator" between painter and public. According to Winner, "James's ideal critic had a grasp of the medium through which the painter expresses himself, but since his main purpose was to interpret paintings and awaken interest in them, he concentrated on those aspects of the picture which could be readily and gracefully described

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for the benefit of the layman."[133] This belief in the ultimate importance of communicating the painter's "message" to the viewer with the least possible element of confusion was expressed in James's earliest-known piece of official art criticism, "An English Critic of French Painting" (1868), wherein he praised the French critics Stendhal, Planche, Vitet, and Taine for maintaining an intelligent balance between "pure sentiment" and "technique" in their critical writings, analyzing paintings "with an equal regard to the standpoint of the painter and that of the spectator, ... to the material used and to the use made of it."[134]

As a result of exhausting and depleting the work of art by means of his finespun web of supersubtle analysis, James argues, Fromentin has bereft the work of its particular charm or mystery, having lost respect for the "unsayable--the better half, we think, of all that belongs to a work of art."[135] Whether it was James's amateur status as a painter or his belief in the suggestive and evocative powers of art that prompted this remark is difficult to determine;[136] his avoidance of the literal or direct presentation of the thoughts of his characters in his novels would seem to imply that he favored the same approach in his art criticism. The danger which one risks in attempting to examine every facet of a painter's creation is a sense of muddled confusion and inconclusiveness. In his passages on Rubens, writes James, Fromentin "multiplies his descriptive and analytic touches, but we are at a loss to know exactly what he has desired to prove."[137] Like the painter, who must maintain an objective

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distance from his creation if he is to succeed in producing a work of some significance, the art critic must avoid the pitfalls of a purely emotional response to a painting if his criticism is to remain intelligible to the layman. By exhausting "the vocabulary of hopeless aesthetic conjecture" in an attempt to discover the greatness of Rembrandt's Night Watch (whose actual title is The Shooting Company of Captain Frans Banning Cocq), Fromentin, in James's opinion, clouded rather than illuminated the painter's accomplishment. Despite these criticisms, however, James admired the "acuteness and delicacy of perception" evident in the French critic's analyses and shared his love of the Dutch and Flemish schools of painting.[138] Fromentin, like La Farge, set an example for James to follow in the complementary fields of art and literature.

A critic for whom James had the deepest respect was Hippolyte Taine. The latter's Notes sur L'Angleterre (1872) are mentioned with great frequency in The Painter's Eye; James termed the work "very suggestive" and "pregnant" with meaning for the foreign reader. One might almost say that he adopted, in toto, Taine's views on British art: "I never go into an exhibition of English pictures without being strongly reminded of M. Taine," wrote James in an 1878 essay; "I put on his spectacles; I seem to see so well what he meant."[139] Taine's stress upon the expressiveness of British portraiture, his keen analysis of the psychological nuances in the facial renderings of these artists, and his insistence upon the predominance of the "moralizing" quality over the plastic

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element in British art were all subjects which James himself would subsequently develop at length. The French critic's social view of art complemented James's belief in the historical dimension of all great art, i.e., the painting as a reflection of the finest achievements of human culture. Despite these similarities, however, the scientific determinism and methodical approach favored by Taine did not suit James's need for allusiveness and suggestion in a work of art.

If Taine provided James with a deeper insight into the psychological and moral dimensions of British art, Théophile Gautier taught him to expand his powers of visual observation and to admire the plastic qualities of French art. While Gautier's name is mentioned only once in The Painter's Eye, his influence is clearly evident in the descriptive travel essays (e.g., Portraits of Places), in which James's observations on art are often more frequent and more perceptive than those contained in his official reviews. Gautier's gift for couleur locale and his ability to describe the natural scene or the painted image in highly picturesque and colorful terms were certainly admired by the American art critic, but he somehow sensed a superficiality, a lack of deep thought and reflection, in the French critic's writings on art. The aesthetic impulse, however strong, was not sufficient for the creation of a meaningful dialogue between painter, viewer, and critic. James, in his essay on Gabriele D'Annunzio, had termed this aesthetic view of life "a queer high-flavoured fruit from overseas, grown under another sun than ours, ... but not found on the whole really to agree with

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us, not proving thoroughly digestible."[140] What Gautier's criticism lacked was a sense of human values, a concern with the "trappings"--social, moral, and psychological--of art. What "art for art's sake" failed to express was that "passion for representation" which James consistently cherished.

A critic who managed to incorporate the aesthetic doctrine into a larger philosophical scheme was Walter Pater, whom James compared to a "lucent matchbox" illuminating the "disturbed midnight of our actual literature," one who "[was] not of the little day--but of the longer time."[141] While Pater's direct influence upon James's theories of art may not have been as evident as that of Ruskin,[142] these two writer-critics certainly shared many aesthetic concepts. Among these, Winner singles out "a sensitivity to the visible and concrete, a concomitant distaste for the abstract and theoretical, an emphasis on the personal impression, a belief in the relativity of beauty, and a concentration on style."[143] How concerned Pater actually was with concrete, visible reality in and of itself is disputable;[144] it was more often a catalyst for the writer's own subjective reflections and reactions; the careful observation of reality was, by contrast, of primary importance in James's conception of the artistic process. Both disliked metaphysical or abstract criticism, and it is highly probable, as Bowden suggests, that James's stress upon the temperament of the artist above abstract laws was a wholesale adoption of Pater's theory.[145] One might dispute Winner's assumption that both James and Pater considered beauty a relative matter. James,

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it must not be forgotten, had inherited the academic hierarchy of subject matter in art, in addition to receiving Ruskin's moral precepts. He was quick to condemn a painting for being in bad taste, i.e., the artist had chosen an "ugly" or "unhandsome" subject to begin with, even if his treatment was impeccable. Though he never bothered to define beauty, preferring instead to make it a natural consequence of the artist's sensitive perception and rendering of an object, person, or scene, James did stress that "every artist of talent has somewhere lurking in his soul ... a guiding conception, an ideal of formal beauty...."[146] Style, in James's critical vocabulary, is ever-present as a term, but nowhere receives a definitive analysis of its constituent elements. Implied in its use, however, is a certain grandeur of conception and nobility or elevation of thought. The term grande peinture, which James reserved for the art of the Italian Renaissance and a few modern French masters, was simply defined as "painting in which style plays a part...."[147]

Despite their basic agreement on several issues, James found in Pater's aesthetic writings an "unhealthy" or "unnatural" preoccupation with ideas divorced from reality. In contrast to the "masculine" art criticism of Ruskin, with its emphasis on the moral dimension in all great art, Pater's more "feminine" approach to art, i.e., the sinuosity of his thoughts and reflections, made James wary of his influence. To exorcise such a possibility, James may have caricatured Pater's doctrines in the character of Gabriel Nash, the dandy and aesthete of The Tragic Muse, whose preoccupation with

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thought rather than action represents the extreme position of the aesthetic school.[148]

With slight modifications, Gabriel Nash might also be taken as a disciple of Oscar Wilde; like his master, as Nick Dormer, the artist-hero of The Tragic Muse, remarked, "premeditated paradox was the light to read him by...."[149] James seems to have cared very little for the aesthetic theories of Wilde. "He was never in the smallest of degree interesting to me," the art critic confessed to Edmund Gosse in a letter written in 1895.[150] Wilde's radical belief that "art never expresses anything but itself" ("The Decay of Lying") could not possibly sit well with a critic who had stressed the fundamental connection between art and life: "James cared too deeply for art," writes Winner, "and was too socially responsible to fail to see the emptiness of the ideals of the Wilde dandy--of the soul, independent, mentally austere and fastidious, superior to art and to the honor accruing to its creators, dedicated to an absolutely useless, aimless, and asocial existence."[151] In direct opposition to the sterile and self-contained theory of art expressed by Wilde and his followers, James elevated the human element above all else. In his essay on Delacroix, the art critic argued that "the artist we value most is the artist who tells us most about human life. This large reference to human life appeared to be the merit of Delacroix.... It is the presence of heart, and soul, and reason, of something that touches mortalia corda, which constitutes half the charm of Delacroix."[152] Where Wilde insisted that nature imitated the

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effects of art, James held firmly to the belief that it was nature from which all art derived its initial source of inspiration. Far from wishing a photographic duplication of a person or scene, James felt that the artist's renderings represented an all-encompassing, global impression of life: "...the great charm of art is in its being a change from life, and not a still narrower consciousness of it...."[153]

Of all the influences which James underwent in the formation of an aesthetic, none was of greater significance than that exerted by John Ruskin. We know from Thomas Sergeant Perry's account of the young Henry James's attempt to copy a leaf and a rock jutting out of a lily pond that he was already in contact with Ruskin's teachings during the early Newport days.[154] Writing to Alice James from London in early March of 1869, the fledgling art critic reported that he had gone to "hear Ruskin lecture at University College on Greek Myths. I enjoyed it much in spite of fatigue; but as I am to meet him some day through the Nortons, I shall reserve comments."[155] The meeting occurred later that same month; James's account of his immediate impressions of Ruskin provide a revealing commentary on the young art critic's reaction to an established and respected figure:

> The next day I went with several of the Nortons to dine at Ruskin's, out of town. This too was extremely pleasant. Ruskin himself is a very simple matter. In face, in manner, in talk, in mind, he is weakness pure and simple. I use the word, not invidiously, but scientifically. He has the beauties of his defects; but to see him only confirms the impressions given by his writing, that he has been scared back by the grim face of reality into the world of unreason and illusion, and that he wanders

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> there without a compass and a guide--or any light save the fitful flashes of his beautiful genius.[156]

James, it would appear, became a frequent dinner guest at the Ruskins', yet always in the company of the Nortons. He was given a personally escorted tour of the master's private Turner collection, yet he could not share--at this early date, at any rate--Ruskin's affection for this painter, preferring instead the more "tasteful" landscapes of Claude.[157]

While the two critics did not seem to agree on the merits of this British painter, they certainly shared a warm enthusiasm for the Italian artists of earlier periods. It was Ruskin's art criticism which served as James's guide to the artistic treasures of northern Italy and, by way of The Stones of Venice, to this enchanting city as well. The early Florentine painters were also revealed to the young James via Ruskin's writings, and it is probably the latter's championship of Tintoretto that produced an equally fervent admiration on the part of James. His comment, quoted earlier, that Tintoretto's "indefatigable hand never drew a line that was not ... a moral line," is a typical instance of the strong impress which Ruskin's teachings left upon the American art critic. According to Winner, "evaluations of specific paintings were almost certainly colored by Ruskin's prior judgment: James's disappointment in Titian's Assumption in the Academy in Venice is an almost word-for-word echo of Ruskin's remarks in [The] Stones of Venice."[158] James's requirement that a painting be "in good taste" or display an "elevation of thought" were certainly modifications of the

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Ruskinian belief that honest effort and pure thoughts would ultimately produce works of merit.[159] Like Ruskin, James argued that a painter must see beyond the purely literal facts he is recording; he must possess a "lingering relish for something in objects over and above their literal facts."[160] The power which would enable him to perceive this deeper reality behind surface appearances--the imagination--was recognized, both by Ruskin and James, as of supreme importance in the creative process.[161] James's belief, expressed in his essay on Delacroix, that "in the arts, feeling is always meaning,"[162] is heavily indebted to Ruskin's theory that there exists a "reciprocal action between the intensity of moral feeling and the power of imagination...."[163] The connection between elevated thought and nobility of character, on the one hand, and a resultant sense of style and "finish," on the other, was one which James had adapted from Ruskin's teachings.[164]

Although James had begun writing his official art criticism with the view that Ruskin was primarily an "aesthetic" critic,[165] he eventually came to feel that Ruskin's doctrinaire stance and imputation of moral or extrapictorial intentions to the artist actually clouded the painter's achievement. Writing to the American illustrator Edwin A. Abbey in 1906, James suggested: "Look into Ruskin and he's all about Nature--splendidly often, but <u>loathing</u> Art."[166] James, however, was disturbed by more than just Ruskin's "attribution of various incongruous and arbitrary intentions to the artist...."[167] What he objected to most strenuously was Ruskin's

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whole attitude towards art, the almost religious and sacrosanct tone of his criticism. James's essay on Florence, written in 1877, contains his most forceful denunciation of Ruskin's pernicious influence; it consequently merits quotation at length:

> Nothing in fact is more comical than the familiar asperity of the author's style and the pedagogic fashion in which he pushes and pulls his unhappy pupils about, jerking their heads toward this, rapping their knuckles for that, sending them to stand in corners and giving them Scripture texts to copy. But it is neither the felicities nor the aberrations of detail, in Mr. Ruskin's writings, that are the main affair for most readers; it is the general tone that, as I have said, puts them off or draws them on. For many persons he will never bear the test of being read in this rich old Italy, where art, so long as it really lived at all, was spontaneous, joyous, irresponsible. If the reader is in daily contact with those beautiful Florentine works..., it will seem to him that this commentator's comment is pitched in the strangest falsetto key.... Art is the one corner of human life in which we may take our ease. To justify our presence there the only thing demanded of us is that we shall have felt the representational impulse. In other connections our impulses are conditioned and embarrassed.... Art means an escape from all this. Wherever her shining standard floats the need for apology and compromise is over; there it is enough simply that we please or are pleased. There the tree is judged only by its fruits. If these are sweet the tree is justified--and not less so the consumer.
>
> One may read a great many pages of Mr. Ruskin without getting a hint of this delightful truth; a hint of the not unimportant fact that art after all is made for us and not we for art. This idea that the value of a work is in the amount of illusion it yields is conspicuous by its absence. And as for Mr. Ruskin's world being a place--his world of art--where we may take life easily, woe to the luckless mortal who enters it with any such disposition. Instead of a garden of delight, he finds a sort of assize court in perpetual session. Instead of a place in which human responsibilities are lightened and suspended, he finds a region governed by a kind of Draconic legislation. His responsibilities indeed are tenfold increased; the gulf between truth and error is forever yawning at his feet; the pains and penalties of this same error are advertised, in apocalyptic terminology, upon a thousand signposts; and the rash intruder soon begins to look back

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> with infinite longing to the lost paradise of the artless. There can be no greater want of tact in dealing with those things with which men attempt to ornament life than to be perpetually talking about "error." A truce to all rigidities is the law of the place, the only thing absolute there is that some force and some charm have worked. The grim old bearer of the scales excuses herself; she feels this not to be her province. Differences here are not iniquity and righteousness; they are simply variations of temperament, kinds of curiosity. We are not under theological government. [168]

To the critic who had stressed enjoyment as the primary aim of art, Ruskin's severe, pedagogic manner rang false. "Closer in tone to Gautier than to Ruskin," writes Winner, "[James] held a relaxed view of his critical duties...."[169] Whether it was the fact of James's amateur status as a painter or his frustration at the overpowering influence which Ruskin exerted in the field of art criticism which led him to adopt a more informal attitude in his role as a professional critic is hard to say. That it was James's sincere conviction that the critic should be guided by his own impressions rather than by external rules or guidelines is borne out by his comment, in the essay on Delacroix, that "a person whose sole relation to pictures is a disposition to enjoy them can rest upon his personal impressions; and in the case of the writer of these lines such an impression has been conscious of no chilling responsibilities."[170]

Despite these admittedly serious differences of tone and approach to art, James profited immensely from Ruskin's teachings. He never abandoned the moral concerns of art and shared Ruskin's predilection both for the Italian painters of the Renaissance and the Pre-Raphaelite artists of his own

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period. That "passion for representation" which James cherished above all else was instilled in him during those early Newport days when he had attempted to preserve a Ruskinian fidelity towards nature in his sketches and drawings. One year after his scathing condemnation of Ruskin's sacerdotal approach to art criticism, James still admired him enough to be able to call him "a writer whose eccentricities of judgment have been numerous, but for whom, at least, it can be claimed that he is the author of some of the most splendid pages in our language...."[171]

Aesthetic Theories on Painting in Fictional Guise:

In his 1888 essay on the novelistic art of Pierre Loti, James defined the function of "intelligent" criticism as "the study of connections."[172] In his pursuit of the psychological, historical, and social trappings of various works of art, however, James neglected to establish a cohesive set of guidelines or aesthetic principles under which he was operating. To speak of James's uniform aesthetic or artistic theory, therefore, is pointless; according to Winner, "James's art criticism suffers from being based on an inadequate theory of art with a ready-made critical vocabulary."[173] Nevertheless, James did enunciate several important, albeit disconnected, principles on art, some of which he chose to embody in a fictional context.

Of prime concern to James was the proper fusion or balance between the ideal and the real in a work of art. In contrast to those "painters who advocate pure imitation,"

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i.e., the realists, James noted "the other faction, who dream of conferring on the subject an added grace, begotten in their own minds."[174] Winslow Homer, for example, represented the first category of artists, while Burne-Jones stood for the latter. What James sought was a fusion of these two extremes. When one element threatened to dominate or stifle the other, as in the overriding idealism of Watts's art, the result was obscurity and confusion.

"The Madonna of the Future," written in 1873, provides a dramatic illustration of this point. Theobald, an expatriate American painter living in Florence, encounters the anonymous narrator of this tale and expresses his dissatisfaction with the poverty of inspiration evident in contemporary art: "We live in the evening of time. We grope in the grey dusk, carrying each our poor little taper of selfish and painful wisdom, holding it up to the great models and to the dim idea, and seeing nothing but overwhelming greatness and dimness. The days of illumination are gone."[175] This, in fact, is one of the major leitmotifs running through James's art criticism. In an 1878 essay entitled "Italy Revisited," James bemoaned "the contrast between the fecundity of the great artistic period [i.e., the Italian Renaissance] and the vulgarity of the Italian genius of to-day ... the race of which Michael Angelo and Raphael, Leonardo and Titian were characteristic [has] no other title to distinction than third-rate genre pictures and catchpenny statues...."[176] To embody this truth in his story, James created the figure of the earthy sculptor as a foil for Theobald. Producing small

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statuettes of cats and monkeys which are meant to symbolize, in satirical fashion, the baser qualities of human nature, the sculptor prides himself on the fact that his types--the uniformity of which is antithetical to James's concern for inventiveness and re-creation in art--are studied directly from life. James had insisted, time and again, that "the affair of the painter is not the immediate, it is the reflected field of life, the realm not of application, but of appreciation...."[177] It is clear from the narrator's comments ("Their imitative felicity was revolting. As I looked askance at the complacent little artist, ... he struck me as himself little more than an exceptionally intelligent ape." [p.46]) that James was totally opposed to the ultra-realistic manner in which the sculptor produced his little "catchpenny statues." What he lacked, above all, was a reflective quality, the ability to envision his creation at one remove from reality. Technical facility is clearly not sufficient to produce great art.

Theobald, on the other hand, possesses a reflective temperament to an extreme degree. The narrator counters the painter's monologue on the dearth of culture and artistic inspiration in America with the assertion: "The only thing that helps is to do something fine.... Invent, create, achieve.... What else are you an artist for?" (p.21) But Theobald is so preoccupied with the theoretical working-out of his artistic conceptions that he never achieves a concrete realization of his efforts. Like the aesthete Gabriel Nash, the painter considers the "doing" of a work as the inferior

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half of the process of artistic creation: "I've chosen never to manifest myself by imperfection ... My little studio has never been profaned by superficial feverish mercenary work. It's a temple of labour but of leisure! Art is long." (p.22) James, however, was convinced that the gift of artistic reflection was useless if it was not accompanied by the requisite manual skill.[178] His interest in the works of the Pre-Raphaelite painters, like that of Ruskin, was based, in part, upon an admiration for their solid craftsmanship.

James's dislike for abstract theories and intellectual subtleties in art is shared by the narrator, who remarks of Theobald that "he inclined more than I approved to the sentimental proposition, was too fond, I thought, of superfine shades and of discovering subtle intentions and extracting quintessences. At moments too he plunged into the sea of metaphysics and floundered a while in waters that were not for my breasting." (p.24) True, James had praised Tintoretto and Michelangelo for expressing the spiritual by means of the material, but their works were nonetheless based upon real models and careful observation of external reality. Theobald, however, is content to dismiss reality as a mere starting point or catalyst in the painterly process. His favorite painting, Raphael's Madonna of the Chair, is great precisely because "no lovely human outline could charm it to vulgar fact. He saw the fair form made perfect ... That's what they call idealism; the word's vastly abused, but the thing's good. It's my own creed at any rate ... I too am an idealist!" (p.26) James's demand for a "critical return upon reality"[179] is

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given short shrift by this painter.

It is Mrs. Coventry, another expatriate American whose salon serves as the meeting place of an artistic circle of connoisseurs, who voices the sad truth about Theobald: "...he has talked more about his subject--about every subject--than any human being before has ever talked about anything, but has never put brush to canvas ... The man didn't know the very alphabet of drawing. His strong point, he intimated, was his sentiment...." (p.31) Theobald's grandiose undertaking, according to Mrs. Coventry, was to be the creation of a madonna that would incorporate the best elements of all the other madonnas of the Italian school. Her passing reference to Balzac's Frenhofer,[180] another incurable idealist, underscores the hopelessness and futility of such a venture. Ironically, Theobald voices a truism which condemns his own efforts when, after inviting the narrator to see his "divine" model-companion Serafina, he observes that "with too great a familiarity we're apt to lose a sense of the real value of things...." (p.34) James had pointed to this danger in an 1875 essay, where he had written that "for artistic purposes there is such a thing as knowing too much about your subject ... often, for the artist, it is a great knowledge that is dangerous--in the sense that it crowds out inspiration and imagination."[181] Theobald's monomaniacal pursuit of ideal beauty has blinded him to the truth: his sublime model, a middle-aged Italian woman, is more interested in the animal sculptor than in any Platonic vision which Theobald might hope to capture and immortalize on his canvas. When the

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painter finally admits to himself that he has spent years studying and absorbing the image of his model without actually having her pose for him, he is disclosing the paralytic hold which his obsession has assumed over his creative functions. "I've got my grand fundamental impression. That's the great thing!" (p.39) he tells the narrator. In this he is certainly echoing James's belief in "that great general impression which, first and foremost, it is the duty of an excellent picture to give you...."[182] But reflection must be followed by execution if the painter is to avoid the dangers of overrefinement and intellectual confusion. That element of spontaneity and freedom of execution, so marked in Sargent's works, was severly lacking in Theobald's case; only once, in a large drawing of the Christ child, had the painter succeeded in freeing himself from the tyranny of thought. That short-lived achievement, however, was soon buried beneath a mass of theorizing and needless delay. The narrator's revelation of the truth ("You've lost time in effortless contemplation." [p.39]) leads Theobald to the sad realization that he will never be able to paint his great work:

> "The elements of it are all here." And he tapped his forehead with that mystic confidence which had so often marked the gesture for me before. "If I could only transpose them into some brain that has the hand, the will. Since I've been sitting here taking stock of my intellects, I've come to believe that I've the material for a hundred masterpieces. But my hand's paralyzed now and they'll never be painted. I never began! I waited and waited to be worthier to begin--I wasted my life in preparation. While I fancied my creation was growing it was only dying ... I suppose we're a genus by ourselves in the providential scheme--we talents that can't act, that can't do nor dare! We take it out in talk,

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> in study, in plans and promises, in visions ... I need only the hand of Raphael. His brain I already have ... I'm the half of a genius! Where in the wide world is my other half? ...." (p.48)

Theobald knows only too well that his "other half" is none other than the productive little animal sculptor whose conception of art and attitude towards his creations is so antithetical to his own. James was to further explore this dichotomy in his first major novel, Roderick Hudson (1876), wherein the facile and artful productions of the society sculptor Gloriani are opposed to the more labored and theoretical efforts of the young Roderick. Yet neither the shrewd animal sculptor nor the more worldly Gloriani are themselves capable of producing truly great art. "In portraying the realist as a cynical caricaturist and the romantic idealist sympathetically," writes Winner, "James expresses his belief that while the artist must risk his ideal by immersion in the actual, without an ideal at all his work, no matter how clever or technically successful, will be base."[183] What "The Madonna of the Future" (and Roderick Hudson) seems to suggest, therefore, is the need for a fusion or blending of visionary inspiration and manual dexterity, a requisite balance between the elements of idealism and realism, qualities which James was to praise in the art of Delacroix and Tintoretto.[184]

The Tragic Muse (1890), although unsuccessful as a convincing study of the painter and his milieu,[185] contains several important aesthetic discussions between Nick Dormer, the painter-hero, and Gabriel Nash, the fin-de-siècle aesthete, which reflect some of James's own preoccupations with art and

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aesthetics.

Nick's view of art as essentially unified in spirit and conception is one which James shared wholeheartedly. According to the painter, "All art is one ... It's the same great many-headed effort, and any ground that's gained by an individual, any spark that's struck in any province, is of use and of suggestion to all the others. We're all in the same boat."[186] This had been the important lesson which another painter, John La Farge, had instilled in the young James. In one of his most famous essays, "The Art of Fiction" (1884), James had drawn an explicit analogy between the art of the painter and that of the novelist: "Their inspiration is the same, their process (allowing for the different quality of the vehicle) is the same, their success is the same. They may learn from each other, they may explain and sustain each other. Their cause is the same, and the honor of one is the honor of another."[187]

Gabriel Nash's Paterian philosophy ("We must feel everything, everything that we can. We're here for that ... Oh the happy moments of our consciousness--the multiplication of those moments. We must save as many as possible from the dark gulf ... We pay too much attention to the ugly; we notice it, we magnify it. The great thing is to leave it alone and encourage the beautiful." [I,30,32]) is one with which James would not have been totally satisfied. To Nash's demand that one feel deeply, the art critic would have added that "in the arts, feeling is always meaning."[188] James would have agreed with the aesthete that one must cultivate certain moments of

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our experience; the painter chooses and selects from a vast array of visual phenomena before he sets about the process of creation. "Our deepest interest," according to James, "depends on the way he deliberates and chooses."[189] To Nash's insistent demand that the beautiful should take precedence over the ugly in matters of art James would have necessarily agreed, although he did stress that a master is a master whatever subject he may choose to paint. According to the art critic, "the beautifying of existence [and] the conservation of enjoyment"[190] are the prime obligations of every painter who considers himself worthy of this title. But by enjoyment James did not simply mean a total indulgence of one's senses in the visual experience. He had chastized Fromentin for failing to see that enjoyment, rather than over-subtle intellectualizations, was the ultimate aim of art; he had criticized Ruskin for denying the pleasurable and easy-going manner in his art criticism. Yet James was himself also conscious of a more serious aspect to the aesthetic adventure. As E.M. Forster has written, "The standards established in his mind were in theory aesthetic, and indeed hedonistic. A picture, he held, must give pleasure, and if it fails to do this it has failed. It must never preach a lesson ... But this hedonism was not thoroughgoing. He could get no pleasure from a picture that lacked good taste, and he held that good taste is akin to moral delicacy. So ethics get involved after all."[191]

In making Nick Dormer a painter of portraits rather than a landscape or still-life artist, James was consciously

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expressing his belief in the superiority of this form over the other possible subjects available to the artist. When, in his essay on Sargent, he flatly declared that "there is no greater work of art than a great portrait,"[192] he had in mind the complex relationship existing between art and life, between the sitter and the artist. Gabriel Nash praises portraiture for precisely the same reasons: "...unlike most other forms it was a revelation of two realities, the man whom it was the artist's conscious effort to reveal and the man--the interpreter--expressed in the very quality and temper of that effort. It offered a double vision, the strongest dose of life that art could give, the strongest dose of art that life could give." (II,52) This dual interest in the subject of a work and the personality of the artist revealed through the painting itself[193] was one which James had seen put to allegorical use by Hawthorne. He was subsequently to refine this technique and stress the psychological implications of the artist-sitter relationship in several of his own works, from the early tale "The Story of a Masterpiece" (1868) to the posthumous novel The Sense of the Past (1917).

During a moment of frustration and despair, Nick visits the National Gallery and begins to question the validity of works of art as well as the painter's contribution to humanity:

> What had happened to him, as he passed on this occasion from Titian to Rubens and from Gainsborough to Rembrandt, was that he found himself calling the whole exhibited art into question. What was it after all at the best and why had people given it so high a place? Its weakness, its limits broke upon him; tacitly blaspheming he looked with a lustreless eye at the palpable polished "toned" objects designed

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> for suspension on hooks. That is he blasphemed if it were blasphemy to feel that as bearing on the energies of man they were a poor and secondary show. The human force producing them was so far from one of the greatest; their place was a small place and their connexion with the heroic life casual and slight. They represented so little great ideas, and it was great ideas that kept the world from chaos. (II,265-6)

A few lines down on the same page James adds: "Gabriel maintained precisely that there were more ideas, more of those that man lived by, in a single room of the National Gallery than in all the statutes of Parliament." (II,266) This, in effect, is the point of the entire novel, the lesson which James wishes his painter-hero to experience. For once Nash has voiced a principle with which James was in total agreement. The art critic always responded first to the historical, social, and psychological dimensions of a painting, to its representation of the cultural heritage of a particular civilization, and only second to its inherent plastic virtues.[194] This was what James saw as the charm and wonder of art--its ability to preserve the past <u>in</u> the present. As Winner has observed, "The touchstone of greatness for a work of art [according to James] lay in its power to evoke a sense of human relationships, especially of the past to the present. Like Irving, he needed the humanizing touch of the past to see beauty in a natural scene. At times he almost equated history and art."[195] It is in the light of this philosophical attitude that one should read Nick Dormer's final paean to the great art of the past:

> These were the things the most inspiring, in the sense that while generations, while worlds had come and gone, they seemed far most to prevail and survive

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> and testify. As he stood before them the perfection of their survival often struck him as the supreme eloquence, the virtue that included all others, thanks to the language of art, the richest and most universal. Empires and systems and conquests had rolled over the globe and every kind of greatness had risen and passed away, but the beauty of the great pictures had known nothing of death or change, and the tragic centuries had only sweetened their freshness. The same faces, the same figures looked out at different worlds, knowing so many secrets the particular world didn't, and when they joined hands they made the indestructible thread on which the pearls of history were strung. (II,390-1)

Reflecting his admiration for the ability of art to withstand the forces of time, Nick Dormer's thoughts would subsequently be echoed by Milly Theale, the heroine of The Wings of the Dove, as she stands before the Bronzino portrait of an Italian noblewoman. To her it was not granted to enter into the historical period of the portrait. Yet in his late novel, The Sense of the Past, James actually permitted his hero, Ralph Pendrel, to exchange places with his ancestor, by means of a portrait, and enter into the latter's world for a brief sojourn. The link between history and art was here indissoluble.

"The Real Thing" (1893), although outwardly resembling a short and insignificant tale with no pretention to profundity, contains one of James's most basic truths concerning art. A clue to this hidden meaning is provided in the Notebooks: "It must be an idea," writes James, "--it can't be a 'story' in the vulgar sense of the word. It must be a picture, it must illustrate something."[196] The story element can be recounted rather briefly: An impoverished aristocratic couple, Major and Mrs. Monarch, offer themselves as models to a painter who does illustrations for magazines and novels. He at first agrees to try them out but is eventually forced to reject them

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in favor of his untitled yet far superior regular models.

One of the reasons for the painter's rejection of the old couple is ironically suggested right at the outset. Thinking, at first, that the couple have come to have their portraits done--and to pay him for them--the painter soon discovers their intentions and expresses his dissatisfaction with these people as suitable models: "I was disappointed; for in the pictorial sense I had immediately seen them. I had seized their type--I had already settled what I would do with it."[197] This situation, according to James, can lead to no fruitful or productive end. The fact that the painter has already "typecast" his models means that their use will be extremely limited. They are too literal a pair of representatives of the class to which they belong for the painter to be able to rely upon his imaginative powers of re-creation to adapt these models to his particular needs. Representing types rather than individuals, they lack the flexibility and protean qualities so necessary to a painter's model.

Despite the painter-hero's emotional sympathy with the elderly couple's plight, his artistic half is wary of their effectiveness as models: "...somehow with all their perfections I didn't easily believe in them. After all they were amateurs, and the ruling passion of my life was the detestation of the amateur. Combined with this was another perversity--an innate preference for the represented subject over the real one: the defect of the real one was so apt to be a lack of representation. I liked things that appeared; then one was sure." (p.174) This "perversity," in essence, was

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the guiding principle in James's art criticism, i.e., his belief that the painter should never be satisfied with the literal representation of reality, but should strive instead to obtain a general impression of his subject by means of the distilling powers of his imagination. Since the literal is, by definition, circumscribed and finite, it leaves little room for artistic inspiration. By assuming that they are "the real thing" and therefore come closest to the painter's needs, the Major and his wife fail to take account of this truth: "Wouldn't it be rather a pull sometimes to have--a--to have ... the <u>real</u> thing; a gentleman, you know, or a lady?" (p.176) asks the Major. The answer which the painter gives encapsulates the moral of the tale: "...you must allow for the alchemy of art." (p.178)

Despite his better artistic judgment, however, the painter agrees to have Mrs. Monarch pose for him. The results are predictably disappointing: "...do what I would with it my drawing looked like a photograph or a copy of a photograph. Her figure had no variety of expression--she herself had no sense of variety ... She was always a lady, certainly, and into the bargain was always the same lady. She was the real thing, but always the same thing ... I found myself trying to invent types that approached her own, instead of making her own transform itself...." (p.180) Prizing character above all other elements, the painter refuses to be ridden by a generalized type. What his aristocratic model is unable to provide--that quality of variety and range--his regular model supplies instinctively: "...the value of such a model as

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Miss Churm resided precisely in the fact that she had no positive stamp ... what she did have was a curious and inexplicable talent for imitation. Her usual appearance was like a curtain which she could draw up at request for a capital performance. This performance was ... suggestive...." (p.180) The theater metaphor indicates that what is required of any artist--whether it be a painter or his model--is the ability to stand outside himself,[198] to view his creation with the necessary sense of objective distance. While this task is virtually impossible for the Major and his wife, Miss Churm prides herself on the conviction that "she could sit for characters that had nothing in common with each other." (p.181) It is this gift of detachment which marks the success or failure of any artistic venture.

That the artist must pay dearly if he persists in his foolish and sentimental decision to retain the aristocratic couple as models is made clear by a painter friend who insists: "Ce sont des gens qu'il faut mettre à la porte." (p.186) It is evident from James's comments in the Notebooks[199] that his tale hinges upon the final decision arrived at by the hero. Threatened with the loss of a commission to illustrate other novels by the same publisher, the painter is forced to tell the Monarchs the sad truth: "Oh my dear Major--I can't be ruined for you!" (p.189) What he comes to realize, in effect, is the necessity of illusion in art,[200] the requisite freedom of the imagination to transform literal reality into a more meaningful, subjective "general impression." The painter is disturbed that the elderly couple failed to

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"read with me the moral of our fruitless collaboration, the lesson that in the deceptive atmosphere of art even the highest respectability may fail of being plastic." (p.189) It is this plastic or pictorial quality, as James suggests in his Notebook entry, which distinguishes mediocre from superior art. Although the painter is distressed by "the perverse and cruel law in virtue of which the real thing could be so much less precious than the unreal" (p.191), he eventually submits to this aesthetic principle and thereby rescues his art from mediocrity.

The Psychology of Art--The Portrait Theme:

To the art critic who had claimed that there was no greater work of art than a fine portrait, the desire to embody this truth in a fictional context was only natural. Having admired, as did Gabriel Nash, the dual capacity of the portrait to reveal both the sitter and the painter simultaneously, James saw the advantages, psychologically speaking, which would accrue from the application of this theme to his fiction.

According to Miriam Allott, James's interest in the portrait theme manifests itself in four distinct variations: "...he may be preoccupied with the artist himself (Roderick Hudson, 1875; The Tragic Muse, 1890; "The Real Thing," 1893); he may be interested in it as the pivot for a plot ("The Story of a Masterpiece," 1868; "The Tone of Time," 1900; "The Beldonald Holbein," 1901); he may be concerned with it as a device for telling us more about the personality of one of the characters ("The Liar," 1888; "The Wheel of Time," 1893); or,

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finally, he may be attempting the tricky psychological study of emotional tension between the artist and his sitter (The Sense of the Past)."[201] While one need not strictly adhere to these distinctions--several shorter tales and longer novels present these elements in combination--they do serve as a convenient starting point from which to proceed to a deeper investigation of the actual manifestation of this theme in a sampling of James's fiction.

"The Story of a Masterpiece" (1868) represents one of James's earliest fictional treatments of the portrait theme. The painting is here treated as an integral part of the plot, determining the course of events and providing the motivation behind the actions of the various characters. The story concerns the engagement of John Lennox, a widower, to Miss Marian Everett, a woman of extreme beauty and alluring charm. Lennox, a connoisseur of the fine arts, pays a visit to his painter-friend Gilbert, who is absent from his studio, and discovers his associate, Stephen Baxter, standing before a large portrait which the latter has fancifully entitled "My Last Duchess" after Browning's poem. Lennox is immediately struck by the resemblance between this supposedly imaginary figure and his own fiancée: "As Lennox inspected her face it seemed to reveal a hidden likeness to a face he well knew -- the face of Marian Everett ... The longer Lennox looked at the picture the more he liked it, and the deeper seemed to be the correspondence between the lady's expression and that with which he had invested the heroine of Browning's lines. The less accidental, too, seemed that element which Marian's

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face and the face on the canvas possessed in common."[202] After seeing a photograph of Marian, Baxter admits to having met her in Europe, but denies that his portrait is solely based upon her facial features. Receiving this confession of faith with mixed emotions, Lennox hits upon the idea of having Baxter paint her portrait as a kind of engagement present.

The omniscient narrator of the tale interrupts the action at this point in order to provide the reader with background information concerning the true nature of the relationship existing between the painter and his sitter. It turns out that Marian and Baxter had been more than platonic with one another; although the former had promised to marry the painter after he had made his fortune, Baxter discovered that she had been intimate with two other young men besides himself. Seeing the fickleness and baseness of her character, Baxter gave her up and departed. Now that fate has reunited them, albeit as painter and subject, these incidents once again rise to the surface. Lennox catches a glimpse of the nearly finished portrait of Marian Everett and is immediately struck by the "brutality" and "actuality" of the image. Persuaded to wait until the picture has been completed, he suspends his judgment for a few hours. Greeted with the news that the work is ready for his inspection, Lennox at first concedes that he has misjudged the painter's efforts: "...it now impressed him as an original and powerful work, a genuine portrait, the deliberate image of a human face and figure. It was Marian, in very truth, and Marian most patiently measured and observed. Her beauty was there, her sweetness, and her young loveliness and her aerial grace, imprisoned forever,

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made inviolable and perpetual." (p.112) Gradually, however, he begins to see in the portrait more than he had bargained for:

> It was his Marian, assuredly, with all that had charmed him--with all that still charmed him when he saw her ... And yet, as he looked, an expression of pain came into his eyes, and lingered there, and grew into a mortal heaviness ... It seemed to Lennox that some strange potent agency had won from his mistress the confession of her inmost soul, and had written it there upon the canvas in firm yet passionate lines. Marian's person was lightness--her charm was lightness; could it be that her soul was levity too? Was she a creature without faith and without conscience? What else was the meaning of that horrible blankness and deadness that quenched the light in her eyes and stole away the smile from her lips? ... Had Baxter been a man of marvellous insight--an unparalleled observer; or had he been a mere patient and unflinching painter, building infinitely better than he knew? Would not a mere painter have been content to paint Miss Everett in the strong, rich, objective manner of which the work was so good an example, and to do nothing more? For it was evident that Baxter had done more. He had painted with something more than knowledge--with imagination, with feeling. He had almost composed; and his composition had embraced the truth. (p.113)

In his use of the portrait to reveal the true personality of the sitter, James has appropriated a device which Hawthorne had used to great effect in several of his shorter and longer works. But James criticized Hawthorne for his abuse of allegory and cosmic symbolism, insisting that too direct or blunt a utilization of an image would ultimately negate the significance which the author wished to attribute to the subject.[203] Although in this early tale he still retained the basic formula inherited from his predecessor, James veered away from Hawthorne's mythic or supernatural approach, preferring instead to keep the significance of the painted image

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on a strictly personal, human level.[204]

James's concession to Hawthorne--and the Romantic portrait tradition as a whole--was to make the creator of the work of art an individual endowed with special powers of perception. Baxter, as Lennox surmised, was more than a mere observer of life; his knowledge was not of the ordinary sort; he had perceived a truth which remained hidden from the eyes of others and had posited this realization in his portrait of Marian Everett. As Winner has rightly concluded, "...artists are extremely useful to James as narrators or characters whose point of view is adopted. At the same time that they take impressions of the physical world, they see deeply into characters and human motives. They have the painter's special perspicacity which makes them sensitive to the inner life as well as to physical beauty...."[205] Where James contributes a distinctly original touch, however, is in the added dimension whereby the portrait also serves as a reflection of the artist's own temperament; it becomes a record, not only of the sitter, but of the creator of the portrait as well. Merely suggested in the present tale, this identification of the artist with the portrait assumes a central role in "The Sweetheart of M. Briseux" (1873).[206] Whereas in the latter story the painter's shallow character is disclosed by means of the portrait he paints of his beloved, in the present tale the narrator attempts to vindicate the artist of any wrongdoing: "Stephen [Baxter] had been so innocent of any other design than that of painting a good portrait, that his conscience failed to reveal to him the source of his companion's trouble ... His

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only concern had been to do his work well; and he had done it the better because of his old interest in Marian's bewitching face ... The artistic half of Baxter's nature exerted a lusty dominion over the human half--fed upon its disappointments and grew fat upon its joys and tribulations ... his genius had held communion with his heart and had transferred to canvas the burden of its disenchantment and its resignation." (pp.114-15) Despite this fact, Lennox chooses to see in the portrait the contempt of the artist for his former love: "Now I know what I didn't like in your picture--the point of view ... You loved her, she was indifferent to you, and now you take your revenge." (p.116) Baxter, wishing to justify his artistic efforts, holds fast to the technical merits of the finished portrait: "How have I perverted Miss Everett's expression? How have I misrepresented her? What does the portrait lack? Is it ill-drawn? Is it vulgar? Is it ambiguous? Is it immodest?" (p.116) Unable to deny the painter's claims, Lennox confronts Marian with his suspicions: "He saw you as he fancied you--as he wished you; and he has given you a little look of what he imagines moral loveliness, which comes within an ace of spoiling the picture." (p.118) Marian, who had seen nothing of her soul in the finished portrait, now realizes that the suspicion planted in her lover's mind can never be eradicated.

Despite his growing awareness of Marian's true character, Lennox refuses to break the engagement. He decides to have the portrait framed and placed on exhibit for a few days. During a visit to the exhibition room, he finds Baxter with Sarah, the painter's own fiancée, both of whom are deeply en-

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grossed in Marian's portrait. The images of the two women gives Lennox a basis for comparison: "[Sarah] had brought her head into almost immediate juxtaposition with that of Marian's image, and, for a moment, the freshness and the strong animation which bloomed upon her features seemed to obliterate the lines and colors on the canvas. But the next moment, as Lennox looked, the roseate circle of Marian's face blazed into remorseless distinctness, and her careless blue eyes looked with cynical familiarity into his own." (p.120) The extent to which Lennox has changed in his original estimation of Marian Everett is dramatically presented by means of another painting, Baxter's "My Last Duchess", which Lennox coincidentally finds hanging on a wall of the same exhibition room: "He stood amazed. Was this the face and figure that, a month ago, had reminded him of his mistress? Where was the likeness now? It was as utterly absent as if it had never existed." (pp.120-21)

On the eve of his wedding day, the portrait is delivered to Lennox's library. Seeing her image in the last faint rays of the setting sun, Lennox exclaims: "...Marian may be what God has made her; but this detestable creature I can neither love nor respect!" (p.122) Foreshadowing the actions of Wilde's hero by almost twenty-three years, Lennox determines to destroy the portrait: "He looked about him with an angry despair, and his eye fell on a long, keen poinard, given him by a friend who had bought it in the East, and which lay as an ornament on his mantel-shelf. He seized it and thrust it, with barbarous glee, straight into the lovely face of the

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image. He dragged it downward, and made a long fissure in the living canvas. Then, with half a dozen strokes, he wantonly hacked it across. The act afforded him an immense relief." (p.122) Although the narrator subsequently informs the reader that the marriage was, in fact, consummated, it is clearly suggested that the destruction of the portrait can do little to change the course of events of Lennox's fate. Like his counterpart, Colonel Capadose, the subject of an unflattering portrait in "The Liar" (1888), Lennox wishes to ignore the truth which the painted image has placed before his conscience.

To turn from this early tale to James's posthumous novel, The Sense of the Past (1917), is to measure the degree to which James refined his use of the portrait theme in fiction. Although the portrait still serves as the central focus of the action, determining both the course of events and the motives of the characters, it is now integrated in a manner which discloses James's greater interest in the psychological undercurrents and ramifications of the work of art. As Tintner has suggested, "when the Bonzino [sic] in The Wings of the Dove and the ancestor portrait in The Sense of the Past become agents of the peripety of action, one invokes Wilde's Dorian Grey [sic] rather than Hawthorne."[207] James has clearly abandoned the allegorical mode (e.g., Gabriel Nash's fading portrait in The Tragic Muse symbolizes the evanescence of his artistic and philosophical theories) and has entered the realm of psychology in art.

The sequence of events surrounding the portrait are rather straightforward. Ralph Pendrel, an American residing

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in New York, is bequeathed a London townhouse in Mansfield Square by one of his British relations. The hero's passion for all things ancient or historic ultimately leads him to settle in England. It is his fervent hope that the sense of the past will somehow be preserved in this stately old structure. Possessed of an intellectual frame of mind, Ralph Pendrel longs to recapture the past. In a rather Proustian passage, James describes his hero's desire

> ...to remount the stream of time, really to bathe in its upper and more natural waters, to risk even, as he might say, drinking of them.... He was by the turn of his spirit oddly indifferent to the actual and the possible; his interest was all in the spent and the displaced.... If his idea in fine was to recover the lost moment, to feel the stopped pulse, it was to do so as experience, in order to be again consciously the creature that had been, to breathe as he had breathed and feel the pressure that he had felt ... What he wanted himself was the very smell of that simpler mixture of things that had so long served; he wanted the very tick of the old stopped clocks.... He wanted the unimaginable accidents, the little notes of truth for which the common lens of history ... was not sufficiently fine.... It was for the old ghosts to take him for one of themselves. [208]

In this concluding sentence, James carefully prepares for the supernatural turn of events which is to follow. This is likewise conveyed by the hero's reaction to the portraits in Mansfield Square: "He would have been particularly grateful for a portrait [of his late cousin]; but though there were in the house other framed physiognomies, these were things--and not unluckily either!--of a different order of reference, an order in which the friendly photographer ... played no part." (pp.45-6) Following the manner of the Gothic or Romantic portrait tradition,[209] James endows these

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ancestral portraits with an eerie, animated quality: "... they had alike that prime and sufficient property of the old portrait--they had ... their more or less attaching 'look' to give out. They had in short those painted eyes for the particular purpose of following their friend as he moved ... They all had somehow the art of going further than he had ever perceived such a company ... to coincide in going." (pp. 70-71) Like his predecessor Dorian Gray, Ralph Pendrel is shortly to be confronted with the inexplicable.

In a recessed parlor, removed from the rest of the house and the other ancestral portraits, Ralph comes across a rather unusual portrait: "...this work, prominent in its place over the mantel, depicted a personage who simply appeared to have sought to ignore our friend's appeal by turning away his face. This it was that constituted the prodigy, for Ralph had truly never seen a gentleman painted, and painted beautifully, in so thankless a posture." (p.72) The hero's morbid curiosity[210] leads him to speculate as to the reason for the sitter's averted face. Stressing the fact that the anonymous subject of the portrait has turned his head <u>within</u> the picture, Pendrel formulates the theory "that when one wasn't there the figure looked as figures in portraits inveterately look, somewhere in the room, and that this miraculous shift, the concealment of feature and identity, took place only when one's step drew near." (p.73) He ultimately concludes that the sitter, rather than the artist, must have wished to minimize his resemblance to another person and, failing to persuade the artist not to paint his portrait at

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all, resorted to this tactic as a last-ditch effort to conceal his true identity from the onlooker.

Gradually, Ralph Pendrel perceives some link or bond uniting his fate with that of the gentleman in the portrait. That this painted image is more than just a flat, lifeless surface of pigment becomes clear to the hero: "His companion on the wall indescribably lived, and yet lived only to cheat him ... painted as people are always painted, the subject would have had something to say to him ... He had somehow lost a friend by the perversity of the posture--he was so sure of the friend he should have gained had the face been presented." (p.75) What Ralph envies most of all, the narrator suggests, is his inability to enter the world of the sitter, to indulge himself in the cherished past which the portrait's trappings evoke:

> It was enough to say for this gentleman's close compact dark curls, for his long straight neck, which emerged from a high stock and rolled collar, for the fall of his shoulder and the cut of his dark-green sleeve, from the way his handsome left hand, folding easily over a pair of grey gloves, rested its knuckles on his hip and conveyed the impression of a beaver, of the earliest years of the century, held out of view in the right-- ... that they provoked to irritation the desire for others. He was a son of his time, and his time was the dawn of the modern era--which, bringing him to that extent within range, made it more of an offence to curiosity so to have missed him ... The practical snub to poor Ralph was thus that he looked away into a world of his own--off into the dark backward that at once so challenged and so escaped his successor. (pp.76,78)

Awakening and finding himself in total darkness, Ralph lights a candlestick and takes a final tour of the house he is to inhabit. Seeing a reflection of his own candle flame,

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yet knowing that no mirror exists, he is inexplicably drawn to the recessed parlor on whose wall the mysterious portrait hangs. There he discovers a truth beyond his wildest imaginings: "He was staring at the answer to the riddle that had been his obsession, but this answer was a wonder of wonders. The young man above the mantel, the young man brown-haired, pale, erect, with the high-collared dark blue coat, the young man revealed, responsible, conscious, quite shining out of the darkness, presented him the face he had prayed to reward his vigil; but the face--miracle of miracles, yes--confounded him as his own." (p.86)

It is from this point onwards that James's subtle treatment of the portrait theme comes to the fore. Ralph Pendrel and the mysterious gentleman who so closely resembles him exchange identities, i.e., Ralph actually steps inside the picture frame and enters the past, while his counterpart assumes the hero's identity in the present (the future, to the English gentleman). The balance of the novel deals with Ralph's growing realization that his attempt to live in the past and gain the acceptance of his eighteenth-century relations[211] is doomed to failure. He becomes a prisoner of his own dream. What James is here attempting is a study of the self or, even better, of the multiple selves within each of us. As Miriam Allott suggests, "the portrait is now used, like the 'ghosts' of this period, to explore the idea of the alter ego and the might-have-been with a new urgency and an unusual concentration of emotion."[212]

Although James never completed the novel, the "Notes"

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(pp.285-351) which he dictated provide a deeper insight into the uses to which he had hoped to put the portrait theme. In order to dramatize the severity of Pendrel's plight, his utter helplessness in the past, James insists upon the complete identification of the man in the portrait with his hero: "Ralph, I say, in entering the house then walks at a step straight into 1820 and, closing the door behind him, shuts out everything to which he has hitherto belonged. He is from that minute, to his own eyes and all his own faculties, the young man in the portrait, the young man we have seen advance to him that night of his vigil in the drawing-room." (pp.296-7) To intensify his torture, moreover, James permits his hero to have a total recall of the present he has left. He somehow senses that, in the agreement to exchange places with his other self, he has come off worse: "...it's as if the man of 1820, the Pendrel of that age, is having so much better a time in the modern, that is in the Future, than he is having in the present, his Present, which is the Past, that a chill and a fear, the growth of a despair and a terror, drop upon him from it and signify somehow that he must begin to feel himself lost." (pp.305-6) But for all this to have tragic significance rather than mere pathos, James insists that his hero has devised his own perfect torture: "...though the man of 1820 has drawn the man of 1910 ... back into his own age, while the latter has drawn the former forward into his, though I do this, I take care, I soigner the effect that Ralph had begun it, has exerted the original force, has been the determinant for the other and thrust at him his opportu-

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nity." (p.323) And, indeed, Ralph is guilty of a Faustian striving after the impossible. His earlier theory ("It was when life was framed in death that the picture was really hung up" [p.47]) receives an ironic application, for, as David W. Beams observes, "In the work of art the young man refines himself out of existence.... Ralph's eventual experience is life in death, the death of a sculptured, decided past in which the living mind must exist and work. As the man in the portrait can no longer turn, ... the punishment exactly fits the crime."[213]

Where James saw a chance to truly experiment with the portrait theme was in the psychological interplay between the sitter and the artist who originally painted the portrait, i.e., in the growing awareness of the latter that his subject might be other than a man of his own time. In other words, James wished to examine "the question or no of whether the portrait, the portrait <u>in</u> the house in 1910, is done from Ralph in 1820 or not, done from Ralph himself, or accounted for, as coming into existence afterwards." (p.335) Weighing these two possibilities, James wisely concluded that the former chain of events would yield the greatest possible psychological complexity. He then hit upon the brilliant device of communicating Ralph Pendrel's sense of uneasiness to the painter of the portrait, "the painter who gets, doesn't one fancy? into a much straighter and closer 'psychologic' and perceptive and mystified and mixed relation with his remarkable subject than any of the others in <u>their</u> way do. I get the painter-man as affected in his way too with the famous malaise...." (p.337)

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By the same token, the painter's growing suspicion of his subject is subsequently communicated to Ralph himself, "putting him on his guard against this latter, rendering him uneasy ... under the painter's study of him." (p.337) James makes it perfectly clear, however, that he will not resort to any of the Hawthornian devices he had used in the past: "I don't want to repeat what I have done at least a couple of times, I seem to remember, and notably in "The Liar"--the 'discovery,' or the tell-tale representation of an element in the sitter written clear by the artist's projection of it on canvas." (p.338) He is much more concerned with the psychological interaction between the painter and his sitter at the moment the portrait is being painted. James's true subject, one might conclude, is consciousness,[214] Ralph Pendrel's narcissistic infatuation with his own image. As Stephen Spender has written, "in the account of the portrait, a continual series of transformations is suggested, by which the six months of Ralph's visit to the eighteenth century is made perpetually recurrent, because when he is attracted by the portrait he is attracted by himself, and, when he is stepping into the eighteenth century, he is repeating an action which he must already have made before, in order that the portrait should have been painted."[215] It was precisely this labyrinthine maze or cyclical effect which James had hoped to convey to the reader by means of the portrait theme. Although it was never completed, The Sense of the Past displays James's original and inventive insights into a traditional subject. His handling of the portrait in terms of an in-depth exploration of the psyche of the sitter

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and its effect upon the artist, as well as his creation of a truly supernatural yet convincing atmosphere of historicity, has led Newton Arvin to conclude that "no writer ever made use of this emblem more richly, more delicately, or with finer witchery of interfused 'reality' and uncanniness."[216]

Whereas in the two works just discussed the portrait remains the center around which all the action revolves, James also made use of the portrait theme in a much more understated yet symbolically powerful manner. In his longer novels, especially those belonging to the later phase, symbolic scenes involving the confrontation of one or more characters with a fictitous or real portrait serve to underscore or reinforce the major theme of the novel and, more important, to bring the observer(s) to a moment of inner awareness and self-realization regarding his or her past and future actions.

Milly Theale, the heroine of The Wings of the Dove, experiences just such a symbolic moment of revelation when she confronts the Bronzino portrait of an Italian noblewoman at Matcham, a country estate outside London, to which she has been brought as a guest. "Have you seen the picture in the house, the beautiful one that's so like you?" asks Lord Mark, her host and guide.[217] Milly's response discloses the fact that art has, up to this point, merely served her as a pleasurable viewing experience: "I've been through rooms and I've seen pictures. But if I'm 'like' anything so beautiful as most of them seemed to me--!" (XI,156) Convinced that "she was the image of the wonderful Bronzino, which she must have a look at on every ground" (XI,156), Lord Mark leads her

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through a maze of galleries and chambers, during which time Milly reflects upon her good fortune. Earlier, she had compared the festive scene at Matcham with the works of a painter equally adept at portraying the revels of aristocratic society: "The great historic house had, for Milly, beyond terrace and garden, as the centre of an almost extravagantly grand Watteau-composition, a tone as of old gold kept 'down' by the quality of the air, summer full-flushed, but attuned to the general perfect taste." (X,150) Summoning all his descriptive talents, James conveys a sense of Milly's fascination and wonder at the cultural and social scene presented to her view; the stress is upon the freshness of her response, the youth and promise her future holds out to her. It is this "high-water mark of the imagination" (X,151) that Milly recalls as she wends her way to the Bronzino portrait: "Once more things melted together--the beauty and the history and the facility and the splendid midsummer glow: it was a sort of magnificent maximum, the pink dawn of an apotheosis, coming so curiously soon." (XI,158) The stage has been set for her moment of revelation:

> ...she found herself, for the first moment, looking at the mysterious portrait through tears. Perhaps it was her tears that made it just then so strange and fair--as wonderful as he had said: the face of a young woman, all magnificently drawn, down to the hands, and magnificently dressed; a face almost livid in hue, yet handsome in sadness and crowned with a mass of hair rolled back and high, that must, before fading with time, have had a family resemblance to her own. The lady in question, at all events, with her slightly Michelangelesque squareness, her eyes of other days, her full lips, her long neck, her recorded jewels, her brocaded and wasted reds, was a very great personage--only unaccompanied by a joy. And she was dead, dead, dead. Milly recognised her exactly in words that had nothing to do with her. "I shall never be better than this."
>
> (XI, 158-9)

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The various interpretations which this last phrase has elicited points to the fundamental ambiguity of the words themselves. A rather literal and superficial reading by F.O. Matthiessen suggests that "the poignance lies in the sense that none of this will last. Even as Milly looks, she realizes that the joyless lady on the canvas is 'dead, dead, dead'; and the words reverberate for us as an omen of her own future."[218] That this is clearly not the sole or most important interpretation of the scene has been pointed out by more than one critic.[219] To suggest, as Laurence B. Holland does, that art and death are synonymous[220] totally fails to take into account James's lifelong preoccupation with art as an ennobling and enriching experience. Milly Theale's statement, "I shall never be better than this," is ambiguous because the reader cannot be certain as to what "this" refers. Lord Mark, assuming that the portrait of the noblewoman is intended, responds: "Than she? You'd scarce need to be better, for surely that's well enough. But you <u>are</u>, one feels, as it happens, better; because, splendid as she is, one doubts if she was good." (XI,159) To which Milly sadly notes: "He hadn't understood." What she has finally come to realize is, of course, her own mortality and the undeniable evanescence and transience of life. But, more important still, the portrait has given her the necessary strength and conviction to make the most of the life which still lies ahead, to "live, live all you can," as Lambert Strether urges Little Bilham in <u>The Ambassadors</u>. Because she suspects that her days are numbered, Milly looks to the portrait for support and comfort. As she tells her "friend" Kate

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Croy, who has come upon her before the Bronzino, "'...I can go for a long time.' Milly spoke with her eyes again on her painted sister's--almost as if under their suggestion." (XI,164) Instead of using art as an escape or retreat from life, as Tintner suggests,[221] James's heroine is made aware of life's greater possibilities through her encounter with the portrait. It is a double-edged truth which the image conveys, pointing as it does both to the mortality (i.e., insignificance) of the viewer and, at the same time, embodying the hope that the individual may achieve a degree of immortality (i.e., significance) through art. Having received very little exposure to great art, Milly determines to pursue the secret which this portrait has revealed to her. She recognizes, in a subsequent visit to the National Gallery, that

> there were possible great chances she had neglected, possible great moments she should, save for to-day, have all but missed. She might still, she had felt, overtake one or two of them among the Titians and the Turners; she had been honestly nursing the hour, and, once she was in the benignant halls, her faith knew itself justified. It was the air she wanted and the world she would now exclusively choose; the quiet chambers, nobly overwhelming, rich but slightly veiled, opened out round her and made her presently say "If I could lose myself here!" ... She really knew before long that what held her was the mere refuge, that something within her was after all too weak for the Turners and Titians. They joined hands about her in a circle too vast, though a circle that a year before she would only have desired to trace. They were truly for the larger, not for the smaller life.... (XVI,205-6)

Despite her sense of intimidation in the face of this higher realm, this finer, more refined ordering of life, it is precisely the larger life which Milly is determined to experience. As Bowden has written, "The quality of escape and refuge which

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she finds there is a personal response drawn from her consciousness of the physical doom awaiting her, but the quality of the larger life suggested by the arts is one with which James was always concerned. The full weight of James's own view of the arts is pressing on Milly Theale."[222] Although she finds the burden oppressive at first, James's heroine accepts this revelation of a higher truth and attempts to apply it to her own existence.

A knowledge of James's view of individual artists and styles sheds additional light upon the symbolic import of this scene. As mentioned earlier, Milly had compared the social and cultural setting at Matcham with a Watteau composition. The note of gaiety and carefree pleasure evident in this painter's idealized renderings of aristocratic society therefore serves as a dramatic contrast or counterpoint to what will follow. "Coming after the Watteau image," writes Winner, "which conjures up a delicious imaginary world exempt from time and pain, good and evil, the Bronzino becomes a symbol of mortality; the elegance and splendor incompletely mask an all-pervading sadness and sense of mutability."[223] It is in this context, therefore, that one is to understand Milly's description of the sitter's face as "handsome in sadness" and the fact that despite "her recorded jewels, her brocaded and wasted reds," this very great personage was "unaccompanied by a joy." (XI,159) James's choice of a Bronzino portrait, moreover, reflects a conscious effort on his part to heighten the sense of tension and uneasiness to which Milly Theale's tears bear witness as she stands before the portrait. More im-

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portant than the identification of the specific work alluded to in the novel[224] is an awareness of the stylistic traits which are reflected in Bronzino's portraits as a whole. When Matthiessen suggests that James wished to identify his heroine with a Renaissance princess,[225] purportedly because that was a period in art which James held in the highest esteem, he fails to consider the psychological ramifications which such an identification ultimately produces. According to Winner,

> In selecting a Bronzino portrait rather than... a Titian or a Vandyke, James again reveals his sensitivity to overtone and his preference for the full-fed statement. A Titian portrait would suggest splendor, and a Vandyke, elegance and refinement, but with neither could Milly so readily have identified ... the painting is not just a representation of a distinguished, cultivated, elegant woman ... there is a tautness in the fingers, a slight strain in the posture, giving an impression of repressed inner agitation; the repose is qualified by the imperfectly hidden tension. Almost all of Bronzino's subjects have this air of strain, reserve, containment ... Typically mannerist, Bronzino's figures are elongated and distorted, his subjects appear overgraceful and ascetic, worldly and spiritual, elegant and sad....[226]

What better way, therefore, to dramatize the inner conflict in Milly's soul--her knowledge of the ultimate fate that awaits her and her wish to make the most of life--than to choose a visual symbol which embodies these very elements of spiritual uneasiness and mental strain. It is this psychological insight, the perfect balance achieved between Milly's mood and that of her visual counterpart, which marks James's masterful use of the portrait theme in this novel. The Bronzino portrait in The Wings of the Dove, coming as the first in a series of revelations[227] which Milly Theale must undergo, serves as the central symbol of the novel, one which

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ultimately leads the heroine to a level of self-awareness beyond which she can only hope for the release offered by death.

The last example of the portrait theme to be analyzed in the present chapter offers, in this writer's opinion, the most unique and mystifying treatment of the subject in all of James's fiction. One is referring, of course, to the scene involving the painting of a man holding a mask in The Sacred Fount, perhaps the most difficult (and perplexing) of James's novels. In addition to a book-length study of this work,[228] countless articles in periodicals and chapters in books have attempted to fathom the meaning of this highly allusive and suggestive narrative. While all interpretations can be made to "fit" the sequence of events, few critics have devoted more than a passing glance to the crucial scene involving the central characters and the mysterious portrait of the man in black. Yet it is this scene, more than any other, which provides the reader with some point of reference by which to judge the actions of the protagonist.

The incidents leading up to the encounter with the portrait can be outlined as follows: the anonymous narrator, along with several other individuals, has been invited to spend a weekend at a country estate, Newmarch, outside London. While boarding the train which will take him to this retreat, he recognizes Gilbert Long, whom he had previously met at Newmarch. Long decides to join the narrator in his compartment and also persuades Grace Brissenden, with whom the narrator is likewise acquainted, to form the third member of their party. In the course of their conversations, the nar-

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rator is struck by the apparent changes in both his travelling companions: Gilbert Long has somehow gained an intellectual suavity and penchant for witty conversation which the narrator had never previously noticed; Grace Brissenden, for her part, has somehow managed to look more youthful than ever. The narrator slowly begins to suspect that some secret bond or union exists between these individuals and their companions, whether lovers or spouses, which enables them to retain their respective qualities of intellect and youth. This vampire motif was suggested to James by Stopford Brooke. In the Notebook entry for February 17, 1894, James outlined the possibilities inherent in such a subject:

> The notion of the young man who marries an older woman and who has the effect on her of making her younger and still younger, while he himself becomes her age. When he reaches the age that she was (on their marriage), she has gone back to the age that he was. --Mightn't this be altered (perhaps) to the idea of cleverness and stupidity? A clever woman marries a deadly dull man, and loses and loses her wit as he shows more and more. Or the idea of a liaison, suspected, but of which there is no proof but this transfusion of some idiosyncrasy of one party to the being of the other--this exchange or conversion? The fact, the secret, of the liaison might be revealed in that way. The two things--the two elements--beauty and "mind," might be correspondingly, concomitantly exhibited as in the history of two related couples--with the opposition, in each case, that would help the thing to be dramatic. [229]

Five years subsequent to this entry James again took up the subject, adding: "I see 2 couples. One is married--this is the old-young pair. I watch their process, and it gives me my light for the spectacle of the other (covert, obscure, unavowed) pair who are not married."[230] These two notebook entries, plus a few cryptic letters addressed to befuddled

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correspondents, are the only clues which James provided to discover the meaning behind his novel.

Despite the difference of opinion on the question of the exact meaning of the work, most critics are in agreement that the anonymous narrator is possessed of some artistic drive and therefore represents the artistic temperament in action.[231] The narrator's language, for example, is couched in a painterly terminology replete with suggestive metaphors and vivid imagery. Wondering why the formerly dull-witted Long was invited to Newmarch, the narrator remarks: "He was a fine piece of human furniture...."[232] This comparison serves as a clue to the narrator's character; he (like Gilbert Osmond in The Portrait of a Lady) tends to think of human beings in terms of inanimate artistic possessions. While some of the narrator's remarks are meant to lend credence to his artistic undertaking and remain rather neutral or innocuous ("A couple of hours thus passed, and fresh accessions enriched the picture." [II,13]), others are charged with a much more sinister import: "It took me but a minute to add [Guy Brissenden] to my little gallery--the small collection, I mean, represented by his wife and by Gilbert Long, as well as in some degree doubtless also by Lady John: the museum of those who put to me with such intensity the question of what had happened to them." (II,22) This museum metaphor clearly places the narrator in the negative position of a collector of human subjects which he dilettantishly regards as art objects. As Tintner has suggested, "The man who worships art exclusively will, in adjusting people to his museum scale of values, destroy their freedom."[233]

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When the narrator subsequently places himself in the role of a human sculptor ("I felt as if (Guy Brissenden) were now, intellectually speaking, plastic wax in my hand" [VII,126]), he is committing an act which James--and Hawthorne before him--considered the most heinous of crimes: taking possession of the soul of another individual. It is this manipulation of other individuals, this arranging and placement of human beings in vacuo, which tends to throw a shadow over the narrator's aesthetic musings. His wish to comprehend the nature of the personal relationships existing between two couples at Newmarch has as its overriding concern, not the welfare of those involved (although the narrator certainly displays a great deal of compassion), but the legitimacy of his artistic theory of the "sacred fount," the source from which one member of the pair has gained in youth or intellect. As the narrator finally admits, "...the only personal privilege I could, after all, save from the whole business was that of understanding ... I wasn't there to save them. I was there to save my priceless pearl of an enquiry and to harden, to that end, my heart." (XIII,273,296) While James had shown that compassion in and of itself cannot lead to good art--witness "The Real Thing"--to remove the human element from an artistic inquiry was equally damaging to the artistic temperament; the creation of art, in any form, must always remain tied to the human values which it necessarily embodies.

That the narrator is an observer rather than a practicing artist does not detract from his potential ability to perceive truths hidden from other individuals. James even provides

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him with a foil in the figure of Ford Obert, a painter, who is likewise a guest at Newmarch. As Winner rightly concludes, "The intellectual kinship between the narrator and the painter signifies that the narrator's quest is essentially the same as any artist's. Through this identification of the painter with the observant and, in this instance, obsessively percipient being, James suggests that creativity and perception are closely connected."[234] It is in this light, moreover, that the narrator views his ally; he sees him, ironically, as the observer-half of the team ("...his experience of every sort of facial accident, of human sign, made him just the touchstone I wanted...." [II,28]), although he does concede that Obert possesses the practical understanding of the visual arts which he lacks("'I only talk,' I returned, 'as you paint; not a bit worse!...'" [II,30]). That the narrator, like the introspective hero of "The Madonna of the Future," fancies that he can go beyond the theoretical and cross over to the creative is evidenced by his statement: "To see all this was at the time, I remember, to be as inhumanly amused as if one had found one could create something. I had created nothing but a clue or two to the larger comprehension I still needed, yet I positively found myself overtaken by a mild artistic glow." (VI,104). Or, at another point: "...I struck myself as knowing again the joy of intellectual mastery of things unamenable, that joy of determining, almost of creating results, which I have already mentioned as an exhilaration attached to some of my plunges of insight." (XI,214) His efforts, however, remain totally cerebral; the narrator

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places the emphasis of his undertaking upon thought rather than action ("...for real excitement there are no such adventures as intellectual ones" [XI,214]) and remains a passive observer of the scene at Newmarch rather than the active participant which his comments tend to suggest.[235]

Instead of speaking of "authentic" versus "inauthentic" artist,[236] it is best to view Ford Obert's role in the novel as a visual aid to understanding for the narrator. As Parker Tyler has suggested, "his is the aesthetic reaction of one visually sensitive and perceptive."[237] While he does not fully accept the narrator's theory of the sacred fount, he provides moral support for the latter's quest and, more important, he supplies visual clues as well. One of the narrator's prime subjects for observation among the guests at Newmarch is May Server, whose portrait, the reader discovers, had been painted by Ford Obert on several occasions. Searching for a "victim" from whose sacred fount Gilbert Long has derived his intellectual charm, the narrator is surprized to learn from Obert that Mrs. Server is "different from herself--as she was when I painted her. There's something the matter with her." (IV,62) That "something" is evident in her restlessness, her flitting about from one group of guests to another. "She used to be so calm," Mrs. Brissenden tells the narrator, "--as if she were always sitting for her portrait. Wasn't she in fact always being painted in a pink frock and one row of pearls, always staring out at you in exhibitions...?" (V,75) Determined to discover whether or not May Server is, in fact, the donor in the transfer of qualities from herself

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to Long, the narrator decides to show her some portraits hanging in the art gallery at Newmarch. As he informs the reader, "I knew of some pictures in one of the rooms that had not been lighted the previous evening, and I made these my pretext for the effect I desired. I asked Mrs. Server if she wouldn't come and see them with me...." (IV,49) Noting the florid architecture of the gallery and "the faded pastels set, in rococo borders,[238] in the walls and constituting the distinction of the place" (IV,50), the narrator then makes the following critical observation vis-à-vis May Server's reaction to the gallery and its art-filled interior: "She was like an awestruck child; she might have been herself--all Greuze tints, all pale pinks and blues and pearly whites and candid eyes--an old dead pastel under glass." (IV,51) This statement, in addition to foreshadowing the narrator's reaction to the portrait of the man with the mask, is clearly damaging for precisely the same reasons several of his other remarks were incriminating: he has taken a living, breathing person and equated this individual with an inanimate work of art. His ability to divorce the human from the artistic contains a sinister note which is again sounded in his characterization of the aging Guy Brissenden, whom the narrator feels is the "victim" of his wife: "...there was something in a manner decorative even in Brissenden's wonted gloom. He reminded me at this hour more than ever of some fine old Velasquez or other portrait--a presentation of ugliness and melancholy that might have been royal." (IX,158) The import of such characterizations becomes even clearer in the narrator's

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reaction to the central visual image of the novel.

Discovering that Gilbert Long and Ford Obert have preceded them into the art gallery, the narrator and Mrs. Server are drawn to the painting before which Long has been discoursing. Although the narrator has heard no part of Gilbert Long's "aesthetic lecture," an occurrence which the former finds remarkable in itself, he admits to having viewed the subject of the talk on at least one previous occasion. Mrs. Server likewise confesses to a degree of familiarity with the work in question when she responds, "Oh yes, --the man with the mask in his hand!" (IV,54) Stressing the importance of this scene, the narrator comments: "It's the picture, of all pictures, that most needs an interpreter." (IV,55). There then follows the narrator's description of the portrait:[239]

> The figure represented is a young man in black--a quaint, tight black dress, fashioned in years long past; with a pale, lean, livid face and a stare, from eyes without eyebrows, like that of some whitened old-world clown. In his hand he holds an object that strikes the spectator at first simply as some obscure, some ambiguous work of art, but that on a second view becomes a representation of a human face, modelled and coloured, in wax, in enamelled metal, in some substance not human. The object thus appears a complete mask, such as might have been fantastically fitted and worn. (IV,55)

The rather explicit description of the painting has led several critics to attempt to determine the exact source of this image, hoping thereby to gain a clearer understanding of the symbolic import of the portrait. Apparently taking his cue from the narrator's mention of "some whitened old-world clown," Leon Edel speculates that "[James] is probably thinking of the clown seen as a boy in the Cirque d'Hiver and the

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Cirque d'Eté...."[240] While this autobiographical information is interesting, it sheds little or no light upon the actual meaning of the painting. Instead of thinking in terms of one particular clown, William Stein attempts to link this image to a larger iconographic tradition, viz. that of Pierrot. Considering this "farcical" scene before a portrait of "a music hall or circus performer," Stein traces the image back to its antecedents in the literature of the French Decadents and Symbolists, who, in turn, bequeathed the motif to their fin-de-siècle compatriots in England. According to Stein's description, Pierrot was traditionally "garbed in a white costume and a black skullcap; he wore a tight, twisted smile on his heavily powdered face that revealed and concealed a vision of corruption and death." After the French writers and poets had assimilated him into "a perverse poetics based on diseased love and beauty," however, "a black costume emerged as the signature of his identity." Stein therefore concludes that James's interpretation of the traditional image is that of "a grieving Pierrot who has been stricken by the horror of his own foresight. No longer is he able to offer the purgative of laughter as the vehicle of deliverance from folly and ignorance. He has become too absorbed in a vision of the wasteland of Western civilization."[241] While this interpretation certainly comes closer to suggesting the symbolic importance of the image in the larger framework of the novel, it fails to consider the significance of the various reactions which the other observers experience while standing before the portrait.

These reactions, in essence, are central to any under-

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standing of the motives which James imputes to his characters and, in particular, to the narrator himself. In response to the narrator's demand for an explanation of the image, Mrs. Server suggests: "One could call it--though that doesn't get one much further--the Mask of Death." (IV,55-6) To which the narrator replies: "'Isn't it much rather the Mask of Life? It's the man's own face that's Death. The other one, blooming and beautiful--' ... 'Ah, but with an awful grimace!' Mrs. Server broke in. 'The other one, blooming and beautiful,' I repeated, 'is Life, and he's going to put it on; unless indeed he has just taken it off.'" (IV,56) "He's dreadful, he's awful" insists Mrs. Server; the narrator, taking the opposite position, suggests that "the artificial face ... is extremely studied and, when you carefully look at it, charmingly pretty. I don't see the grimace." (IV,56) Mrs. Server, however, sees nothing but the smirk. The narrator subsequently identifies Mrs. Server's visage as identical with that of the mask. She retaliates by suggesting that the face of the man holding the mask resembles another member of the Newmarch circle. Ford Obert, after some deliberation, admits that he, too, finds a remarkable similarity between the two faces, but fails to come up with a specific name. It is Gilbert Long who finally fits the last piece in the puzzle by supplying the name of Guy Brissenden. (IV,57-8)

The significance of these identifications becomes apparent if one recalls that, according to the narrator's theory, both May Server, as the sacred fount for Gilbert Long's intellectual prowess, and Guy Brissenden, as the same

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receptacle for his wife's physical rejuvenation, are both identified with parts of the portrait in question. How Tintner, in an otherwise perceptive essay, can imply that the picture "can give no clues, for there is no link between it and the actors of the private drama,"[242] is beyond one's understanding. It is precisely because the portrait serves as a reflection, in microcosm, of the action of the entire novel that its significance is magnified to such a degree. The reactions of the characters are the sole clues the reader is given vis-à-vis their subjective feelings towards one another and with respect to the life represented by Newmarch society. May Server's interpretation of the mask as representing death and the human face as a reflection of life is usually accepted as the traditional reading of these symbols.[243] The narrator, on the other hand, is possessed of an artistic temperament; according to his reading of the image, therefore, it is that which is artificially created which is more perfect than ordinary reality--hence the mask represents life (and beauty) while the livid man's face is a symbol of death.

Depending upon whether one views the narrator's activities in a negative or positive light, much can be made of this life-death, mask-face symbolism. In the opinion of Blackall, both the mask and the face, according to May Server's implied interpretation, are symbols of death, for the pale and livid face is a symbol of Guy Brissenden's physical decline, while the mask represents May Server's spiritual breakdown.[244] Pursuing this line of reasoning, Blackall further suggests that Mrs. Brissenden is likewise reflected in the portrait as

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a representative of a type of death, "though she is the only one ... who is not its victim as well as its emblem." Identifying her with the "blooming and beautiful" mask in the portrait, this critic sees her as "that kind of death whose presence is not manifest, the sort of person whose persistent demands on another may debilitate and absorb him."[245]

If one chooses to view the narrator's undertaking as a fundamentally evil and sinister enterprise, as Oscar Cargill and William Stein do, then the portrait becomes a reflection of the narrator himself. According to Cargill's interpretation, "the portrait does resemble the narrator ... Clown and complete fool, the obsessed narrator, who has, on his own testimony, thrust off the mask of life, carries the menace of death by reading implications into the relations of all at Newmarch ... Animated as he is, he is the death's head at their banquet."[246] Picking up this same thread, Stein, who views the entire novel as a "subtle parody of the British aestheticism and decadence of the fin de siècle," suggests that the narrator, as a consequence of leading a life of deceit, has become "a horrible caricature of a death's head--the reflection of the actual face of the Pierrot figure ... The portrait mirrors the narrator and his dilemma. Given his imagination, he alone is capable of transcending the entrapment in the 'crystal cage' of artificiality. However, he refuses to doff his mask...."[247] Even Blackall, who does not take such a negative view of the narrator's activities, concedes that he is a party to the deception existing at Newmarch and is therefore also reflected in the symbolic portrait: "Perhaps, after all, then, he himself is 'The Man with the Mask,' a

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figure in whom the serious and comic elements of the book converge. For he himself reminds one of a wide-eyed clown, like the man in the portrait, and yet is to be taken seriously because symbolically he represents a kind of death, the hardening of the heart, signified in the grimace which he shares with the portrayed mask and with Mrs. Server."[248]

Whether one views the man's face or the mask as a symbol of death, or whether one chooses to identify one or all of the central characters with the painting, the connection between the portrait and the rest of the novel is explicitly made in the implied theme of unmasking. What is the narrator's quest, asks Gale, but an attempt to unmask the truths which he feels lie buried beneath the surface appearances at Newmarch.[249] May Server's refusal to see herself in the mask and the narrator's inability to see the grimace in the same object are both central to an understanding of the novel as a whole. The grimace is a leitmotif which James is careful to associate only with May Server. Meeting her alone while strolling in the gardens surrounding the estate, the narrator observes: "Her lovely grimace, the light of the previous hours, was as blurred as a bit of brushwork in water-colour spoiled by the upsetting of the artist's glass ... it fluttered like a bird with a broken wing." (VIII,133) During the course of their conversation, he again observes "the glittering deceit of her smile" (VIII,139); and at the conclusion of their talk, he is repeatedly struck by "the revival of her terrible little fixed smile." (VIII,198) Its final incarnation occurs in the tenth chapter, where "Mrs. Server's un-

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quenchable little smile" (X,195) again appears to haunt the narrator. Interpreting May Server's grin as a symbol of her intellectual dissolution, an attempt to hide her slow mental deterioration beneath a cheery exterior, Blackall asks: "Is some kind of death symbolically recorded in her face just as it is in the mask as she interprets it? Is her grimace also a sort of mask?"[250] The fact that the narrator can only see beauty in the mask where others find sheer horror undermines his credibility as a responsible and morally alert individual. If he cannot see the grimace on the mask, the reader wonders, how sound is his theory of the various social relationships existing at Newmarch, since both are supposedly the result of careful observation and reflection? Like the obscure and ambiguous work of art represented by the mask, according to Walter Isle, the narrator's theory is similarly ambivalent, "for he can perceive only intermittently the grimace that is embodied in his theory, the horror that is transformed to art by his imagination."[251]

Viewed in a larger philosophical context, the mysterious portrait of the man with the mask serves to illustrate, not only the theme of unmasking and social pretence, but the entire concept of appearance and reality, art and life. As Leon Edel has so aptly concluded, "What has been underlined here for us if not the very theme of the book? We are again confronted with appearance and reality: and the difference of opinion over which aspect is Life and which Death, which Beauty and which a mere grimace, is a measure of how a palace of thought can also be a house of cards."[252] If the narrator's

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quest, moreover, is regarded in a favorable light, then the novel can also be interpreted as James's sincere plea for the consideration of art and life as independent yet coexistent realities. "Henry James's point in The Sacred Fount is not," according to Edel, "that 'life' destroys the artist's 'make-believe,' but that the 'make-believe' has a reality of its own."[253] This belief in the autonomy of the artist to choose his own reality would thus explain the conflicting interpretations which the various characters--especially the narrator--put forward with respect to the meaning of the portrait. To the artist, however, multiple interpretations are possible. As Landon Burns, Jr. suggests, "the artist ... may in his role of providence change ordinary reality either way, and the change may be viewed either way. He may in the 'ambiguous work of art' have it both ways ... He may put a mask of life on mundane reality or he may put a mask of death on human vitality; yet it is a mask created by the artist, and as such it represents a new reality, separate from and subject to different laws than ordinary reality."[254]

That James may not have been certain in his own mind of the answer to this riddle of appearance versus reality, as Edmund Wilson long ago suggested,[255] does not discredit his use of the portrait motif in The Sacred Fount to highlight or illustrate this paradox. On the contrary, it is a mark of his achievement that he could take a visual symbol and incorporate it so skillfully into a longer narrative that it would serve as the focal point or symbolic center of the work. For that is precisely what the portrait of the man with the

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mask does. Not only is it significant as "the symbol which constitutes the author's only personal comment on the situation,"[256] as Miriam Allott has pointed out; it is also an attempt to embody the major theme of the novel, i.e., the discrepancy between art and life--which is at the heart of James's major fiction.

Unlike Hawthorne, whose repeated use of the portrait to make an explicit allegorical statement almost becomes a trite cliché, James consciously refrains from permitting his symbolic image to carry more weight than it can sustain. This partially explains why he purposely presented the portrait during only one brief scene, never referring back to it in the ensuing narrative. It was not that he felt his image to be incomplete or imperfect. As Robert Gale has suggested, James wished to avoid the pitfalls which he had observed his predecessor stumble into in his heavy-handed use of symbols in The Scarlet Letter.[257] What James was aiming at was a highly allusive and suggestive effect. The Sacred Fount, moreover, marks a much more conscious and extended use of symbols than James had previously attempted in his longer fiction.[258]

Since it is both a transitional and an experimental work, looking back to such novels as The Portrait of a Lady (in its use of the theme of masks and social hypocrisy) and forward to the achievement of The Ambassadors (in its foreshadowing of the theme of observed relations between individuals),[259] as well as to The Golden Bowl (in its treatment of the symbolic image or object as the focal point of the work), The Sacred Fount holds a special place in the Jamesian canon. In its

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ambitious attempt to examine the complex subject of the artistic temperament and the role of the imagination in the creative process, James's narrative paved the way for the works of his twentieth-century confrères: Proust, Joyce, and Virginia Woolf.[260] It is to the first writer, in fact, that Walter Isle compares the artistic quest of James's hero: "The narrator's theory of the sacred fount is an artistic vision for ordering experience similar in nature to Proust's vision in the last volume of A la Recherche du temps perdu...."[261] One must now turn to the latter to determine the validity of this rapprochement.

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Footnotes

[1] Edwin T. Bowden, The Themes of Henry James: A System of Observation Through the Visual Arts ([New Haven, Conn.], 1969). Viola H. Winner, Henry James and the Visual Arts (Charlottesville, Va., 1970).

[2] The pioneer article by F.O. Matthiessen, "Henry James and the Plastic Arts," Kenyon Review, 5 (Autumn 1943), 533-50 [repr. in: Discussions of Henry James, ed. Naomi Lebowitz (Boston, 1962), pp. 21-30], represents an early attempt at the art-historical approach to James's fiction. Yet Matthiessen was more concerned with the use of paintings and objets d'art as compositional devices than with their moral, psychological, and symbolical implications for James's characters.

[3] Bowden, p. 21. In an otherwise perceptive essay, Quentin Anderson makes the following statement (which I find somewhat misleading): "In the eyes of his best critics James is both a moralist and a symbolist, but he has no system of values which relates his morality and his symbols." (emphasis mine) "Henry James, His Symbolism and His Critics," Scrutiny, 15, i (Dec. 1947), 12. I intend to demonstrate in the present chapter that the artistic tastes of James's various fictional characters are, on the contrary, intimately tied to their moral or ethical choices.

[4] Henry James, The Painter's Eye: Notes and Essays on the Pictorial Arts, ed. John L. Sweeney (Cambridge, Mass., 1956).

[5] Letter to Robertson James dated Jan. 27, 1882. The Selected Letters of Henry James, ed. Leon Edel (New York, 1955), p. 57. Hereinafter referred to as Selected Letters.

[6] Winner, p. 13.

[7] Quoted by Percy Lubbock, "Introduction," The Letters of Henry James, 2 vols., ed. P. Lubbock (New York, 1920), I, p. 7. Hereinafter referred to as Letters. James had come under the influence of Ruskin's teachings at about this time (i.e., 1860); the exactitude and fidelity with which he attempted to copy nature was to foreshadow his admiration for the detailed and meticulously accurate canvases of the Pre-Raphaelite painters.

[8] In Notes of a Son and Brother James speaks of "William [Morris] Hunt and his truly fertilizing action on our common life" and describes the general atmosphere in the studio environment as an "irresistible contagion." Quoted by Sweeney, ed., The Painter's Eye, p. 50, note 1.

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[9] Three instances of James serving as the subject of his own portrait come to mind. He agreed to let George Du Maurier make a sketch of his head for a group portrait (1884); Jacques-Emile Blanche, who also painted a striking portrait of the young Proust as an effete dandy, created a rather chic and stylish portrait of James; lastly, there is the famous portrait of the novelist by John Singer Sargent. For James's reactions to the completed works, see, for Du Maurier, Selected Letters, pp. 140-1; for Blanche and Sargent, see Letters, II, pp. 107-10 and pp. 316-19 respectively.

[10] Cf. Wilbur L. Cross: "...his language is that of the studio; his most repeated words being outline, color, style, form, and plastic fact." "The Contemporary Novel: 1. Henry James and Impressionism," The Development of the English Novel (New York, 1917[1899]), p. 266. In his study of the use of figurative language in James's fiction, Robert L. Gale concludes that "all the mechanical phases of painting--from preparing canvas, through chalking in outlines and mixing pigments, to applying paint, retouching, varnishing, and hanging work in the crowd-filled gallery--are used in numerous images." The Caught Image: Figurative Language in the Fiction of Henry James (Chapel Hill, 1964[1954]), p. 126.

[11] Quoted by Adeline R. Tintner, "The Spoils of Henry James," PMLA, 61, i (March 1946), 240.

[12] "The Italian Experience of Henry James," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 19, iii (Dec. 1964), 238.

[13] Winner, p. 5.

[14] Henry James, "An American Art-Scholar: Charles Eliot Norton," [1908] Notes on Novelists With Some Other Notes (New York, 1969[1914,1942]), p. 415.

[15] Quoted by Tintner, p. 241.

[16] This episode, hallucinatory in nature, concerned a mysterious intruder who pursued the young James through the halls of the Galerie d'Apollon. The analogous subject treated in William Rimmer's painting entitled Flight and Pursuit (1872) leads one to speculate that James may have had this work in mind while composing his own account. See Winner, p. 87.

[17] Judging from the advice contained in the following letter, dated 1894, to a female correspondent who planned to have her portrait executed by Sargent, it would appear that James was firmly convinced that the artistic process was unknowable: "...trust him enough to leave him his ways, his

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variations, his mysteries and circumgyrations and idiosyncracies. You can't keep step with him and you can't assist at the process ... You are outside of it altogether ... It's his affair...." Selected Letters, p. 186..

[18] Cf. James's later revulsion at huge works of art expressed in a letter to a young sculptor, Hendrik Andersen, whom James had met in Rome in 1899: "...your mania for the colossal, the swelling or the huge, the monotonously and repeatedly huge, breaks the heart of me for you ... For that, dearest boy, is the Dread Delusion to warn you against--what is called in Medical Science MEGALOMANIA ..., the infatuated and disproportionate love and pursuit of, and attempt at, the Big, the Bigger, the Biggest, the Immensest Immensity, with all sense of proportion, application. relation and possibility madly submerged...." Selected Letters, p. 199. Hendrik Andersen's intended project, viz. to build a "World-City from top to toe," bears some resemblance to the equally grandiose sculptural conceptions of Roderick Hudson.

[19] Gale, p. 120.

[20] In a letter dated July 23, 1887. Letters, I, p. 127.

[21] Cf. the following letter, dated Dec. 15, 1877: "Italy was still more her irresistible ineffable old self than ever, and getting away from Rome was really no joke ... the old enchantment of Rome, taking its own good time, steals over you and possesses you, till it becomes almost a nuisance and an importunity. That is, it keeps you from working, from staying indoors, etc. To do those things in sufficient measure one must live in an ugly country; and that is why, instead of lingering in that golden climate, I am going back to poor, smutty, dusky, Philistine London." Letters, I, p. 57. This theory would also seem to underly Thomas Mann's novella Death in Venice.

[22] A fleeting reference to the fashionable society painter Boldini as "the most skillful among the little band of Italian painters" whose activities James described as "a sort of neo-Watteau movement" is the only reference, to my knowledge, to a modern (i.e., nineteenth-century) Italian artist. "Art and Letters in Paris,"[1876] Parisian Sketches: Letters to the "New York Tribune," 1875-1876, ed. Leon Edel and Ilse D. Lind (Washington Square, 1957), p. 111.

[23] "Florentine Notes,"[1874] Transatlantic Sketches (Boston, 1875), p. 298.

[24] "A Chain of Cities,"[1873] The Art of Travel, ed. Morton D. Zabel (Garden City, N.Y., 1962), p. 297.

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[25] Winner, pp. 31-2.

[26] "From Chambéry to Milan," [1872] Transatlantic Sketches, p. 82.

[27] In a later essay dealing, in part, with several drawings of heads by Leonardo, James remarks: "These things ... strike me, in their union of the grand and the exquisite, of intellectual intention with brilliant handiwork, as beyond price." "The Norwich School," [1878] The Painter's Eye, p. 157.

[28] "From Chambéry to Milan," op. cit., p. 82.

[29] "Florentine Notes," op. cit., p. 293.

[30] Ibid., pp. 292-3.

[31] According to Miriam Allott, "the portrait artist with the most enduring fascination for him was Bronzino, whose sitters share a family likeness. Remote, pale, elegant, these High Renaissance aristocrats contemplate objets d'art or let their long fingers rest on the illuminated pages of their open books. But for all their quietude they suggest only an apparent arrest of mental and emotional agitation; these frozen, passionate people seem to indicate tensions similar to those of James's New Englanders, held taut in their perpetual conflict of passion and reason." "Symbol and Image in the Later Work of Henry James," Essays in Criticism, 3, iii (July 1953), 327.

[32] "The Autumn in Florence," [1873] and "Florentine Notes," Transatlantic Sketches, pp. 277 and 300 respectively.

[33] Cf. the following statement: "If there should ever be a great weeding out of the world's possessions, I should pray that the best works of the early Florentine school be counted among the flowers. With the ripest performances of the Venetians, they seem to me the most valuable things in the history of art." "The Autumn in Florence," op. cit., p. 277.

[34] "From Venice to Strasbourg," [1873] Transatlantic Sketches, p. 87. Cf. the following: "Nowhere, not even in Holland, ... do art and life seem so interfused and, as it were, so consanguineous ... Venice was both model and painter, and life was so pictorial that art couldn't help becoming so." "Venice," [1882] The Art of Travel, pp. 350-1.

[35] Dated June 20, [1869]. Selected Letters, p. 28. Basing his conclusion upon repeated references to this painter in

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James's fictional imagery, Gale considers Titian as the writer's favorite painter. According to Matthiessen (The James Family, p. 255), James had written, as early as 1869 (in a letter to his brother William): "I admire Raphael; I enjoy Rubens; but I passionately love Titian." Quoted by Gale, The Caught Image, p. 121.

[36] Dated Sept. 21, 1869. Selected Letters, p. 31. James would subsequently echo this same sense of disappointment in his 1882 essay entitled "Venice": "At Venice, strange to say, Titian is altogether a disappointment; the city of his adoption is far from containing the best of him. Madrid, Paris, London, Florence, Dresden, Munich--these are the homes of his greatness." The Art of Travel, pp. 349-50.

[37] "From Venice to Strasbourg," op. cit., p. 92.

[38] "Venice," op. cit., pp. 354-5.

[39] Ibid., p. 353.

[40] "From Venice to Strasbourg," op. cit., p. 91.

[41] Ibid., p. 92.

[42] "Henry James and the Plastic Arts," p. 30. James's observation ("You seem not only to look at his pictures, but into them") was expressed in a letter to his brother William, dated Sept. 25, 1869. Quoted by Winner, p. 42. The same author also quotes James as having said: "I'd give a great deal to be able to fling down a dozen of his pictures into prose of corresponding force and colour." (p. 39) Winner, moreover, finds a parallel in James's fiction to the painterly style of Tintoretto in the former's "masterly 'interfusion' of psychological nuances with descriptions of things, so that through the inanimate thing the essence of the spiritual reality is revealed ... both James's often tortuous, involuted late style and Tintoretto's twisted lines and tormented restless forms reflect an unresolved tension in their efforts to reconcile physical and psychical existence." (pp. 91-2) Winner likewise sees as a characteristically mannerist trait the open-endedness and inconclusiveness of James's fictional endings.

[43] Henry James, "Charles S. Reinhart," [1890] Picture and Text (New York, 1893), p. 72.

[44] James expressed only a slight reservation in connection with this general opinion: "The level of clearness, so high in all French painting, strikes me as rather low in the line of portraiture than elsewhere...." "Art in Paris," [1876] Parisian Sketches, pp. 147-8.

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[45] Speaking of the Roman campagna, James noted in his travel book: "You know it well; you have seen it often in the mellow backgrounds of Claude ... A month's riding on the Campagna, indeed, will show you a dozen prime Claudes ... I vastly enjoyed their delightful air of reference to something which had become a part of my personal experience." "Roman Rides," [1873] Transatlantic Sketches, p. 152.

[46] "Claude must have wandered much on the Campagna, and interfused its divine undulations with his exquisite conception of the picturesque. He was familiar with a landscape in which there was not a single uncompromising line." Ibid.

[47] James's intimate association of works of art and literature is evident in the following description of a midi estate, contained in a letter (1899) to his brother William: "The walks are innumerable, the pleasant 'wildness' of the land (universally accessible) only another form of sweetness, and the light, the air, the noble, graceful lines & c, all of the first order. It's classic--Claude--Virgil...." Letters, I, p. 316.

[48] "The Wallace Collection," [1873] The Painter's Eye, pp. 76-7.

[49] "The 1871 Purchase," [1872], ibid., p. 58.

[50] For James's scattered comments on the art of Gérôme, see: "An English Critic of French Painting" [1868] and "Pictures by William Morris Hunt, Gérôme and Others," [1872] The Painter's Eye, pp. 42 and 51 respectively; "Parisian Topics" [1876] and "Art in Paris," Parisian Sketches, pp. 98-9 and 151 respectively.

[51] "Art in Paris," op. cit., p. 152.

[52] "Art and Letters in Paris," Parisian Sketches, pp. 105-6. For James's earlier negative criticism of Decamp's art, see: "An English Critic of French Painting"; "French Pictures in Boston" [1872]; and "The Wallace Collection in Bethnal Green," The Painter's Eye, pp. 41, 45-6, and 74-5 respectively.

[53] James's favorable comments on Meissonier's works occur in the essay "The Wallace Collection in Bethnal Green," op. cit., p. 75; his adverse opinions of the same painter's productions can be found in the essay entitled "The American Purchase of Meissonier's Friedland," [1876] The Painter's Eye, pp. 108-12.

[54] "An English Critic of French Painting," op. cit., pp. 38-9.

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[55] Ibid., p. 38.

[56] Ibid., p. 40.

[57] "French Pictures in Boston," The Painter's Eye, pp. 47-8.

[58] "Two Pictures by Delacroix," [1876], ibid., p. 113.

[59] Cf. Winner, p. 42: "The affinity which James felt for both Delacroix and Tintoretto arose from this common characteristic: their discovery of psychological equivalents in the movement of color and light, in the dilation of space so that shapes seem to appear and dissolve, without, however, abandoning stable composition and the traditional subjects of the grand style."

[60] "The Letters of Eugène Delacroix," [1880] The Painter's Eye, p. 184.

[61] Ibid., p. 201.

[62] "Honoré Daumier," [1893] The Painter's Eye, p. 240.

[63] Ibid., pp. 238, 240.

[64] "The Impressionists," [1876] The Painter's Eye, pp. 114-15. James appears to have contradicted himself on the question of subject matter. With his keen interest in the psychological states of his fictional characters, it is not surprising that the art critic declared, in his essay on Sargent, that "there is no greater work of art than a great portrait...." Since the Impressionists elevated landscape painting to a position which it had never previously held in the artistic canon, it is understandable that James would tend to minimize their efforts. Yet had not the same art critic declared (in connection with the genre scenes of the Dutch painter Gerard Dou) that "a master is a master, whatever he may paint"? For James's comment on portraiture, see the essay on "John S. Sargent," [1893] The Painter's Eye, p. 227; for the remark on Dou, see the travel sketch entitled "Montpellier," [1882] The Art of Travel, p. 251.

[65] Cf. Winner, pp. 88-9: "...James's knowledge of impressionist painting influenced his way of seeing but only indirectly his method of rendering in prose an impressionist scene or any other ... The impressionists ... may have increased his awareness of atmospheric effects and of the influence of light on color. Through their treatment of contemporary life, he may have come to realize the pictorial

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qualities inherent in certain settings ... What James had in common with the impressionist painters was his view of the interrelatedness of all experience, of consciousness as unified and unstable, and his emphasis on the subjective aspects of experience."

[66] Quoted by Sweeney, "Introduction," The Painter's Eye, pp. 29-30.

[67] "Art in Paris," Parisian Sketches, pp. 152-3.

[68] For James's scattered comments on British art, see the following essays in The Painter's Eye: "The Wallace Collection in Bethnal Green," p. 69; "On Some Pictures Lately Exhibited,"[1875], p. 103; "The Royal Academy,"[1878], p. 167; "The Royal Academy and the Grosvenor Gallery,"[1879], pp. 180-1; "The Letters of Eugène Delacroix," p. 196; and "London Pictures,"[1882], pp. 203-4.

[69] James's opinion of Sir Joshua Reynolds is representative of this narrow and ascetic school of art: "Sir Joshua [Reynolds], somehow, was an eminently Protestant painter; no one can forget that, who in the National Gallery in London has looked at the picture in which he represents several young ladies as nymphs, voluminously draped, hanging garlands over a statue--a picture suffused indefinably with the Anglican spirit and exasperating to a member of one of the Latin races." "Montpellier," The Art of Travel, p. 251.

[70] Cf. the following letter, dated June 20,[1869], to John La Farge: "...I dined at Ruskin's with the Nortons. R. was very amiable, and showed his Turners. The latter is assuredly great: but if you wish to hold your own against exaggeration, go to see him at the National Gallery, where some thirty of his things stand adjoining the Old Masters. I think I prefer Claude. He had better taste, at any rate." Selected Letters, p. 28.

[71] For James's comments on Turner's art, see the following essays in The Painter's Eye: "The Wallace Collection in Bethnal Green," p. 71; "The National Gallery,"[1877], p. 122; "The Norwich School,"[1878], p. 155; and "Ruskin's Collection of Drawings by Turner,"[1878], p. 159.

[72] For James's comments on Leighton's art, see the following essays in The Painter's Eye: "The Picture Season in London,"[1877], p. 148; "The Royal Academy,"[1878], p. 168; "London Pictures," pp. 214-15. For remarks concerning Alma-Tadema's art, see, in the same collection: "The Picture Season in London," p. 151, and "London Pictures," p. 210. For Frith, see, in the same collection: "The Royal Academy," p. 170. Lastly, for Ford Madox Brown's art, see the essays: "Lord Leighton and Ford Madox Brown,"[1897], p. 250, and "The Guildhall and the Royal Academy,"[1897], pp. 253-4.

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[73] "The New Gallery," [1897] The Painter's Eye, p. 244. For additional comments on Watts's art, see, in the same collection: "The Picture Season in London," p. 142; "The Grosvenor Gallery," [1878]p. 164; "London Pictures," pp. 202, 211; and "The Grafton Galleries," [1897] p. 260.

[74] See: Selected Letters, pp. 27-8. The event is described in a letter addressed to John La Farge, dated June 20, [1869].

[75] Letters, I, p. 125.

[76] For scattered references to Burne-Jones in James's correspondence, see, especially, Letters, I, pp. 196-7, 307-8, and 340. For references to this painter in James's art criticism, see the following essays in The Painter's Eye: "On Some Pictures Lately Exhibited," p. 90; "The Picture Season in London," pp. 144-5; "The Grosvenor Gallery," pp. 162-4; and "London Pictures," pp. 205-8.

[77] "The Royal Academy and the Grosvenor Gallery," The Painter's Eye, p. 182. For other comments on Millais's art, see, in the same collection: "The Picture Season in London," p. 143; "The Grosvenor Gallery," p. 166; "The Royal Academy," pp. 168-9; "London Pictures," pp. 202, 205, 210-11; and "The Guildhall and the Royal Academy," p. 253.

[78] Letter to John La Farge, dated June 20, [1869]. Selected Letters, p. 18.

[79] Letter to Grace Norton, dated Feb. 6, 1913. Letters, II, p. 295.

[80] Cf. the following description of Morris's wife, contained in a letter to Alice James, dated March 10, [1869]: "It's hard to say whether she's a grand synthesis of all the pre-Raphaelite pictures ever made--or they a 'keen analysis' of her--whether she's an original or a copy ... Imagine a tall lean woman in a long dress of some dead purple stuff ... with a mass of crisp black hair heaped into great wavy projections on each of her temples, a thin pale face, a pair of strange sad, deep, dark Swinburnian eyes, with great thick black oblique brows, ... a mouth like the 'Oriana' in our illustrated Tennyson, a long neck, without any collar, and in lieu thereof some dozen strings of outlandish beads--in fine complete." Letters, I, pp. 17-18.

[81] Letters, II, p. 343.

[82] William B. Stein has put forward the theory that

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James may have consciously parodied Beardsley's style in The Sacred Fount: "[James] turns to the art nouveau of Aubrey Beardsley for his perspective of sly, caustic irony. The occasion and setting of the novel are the same as those which so often brought into play the famous illustrator's grotesque and morbid wit." "The Sacred Fount and British Aestheticism: The Artist as Clown and Pornographer," Arizona Quarterly, 27, ii (Summer 1971), 166. It should be remembered, in this connection, that James himself had submitted several of his short tales to such "decadent" periodicals as The Yellow Book and The Savoy. The Sacred Fount, one could argue, may have been intended to exorcise the excesses of this period.

[83] "The Duke of Montpensier's Pictures in Boston," [1874] The Painter's Eye, p. 87.

[84] Letter to William James, dated July 29, [1876]. Selected Letters, p. 49.

[85] Cf. the following remark contained in the essay entitled "On Some Pictures Lately Exhibited," The Painter's Eye, p. 100: "We flourish as yet decidedly more in our handling of rocks and trees and blue horizon-hills than in our dealings with heads and arms and legs."

[86] Quoted by Mariani, "The Italian Experience of Henry James," p. 238.

[87] "On Some Pictures Lately Exhibited," The Painter's Eye, p. 101.

[88] Ibid., p. 95. When Johnson strayed away from his chosen field and attempted to be "complex, suggestive, [and] literary," his art was a total failure, according to James.(p. 91)

[89] Ibid., p. 96.

[90] James seems not to have appreciated the wider range of Homer's subject matter. E.M. Forster claims that "[James] duly makes fun of the Yankee youths and pie-fed maidens of Homer's subject-pictures, but completely ignores his excellent and exciting water-colours ... The wilderness and the countrified place were slightly suspect to the neatly attired James. He appreciated scenery, but had no mind to get mixed up in it, whereas Winslow Homer liked to get mixed up." "Henry James as Art Critic," The Listener, 61, no. 1437, Oct. 11, 1956, p. 572.

[91] "The Picture Season in London," The Painter's Eye, p. 143.

[92] "The Grosvenor Gallery," ibid., p. 165.

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[93] "On Whistler and Ruskin," [1878], ibid., p. 174.

[94] "Art-Criticism and Whistler," [1879], ibid., p. 175. For a discussion of the similarities and differences in the aesthetic doctrines of the writer and the painter, see the article by Donald M. Murray, "James and Whistler at the Grosvenor Gallery," American Quarterly, 4, i (Spring 1952), 49-65.

[95] "London Pictures," The Painter's Eye, p. 209.

[96] "The Grafton Galleries," ibid., pp. 258-9.

[97] "Duveneck and Copley," [1875], ibid., p. 107.

[98] For James's comments on Duveneck's art, see the following essays in The Painter's Eye: "On Some Pictures Lately Exhibited," pp. 98-9; "Duveneck and Copley," pp. 105-6. It is worth noting, in this connection, that Henry James's father had his own likeness painted by Duveneck around 1880.

[99] "John Singer Sargent," The Painter's Eye, p. 217.

[100] Ibid., p. 228.

[101] For a biographical discussion of the James-Sargent relationship, see the article by Richard Gilman, "Americans Abroad," American Heritage, 12, vi (Oct. 1961), 9-27 and 89-93. James's letters provide an interesting commentary on the creation and subsequent fate of Sargent's now-famous portrait of the novelist, a work which James praised as "a living, breathing likeness and a masterpiece of painting" (in a letter dated June 25, 1913). Letters, II, pp. 318-19. See, also, in the same collection: Letters, I, pp. 102, 334-5; Letters, II, pp. 233-4, 309, 316-17, 349, 359, 366, and 368.

[102] "The Wallace Collection in Bethnal Green," The Painter's Eye, p. 77.

[103] "In Holland," [Aug. 8, 1874] Transatlantic Sketches, p. 382.

[104] "The Metropolitan Museum's '1871 Purchase,'" The Painter's Eye, pp. 55-6.

[105] "In Holland," op. cit., p. 390.

[106] "Les Maîtres d'Autrefois," [1876] The Painter's Eye, p. 121.

[107] "The Norwich School," ibid., p. 156.

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[108] "Montpellier," The Art of Travel, p. 251. James's dictum, quoted earlier (i.e., "...a master is a master, whatever he may paint"), was formulated in connection with this painter.

[109] Cf. James's reaction to a Jan Steen Kermesse: "This is more than an ugly picture; it is an offensive act. It makes one think more meanly of the human imagination." "The Metropolitan Museum's '1871 Purchase,'" The Painter's Eye, p. 61. One cannot help feeling that James has somehow failed to separate the aesthetic from the moral in his judgment (perhaps intentionally). Beauty, according to James, is inherent in the artist's choice of subject and his conception or treatment of the same.

[110] "Art in Paris," Parisian Sketches, p. 155.

[111] These epithets can be found in the following essays in Transatlantic Sketches: "Florentine Notes," p. 295; "In Belgium," [1874], pp. 394, 396.

[112] "In Belgium," ibid., pp. 395, 397-8.

[113] Cf. the following statement: "There are fine painters and coarse painters, and Rubens belonged to the latter category; he reigned in it with magnificent supremacy." "Les Maîtres d'Autrefois," The Painter's Eye, p. 119.

[114] "Darmstadt," [Sept. 6, 1873] Transatlantic Sketches, p. 376.

[115] "The Splügen," [n.d.], ibid., p. 351.

[116] Ibid., p. 352.

[117] The remark was made in connection with Holbein's portrait of the Meyer family: "It is a wonderfully solid masterpiece," wrote James, "and so full of wholesome human substance that I should think its owner could go about his daily work the better ... for having it constantly before his eyes." "Darmstadt," op. cit., p. 378.

[118] Ibid., pp. 376-7.

[119] "The Duke of Montpensier's Pictures in Boston," The Painter's Eye, pp. 83-4.

[120] "The Wallace Collection in Bethnal Green," ibid., p. 78.

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[121] "The Duke of Montpensier's Pictures in Boston," op. cit., pp. 84-5.

[122] Ibid., p. 85.

[123] "Florentine Notes," Transatlantic Sketches, pp. 290-1.

[124] Cf. Tintner, "The Spoils of Henry James," p. 63: "He understood painting only when it was convertible to literature, when its meaning emerged not through the autonomy of its formal relations but through the story implied in the choice of subject matter."

[125] Barbara Melchiori, "The Taste of Henry James," Studi Americani, no. 3 (1957), 176.

[126] Quoted by Sweeney, ed., The Painter's Eye, p. 50, note 1.

[127] Winner, p. 14.

[128] Quoted by Tintner, "Spoils...," p. 240.

[129] Sweeney, "Introduction," op. cit., p. 16.

[130] "Les Maîtres d'Autrefois," The Painter's Eye, p. 117.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Winner, p. 55.

[134] The Painter's Eye, p. 35.

[135] "Les Maîtres d'Autrefois," op. cit., p. 118.

[136] See fn. 17.

[137] "Les Maîtres d'Autrefois," op. cit., p. 118.

[138] Ibid., p. 121.

[139] "The Royal Academy," The Painter's Eye, p. 167.

[140] "Gabriele D'Annunzio," [1902] Notes on Novelists..., p. 246.

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[141] The event which prompted this comment was the study which Edmund Gosse had written on Pater. James's remark can be found in a letter to Gosse, dated Dec. 13, 1894. See Letters, I, p. 222.

[142] According to Alwyn Berland, "Henry James and the Aesthetic Tradition," Journal of the History of Ideas, 23, iii (July-Sept. 1962), 412, "Walter Pater's direct influence on James is the least interesting, or the least individually significant...." The same critic, however, notes that James's characters (e.g., Lambert Strether) express a very Paterian "passion for experience"; Berland likewise makes a case for the influence of Pater's style in The Renaissance (1873) upon James's impressionistic description of the Raphael Madonna in "The Madonna of the Future" (1875).

[143] Winner, p. 45. Cf. Stuart P. Sherman, "The Aesthetic Idealism of Henry James," On Contemporary Literature (New York, 1917), p. 238: "James is like Pater in his aversion from the world, his dedication to art, his celibacy, his personal decorum and dignity, his aesthetic seriousness, his Epicurean relish in receiving and reporting the multiplicity and intensity of his impressions, and in the exacting closeness of his style ... there is no better side light on James's 'philosophy' than Pater's Conclusion to the Studies in the Renaissance and his Plato and Platonism; no better statement of his general literary ideals than Pater's essay on Style; no more interesting 'parallel' to his later novels than Marius the Epicurean and Imaginary Portraits."

[144] Morris Roberts, Henry James's Criticism (Cambridge, Mass., 1929), p. 120, makes the following important distinction: "[James] is not an impressionist, like Pater, for example. It is not the adventures of his soul that he records, but the visible, objective qualities of the thing before him; he is the analyst always, never merely the sensitive soul."

[145] Bowden, The Themes of Henry James..., p. 10. Cf., in this respect, the following remark by James: "It's in the simplest thing it has that a picture lives--in its temper!" "Roman Neighborhoods,"[n.d.] Transatlantic Sketches, p. 178.

[146] "The Splügen," ibid., p. 351. James made the remark with reference to the art of Martin Schongauer, whose "hideousness," the art critic humorously observed, must also have been a matter of degree.

[147] "The Royal Academy and the Grosvenor Gallery," The Painter's Eye, p. 178.

[148] Cf. Alan W. Bellringer, "The Tragic Muse: the objective centre," Journal of American Studies, 4, i (July 1970),

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75: "Nash's extravagant, reckless style clearly implies habitual exaggeration, if not irresponsibility. It is difficult to believe that Nash's personal aesthetic philosophy is meant to earn our respect. It is often close to a caricature of Paterism...."

149 The Tragic Muse, 2 vols. (New York, 1908), II, p. 400.

150 Selected Letters, p. 147.

151 Winner, p. 123.

152 "The Letters of Eugène Delacroix," The Painter's Eye, pp. 185-6. Cf. Edwin Bowden, The Themes of Henry James..., p. 10: "The human suggestiveness of the work of art was particularly great for James, for he stood in direct opposition to that sterile estheticism which attempts to distinguish the apprehension of beauty from the apprehension of greater values in the life of the human being." Stephen Spender makes an even more subtle distinction in the terminology outlined above when he argues that "what distinguishes James from the aesthetes is his extraordinary sense of life, as distinct from reported experience. Writers like Wilde and Lionel Johnson, and even Whistler, were so deeply embroiled in various sensations and memorable experiences, that it was natural for them to think of Art as something cut off from life. James had nothing of what they would call life; life to him was as much a separate activity from his own life as Art with a big A. He therefore had a reverent, disinterested sense of what life was, because his approach to it was not through his living, but through his art ... His art for him was only valuable because it was the means of creating life. And to the thesis that applied to himself that art was life, there followed the antithesis that life was art, which accounts for so much of the characterization in his later work, where he described people who were artists in creating their own, and in their approach to other people's lives." "Life as Art and Art as Life," The Destructive Element: A Study of Modern Writers and Beliefs (Philadelphia, 1953), pp. 50-1.

153 "Art and Letters in Paris," Parisian Sketches, pp. 106-7.

154 See fn. 7.

155 Letters, I, p. 16.

156 This opinion was expressed in a letter to his mother, dated March 26, 1869. See Letters, I, p. 20.

157 See fn. 70.

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[158] Winner, p. 20.

[159] Cf. Berland, "Henry James and the Aesthetic Tradition," p. 411: "Like Ruskin, James believed that good art comes from good men; thus the problem of moral judgment in dealing with the work of art is the same as that of aesthetic judgment."

[160] "Art: Boston," Atlantic Monthly, XXIX (March, 1872), 372. Quoted by Winner, p. 23.

[161] James, however, seems to have feared the excessive use of the imagination in art. Cf. the following statement: "Imagination is not a quality to recommend; we bow low to it when we meet it, but we are wary of introducing it into well-regulated intellects." "The Metropolitan Museum's '1871 Purchase,'" The Painter's Eye, p. 66.

[162] "The Letters of Eugène Delacroix," ibid., p. 185.

[163] Modern Painters, II. Quoted by Winner, p. 27.

[164] Great art, according to Ruskin, was directly related to the "nobleness of the end to which the effort of the artist is addressed." Quoted by Winner, p. 103.

[165] Cf. the following comment in "An English Critic of French Painting," The Painter's Eye, p. 33: "He has been unable to abandon the aesthetic standpoint. Let him treat of what subjects he pleases, therefore, he will always remain before all things an art-critic."

[166] Quoted by Winner, p. 21.

[167] "Les Maîtres d'Autrefois," The Painter's Eye, p. 117. Cf. James's comment on Turner: "That imaginative quality with which he invests his work is often such as to make the reader of the catalogue [written by Ruskin] admit those ultra-metaphysical intentions which Mr. Ruskin attributes to him." "Ruskin's Collection of Drawings by Turner," ibid., p. 159.

[168] "Florence," [1877], from "Italy Revisited," [1878] The Art of Travel, pp. 330-1.

[169] Winner, p. 21.

[170] "The Letters of Eugène Delacroix," The Painter's Eye, pp. 183-4.

[171] "Ruskin's Collection of Drawings by Turner," ibid., p. 160.

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[172] "Pierre Loti," Theory of Fiction: Henry James, ed. James E. Miller, Jr. (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1972), p. 328.

[173] Winner, p. 54.

[174] "The Duke of Montpensier's Pictures in Boston," The Painter's Eye, p. 84. The distinction was made in connection with the art of Velásquez.

[175] "The Madonna of the Future," Stories of Writers and Artists by Henry James, ed. F.O. Matthiessen ([New York], n.d.), p. 20. Subsequent references to this edition of the story are acknowledged in the text, immediately following the quoted passage.

[176] Portraits of Places (New York, 1948), p. 81.

[177] "The Vessel of Consciousness" (from the preface to The Princess Casamassima), The Future of the Novel: Essays on the Art of Fiction, ed. Leon Edel (New York, 1956), p. 57.

[178] Cf. Bowden, The Themes of Henry James, p. 15: "Clarity of vision he thought the first requirement of any artist, and then the ability to reproduce that vision manually."

[179] "The Metropolitan Museum's '1871 Purchase,'" The Painter's Eye, p. 57. The phrase occurs in James's analysis of the portrait of a burgomaster by the Dutch painter Van der Helst: "...his process is not so much the common, leisurely, critical return upon reality and truth as a bonded and indissoluble union with it...."

[180] "I shouldn't myself be surprised if, when one runs him to earth, one finds scarce more than in that terrible little tale of Balzac's--a mere mass of incoherent scratches and daubs, a jumble of dead paint!" (p. 32) Le Chef d'Oeuvre Inconnu, in fact, was the major source of inspiration for James's present tale.

[181] "Paris as it is," Parisian Sketches, p. 16.

[182] "The American Purchase of Meissonier's 'Friedland,'" The Painter's Eye, p. 111. James felt that Meissonier's concentration upon details at the expense of the overall composition of his painting severely detracted from his accomplishment: "It seems to me it is a thing of parts," wrote James, "rather than an interesting whole."

[183] Winner, p. 97.

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[184] Cf. the following: "Before [Tintoretto's] greatest works you are conscious of a sudden evaporation of old doubts and dilemmas, and the eternal problem of the conflict between idealism and realism dies the most natural of deaths. In Tintoret, the problem is practically solved, and the alternatives so harmoniously interfused that I defy the keenest critic to say where one begins and the other ends." "From Venice to Strasbourg," Transatlantic Sketches, pp. 91-2.

[185] Cf. Winner, p. 126: "In The Tragic Muse James fails ... to draw a convincing particularized picture of a painter in conflict with the world ... It is not a matter of rendering the artist's craft with a precision that would satisfy a painter but rather of providing the kind of detail that Zola does in his characterization of Charles Lantin [sic] in L'Oeuvre, Proust in Elstir, and Cary in Gulley Jimson which distinguishes the painter from a person with an artistic sensibility and which thus when the narrative emphasis is on artist qua artist is convincing. James's dependence on associational values rather than purely aesthetic ones may be blamed for the vagueness and contradictions in his treatment of Nick as a painter."

[186] The Tragic Muse, 2 vols. (New York, 1908), I, pp. 13-14. Subsequent references to this work refer to this edition and are acknowledged in the text immediately after the quoted passage.

[187] The Future of the Novel, p. 5.

[188] "The Letters of Eugène Delacroix," The Painter's Eye, p. 185.

[189] "In Belgium," Transatlantic Sketches, p. 397.

[190] "The Letters of Eugène Delacroix," op. cit., p. 184.

[191] Forster, "Henry James as Art Critic," p. 572.

[192] "John Singer Sargent," The Painter's Eye, p. 227.

[193] Cf., however, Gabriel Nash's comment: "You never find the artist--you only find his work, and that's all you need find." (II,200)

[194] Cf. Tintner, "The Spoils of Henry James," p. 239: "...the work of art embodies and incorporates civilization as it was available to James."

[195] Winner, p. 25.

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[196] Notebook entry dated Feb. 22, 1891. The Notebooks of Henry James, ed. F.O. Matthiessen and Kenneth B. Murdock (New York, 1961), p. 103.

[197] "The Real Thing," Stories of Writers and Artists, p. 170. Subsequent references to this story are acknowledged in the text, immediately following the quoted passage.

[198] According to Edel and Lind, "Introduction," Parisian Sketches, p. xxi: "By 'standing outside' James means the capacity of the artist to detach himself from his subject, to see it aesthetically, and to have (we can complete James's statement) 'regarding its texture and tone, a vision and a conviction' of his own. James is affirming, at the core of his criticism, ... the need for the artist to impose his own imaginative order upon his selected materials. Ultimately this affirmation will form the subject of one of his shortest and most suggestive tales, 'The Real Thing.'"

[199] "Make it out that he himself is on trial--he is young and 'rising,' but he has still his golden spurs to win. He can't afford, en somme, to make many mistakes ... I shall get every grain of 'action' that the space admits of if I make something, for the artist, hang in the balance--depend on the way he does this particular work." Notebooks, pp. 103-4.

[200] Cf. James's dictum: "...the value of a work [of art] is in the amount of illusion it yields...." "Florence," The Art of Travel, p. 330.

[201] Allott, "Symbol and Image...," p. 325. Cf. Winner's more general and less rigid distinctions: "The art object ... may be used simultaneously as a visual detail and as a symbol of culture, superficially as a plot device, and more profoundly as a means of revealing character or reinforcing a theme." (p. 15)

[202] "The Story of a Masterpiece," Eight Uncollected Tales of Henry James, ed. Edna Kenton (New Brunswick, N.J., 1950), pp. 95, 96. All subsequent references to this tale are acknowledged in the text, following the quoted passage.

[203] See Henry James's essay "Hawthorne," (excerpt) Henry James: Representative Selections..., ed. Lyon N. Richardson (Urbana/London, 1966), pp. 51, 53. The passage in question reads as follows: "In The Scarlet Letter there is a great deal of symbolism; there is, I think, too much. It is overdone at times, and becomes mechanical; it ceases to be impressive, and grazes triviality ... Hawthorne is perpetually looking for images which shall place themselves in picturesque correspondence with the spiritual facts with which he is concerned, and of course the search is of the very essence of

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poetry. But in such a process discretion is everything, and when the image becomes importunate it is in danger of seeming to stand for nothing more serious than itself."

[204] Cf. Jay Bochner, "Life in a Picture Gallery: Things in The Portrait of a Lady and The Marble Faun," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 11, 1 (Spring 1969), 761-2: "There is a vast difference between Hawthorne and Henry James in their concern for real things. Hawthorne cares little for the tangible objects life is made up of; objective reality is much more a matter of symbols ... [For James][t]he object definitely exists physically and as such carries weight ... Symbolic meaning in Hawthorne is general, even cosmic when he is at his best; most often, it is moral in a social or religious sense. Symbolic meaning in James is particular and human, a matter of personal, not of social or religious, morality."

[205] Winner, p. 113. Cf. Tintner, "The Spoils of Henry James," p. 245: "Sight for the painter is insight...."

[206] According to Quentin Anderson, "In this story a self-centered, adoringly mothered young man tries to paint the girl he wishes to marry. The process reveals his 'narrow, personal, ineffectual self,' of which he seeks to make the girl a dependent ornament. The genuine painter who happens by and paints a great portrait of the girl is an 'appealing messenger from the mysterious immensity of life.'" "The Portrait Theme," The American Henry James (London, 1958), p. 140.

[207] Tintner, "Spoils...," p. 251.

[208] Henry James, The Sense of the Past (London, 1917), pp. 47-9. All subsequent references to this novel are to this edition; they follow immediately after the quoted passage in the body of the text.

[209] For a brief survey of this theme in Romantic fiction, see the essay entitled "Counterfeit Presentments" in Newton Arvin's American Pantheon, ed. Daniel Aaron and Sylvan Schendler (New York, 1966), pp. 234-44. I am grateful to Professor Irving Howe for bringing this essay to my attention.

[210] Cf. Elizabeth Stevenson's remark in The Crooked Corridor: A Study of Henry James (New York, 1961), p. 97: "The fact that the young man of the picture averts his face arouses an interest which is more of a sickness than a curiosity."

[211] According to Maxwell Geismar, Henry James and the Jacobites (New York, 1965), pp. 412-44, the novel is a disguised autobiography in which Pendrel's attempts to gain acceptance and his growing fear of being 'found out' as an impostor parallel James's own efforts to assimilate himself in-

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to British society. I find this reading a bit farfetched. Equally unconvincing, to my mind, is Edward Stone's interpretation of the novel as an exploration of time travel and a foreshadowing of Einstein's theory of relativity. See his chapter entitled "John Balderston and The Sense of the Past," The Battle and the Books: Some Aspects of Henry James (Athens, Ohio, 1964), pp. 187-205.

[212] Allott, "Symbol and Image...," p. 326. Spencer Brydon's alter ego in "The Jolly Corner" is cited as a parallel example of the use of the portrait theme in the ghost stories of the same period. Arvin, op. cit., pp. 241-44, arrives at a similar understanding of the symbolic meaning behind the Romantic portrait by examining anthropological and folkloric motifs embedded within the portrait symbol.

[213] Beams, "Consciousness in James's The Sense of the Past," Criticism, 5, ii (Spring 1963), 159, 166.

[214] Cf. Beams, pp. 171-2: "[Ralph's] consciousness grows larger than life, or than death, to show that life itself is large and cannot be detained in the reclusive self, framed in the indefectibility of the portrait which no longer attests to life, hung up in the closed consciousness.... The reader of The Sense of the Past finds Bergsonian duration and recapture of things present, a deranged Symbolist expression of the inexpressible and finally James's noblest allegory of the consciousness of the artist who makes life by making awareness of it."

[215] Spender, The Destructive Element, p. 106.

[216] Arvin, op. cit., p. 236.

[217] Henry James, The Wings of the Dove (New York, 1964), chap. XI, p. 156. All subsequent references are to this edition and appear in the body of the text immediately after the quoted passage.

[218] Matthiessen, "Henry James and the Plastic Arts," p. 27.

[219] Cf. Bowden, The Themes of Henry James, p. 93: "To see in the portrait only an image of Milly as a princess ... and to interpret her startling 'dead, dead, dead' as only an omen of the future, is to miss much of the incisive meaning of the moment...."

[220] Holland, "The Wings of the Dove," Journal of English Literary History, 26, iv (Dec. 1959), 556-7: "She is reminded, of course, of her own death that she fears is imminent, but the reader is also reminded of a sense in which any work of

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art, no matter how brilliant, is dead: no blood flows through a painting or novel and no breath breathes there; one can smear greasy oil upon a yielding canvas, but no womb will conceive new life. The association of the realm of art with death is reinforced instantly for it is immediately afterward that Milly, her illness upon her, sinks fainting into a chair." It is surprising that Holland's perceptive interpretation of the Venice chapters in The Wings of the Dove in terms of Veronese's paintings (pp. 558-61) should lead him to such an erroneous conclusion as the above.

221 "Millie [sic] compensates for her failure to live by a retreat to the world of traditional art." "The Spoils of Henry James," p. 249. Tintner, however, does regard the Bronzino portrait--which she stresses as a work belonging to the past--as "the image of [Milly's] possibilities."

222 Bowden, The Themes of Henry James, p. 92.

223 Winner, p. 84.

224 Miriam Allott, "The Bronzino Portrait in Henry James's The Wings of the Dove," Modern Language Notes, 68, i (Jan. 1953), 23-5, has identified the work as the portrait of Lucrezia Panciatichi, which James had seen at the Uffizi. Of particular interest is the fact that "carved into the longer green 'beads' of the second and larger necklace worn by Bronzino's Lucrezia is the legend 'Amour dure sans fin.' No phrase could be more exact for the love of a Milly, the dove whose wings even from the grave 'cover us,' as Merton Densher tells Kate Croy when everything else is at an end." (p. 25)

225 "By virtue of insisting on this likeness," writes Matthiessen, "James has fulfilled his wish of making his heroine the equivalent of a Renaissance princess." "Henry James and the Plastic Arts," p. 26. The desire to ennoble his heroine, this "heiress of all the ages," is not the central reason for this particular identification, however.

226 Winner, p. 83. See fn. 31.

227 Cf. Matthiessen, op. cit., p. 27: "This scene before the Bronzino operates almost like a musical theme: it strikes the first note of the shift to Venice, where Milly plays out her make-believe rôle in the gorgeous rented palace which increases the ironic contrast 'between her fortune and her fear.'"

228 Jean Frantz Blackall, Jamesian Ambiguity and "The Sacred Fount" (Ithaca, N.Y., 1965).

229 Notebooks, pp. 150-1.

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[230] Ibid., p. 275. Notebook entry dated Feb. 15, 1899.

[231] Cf. Blackall, p. 90: "...The Sacred Fount embodies a serious statement about the functioning of the artist. Variations on this idea, which is both current and pervasive, constitute the largest single body of opinion as to what The Sacred Fount is about." Tony Tanner's interpretation of The Sacred Fount as an exploration of "the ambiguous nature of the artistic instinct to create imaginary pictures and patterns out of the given actualities of existence ... a parable of the way the artist elicits aesthetic order out of human chaos," is representative of this school of opinion. "Introduction," Henry James - Three Novels: The Europeans, The Spoils of Poynton, The Sacred Fount (New York, 1968), pp. vii and xxii.

[232] Henry James, The Sacred Fount (New York, 1953), chap. I, p. 2. All subsequent references to this edition of the novel are placed within the body of the text immediately after the quoted passage.

[233] Tintner, "The Spoils of Henry James," p. 243.

[234] Winner, p. 112.

[235] Robert A. Perlongo, "The Sacred Fount: Labyrinth or Parable?" Kenyon Review, 22, iv (Autumn 1960), 647, sees the narrator as "the frantically observant artist too busy looking at life and recording it and theorizing about it really to be a compassionate, operative part of it." Leo B. Levy, "What does The Sacred Fount mean?" College English, 23, v (Feb. 1962), 382, characterizes the anonymous narrator as a "compulsive onlooker for whom 'life' is accessible by means of observation alone." Viewing the problem in more philosophical terms, Robert J. Andreach, "Henry James's The Sacred Fount: The Existential Predicament," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 17, iii (Dec. 1962), 208-10, insists that "the narrator never makes real contact with others; he never becomes involved with others in any real sense; he never gets outside of his solipsistical, ideational universe to act. It is real choice that establishes the possibility of a genuine moral issue, and the narrator never makes real choices vis-à-vis the existential situation; he merely poses mental choices for himself.... His predicament is that he does not get outside of his self. In fact, his perceptions are merely extensions of his own consciousness without existential substantiation; that is, not real perceptions at all." Representing a minority opinion, Naomi Lebowitz, "'The Sacred Fount': An Author in Search of His Characters," Criticism, 4, ii (Spring 1962), 159, stresses the narrator's (whom she views as a writer) active involvement: "Against his characters' inclination to freeze their relationships, to remain picturesque, to limit consciousness, to prefer an Obert portrait to a James novel, the narrator as novelist stands as the defender of moral potentialities in relationship. It is the infusion of moral sense into the picturesqueness of the scene which makes possible the creative vision of a novel."

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[236] Cf. Winner, p. 115: "The presence of Ford Obert in The Sacred Fount, a professional artist specificially identified as such, also implies that the narrator is not necessarily an artist to the extent that he believes himself to be. A significant point of contrast between them is that Obert characteristically prefers the simpler explanation to the more complex. Furthermore, though Obert strives to understand, he admits it when he does not."

[237] Tyler, "The Sacred Fount: 'The Actuality Pretentious and Vain' vs. 'The Case Rich and Edifying,'" Modern Fiction Studies, 9, ii (Summer 1963), 128.

[238] Stressing the predominance of rococo elements at Newmarch, Giorgio Melchiori has suggested that Fragonard's The Fountain of Love may have inspired James's use of the sacred fount as the central metaphor of the novel. He makes a perceptive psychological statement when he states that "the rococo décor of the setting stresses the vacuity" of the social scene at Newmarch. Of interest is Melchiori's paralleling of the atmosphere predominating at James's fictitious country estate and that of Robbe-Grillet's film L'Année Dernière à Marienbad: "Is there indeed," he asks, "much difference between the wanderings of the anonymous narrator of The Sacred Fount through the Newmarch rooms and the opening tracking shot of Marienbad?" "Cups of Gold for the Sacred Fount: Aspects of James's Symbolism," Critical Quarterly, 7, iv (Winter 1965), 301-16. Cf. Leon Edel, "An Introductory Essay," The Sacred Fount, p. xxxii: "...there is the striking compositional method that reminds one of those experimental films in which the camera eye is ours, but is also the eye of the person in the film."

[239] This fact should not be overlooked in any attempt to discover the significance of the portrait. Edel asks: "...is this not still another instance in which the description is furnished by the narrator? It is he who tells us what's in the picture ... we must take it as given: indeed we have no alternative." "An Introductory Essay," op. cit., p. xix. Miriam Allott, however, notes that "the reactions of those who look at it exist outside the range of the narrator's subjective impressions." "Henry James and the Fantasticated Conceit: The Sacred Fount," The Northern Miscellany of Literary Criticism, no. 1 (Autumn 1953), 81. Attempting to be even more explicit, William B. Stein suggests that the figure in the portrait, "instead of being described by the first-person narrator or one of the other characters, ... is evoked by a cold, intrusive voice in the present tense which sets out the facts as they stand." "The Sacred Fount and British Aestheticism," p. 169. Viewing this difference of critical opinion as one of the reasons for the portrait's ambiguous meaning, Robert L. Gale agrees with Edel that "only the strange narrator tells us what it looks like, directly by presumably accurate description," yet differs

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with Allott's interpretation in his view that the narrator indirectly provides another avenue of interpretation "through his perhaps biased reporting of the words of other observers of it...." "The Marble Faun and The Sacred Fount: A Resemblance," Studi Americani, 8 (1962), 30. This brief survey of conflicting critical opinion is enough to suggest the complexity of James's narrative technique.

[240] Edel, "An Introductory Essay," p. xviii.

[241] Stein, "The Sacred Fount and British Aestheticism," pp. 168-9.

[242] Tintner, "The Spoils of Henry James," p. 247.

[243] Cf. Walter Isle, "The Romantic and the Real: Henry James's The Sacred Fount," Henry James: Modern Judgments, ed. Tony Tanner ([London], [1968]), p. 260: "Customary symbolism would indicate that May Server is right, that the mask is appearance, lifeless, while the face is reality, life. But the sort of reality that is hidden behind the narrator's theory of the sacred fount is death-in-life, as is evident from his description of May Server ..., and this is the effect of the pale, livid man in black. The mask then has perhaps the quality of life that he attributes to it." Cf., also, Dorothea Krook's reading: "Mrs. Server expresses the normal, commonsense view when she 'sees' the Man to be life--that is, reality --and the Mask death--that is, appearance (the negation of reality); the narrator, taking the unnatural, 'perverse' artist's view, characteristically sees the opposite--that the Mask, the work of art, is life or reality, and the Man death or appearance." "The Sacred Fount," The Ordeal of Consciousness in Henry James (Cambridge, England, 1963), p. 177.

[244] Cf. James Reaney, "The Condition of Light: Henry James's The Sacred Fount," University of Toronto Quarterly, 31, ii (Jan. 1962), 144: "The sacrificial figure dressed in black can either resemble Guy Brissenden old before his time or, when the mask is put on, the beautiful Mrs. Server, intellectually depleted before her time ... In the discussion that takes place as to which face is the one of death, surely the point we are to make is that in their different ways both face and mask represent Death--Life-in-Death for Guy Brissenden, Death-in-Life for Mrs. Server."

[245] Blackall, pp. 142-3.

[246] Cargill, "The Sacred Fount," The Novels of Henry James (New York, 1961), pp. 292-3.

[247] Stein, "The Sacred Fount and British Aestheticism," p. 170.

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[248] Blackall, p. 141.

[249] Cf. Gale, "The Marble Faun and The Sacred Fount," p. 31: "...the artist has given us the picture of an unmasking, while the narrator is busy trying to lift the masks from those under his scrutiny." Cf., also, Stein, "The Sacred Fount and British Aestheticism," p. 169: "[The facts surrounding the description of the painting] embrace both the portrait and its observers, all of whom wear masks--their prescribed social personas."

[250] Blackall, p. 135. Cf. Bowden's identical remarks concerning Isabel Archer in The Portrait of a Lady: "As Isabel enters further into the tragedy of her marriage to Gilbert Osmond she attempts to hide her suffering, to disguise the natural portrait by art: 'If she wore a mask, it completely covered her face. There was something fixed and mechanical in the serenity painted upon it; this was not an expression, Ralph [Touchett] said--it was a representation.' Isabel is forcing herself into an artificial pose, a false portrait. Her desire is no longer to meet the full shock of life...." The Themes of Henry James, p. 63. It is quite possible that James derived his use of the mask in The Sacred Fount from his earlier treatment in Portrait.

[251] Isle, "The Romantic and the Real," p. 260.

[252] Edel, "An Introductory Essay," p. xx. Edel's image is drawn from two points in the novel. During their midnight conversation, Mrs. Brissenden criticizes the narrator by suggesting: "You see too much ... you're abused by a fine fancy ... you build up houses of cards." (XII,261-2) The narrator's final statement, addressed to Mrs. Brissenden, reads: "... you're costing me a perfect palace of thought!" (XIV,311) Other critics who agree with Edel's interpretation include: Winner ("The conflicting interpretations which the ambiguous portrait elicits symbolize the central problem of reality and appearance." [p. 73]); Isle ("The portrait is consciously ambiguous itself. It represents both death and life, the reality of death-in-life of the face and the artifice of life-in-art of the mask, the appearance which masks reality." [p. 260]); Wilson Follett, "The Simplicity of Henry James," American Review, 1, iii (May-June 1923), 315-25 ("The Sacred Fount is, expressly, a parable of the relation between reality and art...." [p. 320]); Ralph A. Ranald," The Sacred Fount: James's Portrait of the Artist Manqué," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 15, iii (Dec. 1960), 239-48 ("The Sacred Fount, if it is 'about' anything, is about life, and the relationship of art to life." [p. 240]); and, finally, Krook ("...both the Man and the Mask form a picture--that is, both owe their existence or 'life' to the phantasmagoric powers of some artist's imagination, and this gives a last Jamesian turn to the portrait colloquy as a symbolic statement of James's metaphysical position in The Sacred Fount. For it ensures, as completely as the ambiguity, that the metaphysical problem itself--which is reality, which appearance?--shall remain unresolved...." [pp.129-30])

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[253] Edel, "An Introductory Essay," p. vi.

[254] Landon C. Burns, Jr., "Henry James's Mysterious Fount," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 2, iv (Winter 1961), 525-6.

[255] "The Ambiguity of Henry James," A Casebook of Henry James's "The Turn of the Screw", 2nd edn., ed. Gerald Willen (New York, 1969), p. 125. Cf. Quentin Anderson, "The Portrait Theme," The American Henry James, p. 156: "[James often] puts up sign posts of emblematic reference toward which he has an ambivalent attitude. He both wants and does not want to be found out."

[256] Allott, "Symbol and Image," p. 328.

[257] Gale, "The Marble Faun and The Sacred Fount," p. 30. The question of degree aside, however, Gale notices some fundamental resemblances: "...in both novels the action is advanced by the puzzled, puzzling responses of the characters to the pictures, and as those persons seek resemblances they to a degree characterize themselves. Both novelists, then, use challenging pictures, hung in deceptive light, to elucidate character and implement plot, while the postures within the frames are thematically symbolic." (p. 33)

[258] According to Arnold P. Hinchliffe, "Henry James's The Sacred Fount," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 2, i (Spring 1960), 93, "it is in The Sacred Fount that [James] makes his first significant use of symbols (as opposed to motifs or extended images or recurring metaphors)."

[259] Cf. Edel, "An Introductory Essay," p. xxx: "...what is Lambert Strether doing but once more being the sensitive observer seeking to fathom a relationship, that between Madame de Vionnet and Chad? Madame de Vionnet is again a May Server, at whose sacred fount Chad has acquired poise and a measure of polish. It is she who is left depleted at the end." The analogies are indeed striking.

[260] Citing R.P. Blackmur and Leon Edel, Oscar Cargill terms The Sacred Fount "a partially buried and forgotten milestone on the road to the great subjective novels of Joyce and Proust and Virginia Woolf." "The Sacred Fount," The Novels of Henry James, p. 296.

[261] Isle, "The Romantic and the Real," p. 264. Unlike Proust's hero, however, writes Isle, "James's narrator has not had and never will have this final vision, for James in his synthesis of the romantic and the real has ruled out the separate artistic vision which is all the narrator can achieve ... for James's art is always the world he lives in, of the individual alienated from but struggling with his world. It is the true novelist's vision."

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Chapter Four

Marcel Proust and Painting

> "Grâce à l'art, au lieu de voir un seul monde, le nôtre, nous le voyons se multiplier, et, autant qu'il y a d'artistes originaux, autant nous avons de mondes à notre disposition, plus différents les uns des autres que ceux qui roulent dans l'infini et, bien des siècles après qu'est éteint le foyer dont il émanait, qu'il s'appelât Rembrandt ou Ver Meer, nous envoient encore leur rayon spécial."
>
> (Le Temps Retrouvé)

Although painting is merely one among several arts which Proust chose as the vehicle for the expression of his aesthetic theories, the amount of secondary criticism which has been directed towards an investigation of Proust's connections with painting attests to its privileged position in the writer's aesthetic philosophy.[1] In addition to four full-length studies of the subject,[2] numerous articles, essays, and chapters in longer works have explored virtually every aspect of Proustian aesthetics as it relates to painting.

It is therefore natural to ask why yet another study of this subject is warranted. Faced with this same question, J. Theodore Johnson, Jr., provided the logical answer when he argued that "although innumerable writers have dealt with

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Proust and painting, what has emerged is a very confusing, contradictory picture of the actual role of the painter not only in Proust's fiction, but in his life as well. Misinformation and hastily drawn conclusions have not only diverted attention toward the insignificant, but have also led to many erroneous conclusions."[3] Several of Proust's contemporaries were misled by the "social butterfly" aspect of his youth into believing that his tastes in art were rather mediocre and based upon a dilettante's appreciation of aesthetic beauty.[4] Early critics, while somewhat more objective in their treatment of the subject, wasted much energy in tracking down possible sources or clefs for the various fictional works of art which Proust attributed to Elstir, the representative of the painter's domain in the novel; this, despite the author's repeated claim that his fictional artists and their fictive works were based upon no single source, that they were the product of a syncretic fusion of traits from many diverse sources.[5] Another error common among earlier critics was the erroneous substitution of Proust's name for that of the fictional narrator(s) in matters of artistic taste.[6] Even more serious was the transference of the aesthete Charles Swann's shortcomings, i.e., his idolatrous worship of certain works of art as a reflection of real-life acquaintances (or vice-versa), to the author himself, an identification which was certainly not intended by Proust.[7] Lastly, the posthumous publication of Proust's early novel Jean Santeuil and the recent attempts by Philip Kolb and other Proustian scholars to consolidate the author's vast

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correspondence have made previously untapped information available to more recent critics, providing an overview of the subject which was formerly not possible.

The present chapter cannot deal with the question of Proust and painting in any comprehensive fashion. The emphasis throughout will therefore fall upon key sections of A la Recherche du Temps Perdu--most notably in A l'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs, which contains various aesthetic discussions between the narrator and Elstir, as well as the former's reflections on the fictional painter's art in Le Côté de Guermantes (2) and elsewhere.

As background to this analysis, Proust's visual equipment and the psychological factors determining his appreciation of art are examined. His tastes for various artistic periods and national schools, as well as his individual preferences for such painters as Chardin, Vermeer, Rembrandt, and Moreau, are explored by means of critical statements contained in Proust's fiction, essays, letters, and responses to questionnaires and interviews. Proust's contacts with painters and art critics, many of whom he befriended, are examined in an attempt to shed some light on the degree of intimacy with the art world Proust actually possessed. His aesthetic theories are surveyed to show how much they owed to Ruskin, Whistler, and other aestheticians--and what portion represented the writer's personal contribution to the field of art criticism.

The balance of the chapter is concerned with the fictional painter Elstir's oeuvre. The artist's painting entitled

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"Le Port de Carquethuit" is examined in detail in order to demonstrate the application of Proust's theories of artistic creation and perception to a work of art. Whereas previous studies have concentrated upon the Impressionist heritage evident in Elstir's landscapes and genre scenes, the present chapter explores the psychological and aesthetic implications of such works as Elstir's portrait of Odette de Crécy as "Miss Sacripant" in order to link this work and others like it to Proust's conception of the human personality as it is reflected in his fictional universe. An emphasis upon the portrait, both in Proust's fictional and non-fictional writings, will be seen to play a central role in his appreciation and understanding of painting.

Proust's Receptivity to Art:

Unlike the writers discussed in the preceding chapters, Proust was never a professional art critic and therefore wrote no official salon criticism. While he did, in his youth, entertain the notion of pursuing some vocation related to museums and art criticism,[8] he never deluded himself into believing that he possessed the gift of manual dexterity in sufficient measure to enable him to pursue a career as a painter. When asked, late in life, what profession he would have chosen had he not opted for his present vocation, Proust responded: "...si je me trouvais dans la situation que vous spécifiez, je prendrais comme profession manuelle, précisément celle que j'exerce actuellement: écrivain."[9]

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Despite this admission, Proust's letters--particularly those addressed to his close friend Reynaldo Hahn--bear witness to the writer's irrepressible desire to graphically express his innermost thoughts. While most of these drawings do not rise above the level of capricious and inventive doodling, they do demonstrate Proust's conscious desire to emulate the styles of various schools of painting as he was subsequently to do for literature in his pastiches.[10] The artistic impulse rather than the actual technical degree of accomplishment is significant here, for it clearly demonstrates Proust's familiarity with a diverse assortment of painterly schools and styles; more important, it illustrates the visual predilections of Proust's thought processes.

Another indication of Proust's habit of thinking in terms of painting is provided by the game which he and his close circle of friends devised for their own amusement. According to Marie Nordlinger, Reynaldo Hahn's British cousin, "Comme Swann, nous nous amusions à désigner à nos amis des portraitistes dont la manière convenait à leur genre. On m'attribua de suite le Titien.... Pour Madrazo [Frédéric de Madrazo, a fashionable painter who subsequently married Reynaldo Hahn's sister], rien de plus facile: El Greco. On chercha longtemps pour Marcel. Ricard? Carrière? Courbet première manière? Peut-être Pisanello? Et pourquoi pas Whistler?"[11] At times, painting reflected not merely a similar manner of expression, but an identical physical resemblance. Lucien Daudet, another of Proust's close friends, recalled that during their visits to the Louvre his companion

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"tombait en arrêt devant le monsieur au nez rouge et à la robe rouge, qui sourit à un enfant, et s'écriait: 'Mais c'est le portrait vivant de M. du Lau! C'est d'une ressemblance incroyable!' ...."[12] Where Proust discovered this game of painterly transpositions is not certain; he may have come across it in his readings of the Goncourts,[13] Ruskin,[14] or perhaps even in the theoretical writings of the Pre-Raphaelites.[15] The testimony of his friends, however, seems to suggest that this habit was already ingrained in Proust's personality during early adolescence, i.e., before he had immersed himself in aesthetic criticism. As with his graphic pastiches, this amusing pastime strengthened Proust's visual acuity, increased his familiarity with paintings belonging to a wide range of historical periods and styles, and paved the way for the various uses to which painting would be put in his great novel.

Proust's curious intermingling of painting and reality has led some critics to take the extreme position that the writer could only appreciate the exterior world in terms of art, i.e., that he was incapable of seeing reality directly, without the aid of painterly comparisons.[16] Proust was primarily responsible for propagating this simplistic belief, a fact which his correspondence confirms. Writing to his friend, the art critic Jean-Louis Vaudoyer, after having visited an exhibition of Ingres' paintings, Proust complained: "Je regrette d'avoir mal regardé la vue de Rome sur laquelle se détache un des hommes peints par Ingres. Comme je ne connais pas Rome, je voudrais à force de vues de ce genre et à grand

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renfort de Corot, etc., deviner." (May 1921. Corr.Gén.,IV,89) That Proust did not place much faith in the reliability and accuracy of such a procedure is evident from the remarks of the young narrator in the Combray section of the novel; his grandmother's gift of photographic reproductions of paintings by the masters illustrating various geographical sites has its limitations: "L'idée que je pris de Venise d'après un dessin du Titien qui est censé avoir pour fond la lagune, était certainement beaucoup moins exacte que celle que m'eussent donnée de simples photographies."[17] While paintings may not have provided Proust with a literal rendering of sites he longed to see, they supplied him with a poetic insight into the nature of reality which proved to be far more valuable to the creative artist he was to become.

One factor whose roots were deeply imbedded in Proust's personality was his ability to appreciate art completely only if "recollected in tranquillity." He was fully aware of this peculiar and highly idiosyncratic aspect of his nature: "...je ne fais presque la connaissance d'un objet que quand je m'en sépare," he confided to Mme Catusse, a dealer in antiques and curios and a friend of Proust's mother.[18] This psychically based delayed reaction to art was just one aspect of Proust's total Weltanschauung; according to Juliette Monnin-Hornung, "L'univers tangible, visible, lui apparaît comme émietté, non cohérent en tant que matériel, et ne pouvant retrouver son unité qu'au sein de l'esprit, sa vision de la peinture correspond forcément à cette particularité de sa vie psychique.[19] Instead of viewing this fact in a negative light,

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i.e., seeing in this inability to grasp the essence of an object or scene a passive, fearful attitude towards external reality, it would be more sensible to regard this process as one of enrichment, the bestowal by a unique sensibility of an added dimension of poetry upon a prosaic universe.[20]

Proust's visual equipment, in conjunction with his formidable memory, enabled him to experience art in this manner. The unique qualities of his vision did not escape the notice of his contemporaries. In the words of Lucien Daudet,

> Sa vision avait le don de grossir sans déformer; on eût dit que sa rétine, douée d'un pouvoir supplémentaire, d'un privilège spécial, lui permettait de voir tout en plus grand; une figure prenait les proportions d'un paysage, un mouvement de physionomie inaperçu de tout le monde, avait pour lui l'importance d'un masque ... Il forçait sa vision à être rapide et universelle; ses yeux recueillaient avec un magnifique grossissement ce que son génie classerait, décanterait et définirait ensuite pour nous le rendre avec la beauté native, la fleur première, mais enrichies par une opération magique de ce même génie.[21]

Georges Cattaui has attributed this unique quality to a paradoxical combination of elements in the writer's visual make-up: "Proust unissait, ce qui est rare, l'amplitude de la vision à l'acuité du regard; il voyait l'ensemble et le détail; il était spacieux, mais il était précis...."[22] Coupled with this visual gift was Proust's remarkable power of concentration, his ability to visually fasten upon an object and extract the essence of its beauty. Reynaldo Hahn's account of the writer's fascination with a rosebush in the garden of Madeleine Lemaire's country château at Réveillon provides a good example of Proust's awesome gift for unflinching obser-

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vation:

> Ayant fait le tour du château, je le retrouverai à la même place, regardant fixement les roses. La tête penchée, le visage grave, il clignait des yeux, les sourcils légèrement froncés comme par un effort d'attention passionné ... son être entier, concentré dans un travail transcendant de pénétration et d'aspiration alternées, entrait, pour ainsi dire, en état de transe ... son intelligence et sa sensibilité surhumaines, tantôt par une série de fulgurations aiguës, tantôt par une lente et irrésistible infiltration, parvenaient jusqu'à la racine des choses et découvraient ce que personne ne pouvait voir.... [23]

How closely Proust's visual abilities paralleled those of the Impressionist painters has been the subject of several studies. Speaking solely of his powers of observation, as distinct from the "impressionism" inherent in his descriptive techniques,[24] one finds the critics divided on this issue--with those in favor of such a rapprochement clearly outnumbering those opposed. It is difficult to accept the notion that the scientific basis of the Impressionist vision, i.e., the fragmentation of forms under the dissolving action of light and the study of color in terms of its constituent elements, was one which Proust's poetically enhanced vision of reality could easily have accommodated; conversely, the Impressionists did not share the writer's fondness for the psychological recreation of an image perceived in external reality. As Antun Polanšćak notes, there are even greater philosophical differences separating the writer from his near-contemporaries:

> Comme les peintres impressionnistes, Proust suscite en nous la sensation du monde extérieur. Mais tandis que les premiers se servent seulement des effets lu-

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> mineux et coloriés pour atteindre leur but, Proust emploie tous les moyens disponibles pour créer la sensation complète de tout ce qui est capable d'agir sur nous ... Proust nous découvre l'enchaînement ininterrompu de la réalité, tandis que le peintre impressionniste se limite à un moment de cette suite; le second emploie le passé défini et le premier l'imparfait ... C'est la différence entre l'écrivain impressionniste et le peintre impressionniste. De plus, les images de Proust ne présentèrent jamais un moment isolé d'une action, elles font partie d'une immense filet qui se met en mouvement aussitôt que l'on touche à l'une d'elles. [25]

It is this conscious effort on the part of Proust to link the evanescent and fragmentary moment to some universal, eternal truth which separates him from the purely physical and spontaneous vision of the Impressionists.[26]

Of Painters and Periods:

Blessed with the visual apparatus and psychic ability to appreciate art, Proust immersed himself in the fashionable world of society painters and art critics. Unlike Zola, who rubbed elbows with Manet and a host of as yet undiscovered painters in their bohemian circles, Proust primarily associated with artists who had already arrived: "...instead of going from art to society," writes Maurice Chernowitz, "Proust went to art through society."[27] Some of Proust's own friends were painters: Lucien Daudet had studied painting at Julian's studio and was reputed to be Whistler's only French student;[28] Jacques-Emile Blanche, who painted the portrait of Proust which is most closely associated with the writer, knew him as early as 1891, since both spent their summer vacations at Auteuil; Proust must have gained an immense amount of tech-

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nical knowledge concerning painting as a result of his frequent visits to Blanche's studio;[29] Marie Nordlinger was a gifted watercolorist in addition to being a talented designer of art nouveau objects in Bing's studio;[30] Robert de Montesquiou, Proust's professeur de beauté, also dabbled in the art which he investigated as a critic;[31] Marie Scheikevitch, a mutual friend of Proust and Reynaldo Hahn, was briefly married to the son of the painter Carolus-Duran, a fact which may have contributed to her artistic gifts.[32] Besides Blanche, Proust's professional painter friends included Paul Baignères, who also painted a portrait of the novelist.[33] Proust's relationship with the painter Jean Béraud was of a more formal nature; the latter served as his second in a duel against Jean Lorrain.[34] Frédéric de Madrazo, a possible model for the second-rate sculptor Ski in the Verdurin circle, may have supplied Proust with valuable insights into the technical aspects of painting.[35] The verve and wit of Jean-Louis Forain's caricatures were not lost upon Proust;[36] he had numerous occasions to discuss these drawings with the artist in the salons of Madeleine Lemaire, a flower painter (and possible model for the character of Mme Villeparisis), and Mme Straus. Proust was the target of Sem's caricatures, a fact which did not deter him from appreciating this artist's versatility. The aristocratic portraiture of the Italian painter Boldini could not have failed to impress Proust, who visited his studio on one occasion to study a portrait of his mentor Montesquiou in the hopes of meeting the latter.[37] Other fashionable portrait painters whom Proust met included Georges Clairin,[38] likewise a regular at Mme Lemaire's salon, and La Gandara, whom Proust

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mentions by name as the artist responsible for the portrait of his fictional hero Jean Santeuil.[39] Proust held the painter Helleu in especial esteem, both as a friend and as a gifted artist. They were introduced to one another by Montesquiou at Madelaine Lemaire's atelier. Helleu taught Proust the value of restricted color harmonies and instilled in him a love for eighteenth-century art; Proust repaid the debt by incorporating several of the aesthetic theories of this painter in his fictional artist's program.[40] Edouard Detaille, the painter of French military scenes, and Léon Bonnat, both of whom could be seen at Mme Lemaire's gatherings, were other fashionable society painters in whose circles Proust most probably mingled.[41] Lastly, the almost totally forgotten Spanish painter José-Maria Sert was a great friend and favorite of the novelist.[42]

Lest one accept the false notion that Proust only associated with fashionable society painters and mediocre artistic talents, it would be wise to recall that Proust met and appreciated the works of some of the greatest figures in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century art. Jean Autret cites Manet and Renoir among Proust's acquaintances.[43] His single meeting with Whistler was enough to convince him of the painter's genius.[44] Proust must certainly have encountered Degas at Mme Straus's gatherings. Because of the painter's avowed hatred of homosexuals, I.H.E. Dunlop surmises that "it seems improbable that they talked much," yet he also notes that "they had many acquaintances and friends in common," most notably Charles Haas and Charles Ephrussi, both of whom contributed to the character of Charles Swann.[45]

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Among the older generation of fin-de-siècle painters, Proust could have met Puvis de Chavannes at Madeleine Lemaire's salon. The novelist's familiarity with the works of the more recent Symbolist/Nabi painter Maurice Denis and the intimist Vuillard is a matter of record; in his correspondence with Blanche concerning the preface which the painter asked him to write for his book Propos de Peintre, Proust states: "...j'aimerais avoir communication de ce que vous dites de Vuillard et de Denis. Pour deux raisons: vous me demandez de supprimer ce que j'ai dit à leur sujet ... Mais, d'autre part, comme ce sont deux artistes dont par hasard je connais la peinture--et la personne--je serais content de mettre une ligne sur chacun d'eux...." (25 Jan. 1919. Corr.Gén.,III,157) Proust's friend Fernand Gregh suggested that the writer may have met Vuillard through the offices of the Revue Blanche,[46] which published some of Proust's early critical essays (e.g., "Contre L'Obscurité" [1896]). They could also have met at the home of Antoine Bibesco, whose admiration for the works of Vuillard was certainly communicated to Proust.[47] In addition to meeting Vuillard, Proust could also have encountered Bonnard, Maillol, and Odilon Redon at Mme Bibesco's salon.[48]

Antoine Bibesco seems to have been the first person to link Proust's name with that of Cézanne,[49] a connection which lacks any factual basis. The error has recently been repeated by E.F.N. Jephcott in his comparative study of Proust and Rilke.[50] Some writers have even attempted to see in Proust's method of composition a technique analogous to Cézanne's painterly style.[51] Proust never met Cézanne and was

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unable to appreciate the experimental nature of his art; not even Zola, his closest friend, understood the modernist dimensions of the painter's geometric style.

On the positive side, however, Proust recognized the genius of Pablo Picasso. In the letter to Blanche previously cited, Proust described Picasso as "un peintre dont l'oeuvre et la personne ne me sont pas inconnues." (p.158) According to I.H.E. Dunlop, "[Proust] saw Picasso's cubist paintings almost by accident, late at night, at the home of a Chilean beauty, Madame Errazuriz,[52] and met Picasso himself at a memorable dinner party given by Violet and Sydney Schiff in honour of the Ballet Russe. Among the guests were Stravinsky and Joyce."[53] Although Proust may not have grasped the full significance of Picasso's pictorial experiments,[54] he knew that he was in the presence of a gifted artistic personality. In his preface to Blanche's book, he praised his friend for having done justice "au grand, à l'admirable Picasso, lequel a précisément concentré tous les traits de Cocteau en une image d'une rigidité si noble qu'à côté d'elle se dégradent un peu dans mon souvenir les plus charmants Carpaccio de Venise."[55] Admittedly, the comparison is a bit unorthodox if considered solely in art-historical terms; but if one recalls Proust's overriding passion for the art of the Italian painter, one can gain some idea of Proust's admiration for his Spanish contemporary. A recent critic has gone so far as to suggest that Proust's knowledge of Cubist art theory left its mark upon certain passages of his novel.[56]

Proust's wide range of acquaintances also included mu-

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seum curators and art critics. His school companion Pierre Lavallée went on to become, according to Robert Proust, "conservateur de la bibliothèque et du musée de l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts. De ce fait il s'est trouvé avoir entre les mains une splendide collection de dessins, dont Marcel était très heureux de lui entendre parler, car sa santé ne lui permettait guère de la visiter."[57] Charles Ephrussi, an avid art collector and critic, assumed the directorship of the Gazette des Beaux-Arts; Proust had first met him at princess Mathilde's social gatherings.[58] Jacques-Emile Blanche's art criticism was, on the whole, praised by Proust; the latter's letters to the painter/art critic are sincere and display a genuine sense of admiration for his friend's multiple talents.[59] The professional art critic Jean-Louis Vaudoyer was one of Proust's most constant companions during the latter years of his life; it was in the company of Vaudoyer that Proust visited, in May of 1921, the exhibition of Dutch paintings at the Jeu de Paume which contained his beloved View of Delft by Vermeer.[60] According to Proust's brother, "Marcel aimait beaucoup les livres de Vaudoyer et nombre de ses lettres témoignent du plaisir qu'il a prit à lire en particulier les Délices de l'Italie."[61] A more formal relationship existed between Proust and Bernard Berenson, the distinguished critic of Italian Renaissance art.[62] Proust's discussions of church architecture and medieval art in A la Recherche owed as much to Emile Mâle, an authority on Gothic art, as they did to Ruskin;[63] he corresponded regularly with Mâle and obtained useful hints as to which historical sights

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in Normandy and elsewhere in France he might well visit.[64] Chernowitz notes that Proust, who frequented the home of the Daudets, "used to see Edmond de Goncourt [there], whose conversation stimulated his interest in eighteenth-century masters."[65] The individual from whom he gained the most personal and rarefied knowledge of such painters as Moreau, Monticelli, El Greco, da Vinci, and Whistler was Robert de Montesquiou. While Proust was rather slavish in his praise of this arbiter of taste when corresponding with him directly, he was motivated by the deepest conviction when he told Jacques Boulenger: "Aujourd'hui je songe que le meilleur critique d'art de notre époque est Robert de Montesquiou et que personne ne lui demande d'articles," later adding "...c'est un critique d'art, un essayiste merveilleux, qui peint comme personne, en prose, l'oeuvre d'un peintre, d'un sculpteur qu'il aime." (June 1921. Corr.Gén.,III,240 & 253 resp.)

Although Proust was prevented by his illness from travelling extensively beyond the confines of his native France, he did manage to make four separate trips to other countries: twice to Belgium and Holland and twice to Italy. In October of 1898 Proust travelled to Amsterdam and probably attended the huge exhibition of Rembrandt's paintings and drawings.[66] He undertook a second voyage to Belgium and Holland in late September or early October of 1902, accompanied by his friend Bertrand de Fénelon; it was there, at the Hague museum, that he caught his first glimpse of Vermeer's View of Delft, the painting that left such an indelible impression that, almost twenty years later, Proust confided to Vaudoyer: "Depuis

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que j'ai vu au Musée de La Haye la Vue de Delft, j'ai su que j'avais vu le plus beau tableau du monde." (2 May 1921. Corr. Gén.,IV,86) Proust conscientiously visited several other museums and art galleries while in Holland and Belgium.[67]

Proust's two trips to Venice have received a great deal of attention by critics.[68] According to Louis Védrines, "...Proust effectua, en cette même année 1900, deux voyages à Venise: l'un au mois de mai, avec sa mère, l'autre au mois d'octobre, mais seul cette fois."[69] This fact, long ignored by earlier writers, has led a recent critic to see in the Venice episode of La Fugitive a fictional transposition or fusion of Proust's two sojourns in that enchanting city.[70] Marie Nordlinger's recollection of the moment of meeting between herself and Proust in Venice begins: "Par une radieuse matinée de mai, nous vîmes, en effet, ma tante, Reynaldo et moi, arriver à Venise Marcel et sa mère. Quelques heures après, nous commencions, à l'ombre de Saint-Marc, à corriger les épreuves de notre traduction de la Bible [d'Amiens]."[71] Armed with Ruskin's Stones of Venice, Saint Mark's Rest, and the Guide to the Academy of Fine Arts of Venice, Proust visited the Academy, where he was able to study the series of eight paintings which Carpaccio had devoted to The Life of Saint Ursula (discussed by Ruskin in Saint Mark's Rest) as well as the sketches of Leonardo da Vinci.[72] During that first trip, Proust also visited Padua, where he experienced the revelation of Giotto's frescoes depicting the Vices and Virtues at the Arena Chapel.[73] He also visited the now destroyed Ovetari Chapel in the church of Eremitani, where he

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beheld frescoes by Mantegna.[74] According to Jeffrey Meyers, Proust saw Gentile Bellini's Portrait of Sultan Mohammed II on this trip.[75] Whether he also had a chance to study paintings by Veronese while in Venice is not certain; there is no specific reference to any of this master's paintings in A la Recherche.[76]

Despite Proust's comparatively short stay in Italy, the memory of these works never left him. Paul Brach, a close friend, consulted Proust before departing for Italy: "J'ai eu l'occasion," he writes, "...de l'entendre évoquer la ville légendaire. Saint-Marc, Sant'Alvise, San-Zaccharie, toutes les églises revivaient, chaque tableau dans son cadre, chaque peintre à son rang ... il rappelait ses préférences, parlant des ouvrages qu'il avait lus et qui l'avaient aidé."[77] Although the scope of his travels was narrow and the number of painters he could have studied at first hand was primarily restricted to the museum holdings of Holland, Belgium, and Italy--specifically Venice and Padua[78]--Proust extracted a lifetime's worth of aesthetic contemplation during this brief idyll. Quality rather than quantity, as Charly Guyot has suggested, was the guiding principle behind the novelist's artistic pilgrimage.[79]

If Proust was unable to visit the museums of other European cities, he had the rich treasures of several Paris museums and galleries--not to mention the private collections of friends--at his disposal. The writer's early visits to the Louvre have been preserved for posterity by a number of

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his intimate acquaintances. Pierre Lavallée recalled: "Souvent nous sortions ensemble. Nous allions au musée du Louvre, à l'époque où il publiait ses Portraits de peintres [1896]; il s'arrêtait devant l'Embarquement pour Cythère, devant le Duc de Richemond [sic], de van Dyck, devant le Départ des cavaliers, de Cuyp...."[80] Marie Nordlinger's account of their regular trips to the Louvre and various art galleries captures the excitement of their aesthetic discussions:

> Avec quelle joie nous revenions aux musées, au Louvre surtout, non seulement parce que cela faisait plaisir, mais pour mieux comprendre, contrôler nos impressions ... Aux promenades dans les salles de dessins italiens succédaient quelquefois des visites chez Durand Ruel, où on découvrait tantôt un Manet, tantôt un Lautrec ou un nouveau Monet. Les écoles anciennes et modernes nous attiraient, nous passionnaient par le jeu de leurs contrastes et leur profonde unité. On se méfiait tant des idées reçues, des suffrages publics ... Et ce fut au gré de ces pèlerinages sans cesse renouvelés à travers les formes changeantes de l'art que se forma l'expérience esthétique de Proust et qu'il arriva à son tour à "distinguer." [81]

For a change of pace--and period--Proust and his friend Robert de Billy visited museums housing treasures belonging to earlier civilizations: "Une autre fois," writes Billy, "ce fut le musée de Cluny, la dame à la licorne, les plats à reflets métalliques, les hauts dressoirs sculptés et les petites statues de pleureurs de Claus Sluter."[82] In addition to visiting Durand-Ruel's, Proust also paid occasional visits to the art establishments of Bing and Gallé, where he would order expensive and exotic gifts for his close friends.[83]

The art collections which these same acquaintances had amassed was sufficient to keep Proust preoccupied for the

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remainder of his active career. According to Dunlop, "Madame Straus had Boudins and Monets,[84] including his Bras de Seine, près Giverny; Antoine Bibesco collected Vuillards; Blanche had Renoirs and Fantin-Latours;[85] and Montesquiou owned Helleus, Boldinis, Whistlers and Monticellis...."[86] To this already impressive list Monnin-Hornung adds "les Derains, les Renoirs, les Van Dongens d'Abel Desjardin...."[87] As for earlier painters, Maria de Madrazo (Reynaldo Hahn's sister) possessed a veritable storehouse of old masters: "What a museum!" Proust exclaimed to Georges de Lauris. "A really heavenly Greco with tones as precious, in their own way, as those of a Vermeer, and with unimpaired freshness and an incomparable glaze. Also a small Tiepolo, some Raphael drawings, compositions by Titian which he never painted, engraved during his lifetime, Goya engravings and drawings of a delicious obscenity, a La Tour, in short a collection as interesting as could be...."[88] In addition to visiting the Moreau collection in the artist's house-turned-museum (1898), Proust could sample Moreau's art in the homes of Mme Straus, Montesquiou, and Charles Ephrussi[89] (who also owned Monets). In his study of Proust and Moreau, Mizuho Hokari notes that "une exposition de la collection particulière de Charles Hayem eut lieu au musée du Luxembourg dès le 31 janvier 1899; on y compte quatorze tableaux de Moreau, inconnus jusqu'alors du public. On imagine aisément quel enthousiasme cette exposition soulevait en Proust, à lire la subtile description qu'il fait, au début de son Gustave Moreau, de trois des tableaux exposés: l'Amour et les Muses, Bethsabée et le Calvaire."[90]

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As for Vermeer, Paul Baignères owned a copy of a painting by this master.[91] Hélène Adhémar has suggested that "[Proust] avait pu voir chez Athalin, oncle d'un de ses amis, la Dame au chapeau rouge," adding that "à deux reprises, en 1910 et en 1912, Helleu essaiera d'acheter les deux toiles de Vermeer qui sont alors sur le marché, la Peseuse de perles de la comtesse de Ségur (Musée de Philadelphie) et le Soldat et la femme (collection Frick) qu'il poussera jusqu'à 500.000F."[92] Clearly, if Proust had chosen never to leave his native Paris, he could still have enjoyed a rich and rewarding contact with the works of some of the greatest artists of the nineteenth century, as well as those of earlier periods.

A few critics who seek to minimize Proust's interest in the artists of the past point to the fact that this supposed "amateur de peinture" possessed no works of note in his own home:

> Bien que sa fortune lui permît de faire l'acquisition de bon nombre de tableaux, gravures, sculptures, livres et objets d'art [writes Aurel Diaconu], Proust n'éprouva jamais la tentation...d'en faire collection et il se contenta d'aimer l'art de façon presque platonique. Mis à part quelques portraits de famille sans grande valeur artistique, les seuls objets d'art qu'il eut en sa possession à son domicile consistaient en deux reproductions, l'une de la Joconde, l'autre d'une Infante de Vélasquez, à quoi il faut peut-être ajouter un paysage de Helleu que le peintre lui avait donné.[93] C'est là évidemment assez peu pour témoigner des préoccupations picturales du maître des lieux. [94]

In addition to containing factual inaccuracies concerning the works actually owned by Proust and his parents,[95] Diaconu's statement fails to take into account the novelist's subjective theory of interior decoration, which Proust clear-

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ly outlined in a letter (Oct.-Nov.1906) to Mme Catusse: "...pour mon compte," he wrote, "tout tableau qu'on n'a pas désiré, acheté avec peine et amour,[96] est atroce dans un appartement. William Morris a dit: 'N'ayez jamais dans votre appartement que des choses que vous trouviez belles ou que vous jugiez belles.'[97] Or une armoire, une table même laides, même inutiles, cela évoque encore une idée d'utilité. Mais un tableau qui ne plaît pas, c'est une horreur. Et je peux le dire de tous ceux, bons ou mauvais, qui seront là."[98] Proust gave some indication of the type of art he preferred to surround himself with in his essay entitled "Journées de Lecture" (which originally served as the preface to his translation of Ruskin's Sesame and Lilies):

> Je laisse les gens de goût orner leur demeure avec la reproduction des chefs-d'oeuvre qu'ils admirent et décharger leur mémoire du soin de leur conserver une image précieuse en la confiant à un cadre de bois sculpté. Je laisse les gens de goût faire de leur chambre l'image même de leur goût et la remplir seulement de choses qu'il puisse approuver. Pour moi, je ne me sens vivre et penser que dans une chambre où tout est la création et le langage de vies profondément différentes de la mienne, d'un goût opposé au mien, où je ne retrouve rien de ma pensée consciente, où mon imagination s'exalte en se sentant plongée au sein du non-moi....[99]

Judging from these two statements of aesthetic preference, the arguments put forth by Diaconu and other critics lose much--if not all--of their validity; they fail to grasp the fact that Proust had no need of the physical object to engage in artistic contemplation; his peculiar psychic mechanism and his retentive memory presented him with an image more concrete than the actual painting hanging on the museum walls.[100]

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Proust's early artistic tastes can be deduced from the responses he provided to various questionnaires and childhood albums. At about the age of thirteen or fourteen he answered the question "Your favourite painters and composers" with "Meissonnier [sic], Mozart, Gounod."[101] At twenty, he had clearly rejected the grandiose conceptions and minute renderings of Meissonier's military paintings; he now expressed a preference for the more introspective, psychological, and suggestive school of art, responding to the same question "Mes peintres favoris" with "Léonard de Vinci, Rembrandt."[102] When he came to write Les Plaisirs et les Jours, with its section entitled "Portrait de Peintres," Proust's choice of painters clearly reflected this dual inheritance: the naturalistic world of forms was represented by Cuyp and Potter, while the poetic world of thought was personified by Watteau and Van Dyck.[103]

The accounts written by Lucien Daudet and Robert de Billy also give some indication of Proust's preferences for specific painters and works of art at this rather early stage in his artistic development. "Je me rappelle ainsi de longues stations devant les deux 'Philosophes' de Rembrandt," writes Daudet, "les différences ingénieuses et captivantes que Marcel Proust découvrait et m'expliquait entre l'un et l'autre ... ou bien, dans la Salle des Primitifs [du Louvre]... son admiration pour Fra Angelico, dont il appelait les roses et les jaunes des couleurs 'crémeuses et comestibles'; sa connaissance parfaite de tous les passages des Ecritures transposés par le peintre ... son étonnement devant Ucello [sic] qu'il

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comparait si justement à certains Japonais...."[104] According to Billy, "...les Bergers d'Ariadne et, en général, les Poussin n'intéressèrent pas Marcel ... L'atmosphère dorée des fins de journée plus éclatante chez Claude Lorrain, plus intime chez Cuyp, le retinrent. Devant l'Embarquement pour Cythère, il parla des Fêtes Galantes et de l'agonie de Verlaine qui commençait et qui dura cinq ans encore ... Puis il s'arrêta longtemps devant le duc de Richmond de Van Dyck...."[105] Some of these painters--notably Rembrandt and Watteau--were to hold Proust's attention and interest well into his mature years, while others--Cuyp, Potter, and Van Dyck--were to join Meissonier and Gleyre in the pantheon of forgotten masters. Proust's sure instincts guided him towards an appreciation of those painters whose more universal appeal were to form the basis of several critical essays devoted to a largely psychological examination of their art.

Proust's aesthetic tastes were not restricted to any particular national school or period. He marveled at the beauty of prehistoric cave paintings,[106] longed to visit exhibits of Egyptian and Assyrian art,[107] and was familiar enough with Etruscan artifacts to draw concrete analogies with the artistic style of his own epoch;[108] Indian art seems to have been of special interest to Proust;[109] Ruskin must certainly have played a major role in exposing him to the world of early Italian primitive painters[110]--despite the attempts by his friends to denigrate all pre-Baroque art.[111] This eclecticism points to Proust's far-ranging interest in the entire spectrum of human achievement in the visual arts.[112]

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In terms of national schools, Thomas W. Bussom has divided up the seventy-eight references to individual painters[113] in A la Recherche in the following manner: "...thirty-six belong to the French school, twenty-four to the Italian, ten to the Flemish-Dutch-German group. Five of them represent English painters and the Spaniards are limited to El Greco, Goya, and Velasquez."[114] If these figures are correct, they would tend to corroborate the statements by Vaudoyer ("Ses préférences allaient aux peintres hollandais et aux peintres français...."[115]) and Roger Allard ("C'est aux peintres de la Hollande et de l'Italie que Marcel Proust demande le plus souvent une aide pour fixer les traits de ses personnages."[116]) With regard to specific painters within each school, Dunlop surmises that Proust expected his readers "to have a thorough knowledge of Italian art, from Giotto, Fra Angelico and Orcagna to the masters of the High Renaissance. Flemish and Dutch artists--Memling, Breughel, Hals, Van Dyck, Cuyp, Potter, Rembrandt, Maes, de Hooch, Vermeer and Wouverman[117]--are mentioned; so too are English artists, notably Turner and the pre-Raphaelites; and almost the whole of French art from the eighteenth century onwards--Watteau, Chardin, Robert, Courbet, Decamps, Gérôme, Meissonier, Corot, Moreau, Puvis de Chavannes, Détaille [sic], Helleu, the Impressionists, the Cubists, Le Sidaner and La Gandara."[118]

Japanese and oriental art hold a special place in Proust's fictional and non-fictional writings.[119] Even a casual reading of A la Recherche discloses that Proust was deeply affected by both the subject matter and style of Jap-

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anese art. It becomes apparent the moment the narrator dips the immortal madeleine into a cup of tea and compares the resultant resurrection of Combray to "ce jeu où les Japonais s'amusent à tremper dans un bol de porcelaine rempli d'eau, de petits morceaux de papier jusqu-là indistincts qui, à peine y sont-ils plongés, s'étirent, se contournent, se colorent, se différencient, deviennent des fleurs, des maisons, des personnages consistants et reconnaissables." (CS,I,47)[120] It is also reflected in Odette de Crécy's furnishings and clothing "à la japonaise." (CS,I,220-1)[121] Even more significant, it pervades Proust's conception of certain landscapes in terms of light and shadow, silhouettes of trees or church spires against the sky, and the reduction of the scene to the barest yet most suggestive essentials.[122] Proust was familiar enough with the art of the Japanese poster to make references, in his letters, to a particular artist's style or choice of subject.[123] Lucien Daudet noted Proust's astonishment and surprise vis-à-vis the art of Uccello "qu'il comparait si justement à certains Japonais...."[124] In his youth, Proust never missed an exhibition of Japanese or oriental art.[125] He was, moreover, just as interested in the sculpture and metalwork of these cultures as he was in their paintings.[126] While it is certainly true, as François Fosca has observed, that Proust's interest in Japanese art was part of a general vogue for all things oriental and exotic,[127] this does not diminish his masterful use of various aspects of Japanese art to enrich his descriptions of natural scenes and furnishings in A la Recherche. Proust regarded the art of this civiliza-

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tion as far more than merely ornamental or decorative; both his aesthetic and his philosophical Weltanschauung were intimately linked to the Japanese artistic vision.[128]

How in tune was Proust with the art of his own time? The Impressionists were obviously known to the author of A la Recherche and he made much use of their artistic vision and technical experiments in his own descriptions. Yet what of the Pre-Raphaelites, the Symbolists, Art Nouveau, Cubism, and Futurism? How clearly did Proust grasp the achievements of any or all of these artistic movements? With respect to the first-named movement, one can safely assume that Proust was intimately acquainted with the works of the painters who comprised this group. He had no need to travel to England, for his good friend Robert de Billy probably supplied him with more first hand information than he required.[129] Marie Nordlinger, herself "une dévote de Ruskin saturée des doctrines pré et post-raphaélites," suggests several other points of contact between Proust and this British school of painters:

> ... Jacques-Emile Blanche était un véritable fournisseur de tous les racontars londoniens. Lucien Daudet est allé plus tard à Twickenham. Henri Bardac était à Oxford ... Naturellement Reynaldo était toujours une source de renseignements. Ne chantait-il pas et ne faisait-il pas de la musique pour cinq générations de la famille royale? Proust a rencontré en chair et en os beaucoup des modèles de Sargent; il en a connu et admiré quelques-uns, tout à fait d'un autre genre, que Burne-Jones a peints, et notamment les membres de la famille de Lady Diana Duff Cooper....[130]

In 1903, an article by Proust entitled "Dante-Gabriel Rossetti et Elizabeth Siddal" appeared in the Chronique des Arts et de la Curiosité; it was intended as a review of the

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monograph, bearing the same title, by William Rossetti (Dante's brother), which had appeared earlier that same year in the Burlington Magazine. The review was, for the most part, biographical and factually precise.[131] Proust's rather detached point of view was only to be expected, for he never seems to have shared Ruskin's fondness for these painters.[132] Elizabeth R. Jackson has suggested that the moral overtones and superficial literary allusions characteristic of the works of the Pre-Raphaelites alienated Proust, who had dismissed both morality and ideas from the realm of art.[133]

On the positive side, however, Proust stressed the Brotherhood's doctrine that "un peintre, s'il veut traiter un sujet idéal ou poétique, ne doit pas se servir des modèles habituels des ateliers, mais doit chercher à trouver dans la vie des êtres qui, par leur raffinement de caractère et d'aspect, puissent être supposés avoir des affinités de nature avec le personnage idéal destiné à être représenté."[134] This principle would certainly have appealed to the author of A la Recherche, who constantly referred back to the real world of Parisian society in order to create his social tableaux. Even more central to Proust's aesthetic was the notion that "les peintres ont une tendresse pour la créature qui réalise soudain devant eux, en une matière exquise et vivante, un rêve longtemps caressé, et portent sur elle des regards plus pleins de pensée, plus intuitifs et, pour tout dire, plus chargés d'amour que ne peuvent faire les autres hommes."[135] Despite these occasional similarities, no case can be made for any appreciable influence of the Pre-Raphaelite painters

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upon either Proust's fictional or non-fictional writings.

Symbolist art was, in Proust's eyes, synonymous with the paintings of Gustave Moreau. Although the nature of Proust's attraction for the esoteric aspects of Moreau's art will be studied in another context, it might be well to mention some of his general aesthetic reactions to the creative efforts of the literary and visual practitioners of this style.

Proust's most significant judgment of Symbolist art is contained in an essay entitled "Contre l'Obscurité," first published in La Revue Blanche in 1896. In this article Proust attacks the school of Symbolist poetry on two counts. He argues, firstly, that although these poets have a right to enshroud their works in mystery, they abuse this privilege by resorting to an obscurity of language and style: "...Macbeth est, à sa manière, une philosophie. Le fond d'une telle oeuvre...reste sans doute obscur. Mais c'est une obscurité d'un tout autre genre, féconde à approfondir et dont il est méprisable de rendre l'accès impossible par l'obscurité de la langue et du style ... si la philosophie où les termes ont une valeur à peu près scientifique, doit parler une langue spéciale, la poésie ne le peut pas. Les mots ne sont pas de purs signes pour le poète."[136] The second criticism which Proust levels at this school concerns the question of intentional lack of specificity, vagueness, and ambiguity--all central to the movement's aesthetic program: "[Le symbolisme] méconnait une autre loi de la vie qui est de réaliser l'universel ou éternel, mais seulement dans des individus. Dans

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les oeuvres comme dans la vie les hommes, pour plus généraux qu'ils soient, doivent être fortement individuels ... et on peut dire d'eux, comme de chacun de nous, que c'est quand ils sont le plus eux-mêmes qu'ils réalisent le plus largement l'âme universelle."[137] As a consequence of this shortcoming, Proust argues, all purely symbolic works run the risk of remaining incomprehensible, and therefore lacking in significance: "Les oeuvres purement symboliques risquent donc de manquer de vie et par là de profondeur ... les poèmes, qui devraient être de vivants symboles, ne sont plus que de froides allégories.[138] Que les poètes s'inspirent plus de la nature, où, si le fond de tout est un et obscur, la forme de tout est individuelle et claire. Avec le secret de la vie, elle leur apprendra le dédain de l'obscurité."[139] Recommending that poets seek inspiration in nature is a far cry from Wilde's "art for art's sake" philosophy, but one should recall that the year in which this essay was published (1896) also marked the publication of Proust's Les Plaisirs et les Jours, on the whole a rather precious and stylized collection of poems and stories bathed in a Symbolist atmosphere. The Baudelairean-inspired "Portraits de Peintres" section, moreover, gives a strong indication of Proust's total immersion in the stylistic conventions of this period. His conception of nature as "un et obscur" might even heark back to the opening lines of "Correspondances."[140]

If Proust, at this early stage in his career, pointed to the dangers of willful obscurity in Symbolist poetry, he wholeheartedly accepted the Symbolist notion of a common

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source for the various arts. According to Emeric Fiser,

> Sous la diversité des arts, le symbolisme de Proust retrouve une unité fondamentale qui n'est pas autre chose que la pureté de l'âme dans sa fraîcheur primitive ... La langue dans laquelle se traduit l'impression originale, que l'artiste ...arrive à capter, détermine la nature de l'art. Ce sont des univers que les artistes nous dévoilent ainsi; univers variant dans l'expression selon les artistes, mais dans lesquels, remontant à l'origine, nous retrouvons l'identité fondamentale qui les relie et qui fait jaillir le sublime de la rencontre mystérieuse des forces de l'âme. Car cette identité, c'est la vibration puissante de l'impression artistique ... Cette conception de l'origine commune des arts permet à Proust d'abolir les barrières qui séparent les différents arts. 141

Thus, while he may have rejected the Mallarmean desire to leave mysteries unresolved or the withdrawal of the Symbolists from the fertile realm of physical sensations, Proust clearly adopted a view of the arts which reflected their fondness for synaesthetic effects and the cross-pollination of painting, music, literature, and drama. His emphasis upon the unified artistic vision rather than the individual techniques of each art form made such a rapprochement possible.

Although Proust did not pass any critical judgments on Art Nouveau in his non-fictional writings, one can assume that his frequent visits to Bing's art establishment, which specialized in the manufacture of Art Nouveau objects and japonaiserie, plus the first-hand information provided by Marie Nordlinger, who was employed as a silversmith in one of these ateliers scattered about Paris, certainly kept him abreast of the artistic achievements of this school. Several

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descriptions of flowers and landscapes in A la Recherche attest to the impact of the sinuous line, the lush organic quality, and the flat, decorative patterning typical of Art Nouveau at its best.[142]

As for the artistic achievements of Cubism and Futurism, it would appear that Proust utilized their theoretical principles for sections of his novel which were previously thought to owe more to the Impressionists.[143] Despite Céleste Albaret's assertion concerning Proust's inability to grasp the Cubist experiments of Picasso[144] and Lucien Daudet's reminder that "Marcel Proust n'aimait pas l'abstraction. Dans sa conversation comme dans son oeuvre, quand il abordait une question abstraite, il la ramenait vite dans le domaine concret,"[145] it would be wrong to assume that Proust was not, at the very least, critically aware of these artistic currents. When Germaine Brée states, in a footnote, that "Proust, in the realm of painting, still thinks in terms of representational art,"[146] she is vastly oversimplifying the issue; one need only recall the abstract color harmonies of the late Turner, the nocturnes of Whistler, and the fog-enshrouded morning scenes of Monet--whose art Proust fervently admired and understood--to invalidate this critical assumption. If Proust chose not to use Cubist or Futurist artistic examples to illustrate his aesthetic theories in A la Recherche, the reason was much more fundamental: the radical fragmentation of the visible universe which these newer movements attempted to convey was alien to Proust's associational conception of reality. In the words of Jacques Cazeaux, "...l'esthétique

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de Proust ne peut s'accomoder de l'art abstrait, qui manque [de] la métaphore ... l'art abstrait assassine l'intelligence en brisant non seulement le monde, mais la synthèse provisoire de chaque notion."[147] Proust may have felt that the Impressionist vision more closely approximated his own view of reality, but he recognized that the world was re-created with each succeeding artistic movement: "Tel est l'univers nouveau et périssable qui vient d'être créé. Il durera jusqu'à la prochaine catastrophe géologique que déchaîneront un nouveau peintre ou un nouvel écrivain originaux." (CG2,II,327)

The Lessons of the Masters:

Anyone familiar with Proust's art criticism will be quick to note that individual painters rather than broad artistic currents tend to predominate; given Proust's notion of the subjective vision of each creative artist, such an individualized treatment of artistic personalities is to be expected.

Although Chardin, Rembrandt, Vermeer, Moreau and Monet are Proust's main targets for critical investigation, he also esteemed the art of several other painters. Among these, Giotto holds a special position.[148] It was his art that Proust singled out as a perfect illustration of his views on the symbolic nature of art, i.e., the mutual interaction of an allegorical image and its counterpart in the physical universe. An example of this interaction can be found in the "kitchen-maid/Charité" episode of Combray; the narrator observes that "ces Vertus et Vices de Padoue...m'apparaissent comme aussi vivants que la servante enceinte, et qu'elle-même ne me sem-

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blait pas beaucoup moins allégorique." (CS,I,82)[149] According to Monnin-Hornung, it is Proust's psychological interest in Giotto's art that distinguishes his analysis of the painter's frescoes from Ruskin's, through whose works he first came into contact with this artist.[150] The fictional narrator is fascinated by the fact that "la beauté des fresques de Giotto tient à ce que le peintre a rejeté toute abstraction; ce n'est pas l'Idée de la Charité, l'Idée de la Justice, imaginées, construites avec l'intelligence, qu'il a peintes, mais la manifestation de ces vertus telle qu'on la voit dans la vie."[151] The mature narrator's trip to the Arena Chapel in Padua merely confirms the quality of life he had discovered in the photographic reproductions of the Vices and Virtues which Swann had given him as a child: "...dans le vol des anges, je retrouvais la même impression d'action effective, littéralement réelle, que m'avaient donnée les gestes de la Charité ou de l'Envie." (F,III,648) Although this episode is no more than a brief interlude in the novel, it attests to Proust's fervent admiration for the art of this early Italian master.[152]

Another Florentine painter whose works Proust held in especial esteem was Leonardo da Vinci. It is more than likely that Robert de Montesquiou was responsible for developing Proust's critical interest in the works of this artist.[153] At the age of twenty-one or so, it will be recalled, Proust had already selected da Vinci as one of his two favorite painters. In his preface to Les Plaisirs et les Jours, dedicated to his recently departed friend Willie Heath, Proust

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gave some indication of the particular fascination which da Vinci's art held out to him; he characterized his late friend in the following painterly terms: "...si la grâce de votre fierté appartenait de droit à l'art d'un Van Dyck, vous releviez plutôt du Vinci par la mystérieuse intensité de votre vie spirituelle. Souvent, le doigt levé, les yeux impénétrables et souriants en face de l'énigme que vous taisiez, vous m'êtes apparu comme le saint Jean-Baptiste de Léonard."[154] It was precisely the enigmatic and mysterious quality evident in da Vinci's paintings that appealed to the psychologist in Proust, himself an acute and perceptive analyst of the human emotions. His conception of painting as a spiritual process, a matter of vision rather than technique, was, by his own admission, deeply indebted to da Vinci, for whom painting was first and foremost cosa mentale.[155] Like Pater, Proust was fascinated by the hypnotic beauty of Leonardo's works, with their stress upon the ambiguous and the unresolved riddles of human existence.[156]

Sandro Botticelli's art had both a negative and a positive appeal to Proust. Since this painter was extremely fashionable among his aristocratic circle of acquaintances, the young Proust--whose aesthetic preferences had not yet gelled--could write to his friend Robert Dreyfus in 1888 that were he forced to make a choice, he would select "ces vierges naïves de Luini (Bernardino) ou de Botticelli, que je préfère de beaucoup à celles de Raphaël...."[157] Yet when he came to compose his great novel, it was Botticelli's art that Proust chose to identify with Swann's idolatrous worship of Odette

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as a reincarnation of the painter's Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro: "...[Odette] le regardait d'un air maussade, il revoyait un visage digne de figurer dans la Vie de Moïse de Botticelli...." (CS,I,238)[158] It is the failure of such critics as Fosca to take into account Proust's evolution in the field of artistic preferences that leads them to discredit the writer's interest in art with the label of dilettante or aesthete. Even Monnin-Hornung, who clearly identifies the harmful influence of Swann's idolatry, does Proust a slight injustice in grouping this painter alongside Giotto and Elstir as representatives of Proust's ideas on art; Botticelli is obviously not meant to be viewed in a positive light, as are Giotto and Elstir.[159] Although Ruskin may have opened Proust's eyes to the visual splendor of the Primavera painter, the overpopularization which Botticelli's reputation suffered at the hands of artistic coteries and art journals crystallized in Proust's thoughts to become the epitome of all that was wrong with the appreciation of art in his own century.

Carpaccio's art, like that of Giotto, holds a privileged position in A la Recherche. It is the subject of the narrator's lengthy reverie in La Fugitive, where it is intertwined with the love/jealousy theme:

> Carpaccio, que je viens de nommer et qui était le peintre auquel, quand je ne travaillais pas à Saint-Marc, nous [i.e., the narrator and his mother] rendions le plus volontiers visite, faillit un jour ranimer mon amour pour Albertine. Je voyais pour la première fois Le Patriarche di Grado exorcisant un possédé ... tout à coup je sentis au coeur comme une légère morsure. Sur le dos d'un des Compagnons de la Calza, reconnaissable aux

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> broderies d'or et de perles qui inscrivent sur leur manche ou leur collet l'emblème de la joyeuse confrérie à laquelle ils étaient affiliés, je venais de reconnaître le manteau qu'Albertine avait pris pour venir avec moi en voiture découverte à Versailles ... J'avais tout reconnu, et, le manteau oublié m'ayant rendu pour le regarder les yeux et le coeur de celui qui allait ce soir-là partir à Versailles avec Albertine, je fus envahi pendant quelques instants par un sentiment trouble et bientôt dissipé de désir et de mélancolie. (F,III,646-7)

Proust was intimately acquainted with the art of Carpaccio. In a letter to Maria de Madrazo (a relation of the couturier Fortuny, whose dresses, patterned after the designs in Carpaccio's works, were worn by the duchesse de Guermantes and Albertine), Proust informed her: "Carpaccio est précisément un peintre que je connais très bien, j'ai passé de longues journées à San Giorgio dei Schiavoni et devant Ste Ursule, j'ai traduit tout ce que Ruskin a écrit sur chacun de ses tableaux[160]... il n'y a pas de jour que je ne regarde des reproductions de Carpaccio...."[161] Proust may well have seen these paintings reproduced in "le petit volume broché intitulé Carpaccio dans la collection des peintres,"[162] which he owned and wished to have sent to him during his stay at Cabourg. His correspondence contains frequent references to other paintings by this master.[163] Even Elstir, Proust's fictional painter, justifies his choice of subject matter by referring to the works of this Venetian painter. (JF,I,898 and CG2,II,420)

What is particularly striking in Proust's description of Carpaccio's painterly style is the attention he has his narrator lavish upon details of embroidery and costume, as well as

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the technical treatment of color and light:

> Je regardais l'admirable ciel incarnat et violet sur lequel se détachent ces hautes cheminées incrustées, dont la forme évasée et le rouge épanouissement de tulipes fait penser à tant de Venises de Whistler. Puis mes yeux allaient du vieux Rialto en bois à ce Ponte Vecchio du XV^e siècle aux palais de marbre ornés de chapiteaux dorés, revenaient au Canal où les barques sont menées par des adolescents en vestes roses, en toques surmontées d'aigrettes ... Enfin, avant de quitter le tableaux mes yeux revinrent à la rive où fourmillent les scènes de la vie vénitienne de l'époque. Je regardais des musulmans, des nobles seigneurs vénitiens en larges brocarts, en damas, en toque de velours cerise.... (F,III,646-7) [164]

After reading such a passage, one can easily sense the deep attraction which Proust felt for the resplendent art of Carpaccio.

If it is possible to gain a composite picture of Proust's artistic tastes by drawing up a list of his favorite painters, it is just as revealing to examine those painters whom he ignored or consciously excluded from any critical discussion. One cannot accept at face value, however, such statements by Proust as the following, expressed in a letter to Blanche: "...Cézanne, Degas, Renoir, peintres que je devine à peine et dont j'eusse été passionné de connaître les oeuvres." (25 Jan.1919. Corr.Gén.,III,156)[165] This could hardly have been the case--at least for the second and third artists mentioned--for Céleste Albaret clearly recalls that Proust "me parlait des cathédrales, de Vermeer ou de Renoir et de Degas, qu'il admirait tous les deux parmi les modernes de l'époque...."[166] As for Cézanne, Proust's friend Lucien Aressy insisted that "[il] n'aimait ni Vangogh [sic] ni Cézanne, qui le dépassait."[167] If Proust was unable to comprehend the artistic experiments

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of a handful of painters belonging to the avant garde, what were his reasons for ignoring the art of several prominent Old Masters? According to Johnson, "Proust's taste in art simply [did] not include the large canvases and frescoes of the Renaissance, Mannerist or Baroque painters. Indeed with the exception of Vermeer and intimate portraits of Van Dyck and Rembrandt, and Veronese's Noces de Cana, the Baroque painters Rubens, Tintoretto,[168] Jordaens, Ribera, Murillo, Charles Le Brun, and those of a later period but of similar sensibilité--Delacroix (who copied Rubens extensively), Van Gogh (who copied several Delacroix paintings)--[did] not move Proust and [were] not included in his most significant writings."[169] The Baroque style, with its emphasis upon grandiose effects of light and color, its theatrical, illusionist trappings, and its uneasy sense of tension and instability, would understandably not have appealed to the reflective temperament of a Marcel Proust. In contrast to the miniaturist brushwork of a Carpaccio or a Vermeer, the freer style of a Rubens, a Delacroix, or a Van Gogh would have seemed vulgar by comparison.

While painters such as Cuyp and Potter were once held in high esteem by the author of "Portraits de Peintres,"[170] they eventually were forgotten by the mature critic. Not so in the case of Watteau, whose dreamy, evocative, and melancholy paintings struck a responsive chord in Proust. In addition to including a poem on Watteau in his 1896 collection,[171] Proust wrote a short critical essay on the painter (c.1900) which relied heavily upon the earlier essays by the Goncourts

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and the Comte de Caylus.[172] What distinguishes this article from the others devoted to painters is Proust's attempt to understand the artist's oeuvre, i.e., the reasons for his choice of melancholy subjects concerned with unfulfilled love and deception, by pointing to related experiences in Watteau's private life--a Sainte-Beuvian technique which Proust was never to consciously repeat in his later criticism: "Je pense souvent avec une sympathie mêlée de pitié," the essay begins, "à la vie du peintre Watteau, dont l'oeuvre demeure la peinture, l'allégorie, l'apothéose de l'amour et du plaisir, et qui était, au dire de tous ses biographes, d'une constitution si faible qu'il ne put jamais goûter, ou presque jamais, au plaisir de l'amour. Aussi dans son oeuvre l'amour est mélancolique, et le plaisir même."[173] The points of contact between Proust and Watteau are obvious from this passage: the same sickly constitution, the same lingering illness, a corresponding inability to enjoy the fruits of their labors, to experience life in all its immediacy and excitement. Stressing Watteau's extreme sensibilité, his "caractère doux et qui tolère la raillerie," one can also surmise that Proust was identifying himself with this painter's lot when he wrote the following: "Absorbé par sa mauvaise santé, il le fut aussi par tous les importuns qui venaient le voir et à qui il ne savait pas refuser un tableau."[174] It is no wonder, therefore, that Proust reacted with extreme joy when he came across his friend Vaudoyer's article on Watteau: "Tout ce que vous disiez des génies analogues et touchés par la mort était tel!" he told the art critic. (2 May 1921. Corr.

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Gén.,IV,86) One need only recall the death of Bergotte to substantiate the autobiographical aspect of Proust's fictional characters--or, by extension, of his projection into the lives of his favorite painters.

Only in the last paragraph of this short article does Proust even begin to concern himself with the artistic accomplishments of Watteau (and even here the details are rather sketchy): "...il aimait le jardin du Luxembourg et restait longtemps à y peindre, 'parce que ce jardin était moins peigné que les autres demeures royales.'" Recalling Watteau's collection of costumes from the Comédie Italienne and the painter's habit of dressing up his friends in these outfits and asking them to pose for him, one is reminded of Proust's own game of seeing real individuals in terms of paintings and vice-versa: "...il les priait de poser, se consolant à voir dans de si beaux habits irréels des personnes vivantes, souriantes, regardantes et parlantes...." Characterizing the painter as "une âme éprise de lumière et de couleur," Proust abruptly ends his essay with a short description of how these impromptu sketches were eventually incorporated into full-scale paintings.[175]

The reader who expects to gain an insight into Watteau's technical accomplishments is sorely disappointed. Proust certainly understood Watteau's art and could easily have entered into a more detailed discussion of the painter's style. Why did he choose to remain on the surface, to convey only details of a biographical, highly sentimental nature? The answer to this question is hinted at by Jean Roudaut when he

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writes: "Choisir Watteau, quand on est Proust et que l'on se sent mentalement si proche de lui, serait accepter le plaisir de la lassitude, s'enfermer dans le domaine de l'imaginaire et des noms. L'attachement à Watteau figure une tentation. La lecture de Chardin apparaît comme une réaction, une conquête ... Préférer Chardin est faire un choix ontologique: celui de durer pour dominer la mort plutôt que de subir son prestige, de céder à sa fascination."[176] Seen in this light, therefore, the essay on Watteau represents a kind of exorcism of all that the author of Jean Santeuil had outgrown by the time he had completed his re-education under Ruskin's tutelage; it is, in a sense, an apologia, not only for Watteau's eccentricities, but for those of all artists.[177]

Chardin's art, as Jean Roudaut has suggested, represented all that was positive, life-affirming, and joyful in Proust's eyes. To say that he was one of his favorite painters is to understate the case; when asked by his friend Vaudoyer, in 1920, to select eight paintings which he prized the most, Proust singled out three works by Chardin: "...Portrait de Chardin, par lui-même, Portrait de Mme Chardin, par Chardin, Nature morte, de Chardin...." (Corr.Gén.,IV,82)

Proust's interest in the art of Chardin was probably first communicated to him by Montesquiou.[178] When he came to write his own critical essay on this painter, in 1895, he gleaned as much factual information as he could from the Goncourts.[179] The final product, however, represented a deeply personal and original view of the artist's aims and accomplishments. Proust outlined the scope of his essay in

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a letter (end of November 1895) to Pierre Mainguet, director of the Revue Hebdomadaire:

> Cher Monsieur, je viens d'écrire une petite étude de philosophie de l'art, si le terme n'est pas trop prétentieux, où j'essaye de montrer comment les grands peintres nous initient à la connaissance et à l'amour du monde extérieur, comment ils sont ceux 'par qui nos yeux sont déclos' et ouverts en effet sur le monde. C'est l'oeuvre de Chardin que je prends dans cette étude comme exemple et j'essaye de montrer son influence sur notre vie, quel charme et quelle sagesse elle répand sur nos plus humbles journées en nous initiant à la vie de la nature morte. 180

If the essay has received a great deal of critical attention,[181] it is because scholars have been quick to note that some of Proust's major aesthetic doctrines are expressed therein.

The essay opens with the image of a noonday meal just completed, the food and dishes not yet having been cleared away. A young man, still seated at the table, stares at "la banalité traditionnelle de ce spectacle inesthétique."[182] The disgust and revulsion which this sensitive soul experiences at the sight of "cette médiocrité domestique" (p.372) was likewise experienced by the young Proust: "Avant d'avoir vu des Chardin," he confided to Walter Berry, "je ne m'étais jamais rendu compte de ce qu'avait de beau, chez mes parents, la table desservie, un coin de nappe relevé, un couteau contre une huître vide ... Chardin m'a donné de jouir dans la vie courante de toutes les natures mortes." (August 1917. Corr. Gén.,V,39)[183] The young gentleman in Proust's narrative, beset by a Baudelairean "ennui...écoeurement...spleen" (p.373), seeks to raise his sunken spirits by blotting out the banal images before him with those to be found in the Louvre, "des

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visions de palais à la Véronèse, de princes à la Van Dyck, de ports à la Claude Lorrain...." (p.373) So begins Proust's voyage of discovery as he leads the young man deeper and deeper into the secret charms of the outwardly prosaic art of this eighteenth-century painter.[184]

One of the first lessons which Proust--in the guise of the fictional narrator/museum guide--attempts to impart is the intimate relationship existing between Chardin's paintings and the reality upon which they are based: "Si tout cela vous semble maintenant beau à voir," he informs the young man, "c'est que Chardin l'a trouvé beau à peindre. Et il l'a trouvé beau à peindre parce qu'il le trouvait beau à voir ... Si en regardant un Chardin vous pouvez vous dire: cela est intime, est confortable, est vivant comme une cuisine, en vous promenant dans une cuisine vous vous direz: cela est curieux, cela est grand, cela est beau comme un Chardin ... et pour avoir compris la vie de sa peinture vous aurez conquis la beauté de la vie."[185] It is this insistence upon the material object as an entity in its own right, without which a painted or imagined image could not exist, that distinguishes Proust's aesthetic from that of Mallarmé or the Symbolists as a whole. As François-Xavier Nicolas has rightly observed, "la vision proustienne se situe au niveau où l'art et la vie s'enrichissent et s'affinent mutuellement, la connaissance de l'un passant par celle de l'autre. Par la création d'un double spirituel, l'art favorise une attitude positive en face de la nature ... La nature 'telle qu'en elle-même' elle apparaît dans la sensation et la nature

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spiritualisée que nous présente l'art se rejoignent et se complètent...."[186]

A second point which the narrator stresses--and which is one of Proust's most central ideas--is the importance of the artist's subjective vision, the projection of his innermost thoughts onto a concrete surface. The image of a ray or beam of light conveys this concept most succinctly: "Dans ces chambres où vous ne voyez rien que l'image de la banalité des autres et le reflet de votre ennui, Chardin entre comme la lumière, donnant à chaque chose sa couleur, évoquant de la nuit éternelle où ils étaient ensevelis tous les êtres de la nature morte ou animée...."[187] That this process verges on the magical or miraculous is emphasized by Proust in his linking of this action with the fairy-tale awakening of the sleeping princess (pp.374-5) Proust's subsequent animated description of a lifeless sting ray prolongs this enchanted atmosphere and rivals the art of Chardin himself: "...au-dessus de vous un monstre étrange, frais encore comme la mer où il ondoya, une raie est suspendue ... Elle est ouverte et vous pouvez admirer la beauté de son architecture délicate et vaste, teintée de sang rouge, de nerfs bleus et de muscles blancs, comme la nef d'une cathédrale polychrome. A côté, dans l'abandon de leur mort, des poissons sont tordus en une courbe raide et désespérée, à plat ventre, les yeux sortis." (p.376)

The third lesson to be extracted from this artistic initiation is concerned with the equality of all things in the eyes of the painter (and the viewer): "Pour l'artiste

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véritable, comme pour le naturaliste, chaque genre est intéressant, et le plus petit muscle a son importance ... Nous avions appris de Chardin qu'une poire est aussi vivante qu'une femme, qu'une poterie vulgaire est aussi belle qu'une pierre précieuse. Le peintre avait proclamé la divine égalité de toutes choses devant l'esprit qui les considère, devant la lumière qui les embellit." (pp.376,380) This lesson represents one of the cornerstones of the fictional painter Elstir's aesthetic doctrines: "'Il n'y a pas de gothique, il n'y a pas de chef-d'oeuvre,'" he tells the narrator, "'l'hôpital sans style vaut le glorieux portail' ... il n'y a pas de choses plus ou moins précieuses, la robe commune et la voile en elle-même jolie sont deux miroirs du même reflet." (CG2,II,421)[188a]

Even at this early stage in his artistic evolution, Proust was acutely aware of the necessity of a receptive onlooker, an eager participant, for the miracle of art to occur. Rather than place the artist on a pedestal or separate him from the rest of humanity, Proust wisely resolved the issue by making him different only in terms of degree rather than in his basic nature:[188b] "Chardin n'aura été qu'un homme qui [se] plaisait dans sa salle à manger, entre les fruits et les verres, mais un homme d'une conscience plus vive, dont le plaisir trop intense aura débordé en touches onctueuses, en couleurs éternelles. Vous serez un Chardin, moins grand sans doute, grand dans la mesure où vous l'aimerez, où vous redeviendrez lui-même, mais pour qui, comme pour lui, les métaux et le grès s'animeront et les fruits parleront." (p.374)

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Having disclosed these basic artistic truths through a careful study of the works of Chardin, the narrator/guide, like Virgil, leaves his Dantean quester to discover even deeper mysteries in the art of Rembrandt, whose paintings form the subject of the second part of the essay. Before leaving Chardin, however, it is important to stress Proust's unique approach to this artist's works. Unlike Diderot or the Goncourts, Proust does not concern himself to any marked degree with the technical accomplishments of Chardin's paintings.[189] While he carefully names and describes several of the latter's works, his interest is primarily psychological. As Gita May has observed, "le point de vue de [Proust] est surtout psychologique; c'est-à-dire qu'il étudie principalement l'effet enrichissant des tableaux de Chardin sur l'âme du spectateur, s'annexe les éléments qui le captivent, et, omettant toute discussion purement picturale, se livre à une longue description ... [Proust] tend à transposer les personnages et les objets de Chardin, non comme des représentations picturales, mais comme des réalités matérielles chargées de significations spirituelles supérieures qu'il appartient au critique de déchiffrer."[190] It is this interest in the psychological ramifications of a work of art that leads the narrator/guide and his young disciple from the reflected image of reality in Chardin's paintings to the more internalized and dramatically transmuted reality in the chiaroscuro-filled compositions of Rembrandt.[191]

Proust's preference, at the age of twenty, for the art of this painter has already been mentioned. The psychological

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basis for this attraction is hinted at in Lucien Daudet's recollection of his visits to the Louvre in the company of Proust: "Je me rappelle ainsi de longues stations devant les deux 'Philosophes' de Rembrandt, les différences ingénieuses et captivantes que Marcel Proust découvrait et m'expliquait entre l'un et l'autre...."[192] Proust may have seen the Rembrandt exhibition in Amsterdam in 1898. In any event, his analysis of Rembrandt's art, like that of Chardin's, owes more to his subjective interpretation of this painter's oeuvre than it does to any work of secondary criticism.

Although the amount of space Proust devotes to Rembrandt is considerably less than that allotted to Chardin, the ideas contained in this section prove far more significant in terms of the writer's mature aesthetic outlook. One of the most startling statements occurs right at the outset: "Avec Rembrandt," notes the narrator/guide, "la réalité même sera dépassée. Nous comprendrons que la beauté n'est pas dans les objets, car sans doute alors elle ne serait si profonde et si mystérieuse. Nous verrons les objets n'être rien par eux-mêmes, orbites creux dont la lumière est l'expression changeante, le reflet prêté de la beauté, le regard divin."[193] The importance of this critical statement should not be underestimated. Proust has clearly moved away from the more-or-less objective world of Chardin and has entered, with Rembrandt, another stage in the appreciation of art. Where the former lifts the veil of conformity and habit to disclose a world of beauty which was merely waiting to be discovered ("Vous l'éprouviez déjà inconsciemment, ce plaisir que donne le

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spectacle de la vie humble et de la nature morte, sans cela il ne serait [pas] levé dans votre coeur, quand Chardin avec son langage impératif et brillant est venu l'appeler. Votre conscience était trop inerte pour descendre jusqu'à lui. Il a dû attendre que Chardin vînt le prendre en vous pour l'élever jusqu'à elle." [emphasis mine] p.374), Proust suggests that Rembrandt's vision of the world endows it with a sense of beauty which it did not previously possess. Or, to put it in more philosophical terms:

> Un problème se pose à l'homme qui s'intéresse aux arts [writes Jean Grenier] de même nature que celui qui se pose à l'esprit scientifique: dans quelle mesure inventons-nous, dans quelle mesure nous contentons-nous de découvrir? ... Proust se le demande à propos de la peinture. Une première réponse est celle-ci: l'artiste apprend à voir, il n'idéalise pas, il fait mieux: il retire le rideau qui nous cachait des parties du monde extérieur ... il suffit de réveiller notre conscience engourdie et de nous apprendre à regarder. La chose regardée n'existe-t-elle donc que par le regard qu'on jette sur elle? Elle en est inséparable, selon Proust, et donc l'invention se confond avec la découverte, comme dans une analyse phénoménologique ... Pourtant, si l'on approfondit la conception que Proust a de l'art, on se rend bien compte que l'équilibre entre objet et sujet... tend à se rompre en faveur du sujet. Le regard crée la chose et ne la révèle pas seulement. [194]

The truth of this assumption is echoed by Proust's fictional painter Elstir, who ends his discourse on the equality of all subjects in the artist's mind with the words: "Tout le prix est dans les regards du peintre." (CG2,II,421) Even in his critical writings, moreover, Proust tends to stress the subjective vision of the artist over and above the world he uses as his raw material. Criticizing Blanche for his emphasis upon the historical epoch in which an artist worked or

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the models he was fortunate enough to encounter, Proust argues that "il est d'un bien agréable fétichisme de croire qu'une bonne partie du Beau est réalisée hors de nous et que nous n'aurons pas à la créer ... je ne suis pas si matérialiste que de croire que les modes du temps de Fantin rendaient plus facile de faire de beaux portraits, que le Paris de Manet était plus pictural que le nôtre, que la féerique beauté de Londres est une moitié du génie de Whistler."[195] When, at the end of Le Temps Retrouvé, Proust's fictional narrator confesses: "Je m'étais rendu compte que seule la perception grossière et erronée place tout dans l'objet, quand tout est dans l'esprit..." (TR,III,912), he is voicing a truism which the author himself had discovered through a careful study of Rembrandt's art. This anti-Ruskinian view[196] was to become one of the main pillars of Proust's aesthetic philosophy.

Returning to the essay, one notes that Proust's narrator/guide stresses the transforming power of light in Rembrandt's paintings, its ability to transmute physical objects and to bathe them in an almost supernatural[197] atmosphere:

> Nous verrons dans Les Deux Philosophes, par exemple, la lumière déclinante rougir une fenêtre comme un four ou la peindre comme un vitrail, faire régner dans la chambre si simple de tous les jours la splendeur majestueuse et multicolore d'une église, le mystère d'une crypte, la peur des ténèbres, de la nuit, de l'inconnu, du crime. Nous verrons de même dans Le Bon Samaritain...un même rayon, mettant la terre à l'unisson du ciel ... un seau qui descend le long de la fenêtre, faisant passer sur ces objets si familiers, si usuels, le reflet et comme le frisson de cet être que nous sentons partout et que nous ne pouvons saisir nulle part, de cette lumière qui fait tout le jour la beauté des objets et le soir tout leur mystère, qui,

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> en se retirant d'eux, modifie à tel point leur existence[198] que nous sentons bien qu'elle en est le principe et qu'eux-mêmes semblent passer, dans ces minutes si inquiétantes et si belles, par toutes les affres de la mort. 199

It is this special quality of light suffusing Rembrandt's paintings, this "jour doré" typical of all his works, that Proust chooses as the characteristic leitmotif of Rembrandt's oeuvre, that single quality which makes the artist's style unique and identifies an unknown work as a Rembrandt.

Before concluding the essay, Proust's narrator/guide touches upon a fundamental conception concerning artistic creation:

> Je veux ajouter pour les peintres qui reprochent sans cesse aux littérateurs leur incapacité à parler peinture, leur complaisance à prêter aux peintres des intentions qu'ils n'eurent jamais, que si en effet les peintres font ce que j'ai dit, ou pour être plus précis si Chardin a fait tout ce que j'ai dit, il n'en eut jamais l'intention, il est même fort probable qu'il n'en eut jamais la conscience ... les actes créateurs procèdent en effet non de la connaissance de leurs lois, mais d'une puissance incompréhensible et obscure, et qu'on ne fortifie pas en l'éclairant. 200
>
> (emphasis mine)

This basic belief in the unconscious wellsprings of creation will be developed at greater length in Proust's subsequent essay on the art of Gustave Moreau, where it is linked to the corollary theory of artistic inspiration. Although this view incorporates Ruskin's belief in the passive or unconscious nature of artistic creation, with the painter or poet acting as a scribe or déchiffreur obeying a force greater than himself,[201] it does modify the Carlylean concept of the artist as voyant by introducing a final step to the process,

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i.e., the artist's intellect enters the final stages of creation to give form and substance to his original impressions. As Germaine Brée insists, "L'artiste proustien donc, dans son travail, n'est pas la proie d'un moi irrationnel, et ne perd pas le contrôle de lui-même. Il suffit de voir les manuscrits de Proust, son incessant labeur pour constater à quel point il est éloigné de tout recours à l'inspiration, à l'écriture automatique. Le 'moi créateur' chez lui n'est pas doué de parole. Mais au contact de ce moi, l'artiste devient conscient de lui-même dans sa totalité, se saisissant comme conscience intelligente, intelligible quoique non abstraitement, capable d'universalité."[202] It is this two-step process, involving unconscious (or irrational) inspiration and conscious (rational) creation, which Proust will embody in the figure of Elstir.

So great was Rembrandt's hold upon Proust that the novelist felt compelled to investigate the nature of this attraction in another essay, written approximately five years later. Here Rembrandt does not share double billing with another painter; it is his art alone which concerns Proust.

The opening paragraph discloses just how far Proust has travelled in his spiritualization of art: "Les musées," he writes, "sont des maisons qui abritent seulement des pensées.[203] Ceux qui sont le moins capables de pénétrer ces pensées savent que ce sont des pensées qu'ils regardent dans ces tableaux placés les uns après les autres, que ces tableaux sont précieux, et que la toile, les couleurs qui s'y sont séchées et le bois doré lui-même qui l'encadre ne le sont pas."[204]

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To view a museum as a temple of thought, a storehouse of knowledge, and to see paintings as transmitters of the artist's unique ray of light, i.e., his spiritual message, is certainly an intellectual conception of the function of art, one which verges on the mystical.[205] Yet this is precisely the manner in which Proust conceives of the act of artistic contemplation and creation. Not only does he choose to ignore the technical aspects of Rembrandt's art, e.g., the bravura brushwork, the coloristic harmonies, and the creation of unusual perspectival angles, he even reduces the subject matter of the paintings to an extension of the artist's personality: "...les vieilles coupeuses d'ongles, peigneuses de cheveux fins, la femme triste et modeste sous ses fourrures et sous ses perles, la maison où le feu s'allume dans l'ombre des pièces obscures, ce ne sont pas des choses que Rembrandt a peintes, ce sont les goûts de Rembrandt, ces idées qui pour chaque grand homme [sont] lui-même...." (p.660) It is this distilled essence of the artist's <u>moi</u> that the receptive viewer sees when contemplating his work. Subtle analogies existing between several paintings by the same artist become evident to the perceptive viewer. The artist's trademark is indelibly stamped on all his creations: "...à partir d'un certain moment, toutes ces figures apparaissent dans une sorte de matière dorée, comme si elles avaient été toutes peintes dans un même jour qui serait, semble-t-il, celui du soleil couchant quand les rayons frappant directement les objets les dorent." (ibid.) This special atmospheric light, moreover, is not just a prop or useful device which

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Rembrandt repeatedly employs; it is the very essence of his art, the embodiment of his innermost thoughts: "...cette lumière où sont ses portraits et ses tableaux, c'est en quelque sorte le jour même de sa pensée, l'espèce de jour particulier dans lequel nous voyons les choses, au moment où nous pensons d'une façon originale." (p.660) Rembrandt's discovery of his own individuality, Proust argues, enabled him to conceive of all his subsequent work as being bathed in the same golden light, a filter through which all his perceptions would necessarily have to pass: "...il éprouvait à ce moment la joie qui est le signe que nous touchons à quelque chose de haut, que nous allons procréer." (pp.660-1) As a consequence of his discovery, the artist, through the repeated use of this special quality of light, enables the receptive viewer to share in his joy by following this sign from one work to another: "...ce privilège de son génie nous est sensible par la joie que nous cause la vue de sa matière dorée, joie à laquelle nou nous livrons sans scrupule, en sentant qu'elle nous découvre une perspective extrêmement profonde de la chose observée...." (p.661) It is in the artist's third or late phase that this personal symbol is most clearly expressed,[206] for it is only through this "jour doré" that the artist can view reality, to the exclusion of all else: "...[ce jour doré] est devenu pour lui toute la réalité, et qu'il ne s'efforce plus, de la manière la plus heurtée, que de la traduire intégralement, sans plus souci de la beauté ni d'une autre vérité extérieure, mais sacrifiant tout à cela, s'arrêtant, se reprenant pour n'en rien laisser

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perdre, sentant que cela seul importait." (p.661)

Having communicated his "message" to a receptive viewer, Rembrandt's task is completed. His mind is no longer burdened with thoughts, for they have received their ultimate expression in a work of art. Nor is there a sense of anxiety or fear of the possibility of being forgotten on the part of the painter, "le but de l'organisation de l'artiste étant de donner intégralement telle ou telle pensée, non la gloire, et lui-même étant tranquille (en ce qui concerne son oeuvre) une fois qu'elle est finie, en tant qu'elle lui semble fidèle à ce qu'il avait à y mettre." (p.662) Proust has here touched upon an essential aspect of his aesthetic, viz. the belief that through the work of art the painter can rest assured that his "message" will be conveyed to future generations. In A la Recherche, this idea is most dramatically expressed in the celestial image marking the end of Bergotte's earthly existence: "On l'enterra, mais toute la nuit funèbre, aux vitrines éclairées, ses livres, disposés trois par trois, veillaient comme des anges aux ailes éployées et semblaient, pour celui qui n'était plus, le symbole de sa résurrection." (P,III,188) In the context of the present essay, Proust illustrates his conception of the work of art serving as the vehicle for the transmission of the artist's thoughts to a receptive viewer by transporting the aged Ruskin--in a purely fictional epilogue--to an exhibition of Rembrandt's works in Amsterdam, where the old man can still marvel at the beauty of the painter's universe and thereby give meaning and richness to the final moments of his own existence:[207]

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"...c'était pour Rembrandt comme une récompense qui aurait pu lui être douce et que, si le regard de Rembrandt, qui semble nous considérer au fond de ses toiles achevées, avait pu voir Ruskin, le maître eût été à lui, comme un souverain qui reconnaît un souverain dans la foule." (p.664)

Proust's essay, in addition to disclosing several important aesthetic doctrines, also serves as a prime example of this writer's uniquely subjective approach to the work of any artist: "Toujours," writes Brée, "ce que Proust cherche à dégager c'est une impression centrale, un point de vue unique autour duquel l'oeuvre s'organise, méthode intuitive et intellectuelle à la fois, mais non rationnelle et logique."[208] Proust's search for the psychological and spiritual underpinnings of a painter's oeuvre, for that one trait or quality which, like a password, will open the artist's universe to the receptive viewer, is necessarily based upon his conviction that Chardin's or Rembrandt's vision is more important than the painter's technique, a position which is certainly open to attack by professional art critics. But by searching for the essential features of an artist's work, by seeking to discover the secrets of his individuality, Proust gives us more than just the sum total of a painter's technical accomplishments. He provides us with a fundamental insight into the nature of aesthetic perception and the act of creation. Viewed in these terms, the novitiate can only stand to gain from such a privileged exposure to artistic genius.

Proust's essay on the art of Gustave Moreau (c.1900)

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represents the third and final stage in the spiritualization of art; the viewer has gradually moved away from an appreciation of the rendering of material reality (Chardin), has witnessed the transmutation of concrete reality into a purer, spiritual essence (Rembrandt), and is now able to appreciate the final metamorphosis of reality into a purely symbolic realm. Proust described this artistic trajectory in an essay entitled "La Poésie ou les Lois Mystérieuses":

> Quand on a vu Chardin, non seulement on voit la beauté d'un repas bourgeois, mais on croit que la poésie n'est que dans les repas rustiques et on détourne les yeux quand on voit les bijoux. Mais quand on a...vu du Gustave Moreau, on recherche les diamants et les pierreries comme des choses qui sont aussi belles, et quand on a vu Gustave Moreau, après avoir cru que les choses n'étaient belles que dans leur spontanéité et les fleurs dans les champs et les bêtes dans leur vie, dédaignant toute espèce d'objets d'art et les laissant aux riches sans imagination, quand on a vu les Gustave Moreau, on se prend de goût pour les toilettes somptueuses, pour les choses détournées de leur grâce naturelle et prises comme symboles.... [209]

Proust's interest in the art of Gustave Moreau was quickened by the critical essays of his friend Robert de Montesquiou.[210] The art critic Ary Renan published the first installment of a monograph devoted to the art of Moreau in the Gazette des Beaux-Arts for 1899, a fact which probably did not escape Proust's attention. As for actual examples of the artist's work, it will be recalled that Charles Ephrussi owned several paintings by Moreau; in addition, the 1899 exhibition at the Musée du Luxembourg, consisting of fourteen works by Moreau in the private collection of Charles Hayem, was an event which Proust would not have missed. He

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was, given these fortuitous circumstances, in a privileged position to study and relish the art of this archetypal Symbolist painter.

Predating the c.1900 essay are two passages in Jean Santeuil that announce several important aesthetic leitmotifs which Proust will develop at length in subsequent writings on Moreau. The section of the novel entitled "L'Eglise de Decazeville" has been traced back to an actual news item which the novelist transposed to his early work.[211] It describes the discovery of a cache of Moreau paintings in this isolated provincial church. Of importance is the embryonic motif of the artistic pilgrimage, already noted in relation to the Ruskin-Rembrandt and Bergotte-Vermeer episodes: "...un jour quelqu'un épris de l'oeuvre de Moreau les découvrirait et irait se pencher sur ces tombes somptueuses et muettes pour leur demander le secret de la vie du maître défunt."[212] A second theme, that of the "lieu sacré," is also linked to the motif of the aesthetic journey: "...les oeuvres humaines à force d'être fixées dans un endroit de la nature finissent par en faire partie, de sorte qu'il nous attire par une sorte de personnalité à demi humaine et elles par une sorte de charme local ... Il semble que la beauté d'art se soit enracinée et soit peu à peu devenue, comme le lieu où elle adhère, quelque chose d'unique et qui ne dépend pas de l'homme, quelque chose que rien ne nous donne si nous n'y retournons." (JS,366)[213] With time, Proust was to reject this concept in his mature criticism, for it smacked of too much materialism in an art form that represented, in his

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eyes, the highest spiritual essence.[214]

The second, far more significant, passage is contained in the section entitled "Rencontre à Réveillon du Romancier Traves." Here Proust sets forth his basic theory of the distance separating the social and artistic selves of each creator: "...si vous vouliez tâcher de pénétrer plus avant dans ces nudités mystérieuses, à la chevelure tressée de lotus, qui sont appuyées les yeux pleins de rêve dans tous les tableaux de Gustave Moreau ... vous n'y réussirez pas, et vous auriez beau connaître en détail la vie de Gustave Moreau, causer avec lui de l'art, de la vie et de la mort, dîner chaque soir avec lui, vous ne pénétreriez pas plus avant dans le mystère de leur origine et de leur signification...." (JS,478) The creator himself, moreover, is just as much in the dark about the nature of artistic creation as is his receptive viewer. These "[nudités mystérieuses] lui sont apportées précieusement, comme d'étranges filles de la mer, dans les marées de l'inspiration qui l'assaillent. Ce qu'il pourrait vous en dire n'aurait trait qu'aux circonstances de leur invention, à la partie terrestre de leur fabrication (tel paysage vu, telle terre cuite admirée) mais non à la mystérieuse ressemblance qui les unit et dont l'essence, quoique unie à son esprit puisque seul il la dégage et seule elle le rejoint et le délivre, lui [est] néanmoins inconnue." (ibid.) It is the paradox of artistic creation that the artist can unconsciously reveal aesthetic truths which transcend both himself and the work of art entrusted with their safekeeping and promulgation.

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It is this attempt to fathom the nature of artistic creation, to discover the secret sources of inspiration, that is Proust's primary concern in his critical essay on the art of Gustave Moreau. It opens with the same paradoxical, unanswerable question concerning the means by which the artist is able to create: "Nous avons beau demander ce que le maître voulait faire," observes Proust, "on ne peut guère nous répondre puisque lui-même n'a pas pu se répondre en lui-même qu'en faisant...[ces] images le plus exactes possible de ce qu'il entrevoyait...."[215] What is certain, however, is the fact that the painter must passively await the arrival of inspiration, "tâcher de la revoir, de l'approcher et, d'après elle, peindre." (p.668) Great indeed is the distance Proust has travelled from his love of the ordinary and the commonplace, as exemplified in the art of Chardin; compared with a Moreau landscape, "un paysage pur paraît à côté bien vulgaire et comme désintellectualisé...." (ibid.) Moreau's universe is a highly intellectualized, deeply spiritual and symbolic domain; his canvases are weighed down by ominous portents; his landscapes bear "le sceau d'une heure tragique ... une heure incertaine que la toile éternise comme le souvenir du héros." (ibid.) It is this preoccupation with time, the attempt to reflect the eternal in the evanescent, that is particularly appealing to the author of A la Recherche.[216] The narrator finds the same principle at work as he stands before the Elstirs in the Guermantes collection: "[Elstir] avait su immortellement arrêter le mouvement des heures à cet instant lumineux ... Mais justement parce que l'instant

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pesait sur nous avec tant de force, cette toile si fixée donnait l'impression la plus fugitive...." (CG2,II,421)

A second quality which Proust notes in the art of Moreau is the overriding sense of mystery pervading every aspect of his paintings: "...comme ce paysage naturel et qui semble pourtant conscient ... le visage du héros lui-même semble participer aussi vaguement au mystère que toute la toile exprime." (p.668) Like the sphinx which formed the subject of Moreau's early masterpiece, the artist's paintings also contain an unresolved riddle, a hidden enigma, which no amount of rational explanation can hope to decipher. Since Moreau was an artist who tapped the sacred fount of his own unconscious thoughts, "cet homme qui...peignait ses rêves" (ibid.), it is useless to rely upon reason and logic as operatives in the artistic process of creation. Elstir, like Moreau, would harness his surreal visions and make them serve as the basis of his art: "Si un peu de rêve est dangereux," he tells the narrator, "ce qui en guérit, ce n'est pas moins de rêve, mais plus de rêve, mais tout le rêve." (JF,I,843)[217]

The next section of the essay contains a definition which is central to Proust's aesthetic: "Un tableau," he writes, "est une sorte d'apparition d'un coin d'un monde mystérieux dont nous connaissons quelques autres fragments, qui sont les toiles du même artiste." (p.669) It is precisely this thought which runs through the narrator's mind as he stands before the Elstirs in the Guermantes collection: "...j'avais devant moi les fragments de ce monde aux couleurs inconnues qui n'était que la projection de la manière

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de voir particulière à ce grand peintre...." (CG2,II,419) In the case of Rembrandt, as we have seen, this particular universe was bathed in a "jour doré"; the inhabitants of Moreau's universe seem to follow some higher force, to be guided by "d'autres lois que les lois de notre monde" (p.669), thus creating a sense of mystery, an invisible complicity between the inanimate and animate objects represented by the painter.

In addition to the aura of mystery pervading all of Moreau's works, Proust also stresses a sexual ambiguity evident in the painter's depiction of the mythological hero or poet: "...le héros qui a l'air doux d'une vierge ... ce poète qui a une figure de femme ... et tous ces hommes imberbes à la figure de femme...." (ibid.) This fascination and obsession with the androgyne, a commonplace in Symbolist art and literature, is linked by Proust to the painter's attempt to define the nature of the poet in terms of the feminine principle.[218] If for no other reason, the author of A la Recherche would have been drawn to the art of Moreau for its subtle presentation of sexual ambiguity and its elevation of the androgyne to a level above either of the sexes.

Another aesthetic principle contained in the essay involves the lost world, the inner sanctum, from which each artist is exiled and toward which each creator aspires:

> Le pays, dont les oeuvres d'art sont ainsi des apparitions fragmentaires, est l'âme du poète, son âme véritable, celle de toutes ses âmes qui est le plus au fond, sa patrie véritable, mais où il ne vit que de rares moments ... [Les poètes] sont avertis par une joie secrète que les seuls véritables moments sont ceux qu'ils y passent. Le reste de

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> leur vie est une espèce d'exil souvent volontaire, non pas triste, mais maussade. Car ils sont des exilés intellectuels; dès qu'ils sont exilés, ils ont perdu du même coup le souvenir de leur patrie et savent seulement qu'ils en ont une, qu'il est plus doux d'y vivre, mais ne savent comment y revenir. (pp.670,672)

Proust may have discovered this concept in the writings of Baudelaire or Mallarmé;[219] in any event, the idea of a lost world or edenic paradise is organically linked to every phase of artistic creation as envisioned by Proust: "L'inspiration," the essay continues, "est le moment où le poète peut pénétrer dans cette âme la plus intérieure. Le travail est l'effort pour y rester entièrement, pour ne pas, tandis qu'il écrit ou qu'il peint, y rien mêler du dehors." (p.670)

The single painting which most completely incorporates these aesthetic principles, according to Proust, is Moreau's Le Chanteur Persan. There is the characteristic note of sexual ambiguity ("...il chante, ce cavalier au visage de femme et de prêtre..."), the complicity between all elements of creation ("...l'esprit qui circule encore dans toute la nature..."), and the paradoxical suggestion of flux in stasis ("...cette palpitation visible se soulève éternellement dans la toile immobile.") (pp.670-1) This Persian singer, moreover, is the archetypal image of the creator, the inspired artist, the poet. His song is infectious, for it awakens the creative instinct in each of us: "J'étais un homme comme tous les autres dans ce salon, j'ai levé les yeux et j'ai vu ce Chanteur indien que je n'entendais pas ... Aussitôt en moi aussi le chanteur s'est réveillé. Et tant qu'il a été réveillé, rien n'aurait pu le distraire de ce qu'il avait à

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dire ... je les écoutais [i.e., thoughts] ne pouvant m'éloigner de la tâche invisible mais proposée." (p.673)

The passage of the essay dealing with the conversion of Moreau's private residence into a state museum[220] leads Proust to formulate a theory of the artistic personality which differs radically from the earlier conception of Chardin as a being different only in degree, possessing a more acute sensitivity to visual stimuli than most individuals; the artist is here defined as a priest-like being officiating at a cermony whose order is instinctively perceived: "Il est une espèce de prêtre dont la vie est vouée à servir cette divinité, à nourrir les animaux sacrés qui lui plaisent et à répandre les parfums qui facilitent ses apparitions. Sa maison est à moitié église, à moitié maison du prêtre." (p.671) The artist is here envisioned as a driven creature, obeying an inner law which cannot be denied, yet one which he feels it is his destiny to fulfill: "...ils agissent en vertu d'une sorte d'instinct qui, comme celui des insectes, est doublé d'un secret pressentiment de la grandeur de leur tâche et de la brièveté de leur vie. Et alors, ils délaissent toute autre tâche pour créer la demeure où vivra leur postérité, et pour y déposer cette postérité, prêts à mourir ensuite. Voyez l'ardeur que le peintre met à peindre sa toile et dites si l'araignée en met plus à tisser la sienne." (p.672) Contrary to earlier statements stressing the conscious process of creation which follows immediately upon the heels of the artist's original impression, Proust has here formulated a theory of artistic creation which leaves nothing

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to the artist's will. According to Germaine Brée, "l'artiste est pour lui le 'dépositaire' d'un pouvoir qui le dépasse."[221]

Proust's essay on Moreau is probably the most subjective of all his critical writings on painters--and therefore the most difficult to discuss objectively. Whereas his essays on Chardin and Rembrandt deal with specific paintings by these masters and attempt to locate a central theme running through all their works, with Moreau Proust is interested less in the oeuvre of the artist and is more concerned with the actual process of artistic creation, which is the same for all artists. It is this sense of spiritual kinship with Moreau, the feeling that his Poet is the symbol of all creative striving, that leads Proust to identify his most important aesthetic principles with the work of this painter: "L'oeuvre de Gustave Moreau," writes Patrick Gauthier, "est particulièrement importante pour Proust car il y trouve une confirmation et une traduction de ses propres idées esthétiques. G. Moreau fait pénétrer Proust dans les couches les plus profondes et les plus mystérieuses de la création artistique ... il semble avoir trouvé en Gustave Moreau un frère d'élection dans le domaine de l'art."[222] This meeting of minds occurred at a time when Proust had reached an impasse in his creative efforts; the author of the abortive Jean Santeuil looked to art for inspiration. Not even the museums of Europe were able to accomplish this revitalization process, however. According to Hokari, "...l'essai sur Moreau de 1899 permettait à Proust de saisir avec clairvoyance le

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secret du principe créateur de l'artiste et d'annoncer bien longtemps à l'avance, peut-être inconsciemment, la plus haute signification de son livre ultime...."[223] Given this explanation, one can more easily comprehend the underlying significance of the personal confession which concludes the critical essay on this painter; referring to the latter's Le Chanteur Persan, Proust observes: "Ce Gustave Moreau vu un jour de dépaysement, de disposition à écouter les voix intérieures, m'a valu tout le voyage de Hollande fait vite, le coeur attentif mais fermé...." (p.674)

Proust's essay on the art of Claude Monet is perhaps the most fragmented and disjointed of all the critical articles discussed thus far. Since these essays were discovered among Proust's voluminous notes and bore neither formal titles nor any real indication of their dates of conception, it is only logical to assume that the novelist never intended them for publication and therefore did not concern himself with such matters as formal design and tight construction. "Proust a dû se rendre compte," writes Germaine Brée, "à l'époque où il esquissa ces études, que sa pensée restait confuse. Elles semblent d'ailleurs conçues non point tant pour nous éclairer sur les peintres, que comme tentative d'élucidation personnelle."[224] It is in this light, therefore, that one should consider the essay on Monet, i.e., as a random assortment of critical aperçus and highly illuminating insights into the nature of artistic creation.

As was the case vis-à-vis Moreau, Proust had previously expressed several important ideas concerning the art of Monet

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in Jean Santeuil. In the section entitled "Un Amateur de Peinture.--Monet, Sisley, Corot," Proust described a certain "amateur de Rouen" whose one great passion in life was to amass as many Monets as possible. Of significance is the passage describing the collector's desire to visit the sites immortalized by Monet's canvases: "...si vous aviez pu lui dire la rivière où Monet avait fait telle esquisse, il l'aurait longée tout entière aux heures incommodes où Monet peignait, pour tâcher de retrouver le lieu, pour mieux comprendre ce qu'il y a de réel dans une toile de Monet ... pour que l'on saisisse mieux la pensée de Monet en voyant ce qui la motivait et qu'on sente ce qui l'inclinait à l'inspiration, quels étaient les éléments dont il avait besoin pour trouver le problème."[225] This same goal had likewise obsessed the narrator of A la Recherche for a time; he thought that by visiting the sites which Elstir had so poetically rendered on his canvases (e.g., Les Creuniers) he might catch a glimpse of the creative process. It was only after a considerable period of time had elapsed, after continued contact and discussion with Elstir, that the narrator finally came to understand the foolishness of his quest: "...le caractère si nouveau qui se manifestait avec tant de puissance dans le "Port de Carquethuit" d'Elstir tenait peut-être plus à la vision du peintre qu'à un mérite spécial de cette plage." (JF,I,854) In his essay on Monet, Proust will expand and develop this theme.

There is also contained in this section of Jean Santeuil a prefiguration of the Proustian view that the painter's

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subjective moi pervades all aspects of his canvas; this unique essence[226] identifies the artist's style and distinguishes it from all others: "Une toile, sans que nous nous [en] apercevions, nous dit une seule chose. Le plaisir que nous avons à la regarder, le plaisir que chaque partie du tableau ajoute à notre plaisir naît de ce que chaque partie du tableau dit la même chose par cent voix harmonieusement unies. Le genre de vérités qu'il dit, la manière de les dire qui est elle-même un genre de vérité, nous fait dire: 'C'est bien un Monet.'" (JS,892) This is the same conclusion that the narrator of A la Recherche arrives at vis-à-vis Elstir's art: "Il me semblait d'ailleurs que ses moindres tableaux, à lui, étaient quelque chose d'autre que les chefs-d'oeuvre de peintres même plus grands. Son oeuvre était comme un royaume clos, aux frontières infranchissables, à la matière sans seconde." (CG1,II,125) The harmony existing between all elements of a painting is visually suggested in Jean Santeuil by the narrator's description of a river scene: "Voyez comme tout miroite, comme tout est mirage par ce dégel: vous ne savez plus si c'est de la glace ou du soleil ... on ne sait plus où l'on est, si c'est le lit d'un fleuve ou la clairière d'un bois ... voyez le ciel reflété dans l'eau, voyez les bois reflétés sur les bords, voyez les nuages reflétés par places, blois bleus, nuages cendrés, ciel bleu, eaux bleues...." (JS,893) It is this metaphorical jeu, this intermingling of the various elements of nature to create an artistic entity, that will be employed to such great effect in Elstir's masterpiece, "Le Port de Carquethuit."[227]

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The second section of Jean Santeuil devoted to the art of this Impressionist painter is entitled "Les Monet du Marquis de Réveillon." The passage dealing with the nature of artistic perception is of particular interest. Choosing a painting, purportedly by Monet, in which "la rivière dort encore dans les songes du brouillard" (JS,896), the narrator suggests that it is the original impression that the painter seeks to capture in paint: "Ici c'est déjà la rivière, mais là la vue est arrêtée, on ne voit plus rien que le néant, une brume qui empêche qu'on ne voie plus loin. A cet endroit de la toile, peindre ni ce qu'on voit puisqu'on ne voit rien, ni ce qu'on ne voit pas puisqu'on ne doit peindre que ce qu'on voit, mais peindre qu'on ne voit pas, que la défaillance de l'oeil qui ne peut pas voguer sur le brouillard lui soit infligée sur la toile comme sur la rivière, c'est bien beau." (ibid.) This passage foreshadows, to a remarkable degree, the essential aesthetic principles upon which Elstir's art is based, his need "de ne pas exposer les choses telles qu'il savait qu'elles étaient, mais selon ces illusions optiques dont notre vision première est faite...." (JF,I,838) Elstir's conscious attempt to make his mind a tabula rasa before beginning any work of art is a reflection of Proust's belief in the non-transmissable nature of knowledge in the realm of art, "car ce qu'on sait n'est pas à soi...." (JF,I,840) It is also an indication of the highly subjective nature of all artistic creation and the underlying ambiguity which one's perceptions necessarily foster in the re-creation of reality.

Proust's later essay on Monet represents a rather

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rambling development and amplification of the theme first announced in Jean Santeuil, viz. the illusory attempt to discover the secret behind a painter's rendering of a particular landscape by returning to the same spot. The rather egocentric and snobbish attitude which this desire reflects is clearly stated at the outset: "L'amateur de peinture, qui fera un voyage pour voir un Monet représentant un champ de coqueliquots, ne fera peut-être pas une promenade pour aller voir un champ de coqueliquots...."[228] This immature attitude, moreover, denies the Proustian premise that art has the power to reveal the beauty of the natural world, to ensure the authenticity of the artistic experience by never losing sight of the material source from which it springs. While there is essentially nothing wrong with the view that "un tableau de Monet nous fait aimer le pays qui nous y plaît"(p.675), it is the elevation of the painter's subjective vision above the givens of reality, or rather, the fact that we tend to forget that the painter has stamped a landscape with his own uniquely subjective vision, that leads to our sense of disillusionment when confronted by the outwardly banal and unpoetic physical setting:

> [Monet] nous fait adorer un champ, le ciel, une plage, une rivière comme des choses divines vers lesquelles nous voulons aller, comme des choses divines où nous sommes tant déçus d'apercevoir, se promenant dans le champ, marchant vite sur la plage, une dame serrant son châle, un homme et une femme se tenant par la main. Nous plaçons si haut les divinités que nous adorons que ce qui les rabaisse à des choses déjà connues nous désenchante. C'est de l'idéal que nous sommes épris. Nous croyons que le peintre va nous dire ce que c'est que tel lieu, personne mystérieuse...et entre nous et cette personne nous voyons un couple qui s'interpose ...

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> la vue des hommes incorporés à ces choses nous gêne, car nous ne voulions voir qu'elles, sans rapetissement. Telle est l'exigence de nos idéaux. (pp,676-7)

While Proust does not outwardly condemn this fantasizing on the part of the viewer--he even admits it as a necessary stage of childhood reveries--the implications of such a hopeless quest are certainly suggested.

Art as a heightened reflection of reality is likewise implicit in the analogy which Proust establishes between the figure of an astrologer and that of an amateur collector: "...comme ces astrologues qui avaient une lunette dans laquelle ils voyaient toutes les choses de la vie ... [les amateurs de peinture] ont dans des chambres des espèces de miroirs non moins magiques appelés tableaux, et dans lesquels, si l'on sait, en s'éloignant un peu, bien les regarder, d'importantes parties de la réalité sont dévoilées." (p. 675) The same image reappears in A la Recherche, where the narrator describes "un de ces miroirs du monde qu'est un tableau d'Elstir...." (CG1,II,126) There follows a step-by-step hypothetical reconstruction of the thought processes involved in the true appreciation of a work of art: "Nous sommes là, penchés sur le miroir magique, nous en éloignant, essayant de chasser toute autre pensée, tâchant de comprendre le sens de chaque couleur, chacune appelant dans notre mémoire des impressions passées qui s'associent en aussi aérienne et multicolore architecture que les couleurs sur la toile et édifient dans notre imagination un paysage...." (p.675) Not only does Proust apply the mirror image to a work of art, he also uses it to describe the artist himself: "...ce n'est

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pas le plus spirituel, le plus instruit, le mieux relationné des hommes," observes the narrator of A la Recherche, "mais celui qui sait devenir miroir et peut refléter ainsi sa vie, fût-elle médiocre, qui devient un Bergotte...." (TR,III,722) It naturally follows that artistic genius will also be defined in terms of its reflective capacity, "...le génie consistant dans le pouvoir réfléchissant et non dans la qualité intrinsèque du spectacle reflété." (JF,I,555) Proust's choice of a mirror as his central image is a fortuitous one, for it allows for that distortion of reality which the subjective vision of every genuine artist necessarily entails. To put it another way, "le miroir de vie que l'artiste offre," writes Leon Tauman, "enferme une multitude de significations diverses qu'il ne discerne pas toutes lui-même mais que son art implique."[229]

In conclusion, one may say that despite their disjointedness and sketchiness, Proust's critical aperçus on the art of Monet show how deeply he identified this painter's artistic vision with the ideal mode of aesthetic perception set forth in A la Recherche. Whether or not the fictional painter Elstir is a partial portrait of Monet is less important than the fact that they share a similar manner of perceiving reality and recording it graphically. The "nymphéas de la Vivonne" passage in Du Côté de Chez Swann may represent Proust's homage to the art of Monet, but the former succeeded in creating a narrative which equalled, perhaps transcended, its visual model.[230]

Although Proust never devoted a separate critical essay

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to the paintings of Jan Vermeer, he made the art of this painter an integral part of A la Recherche:

> Vermeer's art [writes Chernowitz] appears as a leitmotif associated with the main characters and situations. Like the little phrase of Vinteuil's sonata, so Vermeer's art, almost unnoticed at first, gradually gains in strength, disappears, returns, and grows in the story ... Linked to the two loves of the novel [i.e., Swann's love for Odette and the narrator's tyrannical passion for Albertine], the Vermeer motif is also associated with death--with Swann's death, with Bergotte's death, as well as with the death of Proust himself, whose last thoughts appear to have been directed toward Vermeer's art. 231

In a letter to the art critic Vaudoyer, who had written several articles on Vermeer[232] which Proust read with great enthusiasm, the novelist confessed to his literary intentions in A la Recherche vis-à-vis the art of this painter: "Depuis que j'ai vu au Musée de la Haye la Vue de Delft, j'ai su que j'avais vu le plus beau tableau du monde. Dans Du côté de chez Swann, je n'ai pu m'empêcher de faire travailler Swann à une étude sur Ver Meer. Je n'osais espérer que vous rendriez une telle justice à ce maître inouï." (2 May 1921. Corr.Gén.,IV,86)

While it is true that an appreciation of the art of Vermeer was de rigueur among Proust's intimate friends, the writer's attachment to the art of Vermeer was much more than just a passing fancy or social stance. René Huyghe has attempted to define the psychological forces which attracted Proust to the works of this painter:

> A son éclat paisible, à ce calme miroir de quiétude, comment ne pas opposer la sensibilité proustienne, trouble, inquiète, impure, étang

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> malsain, agité de courants qu'enlacent des algues sans fin ... Pour Vermeer, poète du présent et du stable, le Temps s'écoule, insensible, étale et doux au fil paresseux des longues après-midi provinciales--Proust n'est que nostalgique recherche du temps perdu. Le réalisme en Vermeer naît de l'intense et permanente présence des choses--en Proust de l'acuité de leur souvenir et de leur regret ... Vermeer est la Vie en face de la hantise de la Mort de Proust ... Mais cet écart immense, par un imprévisible détour, il les relie plus étroitement encore ... La santé équilibrée de Vermeer redouble le parfum de paradis perdu qu'y trouve Proust ... Sa sécurité posthume flatte la sensibilité pathétique de Proust. [233]

We are dealing, then, with a case involving the attraction of opposites, Vermeer's art representing all that Proust hoped to achieve in his own field of creative endeavor. As with Chardin's glorification of the humble objects of everyday life, Vermeer's art presented an almost hermetic or claustrophobic view of existence, the repetition of objects and interiors creating a hypnotic, pacifying effect upon the viewer. This would certainly not have failed to please the asthma-ridden and anxiety-prone author of A la Recherche.

Proust's fascination with the art of Vermeer was grounded upon aesthetic principles as well as psychological factors. Vermeer, more than any other painter, represented the perfect case of the total effacement of the artist before his work. In his preface to Paul Morand's Tendres Stocks, Proust expressed his belief in the total absorption of the creative artist's personality in the work of art: "Dans tous les arts, il semble que le talent soit un rapprochement de l'artiste vers l'objet à exprimer. Tant que l'écart subsiste, la tâche n'est pas achevée ... Quand tout cela aura fini par disparaître, que la phrase de violon ne fera plus qu'un avec l'artiste

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entièrement fondu en elle, le miracle se sera produit."[234] The image of the mirror, previously discussed in connection with paintings and artistic genius, is here supplanted by the image of the window or pane of glass, a substance which possesses that quality of transparency which Proust praised as the greatest virtue of the interpreters of art.[235]

It would appear that the quality which Proust admired most in Vermeer's art was its perfection of execution, the ability of the artist to hide the painstaking effort involved in the creation of a work of art beneath an almost seamless surface of harmoniously arranged shapes and colors. According to Robert de Billy, "[Proust] l'aimait surtout à cause de la perfection de la matière, perfection qui n'est pas photographique mais complète."[236] Although we now have positive proof that Vermeer achieved his optical effects through the use of a camera obscura[237]--a fact which may have been known to Proust's more enlightened contemporaries--this does not diminish the flawless beauty of Vermeer's painterly technique.

As if to underscore this aspect of Vermeer's genius, Proust presents two versions, one comic and the other tragic, of the artist's impact upon the characters of A la Recherche. In the first instance, M. Biche--who is later to become the great Elstir--expresses his amazement to the members of the Verdurin circle after having visited an exhibition of works by a recently departed painter--unnamed, but assuredly Vermeerian in technical execution--a former friend of Mme Verdurin: "Je me suis approché, dit-il, pour voir comment

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c'était fait, j'ai mis le nez dessus ... --Ça a l'air fait avec rien, reprit le peintre, pas plus moyen de découvrir le truc que dans la Ronde ou les Régentes et c'est encore plus fort comme patte que Rembrandt et que Hals ... --Ça sent bon, ça vous prend à la tête, ça vous coupe la respiration, ça vous fait des chatouilles, et pas mèche de savoir avec quoi c'est fait, c'en est sorcier, c'est de la rouerie, c'est du miracle...." (CS,I,254-5) The second instance of this fascination with the art of Vermeer occurs in the famous scene involving the visit of the writer Bergotte to an exhibition of the painter's works: "...un petit pan de mur jaune...était si bien peint qu'il était, si on le regardait seul, comme une précieuse oeuvre d'art chinoise, d'une beauté qui se suffirait à elle-même ... il remarqua pour la première fois des petits personnages en bleu, que la sable était rose, et enfin la précieuse matière du tout petit pan de mur jaune." (P,III,186)[238] It is not unreasonable to assume that the anonymous critic who revealed these wonders to Bergotte was, in the case of Proust, none other than Vaudoyer; a comparison of several of the latter's articles with Proust's text discloses a number of striking verbal parallels. Proust's conception of Vermeer's ideal execution, to take one example, is echoed by Vaudoyer when he writes: "Pour Vermeer, le sujet et l'expression ne font qu'un ... Dans ses toiles, l'art de la composition est employé de la manière la plus secrète, la plus dissimulée."[239] Even more surprising is Vaudoyer's description of the View of Delft: "...ces maisons de briques, peintes dans une matière si précieuse, si massive, si pleine,

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que, si vous en isolez une petite surface en oubliant le sujet, vous croyez avoir sous les yeux aussi bien de la céramique que de la peinture."[240] These similarities of expression have led Hélène Adhémar to conclude that "si pas un mot employé par Vaudoyer ne se retrouve chez Proust, toute l'atmosphère, de façon bien plus subtile, est la même."[241]

If Proust considered Vermeer's View of Delft a model of painterly execution, he singled out the painter's mysterious Artist's Studio as the work which most succinctly embodied his own belief in the unimportance of the artist's social self, his disregard for personal recognition, and the immortality bestowed upon him through his creation. Vaudoyer had written as follows:

> Ce mépris du public, ce besoin de rester chez soi, Vermeer l'éprouvait si fortement, si jalousement, qu'il est parvenu à le préserver pour l'avenir; et la seule apparence mortelle de lui que la postérité possède, c'est un homme assis, qui peint la figure d'un être cher, au milieu de chers accessoires familiers--mais ce peintre nous tourne le dos. Il nous défend de connaître jamais son visage; et si l'on se laisse aller puérilement à rêver, on se dit que jamais il ne lira sur le nôtre notre fervente admiration ... Nous tournant le dos, Vermeer est là, peignant cette touchante et douce figure. Il nous permet de savoir comment il se vêtait; mais son visage nous reste inconnu, comme sa vie, comme sa mort.[242]

Proust's reaction to this passage is recorded in a letter to Vaudoyer: "...je n'ai pas pu vous parler de votre dernier Ver Meer, ne vous ayant pas écrit depuis. Il est merveilleux. Cet artiste de dos qui ne tient pas à être vu de la postérité et ne saura pas ce qu'elle pense de lui est une admirable idée poignante." (c.14 May 1921. Corr.Gén.,IV,87) What Proust found so moving in this concept was the ability

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of the artist to devote his entire being to the pursuit of spiritual beauty with no other motive than that of aesthetically enriching the universe for generations to come. In his 1900 essay on Ruskin, Proust had written that "la Beauté ne peut pas être aimée d'une manière féconde si on l'aime seulement pour les plaisirs qu'elle donne ... le plaisir esthétique nous est donné par surcroît si nous aimons la Beauté pour elle-même, comme quelque chose de réel existant en dehors de nous et infiniment plus important que la joie qu'elle nous donne."[243] Despite their presumed temperamental differences, Proust saw in the person of Vermeer a true spiritual brother, a being who, according to Suzy Mante-Proust, was "aussi pénétré que lui de l'importance de son travail, aussi méticuleux, observant comme lui les effets de la lumière, tirant comme lui ses modèles de son univers familier, ne vivant comme lui que pour son oeuvre...."[244]

A Summing Up:

Marcel Proust would have been the first to disclaim any degree of professionalism in his art criticism. In an early letter (21 Feb. 1911) to Reynaldo Hahn, the novelist confessed: "...je sais combien je me trompe dans les arts arts [sic], au point que les vues du jardin de Gandara (= O) m'avaient charmé...."[245] Although one could attribute this admission of ineptitude to the natural evolution of Proust's critical tastes in art, the same sense of critical uncertainty is again expressed--eight years later--in a letter to Blanche concerning the latter's request that Proust write a

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preface to his volume Propos de Peintre: "Votre livre est assez gros sans elle, et assez grand. Elle ne lui ajoutera rien. Je ne me crois aucune autorité en rien, mais sais que j'en manque surtout en matière de peinture." (25 Jan. 1919. Corr.Gén.,III,155) These two statements, taken together, would certainly provide with ready ammunition any critic seeking to minimize the novelist's contribution to the field of aesthetics and art criticism. But it is precisely because Proust refused to consider himself more than just a passionate and sensitive amateur and never placed himself in a position of responsibility, i.e., as an official art critic, that such arguments of unprofessionalism and lack of technical expertise lose much if not all of their validity. In a discussion of Baudelaire's receptivity to Wagner's musical genius, Proust made the following significant statement: "...l'exactitude objective des jugements qu'un écrivain porte sur telle oeuvre appartenant à un autre art que le sien n'a pas d'importance ... son admiration, même fausse, lui inspire d'utiles rêveries."[246]

Proust's contemporaries recognized his gift for perceiving universal psychological truths behind various works of art. According to Lucien Daudet, "Il était un grand critique d'art. Personne alors n'en savait rien. Tout ce qu'il découvrait dans un tableau, à la fois picturalement et intellectuellement, était merveilleux et transmissible; ce n'était pas une impression personnelle, arbitraire, c'était l'inoubliable vérité du tableau."[247] The painter Jacques-Emile Blanche, an art critic in his own right, described Proust's

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critical abilities in the following manner: "Dans son oeuvre gigantesque, ciselée, laquée, comme un cabinet chinois aux tiroirs secrets, on trouverait épars de quoi faire des volumes d'articles par le plus original des critiques littéraires, par un bien curieux critique d'art."[248] No less a figure than the painter Vuillard praised Proust's critical acumen and just perceptions; writing to Chernowitz in 1936, the painter observed: "Sous des façons mondaines qui n'enlevaient rien à son charme, on arrivait vite à croire à la sincérité de son intérêt pour les arts. Je crois qu'il aimait la peinture autrement qu'en littérateur seulement. Il me semble qu'il goûtait vraiment Vermeer et des quelques lignes que j'ai eues de lui j'ai conservé le souvenir d'un être attentif et beaucoup plus désireux de connaître que d'ironiser comme le monde qu'il fréquentait...."[249]

Despite Proust's disclaimer of professionalism and the testimony of his contemporaries, several critics--notably François Fosca--have savagely attacked Proust from every angle. Since Fosca considers Proust alongside such professional writers/art critics as Diderot, the Goncourts, Taine, and Huysmans, it is understandable that the novelist's highly subjective approach to art, with its de-emphasis of painterly technique and the absence of purely visual preoccupations, seems unacceptable to this critic:

> Pour moi, Proust n'avait pas un goût <u>inné</u> pour les arts visuels. Vivant dans un milieu où l'on s'y intéressait extrêmement, intelligent et très réceptif...il s'est formé le goût, l'a développé et affiné. Mais il n'a rien ajouté de personnel à ce qui lui avait été inculqué ... Adoptant les goûts de son entourage, il les a parés de la

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> magie de son style; mais dans tout ce qu'il a écrit sur les arts, on ne peut rien découvrir d'original, rien que quelqu'un d'autre n'ait dit; seulement, lui, Proust, le disait beaucoup mieux ... En effet, ni Montesquiou ni Proust n'ont été à proprement parler des critiques d'art comme le furent Baudelaire, les Goncourt et Fromentin ... ils ont exécuté de brillantes variations littéraires à propos, je dirai même à la surface, des oeuvres d'art. Mais ils n'ont pas expliqué à leurs lecteurs de quoi elles étaient composées, quels moyens leurs auteurs avaient mis en oeuvre pour les créer, et pourquoi elles étaient belles. 250

This critic's bias is evident from the concluding remark. By placing Proust within a too rigid and systematic framework, i.e., viewing his gift for art appreciation from a traditional, art-historical vantage point instead of from a creative, poetic, and psychological angle, Fosca totally fails to grasp Proust's real and lasting contribution to the field of aesthetics and art criticism. Monnin-Hornung has perhaps best expressed the novelist's unique manner of viewing art:

> ...il observe avec justesse, et si son observation ne porte que sur certaines parties d'un tableau, elle n'en dégage pas moins ce qui fait l'âme particulière de ce tableau, et les traits par lesquels il dévoile la vision particulière de l'artiste. L'impression qu'il reçoit d'une toile, si elle est tout à fait personnelle, n'est cependant jamais arbitraire. Elle a une valeur assez générale pour que l'on ne dise pas seulement: c'est ingénieux, c'est bien trouvé, mais aussi: c'est vrai. Ses comparaisons avec la peinture...peuvent être contestables, elles ne sont jamais banales et le plus souvent elles nous obligent à regarder à nouveau les oeuvres auxquelles il est fait allusion. 251

In retrospect, one must admit, on the negative side, that Proust's tastes for certain painters and artistic styles reflect a rather conservative and orthodox--albeit

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eclectic--choice. Also serious, from a general standpoint, is Proust's deficient understanding of the actual craft of the painter--he may have possessed the painter's eye, but he did not possess his hand or mind. On the positive side, one senses a sincere desire to give new life and meaning to art, to discover the principles underlying artistic creation and to explore the subtle psychological ramifications of the viewing experience. Neither a casual museum-goer, a superficial aesthete, a professional art critic, nor a theoretician divorced from the sensuous experience of art, Proust was ultimately a creative artist for whom painting held out the opportunity to explore yet another form of human expression, one which reflected the same universal laws which his own craft had revealed to him. He "humanized" art, endowing it with a uniquely subjective yet valid meaning, one which could be understood by all sensitive and receptive individuals striving to enrich their lives through an appreciation of aesthetic beauty. In a word, writes Chernowitz, "Proust took painting out of the museums and brought it into everyday experience."[252]

The Critical Heritage:

Proust never claimed to possess radically different or experimentally daring insights vis-à-vis art criticism and aesthetic theory. Just as, in one of his essays devoted to Ruskin, he urged the artist to profit from the example of his predecessors, one can also assume that he adopted the same attitude in his own critical essays: "Il n'y a de meilleure manière d'arriver à prendre conscience de ce qu'on sent soi-

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même," wrote Proust, "que d'essayer de recréer en soi ce qu'a senti un maître. Dans cet effort profond c'est notre pensée elle-même que nous mettons, avec la sienne, au jour ... c'est en soumettant son esprit à rendre cette vision, à approcher cette vérité que l'artiste devient vraiment lui-même."[253] This principle, which Proust labelled "la servitude volontaire," occupies a central position both in his fiction and criticism. Without the example of the literary pastiches, it is doubtful whether Proust would ever have discovered the unique qualities of his personal narrative style. By the same token, he might never have developed his own theory of artistic creation and contemplation had he not undergone a critical apprenticeship at the hands of Ruskin and several other aestheticians.

Robert de Montesquiou was probably Proust's first "professeur de beauté" in the field of art criticism. While his estimation of Montesquiou's critical gifts was undoubtedly exaggerated,[254] there were certain qualities in the master's critical manner and approach which Proust was subsequently to adopt in his own art criticism. In an essay entitled "Un Professeur de Beauté," which first appeared in Les Arts de la Vie in 1905, Proust pointed to those elements or qualities in Montesquiou's art essays which he esteemed: "...si M. de Montesquiou sait tout de la peinture, en revanche dès qu'il écrit il n'est plus qu'un écrivain. Vous ne trouverez jamais chez lui le moindre de ces 'glacis,' de ces 'empâtements,' de tous ces termes d'atelier qui restent comme une petite tache sur les plus merveilleuses descriptions de

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nature des Goncourt. Et pourtant M. Montesquiou n'est jamais abstrait, ce qui arrive trop souvent à un autre critique d'art, et en cela inférieur à notre avis, Fromentin."[255] A complete absence of technical jargon and a refusal to enter into vague or abstract discussions--these are certainly qualities which left their imprint upon Proust's critical approach. Chernowitz adds that Proust also admired in Montesquiou's criticism "the latter's taste, which enabled him correctly to evaluate various contemporaries, such as Whistler and Moreau[256] ... his uncompromising devotion to high standards of perfection as a sort of sacred mission in life ... his clear, sharp discernment of details that ordinarily remain unseen; and especially his uncommon linguistic virtuosity...."[257]

If Proust adopted several of Montesquiou's critical techniques, he also made a wholesale appropriation of most of the latter's artistic tastes. According to Fosca, "Il communiqua à Proust toutes ses admirations: Gustave Moreau, Whistler, Helleu, le verrier Gallé, les arts du Japon et du XVIII^e^ français."[258] While it is possible that the works of Chardin or da Vinci might have been revealed to Proust by another critic, it is doubtful whether the works of Monticelli or El Greco would ever have come to his attention had not Montesquiou instilled a deep love and respect for their art in his young protégé.[259] Despite Montesquiou's social eccentricities, Proust gained a considerable degree of insight into the art of the later nineteenth century as a result of his contact with this hyperaesthete.

Regarding the art criticism of Jacques-Emile Blanche

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and Jean-Louis Vaudoyer, it is not certain whether Proust actually adopted any of their critical approaches. Blanche, it will be recalled, was chastized by Proust for being the Sainte-Beuve of the art world. Vaudoyer appears to have insisted upon a hierarchical approach to subject matter in art, a concept which was opposed to Proust's mature aesthetic beliefs.[260] The author of A la Recherche certainly developed an interest in such painters as Manet, Fantin-Latour, and the Impressionists as a result of Blanche's criticism. Similarly, Vaudoyer helped the novelist to appreciate the art of Raphael,[261] Watteau, and Vermeer. To say more than this would be to risk pure conjecture.

Proust's letters to Georges de Lauris prove that he was aware of the art criticism of Bernard Berenson and that he expressed a desire to meet the latter.[262] According to Chernowitz, such a meeting of minds did occur, resulting in a substantial correspondence; one can be certain that Proust gained valuable insights into the art of the Italian Renaissance as a result of his contact with Berenson. In the case of Emile Mâle, we know that Proust read his L'Art Religieux du XIIIe Siècle en France (1898), L'Art Religieux du Moyen Age (1908), and utilized both extensively in A la Recherche as the basis for his discussions of church architecture.[263] Whether Mâle's criticism also helped Proust to formulate his allegorical interpretation of Giotto's frescoes cannot be stated with utter certainty.[264] Jean Autret has suggested that Mâle's lively style and his ability to suffuse even the most remote historical objects or events with a poetic aura

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were partially responsible for Proust's interest in this critic's writings.[265]

The art criticism of Maurice Denis was not unknown to Proust. In his preface to Blanche's Propos de Peintre he had cited Denis's dictum that "un tableau, avant d'être un cheval de bataille, une femme nue ou une quelconque anecdote, est essentiellement une surface plane recouverte de couleurs en un certain ordre assemblées."[266] Blanche, who had written that "la nouveauté, l'invention, en peinture, se décèlent souvent en un simple rapport de ton, en deux valeurs juxtaposées ou même en une certaine manière de délayer la couleur, de l'étendre sur la toile," should, by all appearances, have agreed with Denis's plea for a formal consideration of art, but he took precisely the opposite position: "Protestons contre la part infime qui reste dans les théories de M. Denis à la sensibilité, à l'émotion qui est tout de même le plus précieux de l'intelligence ... La charge à fond contre le réalisme et la copie de la nature, si chère aux néo-impressionnistes, aboutirait à des formules où la raison seule interviendrait, au détriment du sentiment humain, de la sensibilité, à un art strictement ornemental et décoratif .... Ce serait la fin du tableau comme l'ont conçu les hommes de notre race."[267] Proust, with his deeply associational aesthetic,[268] would have wholeheartedly agreed with Blanche. The latter's defense of "sentiment" in art appreciation, while certainly a far cry from avant-garde critical theory, gave added support to Proust's subjective approach to art. Judging from the latter's positive reaction

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to Blanche's statement, it is unthinkable that Proust would have favored Denis's formalist theory of art, with its stress upon abstraction and its de-emphasis of the "content" of painting in general. Perhaps the only point that Proust seems to have echoed in Denis's criticism, according to Chernowitz, is the notion that "we constantly see a new 'nature' modified and conditioned by the previous works of art we have experienced."[269]

At the opposite extreme from Denis's neo-Impressionist aesthetic is Zola's art criticism, with its emphasis upon the artist's tempérament and the subjective distortion of reality. If we are to believe Chernowitz, "Proust was familiar with Zola's collection of articles on art, such as Mes haines."[270] This is borne out by Proust's reference to Zola's study of Manet in his preface to Blanche's book. While one would have expected Proust to be in complete accord with the critic who defined art as "un coin de la création vu à travers un tempérament," his reference to Zola is certainly not flattering: "[Blanche] montre l'absurdité de certaines formules qui ont fait admirer les grands peintres pour les qualités contraires de celles qu'ils avaient (opposez le Manet de Blanche à l'irréel Manet de Zola 'fenêtre ouverte sur la nature')."[271] One could argue, on the other hand, that Proust's concept of "le jour doré," vis-à-vis Rembrandt's art, is just as formulaic and subjective. Given the context of Proust's remark, it is understandable that he would have wished to make Blanche's criticism outshine that of other art critics.

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Marcel Girard has argued, rather unconvincingly, that Proust and Zola shared a common aesthetic mystique; to support this conclusion, he parallels the episode involving Bergotte's attack before the Vermeer painting and Claude Lantier's suicide before his abortive fin-de-siècle canvas: "Ces deux artistes 'athées,'" argues Girard, "...attribuent plus d'importance à un peu de couleur sur de la toile, à l'image précieuse d'un petit pan de mur jaune, qu'à la vie elle-même. L'un et l'autre se sont usés à vouloir transcender les apparences mortelles. Telle est la mystique de Proust. Ce fut aussi, sous une forme plus rude, la mystique de Zola."[272] What Girard fails to grasp, however, is the obvious distinction between the lucid--and consequently tragic--moment of realization of the writer Bergotte ("'C'est ainsi que j'aurais dû écrire, disait-il. Mes derniers livres sont trop secs, il aurait fallu passer plusieurs couches de couleur, rendre ma phrase en elle-même précieuse, comme ce petit pan de mur jaune.'" [P,III,187]) and the pathetic, desperate act of a man obsessed by the psychologically morbid image of painted flesh, brought on by a hereditary lesion of the eyes. While both artists do, in the end, sacrifice their material selves to Art, only Bergotte is promised a sort of spiritual salvation through his works.

There is far more that separates Proust's aesthetic from that of Zola than the few points which they share. According to Roger Bordier,

> ...Proust commence avec des impressions pour tenter d'aboutir à la vision d'une exactitude; Zola construit son image sur l'exactitude, et pour restituer

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> celle-ci mieux encore, l'orne d'impressions diverses. Le lyrisme surgit de la réalité. Chez Proust, il la commande. Chez Proust, la sensibilité, et même dans son abstraction, fait naître un état de choses. Zola exerce sa sensibilité sur les formes strictes du constat. Le détail matériel est sa première obsession ... La fiction est pour Zola le reflet direct des choses vues, dans un miroir de lumière crue; pour Marcel Proust, ce reflet est vu à travers la brume que dépose sur le miroir le souffle du contemplateur. Ils ont la même attirance, ils n'ont pas la même opinion des charmes qu'elle procure. Leurs moyens diffèrent strictement à ce niveau. 273

On the positive side, one can point to the basically conservative artistic tastes of both writers, i.e., their choice of established "Old Masters" belonging to specific artistic traditions. Both reacted with bewilderment at the experiments of the Fauvists and the avante-garde painterly styles. There is, moreover, a conscious irony implicit in Proust's choice of Zola as the author of a monograph on Elstir in A la Recherche (CG2,II,500), a painter whose art, in its early mythological phase, was closely modelled upon that of Gustave Moreau, for whom Zola had such an aversion. It is perhaps this unlikely coupling which suggests most clearly the distance separating Proust's aesthetic from that of Zola.

Proust's familiarity with the art criticism of the Goncourts has already been touched upon briefly in connection with the former's critical essays on Watteau and Chardin. Marie Nordlinger, it will be recalled, stressed the importance of Edmond de Goncourt's talks (at the home of the Daudets) on aesthetics and eighteenth-century art in the formation of Proust's early artistic tastes. While the latter certainly respected the vast erudition of the Goncourts and praised

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them for their sincerity and the passion with which they discussed their favorite painters,[274] he could accept neither their fictional nor their essayistic approach to art. The Goncourt pastiche in Le Temps Retrouvé (III,709-17) is perhaps the most scathing indictment of "realist" fiction which Proust ever penned. The narrator, at first experiencing a sense of inferiority at his inability to see and record reality in the manner of the Goncourts, eventually comes to realize that his own manner of perceiving reality is perhaps more genuine than theirs: "...je ne voyais pas les convives, parce que, quand je croyais les regarder, je les radiographiais"; he arrives at the conclusion that the social portrait in the detailed Goncourt fashion "peut avoir une importance documentaire et même historique, mais n'est pas nécessairement une vérité d'art." (TR,III,719)

It is precisely this ability to radiographier the painters he is examining, to probe beneath the surface of their brushwork and color in order to arrive at basic psychological truths concerning their art, that distinguishes Proust's critical method from that of the Goncourts. Monnin-Hornung has brought their differences into even sharper relief:

> Pour les Goncourt, la peinture est avant tout une ou des techniques, qu'ils étudient avec passion, et auxquelles ils s'initient pratiquement ... La couleur, la qualité de la matière d'un tableau les intéressent au plus haut point ...[275]
>
> C'est exactement l'opposé de ce que ressent Proust. Il est indifférent...à la technique qui n'offre d'intérêt que pour autant qu'elle exprime une réalité spirituelle. Son imagination, au contraire de celle des Goncourt...s'élance au delà de la matérialité de l'oeuvre, et cherche à découvrir ce qui se cache derrière cette matérialité, la vision de l'artiste, l'image du monde particulier dans lequel il vit, et que seule son oeuvre, et non pas ses paroles ou ses actes, peuvent révéler....[276]

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Despite these fundamental differences of critical approach, Proust may have discovered in the aesthetic theories of the Goncourts an added reinforcement of his doctrine concerning the subjective vision of every great artist. In the Journal, for example, he could have read the following definition of art: "...la nature vue par des lunettes individuelles,"[277] a formula which certainly bears a striking similarity to Zola's and Proust's definitions of artistic perception. While he may have found the Goncourts' art criticism too rigid and formalistic, burdened by the technical baggage of the atelier, and overripe in literary and painterly allusions couched in a forced écriture artiste, there can be no doubt that Proust profited considerably from the Goncourts' illuminating insights into Japanese and eighteenth-century art.

Both the artistic achievements and the critical theories of James Abbot McNeill Whistler held a special attraction for Proust. Although he met the painter on only one occasion--at the salon of Méry Laurent, where Reynaldo Hahn had introduced him to the artist--he seems to have held Whistler in awe, revering him as a divinity rather than a mere mortal. When, in January of 1904, Marie Nordlinger had lent Proust a copy of the painter's tract entitled The Gentle Art of Making Enemies, he wrote her the following note: "Sur le Whistler même, je ne veux rien écrire; l'exemplaire est rare et il serait criminel d'y rien tracer. D'ailleurs, c'est vraiment le livre d'un trop grand homme pour supporter un nom indifférent comme le mien."[278] An even more revealing instance of this passionate attachment occurs in a letter Proust wrote

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to Marie Nordlinger after having returned from a retrospective exhibition of the painter's works at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts: "...l'autre jour, bravant la mort (et hélas! la trouvant presque), à l'heure où je me couche, rompu, j'ai pris à la place un fiacre et suis allé voir les Whistler. Ce sont des choses qu'on ne ferait pas pour un vivant...."[279] In the same letter Proust defended Whistler against the charge that he was simply "un homme d'un goût exquis qui a pu laisser croire par là qu'il était un grand peintre, bien qu'il n'en soit rien." He even refuted the opinion of his friend Blanche, who shared this view, arguing that "si celui qui a peint les Venise en turquoise, les Amsterdam en topaze, les Bretagne en opale, si le portraitiste de Miss Alexander, le peintre de la chambre aux rideaux semés de bouquets roses, et surtout des voiles dans la nuit à MM. Vanderbilt et Freer...n'est pas un grand peintre, c'est à penser qu'il n'y en eut jamais."[280]

Although Proust never considered himself an adherent of the "art for art's sake" school of thought, he fully agreed with Whistler's separation of art and morality. "Whistler a raison de dire dans Ten o'Clock que l'art est distinct de la Morale," he told Marie Nordlinger in a letter dated 9 February 1905. Having undergone a period of Ruskinian indoctrination, however, Proust felt his allegiances torn between these diametrically opposed critical stances; he thus was forced to add, in the same letter: "Et pourtant, Ruskin émet aussi une vérité, d'un autre plan, quand il dit que tout grand art est moralité."[281] The attempt to reconcile these two views led Proust to erect--at least in his own mind--a compromise

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or truce between Ruskin's and Whistler's aesthetic theories. What Proust sought, as always, was the emotional or spiritual message of each critic; by laying aside their critical approaches, systems, and abstract theoretical statements, he was able to facilitate a psychological rapprochement:

> Ruskin et Whistler se sont bien méprisés parce que leurs systèmes étaient opposés. Mais la vérité est une, et ils la percevaient tous deux. Dans le procès même contre Ruskin, Whistler dit: "Ce tableau, je l'ai peint en quelques heures, dites-vous. Mais c'est que je l'ai peint avec l'expérience de toute ma vie." Or, à ce même moment, Ruskin écrivait à Rossetti: "Je préfère les choses que vous faites vite, immédiatement, vos pochades, à ce que vous travaillez. Ce que vous travaillez, vous mettez disons six mois à le faire; mais ce que vous dessinez d'un coup est l'aboutissement de nombreuses années de rêve, d'amour et d'expérience." En cet endroit, les deux étoiles frappent d'un rayon hostile peut-être, mais identique, un même point. Il y a coïncidence astronomique. 282

While the point is certainly well made, there is quite a difference between what Ruskin called Rossetti's pochades and the "finished" quality of Whistler's paintings, i.e., their conception as serious, full-scale or major works rather than preparatory sketches. The question at issue, in the Ruskin-Whistler controversy, was clearly not spontaneity of approach; each critic's perception of reality was being challenged or defended.

Given Proust's preference for associational or content-oriented art, how might he have reacted to the abstract compositions--bearing equally nondescript titles--of this American painter? Is Dunlop correct in his assertion that "Proust was probably only dimly aware of the significance

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of Whistler's...beliefs, which later critics have seen as the foundation of abstract art and action painting"?[283] In all likelihood, Proust probably reacted to Whistler's art in much the same manner as he did to Monet's late works. He must have prized the suggestive or poetic qualities evident in Whistler's canvases, their musical titles enhancing the sense of a harmonious transposition or fusion of various sense impressions. It is this effect which is most pronounced in the following Proustian homage to the art of Whistler: "...parfois, sur le ciel et la mer uniformément gris, un peu de rose s'ajoutait avec une raffinement exquis, cependant qu'un petit papillon qui s'était endormi au bas de la fenêtre semblait apposer avec ses ailes, au bas de cette 'harmonie gris et rose' dans le goût de celles de Whistler, la signature favorite du maître de Chelsea." (JF,I,805) Proust saw in Whistler's art a spiritual, ethereal quality which perfectly complemented his own delicate sensibility. In addition to discovering in Whistler's paintings, in the words of Johnson, "a poetic and ambiguous vision of the natural world," he also found a confirmation of his own aesthetic views in the painter's dictum that "a work of art is created with the experience of a lifetime and that Art is distinct from Ethics...."[284]

What influence, if any, did the aesthetic theories of Oscar Wilde have upon Proust? This question is not easily answered. There is virtually no discussion of Wilde's criticism in all of Proust's correspondence, essays, or fiction. A la Recherche contains a mere veiled reference to the

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social person of Wilde, "...le poète la veille fêté dans tous les salons, applaudi dans tous les théâtres de Londres, chassé le lendemain de tous les garnis sans pouvoir trouver un oreiller où reposer sa tête...." (SG,II,615-16) Robert de Billy has left us a tantalizingly brief yet suggestive account of Wilde's possible influence upon the young Proust: "Dans l'année qui précéda sa condamnation, Oscar Wilde vint à Paris [1894] et sa conversation pleine d'imprévu intéressait Marcel ... Il ne resta pas longtemps en France, mais je doute qu'il ait beaucoup parlé à Marcel des romanciers ou philosophes anglais...."[285] Billy also adds that he discussed Wilde's De Profundis with Proust.[286] According to Chernowitz, Proust had read The Picture of Dorian Gray at about the age of twenty-two. He would certainly have agreed with several of Wilde's aesthetic theories expressed therein, e.g., the view that the painter depicts himself in his portraits of others.[287] Yet Wilde's Intentions, with its central belief in the total separation of art and nature, i.e., the theory that nature imitates art, would have met with little approval from Proust.[288] Had he not, in "Contre l'Obscurité," expressed the wish that "les poètes s'inspirent plus de la nature..."?[289] While Proust may have regarded art as a heightened reflection of reality, he never claimed that the two were unrelated. Unlike Wilde, who wished to flee from the crassness of external nature into a totally self-contained and hermetic world of aesthetic beauty, Proust never denied the importance of the most insignificant sensory impression, delighting in the infinite gradations of

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light and color in the visible world.[290] Without the raw material provided by external reality there can be no "moment privilégié," for the artist cannot create in a total vacuum.

Like Wilde, however, Proust supported the view that art can help us to see reality in a different light, can lift the veil of habit and indifference to disclose a world of poetic beauty. Since any painter's perception of reality is necessarily subjective and therefore different from another artist's rendering of the same subject, art will unavoidably reflect the individual image we each possess of all that exists outside ourselves. While Chernowitz rightly discloses this parallel between Proust's and Wilde's aesthetic doctrines, he is wrong, I feel, in suggesting that Proust accepted Wilde's dictum that "a great artist invents a type and life tries to copy it...."[291] It is not life that is the active principle for Proust, but our subjective emotions. If we eventually come to see the countryside in terms of Renoir's palette--where we had previously only visualized it in the style of Courbet or the Barbizon painters--it is because **our** perceptions have been modified through a certain amount of intimacy with Renoir's works. This distinction must be stressed in any comparison of the aesthetic theories of Proust and Wilde.

The points of contact between Walter Pater and Marcel Proust are even more intriguing. For some time it was thought that Proust was either unaware of or indifferent to Pater and his aesthetic philosophy. Gabriel Mourey, writing

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in 1926, erroneously concluded that Proust "[n'a] jamais prononcé nulle part son nom," yet still suspected that "Proust devait professer la plus tendre admiration" towards this kindred spirit.[292] In truth, Proust was aware of Pater's aesthetic theories as early as 1897. Douglas Ainslie recounted several meetings with Proust and Billy in the former's home on the boulevard Malesherbes during the course of that year: "Nous entamions assez fréquemment des discussions sur la valeur respective de Ruskin et de Walter Pater ... [Proust] ne voulait pas qu'on se prévalût de Pater contre Ruskin, et lorsque je lui racontai que Pater m'avait dit un jour: 'Je ne crois pas que Ruskin ait pu découvrir dans Saint Marc plus de choses que moi,' il haussa les épaules et dit: 'Que voulez-vous, nous ne nous entendrons jamais sur la littérature anglaise.'"[293] Upon his return from England in 1899, Billy gave Proust additional first-hand information concerning Pater's aesthetic theories: "...je lui fis connaître Walter Pater et ses Etudes helléniques. Je ne suis pas sûr qu'il ait lu Marius l'Epicurien."[294] According to J.P. Hulin, "there is no doubt whatever that [Proust] read the collections of Pater's essays published by Macmillan under the titles Appreciations (1889) and Miscellaneous Studies (1895)."[295] Clearly, Proust was in a position to fully appreciate the aesthetic contribution of Walter Pater, if not in its entirety, then at least in a fair sampling of the latter's writings on art.

What similarities or differences can one detect in their major aesthetic assumptions? First, both critics stressed the

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importance of the physical impression in the formulation of any theory of beauty or artistic perception. In the "Preface" to his Studies in the History of the Renaissance (1873), Pater had written that "in aesthetic criticism the first step towards seeing one's object as it really is, is to know one's own impression as it really is, to discriminate it, to realize it distinctly."[296] Likewise, Proust made the humble sensory impression the basis of his entire aesthetic philosophy as embodied in A la Recherche: "Seule l'impression," observes the narrator, "si chétive qu'en semble la matière, si insaisissable la trace, est un critérium de vérité, et à cause de cela mérite seule d'être appréhendée par l'esprit, car elle est seule capable, s'il sait en dégager cette vérité, de l'amener à une plus grande perfection et de lui donner une pure joie." (TR,III,880)[297] Both Pater and Proust, moreover, were convinced that all knowledge that was not gained through this personal and subjective medium of the senses could not rightly be considered one's own. Pater's "one must realize such primary data for oneself or not at all"[298] is echoed in Proust's "ce que nous n'avons pas eu à déchiffrer, à éclaircir par notre effort personnel, ce qui était clair avant nous, n'est pas à nous." (TR,III,880) Both critics were likewise struck by the fragile, evanescent quality of these sensory impressions. Pater defined them in terms of flamelike imagery, "unstable, flickering, inconsistent, which burn and are extinguished with our consciousness of them...."[299] The source of anguish which Proust's narrator constantly experiences is a direct result of this

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inability to arrest the moment of revelation which he knows the steeples of Martinville and the trees of Hudimesnil hold out to him. But while Pater claims that "our one chance is in expanding that interval, in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time,"[300] Proust's narrator is in search of a means of preserving rather than expanding the precious moments of truth. As Joseph E. Baker suggests, "...Pater is theoretically more concerned with the moment as it passes, whereas Proust is treating what Wordsworth would call 'emotion recollected in tranquility.'"[301]

Like Proust, Pater identifies habit as the bane of artistic perception: "To burn always with this hard gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life. Failure is to form habits, for habit is relative to a stereotyped world...."[302] For life to remain interesting, there must be some element of mystery which endures after we have sifted through the mass of impressions which we are constantly experiencing. When, in the Renaissance, Pater suggests that a certain strangeness is a mark of a work's authenticity, he is echoing Proust's praise of Moreau's paintings for their elusive and perplexing quality. Both writers realize that it is the task of the critic to discover the secret or essence which gives each artistic creation its unique appeal, resulting in a special sense of joy or ecstasy when contemplated by a perceptive viewer: "...the function of the aesthetic critic," writes Pater, "is to distinguish, analyze, and separate from its adjuncts, the virtue by which a picture, a landscape, a fair personality in life or in a book, produces this special impression of beauty or pleasure, to indicate

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what the source of that impression is, and under what conditions it is experienced."[303] The quest of Proust's narrator could not be expressed more succinctly.

If, according to Pater, "experience itself is the end,"[304] the goal toward which each sensitive and feeling individual directs his energies, then expression is the means by which the individual conveys the truths he has discovered. "Selon Pater," writes Ramon Fernandez, "toute beauté est expression, et l'expression n'est pas autre chose que 'la plus fine accommodation du langage à la vision intérieure.' Ce sont à peu près les termes de Proust, l'accord des deux esthéticiens est sur ce point complet. L'un et l'autre reconnaissent une valeur esthétique à l'expression, au sens intime, à cet oeil intérieur...."[305] This turning within to discover a hidden truth is the basis of both critics' essays on style. As early as 1928 Fernandez had discovered several striking similarities between Pater's essay on "Style" (1888) and Proust's theory of stylistic expression in Le Temps Retrouvé.[306] In the opinion of Hulin, "both writers entertain an 'expressionistic' conception of style, according to which style is the expression of a 'vision within.'"[307] This belief in an internal model requiring verbal or visual expression is one which recurs throughout Proust's criticism and fiction. In response to a survey dealing with the question of stylistic renewal, Proust wrote as follows: "On doit être préoccupé uniquement de l'impression ou de l'idée à traduire. Les yeux de l'esprit sont tournées au dedans, il faut s'efforcer de rendre avec la plus grande fidélité possible le modèle intérieur."[308]

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Since their theories of style were thus quite similar, it should come as no surprise that the practical application of these concepts would lead to a literary manner of expression which was also related. Betty Miller, choosing Pater's essay The Child in the House as an example, noted several of these stylistic and textual resemblances: "Not only does the material--the re-establishment, in middle age, of the most vivid and intimate details of early childhood[309]--recall the opening chapters of Du côté de chez Swann, but the manner, the choice of adjective, the cadence of the prolonged and meticulously balanced sentences, all are strikingly evocative of the prose style of Proust...."[310] Whether or not Proust had read Pater's Marius the Epicurean or several of his shorter works, these stylistic convergences would still have occurred, since both writers were guided by the same theoretical aesthetic foundations. By the same token, even if Proust had never read any of Pater's art criticism, he would still have sensed a certain spiritual affinity with the critic for whom da Vinci's Gioconda represented the ultimate expression of psychological truth.[311]

Proust's passion for the poetry of Charles Baudelaire is apparent to any reader of A la Recherche. It sparked his critical interest on at least two occasions, for he devoted a section of Contre Sainte-Beuve to Baudelaire's verse and, in 1921, published a long essay entitled "A Propos de Baudelaire." It is understandable, therefore, that Proust would have been influenced by Baudelaire's "Phares" when he came to write his own "Portraits de Peintres."[312] According to

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Robert de Billy, "Le long de la grande galerie [du Louvre], il récitait les vers de Baudelaire sur les peintres...."[313] Since Proust also shared Baudelaire's passion for Wagner, it is reasonable to assume that he also read a major portion of the poet's criticism on music; the art criticism was not unknown to Proust.[314] What impact did these readings have upon Proust's aesthetic theories?

The tension that is constantly present in Proust's conception of the relation of the material world to the artist's spiritual representation of that universe through his art is also evident in his theory of beauty. While he was still under Ruskin's sway, Proust could write that "la Beauté ne peut pas être aimée d'une manière féconde si on l'aime seulement pour les plaisirs qu'elle donne ... le plaisir esthétique nous est donné par surcroît si nous aimons la Beauté pour elle-même, comme quelque chose de réel existant en dehors de nous et infiniment plus important que la joie qu'elle nous donne."[315] This interpretation of beauty as an absolute or ideal Platonic quality,[316] however, conflicts with Proust's subsequent conception of each artist's individual and subjective vision of beauty or reality in general. Ruskin had stated, in Sesame and Lilies, that it is the paradoxical ability of beauty to exist as an external standard and, at the same time, to adapt itself to each artist's individual rendering of its essence. According to J.M. Cocking, "[Proust] might equally have found the paradox implied in Baudelaire's Salons; Baudelaire, too, claimed that beauty is eternal and absolute but expressed by every age and country in its own way."[317]

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As an avid reader of Les Fleurs du Mal, Proust would have encountered Baudelaire's uniquely modern conception of beauty as a combination of sinister and angelic qualities. The ambivalence inherent in this theory must have appealed to the writer who saw ambiguity as the basis of the human personality. According to Bruce Lowery, "...Proust inclut dans sa conception du beau une certaine laideur fascinante, une certaine grandeur grotesque et parfois monstrueuse."[318] It is precisely this duality, this strange mixture of the seraphic and the demonic, that Swann sees in the figure of Odette: "...il s'amusait à opposer cette personnification étrange: la femme entretenue--chatoyant amalgame d'éléments inconnus et diaboliques, serti, comme une apparition de Gustave Moreau, de fleurs vénéneuses entrelacées à des joyaux précieux--et cette Odette sur le visage de qui il avait vu passer les mêmes sentiments de pitié pour un malheureux, de révolte contre une injustice, de gratitude pour un bienfait, qu'il avait vu éprouver autrefois par sa propre mère, par ses amis...." (CS,I,267-8)

In their conception of nature, Proust and Baudelaire seem to have shared a common outlook. It is perhaps Baudelaire's phrase "une ténébreuse et profonde unité" (from his poem "Correspondances") that Proust may well have had in mind when he defined nature as a realm where "le fond de tout est un et obscur...."[319] In the opinion of Margaret Mein, "Both Baudelaire and Proust move away from any Ruskinian theory that Nature is capable, either of joining man in his range of moods, or of existing as an independent, even Divine power. Nature has only the degree of importance which man

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accords to her, firstly in admitting her within his mind and secondly in re-creating her."[320] A dramatic illustration of this belief occurs during the narrator's visit to Venice. The city that had once held out a dream of oriental splendor is suddenly bereft of all significance as a result of the departure of the narrator's mother and his refusal to join her:

> ...je me sentais seul, les choses m'étaient devenues étrangères.... La ville que j'avais devant moi avait cessé d'être Venise. Sa personnalité, son nom, me paraissaient comme des fictions mensongères que je n'avais plus le courage d'inculquer aux pierres. Les palais m'apparaissaient réduits à leurs simples parties et quantités de marbre pareilles à toutes autres, et l'eau comme une combinaison d'hydrogène et d'azote, éternelle, aveugle, antérieure et extérieure à Venise, ignorante des Doges et de Turner. Et cependant ce lieu quelconque était étrange comme le lieu où on arrive et qui ne vous connaît pas encore, comme un lieu qu'on a quitté et qui vous a déjà [sic] oublié. Je ne pouvais plus rien lui dire de moi, laisser rien de moi se poser sur lui, il me contractait sur moi-même ... Tels les palais, le Canal, le Rialto, dévêtus de l'idée qui faisait leur individualité et dissous en leurs vulgaires éléments matériels ... elles cessèrent de plus rien contenir de moi; bien plus, elles cessèrent d'être Venise; comme si c'était moi seul qui avais insinué une âme dans les pierres des palais et l'eau du Canal. (F,III,652-3,655)

An idea central to Proust's aesthetic, viz. the transformation by the artist of physical matter into a spiritual essence, may well have been suggested to him by his readings of Baudelaire's essays on art and aesthetics. When Mein notes the latter's insistence that "the poet creates the sun and radiance of a warm atmosphere from the glowing particles of his thoughts,"[321] this conception approximates Elstir's ability to recreate the world of nature within the confines of his own studio:

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> ...obligé de rester enfermé dans son atelier, certains jours de printemps où savoir que les bois étaient pleins de violettes lui donnait une fringale d'en regarder, [Elstir] envoyait sa concierge lui en acheter un bouquet: alors ce n'est pas la table sur laquelle il avait posé le petit modèle végétal, mais tout le tapis des sous-bois où il avait vu autrefois, par milliers, les tiges serpentines, fléchissant sous leur bec bleu, qu'Elstir croyait avoir sous les yeux, comme une zone imaginaire qu'enclavait dans son atelier la limpide ödeur de la fleur évocatrice. (P,III,139)

In his spiritualization of reality, moreover, the painter does not merely reproduce mental images or recollections of concrete forms; he re-creates them. Thus, the charm of Elstir's canvases, for the narrator, "consistait en une sorte de métamorphose des choses représentées, analogue à celle qu'en poésie on nomme métaphore, et que, si Dieu le Père avait créé les choses en les nommant, c'est en leur ôtant leur nom, ou en leur donnant un autre, qu'Elstir les recréait." (JF,I,835) When, much later in his spiritual journey, Mme Verdurin shows the narrator an Elstir watercolor depicting a bunch of roses, this lesson is brought home to Marcel; he finally realizes that "Elstir ne pouv[ait] regarder une fleur qu'en la transplantant d'abord dans ce jardin intérieur où nous sommes forcés de rester toujours. Il avait montré dans cette aquarelle l'apparition des roses qu'il avait vues et que sans lui on n'eût connues jamais; de sorte qu'on peut dire que c'était une variété nouvelle dont ce peintre, comme un ingénieux horticulteur, avait enrichi la famille des Roses." (SG,II,943) It is only by virtue of his art that the painter is able to maintain a record of this process of spiritualization: "...l'opposition nature

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(matérialité pure) / homme (matière + esprit)," according to François-Xavier Nicolas, "a été vaincue par l'art, suprême assimilation de la nature à l'homme."[322]

Proust's wholesale adoption of Baudelaire's theory of correspondences, both in terms of synaesthetic sense impressions and the transposition or fusion of the various art forms, is so obvious as to need little if any amplification. The concept of the multilayered realm of sense experiences is clearly expressed when Proust's narrator concludes that "une heure n'est pas qu'une heure, c'est un vase rempli de parfums, de sons, de projets et de climats." (TR,III,889) Bergotte's consideration of his literary style in terms of Vermeer's "petit pan de mur jaune" and the narrator's description of the Vinteuil sonata and septet in terms of color and light are just two memorable instances of the practical application of Baudelaire's theory to A la Recherche. That Proust may have derived his theory of the artist's "patrie perdue" from Baudelaire's concept of "la vie antérieure," as Hokari has suggested,[323] is a more tenuous hypothesis. Likewise, Inoue's attempt to trace Proust's use of the term "énergie instinctive"--in connection with the art of Chardin--to Baudelaire's use of the same term in his essay on the art of Constantin Guys is a highly suspect undertaking.[324]

Contrary to Monnin-Hornung's conclusion that "les deux écrivains ne se ressemblent ni dans leurs goûts, ni dans leur façon d'examiner la peinture, ni dans la manière de l'introduire dans leur oeuvre,"[325] there is a strong reminder of Proust's personal approach to viewing art in

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Baudelaire's definition of his own critical process, expressed in his "Salon of 1846":

> I sincerely believe that the best criticism is one that is amusing and poetic; not a cold, algebraic criticism which, under the pretext of explaining everything, has neither love nor hate and deliberately strips itself of every shred of temperament. No, the best criticism, since a fine picture is nature reflected by an artist,[326] will be that picture reflected by an intelligent and sensitive mind ... to justify its existence, criticism should be partial, passionate and political, in other words written from an exclusive point of view, but from the point of view that opens up the widest horizons. [327]
>
> (emphasis mine)

Like Proust, moreover, Baudelaire, in his essay on Wagner, outlined a two-stage operation in the appreciation of art. "The starting-point [for Baudelaire] is nearly always volupté," writes Jonathan Mayne, "--the shock of pleasure experienced in front of a work of art; the poet-critic then proceeds to examine and analyse the pourquoi--the why and the wherefore--until finally he is able to transform the initial shock of pleasure into knowledge--the volupté into connaissance."[328] Granted that Proust's particular psychic apparatus may not have permitted him to experience the initial sensuous impact of colors and shapes to the same degree as Baudelaire's moment of volupté, there still remains the fact that, like Baudelaire, Proust felt the need to withdraw from immediate contact with the painting in order to recompose his thoughts, to sift through his impressions and thereby discover the unifying element or key to an artist's style.

Monnin-Hornung's subsequent conclusion that for Baudelaire "la sensibilité à la couleur n'est pas dominante; chez

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Proust, au contraire, elle est frappante, elle apparaît comme de claires notes espacées, semées dans toute l'oeuvre,"[329] tends to lose much of its validity if one recalls that Proust had praised Baudelaire for having created a symphony of colors in his poetry: "Rappelle-toi que toutes les couleurs vraies, modernes, poétiques, c'est lui qui les a trouvées, pas très poussées, mais délicieuses, surtout les roses, avec du bleu, de l'or ou du vert...."[330] Where I am in complete agreement with Monnin-Hornung, however, is in her realization that both critics stressed the need for contemporary subject matter in art. Baudelaire's essay "Le Peintre de la Vie Moderne" is probably the poet's most eloquent defense of this issue. In the case of Proust, it is again Elstir who voices this argument. From his description of races and yachting events, the narrator concludes "que des régates, que des meetings sportifs où des femmes bien habillées baignent dans la glauque lumière d'un hippodrome marin, pouvaient être, pour un artiste moderne, un motif aussi intéressant que les fêtes qu'ils aimaient tant à décrire, pour un Véronèse ou un Carpaccio." (JF,I,898)

One point which has received relatively little critical attention is the difference in attitude of each critic vis-à-vis the concept of the imagination. Baudelaire expounded upon the meaning of the term in his "Salon of 1859"; he viewed the imagination as a creative faculty and gave it a supreme position in the artist's makeup, adding that it must also be accompanied by a refined sensibility and technical know-how. Proust, on the other hand, was always somewhat suspicious of

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the unchecked and freewheeling operation of the imagination.[331] In the words of the narrator of A la Recherche, "Il n'est pas certain que, pour créer une oeuvre littéraire, l'imagination et la sensibilité ne soient pas des qualités interchangeables et que la seconde ne puisse pas sans grand inconvénient être substituée à la première ... Un homme né sensible et qui n'aurait pas d'imagination pourrait malgré cela écrire des romans admirables." (TR,III,900-1) Proust's fear of letting the imagination assume complete control over the artist's creative activities is based upon his conviction that without an initial contact with reality the artist has no means of measuring the truth of his creation.[332] He had criticized the Symbolist poets for losing touch with reality, creating poems that were often no more than lifeless allegories. Despite his subjectivist leanings, Proust could not deny the basically rationalist core of his aesthetic philosophy. As Ramon Fernandez has observed, "Proust n'a jamais cherché à tirer parti de ses découvertes esthétiques au bénéfice d'une philosophie non rationaliste. Rationaliste, il l'était à fond, à la manière assez démodée de Taine."[333] It is for this reason that Proust conceived of Elstir's creative efforts as a two-step process, i.e., an initial poetic vision, based upon an optical illusion or distortion of reality, followed by a conscious intellectual ordering process.

If, as Monnin-Hornung suggests, Proust acknowledged "une sorte de filiation entre l'esthétique du poète et la sienne,"[334] it was probably in their personal approach to art criticism. Both critics sought to define the essential quality or key to

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the paintings of a particular artist, to discover the unifying thread holding all the works together.. Baudelaire's definition of the best type of criticism could serve as the motto for Proust's essays on Rembrandt, Vermeer, Moreau, as well as for lesser known painters treated in his criticism. Baudelaire's appreciation of art may have been more direct, his command of the technical métier of the artist may have been more complete, but he was in total agreement with Proust in attempting to discover the psychological underpinnings of the artists of his own century.

The art criticism of Eugène Fromentin was well known to Proust. One can assume from the following letter (17 Oct. 1902) addressed to his mother that Proust bought a copy of Les Maîtres d'Autrefois (1876) before departing for Holland: "As-tu des renseignements sur la vie de Fromentin?" he asked Mme Proust. "C'est ennuyeux de n'avoir aucun 'tuyau' sur quelqu'un avec qui on vient de passer quinze jours à l'hôtel."[335] He was also familiar with Fromentin's travel essays, Un Eté dans le Sahara (1857) and Une Année dans le Sahel (1859).[336]

There were several factors which contributed to Proust's dissatisfaction with Fromentin's art criticism. On a personal level, Proust could not forgive the author of Les Maîtres d'Autrefois for virtually ignoring the artistic achievements of his beloved Vermeer.[337] From a stylistic point of view, Proust found Fromentin's manner of expression rather affected and precious, a fact which may explain why the latter's criticism was held in such high esteem by Montesquiou. "Passons l'éponge sur le peintre," wrote Proust in his preface to

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Blanche's Propos de Peintre, "et avouons que l'écrivain, au moins dans les Maîtres d'autrefois, avec ses élégances à la George Sand, sinon à la Jules Sandeau, est inférieur à celui des Maîtres de jadis et de naguère."[338] The most serious fault, however, which Proust found in Fromentin's art criticism was its lack of concreteness, its indulgence in vague and abstract speculations. In his essay entitled "Un Professeur de Beauté," Proust praised Montesquiou for avoiding the abstract tendency which marred so much of Fromentin's art criticism, adding, with respect to the latter, "...il sut rarement dans ses livres, malgré tout son luxe d'explications fines, de raisonnements profonds, de touches techniques, nous faire voir un tableau...."[339]

Although he took Fromentin to task, Proust, in the words of Chernowitz, "owed him more at first than he would later have cared to admit."[340] In support of this statement, the same critic points to Proust's choice of the rather insignificant figures of Cuyp and Potter for inclusion in his "Portraits de Peintres" as proof that the young aesthete had read his Maîtres d'Autrefois rather well. Like Proust, Fromentin never published a separate collection of salon criticism; his views on art or aesthetics were always expressed in the context of travel essays or fictional narratives. One can go even further and find actual parallels in the aesthetic theories of each critic. Since Fromentin was a painter as well as a writer, he was acutely aware of the differences inherent in these two crafts; in his preface to the third edition of Sahara, he claimed that the two were not rival but

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complementary activities, each with distinctly different means of expression. This was precisely the point on which Proust differed most radically with Ruskin. When the latter argued, in The Bible of Amiens, that a painting is beautiful insofar as the ideas it expresses in visual terms are independent of the technical language used to express them, Proust responded: "Il me semble que, si le système de Ruskin pèche par quelque côté, c'est par celui-là. Car la peinture ne peut atteindre la réalité une des choses et rivaliser par là avec la littérature, qu'à condition de ne pas être littéraire."[341] In A la Recherche, the narrator expresses the same belief with respect to the literary effort: "Le littérateur envie le peintre, il aimerait prendre des croquis, des notes, il est perdu s'il le fait." (TR,III,899)

Fromentin's stress upon the role of memory in the perception and appreciation of various sensations presents a striking parallel with Proust's need for the "distancing" process, effectuated by his memory, in the appreciation of art. It is revealing to compare statements by each critic on this issue. According to Fromentin, "Ce n'est que dans quelques jours que je saurais si je suis en disposition de goûter ce que j'ai vu et si j'y ai trouvé quelque nourriture."[342] Proust, writing to Mme Catusse, confessed: "...je ne fais presque la connaissance d'un objet que quand je m'en sépare."[343] In both cases, the distilling powers of memory are necessary in order to gauge the full significance of an impression, whether visual or otherwise.

Fromentin's aesthetic, despite its qualities of clarity

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and balance, is highly subjective. Like Proust's theory, it is the artist's subjective vision of reality, the interiorization of an image perceived in the external universe, that determines the originality of a painter or writer. The artist is endowed with a certain manner of seeing, feeling, and expressing; these qualities, moreover, are unmistakably stamped upon each work he produces. "On sent bien," notes Proust's narrator, "à voir les uns à côté des autres dix portraits de personnes différentes peintes par Elstir, que ce sont avant tout des Elstir." (JF,I,851)

Although there is no factual evidence to support the following assumption, it is possible that Proust may have been influenced by Fromentin's original and unique consideration of Rembrandt's art in terms of light when he came to write his own essay on this painter. In both instances there is an emphasis upon the supernatural or dramatic role of light in Rembrandt's canvases. In his Maîtres d'Autrefois, Fromentin coined the term luminariste to accurately describe this Dutch painter's style: "Un 'luminariste' serait, si je ne me trompe, un homme qui concevrait la lumière en dehors des voies suivies, y attacherait un sens extraordinaire, et lui ferait de grands sacrifices...."[344] Proust's emphasis upon the "jour doré" leitmotif running throughout Rembrandt's works--with its almost alchemical powers of transformation --comes quite close to Fromentin's conception of Rembrandt's magical use of light.

Despite these similarities, one can easily see that the critical approaches of the writers were radically different.

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On the one hand, there is Proust's intuitive, poetical grasp of the essence of a painter's style; on the other, there is Fromentin's mastery of the technical aspects of painting, coupled with a highly intellectualized approach to the subject matter and intentions of the artist. Both critics, it is true, were endowed with an acute sensitivity to external impressions, but Fromentin's first-hand knowledge of the painter's craft gave him the degree of assurance which only a professional art critic could possess.

The same distinction might be made in discussing the art criticism of Denis Diderot and its relationship to Proust's essay on Chardin. There is no evidence to prove that Proust ever read Diderot's Salons,[345] but Johnson has argued that "Proust undoubtedly was familiar with the Goncourt's essay on Chardin as it directly followed their essay on Watteau in L'Art du XVIIIe siècle. If Proust had read this article, he would also have read the extract from Diderot's Salon of 1765, in which the eighteenth century philosopher quotes certain remarks of Chardin on his art."[346] Gita May's comparative study of Proust's and Diderot's analyses of Chardin's art wisely avoids the question of a possible influence and stresses the differences in critical approach of the writers--"Diderot en analysant les procédés du coloriste, Proust en portant l'accent sur le côté psychologique"--only to conclude that "ils ont abouti aux mêmes intuitions des qualités uniques qui constituent l'originalité de l'art de Chardin."[347] At the very least, it is safe to assume that Proust saw in Diderot a model for the writer-as-art-critic, thus encouraging him in his own attempts at art appreciation.

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The impact of John Ruskin's aesthetic theories upon Marcel Proust has been the subject of several longer studies and countless articles;[348] given the narrower scope of the present chapter, the question can only be treated in a rather cursory fashion.

How and when Proust first discovered Ruskin's writings on art is a question which has not yet received a definitive answer. In all likelihood, he first heard of Ruskin's aesthetic theories from Paul Desjardins, his onetime professeur de lettres; the latter had begun to publish fragmentary translations, mostly drawn from Ruskin's Sesame and Lilies, in the Bulletin de l'Union pour l'Action Morale for 1893. Proust had the opportunity to glean first-hand information concerning Ruskin's aesthetic theories from Marie Nordlinger, whom he met at Reynaldo Hahn's apartment as early as 1896. As for critical works about Ruskin, one can gather from Proust's letters that he read Robert de la Sizeranne's Ruskin et la Religion de la Beauté (1897), Milsand's L'Esthétique Anglaise, and works by several lesser known critics.[349]

With which of Ruskin's writings on art and aesthetics was Proust familiar, either in translation or in the original? In a letter written at the height of his interest in Ruskin (8 Feb. 1900) Proust told Mlle Nordlinger that he had memorized entire passages "des Sept Lampes de l'Architecture, de la Bible d'Amiens, du Val d'Arno, des Lectures d'Architecture et de Peinture, de Praeterita...."[350] Chernowitz adds that Proust also referred to all of the following works by Ruskin in his own translations and prefaces: Modern Painters,[351]

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The Stones of Venice,[352] Saint Mark's Rest,[353] Mornings in Florence,[354] The Relations between Michelangelo and Tintoret, and The Eagle's Nest.[355] Proust also read Ruskin's Queen of the Air and his Guide to the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice.[356]

Proust's translations of Ruskin's Bible of Amiens (1904) and Sesame and Lilies (1906) have been the subject of much critical controversy, mostly centering upon the translator's command of English. According to Marie Nordlinger, Ruskin's Bible of Amiens "lui restait inaccessible, car il ignorait l'anglais, et il fallut par la suite que sa mère...traduisît le texte mot à mot à son intention...."[357] Proust's letters to his mother tend to confirm this statement,[358] although in the opinion of Georges de Lauris "the only English he knew was Ruskin's, but this he knew in all its subtlety."[359] In addition to the contributions of his mother and Mlle Nordlinger, Proust also made use of the linguistic abilities of Robert de Billy,[360] Antoine and Emmanuel Bibesco, Robert d'Humières,[361] and Léon Yeatman.[362] Given these intermediary aids, the question still remains: How well did Proust comprehend Ruskin's inner voice? If we accept Philip Kolb's assertion that "il existe donc toujours entre Proust et l'oeuvre de Ruskin une sorte de barrière linguistique que lui imposa son ignorance de l'anglais,"[363] does this mean that Proust was unable to grasp the significance of Ruskin's aesthetic theories? A mere glance at the copious annotations to each of Proust's translations should easily dispel any such notion. Is it not as a critic--in its widest sense--of Ruskin rather than a slavish imitator/translator that Proust's

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name is forever linked to that of the British aesthetician?[364]

To call Proust a spiritual disciple of Ruskin is to falsify the nature of his involvement with this thinker.[365] Ruskin would have been the first to deny such an attachment; in Saint Mark's Rest Ruskin is quoted by Monnin-Hornung as having proclaimed: "...aucun de mes vrais disciples ne sera jamais ruskinien. Il suivra non ma direction, mais les sentiments de son âme propre...."[366] Proust himself has best defined the nature of his bond with Ruskin--or any great thinker, for that matter: "Il n'y a de meilleure manière d'arriver à prendre conscience de ce qu'on sent soi-même que d'essayer de recréer en soi ce qu'a senti un maître. Dans cet effort profond c'est notre pensée elle-même que nous mettons, avec la sienne, au jour ... c'est en soumettant son esprit à rendre cette vision, à approcher de cette vérité, que l'artiste devient vraiment lui-même."[367] Proust's study of Ruskin's art criticism, to repeat Henri Lemaître's felicitous image, served him as a tremplin[368] or springboard to reach new heights in his own aesthetic theories.

From the point of view of pure factual knowledge, there can be no doubt that Proust owed Ruskin a considerable debt. In the opinion of Maurice Bardèche, Ruskin's art criticism "ouvrit à Proust un pays inconnu, la terre de Canaan couverte des opulents et somptueux vergers de l'art...."[369] This unknown province was, for the most part, quattrocento Italy, and among the "fruits" which Proust discovered were the works of Fra Angelico, Carpaccio, Bellini, Mantegna, as well as the paintings of such lesser known figures as Cima da Conegliano,

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Luini, and Orcagna. Proust's familiarity with the art of Botticelli, Raphael, Tintoretto, and Titian was also strengthened as a consequence of his readings in Ruskin's art criticism. The revelation of Giotto's art represents a special case, one which has already been discussed in an earlier section. Although it is tangential in the present context, one should also recall the fact that Proust was an avid reader of Ruskin's essays on church architecture; these pages certainly found their way into sections of A la Recherche and Proust's own criticism.[370] Turner, a painter whose works Proust greatly admired, was first brought to his attention by Ruskin. It was around Turner's classic statement, "I paint what I see, not what I know" (cited by Ruskin in Eagle's Nest)[371] that Proust formulated his theory of artistic perception. According to the narrator of A la Recherche, "l'effort d'Elstir [était] de ne pas exposer les choses telles qu'il savait qu'elles étaient, mais selon ces illusions optiques dont notre vision première est faite...." (JF,I,838)[372] While it has been suggested that Proust could also have derived this theory from Monet,[373] the evidence in favor of a Turner-Ruskin-Proust chain of transmission is much more convincing. Although Proust did not share Ruskin's passion for the works of the Pre-Raphaelites,[374] the course of his own thinking--and the very substance of his novel--would have been radically different had he not been exposed to Ruskin's analysis of the achievements of quattrocento Italian art or the Romantic vision of Turner.

A more intangible lesson which Proust derived from

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Ruskin's art criticism was the ability to perceive art in a new and more intimate manner. In its most primitive application, this simply meant seeing nature and art through the eyes of a previous thinker. Such examples are frequent in Proust's earlier years of aesthetic apprenticeship, when his enthusiasm for Ruskin was passionate in the extreme. Writing to his mother while on vacation at Evian, Proust asked her to send him Sizeranne's book on Ruskin "pour voir les montagnes avec les yeux de ce grand homme."[375] The following year he undertook an artistic pilgrimage to Venice in order to follow in Ruskin's footsteps. In a note to The Bible of Amiens he described the fervor with which he re-enacted Ruskin's itinerary: "Que ces jours-là étaient heureux, où l'on se promenait en gondole à Venise avec quelques autres disciples du Maître, où l'on écoutait sa prédication au bord de l'eau, en débarquant devant chacun des temples qui semblent surgir de la mer, en montrant l'objet de son discours et les images mêmes de sa pensée, en animant ses livres comme aujourd'hui la lumière de l'immortalité les anime."[376] While it is certainly true that Proust had later written that the value of art resided in its ability to externalize the most intimate and inexpressible sentiments, the viewer thereby enjoying the privilege "d'avoir d'autres yeux, de voir l'univers avec les yeux d'un autre, de cent autres, de voir les cent univers que chacun d'eux [i.e., every original artist] voit, que chacun d'eux est..." (P,III,258), this theory implied that the artist had re-created the universe as he perceived it, with the concomitant obligation that the

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receptive and sensitive observer would also see the painting or hear the music with his own unique sensory apparatus, thus re-creating the image or sound for a second time. Proust's rather slavish adoption of Ruskin's visual point of view, at this early stage in his career, did not seem to involve such a re-creative process; the young writer was apparently content to see things exactly as Ruskin had witnessed them.

With time, however, Proust's adolescent fervor cooled somewhat and he was better able to see Ruskin's strengths and shortcomings in their proper perspective. He realized that Ruskin had taught him to appreciate art and nature in a manner heretofore unknown to him. Like Chardin, Ruskin had unsealed Proust's eyes, exposing him to the infinite beauty of the external universe. As André Maurois has written,

> Ruskin a été pour lui un des esprits intercesseurs qui nous sont nécessaires au début de notre vie, pour prendre contact avec le réel. Ruskin lui a appris à regarder des vagues, des fleurs, à les regarder de tout près ... En somme Proust, ayant appris de Ruskin une manière nouvelle de regarder à la fois les oeuvres d'art et la nature, a développé cette manière et l'a enfin poussée plus loin que son maître. Non seulement ses descriptions sont plus belles encore et plus précises que celles de Ruskin, mais surtout il a appliqué aux sentiments la vision minutieuse de Ruskin, ce que Ruskin n'avait pas fait. Il l'a même appliqué aux sentiments moraux, ce que Ruskin n'eût pas osé faire. [377]

The image of reality as Ruskin had perceived it was now no longer transmitted to Proust as a mirror reflection,[378] but rather in terms of a magnifying glass.

What are some of the major aesthetic theories which Proust may have discovered in Ruskin's writings? According to Jessie Murray, "In all that Proust says about 'la vision

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du peintre,' about the imaginative power by which an artist creates a new reality,[379] he is in complete agreement with Ruskin ... [the] theory of a perpetually renewed creation in which each artist plays his part...was expressed by Ruskin when he claimed that the artist imitates the work of the Creator, or rather he creates in art a kind of secondary life."[380] This last concept, it will be recalled, occurs in A la Recherche when the narrator observes: "...si Dieu le Père avait créé les choses en les nommant, c'est en leur ôtant leur nom, ou en leur donnant un autre, qu'Elstir les recréait." (JF,I,835) Both Proust and Ruskin, moreover, stress the purely subjective nature of artistic perception; in the case of the former, it is by virtue of what may be likened to an optical illusion or trick perspective that Elstir succeeds in capturing a unique and original glimpse of reality: "...tout le tableau [i.e., "Le Port de Carquethuit"] donnait cette impression des ports où la mer entre dans la terre, où la terre est déjà marine et la population amphibie ... la perspective faisait s'enjamber les unes les autres." (JF,I,837) As Jean Autret has rightly observed, "[pour] Proust comme pour Ruskin la matière de l'oeuvre d'art en peinture c'est l'impression pure, qui est une perception erronée, une illusion d'optique, mais qui est la seule vision de l'artiste, la seule réalité et la seule vérité qui comptent pour son art."[381]

Both Ruskin and Proust viewed the artist as a type of seer or voyant, a conception which had been put forth by Thomas Carlyle; Proust was familiar with the latter's Heroes and Hero-Worship.[382] It is in Ruskin's emphasis upon the

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predestined role of the artist, the sense of a mission which the creator feels impelled to undertake, that Proust most nearly approaches Ruskin's conception of the artist's task. "Il y a accord absolu entre Proust et Ruskin," writes Murray, "sur ce qu'il y a de servitude volontaire dans le rôle d'un grand artiste. Proust comme Ruskin se regarde comme un instrument dont la fonction sera remplie quand il aura donné à l'humanité le message qu'il se croit créé pour communiquer ... C'est ainsi que Proust et Ruskin ont compris l'obéissance et le respect. Ce principe de nécessité, qui a été le guide de leur vie, leur a paru plus beau que la liberté."[383] Proust envisioned this artistic discipline as a healthy, therapeutic process.[384] If the artist's sense of duty is instinctively felt, it is still a voluntary choice; his sources of inspiration and the act of actual creation, on the other hand, are beyond his conscious control: "Le sujet du romancier, la vision du poète, la vérité du philosophe," writes Proust, "s'imposent à eux d'une façon presque nécessaire, extérieure pour ainsi dire à leur pensée. Et c'est en soumettant son esprit à rendre cette vision, à approcher de cette vérité que l'artiste devient vraiment lui-même."[385] Whereas Proust saw the artist obeying an inner voice, an artistic conscience, Ruskin felt that the artist should transcribe the word of God. But in both cases the artist was compelled to create by a force greater than himself.

In the opinion of Autret, Proust may have discovered in Ruskin's writings the theory that art is a non-transmissible phenomenon, with no scale of values to measure "progress," as

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in the natural sciences.[386] Proust, however, modified this theory somewhat when he came to write A la Recherche; although Elstir is certainly a prime example of "la servitude volontaire"--having opted to forego the company of society--his individual creative style is the result of a careful study and assimilation of the lessons of earlier painters: "...Elstir avait pour son compte refait devant le réel...le même effort qu'un Chardin ou un Perroneau, et qu'en conséquence, quand il cessait de travailler pour lui-même, il admirait en eux des tentatives du même genre, des sortes de fragments anticipés d'oeuvres de lui." (CG2,II,420)[387] The point here is that while Chardin's technique may not be transmissible, Elstir has managed to absorb his message, to identify himself completely with the earlier painter's perception of reality. In this sense, there is what one might refer to as a chain of continuity in Proust's conception of art.

While Ruskin and Proust both agree that the act of perception is basically subjective, they appear to differ on the question of whether or not the art object can serve as the vehicle for the transmission of the artist's personality to the perceptive and receptive viewer. According to J. Ann Duncan, "Ruskin did not state that art was a means of communicating the essence of the artist's individuality,[388] but only the essence of the object; this would seem to be Proust's personal addition. A possible explanation is that Ruskin was primarily interested in the artist's vision, in the fullest sense, whereas Proust was mainly concerned with communication, particularly of all that he felt to be most essential to his

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own nature and perception."[389] In A la Recherche Proust clearly views art as a vehicle for the expression of the artist's innermost qualities: "Comme le spectre extériorise pour nous la composition de la lumière," observes the narrator, "l'harmonie d'un Wagner, la couleur d'un Elstir nous permettent de connaître cette essence qualitative des sensations d'un autre...." (P,III,159) If Duncan's differentiation is correct, then it naturally follows that Ruskin would not have accepted Proust's conclusion that the disappearance of the art object necessarily implies the extinction of the artist's "message" for future generations.[390] The hope that is embodied in the vision of Bergotte's books--symbolically arranged in rows of three to signal the artist's spiritual resurrection--is one which would have appeared alien to Ruskin's aesthetic doctrines.

Ruskin may have suggested to Proust the concept of the leitmotif, i.e., a visual treatment of light, color and/or a physical object which consistently reappears throughout a painter's works, thereby giving the whole a sense of unity and cohesiveness. In La Prisonnière, for example, the narrator attempts to explain the importance of this technique to Albertine: "Vous m'avez dit que vous aviez vu certains tableaux de Ver Meer, vous vous rendez bien compte que ce sont les fragments d'un même monde, que c'est toujours, quelque génie avec lequel elle soit recréée, la même table, le même tapis, la même femme, la même nouvelle et unique beauté...." (P,III,377)[391] Whereas objects appear to be the unifying links in Vermeer's paintings, Rembrandt's canvases

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are all marked by a certain "jour doré," i.e., a peculiar treatment of light and color as opposed to a recurrent image.

More important still, however, is the possibility that Proust may have derived the thematic structure of his own novel from his readings of Ruskin's criticism. In support of this hypothesis, Philip Kolb cites a note which Proust appended to his translation of Sesame and Lilies (c.1905--four years before he began the writing of Du Côté de Chez Swann) wherein this unifying device is clearly explained.[392] If, therefore, this assumption is correct, then it would appear that Ruskin instilled in the "auteur manqué" of Jean Santeuil a renewed faith in his craft and was largely responsible for the underlying compositional structure of A la Recherche.

Although there were many points of contact between Ruskin and Proust, both in terms of their personalities[393] and their aesthetic doctrines, Proust was not blind to Ruskin's shortcomings as a critic. During the ten-year period of his active involvement with Ruskiniana (c.1895-1905), Proust was tempted to forgive his predecessor for his rather glaring inconsistencies and obvious biases: "...même pendant qu'il divaguait sur les tableaux des autres," Proust told Marie Nordlinger in January of 1904, "ses erreurs dépeignaient et retraçaient de merveilleux tableaux qu'il faut aimer en soi."[394] Not even Ruskin's felicitous manner of expression, however, could compensate for his deficiencies as a thinker; Proust was fully aware of the latter: "...son admiration pour l'écriture 'artiste' ne l'empêche ni de s'exprimer clairement ni de remarquer et de critiquer dans les belles phrases

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d'un Ruskin 'le rapt rapide mais visible que la phrase fait de la pensée,'" writes Will McLendon, "'et la déperdition immédiate que la pensée en subit.'" (La Bible d'Amiens)[395] Proust's increasing dissatisfaction with Ruskin's aesthetic theories can be traced in his letters to friends. "Oui, mon amour pour Ruskin dure," he confided to Léon Bélugou in 1906, "Seulement quelquefois rien ne le refroidit comme de lire Ruskin."[396] In the same letter he judged Sesame and Lilies "le plus mauvais ouvrage de Ruskin."[397] In the "Post-Scriptum" to The Bible of Amiens translation of 1904, Proust confessed that his passion for Ruskin was dead, adding:"C'est quand Ruskin est bien loin de nous que nous traduisons ses livres et tâchons de fixer dans une image ressemblante les traits de sa pensée."[398]

What were some of Proust's major objections to Ruskin's aesthetic theories? For one thing, he accused Ruskin of lacking sincerity and maintaining a hypocritical attitude vis-à-vis his appreciation for certain works of art: "...au moment même où il prêchait la sincérité," writes Proust, "il y manquait lui-même, non en ce qu'il disait, mais par la manière dont il le disait. Les doctrines qu'il professait étaient des doctrines morales et non des doctrines esthétiques, et pourtant il les choisissait pour leur beauté. Et comme il ne voulait pas les présenter comme belles, mais comme vraies, il était obligé de se mentir à lui-même sur la nature des raisons qui les lui faisaient adopter."[399] Obviously, Proust was totally opposed to Ruskin's belief that "Art without religion is but dust and ashes."[400] Yet he did

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not condemn Ruskin for holding this purportedly mistaken view; he criticized him for claiming, on the one hand, that art's highest mission was in the service of morality and, on the other, reacting in a purely aesthetic fashion to a work of art while insisting that his love proceeded from the deepest ethical or moral impulses. This sin of idolatry--which Proust defined by citing Ruskin's own Lectures on Art ("...le fait de servir avec le meilleur de nos coeurs et de nos esprits quelque chère ou triste image que nous nous sommes créée, pendant que nous désobéissons à l'appel présent du Maître, qui n'est pas mort, qui ne défaille pas en ce moment sous sa croix, mais nous ordonne de porter la nôtre")--is what the French writer found "à la base de l'oeuvre de Ruskin, à la racine de son talent...."[401] Charles Swann's wasted existence, his refusal to heed the call of artistic creation/contemplation, and his willingness to compromise his most basic ideals for the love of a cocotte are also aspects of this complex, typically Proustian concept. According to Monnin-Hornung, "Pour Proust l'idolâtrie consiste à trop aimer les formes, les matériaux dont peut se servir ou dont s'est déjà servi le génie ... transposé en langage proustien, ce qui est pour Ruskin l'appel du Maître, du Christ, et que l'idolâtrie fait négliger, c'est l'appel de l'art vers la création. Les joies que procure l'idolâtrie ne proviennent pas uniquement de la Beauté elle-même,[402] elles sont mêlées d'érudition;[403] cette sorte de plaisir esthétique peut être très aigu, mais reste impur et provoque un 'retour égoiste sur soi-même.'" (Pastiches et Mélanges)[404]

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Needless to say, Proust found Ruskin's belief that "There is no moral vice, no moral virtue, which has not its precise prototype in the art of painting; so that you may at your will illustrate the moral habit by the art, or the art by the moral habit"[405] totally opposed to his own conception of art. In A la Recherche, a dramatic illustration of this point occurs at the moment the narrator discovers Elstir's portrait of Odette as "Miss Sacripant": "...Elstir, insoucieux de ce que pouvait présenter d'immoral ce travesti d'une jeune actrice...s'était au contraire attaché à ces traits d'ambiguïté comme à un élément esthétique qui valait d'être mis en relief et qu'il avait tout fait pour souligner." (JF,I,849) This distinction between the aesthetic and the moral is carried over into Proust's discussions of Ruskin's aesthetic theories; he is careful, however, not to oversimplify the man or his ideas on art: "...ceux qui voient en lui un moraliste et un apôtre aimant dans l'art ce qui n'est pas l'art," writes Proust, "se trompent à l'égal de ceux qui, négligeant l'essence profonde de son sentiment esthétique, le confondent avec un dilettantisme voluptueux."[406] While it is true that Proust's image of Ruskin is necessarily subjective and therefore runs the risk of appearing one-sided,[407] there is never a conscious attempt to distort or ignore the theories of the British aesthetician which run counter to Proust's own views. On the contrary, when Proust wishes to dispute one of Ruskin's aesthetic doctrines, he does so with the assurance that "Ruskin aurait d'ailleurs été le premier à nous approuver de ne pas accorder à ses écrits une autorité infaillible,

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puisqu'il la refusait même aux Ecritures Saintes."[408]

Proust was highly selective in his appreciation of Ruskin's achievement, choosing to consider only those aspects with which he was familiar: "...c'est seulement de la partie de l'oeuvre de Ruskin qui concerne les 'Beaux Arts,'" begins one essay, "tels qu'on les entend généralement, de Ruskin estthéticien [sic] et critique d'art que j'aurai à parler ici."[409] Among those aspects of Ruskin's thinking which Proust felt had no place in a discussion of aesthetics was the former's writings on social and economic reform, as well as his interest--from a naturalist's perspective--in the external universe. Henri Lemaître has attempted to prove that the author of Jean Santeuil was already aware of Ruskin's conception of the artist as social prophet before he had actually come into direct contact with his works. In support of this view, Lemaître cites a minor episode from the early novel concerning a painter named Maindant ("...vivant malgré sa grande fortune parmi les ouvriers dont il embellissait la vie en leur jouant du César Franck, en leur donnant des reproductions de Botticelli" [JS,659]) and thereby arrives at the conclusion that "ce personnage est évidemment directement inspiré de Ruskin, et puisqu'il est prouvé que Proust, à l'époque de Jean Santeuil, connaissait déjà Ruskin au moins de réputation, il est probable qu'il en connaissait surtout le personnage de prophète social, dont l'une des principales théories était de confier à l'art la régénération du prolétariat."[410] While this view may have been held by the young Proust, the author of A la Recherche was totally

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opposed to any theory which placed art in the service of social amelioration; in Proust's mature estimation, any art which was guided by political, social, economic, or moral considerations was not worthy of such an appelation.[1] The narrator of A la Recherche makes this point most emphatically when he observes: "L'idée d'un art populaire comme d'un art patriotique, si même elle n'avait pas été dangeureuse, me semblait ridicule ... M. Barrès avait dit que l'artiste...doit avant tout servir la gloire de sa patrie. Mais il ne peut la servir qu'en étant artiste, c'est-à-dire qu'à condition...de ne pas penser à autre chose--fût-ce à la patrie--qu'à la vérité qui est devant lui." (TR,III,888)[411]

Although Proust did not accept all of Ruskin's aesthetic theories at face value, he still considered him to be "un des plus grands écrivains de tous les temps et de tous les pays."[412] Ruskin's aesthetic stressed the spiritual aspect of reality which Proust's narrator spent the greater part of his life exploring. The British aesthetician's Platonic, somewhat mystical conception of art was one with which Proust was in total agreement. Both writers, moreover, always sought a concrete basis for their abstract speculations on art. Whether one speaks of affinity or influence,[413] there can be no doubt as to the impact of Ruskin's aesthetic theories upon the young Proust. Their common bond was an emotional rather than an intellectual reaction to art, since both critics clearly relegated the intelligence or reasoning faculty to a position beneath that of the artist's sensibilité and imagination. What Proust discovered in Ruskin's writings was not so much

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the figure of the philosopher/theoretician, but rather the receptive and impressionable observer of beauty in all its diversity. "De tant d'aspects de la physionomie de Ruskin," wrote Proust, "celui qui nous est le plus familier...c'est le Ruskin qui n'a connu toute sa vie qu'une religion: celle de la Beauté."[414] It is this aspect of Ruskin's writings on art that is clearly reflected in Proust's long novel.

This survey of critical thought points up the wide range of aesthetic doctrines and ideas to which Proust had access in the process of formulating his own views on artistic perception and creativity. What emerges is a Proustian theory of art which follows no rigid system; rather, it selects the best aspects of a variety of aesthetic approaches and fuses them into an eclectic yet consistent philosophy of art. Proust's "subjectivisme intégral"[415] is a direct reflection of the diverse artistic currents of his own period; his aesthetic outlook can be considered "impressionist" only in the widest sense of the term.[416] In the last analysis, however, Proust's is a deeply personal appreciation of art, whether he is writing on the harmonious and balanced still lifes of Chardin, the charged, luminescent canvases of Rembrandt, or the haunting mirages of Moreau. One may point to an echo of Goncourt in the first instance, a resemblance to Fromentin in the second, and perhaps even a conscious borrowing from Renan or Montesquiou in the third, but Proust's art criticism manages to absorb these concepts and refashion them in a new and original manner. As Chernowitz has rightly concluded, "Proust's originality resides not so much in the creation of any single

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idea or concept of his complex aesthetics as in the organic application of them all...."[417]

Elstir and His Oeuvre:

Almost as much effort has been expended by critics to discover the true identity of Proust's fictional painter and the source of his aesthetic doctrines as in the case of Zola's painter-hero Claude Lantier. Although Zola rejected the idea that he had written a roman à clef, there was at least some justification for the critics' detective work in the sense that L'Oeuvre did represent a given moment of the artistic climate in France (c.1863-1885); more important, the protagonist was fleshed out and presented in the round, i.e., the reader was given numerous details concerning his childhood, early artistic development, personality traits, etc. Proust's Elstir, on the other hand, remains a rather shadowy figure at best; we know very little about his "Biche" existence in the Verdurin circle, almost nothing of his early artistic training, and find it difficult to visualize him from a purely physical standpoint. Proust's A la Recherche, moreover, is a far cry from the art-novel-as-literary-document approach favored by the Goncourts and Zola.[418] As in his critical essays on various painters, Proust is concerned less with factual accuracy than with the expression of a number of deeply felt, highly subjective critical aperçus, with Elstir serving as the vehicle for these aesthetic pronouncements.

Despite the above, Proust has been unjustly criticized for making Elstir's artistic output reflect a variety of

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painterly styles; these critics falsely assume that the artist is primarily a fictional character rather than the author's spokesman, which leads them to the equally erroneous conclusion that a single individual can only possess a uniform or limited manner of artistic expression:

> ...Proust n'a pas pris garde [writes Fosca] au fait que tous ces peintres qu'il amalgame pour composer le personnage d'Elstir avaient des visions extrêmement différentes ... lorsque le lecteur à qui les oeuvres de tous ces artistes sont familières lit les descriptions que trace Proust des tableaux d'Elstir, il voit surgir dans sa mémoire...une suite hétéroclite de toiles qui n'arrivent pas à composer à Elstir une oeuvre homogène. Il me semble qu'un écrivain qui aurait eu vraiment le sens de la peinture n'aurait pas attribué au même artiste fictif des oeuvres aussi dissemblables. 419

What Fosca and other critics fail to perceive is the fact that Proust consciously intended Elstir's works to represent an amalgam or representative sampling of various nineteenth-century painterly styles; his sole concession to verisimilitude was the introduction of the latter in terms of an evolutionary, ongoing process of development reflecting the different stages in an artist's career. During his first visit to Elstir's studio, the narrator notices that the paintings before him clearly belong to diverse periods in the artist's development: "Le plus grand nombre de ceux qui m'entouraient n'étaient pas ce que j'aurais le plus aimé voir de lui, les peintures appartenant à ses première et deuxième manières...la manière mythologique et celle où il avait subi l'influence du Japon...." (JF,I,835) Later, when he hopes to see the Elstirs in the Guermantes collection, the narrator learns, by way of critical reviews of Elstir's

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paintings, that "ce n'était que récemment qu'il avait commencé à peindre des paysages et des natures mortes...." (CG1,II,125) Not only do Elstir's canvases reflect a variety of artistic styles, they also cover a wide range of subjects. According to Albert Feuillerat, his art embraces "tous les genres auxquels peintre puisse s'adonner: paysages, marines, natures mortes, scènes populaires, portraits, aquarelles, grandes toiles, dessins."[420] Clearly, no single artist--with, perhaps, the exception of Picasso--could possibly have encompassed so many different painterly styles and subjects. Elstir represents the idealized embodiment of the great revolution in artistic perception during the last third of the nineteenth century. That Proust did not wish to delimit his fictional painter's achievement is clear from the letter he wrote to Maria de Madrazo, in which he referred to Elstir as "un grand artiste à nom fictif qui symbolise le gd peintre dans mon ouvrage comme Vinteuil symbolise le gd musicien genre Franck."(Proust's orthography)[421]

While it is certainly not wrong to loosely associate Elstir's artistic vision with that of the Impressionists,[422] any pat formula which attempts to specify which painter(s) Elstir may have been modelled upon will necessarily lead to gross oversimplifications and contradictions of fact. Only the most naive of critics would agree with Aurel V. Diaconu's conclusion that "nous avons affaire à un ensemble à quatre facettes: Monet + Manet + Degas + Renoir = Elstir."[423] Traces of the artistic theories, styles, and subject matter of all these painters can readily be found in Elstir's oeuvre,

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but no single painter or contrived combination of painters can be said to subsume or incorporate all aspects of his art.

Monet's name is perhaps most often intoned in critical discussions of Elstir's Impressionist manner.[424] Feuillerat has remarked that even Elstir's physical appearance, as well as his hermit-like existence, owe something to the great Impressionist. In terms of aesthetic theory, they share a common belief in the tabula rasa approach to artistic perception, in addition to a joint conviction that the "religion of art" requires the sacrifice of all personal comforts and pleasures. It is Monet's unmistakable style, however, that makes an occasional rapprochement with Elstir's canvases virtually unavoidable. Such is the case with respect to Elstir's watercolor sketch of the cliffs at Creuniers, so reminiscent of Monet's Cliffs at Etretat: "...on eût dit d'immenses arceaux roses. Mais, peints par un jour torride, ils semblaient réduits en poussière, volatilisés par la chaleur, laquelle avait à demi bu la mer, presque passée, dans toute l'étendue de la toile, à l'état gazeux." (JF,I,901) It is precisely this concern with the subtle gradations of light, the ebb and flow of the sea, and the muted coloristic harmonies of nature that links the artistic styles of Elstir and Monet.

Several of Elstir's paintings seem to owe something to Manet.[425] Here the echo is primarily one involving subject matter rather than technique. Boating scenes and riverside festivals are admittedly commonplaces in Impressionist art, but a few descriptions of Elstir's still lifes tend to suggest the works of Manet in particular. In the case of Elstir's

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painting "Botte de Radis," one of the narrator's favorite works (CG1,II,223), or the artist's "Botte d'Asperges" (CG2,II,501),[426] there is a strong reminder of Manet's renderings of half-opened oysters, partially peeled lemons, and knives precariously balanced at the edge of a table, as in his Luncheon in the Studio or Still life, Oysters, Eel and Red Mullet. While studying another painting by Elstir depicting a man incongruously sporting a top hat in a popular festival atmosphere, the narrator observes that the work dated "à peu près de cette même période où la personnalité d'Elstir n'était pas encore complètement dégagée et s'inspirait un peu de Manet." (CG2,II,500)

Degas's imprint can also be felt in Elstir's decision to paint women seen from various angles who are engaged in such domestic activities as bathing, ironing, or the combing of hair: "...dans la femme qui se coiffe," Mme Verdurin tells the narrator, "qui s'essuie la figure, qui se chauffe les pieds, quand elle ne croit pas être vue, il y a un tas de mouvements intéressants, des mouvements d'une grâce tout à fait léonardesque!" (TR,III,715) While Degas's depiction of women crouching, bending, yawning, and stretching can hardly be termed graceful, his ballerinas are the epitome of poetry in motion; the dresses worn by the little girls in Elstir's "Portrait de la Famille Cottard" are described as "des robes de gaze...pareilles à des tutus de danseuses." (ibid.) Elstir's description of the races captures the spirit of some of Degas's best-know works:

D'abord cet être particulier, le jockey, sur le-

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> quel tant de regards sont fixés, et qui devant le paddock est là morne, grisâtre dans sa casaque éclatante, ne faisant qu'un avec le cheval caracolant qu'il ressaisit, comme ce serait intéressant de dégager ses mouvements professionnels, de montrer la tache brillante qu'il fait et que fait aussi la robe des chevaux, sur le champ de courses! Quelle transformation de toutes choses dans cette immensité lumineuse d'un champ de courses où on est surpris par tant d'ombres, de reflets, qu'on ne voit que là! (JF,I,898)

There is also a parallel interest in the subject of milliners and women's fashions: "Je ne pouvais plus mépriser les modistes, puisque Elstir m'avait dit que le geste délicat par lequel elles donnent un dernier chiffonnement, une suprême caresse aux noeuds ou aux plumes d'un chapeau terminé, l'intéresserait autant à rendre que celui des jockeys...." (JF,I,903)

Renoir's artistic genius is also not ignored. Elstir's work entitled "Les Plaisirs de la Danse," whose subject matter recalls Renoir's Moulin de la Galette, and his two paintings of nude female bathers in a forest setting are the cause of the narrator's anxiety concerning the lesbian relationships which his mistress Albertine may have had:

> J'avais justement vu deux peintures d'Elstir où dans un paysage touffu il y a des femmes nues. Dans l'une, l'une des jeunes filles lève le pied comme Albertine devait faire quand elle l'offrait à la blanchisseuse. De l'autre elle pousse à l'eau l'autre jeune fille qui gaîment résiste, la cuisse levée, son pied trempant à peine dans l'eau bleue. (F,III,527)

> ...j'avais peur que, dans le premier [tableau], certaines poses lascives ne donnassent à Albertine un désir, une nostalgie de réjouissances populaires, la faisant se dire que peut-être une certaine vie qu'elle n'avait pas menée, une vie de feux d'artifice et de guinguettes, avait du bon ... il y avait aussi là-bas, dans les Elstir, des nudités de femmes dans des paysages touffus du Midi qui pouvaient faire penser Albertine à certains plaisirs, bien

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> qu'Elstir, lui...n'y eût vu que la beauté sculpturale, pour mieux dire, la beauté de blancs monuments que prennent des corps de femmes assis dans la verdure. (P,III,405)

Monnin-Hornung has suggested[427] that one can also find echoes of Renoir's Déjeuner des Canotiers in Elstir's "Une Fête Populaire au Bord de l'Eau": "Cette fête au bord de l'eau avait quelque chose d'enchanteur. La rivière, les robes des femmes, les voiles des barques, les reflets innombrables des unes et des autres voisinaient parmi ce carré de peinture qu'Elstir avait découpé dans une merveilleuse après-midi." (CG2,II,420)

Whistler may have suggested to Proust the name for his fictional painter.[428] The narrator spends a great deal of time at Balbec peering out of his hotel window and "composing" seascapes in the simplified Japanese style of the American Impressionist. (JF,I,805) When the bay of Balbec appears to have lost all its charm in the eyes of the narrator, Elstir "lui avait tout d'un coup rendu une individualité en me disant que c'était le golfe d'opale de Whistler dans ses harmonies bleu argent...." (CG1,II,28) The narrator sees a Whistlerian effect in the simplicity of the baron de Charlus's black and white formal attire (SG,II,652) and is reminded of the hues in Whistler's paintings of Venice while studying the violet sky in Carpaccio's Le Patriarche di Grando Exorcisant un Possédé. (F,III,646-7) Monsieur Verdurin is said to be the author of a work on Whistler (TR,III,709), and both he and Swann have modelled their tastes in dress and furnishings after the American painter. (TR,III,770) More important still, Elstir's stress upon the need for light colors, especially

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the interplay of various shades of white, recalls the aesthetic predilections of Whistler: "...la chose unie, simple, claire, grise, qui par les temps voilés, bleuâtres, prend un flou crémeux ... ce qui est gracieux, ce sont ces toilettes légères, blanches et unies...qui au soleil et sur le bleu de la mer font un blanc aussi éclatant qu'une voile blanche." (JF,I,899) It is thus in his role as an arbiter of taste and fashion that Elstir seems to resemble the American artist in several important respects.

In both subject matter and execution, Elstir's art also reflects elements of the style of the lesser known painter Paul Helleu. He, too, was an artist with a flair for elegance and simplicity in matters of interior decoration and dress. According to his daughter, "A cette époque les symphonies de tous préoccupaient mon Père. Il fut le premier à avoir un intérieur peint en blanc, ce qui paraissait alors une excentricité ... Proust...était très intéressé par ce décor blanc. Il était frappé par le goût raffiné d'Helleu."[429]

Like Elstir, Helleu was fascinated by yachting meets and marine subjects; he spent part of the year painting on his own yacht at Deauville. Helleu visited the United States, a fact mentioned by the narrator in connection with Elstir's travels. The latter's interest in the art of Chardin, moreover, recalls Helleu's attempts to become the Watteau of his own century. When, in A la Recherche, Saniette voices a preference for the art of Helleu over that of Elstir, Mme Verdurin replies: "Il n'y a aucun rapport avec Helleu..."; Saniette counters with: "Si, c'est du XVIII^{e} siècle fébrile,"

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followed by the pun on the French word for boat, "C'est un Watteau à vapeur...." (SG,II,939) Lastly, several critics have suggested that Proust may even have based Mme Elstir upon Helleu's wife, who likewise served as the painter's favorite model.[430]

It is Jean Autret's contention that much of Elstir's subject matter and concern with trompe l'oeil effects are the result of Proust's contacts--via Ruskin--with the art of Turner.[431] There is certainly an ideological resemblance in their de-emphasis of the intelligence in the experience of artistic perception. One can also perceive a parallel interest in the play of reflections and the transposition of land and sea in their respective paintings and sketches. But Autret is engaging in pure conjecture when he attempts to identify Elstir's early mythological manner with the paintings of the young Turner; the works dating from this early period in Elstir's stylistic development are much closer in spirit to the paintings of Gustave Moreau. There is no concrete example in all of A la Recherche of a painting by Elstir showing signs of a Turneresque influence. The baron de Charlus purportedly owns a work by Turner depicting a rainbow effect (CG2,II,562) which he proudly exhibits to the narrator. When the latter remains behind in Venice, the city loses all its meaning because of the absence of his mother; he goes so far as to suggest that the water flowing through the canals is "ignorante des Doges et de Turner." (F,III,652) A view of the housecleaning activities of a brigade of servants, each engaged in the same chore on

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various levels of balconies belonging to a large residence, gives the narrator the same sense of pleasure "qu'à voir, dans un paysage de Turner ou d'Elstir, un voyageur en diligence, ou un guide, à différents degrés d'altitude du Saint-Gothard." (CG2,II,573) Aside from these passing references, however, there is no serious attempt by Proust to link the artistic styles of Elstir and Turner.

It is not difficult to see a visual parallel between several of Gustave Moreau's paintings and those belonging to Elstir's early phase of development. In the Guermantes salon the narrator comes across several of these mythological subjects:

> ...les Muses étaient représentées comme le seraient des êtres appartenant à une espèce fossile mais qu'il n'eût pas été rare, aux temps mythologiques, de voir passer le soir, par deux ou par trois, le long de quelque sentier montagneux. Quelquefois un poète, d'une race ayant aussi une individualité particulière pour un zoologiste--caractérisée par une certaine insexualité, se promenait avec une Muse, comme, dans la nature, des créatures d'espèces différentes mais amies et qui vont de compagnie. Dans une de ces aquarelles, on voyait un poète épuisé d'une longue course en montagne, qu'un Centaure, qu'il a rencontré, touché de sa fatigue, prend sur son dos et ramène. (CG2,II,421-2)

In both of the above watercolors--whose titles "Poète Rencontrant une Muse" and "Jeune Homme Rencontrant un Centaure" the narrator subsequently discovers (SG,II,102)--there is a precise attention to detail in Elstir's technique which is characteristic of Moreau's manner as well: "...l'immense paysage (où la scène mythique, les héros fabuleux tiennent une place minuscule et sont comme perdus) est rendu, des sommets à la mer, avec une exactitude qui donne plus que

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l'heure, jusqu'à la minute qu'il est, grâce au degré précis du déclin du soleil, à la fidélité fugitive des ombres." (CG2,II,422) It is this overabundance of detail--which Moreau defined as "la richesse nécessaire"--that gives a historical reality and sense of concreteness to the poetic symbols projected onto Elstir's canvases.[432]

The various attempts by critics to see in Elstir's paintings a reflection of Cézanne's experiments in the visual arts are interesting but essentially misdirected. Proust, as has already been demonstrated,[433] knew few if any of Cézanne's works at firsthand; it would therefore be extremely unlikely that he should attribute several advanced theories of art formulated by Cézanne to his fictional artist. While Dorothy Adelson admits that "it was not the fundamentally upsetting revolution of Post-Impressionism but the much milder Impressionism that Proust had in mind when he composed the figure of the painter," she nevertheless insists that "although the technique of Elstir as described is impressionist, in strength of innovation and importance he corresponds more to Cézanne. Therefore, if we speak symbolically and broadly, we may still say that he is Cézanne."[434] Thomas Bussom is basically in agreement with this view, although he feels obliged to qualify his statement as follows: "It is a matter here not of a particular model but of the point of view toward the art of painting and Elstir's attitude seems to be more that of Cézanne than of the impressionists."[435]

It should be clear from this brief survey that Elstir's paintings reflect the distillation of a wide variety of

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artistic styles and subjects. If carried to absurd extremes--as in the suggestion that Le Sidaner, Thomas Alexander Harrison, and August Strindberg(!) may also have served Proust as models for Elstir's personality and/or his art[436]--the value of such juxtapositions is greatly diminished. In the final analysis, is it not Proust himself who is most closely identified with his fictional painter's theoretical outlook? "In his use of light effects," writes Barbara Bucknall, "especially those light effects which give a transfigured or dematerialized appearance to the objects he depicts, and in his joyful indifference to the conventional value of the subjects he selects, Proust also resembles Elstir. He becomes a second Elstir. The artist whom he himself has created is his rival, but a rival whom he transcends and who justifies him."[437]

It is in his role as a teacher that the ultimate meaning of Elstir as a fictional creation resides: "...Elstir aimait à donner, à se donner," observes the narrator. "Tout ce qu'il possédait, idées, oeuvres, et le reste qu'il comptait pour bien moins, il l'eût donné avec joie à quelqu'un qui l'eût compris." (JF,I,827-8)[438] His paintings are the visual embodiment of some of Proust's most fundamental aesthetic concepts.[439] It has been argued, with some justification, that Elstir is closer than either the writer Bergotte or the musician Vinteuil to the theoretical core of the novel; in the opinion of Cocking, "Not only is the main passage on Elstir more closely adapted to the theoretical account of Marcel's own novel as it is given in Le Temps retrouvé than

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either the Bergotte or the Vinteuil material; it is also thinner and more frankly expository. Proust is thinking more and feeling less."[440] Part of the explanation lies in the fact that Proust greatly revised and expanded the earlier version of the Elstir episode after he had written a considerable portion of A la Recherche; he consequently profited from this bird's-eye view of his novel and was able to give greater clarity and consistency to the ideas he had intended his fictional painter to express.[441]

Since Proust is primarily concerned with Elstir the artist rather than Elstir the man, it is logical that one of the first lessons the painter imparts to the narrator is concerned with the unimportance of the social aspect of each creator's existence. Considering the lives of Vinteuil and Bergotte, the narrator concludes that "le bourgeoisisme pudibond de l'un, les défauts insupportables de l'autre, même la prétentieuse vulgarité d'un Elstir à ses débuts ne prouvent rien contre eux, puisque leur génie est manifesté par leurs oeuvres." (TR,III,720) This is not to suggest, however, that an artist's early existence is of no importance to the mature creator. On the contrary, Elstir does not reject or wish to hide his previous "incarnation" as the vulgar prankster Biche (or Tiche) in the Verdurin circle: "On ne reçoit pas la sagesse," he tells the narrator, "il faut la découvrir soi-même après un trajet que personne ne peut faire pour nous, ne peut nous épargner, car elle est un point de vue sur les choses." (JF,I,864)[44
The same idea is echoed by the narrator at the end of A la Recherche: "Ce que nous n'avons pas eu à déchiffrer," he concludes, "à éclaircir par notre effort personnel, ce qui était

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clair avant nous, n'est pas à nous. Ne vient de nous-même que ce que nous tirons de l'obscurité qui est en nous et que ne connaissent pas les autres." (TR,III,880) This belief in the creative evolution of every great artist can also be applied to the observer of art. Just as the narrator shifts from an early appreciation of Elstir's works as a means to an end ("...j'avais demandé à sa peinture de me conduire à la compréhension et à l'amour de choses meilleures qu'elle-même, un dégel véritable, une authentique place de province, de vivantes femmes sur la plage" [CG1,II,125]) and gradually comes to realize that Elstir's works are valuable in themselves ("...maintenant au contraire, c'était l'originalité, la séduction de ces peintures qui excitaient mon désir, et ce que je voulais voir, c'était d'autres tableaux d'Elstir" [ibid.]), so one can say of Proust that, in the words of Autret, "Il a d'abord aimé Ruskin comme un moyen d'atteindre un but: parce qu'il lui a révélé les cathédrales gothiques, les tableaux d'Angleterre et les trésors d'art de l'Italie. Ensuite Proust a aimé Ruskin pour lui-même...."[443]

Of extreme importance is Proust's utilization of Elstir to explore the nature of artistic inspiration and the creative process. "In Elstir," writes Bussom, "[Proust] tried to get at the fundamental question of what moves the painter to choose a particular subject and point of view for his work. Here he brushed aside as irrelevant all questions of methods and particular techniques. He would go deeper in a search for the inspiration, the urge to create that holds men to such a laborious and often ill-rewarded effort."[444]

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The narrator's first visit to Elstir's studio has been likened to an entry into the creative regions of the artist's psyche,[445] and the analogy is certainly not inappropriate: "...l'atelier d'Elstir," observes the narrator, "m'apparut comme le laboratoire d'une sorte de nouvelle création du monde ... Les stores étaient clos de presque tous les côtés, l'atelier était assez frais et...obscur...de sorte que l'atmosphère de la plus grande partie de l'atelier était sombre, transparente et compacte dans sa masse, mais humide et brillante aux cassures où la sertissait la lumière...." (JF,I,834) Another image which Proust utilizes to convey the sense of exploring the artist's creative impulses is that of a magic lantern.[446] The image receives its fullest symbolic expression during the scene in which the narrator stands before the Elstirs in the Guermantes collection--which can be considered as a pendant to the earlier studio visit:

> ...de nouveau comme à Balbec j'avais devant moi les fragments de ce monde aux couleurs inconnues qui n'était que la projection de la manière de voir particulière à ce grand peintre et que ne traduisaient nullement ses paroles. Les parties du mur couvertes de peintures de lui, toutes homogènes les unes aux autres, étaient comme les images lumineuses d'une lanterne magique laquelle eût été, dans le cas présent, la tête de l'artiste et dont on n'eût pu soupçonner l'étrangeté tant qu'on n'aurait fait que connaître l'homme, c'est-à-dire tant qu'on n'eût fait que voir la lanterne coiffant la lampe, avant qu'aucun verre coloré eût encore été placé." (CG2,II,419)

This scene before the Elstirs occurs during a dinner party given by the Guermantes. The importance of this moment in the aesthetic development of the narrator is underscored by the fact that he loses all sense of the passage of time, so

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completely immersed is he in contemplating the eternal truths reflected in Elstir's art. In a sense, the narrator can already be said to have chosen art over society since he has overextended his stay in the Guermantes' salon, leaving his hosts and their guests to dine without him. J. Theodore Johnson, Jr., has noted several important distinctions between this scene and the earlier one in Elstir's studio:

> Here the narrator transcends the world of reality to enter the world of thought. Whereas in the scene at Balbec the narrator had contemplated Elstir's works in the presence of the artist and within the painter's studio, here he contemplates the Elstir paintings in solitude ... most of the works the Guermantes own belong to the abstract world of thought. Instead of the Port de Carquethuit, the narrator confronts Elstir's mythological landscapes and a series of paintings with, as central figure, the poet. As the subjects are in themselves abstract, so is the person of the painter abstracted. The painter Elstir...is not in the room; yet the inner vision of Elstir is everywhere present within the paintings themselves ... It is through the revelatory contemplation of the Guermantes' Elstirs that [the narrator] realizes the potentialities of that particular magic lantern we each bear within us. 447

While the images of a dark and cavernous interior and a magic lantern suggest the mystery surrounding the act of creation, Proust is intent upon exploring the artist's psyche even further to discover the very principles upon which the artistic effort is grounded. Once again, a technical or scientific analogy is utilized to define this moment of creation:

> Le génie artistique agit à la façon de ces températures extrêmement élevées qui ont le pouvoir de dissocier les combinaisons d'atomes et de grouper ceux-ci suivant un ordre absolument contraire, répondant à un autre type.[448] Toute cette harmonie factice que la femme a imposée à ses traits et dont

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> chaque jour avant de sortir elle surveille la persistance dans sa glace...le coup d'oeil du grand peintre la détruit en une seconde, et à sa place il fait un regroupement des traits de la femme, de manière à donner satisfaction à un certain idéal féminin et pictural qu'il porte en lui. (JF,I,861)

Proust illustrates this process of re-creation by choosing the concrete example of a rose; having glimpsed the latter in the natural world, Elstir transplants the flower, via his senses, to his own "jardin intérieur"; at that point the molecular reorganization process outlined above takes place, resulting in "une variété nouvelle dont ce peintre, comme un ingénieux horticulteur, avait enrichi la famille des Roses." (SG,II,942-3) It is in this sense that Proust considers each artist a truly original creator, rivalling the Biblical Creator himself.

Proust's concept of metaphor is central to an understanding of the aesthetic theories underlying Elstir's paintings--especially with respect to his "Port de Carquethuit," which incorporates several aesthetic theories discussed thus far. Instead of the usual meaning attributed to the term "metaphor," Proust expands his definition of the word[449] to encompass the realms of painting as well as literature, thus creating a bridge between the narrator and Elstir:

> On peut faire se succéder indéfiniment dans une description les objets qui figuraient dans le lieu décrit [observes the narrator], la vérité ne commencera qu'au moment où l'écrivain prendra deux objets différents, posera leur rapport, analogue dans le monde de l'art à celui qu'est le rapport unique de la loi causale dans le monde de la science, et les enfermera dans les anneaux nécessaires d'un beau style; même, ainsi que la vie, quand, en rapprochant une qualité commune à deux sensations, il dégagera leur essence commune en les réunissant l'une et

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> l'autre pour les soustraire aux contingences du temps, dans une métaphore ... Le rapport peut être peu intéressant, les objets médiocres, le style mauvais, mais tant qu'il n'y a pas eu cela, il n'y a rien. (TR,III,889-90)

In the literary field, the style in which the Goncourt Journal pastiche is written is typical of the superficial, enumerative manner which never rises above the banal recording of external reality. The narrator contrasts this type of writing with the more imaginative metaphorical literary style of Mme de Sévigné, his grandmother's favorite author; like Elstir, Mme de Sévigné presents reality as she perceives it, i.e., as an optical illusion, rather than according to the dictates of her intelligence. (JF,I,653) For Proust, there is a correlation or parallel between the "moment privilégié" of the observer and the artist's metaphorical transformation of reality; in each instance, the individual is privy to a heightened awareness of the meaning of his own existence and the symbolic nature of the external universe.

In the case of Elstir's paintings, one can distinguish two basic types of optical illusions which make use of the metaphorical principle outlined above: "One is of the mirage type," writes Chernowitz, "which makes us wonder whether we see a real tower or its reflection in the water ... The other kind of "équivoque" is one of natural staging, where the deceptive illusion is due to the odd angle of perspective from which the scene is viewed."[450] The first type of trompe-l'oeil art is illustrated as follows: "[Elstir] s'était complu autrefois à peindre de véritables mirages, où un château coiffé d'une tour apparaissait comme un château complètement

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circulaire prolongé d'une tour à son faîte, et en bas d'une tour inverse, soit que la pureté extraordinaire d'un beau temps donnât à l'ombre qui se reflétait dans l'eau la dureté et l'éclat de la pierre, soit que les brumes du matin rendissent la pierre aussi vaporeuse que l'ombre." (JF,I,839)

Whereas the term équivoque accurately describes the first type of trompe-l'oeil effect, it is not sufficiently complex to encompass the full meaning of Elstir's painterly transformation of reality. If, in fact, one compares the primitive version of the Elstir episode with the definitive text, one discovers that Proust has dropped the term équivoque in favor of métaphore, and has also abandoned the simpler illusionistic device in preference to the second type of visual metaphor.

Elstir's painting "Le Port de Carquethuit" is a demonstration of the latter. Instead of seeing the work for what it actually is, i.e., a theoretical, propagandistic, synthetic creation, earlier critics attempted to reconstruct the fictional canvas, jigsaw-puzzle fashion, by isolating the various motifs which Proust may have gleaned from pre- and post-Impressionist canvases. Carpaccio's nautical festival scenes, Turner's marine paintings,[451] Manet's Le Port de Bordeaux, seaside scenes by Eugène Boudin, Monet's Le Port du Havre, Cézanne's Le Golfe de Marseille, and even Moreau's paintings[452] were pressed into the service of literary[453] as well as visual detection. While it is certainly possible that Proust may have utilized images drawn from any or all of the above--with the exception of Moreau, whose works did not incline towards

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this type of subject matter--what is important are not the visual sources upon which the painting is based, but the aesthetic principles underlying its creation.

It is also important to stress the fact that Proust, unlike the Goncourts or Huysmans, was not primarily interested in utilizing an "écriture artiste" to approximate or rival the art of the painter. "Proust écrit, il ne peint pas," writes Jacques Cazeaux. "L'étude du 'port de Carquethuit,' toile du peintre Elstir, ne saurait être suppléé par une reproduction en couleurs ... et nous ferions un peu comme le Narrateur cherchant dans l'atelier de Balbec les toiles d'une autre époque, si nous voulions appuyer la description du 'port' sur une oeuvre picturale ... en lisant la description du tableau d'Elstir [nous devons] conserver assez de présence imaginaire d'un tableau, mais le transférer immédiatement sur une épreuve nouvelle, celle du style écrit."[454]

Before the narrator even sees the painting in question, he has already discovered the secret of Elstir's talent: "...le charme de chacune [des marines] consistait en une sorte de métamorphose des choses représentées, analogue à celle qu'en poésie on nomme métaphore...." (JF,I,835) As he walks around the dimly lit studio, he notices a motif which reappears on several of Elstir's canvases: "Une de ses métaphores les plus fréquentes dans les marines qu'il avait près de lui en ce moment était justement celle qui, comparant la terre à la mer, supprimait entre elles toute démarcation." (JF,I,835-6) Although Elstir has perceived these things spontaneously ("...les rares moments où l'on voit la nature

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telle qu'elle est, poétiquement, c'était de ceux-là qu'était faite l'oeuvre d'Elstir" [JF,I,835]), he has made a conscious attempt to employ this device in every possible manner so as to give his art "cette multiforme et puissante unité" (JF,I,836) which is the hallmark of his painterly style.

The description which then follows details the manner in which Elstir has applied the related concepts of metaphorical analogy and optical illusion to a specific work:

> C'est par exemple à une métaphore de ce genre--dans un tableau représentant le port de Carquethuit ...qu'Elstir avait préparé l'esprit du spectateur en n'employant pour la petite ville que des termes marins, et que des termes urbains pour la mer ... Dans le premier plan de la plage, le peintre avait su habituer les yeux à ne pas reconnaître de frontière fixe, de démarcation absolue, entre la terre et l'océan. Des hommes qui poussaient des bateaux à la mer couraient aussi bien dans les flots que sur le sable, lequel, mouillé, réfléchissait déjà les coques comme s'il avait été de l'eau ... un navire en pleine mer, à demi caché par les ouvrages avancés de l'arsenal, semblait voguer au milieu de la ville; des femmes qui ramassaient des crevettes dans les rochers, avaient l'air, parce qu'elles étaient entourées d'eau...d'être dans une grotte marine surplombée de barques et de vagues ... tout le tableau donnait cette impression des ports où la mer entre dans la terre, où la terre est déjà marine et la population, amphibie.... (JF,I,836-7)

Applying the narrator's definition of metaphor to his own creative field ("...la vérité ne commencera qu'au moment où l'écrivain prendra deux objets différents, posera leur rapport,..et les enfermera dans les anneaux nécessaires d'un beau style" [TR,III,889]), Elstir has chosen two different elements (i.e., land and sea) and, by virtue of his poetic perception of reality, has intermingled these two substances so as to make them virtually interchangeable and indistin-

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guishable to the naked eye. The narrator's intellect is helpless before this mixture of aquatic and terrestrial components.

Were this simply a naturalistic rendering of a scene--in the style of the Goncourt pastiche--the eye would have no difficulty in unravelling this maze of interlocking parts. Elstir's canvas, despite its emphasis upon detail ("...près des rochers, à l'entrée de la jetée, où la mer était agitée, on sentait, aux efforts des matelots et à l'obliquité des barques couchées à angle aigu devant la calme verticalité de l'entrepôt, de l'église, des maisons de la ville..." [JF,I,837]) is bathed in a poetic, almost magical ambiance, thus making it intelligible to the emotions rather than to the intellect: "...les églises de Criquebec," observes the narrator, "...entourées d'eau de tous côtés parce qu'on les voyait sans la ville, dans un poudroiement de soleil et de vagues, semblaient sortir des eaux, soufflées en albâtre ou en écume et, enfermées dans la ceinture d'un arc-en-ciel versicolore, former un tableau irréel et mystique." (JF,I,836)(emphasis mine) The same note of wonder is sounded in the passage describing the women gathering shrimp; their imaginary marine grotto seems charmed, "ouverte et protégée au milieu des flots écartés miraculeusement." (JF,I,837)

In addition to the metaphorical fusion of opposites, Elstir's canvas also makes use of the laws of perspective to disorient and confuse the viewer's rational faculties. The steeples of Criquebec church, by virtue of the peculiar angle from which Elstir has chosen to see them, appear not to be part of the rest of the village; similarly, a boat in mid-

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ocean seems to be floating in the middle of the village. This dislocation process is dramatically illustrated in another painting: "Un fleuve, à cause du tournant de son cours, un golfe, à cause du rapprochement apparent des falaises, avaient l'air de creuser au milieu de la plaine ou des montagnes un lac absolument fermé de toutes parts." (JF,I,838-9) As the narrator observes, Elstir's intention throughout is to create

> quelque image singulière d'une chose connue, image différente de celles que nous avons l'habitude de voir, singulière et pourtant vraie, et qui à cause de cela est pour nous doublement saisissante parce qu'elle nous étonne, nous fait sortir de nos habitudes, et tout à la fois nous fait rentrer en nous-même en nous rappelant une impression ... l'effort d'Elstir de ne pas exposer les choses telles qu'il savait qu'elles étaient, mais selon ces illusions optiques dont notre vision première est faite, l'avait précisément amené à mettre en lumière certaines de ces lois de perspective.... (JF,I,838)

Although the visual devices in "Le Port de Carquethuit" affirm the aesthetic doctrines which the narrator will subsequently discover in his own creative field, Proust feels impelled to add his own "literary" touch for good measure. As Monnin-Hornung notes, "Il y a fusion et confusion voulue entre la vision du peintre et la vision de l'écrivain ... [Elstir]inverse le procédé employé par certains écrivains... qui consiste à user en littérature de termes appartenant au métier du peintre ... Plus loin, c'est Proust lui-même qui, dans une série de métaphores, se sert des termes terriens pour décrire les barques sur l'eau...."[455] Take, for example, the following description of another part of the same painting in which the formless sea is conceived of in concrete terms:

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"[Les matelots] trottaient rudement sur l'eau comme sur un animal fougueux et rapide dont les soubresauts, sans leur adresse, les eussent jetés à terre. Une bande de promeneurs sortait gaîment en une barque secouée comme une carriole ... on courait ainsi par les champs ensoleillés, dans les sites ombreux, dégringolant les pentes ... la mer était si calme que les reflets avaient presque plus de solidité et de réalité que les coques vaporisées par un effet de soleil...." (JF,I,837) This intentional confusion of terms by means of literary analogies reinforces the trompe-l'oeil effect which Elstir's painting succeeds in creating.

What the narrator's description of the canvas lacks in coloristic effects[456] is made up for by the lively, animated manner in which the work is described:

> Des hommes qui poussaient des bateaux à la mer couraient aussi bien dans les flots que sur le sable ... La mer elle-même ne montait pas regulièrement, mais suivait les accidents de la grève, que la perspective déchiquetait encore davantage ... Une bande de promeneurs sortait gaîment en une barque secouée comme une carriole; un matelot joyeux, mais attentif aussi, la gouvernait comme avec des guides, menait la voile fougueuse, chacun se tenait bien à sa place pour ne pas faire trop de poids d'un côté et ne pas verser, et on courait ainsi par les champs ensoleillés, dans les sites ombreux, dégringolant les pentes. (JF,I,836-7)

"...A lire cette transcription d'une oeuvre peinte," writes Monnin-Hornung, "on éprouve une prenante sensation de vie. Proust, par le choix de certains mots, nous fait imaginer que nous assistons à une scène réelle ... Des bruits de voix, des sentiments, des visages expressifs, des sensations attribuées même aux barques, des mouvements, tout cela donne à la

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scène peinte une animation de scène réelle plus que d'oeuvre d'art."[457] It is precisely for this reason that the search for iconographic borrowings from actual paintings loses much of its value. Proust's primary concern is not to reproduce from memory fragments from one or more paintings he may have seen; his aim is to create a synthetic pictorial image which will most succinctly embody his theory of the metaphorical basis of artistic creation. As William Cunningham has rightly observed, "...Proust, while profoundly indebted to his knowledge of art history, does not hesitate to rearrange the facts concerning even major paintings in order to create something which has a logic and an aesthetic value only when seen in the context of his own artistic purpose."[458]

As an illustration of Proust's fundamental belief in the subjective nature of artistic perception and a demonstration of the corollary theory of artistic creation in terms of metaphorical analogy, the choice of Elstir's "Le Port de Carquethuit" can certainly be justified. It is not, however, intended as a prime example of the Impressionist manner of Elstir--or Proust, for that matter. The emphasis upon models and sources has created the erroneous impression that Elstir's painting represents Proust's homage to Manet, Monet, and Impressionism as an artistic movement. Johnson, in a recent article, has clearly demonstrated that Proust's "impressionism" is to be found, not in "Le Port de Carquethuit," but in the concluding pages of Combray describing "les nymphéas de la Vivonne." (CS,I,168-70)[459] What "Le Port de Carquethuit" does reveal is the manner in which Proust incorporated his knowledge of the visual arts to reinforce his own literary

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activities. "If Proust's conception of painting is 'literary,'" writes Chernowitz, "it is therefore not in the old passive meaning of its being infused with anecdotal, story-telling elements, but in the active sense of joining the domain of literature, becoming part and parcel of a writer's creative process...."[460] By studying, step by step, the artistic process of creation, Proust succeeded in isolating several important aesthetic principles which could be applied equally to the creative activities of the painter, the writer, and the musician. His emphasis upon vision rather than technique, upon subjective emotions rather than objective and scientific accuracy, permitted him to make such a rapprochement of the various arts possible.

Real and Imaginary Portraits in the Proustian Universe:

From his earliest visits to the Louvre, Proust showed a marked preference for the portrait over other painterly genres. Lucien Daudet recalled "de longues stations devant les deux 'Philosophes' de Rembrandt, les différences ingénieuses et captivantes que Marcel Proust découvrait et m'expliquait entre l'un et l'autre...."[461] Here was a painter who captured the essence of the sitter's personality, who plunged to the depths of his subject's soul. Rembrandt's stress upon the psychological dimensions of portraiture was one with which Proust, himself a perceptive analyst of the human passions, could easily identify. While the author of A la Recherche was certainly able to appreciate a still life or a landscape, the portrait seemed to offer the closest

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visual parallel to his own interest in human behavior. Rembrandt's analytic powers were such that he could turn his gaze upon himself and capture the multiform aspects of his own nature. Nor was he ignorant of the complexity of the personality: "Les portraits de la jeunesse de Rembrandt diffèrent beaucoup les uns des autres,"[462] observed Proust in his essay on the painter; he thus discovered a visual corroboration of his own view concerning the multiple selves of which each individual is comprised. It was Rembrandt's basic honesty and sincerity, his unflinching attitude vis-à-vis the human condition, that endeared him to the author of A la Recherche. Even in his earliest self-portraits, Proust observed, "on distingue à un grand désir ce qui plus tard sera une sorte de scrupule soucieux, la réalité intérieure, son génie qui l'enflammait étant alors connu de lui...."[463] The fact that Rembrandt was inescapably drawn to reflect his own features in the faces of his sitters[464] was a phenomenon which Proust incorporated in his own subjective aesthetic; when Jacques Blanche wrote his preface to Dates in honor of Proust, the latter responded: "Cette espèce de portrait de vous en faisant le mien--c'est le propre des maîtres--le bourgmestre Six de Rembrandt est à la fois lui et Rembrandt...." (16 Jan.1921. Corr.Gén.,III,173) Underlying this theory was a basic belief in the reflection of the universal in the particular, the knowledge that the human visage, no matter how individualized, reflects emotions and passions common to all of humanity.

The ability of the portrait to convey the essence of a human emotion, to present a graphic record of an individual's

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life experiences, also intrigued Proust. If Rembrandt's mature self-portraits could be said to embody one principal emotion, it is most assuredly that of human suffering, a sense of melancholy brooding and mental anguish. Proust's almost morbid preoccupation with the nature of jealousy and its devastating effects upon the individual's psyche and physical constitution found a perfect visual equivalent in the tortured expression of the aging artist: "Le chagrin finit par tuer," concludes Proust's narrator, who, like Swann, is a prey to his own suspicions of Albertine's infidelities. "A chaque nouvelle peine trop forte, nous sentons une veine de plus qui saillit, développe sa sinuosité mortelle au long de notre tempe, sous nos yeux. Et c'est ainsi que peu à peu se font ces terribles figures ravagées, du vieux Rembrandt, du vieux Beethoven, de qui tout le monde se moquait." (TR,III,906)

The portrait need not, however, be a study in despair. The same attention to minute detail which Proust's narrator lavishes upon his descriptions of the dying Swann or the pathetic figure of Charlus can also be found in Proust's study of Chardin's self-portraits. "Allez voir," he tells the novitiate in search of the meaning of art, "dans la galerie des Pastels, les portaits [sic] que Chardin fit de lui-même, à soixante-dix ans."[465] What the young man subsequently discovers there is a visual record of Chardin's life, each facial wrinkle and faded article of clothing contributing to a sense of the gradual mellowing of the artist to the point of inner peace and joyful acceptance of life:

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> Au-dessus de l'énorme lorgnon, descendu jusqu'au bout du nez qu'il pince de ses deux disques de verre tout neufs, tout en haut des yeux éteints, les prunelles usées sont remontées, avec l'air d'avoir beaucoup vu, beaucoup raillé, beaucoup aimé, et de dire avec un ton fanfaron et attendri: 'Hé bien oui, je suis vieux!'[466] Sous la douceur éteinte dont l'âge les a saupoudrées, elles ont de la flamme encore. Mais les paupières fatiguées comme un fermoir qui a trop servi sont rouges au bord. Comme le vieil habit qui enveloppe son corps, sa peau elle aussi a durci et passé. Comme l'étoffe elle a gardé, presque avivé ses tons roses et par endroits s'est enduite d'une sorte de nacre dorée. Et l'usure de l'une rappelle à tous moments les tons de l'usure de l'autre, étant comme les tons de toutes les choses finissantes, depuis les tisons qui meurent, les feuilles qui pourissent, les soleils [qui] se couchent, les habits qui s'usent et les hommes qui passent, infiniment délicats, riches et doux. (pp.376-7)

In this description one can already detect a prefigurement, in the major key, of what will become one of Proust's principal themes in A la Recherche, viz. the debilitating effect of the passage of time upon the individual, most dramatically (and graphically) illustrated in the grotesque episode describing the matinée of the duchesse de Guermantes. In the opinion of Gita May, "cette recherche subtile dans le domaine graphique de ce qui le fascine déjà et de ce qui l'obsédera bientôt est profondément significative, car on y sent cet accent mis sur la fragilité attristante de la personne devant les forces aveugles de la Durée; accent qui deviendra l'essence de son oeuvre romanesque monumentale et la base de son esthétique."[467]

A good indication of what Proust felt a portrait should reveal about its subject is provided in the same description of the Chardin pastel: "Le moindre pli de la peau," he writes, "le moindre relief d'une veine est la traduction très fidèle et très curieuse de trois originaux correspondants: le

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caractère, la vie, l'émotion présente." (p.377) The imaginative faculties of the viewer also play a significant role in the act of artistic contemplation,[468] transforming what would otherwise be a rather pedestrian visual record into a humorous and perhaps even somewhat exotic portrait:

> ...la négligence du déshabillé de Chardin, la tête déjà coiffée d'un bonnet de nuit, le faisait ressembler à une vieille femme. Elle atteint, dans l'autre pastel que Chardin nous a laissé de lui, à l'étrangêté cocasse d'un vieux touriste anglais. Depuis l'abat-jour vigoureusement enfoncé sur le front jusqu'au masulipatan noué autour du cou, tout donne envie de sourire, sans qu'on songe à s'en cacher, devant ce vieil original qui doit être si intelligent, si fou, si doucement docile à accepter une raillerie. (ibid.)

While Proust does not stress Chardin's technique, he is not insensitive to the artist's palette, seeking to extract a psychological meaning from each hue:

> Si ce masulipatan rose est si vieux, c'est que le vieux rose est plus doux. En voyant ces noeuds roses et jaunes dont la peau jaunie et rosée semble garder les reflets, en reconnaissant dans le rebord bleu de l'abat-jour le sombre éclat des besicles d'acier, l'étonnement, que la mise surprenante du vieillard excite d'abord, se fond en un charme doux, dans le plaisir aristocratique aussi de retrouver, jusque dans le désordre apparent du déshabillé d'un vieux bourgeois, la noble hiérarchie des couleurs précieuses, l'ordre des lois de la beauté. (pp.377-8)

Even in the jovial portrait of this septuagenarian, however, there is an element of uncertainty which gives the young novitiate cause for discomfort: "...en regardant mieux dans ce pastel la figure de Chardin vous hésiterez, et dans l'incertitude de l'expression de cette figure vous vous troublerez, n'osant ni sourire, ni vous justifier, ni pleurer." (p.378) Part of the explanation for this feeling of uneasi-

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ness is due to the viewer's unfamiliarity with the visual iconography of the painter; it is precisely what Proust terms "ce langage, figuré comme une image, mais rapide, direct, surprenant comme une réplique et que nous appelons le jeu de la physionomie" (p.378) that will concern him for the balance of this passage. Intent upon probing deeper into the psychological ramifications of Chardin's puzzling expression, Proust seeks to discover the unspoken thoughts of the artist:

> Chardin nous regarde-t-il ici avec la fanfaronnade d'un vieillard qui ne se prend pas au sérieux, exagérant, pour nous amuser ou montrer qu'il n'en est pas dupe, la gaillardise de sa bonne santé encore alerte, de son humeur encore brouillonne: "Ah! vous croyez qu'il n'y a que vous autres jeunes?" Ou bien notre jeunesse a-t-elle blessé son impuissance, se révolte-t-il dans un défi passionné, inutile et qui fait mal à voir? On pourrait presque le croire, tant la vivacité des yeux, le frémissement de la bouche ont l'air graves ... la figure ne traduisant plus exactement par une expression appropriée chaque pensée, chaque émotion de l'âme, mais en omettant ici l'émotion sans laquelle une assurance devient une plaisanterie, ici l'affectueuse ironie sans laquelle une bravade devient une menace, devient, du langage figuré mais exact qu'elle était de nos sentiments, une sorte de radotage attristant et obscur qui laisse parfois, entre deux expressions contraires et qui ne se rejoignent plus, une place soudaine à notre inquiétude, à nos commentaires, à notre rêverie. (pp.378-9)

It is precisely this sense of uncertainty, this basic incongruity between an image and a thought or idea it is meant to express, that was to attract Proust to the aristocratic portraiture of Anthony Van Dyck--most notably his portrait of the Duke of Richmond entitled Man in a Doublet.[469] According to Robert de Billy's account of their trips to the Louvre together, "[Proust] s'arrêta longtemps devant le duc de Richmond de Van Dyck, et je lui dis que toute cette belle

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jeunesse dont on voit les portraits en Angleterre, à Dresde, à l'Ermitage, avait été fauchée par les Côtes de Fer de Cromwell. Nous philosophâmes sur la mort des 'Cavaliers' et de leur roi Charles, et l'écho de nos pensées se retrouve dans ses vers charmants dont Reynaldo Hahn écrivit l'accompagnement sonore."[470]

The linking of Van Dyck's portraits with death is further evidenced by the fact that Proust dedicated Les Plaisirs et les Jours to his departed friend Willie Heath, whom he chose to remember in terms of a Van Dyck painting: "...comme tant d'entre eux qui furent ses modèles, vous deviez bientôt mourir et dans vos yeux comme dans les leurs, on voyait alterner les ombres du pressentiment et la douce lumière de la résignation."[471] The dedication also discloses those qualities in Van Dyck's portraits which Proust prized most. Speaking of these cavaliers, Proust notes: "Leur élégance, en effet, comme la vôtre, réside moins dans les vêtements que dans le corps, et leur corps lui-même semble l'avoir reçue et continuer sans cesse à la recevoir de leur âme: c'est une élégance morale." (p.6) It is the utter refinement and dignity of Van Dyck's subjects, the feeling of repose and peace of mind which their outward manner suggests but which their eyes somehow betray, that so fascinated Proust. In addition to the "élégance pensive" of Van Dyck's sitters, Proust also admired their aristocratic pride in the face of impending death; he assured his dead friend that "la grâce de votre fierté appartenait de droit à l'art d'un Van Dyck...." (ibid.)

When he came to write his tribute to the art of Van Dyck in a section of his "Portraits de Peintres," Proust was

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to remember the unsettling quality which this painter's portraits seemed to instill in the viewer. The opening lines of "Antoine Van Dyck" suggest, in a general manner, the aristocratic world of portraiture which the painter was to make his unique and lasting contribution to art:

> Douce fierté des coeurs, grâce noble des choses
> Qui brillent dans les yeux, les velours et les bois,
> Beau langage élevé du maintien et des poses
> --Héréditaire orgueil des femmes et des rois!--,
> Tu triomphes, Van Dyck, prince des gestes calmes [472]
>
> (ll.1-5)

The mood of triumph and gaiety, however, is suddenly cut short by a reminder of "tous les êtres beaux qui vont bientôt mourir." (l.6) The tension and inner turmoil that is an inherited legacy of these noblemen is suggested in an understated fashion in the following couplet, which contains visual echoes of Van Dyck's portrait of Charles I: "Halte de cavaliers, sous les pins, près des flots / Calmes comme eux--comme eux bien proches des sanglots." (ll.9-10) Even in the group portrait of the king's children, a note of melancholy pervades and darkens their proud yet sad faces:

> Enfants royaux déjà magnifiques et graves,
> Vêtements résignés, chapeaux à plumes braves,
> Et bijoux en qui pleure--onde à travers les flammes--
> L'amertume des pleurs dont sont pleines les âmes
> Trop hautaines pour les laisser monter aux yeux.
>
> (ll.11-15)

The balance of the poem is given over to a detailed analysis of Van Dyck's portrait of the Duke of Richmond. Three lines evoke the physical appearance of this noble cavalier: "Et toi par-dessus tous, promeneur précieux, / En chemise bleu pâle,[473] une main à la hanche, / Dans l'autre

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un fruit feuillu détaché de la branche." (pp.82-3, ll.16-18) This last symbolic gesture remains a mystery to the viewer--"Je rêve sans comprendre à ton geste et tes yeux" (l.19)--as does the personality of the cavalier himself:

> Debout, mais reposé, dans cet obscur asile,[474]
> Duc de Richmond, ô jeune sage!--ou charmant fou?--
> Je te reviens toujours: Un saphir, à ton cou,
> A des feux aussi doux que ton regard tranquille.
> (ll.20-3)

It is the underlying mystery and ambiguity of the portrait that holds Proust's attention. Van Dyck has managed to create a puzzling, emotionally charged portrait which, while outwardly suggesting the sitter's elegant posture and tranquil gaze, belies this false sense of repose by means of telltale gestures and eyes which reflect the agitated state of the sitter. As Monnin-Hornung has rightly concluded, "[ce que Proust] a remarqué dans les toiles de Van Dyck, ce sont des beautés avant tout spirituelles...."[475]

It is the latter quality that links the art of Van Dyck to that of Leonardo da Vinci, the epitome, in Proust's eyes, of psychological portraiture. This is clearly implied when Proust, seeking to define his dead friend's personality even more precisely, adds: "...vous releviez plutôt du Vinci par la mystérieuse intensité de votre vie spirituelle. Souvent, le doigt levé, les yeux impénétrables et souriants en face de l'énigme que vous taisiez, vous m'êtes apparu comme le saint Jean-Baptiste de Léonard."[476]

Whereas Van Dyck's portraits may be disturbing in their uneasy sense of repose, the sitters do not appear to lead a double life, i.e., one which is totally different from the

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image of themselves which the painter has projected onto the canvas; they may appear troubled and beset by thoughts of death, but this can be intuited from their gestures and their glances. With Leonardo, the artist probes even deeper into the unconscious longings and secret thoughts of his subjects, disclosing a world of psychic horror and sheer evil which not even the sitter can fully comprehend. When, in La Prisonnière, the narrator has an opportunity to study Albertine's countenance while she is at rest--and therefore unaware of his presence--he discovers the Jeckyll-Hyde aspect of her personality, finding in this psychic dualism a cause for despair: "Il y avait, quand elle était tout à fait sur le côté, un certain aspect de sa figure (si bonne et si belle de face) que je ne pouvais souffrir, crochu comme en certaines caricatures de Léonard, semblant révéler la méchanceté, l'âpreté au gain, la fourberie d'une espionne, dont la présence chez moi m'eût fait horreur et qui semblait démasquée par ces profils-là." (P,III,80) M. Drucker must certainly have had this passage in mind when he underscored the fact that "le nom de Léonard n'est pas mis un peu au hasard ... L'intérêt de Léonard pour les aspects les plus troublants du visage humain quand il chavire dans l'animalité, offre aux soupçons du narrateur à l'égard dè la tribu invisible, perverse, menaçante vers quoi penche Albertine même recluse, même endormie, l'autorité indiscutable d'une fiche anthropométrique dressée par un enquêteur qui n'a point d'égal."[477] For Proust, the painter of La Gioconda expressed the ultimate incomprehensibility of the human personality, hiding the emotions of the sitter behind an enigmatic smile and a hypnotic

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gaze.

A significant aspect of Proust's interest in the psychological dimensions of the visual portrait is a stress upon the ambiguous sexuality of the sitter. When Proust was in his early twenties, his response to the question "La qualité que je désire chez un homme" was "Des charmes féminins"; conversely, the query "La qualité que je préfère chez une femme" produced the reply "Des vertus d'homme et la franchise dans la camaraderie."[478] It was this transposition of the qualities of masculinity and femininity that led Proust to single out those paintings which embodied this androgynous ideal. Typical of his predilection for indeterminate sexuality in art were the canvases of Gustave Moreau--especially those which had the poet as their main subject. In his review of Anna de Noailles' collection of poetry, Proust dwelt upon the curious mélange of sexual traits characteristic of Moreau's poets:

> ...on se demande, à le bien regarder, si ce poète n'est pas une femme. Peut-être Gustave Moreau a-t-il voulu signifier que le poète contient en lui toute l'humanité, doit posséder les tendresses de la femme ... C'est seulement parce qu'il a situé cette scène dans l'Inde et la Perse qu'il a pu nous laisser hésitants sur le sexe du poète. S'il avait voulu peindre son poète à notre époque et dans nos pays et l'entourer cependant d'une beauté précieuse, il aurait été obligé d'en faire une femme. [479]

The sexual amorphism which Proust discovered in art may have given added support to his own theory of human sexuality as it is presented in A la Recherche. Whereas Moreau concretized his imaginative conception of the androgyne by placing his figures in a purely poetic and timeless realm, Proust sought to capture the complexities of human sexuality by

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presenting both masculine and feminine traits as coexisting in the same individual. "Devant la vie et devant l'art," writes Monnin-Hornung, "Proust montre une tendance pareille à saisir dans un visage l'alternance de deux personnalités, de deux sexes, leurs rencontres et leurs fuites à peine perceptibles, le charme que présente cette dualité dans une figure, quelle qu'en soit l'origine--hérédité ou équivoque des sexes."[480] A good example of this technique is provided in the opening pages of Sodome et Gomorrhe; the baron de Charlus is secretly glimpsed by the narrator as he prepares to engage in an elaborate courtship ritual with Jupien:

> Clignant des yeux contre le soleil, il semblait presque sourire, je trouvai à sa figure vue ainsi au repos et comme au naturel quelque chose de si affectueux, de si désarmé, que je ne pus m'empêcher de penser combien M. de Charlus eût été fâché s'il avait pu se savoir regardé; car ce à quoi me faisait penser cet homme, qui était si épris, qui se piquait si fort de virilité, à qui tout le monde semblait odieusement efféminé, ce à quoi il me faisait penser tout d'un coup, tant il en avait passagèrement les traits, l'expression, le sourire, c'était à une femme. (SG,II,604)

It is precisely this curious commingling of masculine and feminine traits that Proust will stress in his description of Elstir's portrait of Odette de Crécy in male attire.

Although Elstir is not exclusively a portrait painter, Proust does include several examples of this genre in his fictional artist's oeuvre. Taken together, they provide a good indication of those qualities which Proust appreciated in the art of portraiture. The reactions of the various characters in A la Recherche to Elstir's portraits, moreover, is an integral part of Proust's social comedy, serving as a

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barometer or index of the artistic tastes of middle class and aristocratic Parisian society.[481]

The duc de Guermantes' reaction to Elstir's painterly style as a whole typifies the insensitivity which the majority of Proust's characters--with the exception of the narrator, Swann, and Charlus--display when confronted by something new or experimental in nature: "...il n'y a pas lieu de se mettre autant martel en tête pour creuser la peinture de M. Elstir," he tells the narrator, "que s'il s'agissait de la Source d'Ingres ou des Enfants d'Edouard de Paul Delaroche. Ce qu'on apprécie là-dedans, c'est que c'est finement observé, amusant, parisien, et puis on passe. Il n'y a pas besoin d'être un érudit pour regarder ça. Je sais bien que ce sont de simples pochades, mais je ne trouve pas que ce soit assez travaillé." (CG2,II,501) The unfinished, impressionistic quality of Elstir's style likewise strikes Mme Cottard as unsuitable for portraits: "...je trouve que la première qualité d'un portrait," she tells Swann, "surtout quand il coûte 10.000 francs, est d'être ressemblant et d'une ressemblance agréable." (CS,I,375) The narrator, on the contrary, realizes that only the artist who can probe beneath the surface appearance of the sitter will achieve something worthy of the title of art:

> Si l'un de ces portraits dans le domaine de la peinture met en évidence certaines vérités, relatives au volume, à la lumière, au mouvement, cela fait-il qu'il soit nécessairement inférieur à tel portrait, ne lui ressemblant aucunement, de la même personne dans lequel mille détails qui sont omis dans le premier seront minutieusement relatés, deuxième portrait d'où l'on pourra conclure que le modèle était ravissant, tandis qu'on l'eût cru laid dans le premier, ce qui peut avoir une importance documentaire et même historique, mais n'est pas nécessairement une vérité d'art.[482]

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Similarly, in Proust's eyes a portrait is most valuable if it captures the essence of the sitter's personality rather than a mere physical resemblance; it is the character or soul of the individual, not the mask which social convention requires us to wear, that should be the prime target of the painter. According to the narrator,

> ...le portrait d'une femme par un grand artiste ne cherchera aucunement à donner satisfaction à quelques-unes des exigences de la femme ... il mettra au contraire en relief les désavantages qu'elle cherche à cacher et qui, comme un teint fiévreux, voire verdâtre, le tentent d'autant plus parce qu'ils ont du "caractère" ... Maintenant déchue, située hors de son propre type où elle trônait invulnérable, elle n'est plus qu'une femme quelconque, en la supériorité de qui nous avons perdu toute foi. Ce type, nous faisions tellement consister en lui... sa personnalité, son identité, que devant le portrait qui l'a dépouillée de lui, nous sommes tentés de nous écrier non pas seulement: "Comme c'est enlaidi!," mais: "Comme c'est peu ressemblant!" Nous avons peine à croire que ce soit elle. Nous ne la reconnaissons pas. Et pourtant il y a là un être que nous sentons bien que nous avons déjà vu. (JF,I,862)

If Elstir's refusal to "finish" his portraits infuriates his patrons, the fictional artist's experimental use of color is a second source of dismay to his paying customers. The color scheme of a portrait of Dr. Cottard which Mme Verdurin had commissioned Elstir to paint ("Vous savez que ce que je veux surtout avoir, c'est son sourire; ce que je vous ai demandé, c'est le portrait de son sourire" [CS,I,203]) remains totally incomprehensible to the doctor's wife; she complains to Swann: "Mon Dieu, je reconnais les qualités qu'il y a dans le portrait de mon mari, c'est moins étrange que ce qu'il fait d'habitude, mais il a fallu qu'il lui fasse des moustaches bleues ... Et il avait fait au professeur des cheveux mauves ...

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Je ne sais, Monsieur, si vous trouvez que mon mari a des cheveux mauves." (CS,I,375 and SG,II,938 resp.) The same feeling of befuddlement is expressed by the duchesse de Guermantes vis-à-vis her own portrait by Elstir; when the princesse de Parme inquires: "--Est-ce qu'il n'avait pas commencé un portrait de vous, Oriane?" she responds "--Si, en rouge écrevisse," adding, in a subsequent conversation, "Ce n'est pas ressemblant mais c'est curieux. Il est intéressant pendant les poses. Il m'a fait comme une espèce de vieillarde. Cela imite les Régentes de l'hôpital de Hals." (CG2,II,502 and 523 resp.) The fact that Mme Cottard prefers the slick style of the fashionable portrait painter Machard "aux femmes bleues et jaunes de notre ami Biche" (CS,I,375) is a clear indication of her retrogressive tastes in art; "...je dois vous l'avouer franchement," she tells Swann, "vous ne me trouverez pas très fin de siècle, mais je le dis comme je le pense, je ne comprends pas." (ibid.) Viewed beside the narrator's subtle understanding of Elstir's radical experiments in the visual arts, this clash between the mediocre and the sublime creates the stuff of comedy. "...Oriane de Guermantes' attitude toward her Elstir painting," writes Brée, "and Mme Verdurin's toward the Vinteuil sonata are merely elements in Proust's social satire, the unconscious expression by the character of a scale of values judged by Proust as inadequate.[483]

While most of the portraits executed by Elstir figure in the novel in an episodic, non-organic manner, there is one work by the fictional painter to which Proust devotes his full attention, making it an integral part of the text and a major

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visual symbol incorporating his conception of the human personality, viz. Elstir's portrait of Odette de Crécy as "Miss Sacripant." A careful analysis of this work will disclose Proust's utilization of the various lessons learned from the visual arts and their successful application to his own aesthetic program.

Like Elstir's "Le Port de Carquethuit," this fictional canvas has prompted critics to point to numerous sources, both visual and literary, which Proust may have had in mind while composing the following description:

> C'était--cette aquarelle--le portrait d'une jeune femme pas jolie, mais d'un type curieux, que coiffait un serre-tête assez semblable à un chapeau melon bordé d'un ruban de soie cerise; une de ses mains gantées de mitaines tenait une cigarette allumée, tandis que l'autre élevait à la hauteur du genou une sorte de grand chapeau de jardin, simple écran de paille contre le soleil. A côté d'elle, un porte-bouquet plein de roses sur une table ... Le caractère ambigu de l'être dont j'avais le portrait sous les yeux tenait, sans que je le comprisse, à ce que c'était une jeune actrice d'autrefois en demi-travesti.[484] Mais son melon, sous lequel ses cheveux étaient bouffants, mais courts, son veston de velours sans revers ouvrant sur un plastron blanc me firent hésiter sur la date de la mode et le sexe du modèle, de façon que je ne savais pas exactement ce que j'avais sous les yeux, sinon le plus clair des morceaux de peinture. (JF,I,848)

In a characteristic ploy,[485] Proust has the narrator insinuate that the portrait was "le contemporain d'un des nombreux portraits que Manet ou Whistler ont peints d'après tant de modèles disparus qui appartiennent déjà à l'oubli ou à l'histoire" (JF,I,863), thus supplying the source hunters with grist for their critical mill.

Albert Feuillerat was one of the first critics to identify

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Elstir's imaginary canvas with the work of James Abbot McNeill Whistler. "On ne saurait s'y méprendre," he wrote in 1934, "Miss Sacripant n'aurait pu sortir que de l'atelier de ce peintre. Ce portrait a toute l'étrangeté, l'ambiguïté hantante des traits, 'l'attrait irritant' qui rendent certaines compositions de Whistler si fascinantes."[486] To support his claim, Feuillerat singles out the corresponding asexual quality of Whistler's portraits entitled Lady Archibald Campbell Disguised as Orlando and Connie Gilchrist; he points to the contrast between the starched white shirt front and the velvet black vest as typical of the two-color harmonies favored by the American painter; and he stresses the formal relationship between the standing figure and the placement of her hat ("...[Elstir] a aimé à camper ainsi de face, le pied cambré dépassant de la jupe, le large chapeau rond tenu à la main, répondant symétriquement, à la hauteur du genou qu'il couvre, à cet autre disque vu de face, le visage" [JF,I,862]) as characteristic of Whistler's portraits of Miss Cicely Alexander, Miss Rosa Corder, and his Woman in Gray.

The narrator's suggestion that Elstir's watercolor of 1872 was contemporaneous with the art of Manet has likewise led to much critical speculation. Chernowitz, taking issue with Feuillerat's one-sided approach, concluded that the portrait "is probably only in part a Whistler. The costume disguising her sex recalls the work of Manet, who painted so many portraits of this kind, where he would use the same model, Victorine Meurend, who posed in men's attire in Le Toréador, Le Fifre, Mlle V. en costume d'Espada, Jeune Femme couchée en

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costume d'Espagnol, and others."[487] Adding to the general confusion, Monnin-Hornung, while agreeing that Whistler and Manet were certainly represented in the composite work, suggested that Renoir's Mme Henriot en page may also have been at the back of Proust's mind. Common sense finally asserted itself when the same critic, after an exhaustive examination of visual parallels, was forced to admit: "Rien, parmi les reproductions d'oeuvres impressionnistes que nous avons vues, ne ressemble exactement au portrait de Miss Sacripant.'"[488]

A new avenue of investigation was recently opened up when John Cocking, writing in 1972, made the following statement: "I think it was probably not a painting at all, but a photograph Proust possessed of Réjane playing the part of the Prince de Sagan in a revue."[489] When Proust was awarded the Prix Goncourt in 1919 for A l'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs, he was asked by Réjane, in whose house he was a renter, what gift she could possibly give him; he requested a photograph of her as the Prince de Sagan. In an interview which the now-celebrated novelist accorded a reporter the following year, he expounded upon the meaning which this photograph held for him: "C'est le seul travesti pas ridicule que je connaisse. Cela tient, je crois, à ce qu'en grande actrice, Mme Réjane, comme les grands peintres de tous les temps, n'a pas visé à l'imitation trop matérielle, au trompe-l'oeil. Voyez, elle a gardé sa jupe, des perles aux oreilles.[490] L'allusion à M. de Sagan n'est que plus frappante d'être furtive...."[491] The analogies with Proust's text are certainly present; one need only recall the subject of Elstir's watercolor: "...c'était

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une jeune actrice d'autrefois en demi-travesti." (JF,I,848); also significant is the narrator's request that Elstir give him a photograph of the work in question. (JF,I,860) Yet there is still no conclusive evidence to prove that it was this particular photographic image that Proust had in mind while composing his fictional portrait.[492]

The most intriguing attempt thus far to discover the origin of Elstir's canvas has centered upon the name given to the work. Ironically, in their frenetic search for visual counterparts, most critics overlooked or dismissed the one positive clue which Proust had provided: "Au bas du portrait était écrit: Miss Sacripant, octobre 1872." (JF,I,849) The narrator's curiosity having been piqued, he asks the painter: "Mais qu'est-ce que c'est que ce nom?" Elstir's evasive reply--"C'est celui d'un personnage que tint le modèle dans une stupide petite opérette" (JF,I,860)--satisfies neither Proust's narrator nor his readers. Peter E. Bondanella and J.E. Rivers have attempted to demonstrate, in a brief yet perceptive article, that the main importance of Elstir's watercolor "seems to lie not in its recollections of Impressionistic and other esthetic techniques, but in the fact that it calls to mind a definite literary source, Ariosto's Orlando Furioso, and in so doing functions as a clue to the character of Odette. The portrait thus has a wholly literary significance which no critic seems to have perceived."[493] According to these critics, there is a striking similarity between the warrior Sacripante's mad pursuit of the wanton Angelica and Swann's need to know the past history and present whereabouts of his mistress; both

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lovers, moreover, are tortured by the possibility that they may be just one among several suitors upon whom the ladies in question have bestowed their favors. The significance of Elstir's title for his watercolor sketch is also underscored by these writers: "The name Sacripant as applied to Odette enhances her role as the fitting symbol of the mental anguish brought by love, for Odette alternates between the active and passive roles in her affairs in the novel ... The name Miss Sacripant is, therefore, well chosen: Odette's dual nature betrays the characteristics of both a Sacripante and an Angelica. The half-masculine, half feminine name also reinforces the scattered hints that there may be a Lesbian side to Odette's character...."[494]

If we lay aside the question of possible sources and concentrate upon the portrait itself, several important lessons concerning the relationship between the human personality and aesthetic perception--as interpreted by Proust--will gradually emerge. When the narrator accidentally discovers the mysterious portrait, his immediate reaction is to the subject rather than the technical execution of the watercolor:

> ...[elle] me causa cette sorte particulière d'enchantement que dispensent des oeuvres, non seulement d'une exécution délicieuse, mais aussi d'un sujet si singulier et si séduisant que c'est à lui que nous attribuons une partie de leur charme, comme si, ce charme, le peintre n'avait eu qu'à le découvrir, qu'à l'observer, matériellement réalisé déjà dans la nature et à le reproduire. Que de tels objets puissent exister, beaux en dehors même de l'interprétation du peintre, cela contente en nous un matérialisme inné, combattu par la raison, et sert de contrepoids aux abstractions de l'esthétique. (JF,I,847-8) [495]

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Since the narrator had previously deduced the fact that this portrait "devait être d'un temps bien plus ancien de la vie d'Elstir" (JF,I,847), the stress upon subject matter rather than style can be attributed to the painter's earlier pre-metaphorical manner; similarly, Elstir's emphasis upon the material beauty of his wife and his choice of the latter, in his declining years, to serve as the incarnation of his painterly ideal is also a result of this materialistic strain in his artistic makeup.

Proust heightens the sense of mystery surrounding the origin of the portrait and introduces the theme of l'équivoque by having the narrator engage in a game of visual detection. The latter hypothesizes that part of the charm of the portrait lies in the fact that the viewer cannot be certain as to what is actually being represented. Just as Elstir's "Le Port de Carquethuit" makes use of the metaphorical analogy between land and sea masses to blur their outlines in the mind of the viewer, so Elstir's portrait of "Miss Sacripant" relies heavily upon the equivocal and tenuous border separating illusion from reality to achieve its bewildering and unsettling effect: "Souvent," observes the narrator, "et c'était le cas ici, la singularité de ces oeuvres tient surtout à ce qu'elles ont été exécutées dans des conditions particulières dont nous ne nous rendons pas clairement compte d'abord, par exemple si la toilette étrange d'un modèle féminin est un déguisement de bal costumé, ou si au contraire le manteau rouge d'un vieillard qui a l'air de l'avoir revêtu pour se prêter à une fantaisie du peintre, est sa robe de

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professeur ou de conseiller, ou son camail de cardinal." (JF,I,848)

Unable to determine the style of dress or sex of the model, the narrator temporarily abandons his psychological probing and attempts to study the painting from a purely visual angle:

> Aucune chose dans cette aquarelle n'était simplement constatée en fait et peinte à cause de son utilité dans la scène, le costume parce qu'il fallait que la femme fût habillée, le porte-bouquet pour les fleurs. Le verre du porte-bouquet, aimé pour lui-même, avait l'air d'enfermer l'eau où trempaient les tiges des oeillets, dans quelque chose d'aussi limpide, presque d'aussi liquide qu'elle;[496] l'habillement de la femme l'entourait d'une matière qui avait un charme indépendant, fraternel et, si les oeuvres de l'industrie pouvaient rivaliser de charme avec les merveilles de la nature, aussi délicate, aussi savoureuse au toucher du regard, aussi fraîchement peinte que la fourrure d'une chatte, les pétales d'un oeillet, les plumes d'une colombe. La blancheur du plastron, d'une finesse de grésil et dont le frivole plissage avait des clochettes comme celles du muguet, s'étoilait des clairs reflets de la chambre, aigus eux-mêmes et finement nuancés comme des bouquets de fleurs qui auraient broché le linge.[497] Et le velours du veston, brillant et nacré, avait ça et là quelque chose de hérissé, de déchiqueté et de velu qui faisait penser à l'ébouriffage des oeillets dans le vase. (JF,I,848-9)

The narrator's description of these minute details certainly gives Proust a claim to possessing the painter's eye. Here, perhaps more than in any other analysis of a work of art contained in A la Recherche, Proust consciously seeks to rival the descriptive art of the painter.[498] Although the model's costume and the other accessories are described in great detail, Proust refrains from introducing any terms of a purely technical nature, relying instead upon a subtle yet conscious use of visual comparison and verbal analogy to create a sense of color, form, and texture. For example, the vase appears

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to partake of the liquid state of its contents; the subject's outfit is described by way of tactile analogies with fur, flower petals, and feathers; the same distinction between synthetic and natural objects extends over into the description of the shirt front, whose fanciful pleats are adorned with bell-like trimmings resembling lilies of the valley; lastly, the shaggy velour vest is visually likened to the uneven edges of the pinks, thus creating yet another parallel between the natural and synthetic realms. As Monnin-Hornung has observed, "Proust ne décrit pas cette oeuvre pour nous en énumérer et en 'photographier' simplement les beautés mais pour nous montrer en quoi elle est pour lui source de plaisir, prétexte à réflexions et rêveries."[499]

This painterly description is immediately followed by an extremely important statement by the narrator concerning the complete separation between morality and aesthetics in the painter's mind at the moment of actual creation: "...on sentait qu'Elstir, insoucieux de ce que pouvait présenter d'immoral ce travesti d'une jeune actrice...s'était au contraire attaché à ces traits d'ambiguïté comme à un élément esthétique qui valait d'être mis en relief et qu'il avait tout fait pour souligner." (JF,I,849) While this distinction is in total agreement with Proust's anti-Ruskinian belief in the separation of morals and art, the narrator's description of the model's physiognomy betrays an interest which goes beyond the purely aesthetic to penetrate to the very soul of the sitter:

> Le long des lignes du visage, le sexe avait l'air d'être sur le point d'avouer qu'il était celui d'une fille un peu garçonnière, s'évanouissait, et plus

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> loin se retrouvait, suggérant plutôt l'idée d'un jeune efféminé vicieux et songeur, puis fuyait encore, restait insaisissable. Le caractère de tristesse rêveuse du regard, par son contraste même avec les accessoires appartenant au monde de la noce et du théâtre, n'était pas ce qui était le moins troublant. On pensait du reste qu'il devait être factice et que le jeune être qui semblait s'offrir aux caresses dans ce provocant costume avait probablement trouvé piquant d'y ajouter l'expression romanesque d'un sentiment secret, d'un chagrin inavoué. (JF,I,849) (emphasis mine)

Just as Proust had taken a special interest in the figure of the androgyne--particularly in Moreau's depiction of the poet--one can detect a somewhat morbid fascination, on the part of the narrator, with the sexual indeterminacy of the person represented in Elstir's watercolor. This description, moreover, represents a keen and penetrating analysis of the portrait as a psychological document, a visual confirmation of the innermost thoughts and longings of the (as yet) unnamed subject.

The unexpected arrival of Mme Elstir acts as the catalyst in the process of visual detection upon which the narrator has embarked. Elstir's wish that his wife not catch a glimpse of the watercolor and his unconvincing statement to the narrator that "la jeune femme en melon n'ait joué, je vous assure, aucun rôle dans ma vie ... Je n'ai gardé cela que comme un document amusant sur le théâtre de cette époque" (JF,I,849-50) only serve to heighten the sense of mystery surrounding the cryptic portrait. The narrator's description of Mme Elstir can be viewed as a pendant to the earlier description of the painter's watercolor, the theatricality and artifice of the latter differing markedly from the rather straightforward

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and unadorned quality of the former:

> ...elle aurait pu être belle, si elle avait eu vingt ans, conduisant un boeuf dans la campagne romaine; mais ses cheveux noirs blanchissaient; et elle était commune sans être simple, parce qu'elle croyait que la solennité des manières et la majesté de l'attitude étaient requises par sa beauté sculpturale à laquelle, d'ailleurs, l'âge avait enlevé toutes ses séductions. Elle était mise avec la plus grande simplicité. Et on était touché mais surpris d'entendre Elstir dire à tout propos et avec une douceur respectueuse, comme si rien que prononcer ces mots lui causait de l'attendrissement et de la vénération: "Ma belle Gabrielle!" (JF,I,850)

At first surprised by Elstir's choice of his wife as a fit subject for his art, the narrator gradually comprehends, by means of a careful study of Elstir's paintings belonging to his mythological period, the particular sort of beauty the painter finds in her features and her general demeanor.[500] This episode provides yet another demonstration of Proust's belief in the importance of the artist's subjective vision over and above the particular object he chooses to depict. "Les données de la vie," concludes the narrator, "ne comptent pas pour l'artiste, elles ne sont pour lui qu'une occasion de mettre à nu son génie." (ibid.)

Returning to the mysterious portrait, the narrator hits upon the true identity of the sitter by a stroke of sheer luck: "'Ce n'est pourtant pas Mme Swann avant son mariage,' dis-je par une de ces brusques rencontres fortuites de la vérité ... Elstir ne me répondit pas. C'était bien un portrait d'Odette de Crécy. Elle n'avait pas voulu le garder pour beaucoup de raisons, dont quelques-unes sont trop évidentes." (JF,I,860-1) No sooner has he uncovered one secret,

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but he is immediately confronted by a second revelation, "...plus troublante encore pour moi, concernant l'identité de l'artiste. Il avait fait le portrait d'Odette de Crécy. Serait-il possible que cet homme de génie, ce sage, ce solitaire, ce philosophe à la conversation magnifique et qui dominait toutes choses, fût le peintre ridicule et pervers adopté jadis par les Verdurin?" (JF,I,863) Elstir's subsequent admission that he was, in fact, the notorious painter Biche is followed by a theoretical justification of an artist's earlier existence as a necessary step in the maturation process: "...[l'homme] ne peut être assuré d'être devenu un sage," Elstir tells the narrator, "dans la mesure où cela est possible, que s'il a passé par toutes les incarnations ridicules ou odieuses qui doivent précéder cette dernière incarnation-là." (p.864)

The narrator, now in a better position to grasp the full meaning of the portrait of Odette as "Miss Sacripant," later discovers yet another psychological dimension to the work:

> Je me rappelais cette tragique explication de tant de vies qu'est un portrait génial et pas ressemblant comme celui d'Odette par Elstir et qui est moins le portrait d'une amante que du déformant amour. Il n'y manquait--ce que tant de portraits ont--que d'être à la fois d'un grand peintre et d'un amant (et encore disait-on qu'Elstir l'avait été d'Odette). Cette dissemblance, toute la vie d'un amant, d'un amant dont personne ne comprend les folies, toute la vie d'un Swann la prouvent. Mais que l'amant se double d'un peintre comme Elstir et alors le mot de l'énigme est proféré, vous avez enfin sous les yeux ces lèvres que le vulgaire n'a jamais aperçues dans cette femme, ce nez que personne ne lui a connu, cette allure insoupçonnée. Le portrait dit: "Ce que j'ai aimé, ce qui m'a fait souffrir, ce que j'ai sans cesse vu, c'est ceci." (F,III,440) (emphasis mine)

Not only does the portrait serve as a visual symbol, a concrete

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emblem, of Odette de Crécy's sexual ambiguity, it also functions as a metaphor for the blinding and debilitating power of love. In a sense, Proust has here wedded two major themes, i.e., art and love, in a single image.[501]

A careful rereading of the entire episode in the light of this last point will disclose the presence of the love motif--the "jeunes filles en fleurs" and, in particular, Albertine--insinuating itself at every point in the narrator's aesthetic discussions with the painter. It is Elstir's initial statement ("Il n'y a pas de jour qu'une ou l'autre d'entre elles ne passe devant l'atelier et n'entre me faire un bout de visite" [JF,I,847]) that attracts the narrator to the artist's studio in the hope of meeting Albertine. The narrator sees the painter--at least at the outset--solely in terms of an intermediary between himself and the "jeunes filles en fleurs": "...il ne se suffisait plus à lui-même, il n'était plus que l'intermédiaire nécessaire entre ces jeunes filles et moi...." (ibid.) Clearly, he has not yet gained a deeper understanding of Elstir's artistic genius. Even before the narrator has discovered the portrait of Odette, the art/love theme is indirectly suggested by the framing device of a window in Elstir's studio: "...seule était ouverte une petite fenêtre rectangulaire encadrée de chèvrefeuilles, qui après une bande de jardin, donnait sur une avenue ... Je n'avais plus le même calme qu'avant l'apparition de la jeune fille dans le cadre de la petite fenêtre si charmante jusque-là sous ses chèvrefeuilles et maintenant bien vide." (JF,I,834,847)[502] Like an ostinato melody, this

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leitmotif recurs at strategic moments throughout the narrative. In the midst of examining the watercolor entitled "Miss Sacripant," the narrator remarks: "...le plaisir qu'il me donnait était troublé seulement par la peur qu'Elstir, en s'attardant encore, me fît manquer les jeunes filles, car le soleil était déjà oblique et bas dans la petite fenêtre." (JF,I,848) The unexpected arrival of the painter's wife elicits the following reaction from the narrator: "J'étais désolé de l'arrivée de Mme Elstir qui allait encore nous retarder. Le rebord de la fenêtre fut bientôt rose. Notre sortie serait en pure perte. Il n'y avait plus aucune chance de voir les jeunes filles...." (p.850)

Another means by which Proust links the themes of art and love is through the use of floral symbolism. The narrator, eager to leave the confines of the painter's studio so that he can catch a glimpse of the band of young girls on the beach, urges Elstir to join him in a stroll along the promenade: "Elstir me causa une joie mêlée de torture en me disant qu'il ferait quelques pas avec moi, mais qu'il était obligé de terminer d'abord le morceau qu'il était en train de peindre. C'était des fleurs, mais pas de celles dont j'eusse mieux aimer [sic] lui commander le portrait que celui d'une personne, afin d'apprendre par la révélation de son génie ce que j'avais si souvent cherché en vain devant elles--aubépines, épines roses, bluets, fleurs de pommiers." (p.847) A moment later, the narrator spies the portrait of Odette as "Miss Sacripant." After describing the figure represented in the watercolor, he notes "à côté d'elle, un porte-bouquet plein de roses sur une table."(p.848)

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Although Proust mistakenly refers to these flowers as oeillets in a subsequent description ("...le velours du veston, brillant et nacré, avait ça et là quelque chose de hérissé, de déchiqueté et de velu qui faisait penser à l'ébouriffage des oeillets dans le vase" [JF,I,849]) , it is clear from the hints of Odette's sexual eccentricities--inferred by the narrator from her costume and facial expression--that the rose is a more fitting symbol. Bondanella and Rivers view this utilization of the rose as one more indication of Proust's reliance upon Ariosto for the title and symbolic import of the portrait: "The most striking reference to the Sacripante episode," they suggest, "comes with the rose motif. Flower imagery in Ariosto, and specifically the image of the rose, has an explicitly sexual meaning ... The comparison is in keeping with the fact that Odette's sexuality is associated with flowers throughout the novel."[503] Swann's term for the sexual act, "faire catleya" (CS,I,234), and the chrysanthemum Odette bestows upon her lover--which, like their love, wilts and fades (CS,I,219,225)--are two examples of Proust's conscious identification of human sexuality with flower symbolism.[504] Just as the catleya, Odette's favorite flower, functions as a symbol of sterility,[505] so the rose in Elstir's portrait represents yet another means by which Proust attempts to give his characterization of the demi-mondaine an added degree of psychological depth.

The foregoing analysis of Elstir's portrait gives some indication of the complexity of this visual symbol. On the simplest level, it provides the narrator with information

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concerning Odette's past and her possible liaison with the painter Biche. More important, the narrator's part psychological, part aesthetic reading of the portrait demonstrates the manner in which Proust approached the art of portraiture, i.e., always seeking to probe beneath the brushwork to the spiritual essence, the very soul of the sitter. As the embodiment of Proust's theory of the multiple selves comprising the human personality, moreover, the portrait demonstrates, in visual terms, the complex and often contradictory nature of our emotional drives, as well as the ultimate "unknowability" of another individual--both a result of the various masks which we are forced to assume as a result of social pressure and the need to conform to some preordained moral code.

The portrait is the one genre where the art of the painter and that of the writer converge, making it possible for the latter to enrich his characterizations by appropriating or adapting the visual techniques of the former. If one recalls the fact that the portrait of Odette as "Miss Sacripant" was not in the original Elstir episode as conceived by Proust,[506] its inclusion in the final version shows to what degree the author of A la Recherche saw the uses to which his knowledge of painting--and portraiture in particular--might be put. As Monnin-Hornung has stated:

> Proust enrichit, par ce portrait de "Miss Sacripant," l'oeuvre d'Elstir en lui faisant représenter l'être humain, et il enrichit du même coup son magasin d'analogies ... Désireux de rendre l'art d'Elstir...le plus possible analogue au sien, Proust a voulu montrer, chez un peintre, le même intérêt esthétique qu'il avait éprouvé pour un sujet que la morale courante réprouve. Ses "jeunes filles en fleurs" ne sont-elles pas des travestis qui parfois, par des traits discrets, avouent

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> leur sexe [?]... une étude telle que celle de la physionomie de la fille de Vinteuil n'a-t-elle pas quelque parenté avec le portrait de "Miss Sacripant"?
>
> Par cette description, Proust ne brise pas le cours du récit. Loin d'en faire un morceau statique...où la pensée s'arrête en oubliant tout le reste, il insère la contemplation du tableau dans la continuité de sa vie psychique ... non clairement exprimé, non visible à des yeux inattentifs, le symbole que représente ce portrait lui ajoute un lien avec le reste de l'oeuvre et donne à cette aquarelle un surcroît de vie et d'intérêt. 507

Elstir, as first conceived by Proust, was primarily a landscape painter; as such, his function was restricted to representing the various aesthetic laws governing the artistic vision of the painter. Proust's inclusion of the portrait of Odette as "Miss Sacripant" not only broadened Elstir's painterly oeuvre, it also gave the author of A la Recherche a chance to develop the characterization of one of his pivotal figures. In effect, by wedding art to psychology Proust was able to apply what he had learned from the visual arts to his own literary aesthetic, thereby enriching his novel by having the reader perceive characters and events through the prism of aesthetic creation.

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Footnotes

[1] According to Victor E. Graham, The Imagery of Proust (Oxford, 1966), p.178, "The one art form to which all the others are related and which, both objectively and subjectively, stands first as a general source of images is painting."

[2] Maurice E. Chernowitz, Proust and Painting (New York, 1944); Juliette Monnin-Hornung, Proust et la Peinture (Genève/Lille, 1951); Charles N. Clark, "Elstir: The Role of the Painter in Proust's A la recherche du temps perdu," Diss. Yale, 1952; and J. Theodore Johnson, Jr., "The Painter and His Art in the Works of Marcel Proust," Diss. Wisconsin, 1964. Also worth mentioning is Margaret Moore's "Les Arts plastiques dans l'oeuvre de Marcel Proust," Master's thesis, Chicago, 1928, and Z. Bodkier's "L'Imagination plastique dans l'oeuvre de Proust," Diss. Paris, 1938. The studies by Clark, Moore, and Bodkier were not consulted in the writing of the present chapter.

[3] Johnson, "The Painter and His Art...," p.xxxv.

[4] Cf. the remarks of Proust's friend Lucien Aressy: "La peinture de Helleu, les portraits de Boldini, de la Gandara, voire de Carolus, tout ce qui a l'air si médiocre, autour des Manet, des Degas, des Lautrec, des Renoir, dans les nouvelles salles de nos Musées, l'enchantait." A la recherche de Marcel Proust (Paris, 1930), p.55. Cited by Herbert De Ley, "'L'Hôpital sans style vaut le glorieux portail': Salon Painters in A la recherche du temps perdu," L'Esprit Créateur, 11, i (Spring 1971), 32. Although no defense of Proust's mature artistic tastes is required, Johnson reminds his readers, at the outset, that "even though he was immersed in the pressures and prejudices of Parisian social life, Proust readily distinguished truly superior artists from the fashionable but artistically ephemeral painters of his day...." "The Painter and His Art...," p.11.

[5] In a letter written in 1921, Proust told Jacques de Lacretelle: "There are no keys to the characters of this book; or rather there are eight or ten for each one; the same is true of the church of Combray; many churches posed for me in memory." Letters of Marcel Proust, trans. & ed. Mina Curtiss (New York, 1966), p.362. As early as 1911 Proust had written the same thing to his friend Robert de Montesquiou: "Je ne peux vous dire combien d'églises ont 'posé' pour mon église de Combray, dans Du côté de chez Swann." Correspondance Générale de Marcel Proust, 6 vols., ed. Robert Proust and Paul Brach (Paris, 1930-6), I, p.284. Subsequent references to this edition of Proust's letters will be acknowledged in the body of the text immediately following the quoted passage. (e.g., Corr.Gén.,I,284)

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[6] This critical lapse, while understandable in the case of early readers of Proust's novel, mars much of Monnin-Hornung's otherwise illuminating study. Some examples of this unintentional confusion of characters, chosen at random, point up this irritating and misleading habit: "Au cours de conversations avec Elstir, Proust comprend que certaines scènes de la vie moderne...peuvent séduire un peintre et lui fournir des sujets aussi intéressants que pour Véronèse ou Carpaccio les fêtes vénitiennes ... Proust ne se contente pas d'admirer des formes et des couleurs, seulement parce qu'Elstir s'en est servi pour élaborer ses chefs-d'oeuvre...." (emphasis mine) Proust et la Peinture, pp.52-3 and 55 resp.

[7] Aurel V. Diaconu, "Considérations sur le thème de Proust et de la peinture," Bull. de la Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray, no.12 (1962), 567, mistakenly assumed that Proust had unintentionally presented an incomplete portrait of the "amateur de peinture" in the figure of Swann, when it was precisely his intention to show that Swann's artistic development had been arrested at a premature stage, i.e., he would always remain a "célibataire de l'art." Monnin-Hornung repeats Diaconu's error in her discussion of Swann's habit of seeing Odette de Crécy in the guise of Botticelli's Zephora. Op. cit., pp.109-10. Future references to the Bulletin will be abbreviated as follows: BSAMP.

[8] Cf. the following letter, dated 13 Nov. 1893, to Charles Grandjean: "...voici deux nouvelles idées à ajouter à celle d'attaché à un musée: 1. Rédacteur au Sénat ... 2. Une carrière dont j'ignore le nom qui aboutit à l'inspection des beaux-arts et qui en attendant consiste en missions pour rendre compte des diverses expositions, représentations etc. Cette dernière me séduirait mais j'ai peur que ma famille ne la trouve bien peu carrière." Correspondance: Tome I (1880-1895), ed. Philip Kolb ([Paris], 1970), pp.254-5.

[9] Response to a survey conducted by the journalist Maurice Montabré for L'Intransigeant, 3 August 1920. Lettres Retrouvées, ed. Philip Kolb ([Paris], 1966), pp.143-4. In the same letter to Montabré, roughly dated June-July 1920, Proust objected to the distinction between mental and physical processes which the question implied: "Vous faites entre les profession[s] manuelles et spirituelles une distinction à laquelle je ne saurais souscrire. L'esprit guide la main. Notre vieux Chardin disait (mieux): on ne peint pas seulement avec ses doigts, mais avec son coeur. Et le Vinci, parlant aussi de la peinture: 'Elle est cosa mentale.'" Op. cit., p.143. This belief in the importance of feeling over and above technical facility forms one of the cornerstones of Proust's aesthetic philosophy.

[10] Proust outlined his intent in a letter to Hahn (bearing the former's own peculiar orthography) dated May 1906: "Je vous ai fait trente si jolis dessins que je suis on ne

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peut plus fasché de les avoir perdus. Je veux, 'd'un trait de plume,' vous donner une idée autant que je m'en souviens, car ils constituaient une critique hardie des diverses écoles de peinture. Par exemple j'essayais d'imaginer ce qu'eût été une Présentation au Temple chez les divers peintres des diverses époques." Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn, 9th edn., ed. Philip Kolb (Paris, 1956), p.80. Among the thirty-odd illustrations reproduced in this book, most notable are the following painterly pastiches: "Esquisse d'une descente de croix" (p.81); Portrait de Réjane, par Manet (p.90); Carlyle, par Whistler (pp.161,163); and Jupiter et Léda, par G. Moreau (p.85). Traceries by Proust of illustrations in Emile Mâle's L'Art Religieux du XIII^{e} Siècle en France are reproduced on pages 183, 185-7, and 191 of Johnson's article, "Proust and Giotto: Foundations for an Allegorical Interpretation of A la Recherche du temps perdu," Marcel Proust: A Critical Panorama, comp. Larkin B. Price (Urbana, Ill., 1973). In addition to listing several of these drawings (#254 and #256, p.51), the catalog of the Marcel Proust exhibition held at the Bibliothèque Nationale in 1965 also mentions "'Madame Clotilde de France...' Dessin de Marcel Proust, vers 1905 ... Caricature d'un tableau du Musée du Louvre: portrait de Charles de France, Comte d'Artois, et de sa soeur Mme Clotilde, par Drouais." (#291, p.58) Marcel Proust [exhib. cat.] (Paris, 1965). This may be identical with another "dessin de Proust" depicting an aristocratic female, which is reproduced in the volume of essays entitled Proust, ed. Antoine Adam et al (Paris, 1965), p.95.

[11] "Au Lecteur" [par Marie Nordlinger-Riefstahl] Proust, Lettres à une Amie (Manchester, England, 1942), pp.v-vi. Although Nordlinger linked this game to Swann's habit of seeing real people in terms of works of art, or vice-versa, one should not confuse the lighthearted pastime of Proust and his friends with the tragic consequences resulting from Swann's prolonged habit of confusing life and art in this manner. Cf. Antoine Adam, "Le Roman de Proust et le Problème des Clefs," Revue des Sciences Humaines, n.s., 65 (janv.-mars 1952),68: "L'attitude de Swann a pu être, elle a été l'erreur de Proust: c'est une erreur reconnue et abjurée."

[12] Lucien Daudet, Autour de Soixante Lettres de Marcel Proust, 2nd edn. (Paris, 1929), p.18. Along the same lines, Robert de Billy recalled a dinner he attended with Proust during which "si l'on costume par la pensée les invités d'une soirée on découvrait des ressemblances incroyables de tels avec ceux qui immortalisèrent le crayon de Clouet, le pinceau de Rigaud, de Philippe de Champaigne, de Nattier et de bien d'autres. Un dîner parisien, vu comme collection de vieux portraits qui se lèvent à l'appel de la fraise, du hennin, du justaucorps de buffle ou du pourpoint, est plein d'agréables surprises." Robert de Billy, Marcel Proust: Lettres et Conversations (Paris, 1930), p.84.

[13] According to François Fosca, "Les Amateurs: Proust," De Diderot à Valéry. Les Ecrivains et les Arts Visuels (Paris,

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1960), p.71, this habit "lui fut communiqué par la lecture des ouvrages des Goncourt. Les Goncourt ont cédé à ce penchant, qui rapproche la réalité de la peinture ou de la sculpture, de deux façons: soit en décrivant un spectacle, personnage ou paysage qu'ils avaient vu, comme s'ils auraient eu sous les yeux non la réalité mais une peinture à l'huile, une aquarelle, un dessin; soit en comparant quelqu'un qu'ils avaient rencontré à une oeuvre d'un artiste d'autrefois, ou inversement en découvrant dans une peinture ancienne des ressemblances avec quelqu'un qu'ils connaissaient."

[14] Cf. Adam, "Le Roman de Proust...," p.68: "...Proust s'inspirait des Praeterita de Ruskin pour définir un certain esthétisme et pour le condamner. Aux yeux de Ruskin comme à ceux de Swann, durant ses années d'université, professeurs et camarades prenaient l'aspect d'oeuvres d'art, et il ne s'intéressait qu'à ceux dont on aurait pu faire de beaux tableaux. Il avait pris, lui aussi, l'habitude de retrouver dans les cours du collège l'Erasme d'Holbein, le Mélanchton du Dürer, les doges du Titien."

[15] Elizabeth R. Jackson has suggested that "le rapprochement, femme dans la vie--femme dans la peinture, fut au début de sa propre invention et trouva ensuite un écho et un renforcement dans sa lecture sur la pensée préraphaëlite." "Proust et les Préraphaëlites," Revue des Sciences Humaines, n.s., 117 (janv.-mars 1965), 95.

[16] Monnin-Hornung, for example, has confused the persona of Swann for that of Proust in arguing that the latter "n'a eu, en décrivant Odette penchée sur une gravure, aucune autre image devant les yeux et dans l'imagination que la reproduction de la fresque représentant la fille de Jéthro [in a painting by Botticelli depicting the life of Moses]... Il n'a pas su animer Odette d'autres mouvements que celui que le peintre lui a donné pour l'éternité." Mistaking Swann's obvious shortcomings for those of Proust, she wrongly deduces from this episode the author's "enthousiasme bien plus grand devant la beauté artistique que devant la beauté naturelle, et la passivité d'esprit qui l'empêchait de se créer une vision personnelle du monde extérieur, d'en tirer une beauté qui ne fût pas celle qu'avait déjà créé un grand artiste." Proust et la Peinture, pp.109-10 and 104 resp.

[17] Marcel Proust, A la Recherche du Temps Perdu, 3 vols., ed. Pierre Clarac and André Ferré ([Paris], 1954), I, pp.40-41. All future references to this edition of Proust's novel are acknowledged in the body of the text, following the quoted passage (e.g., CS,I,40-41). For the sake of brevity, the following abbreviations for the various sections of the novel have been adopted: Du Côté de Chez Swann (CS); A L'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs (JF); Le Côté de Guermantes 1 or 2 (CG1 or CG2); Sodome et Gomorrhe (SG); La Prisonnière (P); La Fugitive (F); and Le Temps Retrouvé (TR).

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[18] Proust, Lettres à Mme C[atusse] (Paris: J.B. Janin, 1946), p.153. Cited by Monnin-Hornung, pp.21-2.

[19] Monnin-Hornung, p.65.

[20] Jean Milly, "Proust et l'Image," BSAMP, no.20 (1970), 1042-3, touches upon this point in connection with an analysis of Proust's imagery: "On peut affirmer," he writes, "contre une interprétation trop psychanalytique, qui voudrait voir en elles [i.e., Proust's images] une saisie indirecte du monde due uniquement à la crainte du réel et à l'incapacité d'agir sur lui, qu'elles sont au contraire un mode d'action dans l'ordre littéraire, que grâce à elles Proust réagit positivement devant l'évanescence de la vie contingente et construit...un univers échappant au temps. Univers de formes, certes, et donc hautement intellectualisé. Non dépourvu de vie, cependant, puisqu'il est entièrement tiré d'une expérience particulière et qu'il conserve intacts tous les frémissements de la plus riche sensibilité."

[21] Daudet, "Transpositions," NRF ["Hommage à Marcel Proust"], n.s., 10, no.112 (1 janv. 1923), 48, and Autour de Soixante Lettres..., p.32 resp.

[22] Cattaui, "Technique et Vision," BSAMP, no.2 (1951/2), 89. Cf. Monnin-Hornung: "...le mélange de subtile précision et de vague qui caractérise la vision proustienne ... les qualités contradictoires de Proust: exactitude presque scientifique de l'observation et arbitraire affectif venant donner à l'observation une note d'inattendu, une valeur personnelle." (pp.159 and 212 resp.) See, also, Jean Mouton, "L'Optique de Proust: Du Regard à la Vision," Entretiens sur Proust, ed. G. Cattaui and P. Kolb (Paris, 1966), pp.35-50 (discussion, pp.50-62), for an analysis of optical imagery (e.g., "le verre grossissant") in relation to Proust's novel.

[23] Hahn, "Promenade," NRF, n.s., 10, no.112 (1 janv. 1923), 39-40. Céleste Albaret's recollection of Proust's fanatic insistence upon the proper conditions for viewing an object sheds additional light on the writer's unique personality: "When, for instance, the sun, casting its rays into the corner of the room, illuminated it in some fashion that pleased him, or touched with fantastic colour an object...then his eyes, falling on whatever object it was, would remain fixed upon it, even for an hour or more, and whether it was day or night, he would not allow it to be moved. Sometimes he insisted on its remaining indefinitely because he wanted to renew the sensation it had given him, so it often happened that in different parts of the room there were articles left for days in quite unsuitable places in case the light or the atmosphere should again transmute them into something other than they were." Stephen Hudson, Céleste and Other Sketches (The Blackamore Press, 1930), pp.20-21. Cited by Kyuichiro Inoue, "Proust et Chardin," Etudes de Langue et Littérature Françaises, no.1 (1962), 14-15.

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[24] A discussion of the technical aspects of Proust's style and its indebtedness to the Impressionist vision can be found in the fifth chapter of Chernowitz's book, "Transposing Painting into Literature," pp.134-74; see, also, chapters five ("Représentation du Monde Extérieur--Influence de la Peinture sur la Vision de l'Ecrivain" [pp.137-201]) and six ("Symbolisme et Impressionnisme" [pp.202-10]) of Monnin-Hornung's study.

[25] Polanščak, La Peinture du Décor et de la Nature chez Marcel Proust (Paris, 1941), pp.34-5, 38-9. Cf. Chernowitz, p.167: "If Proust justifies his most fundamental theory by the illusory effects of Impressionist painting, it is because he extends to mnemonic and temporal relations, to temporal 'optics,' the aconceptual impression which the painters had used in spacial relations and spacial optics."

[26] For a more detailed discussion of this question, see the following: Mouton, "L'Optique de Proust...," pp.35-9 and "Discussion," pp.58-60; John N. Alley, "Proust and Art: The Anglo-American Critical View," RLC, 37, iii (juillet-sept. 1963), 418-22; Ninette Bailey, "Le Rôle des Couleurs dans la Genèse de l'Univers Proustien," MLR, 60, iii (April 1965), 188-96; Pierre Jacquillard, "Proust et la Peinture" [Colloque], BSAMP, no.9 (1959), 127-9; Margaret Mein, "Art: The Final Rejoinder," Proust's Challenge to Time (Manchester, England, 1962), pp.106-7; Clotilde M. Wilson, "Proust's Color Vision," FR, 16, v (March 1943), 411-13; Frances V. Fardwell, Landscape in the Works of Marcel Proust, Catholic University of America Studies in Romance Language and Literature, 35 (Washington, D.C., 1948), pp.193-7; Benjamin Crémieux, "Le Sur-Impressionnisme de Proust," Les Critiques de Notre Temps et Proust, ed. Jacques Bersani (Paris, 1971), p.34; Polanščak, La Peinture du Décor..., pp.19-24, 27, 34-5, 38-9; Madeleine Remacle, L'Elément Poétique dans "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu" de Marcel Proust, Académie Royale de Langue et de Littérature Françaises de Belgique (Bruxelles, 1954), pp.109-11, 192; Chernowitz, pp.141-71, 183-4; Monnin-Hornung, pp.208, 210, 214-15; M.V. Tolmachev, "Impressionist-Classicist Tensions," YFS, no.34 (June 1965), 31, 34; and, lastly, Parker Tyler, "The Impressionism of Marcel Proust," Kenyon Review, 8, i (Winter 1946), 49-50.

[27] Chernowitz, p.25. The painter Jacques-Emile Blanche, Proust's lifelong friend, has left us the following sketch of this aristocratic milieu: "Regardons Marcel, lové sur un pouf, sans souci de sa barbe de l'avant-veille, roucoulant de délicieuses badineries à l'adresse d'une noble matrone. Les réflecteurs éclairient mollement un joli portrait rose et bleu de Nattier, et celui si sombre de Geneviève Bizet par Elie Delaunay: 'Dites, monsieur, n'est-ce pas plus beau que la Joconde?'" Blanche, "Marcel Proust," Mes Modèles... (Paris, 1928), p.109.

[28] Cf. the following: "[Proust] me fit parler de l'atelier

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Julian, de mon professeur...." Daudet, Autour de Soixante Lettres..., p.15. Cf., also, Proust's letter (9 Feb. 1905) to Marie Nordlinger: "J'ai un ami--M. Lucien Daudet--qui a travaillé la peinture avec Whistler." Proust, Lettres à une Amie, p.84.

[29] Cf. Fosca, De Diderot à Valéry..., pp.68-9: "Le peintre qu'il fréquenta le plus fut Jacques-Emile Blanche, à qui il demandait des consultations sur la peinture comme il en demandait à des femmes du monde sur des robes, des chapeaux ou des points d'étiquette." In a letter to Hahn (c.1895), Proust speaks of "[le] ravissant atelier de Jacques Blanche." Proust, Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn, p.4. For personal details surrounding Proust's friendship with Blanche--and an appraisal of the latter's gifts as a painter and art critic--see Proust's preface to Blanche's Propos de Peintre, reprinted in Contre Sainte-Beuve précédé de Pastiches et Mélanges et suivi de Essais et Articles, ed. Pierre Clarac and Yves Sandre (Paris, 1971), pp.570-86. Subsequent references to works by Proust contained in this volume will be acknowledged in an abbreviated fashion (e.g., Contre Sainte-Beuve...).

[30] Marie Nordlinger presented a watercolor entitled "Arbres à Senlis" to Proust in 1904 (reproduced in the Bibliothèque Nationale catalog, #239, p.48). According to Nordlinger's account, Proust treasured this work and kept it in his possession until shortly before his impending death, at which point it was given to Hahn; he, in turn, gave the watercolor back to its creator. See Nordlinger's "Au Lecteur," Lettres à une Amie, pp.ix-x. Proust's original note of thanks is significant because it stresses the artist's sensibilité at the expense of the subject of the work in question: "Combien je vous sais gré de ce présent merveilleux, de ce don d'un lieu de la nature, d'une heure de temps, d'une nuance et d'une minute de votre âme attentive à la nature, et pleine aussi de secrets qui ne sont qu'à elle." (emphasis mine) (undated letter) Ibid., p.28. Nordlinger's other interest, i.e., working in precious metals, is mentioned briefly in her article "Proust et le Génie de Ruskin," Arts, no.537, 12-18 oct. 1955, p.7: "L'année 1902 me trouve de retour à Paris, orfèvre dans un des ateliers de l'Art Nouveau."

[31] The Bibliothèque Nationale catalog (#297, p.297) mentions a work entitled "'Fleurs dans un Vase.' Aquarelle par Robert de Montesquiou. Signée R.M. --A Mme Howard-Johnston."

[32] The Bibliothèque Nationale catalog lists an "Autoportrait. Peinture ovale marouflée sur carton, vers 1920" (#342, p.70) and describes its creator as follows: "Très cultivée, elle dessinait et peignait avec talent et connut la plupart des écrivains et des artistes de son temps." (p.71)

[33] See Proust's letter (10 Jan. 1893) to Robert de Billy: "...Paul Baignères, en me faisant poser pour un portrait,

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donne ces temps-ci à mon inaction un prétexte." Correspondance: Tome I (1880-1895), p.196. Cf. the following letter (26 Jan 1893) to the same correspondent: "Je vois souvent... Paul Baign[ères] qui fait mon portrait...." Proust, Choix de Lettres, ed. Philip Kolb ([Paris], 1965), p.50.

[34] A short note from Proust to Béraud is reproduced in Lettres Retrouvées, p.40.

[35] According to Henri Bardac, "Madeleine Lemaire et Marcel Proust," Revue de Paris, 56 (août 1949), 139, "...le sculpteur Ski ressembla singulièrement à Frédéric de Madrazzo [sic]...." Bardac, himself a frequenter of the painter Lemaire's fashionable salon, met Madrazo and Proust's other artist friends in this setting. Adam, "Le Roman de Proust...," p.82, adds that Madrazo "fréquentait en 1895 le même atelier que certains des meilleurs amis de Proust, Lucien Daudet et Albert Flament...." Céleste Albaret suggested that "M. Proust retenait de lui sa façon de parler la peinture ... il en avait une vraie reconnaissance à Madrazo, car c'était sur son insistence qu'il avait eu la révélation de Venise et son explication." Albaret, Monsieur Proust, ed. Georges Belmont (Paris, 1973), p.274. The latter portion of her statement is highly doubtful and based upon no factual evidence.

[36] As Céleste Albaret recalled, "Il y avait à ce moment-là, dans le Figaro, des dessins de l'illustrateur Forain qu'il appréciait beaucoup; il me les montrait en me les détaillant, parce que je ne comprenais pas forcément toute l'allusion." Monsieur Proust, p.247. While he may have appreciated Forain's artistic genius and his flair for trenchant satire, Proust was not at all impressed by his personal qualities. Cf. the following undated letter to Blanche--in which Proust reverses Sainte-Beuve's critical approach: "Quant à Forain, vous dites vous-même que vous savez parfaitement que c'est un vilain et mauvais homme ... Or, Forain doit malgré tout avoir en lui de ces régions nobles car son oeuvre naît tout de même de quelque chose." (Corr.Gén.,III,132,134)

[37] Cf. the following letter, dated 1899, to Montesquiou: "J'irai tantôt voir votre portrait chez M. Boldini. Peut-être aurai-je la chance de vous y rencontrer." (Corr.Gén.,I,86)

[38] In an early letter to Hahn (3 or 4 July 1896), Proust recounted a purported conversation between the painter Clairin and Madeleine Lemaire. See Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn, pp.58-9.

[39] In the section of the novel entitled "Portrait de Jean par un Peintre Mondain," one reads: "Cette année-là La Gandara exposa au Champ-de-Mars un portrait de Jean Santeuil." Proust, Jean Santeuil précédé de Les Plaisirs et les Jours, ed. Pierre Clarac and Yves Sandre ([Paris], 1971), p.675. The resemblances to Proust's portrait by Blanche are striking.

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[40] For additional biographical information, see the article by Helleu's daughter, Paulette Howard-Johnston, "'Bonjour M. Elstir,'" Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 69 (avril 1967), 247-50. Proust's letter to Mme Emile Straus (August 1909) discloses some of the facets of Helleu's personality and artistic refinement which appealed to Proust: "Même physiquement il est charmant et Montesquiou disait avec raison que bien peu de descendants de guillotinés avaient autant de 'race' que le descendant du guillotineur. Et c'est bien vrai. Je voudrais que vous vissiez son installation de Paris ... Je suis sûr que tout cet arrangement d'un goût exquis vous plairait beaucoup et que lui aurait beaucoup de plaisir à vous le montrer. Car il a la nature très simple des vrais artistes, et si très peu de personnes peuvent lui faire plaisir, de ce très peu-là tout lui fait plaisir." Choix de Lettres, p.167.

[41] See Chernowitz, p.26.

[42] Cf. the following letter by Proust, written between 1921 and 1922, to Sert's ex-wife: "If you are still on good terms with Sert, tell him I am bursting with fanaticism for him." Letters of Marcel Proust, p.387. In his preface to Blanche's Propos de Peintre, Proust called Sert "...un homme que j'admire et que j'aime entre tous ... Quel plaisir et quelle sincérité animent les pages où Blanche le compare à Michel-Ange, à Tintoret." Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.582. According to Louis Gautier-Vignal's testimony, Proust visited Sert's studio on at least one specific occasion. Cited by Monnin-Hornung, p.15.

[43] Autret, L'Influence de Ruskin sur la Vie, les Idées, et l'Oeuvre de Marcel Proust (Genève, 1955), p.118. Proust's intimate acquaintance with the work and person of Renoir is questionable; as late as 1919, while writing his preface to Blanche's volume of essays, Proust was forced to confess to his painter friend: "...Cézanne, Degas, Renoir, peintres que je devine à peine et dont j'eusse été passionné de connaître les oeuvres ... [j'irai] voir ces maîtres, là où vous jugerez que leurs meilleures oeuvres sont exposés. Mais je ne connais précisément aucun de ces morceaux et n'ai donc pas pu saisir la direction de votre livre." (25 Jan. 1919. Corr.Gén.,III, 156) The fact that Proust's A la Recherche makes covert references to Renoir's Baigneuses as a work by Elstir (CG2,II,405), alludes to Renoir by name as the artist incorporating a new painterly vision (CG2,II,327), and mentions the painting depicting "le salon de l'éditeur Charpentier par Renoir" (TR,III,722) proves that Proust did, in fact, know several of Renoir's works. One must therefore conclude that his profession of ignorance to Blanche was based upon an incomplete knowledge of the painterly technique of these artists; obviously, there were also references by Blanche to specific paintings by Renoir with which Proust was not familiar and could therefore not discuss at great length. In support of the Renoir-Proust

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rapprochement, Monnin-Hornung cites Louis Gautier-Vignal as the link between the two; Vignal was a friend of the art dealer Ambroise Vollard. According to Monnin-Hornung, "[Il] avait souvent parlé de cet artiste à Proust. Il conduisit un jour l'écrivain chez Bernheim voir des toiles du grand impressionniste ... 'Proust ne parla pas beaucoup pendant tout le temps qu'on nous présenta les tableaux. Je m'abstenais de parler, sachant que cette visite marquait dans son existence et qu'on retrouverait dans son oeuvre les impressions alors ressenties par lui....'" Proust et la Peinture, p.14.

[44] Cf. the following letter (9 Feb. 1905) to Marie Nordlinger: "Moi, je n'ai pas connu Whistler--qu'un seul soir, où je lui ai fait dire un peu de bien de Ruskin! et où j'ai gardé ses jolis gants gris, que j'ai perdus depuis. Mais j'ai entendu beaucoup parler de lui par Robert de Montesquiou et par Boldini." Lettres à une Amie, pp.84-5. According to I.H.E. Dunlop, "Proust and Painting," Marcel Proust: A Centenary Volume, ed. Peter Quennell (New York, 1971), p.109, "...the meeting took place around 1897 in the salon of Méry Laurent...." Cf. the rather lighthearted tone of this letter with the much more dramatic note addressed to Robert de Montesquiou: "La cause de l'état terrible où je viens d'être pendant plusieurs jours--et grave--vient de ce que j'ai voulu aller voir les Whistler, pour faire pour un mort ce qu'on ne ferait pas pour des vivants...." (c.1907-1919. Corr.Gén.,I,246) Proust's admiration for Whistler's art can be felt throughout A la Recherche (e.g., JF,I,649,755,805,863; CG1,II,28; CG2,II,563; SG,II,652; P,III,301; F,III,646-7; TR,III,709,770). Albert Feuillerat, Comment Marcel Proust a Composé son Roman (New Haven, Conn., 1934), p.62, was one of the first critics to suggest, in connection with the name of Proust's fictional painter: "Le nom n'est-il pas l'anagramme de ce peintre américain?"

[45] Dunlop, "Proust and Painting," pp.112-13.

[46] Cited by Monnin-Hornung, p.10.

[47] According to Bibesco, "de tous les peintres vivants du temps de Marcel Proust, celui qu'il préférait de beaucoup, c'était Vuillard." Cited by Monnin-Hornung, p.19. Proust established a friendship with Vuillard. Although he ridiculed the painter's idiosyncratic way of referring to celebrated painters as "un type comme ...," Proust considered Vuillard "un être rare" (a statement contained in a letter [August 1907] written to Hahn from Cabourg, where Proust held frequent discussions with Vuillard). See Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn, pp.145-6. Vuillard executed a sketch of Antoine Bibesco and Proust in 1902; the occasion was a luncheon at Armenonville in the Bois de Boulogne. Proust subsequently desired to buy the sketch from the artist; he asked his friend Bibesco, in a letter dated 1904, if he might intercede on his behalf and arrange for the sale of the work in question, calling the original

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meeting "[un] point de coïncidence unique entre son [i.e., Vuillard's] admirable talent qui féconde souvent ma mémoire et une heure charmante et parfaite de ma vie." Lettres de Marcel Proust à Bibesco (Lausanne, 1949), pp.127-8. A hint of the ineffable quality which Proust admired in Vuillard's paintings and drawings, e.g., their subtle gradations of tone and their careful patterning of a variety of textures and forms, is contained in the following letter by Proust (c.April 1908) to Emmanuel Bibesco: "C'est une simple nuance mais qu'il serait aussi vain de chercher à vous expliquer que le charme d'un tableau de Vuillard à quelqu'un qui ne le percevrait pas. Ce sont choses que le raisonnement ne démontre point à ceux qui ne l'ont pas senti d'abord...." Choix de Lettres, p.153. This statement points to the underlying subjectivity of Proust's approach to art in general, i.e., his emphasis upon feeling rather than abstract (external) reasoning.

[48] Antoine Bibesco, "En Guise d'Introduction," Lettres de Marcel Proust à Bibesco, p.30.

[49] Monnin-Hornung, p.19, cites Antoine Bibesco as saying, with respect to Proust's artistic preferences, "Il aimait Cézanne et Gauguin...." Cf. L. Aressy, A la Recherche de Marcel Proust, p.55: "[Proust] n'aimait ni Vangogh [sic] ni Cézanne, qui le dépassait." Cited by De Ley, "'L'Hôpital sans style...,'" p.33. There is likewise no evidence to support the claim that Proust was an admirer of Gauguin's Symbolist or cloisonné-inspired canvases; cf. Johnson, "The Painter and His Art," p.336: "The sharp lines, bright colors and rigid forms of Cézanne and Gauguin or the stark shapes of the early cubists simply did not appeal to him." Proust's confession that he did not know the work of Cézanne (see fn. 43) seems to have gone unnoticed or was intentionally ignored by such later critics as E.F.N. Jephcott. Cézanne's name is not even mentioned in A la Recherche!

[50] "...Proust shared Rilke's admiration for Cézanne." E.F.N. Jephcott, "Ruskin and Rodin," Proust and Rilke: The Literature of Expanded Consciousness (New York, 1972), p.109. Cf. the earlier statement by Milton Hindus: "In his novel, it is to the painter Elstir that Proust attributes the appreciation of domestic scenes which he had actually learned from the Dutch artists and from certain contemporary French painters whom he liked, like Cézanne." (emphasis mine) "The Aesthetics of Proust," The Proustian Vision (Carbondale/Edwardsville, Ill., 1954), p.60. It would appear that Hindus picked up this erroneous notion from Thomas W. Bussom, whose article preceded his own chapter by eleven years; cf. the following: "[Proust] may have enjoyed in Cézanne not only his original vision of the world of nature but also those resemblances to Chardin and the Dutch genre painters like Ver Meer that later critics have pointed out in Cézanne's work." "Marcel Proust and Painting," Romanic Review, 34, i (Feb. 1943), 62.

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[51] Cf. Georges Cattaui, "Technique et Vision," p.96: "Comme Cézanne, [Proust] procède par de légères touches successives, et sans tâtonnement, chaque notation, chaque modulation correspond à quelque perception nouvelle de la réalité." In a more general context, Tolmachev suggests that Proust's "attempt to create 'classicism' is parallel to Cézanne's efforts to...affirm the reality and weight of objects...." "Impressionist-Classicist Tensions," p.34. Jacques-Emile Blanche unintentionally deflated the contrived attempts of critics to bring Proust and Cézanne together, stylistically speaking, when he wrote (in an essay entitled "Les Arts et la Vie: Paul Gauguin et Charles Morice, Initiateurs," Revue de Paris, 27 [1 mai 1920], 123): "Si le style, inimitable après tout, d'un Marcel Proust, peut faire école, comme la couleur et la forme d'un Cézanne--mais à Dieu plaise qu'il n'en soit pas de même!--A la Recherche du Temps perdu est un domaine spirituel où plusieurs générations de psychologues, de littérateurs, pourront travailler, sans gêner leurs voisins et sans se disputer. Il n'y a rien de tel dans les arts plastiques." Cited by Proust in a letter (25 or 26 July 1920) to Jacques Rivière. See Marcel Proust et Jacques Rivière, Correspondance (1914-1922), ed. Philip Kolb (Paris, 1955), p.125. (emphasis mine)

[52] Cf. the following detailed account by Louis Gautier-Vignal, as reported in Monnin-Hornung's study, p.15: "...Picasso avait envoyé à Mme Errazuriz [de Rome] des toiles enfermées dans trois longues boîtes de bois ... Mon amie pensa qu'elle ne pouvait mieux fêter Proust qu'en ouvrant pour lui les précieuses boîtes ... Après bien des efforts, les toiles de Picasso sortirent de leur gaine. Nous les déroulâmes. C'étaient d'extraordinaires compositions cubistes blanches et bleues."

[53] Dunlop, "Proust and Painting," p.123.

[54] Céleste Albaret has cast a rather disparaging light over the Proust-Picasso question. She recalled a visit that Proust paid, in the company of Antoine Bibesco, to Picasso in his Paris atelier: "Sur le coup de deux heures du matin, ils sont allés...voir les toiles de Picasso, dans son atelier. M. Proust m'en a fait le récit en rentrant: --'C'est un peintre espagnol qui s'est mis à faire ce qu'on appelle du cubisme.' Il m'a décrit un peu à quoi ressemblaient les peintures. Je lui ai fait remarquer que cela devait faire de drôles de museaux. Il a ri, puis il a dit: --'Je dois reconnaître que je n'y ai pas compris grand-chose.' Visiblement, il ne s'en souciait pas. Il n'a jamais reparlé de cette peinture." Monsieur Proust, p.278.

[55] Proust, "Préface" [à Propos de Peintre, par Jacques-Emile Blanche], Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.580.

[56] See Johnson's fine explication de texte of the "Nymphéas de la Vivonne" passage in the light of Cubist art theory

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in his essay "Proust's 'Impressionism' Reconsidered in the Light of the Visual Arts of the Twentieth Century," Twentieth-Century French Fiction: Essays for Germaine Brée, ed. George Stambolian (New Brunswick, N.J., 1975), pp.27-56.

[57] Robert Proust, "Préface," Corr.Gén., IV, p.ii. Cf. the following letter (1 Dec. 1899) from Proust to Lavallée: "Cher ami, Si tu vas ce matin à la Bibliothèque, aie la gentillesse de regarder si vous possédez The Queen of Air [sic] par Ruskin et mets-moi un mot chez mon concierge...." (Corr. Gén.,IV,21)

[58] See Adam, "Le Roman de Proust...," p.67.

[59] Cf. the following letter (1917) to Blanche: "Vous avez été un temps, et en très exact parallélisme, le Sainte-Beuve de la peinture, dans vos critiques.... Vous nous avez montré la vérité humaine, inattendu, pour Manet, pour Fantin, comme il l'a fait pour Chateaubriand, pour Vigny, nous donnant la joie de délicieuses découvertes, et la chance d'erreur qu'on court toujours quand on parle d'art ou d'histoire, qu'on s'occupe de l'homme, et dans l'homme pas précisément de cette essence qu'il exprime dans ses oeuvres. (Erreur possible contre laquelle votre merveilleuse intelligence des oeuvres vous garantit)...." (Corr.Gén.,III,114) Proust was to repeat his objection to Blanche's Sainte-Beuvian penchant two years later in his preface to the latter's Propos de Peintre: "Le défaut de Jacques Blanche critique, comme de Sainte-Beuve, c'est de refaire l'inverse du trajet qu'accomplit l'artiste pour se réaliser, c'est d'expliquer le Fantin ou le Manet véritables, celui que l'on ne trouve que dans leur oeuvre, à l'aide de l'homme périssable, pareil à ses contemporains, pétri de défauts, auquel une âme originale était enchaînée, et contre laquelle elle protestait, dont elle essayait de se séparer, de se délivrer par le travail." Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.577. Proust's criticism of Blanche is a reflection of his belief in the dual nature of the artistic personality, i.e., composed of two distinct selves, the social and the creative.

[60] Cf. Proust's letter (1922) to Vaudoyer: "Je garde le souvenir lumineux du seul matin que j'ai revu et où vous avez guidé affectueusement mes pas qui chancelaient trop vers ce Ver Meer où les pignons des maisons 'sont comme de précieux objets chinois.'" (Corr.Gén.,IV,90)

[61] Robert Proust, "Préface," Corr.Gén., IV, p.ii. The following excerpt from a letter (2 May 1921) addressed to Vaudoyer gives some indication of Proust's glowing admiration for his friend's art criticism: "...jamais je n'ai vu une ascension se continuer comme celle que vous réussissez d'article en article. A celui sur Watteau, si je n'avais été quasi mort...je vous aurais écrit pour ce chef-d'oeuvre." (Corr.Gén.,IV,86)

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[62] According to Chernowitz, p.21, "[Proust] knew Bernhard [sic] Berenson, the authority on Italian painting, with whom he kept up a copious correspondence." This meeting of minds could not have occurred before 1908, for in a letter to Georges de Lauris written that year, Proust stated: "...I would very much like to know Berenson." Two years earlier he had written the same correspondent: "...I would...be glad to know what there is by Berenson in French or translated into French." Proust, Letters to a Friend [Georges de Lauris], trans. Alexander and Elizabeth Henderson (London, 1949), pp.105 and 78 resp.

[63] In the opinion of Autret, "Pour sa conception de l'art religieux, l'auteur de Swann doit à peu près tout à Emile Mâle." "La Dette de Marcel Proust envers Emile Mâle," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 6 pér., tome 51 (janv. 1958), 51.

[64] Several of Proust's letters to Mâle are reproduced in Billy's Lettres et Conversations, pp.112-20.

[65] Chernowitz, p.21. Cf. the following excerpt from Proust's critical essay "Les Goncourt Devant Leurs Cadets: M. Marcel Proust," which appeared in Le Gaulois on 27 May 1922: "M. de Goncourt a été incomparable chaque fois qu'il a parlé de ces oeuvres d'art qu'il aimait d'une passion sincère, même des arbustes rares de son jardin, lesquels étaient pour lui de précieux bibelots encore." Contre Sainte-Beuve..., pp.642-3. Marie Nordlinger suggested that her visits to the Louvre in the company of Proust were, in part, intended to ascertain "ce qu'avait dit Goncourt, la veille, chez les Daudet, à propos de tel maître du XVIII[e]." "Au Lecteur," Lettres à une Amie, p.vi.

[66] One can gain some idea of Proust's reaction to the Rembrandt exhibition from the essay on the painter which he composed at some point after his second trip to Holland. In a purely fictional context, Proust transports the aging Ruskin to this exhibit: "Il était à ses derniers jours et pourtant était venu d'Angleterre voir ces Rembrandt qui déjà à vingt ans lui paraissaient une chose essentielle et qui n'étaient pas pour lui une moindre réalité, arrivé à ces derniers jours. Il allait devant ces toiles, les regardant sans avoir l'air de les voir ... Mais à travers le lointain brumeux des années épaissi sur sa face obscure...la vie...venait du fond des années...apporter à Rembrant un hommage incomparable.... [Ce Ruskin] est le même qui, jeune homme, allait voir Rembrandt, qui écrivit sur lui tant de pages ardentes ... le même effort pour comprendre la beauté le conduisait encore." "Rembrandt," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., pp.662-3.

[67] Cf. the following letter (17 Oct. 1902) to his mother, sent from Holland: "...je fais ce voyage si consciencieusement--et je peux dire si intelligemment--si complètement que

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je n'ai pas une minute. Je pars souvent dès neuf heures ½, dix heures du matin et ne rentre que fort tard. Avant hier, j'allais en cloche d'eau à Vollendam, endroit fort curieux et peu visité je crois! Aujourd'hui à Haarlem voir les Hals." Proust, Correspondance avec sa Mère, ed. Philip Kolb (Paris, 1953), pp.199-200.

[68] See, for example, Paul Brach, "De Balbec à Venise," Hommage à Marcel Proust, 4th edn. (Paris, 1927), pp.227-8; Marie Dujardin, "Marcel Proust à Venise," Le Figaro, 10 oct. 1931 (not consulted); Tsutomu Iwasaki, "Marcel Proust et l'Italie: Poésie et Vérité des Séjours Vénitiens," Etudes de Langue et Littérature Françaises, no.4 (mars 1964), 78-92; Claude Roquin, "Venise: Un 'Pèlerinage Ruskinien' de Marcel Proust," BSAMP, no.23 (1973), 1674-82; and, finally, Louis Védrines, "Séjours Vénitiens," BSAMP, no.4 (1954), 57-60.

[69] Védrines, "Séjours Vénitiens," p.60.

[70] Iwasaki, "Marcel Proust et l'Italie," pp.91-2, cites the following internal evidence from Proust's Contre Sainte-Beuve in support of this two-trip theory: "'Et si j'ai pleuré le jour où je l'ai revue,' ou: 'Mais aussitôt en revoyant Venise....'" (p.91) (emphasis Iwasaki's)

[71] Nordlinger, "Au Lecteur," Lettres à une Amie, p.ix. If we are to believe Céleste Albaret, Frédéric de Madrazo also joined the group (since Védrines and Iwasaki both clearly state that Proust returned to Venice unaccompanied on his second trip): "C'était avec [Madrazo] et Reynaldo Hahn qu'il avait visité Venise, dans sa jeunesse, en compagnie de sa mère ... Il en avait une vraie reconnaissance à Madrazo, car c'était sur son insistance qu'il avait eu la révélation de Venise et son explication." Monsieur Proust, p.274. Needless to say, there is no factual evidence, to the best of my knowledge, to support Albaret's statement.

[72] Iwasaki, "Marcel Proust et l'Italie," pp.88-90.

[73] This visit was incorporated into the fabric of A la Recherche, both directly (F,III,648) and indirectly in the allegorical "kitchen maid-Charité" episode (CS,I,80-2). For a detailed examination of Proust's allegorical treatment of Giotto's frescoes in his novel and a study of the latter's cathedral-like structure, see Johnson's "Proust and Giotto...," op. cit., pp.168-205. Cf., also, Monnin-Hornung, pp.36-9, 64-71.

[74] Cf. the following letter to Montesquiou, written seven years after his visit: "...j'envie ce livre qui pénétrera peut-être dans la pièce où il y a la réplique de la fresque de Mantegna des Eremitani, une des peintures que j'aime le plus au monde, entrevue un jour à Padoue, et dont j'aurais tant aimé connaître la soeur parisienne." (Corr.Gén.,I,12)

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[75] Meyers, "Proust's Aesthetic Analogies: Character and Painting in Swann's Way," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 30, iii (Spring 1972), 379. Meyers identifies the Mantegna painting which Proust admired so fervently (see fn.#74) as Saint James Led to Martyrdom. The Bellini painting is specifically mentioned by Swann, who notices a striking resemblance between the subject of this portrait and the narrator's friend Bloch (CS,I,97). Swann similarly compares a footman at Mme de Sainte-Euverte's soirée to a warrior figure in the Mantegna painting (CS,I,324). Albertine makes a passing reference to the latter's Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian (P,III,168).

[76] Cf. Monnin-Hornung, p.181: "Il est difficile de savoir dans quelle mesure ces peintres [i.e., Chardin and Veronese] furent des maîtres pour Proust, si ce sont vraiment eux qui lui apprirent à percevoir, l'un le charme sévère et modeste de certaine vie bourgeoise, l'autre le charme éclatant de Venise, ou bien s'il arriva à goûter profondément leur art parce qu'il avait connu des décors analogues à ceux qu'ils représentèrent." While there is ample evidence to prove that Chardin taught Proust to appreciate the beauty inherent in even the most humble objects of everyday reality--"Chardin m'a donné de jouir dans la vie courante de toutes les natures mortes," Proust informed Walter Berry in a letter dated August 1917 (Corr.Gén.,V,39-40)--there is no parallel citation for Veronese. Proust described the general atmosphere of the latter's paintings of Venice in the following terms: "...les nobles surfaces de degrés de marbre éclaboussées à tout moment d'un éclair de soleil glauque...." (F,III,626) It is interesting to recall how deeply affected James was by Veronese's Venetian scenes, enough to model his fictional tableaux in The Wings of the Dove after this artist's canvases.

[77] Brach, "De Balbec à Venise," pp.227-8. Cf. Vaudoyer: "...il gardait un souvenir très vif de ce qu'il avait vu autrefois à l'étranger ... Il savait dans quels musées d'Europe étaient ses tableaux préférés...." Cited by Monnin-Hornung, p.13.

[78] Fosca is clearly in error when he writes that Proust "voyagea pour voir les musées de Florence...." "Les Amateurs: Proust," p.68. Cf. Charly Guyot, "Marcel Proust et les Arts Plastiques," De Rousseau à Marcel Proust (Neuchâtel, 1968), p.221: "...il n'eut jamais le bonheur de voir ni Florence ni le Panthéon." Cf., also, the disappointment of Proust's fictional narrator upon learning of the poor state of his health: "...le docteur déclara qu'il fallait renoncer non seulement à me laisser partir maintenant à Florence...mais, même quand je serais entièrement rétabli, m'éviter, d'ici au moins un an, tout projet de voyage et toute cause d'agitation." (CS,I,393)

[79] "Il suffit de quelques exemples," writes Guyot, "... pour conduire une méditation esthétique qui transcende le domaine de telle technique et de tel art particulier. Nul besoin

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pour lui de multiplier les contacts avec les chefs-d'oeuvre." "Marcel Proust et les Arts Plastiques," p.221.

[80] Lavallée, "Note du Destinataire," Corr. Gén., IV, p.4.

[81] Nordlinger, "Au Lecteur," Lettres à une Amie, pp.vi-vii. Cf. Vaudoyer's account: "Une visite au Louvre...était pour Proust un véritable événement, une sorte de voyage! ...Le plus souvent, Proust désirait voir ou revoir un certain tableau, ou les oeuvres d'un certain peintre ... Ces visites au Louvres [sic] étaient de longues visites, coupées de haltes assises, sur les canapés de velours de la galerie du Bord de l'Eau." Cited by Monnin-Hornung, p.12.

[82] Billy, Lettres et Conversations, p.30.

[83] For a reference to Bing, cf. the following letter to Marie Nordlinger dated 30 Jan. 1904: "Si même demain je n'avais pas une crise trop forte...je ne saurais que vers 4 heures si je serai en état d'aller à 6 heures chez Bing ... Tandis que je pourrais aller lundi chez Durand Ruel...." Lettres à une Amie, p.36. For Gallé, cf. the following note addressed to Antoine Bibesco (4 Dec. 1902): "J'étais allé chez Gallé pour faire arranger quelque chose à un vase." Choix de Lettres, p.85.

[84] The Bibliothèque Nationale exhibition catalog adds: "...sa collection comportait encore des toiles de...Gustave Moreau, Carrière et Pissarro." Marcel Proust, p.57.

[85] Monnin-Hornung, p.19, specifies that Blanche owned Renoir's Baigneuses, a fact which would explain Proust's covert appropriation of a painting bearing the same title as a work by Elstir (CG2,II,405); one should recall, in this connection, Proust's constant visits to Blanche's studio before, during, and after his portrait sittings. Monnin-Hornung also notes that the Prince de Wagram owned several other works by Renoir, including Le Déjeuner, La Source, Place Pigalle, Sur l'Herbe, Jeune Fille, Mère en [sic] Enfant, Baigneuses, and Torse de Femme. It is the Prince de Wagram's Renoir, in fact, which Fosca identifies by name as Jeux de Baigneuses, that this critic chooses to see as a possible model for Elstir's "Femmes Nues." "Les Amateurs: Proust," p.79. Michel Drucker, on the other hand, chooses Blanche's Grandes Baigneuses as Proust's prime source of inspiration. "Proust et la Peinture," Les Nouvelles Littéraires, no.1067, 12 févr. 1948, p.6. Proust probably fused traits from several paintings by Renoir to describe Elstir's painting. With respect to Blanche's Fantin-Latours, cf. the following account by the painter/critic: "...un soir, Marcel vint chez moi avec son nouveau 'secrétaire,' un ex-employé du Ritz, jeune garçon dont les dispositions pour la peinture étaient si 'étonnantes' qu'il lui voulait montrer 'les deux petites pommes de Fantin, qui sont dans votre salle à manger.'" Mes Modèles..., p.136.

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[86] Dunlop, "Proust and Painting," p.108.

[87] Monnin-Hornung, p.19.

[88] Letter dated Dec. 1907. Letters to a Friend, p.99.

[89] Cf. Johnson, "The Painter and His Art...," p.178: "Proust was apparently quite familiar with Moreau's Un Chanteur indien in the Straus collection. He may also have known the Moreau paintings in the collection of Charles Ephrussi... and he seems to have known the Moreau paintings then in the Musée du Luxembourg."

[90] Hokari, "Proust et Gustave Moreau--A Propos de l'Echec de Jean Santeuil," Etudes de Langue et Littérature Françaises, no.14 (1969), 36.

[91] Cf. the following letter (2 May 1921) to Vaudoyer: "Je me souviens d'avoir, il y a bien quinze ans, donné une lettre à Vuillard pour qu'il allât voir une copie de Ver Meer que je ne connais pas, chez Paul Baignères." (Corr.Gén.,IV,86)

[92] Adhémar, "La Vision de Vermeer par Proust, à Travers Vaudoyer," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 68 (nov. 1966), 292-3.

[93] For an account of the circumstances surrounding the presentation of Helleu's Automne à Versailles to the novelist, see Proust's letter (1919) to Blanche (Corr.Gén.,III,143) and Céleste Albaret's account of the same incident in Monsieur Proust, pp.312-13.

[94] Diaconu, "Considérations...," p.568.

[95] Cf. the following letter to Mme Catusse, dated Oct.-Nov. 1906: "As for pictures, I don't want to see much of any of them except the small and oldish shepherdess with the monstrous, well-bred air of a Spanish infanta, the portrait of Mother, and my portrait by Blanche. However, the exact copies of the Snyders will do very well in the dining room. I know that the Govaert Flinck ('Tobias and the Angel') is a valuable picture and is, in fact, the very good, if a little too somber, painting of one of Rembrandt's best pupils. But I intend to leave it for Robert [i.e., Proust's brother] ... I shall send him also...'Esther and Haman,' 'Roman History,' and the 'Metsu.'" Letters of Marcel Proust, p.161. It is quite possible that Proust erred in giving the title of one of the above paintings as "Esther and Haman," for in the Bibliothèque Nationale catalog (#95, p.18) one reads: "Esther et Assuérus. Peinture flamande ... A Mme Mante-Proust. Ce tableau figurait dans la collection du Docteur Proust." According to Howard-Johnston, "'Bonjour M. Elstir,'" p.249, after the death of his mother in

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1906, one could find in Proust's apartment on the Boulevard Haussmann "un Gérard Flinck (Tobie et l'Ange), son portrait par Blanche, le portrait de son père par Lecomte de Nouy, 'qui faisait l'admiration de Blanche,' et dans la pénombre de l'antichambre, Esther et Aman [sic] et une Histoire romaine." Cf. Fosca, "Les Amateurs: Proust," p.74: "...après la mort de ses parents il a continué à vivre parmi leur mobilier suranné, banal et laid ... Ce n'était pas seulement par paresse et par indifférence qu'il avait continué à vivre dans ce décor affreux. Le sens artistique était si peu vivace en lui que le culte du souvenir, le désir de ne rien changer à ce cadre qui avait été celui de son enfance, a été le plus fort."

96 In his essay on the painter Gustave Moreau, Proust had written "...le véritable amour pour une oeuvre d'art est chose rare...." "Notes sur le Monde Mystérieux de Gustave Moreau," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.674.

97 In the opinion of Will L. McLendon, "Ruskin, Morris et la Première Esthétique de Marcel Proust," Le Bayou [Houston], no.70 ["Hommage à Marcel Proust"](été 1957), 405-6, "Maple [a Parisian cabinetmaker who adopted Morris's tastes in furniture] et Proust ont pu mal interpréter la pensée de Morris qui préconisait non pas la suppression de 'l'inutile beauté,' mais de ce qui appelait des 'joujoux,' des 'élégances éphémères.'"

98 Lettres à Mme C..., p.67. Cited by Monnin-Hornung, p.20. In the light of this theory, the following statement by Proust makes perfect sense: "Je ne tiens pas," he wrote to the same correspondent in 1906, "si ce n'est pas nécessaire, à avoir des tableaux dans ma chambre. Le portrait de Maman, s'il avait été très bien, est la seule chose que j'y aurais aimée...." (Ibid.) Cf. the following letter (9 Feb. 1905) to Marie Nordlinger: "...dans ma chambre volontairement nue, il y a une seule reproduction d'oeuvre d'art, une admirable photographie du Carlyle de Whistler au pardessus serpentin comme la robe de sa Mère." Lettres à une Amie, p.85.

99 Proust, "Journées de Lecture," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.167. Cf. McLendon, "Ruskin, Morris et la Première Esthétique de Marcel Proust," p.406: "Proust...aurait été sans doute étonné de savoir que son mépris pour 'les gens de goût' qui ornaient leurs chambres des chef-d'oeuvres dictés par la mode était partagé précisément par celui sur lequel il rejette toute la responsabilité, par Morris lui-même. C'est dans un essai qu'il intitule The Lesser Arts que le décorateur anglais exprime son dédain pour tout ce qui est mode en matière d'art." McLendon doubts the sincerity of Proust's theory of the "moi" and the "non-moi," with its implication of objective appreciation: "...l'esthétique proustienne en ce qui concerne l'ameublement et la décoration--tout au moins à l'époque des préfaces--est caractérisée par ce que lui-même appelle la promiscuité. Car ce n'est ni l'authenticité des meubles, ni l'harmonie des dimensions qui l'intéressent dans une chambre, ni même un en-

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semble qui contribue au repos de l'âme et du corps, mais, au contraire...tout ce qui dans 'la nudité de cette vie' particulière à la chambre peut exciter son désir." This view is seconded by Polanščak, who argues that Proust was incapable of adhering to Degas's ideal of classic beauty: "Selon cette 'esthétique de sacrifices,' un bel intérieur serait dépourvu de toute sentimentalité, de toute réminiscence du passé, il serait une belle harmonie d'objets soigneusement choisis pour leur propre beauté. Proust est loin de ce rationalisme dans l'art de la décoration." La Peinture du Décor..., p.91.

100 In fairness, however, it should be recalled that Proust was a fastidious writer and felt the need to document himself on every technical question relating to his novel. Cf. the following letter (18 Feb. 1916) to Maria de Madrazo: "...même pour dire un mot d'une chose, et quelque fois même n'en parler du tout, j'ai besoin de m'en saturer indéfiniment." BSAMP, no.3 (1953), 34; cited by Johnson, "The Painter and His Art...," p.150. While Proust's individual appreciation of art was based upon a Wordsworthian mnemonic delayed reaction, his duty as a writer demanded that he document every fact, whether it be in the realm of aesthetics or science. According to Philip Kolb, "Proust tenait beaucoup à la précision des détails...s'inspirant d'habitude de tableaux d'artistes connus ou de photographies. Il avait accumulé une collection de gravures et de reproductions de toutes sortes qu'il faisait apporter près de son lit lorsqu'il voulait les consulter pour une description de cette sorte qu'il pensait écrire. C'était sa méthode." "Le 'Mystère' des Gravures Anglaises Recherchées par Proust," Mercure de France, 327, no.1116 (1 août 1956), 754. Proust also utilized reproductions of paintings to enhance his appreciation of the art criticism written by his friends. In a letter to Vaudoyer written one year after their visit to the Jeu de Paume exhibit of Dutch paintings (1922), Proust noted: "Depuis j'ai pu me procurer un ouvrage belge dont les nombreuses reproductions, regardées avec votre article à la main, m'ont permis de reconnaître dans des tableaux différents, des accessoires identiques...." (Corr.Gén.,IV,90-1)

101 "Questionnaire," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.336. With the gradual evolution of his artistic tastes, Proust looked back with embarrassment on his choice of the first-named painter as one of his favorites; writing to Montesquiou in 1902, Proust confessed: "Le nom de Meissonnier [sic] approché de celui de Ruskin m'a serré le coeur comme une ressemblance entre une personne laide et une personne qu'on a beaucoup aimée." (Corr.Gén.,I,123) See, also, A. Berge, "Autour d'une Trouvaille," Cahiers du Mois (Dec. 1924). It will be recalled that Henry James also expressed an ambivalent attitude toward Meissonier's art. The choice of this painter, however, is representative of a certain frame of mind which Proust felt was characteristic of early artistic tastes. In an undated essay on Monet, Proust had written: "C'est l'époque où nous n'aimons dans les musées que les tableaux de Gleyre et d'Ingres, où nous avons besoin de formes admirables, de lunes comme un croissant d'argent sur un

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ciel semé d'étoiles, et où toutes les couleurs des Noces de Cana nous apparaissent aussi différentes du monde de la poésie et aussi vulgaires que les pans des manteaux sur la chaise ou les éclaboussures de vin sur la table...." "Le Peintre. Ombres--Monet," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.677.

[102] "Marcel Proust par Lui-Même," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.337.

[103] Cf. René Huyghe: "...Meissonier, Cuyp ou Potter, c'est le goût de la véracité; Mozart, Van Dyck ou Watteau, c'est le goût de l'exquis et des raffinements de l'âme." "Affinités Electives: Vermeer et Proust," L'Amour de l'Art, 17, i (Jan. 1936), 12. Huyghe reiterated the same distinction--with slight modifications--in a subsequent essay: "Ses 'Portraits de Peintres' réunissent des contemplateurs attentifs: Cuyp, Potter, et des poètes du regret tendre: Van Dyck, Watteau." "Proust et la Peinture: L'Illusion Vécue de la Réalité," Les Nouvelles Littéraires, no.2281 ["Spécial Proust"], 11 juin 1971, p.14.

[104] Daudet, Autour de Soixante Lettres, p.18.

[105] Billy, Lettres et Conversations, pp.28-9.

[106] Cf. the following letter (August 1917) to Walter Berry: "...je ne me doutais pas le moins du monde de ces Giotto préhistoriques. J'espère voir chez vous une reproduction du bison.... Pourquoi, parlant de ces sublimes artistes préhistoriques peignant les animaux sans modèles, n'avez-vous pas évoqué les artistes que vous avez vu travailler dans le temple hindou que vous avez dépouillé?" (Corr. Gén.,V,39-40)

[107] Cf. the following letter (8 Dec. 1906) to Marie Nordlinger: "Si je sortais le jour, j'aimerais voir de cet art égyptien et assyrien qui me paraissent bien beaux. Est-ce que M. Bing vend des choses égyptiennes et assyriennes, et gothiques?" Lettres à une Amie, pp.105-6.

[108] In an early letter (10 Sept. 1888) to Robert Dreyfus, Proust described the acacia, "la fleur de l'esthétique parisienne en 1888," worn by a courtesan "dont l'évasure de la nuque a précisément la rondeur charmante de ces amphores où les Etrusques patients mirent tout leur idéal, tout leur rêve consolant de grâce...." (Corr.Gén.,IV,178)

[109] Cf. the following letter (11 Sept. 1916) to Walter Berry: "...les oeuvres indiennes...sont depuis vingt ans ma grande curiosité jamais contentée...." (Corr.Gén.,V,4)

[110] Proust expressed the following wish to Mme Catusse

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in a letter written in 1906: "En ce moment, je rêve de m'acheter un jour, si j'en découvrais un pour peu de chose, d'une part, un Primitif vénitien, d'autre part un Primitif toscan, siennois ou romain. Je n'appelle pas Primitif les peintres auxquels les gens du monde donnent ce nom, Botticelli, Mantegna, etc., que j'adore d'ailleurs. Plus modestement, je pense à des peintres bien plus anciens, Vivarini par exemple, de qui posséder quelque chose serait un motif à rêveries infinies, ou à quelque peintre siennois ou romain, à un de ceux dont Ruskin attribue imperturbablement les oeuvres à Taddeo Gaddi ou Simone Memmi dans la Chapelle des Espagnols, alors qu'on ne sait d'elles avec certitude qu'une chose, c'est qu'elles ne sont ni de l'un ni de l'autre." Cited by Monnin-Hornung, p.20.

[111] Cf. the following letter (1907) which Proust sent to Georges de Lauris from Cabourg: "Sem and Helleu, both very intelligent, have, each separately, tried to convince me that primitive art was no good, that there is no painting prior to Rubens, etc. ...." Letters to a Friend, p.96.

[112] The art critic Vaudoyer, a close friend of Proust, insisted that "il avait une véritable érudition artistique, dont il ne faisait jamais étalage, mais qui trahissait au cours de ses conversations." Cited by Monnin-Hornung, p.13. In the opinion of André and Jean Brincourt, "La culture de Proust était très étendue. Il connaissait directement, ou par leur reproduction photographique, la plupart des chefs-d'oeuvre--en peinture, en sculpture, en architecture--de la civilisation gréco-latine et du monde oriental, depuis le Moyen âge jusqu'à la fin du XIX^{e} siècle...." Les Oeuvres et les Lumières; A la Recherche de l'Esthétique à Travers Bergson, Proust, Malraux (Paris, 1955), p.127. Cf. Chernowitz, p.48, who claims that Proust's allusions to painters belonging to various national schools--both in his fictional and non-fictional writings--"cover almost the entire history of art, beginning with ancient art, Assyrian and Persian, Greek painting, and coming down to mediaeval pictures, Byzantine, Renaissance, and finally modern art." In direct opposition to the opinion of these critics, Fosca insists that "la culture artistique de Proust...n'était ni solide ni extensive, ni profonde...." "Les Amateurs: Proust," p.74. One must not overlook the fact that Fosca is unavoidably measuring Proust's knowledge of art against that of such professional art critics as Taine, Gautier, Baudelaire, and Huysmans.

[113] In a wider context, Johnson notes that "Proust mentions some 272 painters in his published and unpublished works ... he has created some 32 fictional characters who are either professional or part-time painters." "Marcel Proust and Painting," American Philosophical Society Year Book-1972 (Philad., Pa., 1973), p.620.

[114] Bussom, "Marcel Proust and Painting," p.58.

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[115] Cited by Monnin-Hornung, p.12.

[116] Allard, "Les Arts Plastiques dans l'Oeuvre de Marcel Proust," Hommage à Marcel Proust ([Paris], 1927), p.215.

[117] To which one should add--since Dunlop is only concerned with painters mentioned in A la Recherche--the name of Quentin Matsys. Cf. the following early letter (Aug.-Sept. 1896) to Hahn: "J'ai été avant-hier au Louvre (aimez-vous Quentin Matsys, l'homme qui a devant lui des pièces d'or, une petite glace bombée qui représente ce qui [se présente] dans la rue, des perles, etc., et à côté de lui sa femme)...[?]" Choix de Lettres, p.67. The allusion is to the painting entitled The Money Changer and His Wife (1514). For a more detailed listing of painters mentioned by Proust according to national schools, see Chernowitz, pp.49-50.

[118] Dunlop, Proust and Painting," pp.105-6. Dunlop understandably restricts his list to significant artists. Herbert De Ley, on the other hand, is interested in tracking down references to salon/academic painters; he adds to Dunlop's list the names of Bracquemond, J. de Traz, Rosa Bonheur, Lazlo, Couture, Decamps, Fromentin, Tissot, and Vibert. "'L'Hôpital sans style...,'" p.33.

[119] For a detailed examination of Proust's knowledge of Japanese painters and periods plus an in-depth study of the impact of Japanese and oriental art upon his descriptive style, see Françoise Lantz's article "Proust et l'Art Japonais," Etudes de Langue et Littérature Françaises, no.12 (mars 1968), 56-63. See, also, the article by Suzy Mante-Proust and M. Yodono, "Marcel Proust au Japon," BSAMP, no.9 (1959), 17-28.

[120] Cf. the following recollection by Marie Nordlinger: "Un jour, je réussis à lui envoyer une chose qu'il n'avait jamais vue: des comprimés japonais, fleurs, poupées, maisons, qui s'ouvrent dans l'eau. J'ignorais que huit ans plus tard, ces minuscules jouets allaient s'épanouir dans l'apothéose du premier chapitre de Du côté de chez Swann et qu'une des lettres qu'il m'adressa en 1904 en annonçait déjà l'éclosion." "Au Lecteur," Lettres à une Amie, p.x.

[121] Cf. Lantz, "Proust et l'Art Japonais," p.57: "...Odette de Crécy au temps de sa vie de courtisane paraît une réplique d'une figure féminine d'Utamaro ou des artistes de l'estampe au 18e siècle. Le cadre de son rez de chausée, rue La Pérouse, est un intérieur hétéroclite, surchargé d'atmosphère japonaise, éclairé des couleurs de l'estampe, comme le beni et le tan ... Un fonds de fleurs japonaises, les vêtements de soie ne suffiraient pas tout à fait à donner à Odette Swann la silhouette d'un personnage d'estampe, s'il ne s'y mêlait les thèmes favoris traités dans l'estampe comme le thé, la promenade, les toilettes à la dernière mode." Polanščak sees a link between

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the interest of Manet and the Impressionist painters for "le style japonais" and Proust's Japanese décor: "L'appartement d'Odette, rue La Pérouse, nous rappelle le fond du portrait de Zola par Manet et la Japonaise de Monet." La Peinture du Décor..., p.22.

[122] Cf. Lantz, "Proust et l'Art Japonais," p.58: "Cette découverte des ombres portées, des reflets de soleil, du clair-obscur, si travaillés par Hokusai à l'imitation des anciens maîtres du Japon, va gagner et obséder de plus en plus la vision de Proust ... A cette attirance pour les effets de lumière et de gris s'ajoute le choix d'un paysage japonais aux lignes verticales, caractéristique, dont on trouve la composition dès le 15e siècle chez Sesshû ... Si le peintre japonais, auquel on reproche peut-être par incompréhension son manque de perspective, stylise...de même Proust projette ses sensations intérieures dans un espace stylisé et restitue l'essence des lieux dans une perspective décorative." Lantz also sees another point of contact between the Proustian and Japanese artistic vision in their mutual concern with the ephemeral and evanescent aspects of nature. Suzy Mante-Proust has suggested that "le peintre à qui [Proust] a confié ses plus chères théories sur l'art, Elstir, avait subi l'influence des Japonais. Trois arbres en fleurs sur une route normande ont un air d'estampes japonaises. Et d'autres arbres, ceux qui sur le papier mural de Tansonville transforment une chambre en paysage, sont aussi de style japonais." "Marcel Proust au Japon," p.20. Even the fictional narrator displays a special interest in Japanese art; from his hotel window at Balbec he studies the changing effects of light and shadow upon the surface of the sea: "Une fois c'était une exposition d'estampes japonaises: à côté de la mince découpure du soleil rouge et rond comme la lune, un nuage jaune paraissait un lac contre lequel des glaives noirs se profilaient ainsi que les arbres de sa rive...." (JF,I, 804-5) For other painterly aspects of the Proustian landscape, see Fardwell's Landscape in the Works of Marcel Proust, op. cit., especially the chapters entitled "Landscape in Painting (pp.59-78) and "The Pictorial Landscape" (pp.79-150).

[123] Cf. the following pastiche of Mme de Noailles' style contained in an undated letter which Proust sent to Hahn: "...Quel besoin avez-vous de la luisante Asie / Des monts de verre bleu qu'Hokusaï dessinait...." Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn, p.165. Also interesting, in this connection, is the following listing (#294bis) in the Bibliothèque Nationale exhibition catalog: "Haronobu. Gravure Japonaise offerte par Marcel Proust à Pierre Lavallée." Marcel Proust, p.58.

[124] Daudet, Autour de Soixante Lettres..., p.18.

[125] Cf. the following letter (Dec. 1911) to Hahn: "Le jour que je t'ai téléphoné je suis allé à 1h½ avec Lucien Henraux ...à l'Exposition Chinoise (ed. note: Exposition de peintures chinoises à la galerie Durand-Ruel). Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn, p.217.

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[126] Cf. the following reminiscence by Robert de Billy: "Quelques années après, il m'envoya une garde de sabre japonaise. Elle représente une fleur dont le bord des pétales est mosaïqué d'un alliage à base d'argent appelé Shibuitsui. Son choix témoigne d'une fine compréhension d'un art pour lequel Marcel connaissait ma tendresse." Lettres et Conversations, p.70. It may well have been Billy who stimulated Proust's interest in oriental and Japanese art. Billy recalled that c.1892 "j'avais visité la collection Cernuschi et j'avais dit à Marcel mon admiration pour les bronzes chinois et japonais groupés autour du grand Bouddha. Nos idées sur l'Extrême-Orient était certes ferventes, mais elles manquaient de connaissances techniques. Comme son père connaissait M. Cernuschi, il le fit inviter à diner pour que je pusse le rencontrer." Ibid., pp.74-5. Daudet suggested another possible catalyst in their mutual friend the comte Joachim Clary, "auteur d'un livre remarquable sur le Japon: L'Ile du Soleil couchant...." Autour de Soixante Lettres..., p.96.

[127] See Fosca, "Les Amateurs: Proust," p.75.

[128] Cf. Lantz, "Proust et l'Art Japonais," pp.60-2: "Ainsi Proust...va rejoindre l'esthétique de la peinture japonaise, qui réside dans cette recherche et cette contemplation de l'Essence des choses ... Comme les artistes japonais, Proust va se détourner de ce qu'on appelle le réalisme ... Cette vision dissociée de Proust vient du fait qu'il considère la vie, tel l'artiste japonais, comme un spectacle, dont il faut fixer l'éternité de l'instant, une fête qui va s'interrompre, et vers laquelle il faut tendre un regard d'autant plus intense et aigu."

[129] Cf. Billy, Lettres et Conversations, pp.125,127: "Pendant mon séjour de trois ans en Angleterre, de 1896 à 1899, j'avais connu les oeuvres préraphaelites et quelques-uns des hommes. Watts m'avait reçu à la campagne dans le Surrey, et m'avait montré ses dernières oeuvres pour lesquelles il n'avait pas estimé nécessaire d'avoir des modèles. J'avais commencé à étudier la Kelmscott Press, l'oeuvre de William Morris, les vitraux d'après les cartons de sir Edward Burne-Jones, et Dante-Gabriel Rossetti ... Pour Ruskin, je l'avais vu peint par Millais en redingote grise, le chapeau à la main, au bord d'un torrent, image dont la candeur n'excluait pas un léger parfum de ridicule."

[130] Nordlinger-Riefstahl, "Proust et le Génie de Ruskin," Arts, no.537, 12-18 oct. 1955, p.7. According to Jackson, "Proust et les Préraphaëlites," pp.94-5, "[Proust] connaissait certainement l'oeuvre des préraphaëlites avant 1900. Ce groupe anglais fut bien connu en France. Avant 1890, on en parlait dans les revues. Et après que Taine eut abordé la critique des techniques et des théories de Turner, de Hunt, de Millais, et de Ruskin dans les Notes sur l'Angleterre (1890), plusieurs livres traitèrent le même sujet. Proust connaissait au moins

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ceux de Robert de [la] Sizeranne. Il existe des indices que Proust ait lu en 1897 Ruskin et la religion de la beauté ... On trouve d'ailleurs dans ses écrits de jeunesse des références précises. Dans Jean Santeuil il mentionne en passant des reproductions de l'oeuvre de Burne-Jones [JS,804] ... Proust aurait pu voir des toiles de Burne-Jones dans l'exposition au salon du Champ de Mars en 1892."

131 Cf. Johnson, "The Painter and His Art...," p.110: "Proust seems quite detached both from the paintings he describes and from the biography. There are no personal interjections in an article that remains journalistic in tone."

132 Cf. the following remark by Proust contained in an essay devoted to Ruskin: "Nous pouvons oublier aujourd'hui les services qu'il a rendus à Hunt, à Rossetti, à Millais; mais ce qu'il a fait pour Giotto, pour Carpaccio, pour Bellini, nous ne le pouvons pas. Son oeuvre divine ne fut pas de susciter des vivants, mais de resusciter des morts." "En Mémoire des Eglises Assassinées: III. John Ruskin," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.115.

133 Jackson, "Proust et les Préraphaëlites," pp.96-7. Cf. Proust's statement--which is diametrically opposed to Ruskin's view that a painting is beautiful to the degree that the ideas which it translates into images remain independent of the technical language of painting: "...la peinture ne peut atteindre la réalité une des choses et rivaliser par là avec la littérature, qu'à condition de ne pas être littéraire." "En Mémoire des Eglises Assassinées...," p.112.

134 Proust, "Dante-Gabriel Rossetti et Elizabeth Siddal," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.471. It is interesting to recall, in this connection, Henry James's "The Real Thing," which was intended in part to dispel this erroneous aesthetic notion.

135 Ibid., p.473. When he described the painter Elstir's affection for his wife, Proust may have had in mind the Pre-Raphaelite experience of Rossetti and Elizabeth Siddal. Cf. the following: "...cet idéal, c'était la partie la plus intime de lui-même: aussi n'avait-il pu le considérer avec détachement, en tirer des émotions, jusqu'au jour où il le rencontra, réalisé au dehors, dans le corps d'une femme, le corps de celle qui était par la suite devenue madame Elstir et chez qui il avait pu...le trouver méritoire, attendrissant, divin." (JF,I,850-51) Proust, however, attributes this externalization or projection of an inner ideal as a sign of an increasing materialism and a consequent weakening of Elstir's spiritual art.

136 Proust, "Contre l'Obscurité," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.392. Cf. Monnin-Hornung, p.65: "La peinture est avant tout, pour lui, signe, symbole. Elle vaut par la qualité d'âme qu'elle exprime, par l'intensité, l'audace et l'acuité du regard spirituel

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que le peintre a jeté sur le monde." Since Proust refers specifically to the realm of literature, there is no real contradiction.

[137] Ibid., p.394. Cf. Jackson, "Proust et les Préraphaëlites," pp.99-100: "Le rapprochement d'un de ses personnages avec un personnage de peintre offre aussi à Proust un bon moyen d'illustrer son thème idéaliste d'après lequel les caractères généraux se réalisent et se répètent chez les individus. On trouve la meilleure exposition poétique de ce thème dans la description de la sculpture du porche de Saint-André-des-Champs. Les saints, les rois chevaliers suggèrent au narrateur les visages des paysans contemporains." (CS,I,150-2)

[138] This term might well have been applied by Proust to the paintings of the Pre-Raphaelites, which oftentimes derived their subject matter from a totally self-contained and personal universe divorced from external reality. Cf. Jackson, pp.96 & 102: "Parfois l'oeuvre se perd par une fantaisie mièvre et vaporeuse--comme chez Burne-Jones qui, en dessinant ses personnages, finit par supprimer tout souffle de vie. Proust, au contraire, conserve de ses modèles réels...toute la chaleur et les traits piquants et individuels ... Comme les préraphaëlites, [Proust] part d'un sujet réel pour suggérer l'allégorie. Comme les symbolistes, il se sert de la matière pour arriver à des vérités spirituelles. Mais, à la différence des deux, il ne cesse d'interroger le monde, seul répondant qui puisse vérifier son oeuvre."

[139] Proust, "Contre l'Obscurité," p.394.

[140] Cf. Mein, Proust's Challenge to Time, pp.111-12: "Both Baudelaire and Proust move away from any Ruskinian theory that Nature is capable either of joining man in his range of moods, or of existing as an independent, even Divine power. Nature has only the degree of importance which man accords to her, firstly in admitting her within his mind and secondly in recreating her ... Baudelaire and Proust may seem at times to reveal a contradiction within themselves, but mostly they incline to the view that man is a creator in his own right and should interpret Nature, conceiving of his own rôle as something more than that of a purely passive 'déchiffreur' of a reality already in existence."

[141] Fiser, "Le Romancier du Symbolisme: Marcel Proust," Le Symbole Littéraire: Essai sur la Signification du Symbole Chez Wagner, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Bergson et Marcel Proust (Paris, [1941]), pp.180-2. To illustrate this theory of the unity in diversity of the various arts, Proust resorts to the image of refracted light; the outwardly neutral and colorless rays of light, i.e., initial impressions, pass through a prism, i.e., the artist's subjective vision, and emerge as a multicolored series of bands, i.e., the various art forms. Cf. J.

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Ann Duncan, "Imaginary Artists in 'A la Recherche du temps perdu,'" MLR, 64, iii (July 1969), 562: "Proust obviously felt that his theories on art had to be developed through the mediums of literature, drama, painting, and music in order to stress that Art is essentially a synthesis of all its various expressions. Nor was this merely a fashionable stance, arising from the Symbolist cult of Wagnerian Total Art, or a sterile imitation of Ruskin, who also believed that the general principles of composition are the same for all forms of art. Proust's desire for completion and unity could not have been satisfied unless he had explored the possible implications of several kinds of artistic creation, in order to give his narrator's quest the multiple dimensions of every other theme in the novel. He tends to strengthen any single idea by establishing wider and wider circles of association. In this way, the four different art forms discussed could be used to provide four separate sorts of experience to the narrator."

[142] For specific textual examples, see Fardwell, Landscape in the Works of Marcel Proust, passim.

[143] In the opinion of Johnson, "Proust's 'Impressionism' Reconsidered in the Light of the Visual Arts of the Twentieth Century," pp.49-50, "the combined sections of the nymphéas de la Vivonne form undoubtedly one of the most brilliant examples of 'orphic cubism' produced in 1912-13 ... Proust synthesizes in the manner of the cubists in painting, John Cage in music, Lévi-Strauss in cultural anthropology, and so forth. He is doing in his texts exactly what his contemporary Picasso is doing in collages and papiers collés." While Johnson's analysis of this passage is brilliant, his theory concerning Proust's cubist tendencies is admittedly based upon one isolated passage, albeit a significant one; other examples drawn from different points in the novel would have added greater weight and certainty to his argument.

[144] See fn. 54. Cf. Charlus' bewilderment regarding the sexual habits of the younger generation: "Je suis bien vieux jeu, mais je ne comprends pas, dit-il du ton...d'un disciple de Claude Monet des cubistes. Je ne blâme pas ces novateurs, je les envie plutôt, je cherche à les comprendre, mais je n'y arrive pas." (P,III,307) One can easily see how Proust's attitude vis-à-vis the newer art styles might have resembled that of his fictional character.

[145] Daudet, Autour de Soixante Lettres..., p.58. Cf. the following remark by J.M. Cocking: "In matters aesthetic, Proust is always least authentic in abstraction; it is the impressions of real experience, or based on real experience, which are convincing and perennially fresh." "Marcel Proust: 6. The Artists," Proust, Gide, Mauriac: Three Studies in Modern French Literature (New Haven, 1960), pp.101-2.

[146] Brée, "Advent of the Artist," The World of Marcel Proust

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(Boston, 1966), p.286.

147 Cazeaux, "L'Atelier d'Elstir," L'Ecriture de Proust ou l'Art du Vitrail ([Paris], 1971), pp.91-2.

148 Johnson, "Proust and Giotto...," pp.168-205, has attempted to prove that Giotto's 'Virtues and Vices' frescoes in the Arena Chapel at Padua (which Proust saw in the spring of 1900) may have served as the primary inspiration for the architectonic structure of A la Recherche.

149 Another significant parallel occurs in the Jeunes Filles section, where the narrator observes that Albertine's diabolo game "la faisait ressembler à l' 'Idolâtrie' de Giotto." (JF,I,886)

150 Monnin-Hornung, p.34. Cf. Johnson, "Proust and Giotto...," pp.172-3: "Proust discovered Giotto through the writings of John Ruskin. By the time he published his second article, 'John Ruskin,' and with it a reproduction of Giotto's Charity, Proust had already read about the Tuscan painter in Pleasures of England ... Proust [knew] Giotto and His Works in Padua, and he refer[red] to it in a note to the text in La Bible d'Amiens ... In addition to the Ruskin texts mentioned above, Proust also read about Giotto's Virtues and Vices in The Stones of Venice and in Emile Mâle's L'Art religieux du XIIIe siècle. Through Mâle and Ruskin he became more than aware of the existence of literary counterparts of allegorical frescoes and statuary in Dante, St. Thomas, and Spencer [sic]."

151 Monnin-Hornung, pp.38-9. It is this non-intellectual approach to his subject that Proust saw as the crowning achievement of Giotto; in other words, the painter was able to embody an abstract or allegorical concept in a very concrete image--without either element losing something in the process. Cf. Monnin-Hornung, p.66: "...ce symbolisme dépourvu de toute intellectualité, tel au contraire qu'il apparaît dans la vie à notre sensibilité, remplit Proust d'admiration. Car il a fallu à l'artiste, pour le concevoir, une intelligence attentive et sans préjugé, qui contrôlât les enseignements d'une observation aiguë et profonde."

152 According to Monnin-Hornung, p.71, "Le narrateur ne tire pas de ce fragment de fresque une leçon générale, comme il le fait des autres tableaux décrits, n'ajoute pas par elle une nuance à sa vision de la peinture. Cette partie de fresque est décrite pour elle-même, sans relation avec le reste de l'oeuvre ... Il est comme une fleur sur la tombe de Ruskin, comme un hommage à celui qui avait donné à Proust une envie ardente de voir dans leur réalité matérielle les chefs-d'oeuvre de Giotto...." It is instructive to compare the response of Proust's narrator to Giotto's frescoes with the equally dramatic reaction of the young Oscar Wilde upon seeing the painter's frescoes adorning the baptistry walls. See chapter two.

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[153] Writing to Montesquiou in 1907, Proust remarked: "...j'avais lu vos ravissants articles sur Greco, sur Léonard...." (Corr.Gén.,I,203) In another undated letter to the same correspondent Proust reminded Montesquiou "...vous m'avez autrefois appris à aimer cette fleur [i.e., violets] d'après les dessins de Léonard." (Corr.Gén.,I,244) Cf. the following letter (1921) to Violet Schiff: "Chère Madame Violet, fleur cachée, odorante et merveilleuse dont Léonard de Vinci, dans les dessins que vous avez peut-être vus à la bibliothèque Ambrosienne à Milan, a minutieusement dessiné le pédoncule et l'efflorescence...." (Corr.Gén.,III,51) Tsutomu Iwasaki has suggested that Ruskin may have been the professeur de beauté in this instance: "A propos de cette Académie [des Beaux-Arts de Venise, for which Ruskin had written the guide--and which was also owned by Proust], Proust y fit une autre découverte, toujours grâce à Ruskin: les dessins de Léonard de Vinci." "Marcel Proust et l'Italie...," p.90.

[154] Proust, "A Mon Ami Willie Heath," Jean Santeuil précédé de Les Plaisirs et les Jours, p.6.

[155] See fn. 9. Cf. the transfer of this concept to Proust's novel: "Le bonheur, le bonheur par Gilberte, c'était une chose à laquelle j'avais constamment songé, une chose toute en pensées, c'était, comme disait Léonard de la peinture, cosa mentale." (JF,I,500)

[156] Robert André, "Walter Pater et Marcel Proust," NRF, 11, no.126 (1 juin 1963), 1089, is simply mistaken when he insists that "instants magiques et réminiscences se fondent dans la vision du peintre tant aimé par Walter Pater et dont lui, Proust, ne parle jamais: la fresque mangée par l'humidité de Sainte Marie des Grâces, une Cène." In the opening pages of Combray the young narrator recalls that his grandmother preferred to give him engravings of paintings rather than photographs, especially "celles qui représentent un chef-d'oeuvre dans un état où nous ne pouvons plus le voir aujourd'hui (comme la gravure de la Cène de Léonard avant sa dégradation, par Morghen)." (CS,I,40) Odette also makes a passing reference to the Gioconda (JF,I,616), a reproduction of which Proust was purported to have displayed in his apartment (See Diaconu, "Considérations...," p.568). It is worth recalling Henry James's reaction to Leonardo's Last Supper; he described it as "the most majestic and most luckless of frescoes ... the saddest work of art in the world" and compared its gradual decay with "the slow extinction of a human organism." See chapter three.

[157] Proust, Correspondance: Tome I (1880-1895), p.116.

[158] Cf. Johnson, "Proust and Giotto...," p.197: "...much has been said about Botticelli and Proust. Yet the allusions Proust makes to Botticelli even in his early works are inevitably found in passages dealing with snobbishness or idolatry such as in Les Plaisirs et les Jours...or in the subsequent re-

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statement of this material in Jean Santeuil.... All the Botticelli references in A la recherche du temps perdu appear to have been added once the manuscript of Du côté de chez Swann had reached the advanced state of a typescript ... Once Proust had definitively decided to make Swann a connoisseur of paintings and not primarily a collector of plants, he had to change his texts accordingly. This explains the addition at this state of the Botticelli material...."

159 According to Monnin-Hornung, p.35, "Les idées de Proust sur la peinture se groupent, dans leur ensemble, autour de trois grands artistes ... Ce sont Giotto, Botticelli, Elstir." Louis Védrines fails to differentiate between the artistic tastes of Swann and Proust when he suggests that "si Proust avait pu voir les Botticelli des Offices, par exemple, comme il a vu les Carpaccio de l'Académie et de San Giorgio Degli Schiiavoni [sic?], nous imaginons sans peine que cette rencontre avec un peintre si proche de sa sensibilité (et dont il avait souvent rêvé, d'ailleurs, devant l'image de la pâle Zephora) aurait eu au moins la même importance que sa découverte de Vermeer." "A Propos de Proust et la Peinture Italienne," BSAMP, no.9 (1959), 135. While it is certainly true, as Jeffrey Meyers has stated ("Proust's Aesthetic Analogies...," p.380), that "the Botticelli painting, though used ironically...leads to significant revelations about the function of memory, the transformation of unacceptable reality, and the relation between art and moral truth," the point to be stressed is that Proust is demonstrating an aesthetic truth by way of a negative example.

160 According to Iwasaki, "Marcel Proust et l'Italie...," pp.89-90, "Proust visitait l'Académie des Beaux-Arts de Venise, toujours un livre de Ruskin sur lui. La série de huit tableaux que Carpaccio a consacrés à la Vie de Sainte Ursule s'y trouve. Si Ruskin décrivait dans St. Mark's Rest les tableaux du même peintre à l'église San Giorgio dei Schiavoni, c'est dans le Guide de l'Académie des Beaux-Arts de Venise qu'il consacrait, à son tour, une grande étude au cycle Saint Ursule de ce peintre vénitien. Proust lisait ce Guide."

161 Letter dated 18 Feb. 1916. Reproduced in: BSAMP, no.3 (1953), 35; cited by Johnson, "The Painter and His Art...," pp. 150-1. Johnson has devoted a large portion of his dissertation--including a section dealing exclusively with the genesis and final state of the "Fortuny cape" episode in La Fugitive--to the art of Carpaccio and its relationship to Proustian aesthetics and the creative process as a whole.

162 Cited from a letter (August 1907) to Reynaldo Hahn; reproduced in Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn, p.143.

163 In a letter (10-11 Jan. 1920) to Jacques Boulenger, for example, Proust mentions a "saint Georges de Carpaccio que vous avez peut-être vu à Venise lancé sur son cheval." (Corr. Gén.,III,204)

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[164] Cf. the following description by the painter Elstir of one of Carpaccio's paintings depicting a nautical festival: "Les navires étaient massifs, construits comme des architectures ... amarrés à l'aide de ponts volants, recouverts de satin cramoisi et de tapis persans, ils portaient des femmes en brocart cerise ou en damas vert, tout près des balcons incrustés de marbres multicolores où d'autres femmes se penchaient pour regarder, dans leur robes aux manches noires à crevés blancs serrés de perles ou ornés de guipures." (JF,I,898-9)

[165] For a possible explanation of this statement, see fn. 43.

[166] Albaret, Monsieur Proust, p.393.

[167] Aressy, A la Recherche de Marcel Proust, p.55; cited by De Ley, "'L'Hôpital sans style...,'" p.33.

[168] Cf. the following statement by Louis Védrines: "Quant au Tintoret, qui règne sur Venise avec toute la puissance d'un Jupiter tonnant, tout port à croire que Proust ait esquivé, sans doute en connaissance de cause, une confrontation avec son univers de ténèbres et de feu. Il serait proprement inexplicable, en effet, que Proust ait pu négliger, par défaut d'information, une oeuvre qui avait suscité l'admiration de Ruskin et inspiré à celui-ci les pages les plus lucides des 'Stones of Venice'; or les allusions au Tintoret, dans le Temps perdu comme dans la correspondance, sont si rares et si peu significatives que nous sommes obligés d'admettre que Proust a réussi à voir une Venise libérée de l'obsédante présence de Tintoret, ce que nous avons quelque peine à concevoir. Le 'pré-raphaëlisme' alors en vogue ne suffisant point à expliquer cette sorte de bannissement de Tintoret hors de l'univers proustien, il faut bien avouer que les raisons profondes de cette antinomie nous demeurent inconnues." "A Propos de Proust et la Peinture Italienne," p.135. Védrines also signals the absence of any significant references--either in Proust's novel or in his art criticism--to the works of Tiepolo.

[169] Johnson, "The Painter and His Art...," p.xxx.

[170] Cf. the following letter (1921) to Jean-Louis Vaudoyer: "Céleste me dit que vous avez les Plaisirs et les Jours. Vous y trouverez les seuls vers sur Cyp [sic] restés dans mon souvenir. Ils furent écrits avant une classe à Condorcet, en sortant du Louvre où je venais de voir les cavaliers qui ont une plume rose au chapeau." (Corr.Gén.,IV,89) Johnson has identified the painting in question as a possible fusion of two works by Cuyp: Promenade and Départ pour la Promenade. See his study "Proust's Early Portraits de peintres," CLS, 4, iv (1967), 403.

[171] For a detailed analysis of this poem, see Johnson's article, op. cit., p.404.

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[172] The lesser known study by the Comte de Caylus is entitled La Vie de Watteau. Proust made no secret of his sources; cf. the following remark extracted from the essay in question: "Je trouve dans la vie de Caylus, découverte chez un libraire par le grand artiste qui a dérobé à Watteau, pour le peindre, les secrets les plus merveilleux de sa peinture, M. de Goncourt, un trait qui montre sa simplicité." "Watteau," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.666. According to Johnson, "The Painter and His Art...," pp.175-6, "...Proust's source is almost uniquely the Goncourt's monumental and beautifully illustrated L'Art du XVIIIe siècle ... Proust used the factual material of Goncourt's essay as a basis on which he formed conjectures concerning certain aspects of Watteau's personal life." Cf., also, Inoue, "Proust et Chardin," p.11: "Pour ce qui est de Chardin et de Watteau, rien n'est plus attrayant que le livre des Goncourt: L'art du dix-huitième siècle. L'admiration de Proust pour ces deux maîtres magiciens du XVIIIe siècle--réaliste et poète--fut particulièrement nourrie, à ce qu'il nous semble, par la finesse de goût et la théorie du réalisme idéaliste des frères Goncourt."

[173] Proust, "Watteau," p.665.

[174] Ibid., p.666.

[175] Ibid., p.667.

[176] Roudaut, "'Par Qui Nos Yeux Sont Déclos' ou La Vie Profonde des 'Natures Mortes,'" L'Arc, 47, no.1409 (4 trim. 1971), 28.

[177] Cf. Johnson, "The Painter and His Art...," p.167: "Rather than an appreciation of the art of Watteau, the essay is in essence an apology for personal idiosyncrasies in the private lives of artists."

[178] According to François Fosca, "Proust a aussi confessé que Montesquiou lui révéla Chardin, dont il 'aurait eu de la peine à sentir spontanément' le charme." De Diderot à Valéry..., p.69. Cf. Marie Nordlinger's account: "How well I remember Marcel's enthusiasm for the Italian Primitives; it was with him and Reynaldo I first saw the work of Chardin." "Proust and Ruskin," Marcel Proust and His Time [exhib. cat.] (London, 1955), p.58; cited by Inoue, "Proust et Chardin," p.7.

[179] Cf. Johnson, "The Painter and His Art...," p.176: "Proust undoubtedly was familiar with the Goncourt's essay on Chardin as it directly followed their essay on Watteau in L'Art du XVIIIe siècle. If Proust had read this article, he would also have read the extract from Diderot's Salon of 1765, in which the eighteenth century philosopher quotes certain remarks of Chardin on his art."

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[180] Proust, Lettres Retrouvées, p.31. According to Kolb, the editor of this collection of letters, "Cet article fut manifestement écrit après une visite au Louvre. Or, Reynaldo Hahn raconte une visite qu'il fit au Louvre avec Proust pour voir les pastels de Chardin et de La Tour." (ed. fn., p.32)

[181] See, for example, Gita May's article "Chardin Vu par Diderot et par Proust," PMLA, 72, iii (June 1957), 403-18; Inoue, "Proust et Chardin," pp.1-15; and Roudaut, "'Par Qui Nos Yeux Sont Déclos'...," pp.27-31.

[182] Proust, "Chardin et Rembrandt," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.372.

[183] Cf. Inoue, "Proust et Chardin," p.12: "Serait-il abusif de dire que ce jeune homme c'est le Proust non initié, et que le narrateur qui le dirige c'est le Proust déjà initié par les Goncourt?"

[184] Cf. Roudaut, "'Par Qui Nos Yeux Sont Déclos'...," p.27: "L'essai emprunt son ouverture à celle d'un roman; il est l'annonce d'un récit, car il ne s'agit pas de décrire une oeuvre, celle de Chardin, mais de retracer une aventure, celle du lecteur de Chardin ... Le sujet de l'essai n'est pas plus Chardin, qu'il n'est le jeune homme ou son guide, mais l'aventure d'une conscience, de l'ignorance à la clarté. Chardin illustre un moment de ce voyage."

[185] Proust, "Chardin et Rembrandt," pp.373,374.

[186] Nicolas, "Du Côté de la Nature au Côté de l'Homme: Principes d'une Etude Thématique," Europe, 48, nos.496-7 (août-sept. 1970), 83. Cf. Ramon Fernandez, "Note sur l'Esthétique de Proust," NRF, 31, no.179 (1 août 1928), 273-4: "La grande originalité de Proust et le grand intérêt esthétique de son oeuvre viennent de ce qu'il ne s'est pas contenté, comme les symbolistes, d'un monde et d'un langage qui fussent la projection de sa vie intérieure. Par son travail de romancier, de psychologue, de moraliste, il a jeté un pont entre la littérature d'expression et la littérature de connaissance. Il nous a montré comment, parti de la vie intérieure, on pouvait rejoindre le monde objectif, autrement dit comment l'impression menait à la loi." Cf., also, J.M. Cocking, "Proust and Painting," French 19th Century Painting and Literature, ed. Ulrich Finke (New York, 1972), p.323: "Proust, for all his aesthetic of the separation of art and life, never takes us out of the real world, but transforms it in all its solid reality."

[187] Proust, "Chardin et Rembrandt," p.374. In a letter (13 June 1904) to the Comtesse de Noailles, Proust expressed a similar notion, once again utilizing the image of light: "Si on cherche ce qui fait la beauté de certaines choses," he wrote,

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"...on voit que ce n'est pas la profondeur, ou telle ou telle autre vertu qui semble éminente. Non, c'est une espèce de fondu, d'unité transparente, où toutes les choses, perdant leur premier aspect de choses, sont venues se ranger les unes à côté des autres dans une espèce d'ordre, pénétrées de la lumière, vues les unes dans les autres, sans un seul mot qui reste en dehors, qui soit réfractaire à cette assimilation...." (emphasis mine) (Corr.Gén.,II,86-7)

188a Cf. Roudaut, "'Par Qui Nos Yeux Sont Déclos'...," p.31: "Elstir saura poursuivre l'aventure de Chardin, la dépasser en l'assimilant, l'accomplir sans la répéter, lui être fidèle en se détachant d'elle."

188b Cf. Monnin-Hornung, p.32: "Evitant l'erreur de Ruskin, [Proust] n'a pas cru que le peintre, l'artiste de génie est plus grand que nous par les facultés de son âme; il l'est seulement par ses facultés d'expression, grâce auxquelles il nous fait connaître la réalité qui est en lui et qui est la vie vraiment vécue...."

189 Cf. Jephcott, "Ruskin and Rodin," pp.108-9: "Chardin, one of Proust's favorite painters, appealed to him because of his use of colour, which produced an interrelatedness, or 'friendship' as Proust called it, between the different parts of his paintings." Jephcott's statement is only partially correct, for Proust also saw this "friendship" in terms of textural and luminous qualities in Chardin's works. Cf. Proust, "Chardin et Rembrandt," p.380: "Amitié encore...entre le corps penché, les mains heureuses de la femme qui prépare la table, la nappe antique et les assiettes encore intactes dont depuis tant d'années elle sent la fermeté douce résister toujours à la même place entre ses mains soigneuses, --entre cette nappe et la lumière qui lui donne, en souvenir de ses visites de chaque jour, la douceur de crème ou d'une toile de Flandres, --entre la lumière et toute cette chambre qu'elle caresse, où elle s'endort, où tantôt elle se promène lentement, tantôt elle entre gaiement à l'improviste, si tendrement depuis tant d'années, --entre la chaleur et les étoffes, --entre les êtres et les choses, --entre le passé et la vie, --entre le clair et l'obscur."

190 May, "Chardin Vu par Diderot et par Proust," pp.412,414.

191 Cf. Roudaut, "'Par Qui Nos Yeux Sont Déclos'...," p.31: "Avec Chardin on demeure sur le plan des équivalences entre éléments de la réalité ... Il est un guide et comme tel, à un certain moment de la recherche, il doit être délaissé. S'attacher à Chardin serait s'immobiliser dans un rite de passage ... Ce n'est plus Chardin qu'il faut suivre mais Rembrandt, par qui nous sommes confrontés à la nuit mystérieuse et comme crépusculaire de l'être, de l'inconnu et du crime ... Mais, pour être entendue, la parole de Rembrandt nécessite que la leçon de Chardin ait été compris, et retenue. La lecture de l'oeuvre de

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Chardin marque une étape décisive, et indispensable, dans le passage du monde des noms à celui des choses."

[192] Daudet, Autour de Soixante Lettres..., p.18.

[193] Proust, "Chardin et Rembrandt," p.380.

[194] Grenier, "Elstir ou Proust et la Peinture," Proust, ed. Antoine Adam et al ([Paris], 1965), pp.203-4.

[195] Proust, "Préface" [à Propos de Peintre, par Jacques-Emile Blanche], Contre Sainte-Beuve..., pp.580-1. Yet his response to Maurice LeBlond's question (included in a survey being conducted by the review Les Arts de la Vie) "Acceptez-vous la tyrannie séculaire de Rome sur notre art populaire et national?" was rather ambivalent; in his letter to LeBlond, dated 27 August 1904, Proust wrote as follows: "Bien que je ne pense pas que certains lieux de la terre aient le privilège exclusif de la beauté, Rome...semble tout de même devoir être un de ceux qui peuvent exercer sur l'imagination d'un artiste l'action la plus stimulante et la plus durable ... Naturellement je crois qu'on pourrait trouver la beauté ailleurs, de la beauté partout. Mais comme il faut bien choisir, je ne vois pas de raison pourquoi tout autre beau lieu que ce soit, Honfleur, Vollendam, Quimperlé, ou tout autre, devrait être préféré à Rome." Lettres Retrouvées, pp.52-3. Cf. Proust's description of Elstir's growing materialism: "De plus en plus enclin à croire matérialistement qu'une part notable de la beauté réside dans les choses...il voyait disparaître avec M. Verdurin un des derniers vestiges du cadre social, du cadre périssable...qui soutient un art, certifie son authenticité, comme la Révolution en détruisant les élégances du XVIII[e] siècle aurait pu désoler un peintre de Fêtes galantes, ou affliger Renoir la disparition de Montmartre et du Moulin de la Galette...." (TR,III,770)

[196] According to Adam, "Le Roman de Proust...," p.68, "[Ruskin] comprit que la beauté est d'abord au coeur des choses et que l'art ne saurait être que l'expression de cette beauté [Praeterita]." The extremely subjective vision of reality which Proust discovered in Rembrandt's art may explain Ruskin's displeasure with this painter's style. Cf. Johnson, "The Painter and His Art...," p.283: "We know from Ruskin's writings that he was not particularly fond of Rembrandt and the northern painters in general...."

[197] René Huyghe, writing in 1936, could not have been aware of the existence of this essay when he made the following comment: "Point de ces souffles héroiques ou surnaturels dont la houle soulève Rembrandt ou Delacroix, ces peintres dont Proust ne parle pas." (emphasis mine) "Affinités Electives...," p.13.

[198] See fn. 23 for a detailed examination of this phenomenon.

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[199] Proust, "Chardin et Rembrandt," pp.380-1. The transforming power of light is also stressed by the narrator of Proust's novel; cf. the following: "Dans un petit magasin de bric-à-brac, une bougie à demi consumée, en projetant sa lueur rouge sur une gravure, la transformait en sanguine, pendant que, luttant contre l'ombre, la clarté de la grosse lampe basanait un morceau de cuir, niellait un poignard de paillettes étincelantes, sur des tableaux qui n'étaient que de mauvaises copies déposait une dorure précieuse comme la patine du passé ou le vernis d'un maître, et faisait enfin de ce taudis où il n'y avait que du toc et des croûtes, un inestimable Rembrandt." (CG1,II,97)

[200] Ibid., p.382. Cf. Proust's letter (March 1900) to Marie Nordlinger: "Même ce qu'on appelle habileté technique n'est pas un savoir à proprement parler, car il n'existe pas en dehors des mystérieuses associations de notre mémoire et du tact acquis de notre invention quand elle approche les mots. Le savoir, dans le sens d'une chose qui est toute faite en dehors de nous et qu'on peut apprendre comme dans les sciences, est nul en art." Lettres à une Amie, p.17. It is interesting to recall Henry James's conception of the creative act as something mysterious and unknowable; James, unlike Proust, appears to credit the artist, if not the viewer, with knowing how he is able to create. See chapter three, fn. 17.

[201] Cf. Hokari, "Proust et Gustave Moreau...," p.41: "...il semble à Proust que déjouant toute prévision, tout travail conscient du peintre, le tableau surgit tout seul d'une manière impérative et imprévue, et que l'artiste est réduit alors à n'être qu' 'une sorte de scribe écrivant sous la dictée de la nature une partie plus ou moins importante de son secret.'"

[202] Brée, Marcel Proust: Nature et Rôle de l'Art, The Second Kathleen Morris Scruggs Memorial Lecture ([Lynchburg, Va.], 1963), pp.12-13. Cf. Mein, Proust's Challenge to Time, p.113: "There is in Proust's mind a...conflict between the conception of the artist as 'déchiffreur' of a reality already in existence and the belief that the artist's message is capable of only one great rendering, its unique form inseparable from the content and a criterion of its authenticity."

[203] In his essay on Moreau, Proust insisted that even before the painter's residence had been turned into a state museum, it had already lost all vestiges of domesticity: "La maison de Gustave Moreau maintenant qu'il est mort va devenir un musée. C'est ce qui doit être. Déjà, de son vivant, la maison d'un poète n'est pas tout à fait une maison ... Par une brusque métamorphose, la maison est devenue un musée avant même d'être ainsi aménagée ... Emportez les meubles. Il ne faut plus que des toiles qui se réfèrent à l'âme intérieure où il accède souvent, et s'adressent à tous ... Peu à peu les tableaux encombraient toutes les chambres et il n'y en avait plus que très peu où se réfugiait l'homme qui voulait dîner, recevoir ses

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amis, dormir ... Sa maison était déjà presque un musée...." "Notes sur le Monde Mystérieux de Gustave Moreau," pp.671-2.

[204] Proust, "Rembrandt," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.659.

[205] Cf. Brée: "La contemplation esthétique féconde apparaît alors comme une transmission initiatique, la transmission d'une influence spirituelle, qui frappe comme un rayon et change le rapport de l'initié avec le monde qui l'entoure, qui peut même le délivrer du sentiment qu'il a de son néant ... Toutes les images dont Proust se sert pour décrire le mode d'existence propre à l'artiste...reprennent le langage de la gnose, du néo-occultisme fort répandu dans cette fin de siècle où Proust cherchait, comme nombre de ses contemporains, une certitude. Avait-il lu Les grands initiés de Schuré? C'est bien possible; ou médité les idées de Papus auquel Anatole France un instant s'était intéressé, ou fréquenté les milieux occultistes de Paris? En tout cas le parallélisme de son langage métaphorique, et du leur, à l'époque où il écrivait ces essais, ne semble point effet du hasard." "'Vision' et Création Selon Proust," Australian Journal of French Studies, 6, ii-iii (May-Dec. 1969), 185.

[206] In a letter (30 Jan. 1908) to Robert Dreyfus, Proust noted the following: "Les derniers Monet ne peignent que du brouillard, les derniers Rembrandt que du soleil. Et c'est ce que je préfère en art (pas ces peintres, cette manière)." Reproduced in Robert Dreyfus, Souvenirs sur Marcel Proust: Avec des Lettres Inédites de Marcel Proust (Paris, 1926), p.222. According to Chernowitz, p.179, "[Proust] likes the ultimate style of an artist pushed to its extreme, the later stages of his evolution in which his vision attains more and more individuality...."

[207] See fn. 66.

[208] Brée, Marcel Proust: Nature et Rôle de l'Art, p.8.

[209] Proust, "La Poésie ou les Lois Mystérieuses," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., pp.418-19.

[210] Cf. the following undated letter to Montesquiou: "... sitôt que j'ai su que vous aviez écrit sur Moreau j'ai envoyé acheter le catalogue et j'ai lu l'admirable préface ... Tous les jours j'ai espéré pouvoir aller à cette exposition et ne l'ai pas pu. Et elle va fermer et je n'aurai pu lire cette traduction par un lapidaire des pensées que vous avez répandues dans votre préface. J'aurai voulu aller les reconnaître et les confronter aux tableaux de la rue de Sèze." (Corr.Gén.,I,165)

[211] According to Hokari, a notice in La Chronique des Arts et de la Curiosité on 4 Feb. 1899 reported the discovery of

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fourteen Moreau paintings, one of which, located in the church of Decazeville, bore the title Chemin de Croix. Proust retained the name of the church and simply altered the title of the painting to read Descente de Croix. "Proust et Gustave Moreau...," pp.36-7.

212 Proust, Jean Santeuil..., p.366.

213 Cf. the following letter (1906) to Mme Catusse: "If I were rich, I should not try to buy masterpieces that I should leave to museums, but those pictures that retain the odor of a city or the dampness of a church, and that, like curios, hold their illusion as much by association with an idea, as in themselves." Letters of Marcel Proust, p.141. This highly incriminating statement has been utilized by Proust's detractors to prove that the novelist's art criticism was primarily literary or associational in nature, i.e., that his grasp of the technical side of painting was nonexistent. While the remark cannot--and should not--be ignored, it does point to the highly subjective, and therefore original, manner in which Proust chose to interpret the visual arts.

214 Proust, it will be recalled, chastized Blanche for propounding a theory of the superiority of certain surroundings as a stimulus for artistic creativity. In A la Recherche, his theory of artistic genius clearly rejected this emphasis upon the artist's surroundings: "...ceux qui produisent des oeuvres géniales ne sont pas ceux qui vivent dans le milieu le plus délicat...." (JF,I,554)

215 Proust, "Notes sur le Monde Mystérieux de Gustave Moreau," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.667.

216 Cf. Patrick Gauthier, "Proust et Gustave Moreau," Europe, 48, nos.496-7 (août-sept. 1970), 239: "L'aspect symbolique, intellectuel de ce monde mystérieux le met hors d'atteinte du temps ... L'une des raisons de l'admiration de Proust pour G. Moreau est cette intemporalité...." Monnin-Hornung, pp.51-2, has traced the theoretical basis for this theory of the frozen moment in time preserved in a painting back to Hegel and Schopenhauer.

217 Cf. Cazeaux, L'Ecriture de Proust..., pp.91-2: "L'art selon Proust est aux antipodes de l'onirisme ... Si l'intelligence défait la métaphore poétique, si le rêve et l'idéal n'en donnent qu'une caricature, si le hasard peut l'offrir, seule la volonté, qui est le fond de l'art, peut la saisir et la fixer." This statement, especially the latter half, is in complete agreement with Brée, who also stresses the conscious will of the Proustian artist over the unconscious forces at work in the creative process. R. Ironside has even gone so far as to suggest that Elstir's (and Proust's) aesthetic views owe more to Surrealism than Impressionism: "One is bound to regret the reve-

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lations the reader would surely have enjoyed if the art of Elstir had been composed not of fragments chiefly from Monet and from Degas and Renoir, but, instead, from Picasso, Klee, Chagall and Ernst. [Proust's] conception of the springs of beauty ...grew to embrace an automatic psychological symbolism (related to surrealism), by means of which imaginative truths were conveyed to him; though he by no means despised the unaided workings of the intellect, his admiration of these was qualified by his knowledge that inspiration was too spasmodic to support alone the task he had set himself. But inspiration, as he conceived it, however elusive, remained the fountain of beauty and there was a duty to pursue it far into the heart." "The Artistic Vision of Proust," Horizon, 4, xix (July 1941), 41.

218 Cf. the following passage in Proust's review article, "Les Eblouissements, par la Comtesse de Noailles," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., pp.534-5: "Gustave Moreau a souvent, dans ses tableaux et ses aquarelles, essayé de peindre cette abstraction: le Poète ... on se demande, à la bien regarder, si ce poète n'est pas une femme. Peut-être Gustave Moreau a-t-il voulu signifier que le poète contient en lui toute l'humanité, doit posséder les tendresses de la femme; mais si, comme je le crois, il voulait aussi envelopper de poésie le visage, les vêtements, l'attitude de celui dont l'âme est poésie, c'est seulement parce qu'il a situé cette scène dans l'Inde et la Perse qu'il a pu nous laisser hésitants sur le sexe du poète. S'il avait voulu peindre son poète à notre époque et dans nos pays et l'entourer cependant d'une beauté précieuse, il aurait été obligé d'en faire une femme."

219 Cf. Hokari, "Proust et Gustave Moreau...," p.44: "... il n'y aurait peut-être pas d'invraisemblance à soutenir que Proust ait eu cette grande idée sur l'âme perdue du poète sous l'influence de Baudelaire (la vie antérieure) ou de Mallarmé de qui nous avons un beau vers significatif: 'Au ciel antérieur où fleurit la Beauté' (les Fenêtres)."

220 See fn. 203.

221 Brée, "Le 'moi oeuvrant' de Proust," MLR, 61, iv (Oct. 1966), 617. Cf. the following passage from A la Recherche: "Ainsi j'étais déjà arrivé à cette conclusion que nous ne sommes nullement libres devant l'oeuvre d'art, que nous ne la faisons pas à notre gré, mais que, préexistant à nous, nous devons, à la fois parce qu'elle est nécessaire et cachée, et comme nous ferions pour une loi de la nature, la découvrir." (TR,III,881)

222 Gauthier, "Proust et Gustave Moreau," p.241.

223 Hokari, "Proust et Gustave Moreau...," p.43.

224 Brée, "Le 'moi oeuvrant' de Proust," p.616.

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225 Proust, "Un Amateur de Peinture.--Monet, Sisley, Corot," Jean Santeuil..., p.892.

226 See fn. 187 for an illustration of Proust's attempt to define more clearly this "espèce de fondu, d'unité transparente...." According to George Stambolian, "when Proust speaks of fondu, he is really pointing to the difference that exists between the chaotic multiplicity of the actual world and the ordered multiplicity of the artistic components in a work of art ... Fondu describes, therefore, the organic unity and autonomy of a work of art that an artist guarantees only by creating a purely virtual world in which things have lost their 'original aspect as things' to become images or reflections of reality." "Art," Marcel Proust and the Creative Encounter (Chicago/London, 1972), pp.206-7.

227 For a detailed analysis of Proust's reworking of this river-scene passage from an early primitive state to its final embodiment in A la Recherche, see Johnson's article entitled "Débâcle sur la Seine de Claude Monet: Source du Dégel à Breseville d'Elstir," Etudes Proustiennes, I (Paris, 1973), pp.163-76.

228 Proust, "Le Peintre. Ombres--Monet," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.675.

229 Tauman, "Le Langage de l'Art," AUMLA, no.10 (May 1959), 148.

230 Cf. Johnson, "Proust's 'Impressionism' Reconsidered...," pp.31-2: "...if Proust admired Monet's Nymphéas, he was also aware of the inherent dangers in this admiration. That he should have included an extensive passage on nymphéas in his novel suggests a confidence in the originality of his own 'vision.'" For a discussion of the possible sources and methods employed in composing the Vivonne episode, see Hélène Beauregard's essay, "Marcel Proust, Combray et le Côté de Giverny," Littératures[Toulouse], 14 (sept. 1967), 77-86.

231 Chernowitz, pp.120-22. Cf. Fosca, De Diderot à Valéry..., pp.76-7: "...quelle place tient Vermeer dans le roman de Proust? Une fort petite ... il y a le fameux passage...qui décrit Bergotte retournant voir la Vue de Delft à une exposition et mourant dans une crise d'urémie. Mais si dans trois ou quatre lignes sont notées quelques couleurs du tableau, la quasi-totalité de ces trois pages est remplie par les réflexions de Bergotte sur son art et sur sa mort imminente, et par celles de Proust sur la condition humaine, qui ne concernent nullement l'art de Vermeer ... Proust n'a nullement expliqué pourquoi Vermeer--dont d'ailleurs il avoue dans une lettre à Jean-Louis Vaudoyer ne connaître 'presque rien'--était digne d'être admiré."

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[232] These articles have been partially reproduced in Hélène Adhémar's essay, "La Vision de Vermeer par Proust, à Travers Vaudoyer," pp.295-302.

[233] Huyghe, "Affinités Electives: Vermeer et Proust," p.15.

[234] Proust, "Préface [de Tendres Stocks, par Paul Morand]," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.612.

[235] Cf. Hindus, The Proustian Vision, p.36: "If the ideal for the creator is to make himself a mirror, the ideal for the interpreter, according to Proust, should be to become a transparent medium revealing the work of art. In both cases, the artist himself must remain as unobtrusive as possible."

[236] Billy, Lettres et Conversations, p.13.

[237] See Charles Seymour, Jr.'s article, "Dark Chamber and Light-filled Room: Vermeer and the Camera Obscura," Art Bulletin, 46, iii (?), 323-31; cited by Brée (without date) in her essay, "Proust's Combray Church: Illiers or Vermeer?" Proceed. American Philosophical Society, 112, i (Feb. 15, 1968), 6.

[238] Cf. Céleste Albaret's recollection of Proust's reaction to the View of Delft after seeing the work in the 1921 Jeu de Paume exhibition: "--'Ah, Céleste, vous n'imaginez pas la minutie, le raffinement! Le moindre petit grain de sable! Une minuscule touche de rose par ci, de vert par là ... Comme cela a dû être travaillé! Je devrais encore corriger, corriger, ajouter des grains de sable'...." Monsieur Proust, p.329.

[239] Cited by Adhémar, "La Vision de Vermeer par Proust, à Travers Vaudoyer," p.295. At another point in his article, Vaudoyer adds the following: "Vermeer, dans un sentiment de discrétion, de pudeur qui devait être chez lui, au surplus, tout à fait inconscient, cache tout ce qu'il sait, tout ce qu'il fait ...." (p.301)

[240] Ibid., p.297. Vaudoyer echoes this passage a bit later when he writes: "Il y a dans le métier de Vermeer une patience chinoise, une faculté de cacher la minutie et le procédé de travail qu'on ne retrouve que dans les peintures, les laques et les pierres taillées d'Extrême-Orient ... Vermeer fait de ses toiles autant un objet d'art qu'une peinture. Si l'on consacre son attention...à un détail du tableau, on peut vite cesser de croire que l'on est devant un cadre, et imaginer que l'on a devant soi une vitrine où le bibelot le plus précieux et le plus singulier est enfermé." (p.299)

[241] Ibid., p.294.

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[242] Ibid., pp.301-2.

[243] Proust, "En Mémoire des Eglises Assassinées: III. John Ruskin," p.110.

[244] Mante-Proust, "Vermeer et Proust: Le Coup de Foudre Historique," Les Nouvelles Littéraires, no.2046, 17 nov. 1966, p.11.

[245] Proust, Lettres à Reynaldo Hahn, p.199. Cf. the following letter (2 Oct. 1888) by the young Proust to his lycée professor Alphonse Darlu: "...je suis dévoré du besoin d'avoir des règles fixes d'après lesquelles je puisse juger avec certitude les oeuvres d'art." Correspondance: Tome I (1880-1895), p.120.

[246] Proust, "A Propos de Baudelaire" [1921], Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.623.

[247] Daudet, Autour de Soixante Lettres..., p.18.

[248] Blanche, Mes Modèles..., p.139.

[249] Letter dated 6 Dec. 1936; cited by Chernowitz, p.200.

[250] Fosca, De Diderot à Valéry..., pp.73,75,76. For additional negative criticism of Proust's contribution to the field of art criticism, see: Dunlop, "Proust and Painting," pp.105,110; Diaconu, "Considérations...," pp.563,566-8; and De Ley, "'L'Hôpital sans style...,'" pp.32-4,39-41.

[251] Monnin-Hornung, pp.111,125. For additional positive criticism of Proust's achievement, see: Brincourt, Les Oeuvres et les Lumières..., pp.127,129; Bussom, "Marcel Proust and Painting," p.70; and Guyot, "Marcel Proust et les Arts Plastiques," pp.222-5.

[252] Chernowitz, p.236.

[253] Proust, "En Mémoire...," p.141.

[254] Cf. the following letter (1921) to Montesquiou, in which Proust tried to soften the blow of rejection which his mentor had suffered at the hands of his contemporaries: "...on devrait braver votre hauteur et aller contre votre dédain en demandant des directives d'art à qui est, entre autres choses, sans doute le plus grand critique d'art qu'il y ait eu depuis longtemps." (Corr.Gén.,I,287) That Proust was not just engaging in his earlier habit of obsequiousness towards the aging aesthete is evidenced by the following two letters he wrote to

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Jacques Boulenger that same year; in the first he observed: "Aujourd'hui je songe que le meilleur critique d'art de notre époque est Robert de Montesquiou et que personne ne lui demande d'articles." (Corr.Gén.,III,240); the second letter, written at the end of June, describes Montesquiou as "un critique d'art, un essayiste merveilleux, qui peint comme personne, en prose, l'oeuvre d'un peintre, d'un sculpteur qu'il aime." (ibid.,253)

[255] Proust, "Un Professeur de Beauté," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.518.

[256] Cf. Proust's comment vis-à-vis Ruskin's failure to grasp the nature of the artistic experiments of his contemporaries, notably those of Whistler: "...c'est le jugement sur les contemporains qui importe chez un critique." "Un Professeur de Beauté," p.512.

[257] Chernowitz, p.22. Cf. Johnson, "The Painter and His Art...," p.73: "For Proust, it seems, Montesquiou's aesthetic sense, while extremely refined, never really penetrated the world of art." According to Fosca, De Diderot à Valéry..., p.69, "Montesquiou avait pour les arts un goût inné, passionné, mais fort peu sûr."

[258] Fosca, loc. cit. Chernowitz adds, p.15, that "Proust never failed to read everything Montesquiou wrote, including special studies on Gustave Moreau, on Whistler, Helleu, Monticelli, and on old masters like Leonardo." Cf. the following letter (1907) by Proust to his mentor: "...j'avais lu vos ravissants articles sur Greco, sur Léonard...." (Corr.Gén.,I,203-4) Cf., also, the following undated letter to the same correspondent: "...sitôt que j'ai su que vous aviez écrit sur Moreau j'ai envoyé acheter le catalogue et j'ai lu l'admirable préface...." (ibid.,165)

[259] In a letter (1908) to Georges de Lauris, Proust wrote the following: "To-day closes the one exhibition that I would have liked to see, that of the two painters with whom I am most 'in love'--Greco and Monticelli, at the Salon d'Automne, and I haven't been able to go ... I told myself that wherever I might be, even if it were in Venice, I would return for a couple of days for this exhibition--it may not be sublime, but it would have been very fruitful for me because it corresponded with so definite a stage of my desires." Letters to a Friend, p.108.

[260] Cf. the following letter (2 May 1921) to Vaudoyer: "...je sais vos idées...sur la hiérarchie dans l'Art et je le [i.e., Vermeer] craignais un peu trop Chardin pour vous." (Corr. Gén.,IV,86)

[261] Cf. the following letter (13 Aug. 1920) to Vaudoyer: "Un article comme votre article sur Raphaël m'aurait fait vous

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écrire de bien longues pages si je n'étais dans cet état de demi-mort où pendant deux semaines je ne peux ouvrir les yeux, tenir une plume." (Corr.Gén.,IV,83)

[262] In a letter dated 1906, Proust asks: "...I would...be glad to know what there is by Berenson in French or translated into French." Two years later, he writes: "...I would very much like to know Berenson." Letters to a Friend, pp.78 and 105 resp.

[263] Cf. Robert de Billy's account: "...ce fut une grande joie quand parut le premier des livres de M. Mâle. Je le lus comme un roman et, tout de suite, je le prêtai à Marcel. Il resta chez lui quatre ans environ et, quand il me le rendit, il n'avait ni couverture ni page de garde et portait les marques de toutes les disgrâces qui peuvent assaillir un livre, lu au lit, dans le voisinage des remèdes." Lettres et Conversations, p.111.

[264] According to Jessie Murray, Proust considered Mâle "a greater authority than Ruskin on many points, such, for instance, as the meaning which certain symbols conveyed to the mediaeval mind." "Marcel Proust as a Critic and Disciple of Ruskin," Nineteenth Century, 101 (April 1927), 615.

[265] "La sensibilité d'Emile Mâle animait les pierres mortes" is how Autret puts it; "c'est ce qu'a senti Marcel Proust avant toute chose. C'est sans doute aussi ce côté de poésie qui l'avait séduit dans Ruskin, mais l'esprit subtil, aiguisé, si fin du romancier demandait davantage, et c'est ce qu'il a trouvé chez Emile Mâle, où la séduction de la langue et des images s'appuyait sur la forme de réalités historiques." "La Dette de Marcel Proust Envers Emile Mâle," p.50.

[266] Proust, "Préface," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.584.

[267] Ibid., pp.584-5.

[268] See fn. 213. According to Claude Roger-Marx, "... Proust cherchait surtout dans la peinture un moyen de retrouver ses propres sensations et de déchiffrer l'univers avec des yeux semblables aux siens ou différents ... Il aimait une toile bien moins pour ses qualités intrinsèques et les plaisirs purement visuels qu'en tirent les initiés que pour les analogies qu'elle offrait avec ses propres investigations...." "Il Aimait dans la Peinture ce qui Correspondait à son Oeuvre," Le Figaro Littéraire, no.1308, 11 juin 1971, p.31. Cf. Fosca, De Diderot à Valéry..., p.75: "Il faisait donc passer les 'associations d'idées' que les tableaux auraient suscitées en lui, c'est-à-dire quelque chose de tout à fait accessoire, avant leurs mérites proprement artistiques."

[269] Chernowitz, p.16. Proust illustrated this concept by

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choosing the art of Renoir as an example: "Il y eut un temps," observes the narrator of A la Recherche, "où on reconnaissait bien les choses quand c'était Fromentin qui les peignait et où on ne les reconnaissait plus quand c'était Renoir. Les gens de goût nous disent aujourd'hui que Renoir est un grand peintre du XVIIIe siècle. Mais en disant cela ils oublient le Temps et qu'il en a fallu beaucoup, même en plein XIXe, pour que Renoir fût salué grand artiste ... Des femmes passent dans la rue, différentes de celles d'autrefois, puisque ce sont des Renoir, ces Renoir où nous nous refusions jadis à voir des femmes. Les voitures aussi sont des Renoir, et l'eau, et le ciel...." (CG2,II,327)

270 Chernowitz, pp.14-15.

271 Proust, "Préface," p.580.

272 Girard, "Proust et Zola," Adam, International Review, no.260 (1957), 111-12.

273 Bordier, "Sur Zola et Proust: L'Esprit de Famille, l'Art et le Réel," Europe, 48, nos.496-7 (août-sept. 1970), 226. Monnin-Hornung, p.199, likewise sees a marked difference in both novelists' utilization of synaesthetic devices and in their attempts at a transposition of the arts: "...ces passages, chez Zola, sont isolés, accidentels ... ils montrent simplement un intérêt pour certaines théories wagnériennes élargies et apparaissent comme une tentative maladroite et épisodique de les appliquer dans le roman. Chez Proust au contraire, de telles transpositions sont l'expression d'une sensibilité aiguë, capable de recevoir des impressions d'une infinie diversité."

274 Cf. the previously cited passage from Proust's essay, "Les Goncourt Devant Leurs Cadets...," p.642: "M. de Goncourt a été incomparable chaque fois qu'il a parlé de ces oeuvres d'art qu'il aimait d'une passion sincère, même des arbustes de son jardin, lesquels étaient pour lui de précieux bibelots encore." Monnin-Hornung is obviously in error when she insists, p.23, that "...rien, dans sa correspondance ni dans ses oeuvres, ne nous donne d'indication précise sur son opinion du sujet de la 'critique picturale' si importante dans l'oeuvre des deux frères." Had not Proust, in his essay on Watteau, called Goncourt "[un] grand artiste qui a dérobé à Watteau, pour le peindre, les secrets les plus merveilleux de sa peinture..."? "Watteau," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.666.

275 In support of this view, Monnin-Hornung cites (p.24) the following revealing passages from Edmond de Goncourt's Journal: "Un tableau donne-t-il jamais à un être organisé pour apprécier la peinture, une sensation intellectuelle, spirituelle? jamais! Il lui donne la joie matérielle de l'oeil, voilà tout ... un tableau, le plus spiritualiste des tableaux...par l'arrêté des lignes, la matérialité des couleurs, la réalité

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ouvrière de la fabrication, sera toujours une déception pour l'imagination du regardeur, si toutefois il en possède une." And, elsewhere, "Il n'y a en peinture que la tonalité et la beauté de la pâte."

276 Monnin-Hornung, pp.24-5.

277 Cited by Chernowitz, p.15.

278 Proust, Lettres à une Amie, p.32.

279 Letter dated 24 June 1905; ibid., p.87.

280 Ibid., pp.88-9.

281 Ibid., p.85. Cf. the following statement contained in a letter (Dec.1909-Jan.1910) to Robert de Billy: "...je réconcilie tous ces dieux ennemis dans le Panthéon de mon admiration." Choix de Lettres, p.171.

282 Letter dated Jan. 1904. Lettres à une Amie, p.33. Proust was to echo this view in a subsequent letter (9 Feb. 1905) to Marie Nordlinger: "...je pense que si leurs théories, ce qui est la partie la moins intime de chacun de nous, furent opposées, à une certaine profondeur ils se rencontrèrent plus souvent qu'ils ne le croyaient." (emphasis Proust's) Ibid., p.83. It is interesting, in this connection, to recall the following statement by Proust's narrator: "Une oeuvre où il y a des théories est comme un objet sur lequel on laisse la marque du prix." (TR,III,882) In Proust's novel, which certainly has a theoretical foundation, all abstract concepts are organically linked to the text, i.e., they are seldom interjected with a disregard for the flow of the narrative and usually receive a concrete illustration by means of a metaphorical analogy or similar device.

283 Dunlop, "Proust and Painting," p.108. Cf. Chernowitz, p.15: "Whistler's writings delighted Proust, for he speaks with profound admiration of The Gentle Art of Making Enemies and of Ten O'Clock."

284 Johnson, "The Painter and His Art...," p.138.

285 Billy, Lettres et Conversations, p.89. In the same passage Billy suggests that it may have been Wilde who helped Proust choose a tie "d'une soie couleur tourterelle" for his portrait by Blanche. He also adds that Wilde "réprouva l'esthétique de l'appartement du professeur Proust, ce qui fit douter Marcel de son éducation."

286 Ibid., p.128.

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[287] Cf. Proust's dictum: "Quand plusieurs portraits de Rembrandt, d'après des modèles différents, sont réunis dans une salle, nous sommes aussitôt frappés par ce qui leur est commun à tous et qui est les traits mêmes de la figure de Rembrandt." Cited by Allard, "Les Arts Plastiques...," pp.214-15.

[288] Cf. Chernowitz, p.17: "He of course read the Intentions and though he did not fully agree with the great Victorian's aestheticism...he was certain to remember it when he was ready to form his own views."

[289] Proust, "Contre l'Obscurité," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.394.

[290] Hindus oversimplifies and perhaps even falsifies Proust's aesthetic position in the following passage: "When Proust has occasion to liken his impressions of nature with his memories of art experiences, it is in a tone almost of apology for nature. To Proust, as to Yeats in 'Sailing to Byzantium,' art is something precious and permanent rescued from the destructive changes of the natural world. Proust prefers the golden bird to the feathered one ... There seems to me no aspect of Proust which makes him more 'modern' than this elevation of art to a position superior to nature." The Proustian Vision, p.50. Cocking comes nearer to the truth when he suggests that "the beauty of nature can be given a place, in Proust's aesthetic based on 'subjective idealism,' which is properly subordinate to the beauty of art." "Proust: The Artists," p.98.

[291] Chernowitz, p.139.

[292] Mourey, "Marcel Proust, John Ruskin et Walter Pater" [Part II], Le Monde Nouveau, 8 (15 oct. 1926), 907. Had Mourey read Proust's letter to Walter Berry (Aug. 1917), he would have discovered the following statement: "Ce Walter est digne de celui qui s'appelait Pater...." (Corr.Gén.,V,40)

[293] Ainslie, "Témoignage d'un Ami," NRF, n.s., 10, no. 112 (1 janv. 1923), 259-60. J.P. Hulin would have the Proust-Pater rapprochement pushed back even earlier to the former's lycée days: "[Proust] probably came to read Pater's works on the advice of Paul Desjardins, who also introduced him to Ruskin, George Eliot and English literature in general." "Proust and Pater," TLS, no. 2942, 18 July 1958, p.409.

[294] Billy, Lettres et Conversations, p.128.

[295] Hulin, "Proust and Pater," p.409. The evidence this critic cites in support of this contention is as follows: "Proust became particularly interested in these essays when

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he was engaged in his translation of Ruskin's The Bible of Amiens: in his footnotes to his translation Proust refers to Pater's essays on architecture included in Miscellaneous Studies ('Art Notes in North Italy'; 'Notre-Dame d'Amiens'; 'Vézélay')." Ibid.

296 Pater, "Preface" [to Studies in the History of the Renaissance], English Literary Criticism: Romantic and Victorian, ed. Daniel G. Hoffman and Samuel Hynes (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), p.283.

297 Cf. Barbara J. Bucknall: "In his fidelity to the impression, the narrator will truly resemble Elstir, who represents the world in terms of transfiguration and illusion, because of his fidelity to the truth of the impression." "Vision and the Visual Arts," The Religion of Art in Proust (Urbana, Ill., 1969), p.75.

298 Pater, "Preface," p.283.

299 Pater, "Conclusion" [to Studies...], p.286.

300 Ibid., p.288.

301 Baker, "Ivory Tower as Laboratory: Pater and Proust," Accent, 19, iv (Autumn 1959), 212. Yet even Pater hints at the need for holding the transitory moment in abeyance when, in his essay on Winckelmann, he suggests that the ability to discover truth resides in the power to distinguish and halt those fugitive and delicate impressions. Cited by André, "Walter Pater et Marcel Proust," p.1083.

302 Pater, "Conclusion," p.287.

303 Pater, "Preface," p.284.

304 Pater, "Conclusion," p.287.

305 Fernandez, "Note sur l'Esthétique de Proust," p.273.

306 "Les deux essais," writes Fernandez, "malgré la quarantaine d'années qui les séparent, sont de la même époque spirituelle, je veux dire qu'ils marquent une même étape dans ce qu'on pourrait appeler la conquête des droits de l'art." Ibid., p.272.

307 Hulin, "Proust and Pater," p.409.

308 Proust, "Enquête sur le Renouvellement du Style,"

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Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.645. The survey was conducted by La Renaissance Politique, Littéraire, Artistique; Proust's response appeared in the issue dated 22 juillet 1922. Cf. the following: "...je m'apercevais que ce livre essentiel, le seul livre vrai, un grand écrivain n'a pas, dans le sens courant, à l'inventer, puisqu'il existe déjà en chacun de nous, mais à le traduire. Le devoir et la tâche d'un écrivain sont ceux d'un traducteur." (TR,III,890)

309 Cf. Hulin, "Proust and Pater," p.409: "Whether Proust ever read The Child in the House we cannot positively state, though that is most likely, since this essay belongs to the same series [i.e., Miscellaneous Studies, from which Proust cited Pater's essays on architecture]. At any rate, there is in this essay a conception of the past, a treatment of things past, whose resemblance to Proust's early formulation of his main themes cannot fail to strike a careful reader. There is on both sides the same emphasis on voluntary memory, the same belief in the continuity of the past, and the idea that the recurring of certain conditions will always release the emotions associated with these conditions."

310 Miller, "Proust and Pater," TLS, no. 2930, 25 April 1958, p.225.

311 This section on Pater was written without the benefit of Lorenzo Marcanini's study of Pater's influence upon Proustian aesthetics, comprising chapters 3 and 4 of his Proust: Arte e Conoscenza (Florence, 1933).

312 This question has been explored in great detail by Johnson in his article, "Proust's Early Portraits de peintres," pp.397-408. Among the similarities he notes are the following: "The same melancholy tone which weaves through "Phares" becomes the dominant theme of Portraits de peintres, although now the mode has shifted from major to minor ... Instead of descriptive sentences to evoke these canvases Proust makes extensive use of sentence fragments. He suggests rather than describes both individual paintings and the works of a given painter. This again is a technique Baudelaire had used in his "Phares" ... Like Baudelaire...Proust not only evokes through poetry the paintings he loves, but he also uses these poems as a vehicle for expressing certain personal notions regarding the role of art, the artist and the spectator." (pp.401-2)

313 Billy, Lettres et Conversations, p.29.

314 Chernowitz, p.14, states this as a fact.

315 Proust, "En Mémoire...," p.110. Reversing this

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early opinion, Proust later wrote: "...il est d'un bien agréable fétichisme de croire qu'une bonne partie du Beau est réalisée hors de nous et que nous n'aurons pas à la créer." "Préface"[to Blanche's Propos de Peintre], Contre Sainte-Beuve..., pp.580-81.

316 How deeply Proust was imbued with a Platonic reverence for beauty can be inferred from the following definition he coined while still in his twenties: "[La Beauté véritable] ne peut être si extérieure, la véritable Beauté, on doit la pressentir et l'aimer comme une âme à travers des ombres infinies, plutôt que de la saisir matérielle, si directement, si parfaitement qu'en vérité on en ferait d'équivalentes contrefaçons." "La Beauté Véritable," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.342.

317 Cocking, "Proust: The Artists," p.100. Cf. Chernowitz, p.221: "In his art criticism Baudelaire already stresses the unique quality of each artist, in the art of whom the poet envisages the individual above the universal traits of the age, which is a conception Proust was to continue."

318 Lowery, Marcel Proust et Henry James: Une Confrontation (Paris, 1964), p.229.

319 The definition occurs in the essay "Contre l'Obscurité," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.394. Baudelaire's phrase is cited at the conclusion of Proust's essay entitled "Sainte-Beuve et Baudelaire," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.262.

320 Mein, Proust's Challenge to Time, p.111.

321 Ibid., pp.112-13.

322 Nicolas, "Du Côté de la Nature...," p.83.

323 See fn. 219.

324 According to Inoue, "Proust et Chardin," p.10: "L'esthétique proustienne sera guidée d'ores et déjà par cette énergie instinctive (Proust ne dit pas 'intuitive') que nous apercevons nettement marquée par opposition à l'intelligence dans les deux articles[i.e., 'Contre l'Obscurité,' where the term used is puissance instinctive, and 'Chardin'] écrits au temps de son début manqué de la vie littéraire." This critic goes on to remark (in a footnote) that "le mot énergie instinctive est de Baudelaire: 'Ainsi, M.G. [Constantin Guys], traduisant fidèlement ses propres impressions, marque avec une énergie instinctive les points culminants ou lumineux d'un objet.' (Le Peintre de la vie moderne: L'art mnémonique, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1961, p.1166)."

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[325] Monnin-Hornung, pp.22-3.

[326] A modified restatement of a formula also expressed in the art criticism of the Goncourts, Zola, and Proust.

[327] Cited by Robert Kopp, "Dandy, Poet, Art Critic," Baudelaire: The Artist and His World, trans. Robert Allen and James Emmons (Cleveland, 1969), p.47.

[328] Mayne, "Editor's Introduction," The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays, by Charles Baudelaire, trans. & ed. J. Mayne (London/New York, 1965), p.x.

[329] Monnin-Hornung, p.193.

[330] Proust, "Sainte-Beuve et Baudelaire," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.258.

[331] According to René Huyghe, "...plutôt qu'à l'imagination, puissance diffuse et gratuite, Proust donnera-t-il la prééminence à la sensibilité qui, elle, reste adhérente au réel, se nourrit de lui et le nourrit par un échange, une réciprocité." "Proust et la Peinture...," p.14. Cf. Jacques Bret: "...Proust accorde à la sensibilité une grande place dans la création de l'artiste, si grande qu'elle peut compenser l'absence d'imagination ... La sensibilité est soeur jumelle de l'imagination: la première crée, la seconde renouvelle la vision." "La Genèse de l'Oeuvre d'Art et l'Esthétique de Proust," Marcel Proust: Etude Critique ([Genève], [1946]), pp.163, 176.

[332] Cf. Lucette Mouline: "...l'imagination préforme le réel dans une anticipation où les sens abdiquent devant sa vitalité; elle présente à l'esprit les séductions des choses ... elle substitue à l'empreinte brute que laisserait le réel sur un esprit vierge de passé, une perspective à jamais faussée qui restera pourtant à nos yeux la seule vérité ... ce qui serait la vision, c'est-à-dire la saisie immédiate, actuelle, débarassée des espérances et des nostalgies, l'imagination s'en repaît encore pour faire miroiter à l'esprit diverses tentations." "La Mer et la Vision Proustienne dans les Ebauches du 'Temps perdu,'" Revue des Sciences Humaines, 137 (janv.-mars 1970), 97.

[333] Fernandez, "Note sur l'Esthétique de Proust," p.277.

[334] Monnin-Hornung, p.22.

[335] Proust, Correspondance avec sa Mère, p.202.

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[336] In a letter (1904) asking his friend Georges de Lauris for the loan of several books in order to check his notes on Ruskin, Proust added: "I won't mention Fromentin's Le Sahara et le Sahel [sic] because I am sure you don't have it." Letters to a Friend, p.40.

[337] In his preface to Blanche's Propos de Peintre, Proust wrote as follows: "Qu'on se rappelle que dans les Maîtres d'autrefois écrits pourtant plusieurs siècles après la mort de ces peintres hollandais, le plus grand d'entre eux, Ver Meer de Delft, n'est même pas nommé." (emphasis Proust's) "Préface," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.580. This statement is not entirely true. While there is no section exclusively devoted to the art of Vermeer, Fromentin does mention this painter in passing: "Van der Meer has appeared in hardly any publication in France, but since he has certain gifts of observation, which are rather unusual even in his own country, the journey [to Holland] would be worthwhile for anyone who wanted to learn about this particular aspect of Dutch art." Cited by Piero Bianconi, "An Outline of the Artist's Critical History," The Complete Paintings of Vermeer (New York: Abrams, 1967), p.10. Cf. the following undated letter to Blanche: "Je suis loin d'avoir pour Fromentin en général l'admiration qu'a par exemple pour lui Montesquiou. Mais enfin son livre si imparfait sur la Hollande (où le nom de Vermeer n'est même pas prononcé) est un livre célèbre, entouré d'une haute considération." (Corr.Gén.,III,123)

[338] "Préface," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.580. Proust seems to have felt that Fromentin's public image was just as much of a "pose" as the persona of his Maîtres d'Autrefois; cf. the following letter (1907) to Georges de Lauris: "You and I have always known that Fromentin wasn't quite what 'a vain people thinks.' But to judge from a short extract given in the newspapers, some letters published in the Revue des Deux Mondes lift the subtle mask which he had created for himself and reveal...what we had guessed. In any case, I am proud of my discernment, because under each academically vague phrase of the Maîtres d'Autrefois I had written in a proper name. The letters give the same--it was omitted in the official title. Notwithstanding all this it would make agreeable reading to go with the paintings and is most 'recommendable.'" Letters to a Friend, p.94.

[339] Proust, "Un Professeur de Beauté," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.518.

[340] Chernowitz, p.14.

[341] Proust, "En Mémoire...," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.112. There appears to be somewhat of a contradiction in Proust's thinking here, for the attempt to stress the differing technical means of each craft is minimized when Proust's narrator

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argues that "le style pour l'écrivain, aussi bien que la couleur pour le peintre, est une question non de technique mais de vision." (TR,III,895) Cf. Brincourt, Les Oeuvres et les Lumières..., p.57: "...dans cette dernière réponse, la lucidité habituelle de Proust semble lui faire défaut. Selon toute probabilité, il est ici victime des idées avancées par les théoriciens de l'impressionnisme en peinture. Proust n'assimile pas fortuitement l'écrivain au peintre. Si les conceptions esthétiques trouvent leur originalité dans la nature même des oeuvres qui les inspirent, elles y trouvent encore leur limites."

342 Fromentin, Correspondance et Fragments Inédits, ed. Pierre Blanchon (Paris, 1912), p.315.

343 Proust, Lettres à Mme C..., p.153; cited by Monnin-Hornung, pp.21-2.

344 Cited by Louis Gonse, Eugène Fromentin: Peintre et Ecrivain (Paris, 1881), p.225.

345 Chernowitz's suggestion (p.14) that "to a man of Proust's wide reading and erudition, Diderot's Salons were no doubt very familiar" has been rebuked by L.A. Bisson in his review of Chernowitz's book; see his article "Proust and Painting, by Maurice Chernowitz," MLR, 42, iii (July 1947), 387-90, esp. p.389.

346 Johnson, "The Painter and His Art...," p.176.

347 May, "Chardin Vu par Diderot et par Proust," p.417.

348 See, e.g., Autret, L'Influence de Ruskin..., passim; Maurice Bardèche, "Les Années de Ruskin," Marcel Proust Romancier, 2 vols. (Paris, 1971), I, pp.127-63; Bisson, "Proust and Ruskin: Reconsidered in the Light of Lettres à une Amie," MLR, 39, i (Jan. 1944), 28-37; Jacques Chabannes, "Du Côté de Chez Ruskin," Défense de Marcel Proust, ed. Louis Emié and Henri Bonnet (Paris, 1930), pp.25-35; ibid., "Amiens avec Ruskin et Marcel Proust," Volonté Française, 22 juin 1926 [not consulted]; Guyot, "Ruskin et Proust," Lettres [Genève], 5 (1944), 55-70 [rpt. RLC, 21, i (janv.-mars 1947), 54-68; and again in his De Rousseau à Marcel Proust (Neuchâtel, 1968), pp.211-19]; Jephcott, "Ruskin and Rodin," Proust and Rilke..., pp.103-12; Johnson, "Proust, Ruskin, et la Petite Figure au Portail des Libraires à la Cathédrale de Rouen," BSAMP, no. 23 (1973), 1721-36; Kolb, "Proust et Ruskin: Nouvelles Perspectives," CAIEF, no. 12 (juin 1960), 259-73; ibid., "Proust et Ruskin d'après une Lettre de 1917," BSAMP, no. 23 (1973), 1569-70 [not consulted]; Henri Lemaître, Proust et Ruskin (Toulouse: Privat-Didier, 1944)[not consulted]; ibid., "De Jean Santeuil à La Recherche du Temps perdu: La Médiation Ruskinienne," BSAMP, no. 3 (1953), 58-71; André Maurois, "Proust et Ruskin," Essays

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and Studies [by Members of the English Assoc.], 17 (1932), 25-32; McLendon, "Ruskin, Morris et la Première Esthétique de Marcel Proust," pp.402-14; Healy McNeice, John Ruskin dans l'Oeuvre de Marcel Proust (n.p., 1935) [not consulted]; Mourey, "Marcel Proust, John Ruskin, et Walter Pater," Le Monde Nouveau, 8 (15 août - 15 sept. 1926), 702-14 [Part I - not consulted] and (15 oct. 1926), 896-909 [Part II]; Murray, "Marcel Proust et John Ruskin," MF, 189 (1 juillet-1 août 1926), 100-12; ibid., "Marcel Proust as a Critic and Disciple of Ruskin," pp.614-19; ibid., "The Influence of Ruskin on Marcel Proust," Proceed. Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, vol. 2, part 8 (May 1932), 465-515; Nordlinger-Riefstahl, "Proust et le Génie de Ruskin," p.7; Guy de Pourtalès, "Note sur Marcel Proust et John Ruskin," De Hamlet à Swann... (Paris, 1924), pp.219-31; A.J. Roche, "Proust as Translator of Ruskin," PMLA, 45, iv (Dec. 1930), 1214-17; Roquin, "Venise: Un 'Pèlerinage Ruskinien' de Marcel Proust," pp.1674-82; and, finally, Sybil de Souza, L'Influence de Ruskin sur Proust (Montpellier, 1932).

349 Cf. the following letter (30 Jan. 1908) to Robert Dreyfus: "...j'ai pris Ruskin à La Sizeranne, à combien d'autres, à la Célébrité." Souvenirs sur Marcel Proust..., p.222. In two letters addressed to his mother (25? Sept. 1899 and 2 Oct. 1899), Proust specifically requested that she send him La Sizeranne's book. Correspondance avec sa Mère, pp.148 and 156 resp. Cf., also, a letter (4 Jan. 1905) addressed to Fernand Gregh: "J'aurais été ravi de rencontrer Chevrillon [André Chevrillon, anglophile, author of a work on Ruskin and a book entitled L'Enchantement Breton] que je connais, mais que je n'ai pas vu depuis longtemps. J'aurais été content de lui parler de son article de la Revue germanique, sur la jeunesse de Ruskin, qui est épatant." Gregh, Mon Amitié avec Marcel Proust (Souvenirs et Lettres Inédites) ([Paris], 1958), pp.112-13. Nordlinger-Riefstahl, "Proust et le Génie de Ruskin," p.7, also mentions a book on Ruskin by Jacques Bardoux (no title given) with which Proust was purportedly familiar.

350 Proust, Lettres à une Amie, p.14. Henri Lemaître is obviously mistaken when he suggests--in connection with Ruskin's Praeterita--that Proust "ni dans sa conversation ni dans ses écrits, il ne lui est jamais arrivé de mentionner ce livre." "De Jean Santeuil à La Recherche...," p.61.

351 Cf. Lemaître, ibid., p.69: "...Proust n'avait probablement pas lu les Peintres Modernes...." This statement is simply erroneous.

352 Cf. Nordlinger, "Au Lecteur," Lettres à une Amie, p.ix: "Il me souvient d'avoir, pendant une heure d'orage et d'obscurité, pris refuge avec Marcel à l'intérieur de la basilique, et d'y avoir lu avec lui, dans les Stones of Venice, des passages d'une beauté appropriée à l'endroit."

353 Cf. Brach, "De Balbec à Venise," p.228: "Le Repos de

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Saint-Marc, dans sa médiocre traduction, était à ses yeux le guide le plus utile."

354 Cf. the following letter (May 1906) to Mme Catusse: "I think that if one used only these 'Mornings' as guides to Florence, one would see nothing there is to see and would wear oneself out climbing to the top of a ladder at seven o'clock in the morning to distinguish some entirely repainted Giottos not worth the trouble ... If after you come back... and if you are kind enough to come and see me once more, I will show you a copy of Mornings in Florence, an admirably illustrated edition, which I have just received...." Letters of Marcel Proust, p.143.

355 Chernowitz, fn., p.195.

356 In connection with the first-named work, cf. the following letter (May 1900) to Marie Nordlinger: "Vous ai-je jamais remerciée pour Queen of the Air? Je vous enverrai en échange le Queen of the Air que j'avais à moi pour garder plutôt le vôtre." Lettres à une Amie, p.20. Iwasaki, "Marcel Proust et l'Italie...," pp.89-90, states that Proust was familiar with the Guide.

357 Nordlinger, "Au Lecteur," Lettres à une Amie, p.viii.

358 Cf. the following letter, tentatively dated Oct. 1899: "Tu serais bien gentille demain matin de me traduire sur des feuilles du format que tu trouveras (plutôt grand) sans écrire au dos, sans laisser aucun blanc, en serrant ce que je t'ai montré des Sept Lampes." Correspondance avec sa Mère, p.182. In the opinion of Philip Kolb, "le traducteur de Ruskin, ce n'était pas Marcel Proust, mais sa mère." "Proust et Ruskin: Nouvelles Perspectives," p.261.

359 Lauris, "Preface," Letters to a Friend, p.19.

360 Cf. Billy, Lettres et Conversations, p.129: "J'ai aidé Marcel à traduire la Bible d'Amiens et j'ai passé cinq ou six soirées avec lui à chercher le sens de certains passages."

361 Cf. de Lauris, Letters to a Friend, p.18: "In connection with his translations of Ruskin, Marcel would sometimes consult Robert d'Humières, the translator of Kipling, and as fine a scholar of English as he was of French." This fact is repeated by Billy, Lettres et Conversations, p.130.

362 I have not been able to uncover supporting statements for either the Bibesco brothers or Yeatman, both sources which Kolb cites in his article "Proust et Ruskin: Nouvelles Perspectives," p.262.

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[363] Kolb, "Proust et Ruskin...," p.262.

[364] Cf. Murray, "Marcel Proust as a Critic and Disciple of Ruskin," p.614: "Proust not only translates, but he expounds and criticises. He verifies each Scriptural allusion and compares each statement made by the author with various ideas expressed elsewhere throughout his work." Guyot draws a parallel with the visual arts to make the same point: "Il en va de Proust étudiant Ruskin," he writes, "comme de ces peintres de génie s'appliquant à copier une oeuvre d'un grand artiste qu'ils admirent: Manet devant Velasquez ou Goya, Van Gogh devant Delacroix. C'est bien l'oeuvre d'un autre qu'ils reproduisent, et cependant ce n'est plus elle. La personnalité de copiste, même alors qu'il a cru être fidèle, transparaît, rayonne, envahit toute la toile." "Sur Ruskin et Proust," De Rousseau à Marcel Proust, p.215.

[365] Cf. Bardèche, "Les Années de Ruskin," p.147: "On ne peut rien comprendre à Proust, si l'on fait de lui un disciple, même éphémère, de ce missionnaire impérieux. Mais Ruskin a nourri sa pensée ... il a aidé Proust à se reconnaître et à voir." Cf., also, Murray, "Marcel Proust et John Ruskin," p.102: "Cette admiration que Proust a sentie pour Ruskin, qu'on se garde d'y voir uniquement l'hommage romanesque d'un disciple oisif." Roquin does Proust a disservice when he writes: "...c'est en 'disciple' déclaré du champion des préraphaélites qu'il part pour Venise, en mai 1900." "Venise: Un 'Pèlerinage Ruskinien' de Marcel Proust," p.1677.

[366] Monnin-Hornung, p.34.

[367] Proust, "En Mémoire...," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., pp.140-1.

[368] Lemaître, "De Jean Santeuil à La Recherche...," p.69.

[369] Bardèche, "Les Années de Ruskin," p.133.

[370] The title of one of the essays included in Proust's Pastiches et Mélanges, viz. "En Mémoire des Eglises Assassinées," reflects the degree to which he considered church architecture a vital, living symbol of the fourth dimension, i.e., that of time. One need only think of Combray's steeples, those of Martinville, and the pilgrimages which the characters in A la Recherche undertake to the churches at Saint-André-des-Champs and Balbec to gain some notion of the importance of Ruskin's essays to Proust's conception of his novel. The latter comes close to presenting a delightful pastiche of Ruskin's diatribes in Elstir's "sermon" on the iconographic symbolism of the Balbec church façade (JF,I,840-42).

[371] The statement is cited by Proust (in La Sizeranne's

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translation) in his essay "En Mémoire...," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.121: "...mon affaire est de dessiner ce que je vois, non ce que je sais."

372 A repetition of the same idea recurs much later in the novel; as the narrator stands before the Elstirs in the Guermantes collection, he observes: "Elstir tâchait d'arracher à ce qu'il venait de sentir ce qu'il savait; son effort avait souvent été de dissoudre cet agrégat de raisonnements que nous appelons vision." (CG2,II,419)

373 Cf. the following letter (7 June 1912) by Monet to his friend Gustave Geffroy: "...le plus souvent, pour arriver à rendre ce que je ressens, j'en oublie totalement les règles les plus élémentaires de la peinture, s'il en existe toutefois! Bref, je laisse apparaître bien des fautes, pour fixer mes sensations." Cited by Raymond T. Riva, "A Probable Model for Proust's Elstir," MLN, 78 (1963), 309. This view, however, is closer to Elstir's tabula rasa approach to artistic perception than it is to his stress upon poetic vision. Chernowitz, who also cites Monet's letter to Geffroy (p.105), includes the highly significant sentence preceding the passage just quoted: "Je sais seulement que je fais ce que je pense pour exprimer ce que j'éprouve devant la nature." (emphasis mine) According to my reading of this somewhat ambiguous statement, Monet's process would appear to be in direct contradiction to that espoused by Turner and, by extension, Elstir. Dunlop, "Proust and Painting," p.109, cites the following confession by Monet to Claude Roger-Marx: "...my only virtue resides in my submission to instinct. Because I have rediscovered the powers of intuition and allowed them to predominate, I have been able to identify myself with the created world and absorb myself into it." This is clearly not the same process as that described by the narrator of Proust's novel.

374 "Nous pouvons oublier aujourd'hui les services qu'il a rendus à Hunt, à Rossetti, à Millais; mais ce qu'il a fait pour Giotto, pour Carpaccio, pour Bellini, nous ne le pouvons pas. Son oeuvre divine ne fut pas de susciter des vivants, mais de ressusciter des morts." Proust, "En Mémoire...," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.115.

375 Letter dated 2 Oct. 1899. Corr. avec sa Mère, p.156.

376 Cited by Nordlinger-Riefstahl, "Proust et le Génie de Ruskin," p.7.

377 Maurois, "Proust et Ruskin," pp.28, 31. Cf. Guyot, "Sur Ruskin et Proust," p.213: "Dans ses Praeterita, Ruskin note...son goût de l'observation patiente, précise, méticuleuse, des objets. Enfant, il passait ses journées dans un grand jardin; il n'éprouvait aucun désir de cultiver les fleurs, de les soigner, mais la passion de les regarder, de découvrir le

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secret de leur structure ... [Proust] était doué, lui aussi, de cette étonnante capacité d'observation...au sein de la chose observée."

[378] According to Jacques Chabannes, "[Proust] s'est regardé en Ruskin comme dans un miroir." "Du Côté de Chez Ruskin," p.26.

[379] Cf. Jephcott, Proust and Rilke..., p.110: "...neither Rodin nor Ruskin allowed the artist to use his imagination to alter or supplement what was provided by observation. The work of art was therefore derived solely from observed reality, but was more 'real' than so-called reality ... In making it the artist had concentrated the meaning which was present only much more diffusely in his model." Jephcott's statement wrongly assumes that the artist could consciously exclude the imaginative faculty from the process of artistic perception. Kolb has recently suggested that Ruskin may not have been Proust's source for this aesthetic concept: "...il n'est pas certain," he writes, "que ce dernier ait emprunté au maître anglais le concept de l'art comme vision poétique de l'univers, l'idée qu'un artiste doit trouver en lui-même la matière de son oeuvre...." "Proust et Ruskin...," p.266. Kolb, however, cites no alternative source for this theory.

[380] Murray, "The Influence of Ruskin on Marcel Proust," pp.471-2.

[381] Autret, L'Influence de Ruskin sur...Proust, p.93.

[382] In Lettres et Conversations, p.128, Billy writes: "J'en parlai à Marcel et je lui fis lire le Culte des Héros dans la traduction Izoulet...."

[383] Murray, "Marcel Proust et John Ruskin," pp.110-11.

[384] Cf. Proust's response (c.25 août 1904) to an inquiry ("Enquête sur la Séparation des Beaux-Arts et de l'Etat") conducted by Maurice Le Blond for Les Arts de la Vie: "Je ne crois pas que la liberté soit très utile à l'artiste et je crois que, surtout pour l'artiste d'aujourd'hui, la discipline serait comme au névropathe entièrement bienfaisante. Et la discipline est une chose féconde en soi-même, quelle que soit la valeur de ce qu'elle prescrit." "Les Beaux-Arts et l'Etat," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.496. It is worth recalling that at the time this survey was being conducted Proust was actively engaged in his translation of Ruskin's Bible of Amiens.

[385] Proust, "John Ruskin," Pastiches et Mélanges(?); cited by Hokari, "Proust et Gustave Moreau...," p.40.

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386 Autret, L'Influence de Ruskin sur...Proust, p.107. Cf. Proust's letter (March 1900) to Marie Nordlinger (cited earlier): "Le savoir, dans le sens d'une chose qui est toute faite en dehors de nous et qu'on peut apprendre comme dans les sciences, est nul en art." Lettres à une Amie, p.17.

387 Cf., also, the following passages: "...certains artistes d'une autre époque ont, dans un simple morceau, réalisé quelque chose qui ressemble à ce que le maître peu à peu s'est rendu compte que lui-même avait voulu faire. Alors il voit en cet ancien comme un précurseur; il aime chez lui, sous une tout autre forme, un effort momentanément, partiellement fraternel. Il y a des morceaux de Turner dans l'oeuvre de Poussin, une phrase de Flaubert dans Montesquieu." (SG,II,816) "Bien qu'on dise avec raison qu'il n'y a pas de progrès, pas de découvertes en art, mais seulement dans les sciences, et que chaque artiste recommençant pour son compte un effort individuel ne peut y être aidé ni entravé par les efforts de tout autre, il faut pourtant reconnaître que, dans la mesure où l'art met en lumière certaines lois, une fois qu'une industrie les a vulgarisées, l'art antérieur perd rétrospectivement un peu de son originalité." (JF,I,838)

388 It is Ironside's contention, however, that Proust's characters "can have their original being elsewhere [than in Proust's private vision] no more than Carpaccio's courtisans, Elstir's roses or Rembrandt's old women can have taken shape outside the painters' imagination. It is the quality of art to prolong their existence in responsive minds; and in this sense art may be considered a superior language whereby what is essential and essentially valuable in a personality--a Ruskinian conception--may be communicated to others..." (emphasis mine) "The Artistic Vision of Proust," p.40.

389 Duncan, "Imaginary Artists...," pp.556-7. Proust's citation of Ruskin's purported statement upon hearing of the death of Turner--a remark which Proust, in turn, applies to Ruskin--would tend to invalidate Duncan's distinction: "C'est par ces yeux [de Turner], fermés à jamais au fond du tombeau, que des générations qui ne sont pas encore nées verront la nature." "En Mémoire...," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.129.

390 Cf. Murray, "The Influence of Ruskin on Marcel Proust," p.488: "...there is one thing which is not at all Ruskinian, namely, the belief that a man's immortality is limited to his survival in his works, a belief which gives to Proust's worship of the past a pessimism unknown to Ruskin."

391 Cf. the following letter (1922) to Vaudoyer: "...j'ai pu me procurer un ouvrage belge [sur Vermeer] dont les nombreuses reproductions, regardées avec votre article à la main, m'ont permis de reconnaître dans des tableaux différents, des accessoires identiques...." (Corr.Gén.,IV,90-91)

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[392] Kolb, "Proust et Ruskin...," p.266ff. Autret had made the same suggestion five years earlier: "Ce procédé technique de la répétition, c'est aussi le procédé de la composition thématique, que Proust a découvert chez Ruskin, et sur lequel il a ensuite basé la véritable structure de Swann." L'Influence de Ruskin sur...Proust, p.116.

[393] Cf. Lemaître, "De Jean Santeuil à La Recherche...," pp.62-3: "...il s'agissait de deux tempéraments poétiques, de deux de ces 'âmes sensibles,' sur qui les souvenirs d'enfance exercent une telle influence...." Guyot, on the other hand, stresses their totally divergent backgrounds: "...Ruskin, puritain, biblique, moralisateur, prophète d'une rénovation sociale et religieuse; Proust, juif par sa mère, indifférent aux choses de la foi, mondain, observateur impitoyable et sans illusions des moeurs du grand monde; Ruskin, grand voyageur, courant chaque année la France, la Suisse et l'Italie, avec une santé, qui, plutôt faible dans sa jeunesse, se raffermit plus tard et lui permit d'atteindre le bel âge de quatre-vingt-un ans; Proust, malade dès l'enfance, pouvant à peine supporter une promenade à la campagne, n'ayant jamais vu l'Italie (Venise) qu'une fois, en 1900, passant les dernières années de sa vie au lit et mourant à cinquante et un ans." "Sur Ruskin et Proust," p.212.

[394] Proust, Lettres à une Amie, p.34. Cf. Nordlinger's slightly different version of the same remark: "Même si Ruskin ne connaissait rien aux tableaux...dans ses petits discours à leur sujet, il dessinait lui-même de merveilleux tableaux qui inspirent notre admiration, et je tâcherai de les exposer et les faire connaître en France sous la forme de reproductions délicates et exaltées." "Proust et le Génie de Ruskin," p.7. Proust, at this stage, was still able to overlook Ruskin's eccentricities. Writing to a friend in May of 1905, he stated, on the subject of Gobineau, "Ce qu'il dit d'Hérodote est du pur Ruskin (autre vieux fou charmant)..." Dreyfus, Souvenirs sur Marcel Proust..., p.168.

[395] McLendon, "Ruskin, Morris et la Première Esthétique de Marcel Proust," p.412.

[396] Cited by E. de Clermont-Tonnerre, Robert de Montesquiou et Marcel Proust (Paris, 1925), p.148. Cf. Nordlinger-Riefstahl's account of their joint translation sessions: "...peu à peu, l'enthousiasme de Marcel s'attiédait. Il s'écriait: 'Qu'il est assommant, ce bonhomme-là!' ou: 'Il commence à m'ennuyer,' ou même: 'Je n'ai aucune idée de ce qu'il veut dire, et je m'en fiche pas mal!'" "Proust et le Génie de Ruskin," p.7.

[397] Ibid., p.149. Cf. the following letter (1908) to Georges de Lauris: "This doesn't mean that Ruskin's works aren't often stupid, fanatical, exasperating, false and ir-

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ritating, but they are always praiseworthy and always great." Proust, Letters to a Friend, p.110.

398 Cited by Guyot, "Sur Ruskin et Proust," p.212. In an undated letter to Montesquiou, Proust confessed: "J'ai d'ailleurs aimé Ruskin avec un extrême septicisme[sic]dont j'ai même marqué, toute révérence gardée, l'étendue. Et voici que si j'en crois le ton général de certaines petites revues, ceux qui m'ont le plus reproché ma faiblesse à son égard, en font maintenant un dieu, sans défauts, sans mélange du périssable." (Corr.Gén.,I,123-4) It is interesting to compare this statement with Proust's warning to Blanche, in 1919, not to place Ruskin's name on the dedication page of his Propos de Peintre: "Je crois qu'on n'admire pas Ruskin à sa valeur; mais il représente maintenant pour l'opinion en partie erronée des écrivains et des artistes une école d'esthétisme si fâcheuse, que son nom je le crains embrouillerait les choses et jetterait un jour faux, sur moi, ce qui est sans importance, sur vous, ce qui en a beaucoup." (Corr.Gén.,III,145)

399 Proust, "En Mémoire...," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.130. As an illustration of Ruskin's bad faith, Proust cites a passage from the latter's Stones of Venice on the causes of the decadence of that city.

400 Cited by Murray, "The Influence of Ruskin on Marcel Proust," p.489.

401 Proust, "En Mémoire...," p.129.

402 Cf. Proust's earlier remark, contained in the same essay, p.110: "...la Beauté ne peut pas être aimée d'une manière féconde si on l'aime seulement pour les plaisirs qu'elle donne ... le plaisir esthétique nous est donné par surcroît si nous aimons la Beauté pour elle-même, comme quelque chose de réel existant en dehors de nous et infiniment plus important que la joie qu'elle nous donne."

403 The following passage from A la Recherche serves as a perfect illustration of the ignoble uses to which the aesthete puts his vast knowledge of art: "Swann possédait une merveilleuse écharpe orientale, bleue et rose, qu'il avait achetée parce que c'était exactement celle de la Vierge du Magnificat. Mais Mme Swann ne voulait pas la porter. Une fois seulement elle laissa son mari lui commander une toilette toute criblée de pâquerettes, de bluets, de myosotis et de campanules d'après la Primavera du Printemps." (JF,I,617-18) Proust had criticized his friend Montesquiou for a similar failing.

404 Monnin-Hornung, p.42.

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405 Ruskin, Elements of Drawing; cited by Meyers, "Proust's Aesthetic Analogies...," p.384. In his translation of Sesame and Lilies, Proust cites Ruskin's definition of the morality of art: "...le grand art implique l'union de ces deux pouvoirs: il n'est que l'expression, par un tempérament doué, d'une âme pure. S'il n'y a pas de don, il n'y a pas d'art du tout, et s'il n'y a pas d'âme--bien plus pas d'âme droite--l'art est inférieur, fût-il habile." Cited by McLendon, "Ruskin, Morris et la Première Esthétique de Marcel Proust," p.404. Ruskin had praised the Pre-Raphaelite painters precisely because they sought "noble grounds for noble emotions" in their programmatic canvases. Cited by Jackson, "Proust et les Préraphaëlites," p.96.

406 Proust, "En Mémoire...," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.113.

407 Cf. Guyot, "Sur Ruskin et Proust," p.215: "Proust ne discute guère les idées du maître anglais. Tout ce qu'il écrit au sujet de Ruskin témoigne d'une connaissance précise du modèle et d'une documentation sérieuse. Toutefois on serait déçu, si l'on allait chercher, dans les Préfaces à La Bible d'Amiens et à Sésame et les Lys, avant tout des renseignements précis sur Ruskin et un exposé objectif de sa doctrine. Proust nous donne quelque chose de beaucoup plus personnel."

408 Proust, "En Mémoire...," p.135.

409 Ibid., p.106.

410 Lemaître, "De Jean Santeuil à La Recherche...," p.65.

411 Cf. Proust's letter (19? July 1919) to Daniel Halévy: "Les mystérieuses lois qui président à l'éclosion de la vérité esthétique aussi bien que de la vérité scientifique sont faussées, si un raisonnement étranger intervient d'abord." Choix de Lettres, p.247. The "raisonnement étranger" alluded to in the letter is one of ultra-nationalism. Proust was extremely saddened by the fact that Wagner's music--and the artistic genius of Germany as a whole--was intentionally suppressed by the French government during the First World War, and was replaced by a vastly inferior repertoire of French minor masters. In "A Propos de Baudelaire," he wrote as follows: "...la nécessité de n'inscrire sur un menu musical que des oeuvres françaises ou alliées, fit sortir de la poussière Faust et Roméo. En pareille matière le cuisinier n'a qu'à se conformer aux interdictions du médecin nationaliste. On change le nom des entremets comme le nom des rues. Et de grands métaphysiciens purent faire une histoire de la philosophie universelle sans prononcer une seule fois les noms abhorrés de Leibnitz, de Kant et de Hegel, sans compter les autres. Cela ne laissait pas de creuser quelques vides, insuffisamment remplis par Victor Cousin." Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.624.

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412 Proust, "En Mémoire...," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.134.

413 According to Murray, "...most of the resemblances between Proust and Ruskin are the outcome of affinity rather than of direct influence." In Nordlinger's opinion, "Ce fut une coïncidence heureuse, une révélation d'affinités attendues." Murray, "The Influence of Ruskin on Marcel Proust," p.513; Nordlinger, "Au Lecteur," Lettres à une Amie, p.vii. Robert de Billy observed: "...jamais conjonction ne fut plus dans la nature des choses, que celle de Marcel avec le philosophe de Brantwood." Lettres et Conversations, p.127.

414 Proust, "En Mémoire...," p.109.

415 The term is borrowed from Grenier's "Elstir ou Proust et la Peinture," p.205.

416 Cf. Victoria Achères, "La Peinture et le Décor de la Vie Chez Proust," Europe, 48, nos. 496-7 (août-sept. 1970), 233: "L'Impressionnisme ne lui semblait pas seulement une technique picturale, il était pour lui une somme de conceptions dont certaines dépassant la peinture pouvaient s'incorporer à d'autres modes d'expression artistique, établissaient avec eux des rapports nouveaux."

417 Chernowitz, p.184.

418 In this respect, I feel obliged to disagree with Bussom's view that Proust's "modern point of view gives a certain historical value to his novel where he would seem to be summing up in a sort of mise au point the most advanced contemporary ideas in the field of painting ... It is as if Proust were trying to act as guide, summing up all that his readers ought to know about the currents in the modern art of their day." "Marcel Proust and Painting," p.62.

419 Fosca, De Diderot à Valéry..., pp.79-80.

420 Feuillerat, Comment Marcel Proust a Composé son Roman, p.60. Since he is basically a modernist, Elstir does reject some subjects: there are no religious or historical works in his oeuvre, nor does he paint such academic subjects as the nude. Cf. Johnson, "The Painter and His Art," p.304.

421 This letter is reproduced in: BSAMP, no. 3, p.33; cited by Johnson, "The Painter and His Art," p.303.

422 Among those critics who identify Proust's fictional artist with this school, one can single out Feuillerat, Comment Marcel Proust..., p.62; Riva, "A Probable Model...,"

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pp.309-10; Brincourt, Les Oeuvres et les Lumières..., p.128; Ironside, "The Artistic Vision of Proust," p.32; and Maurois, "Marcel Proust et la Peinture," Arts, no. 211, 22 avril 1949, pp.1-2.

[423] Diaconu, "Considérations sur le Thème de Proust et de la Peinture," p.549.

[424] See, e.g., Feuillerat, Comment Marcel Proust..., p.61; Riva, "A Probable Model...," pp.308-9; Ironside, "The Artistic Vision of Proust," p.31; Beauregard, "Marcel Proust, Combray et le Côté de Giverny," passim; and Suzanne Bernard, "Rimbaud, Proust et les Impressionnistes," Revue des Sciences Humaines, n.s., 78 (avril-juin 1955), 258.

[425] For a discussion of the Elstir-Manet rapprochement, see Feuillerat, pp.61-2, and Monnin-Hornung, pp.94-5.

[426] Cf. Cocking, "Proust and Painting," p.305: "Manet painted the bundle of asparagus for Proust's friend Ephrussi, who paid him so generously for it that Manet painted another single stick of asparagus as a surprise present. It looks as if Proust may have adapted this incident by turning a positive into a negative; Ephrussi the generous patron becoming Guermantes the parsimonious philistine...."

[427] Monnin-Hornung, pp.96-7.

[428] Albert Feuillerat was one of the first critics to suggest that the name Elstir was an anagram for Whistler (i.e., minus the first two letters). Comment Marcel Proust..., p.62. Cf. Kolb, "The Birth of Elstir and Vinteuil," Marcel Proust: A Critical Panorama, ed. Larkin B. Price (Urbana, Ill., 1973), p. 148: "His name seems to combine the first syllable of Helleu's name with an anagram of Whistler's."

[429] Howard-Johnston, "'Bonjour M. Elstir,'" pp.248-9.

[430] Those critics who favor such an identification include: Adam, "Le Roman de Proust...," p.85, and Chernowitz, p.117. Monnin-Hornung, p.97, prefers to see Renoir's servant--who bears the same first name of Gabrielle and resembles Mme Elstir physically--as a possible source. Dunlop, "Proust and Painting," p.209, is alone in suggesting Monet's first wife as the original inspiration for Proust's character.

[431] Autret, L'Influence de Ruskin sur...Proust, pp.129-33. Cf. Murray, "The Influence of Ruskin on Marcel Proust," p.471: "Elstir...reminds us often of Turner. Like him, he is impelled first of all by the search for truth, the desire to understand the spiritual meaning of nature." Both critics are obviously

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partial in their judgments, since it is Ruskin's influence that they are intent on expressing. Grenier notes that Elstir "prend pour motif une rivière enveloppée de brouillard--ce qui fait penser aux motifs favoris de Turner, le grand précurseur." "Elstir ou Proust et la Peinture," p.207.

[432] Several of the characters in A la Recherche also allude to or name various paintings by Moreau. For example, Swann views Odette in terms of the painter's Salomé (CS,I,267-8); Mme de Villeparisis's abnormal concern vis-à-vis the narrator's father is compared to the gigantic figure of Jupiter beside the frail and winsome figure of a mortal woman in Moreau's canvas; lastly, the duchesse de Guermantes cannot refrain from comparing the image of her friend's son (i.e., laid out on his sickbed beside a statue of a lotus-bearing siren) with Moreau's Jeune Homme et la Mort (CG2,II,520).

[433] See fn. 49-5.

[434] Adelson, "The Vinteuil Sonata," Music and Letters, 23 (July 1942), 230; cited by Alley, "Proust and Art...," p.420.

[435] Bussom, "Marcel Proust and Painting," p.61. Achères, "La Peinture et le Décor...," p.233, also sees a parallel between Cézanne's definition of Impressionism ("...le mélange optique des couleurs ... La division des tons sur la toile et la reconstitution dans la rétine") and the narrator's preference for those works by Elstir which are founded upon an optical illusion.

[436] Laurent Lourson, "Londres Retrouve le Temps Perdu," Arts, no. 537, 12-18 oct. 1955 , p.7, claims that Blanche held the view that Elstir was modelled after Le Sidaner, whose painting entitled Table was in the possession of Proust's family. Grenier, "Elstir ou Proust et la Peinture," p.207, suggests that "plutôt qu'à Claude Monet ou même à un de nos contemporains, je citerais le nom de Strindberg qui pendant une période de sa vie a peint des 'marines' qui mêlent les choses de la terre et celles de la mer dans une énigmatique unité." Riva, "A Probable Model...," pp.310-13, is responsible for the choice of Harrison as Elstir's original; his argument rests on the fact that the narrator mentions Elstir's sojourn in Florida, where Harrison is known to have worked for five years.

[437] Bucknall, The Religion of Art in Proust, p.75. Cf. Johnson, "The Painter and His Art...," p.314: "Ultimately Elstir incarnates Proust's own vision of reality, for one senses that if Proust had been a painter, he would have become an Elstir."

[438] In his study of the primitive version of the Elstir passage in Jeunes Filles, Feuillerat stresses the modification

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of character which Proust effected in his definitive account of Elstir's personality: "Le solitaire froissé est transformé en un sage, éminent par l'intelligence et par le coeur, un philosophe à la conversation magnifique et dominant toutes choses. Il a appris que la vraie sagesse est celle que l'on découvre soi-même au travers de l'erreur, et au-dessus de l'amour propre il a mis la douceur d'instruire les autres par son exemple." Comment Marcel Proust a Composé son Roman, p.59.

439 Cf. Ironside, "The Aesthetic Vision of Proust," p.41: "The figure of Elstir is clearly inadequate as the exponent of Proust's aesthetic 'doctrines' as they finally emerge. We cannot doubt that he was an impressionist painter, but we can deny that the aesthetic doctrine of the impressionists accorded in any way with Proust's most earnest feelings on this subject." Despite the early date (1941) of this article, there is little excuse for such a misreading of the novel. Ironside would have us see in Elstir's paintings a synthesis of the artistic styles of Picasso, Klee, Chagall, and Ernst. Rather than Impressionism, he associates the fictional painter's aesthetic with an "automated psychological symbolism (related to surrealism)...." (ibid.)

440 Cocking, "Proust: The Artists," p.98. Duncan, "Imaginary Artists...," pp.559 & 563, also notes the following differences among the various artist figures: "Elstir is never associated with doubt or disillusionment, as are Bergotte and La Berma. The passages devoted to his painting invariably demonstrate the validity of art and the means by which the artist captures the essence of fleeting beauty ... Elstir's art fulfils the potentiality of the object which Bergotte helps Marcel to assimilate into his own experience...whereas Vinteuil's music fills the listener with an almost mystical conviction and involves him totally, through the emotions, Elstir's painting provokes discussions of the artist's material. The intuition of art only glimpsed through Bergotte and La Berma becomes materialized through Elstir--who directly illustrates the relation between the artist's vision and his creative process--before it is eventually caught in the literary presentation of the drama of Marcel's life."

441 Cf. Feuillerat's account of this revision, op. cit., pp.57-8: "Proust, reprenant son manuscrit, reconnut la faiblesse de cette partie, et il se mit à la récrire presque entièrement. Sur les quinze pages primitives, six seulement ont été conservées ... Ces passages sont aujourd'hui fragmentairement encastrés dans les trente-six pages de la forme définitive, qui constituent, en somme, une longue addition."

442 Theodore R. Bowie is mistaken in claiming that "the transformation of the one-time Bohemian 'Monsieur Biche' into the elegantly austere gentleman, fully conscious of his dignity as creative artist, is merely the latest proof of a peculiar snobbishness which considers art as the privilege of an

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elite embracing the artist himself ... Proust's painter is... proudly conscious of his superior essence." The Painter in French Fiction (Chapel Hill, No. Carol., 1950), pp.9 & 10.

443 Autret, L'Influence de Ruskin sur...Proust, p.47.

444 Bussom, "Marcel Proust and Painting," p.70.

445 According to Stambolian, Marcel Proust and the Creative Encounter, pp.204-5, "...the painter's studio seems a concrete symbol of the inner space of the creative spirit ... In the clair-obscure, 'in-between' atmosphere of these rooms the exterior world enters the space of the esprit in the form of images or 'reflections' that are at once real and ideal." Cf. Johnson, "'La Lanterne Magique': Proust's Metaphorical Toy," L'Esprit Créateur, 11, i (Spring 1971), 29: "In this studio episode the narrator witnesses the mysteries of artistic creation to which the uninitiated rarely have access: he is, as it were, inside Elstir's mind watching pictures develop before they leave their creator for their own life outside the studio and after their creator's death ... the visit to the studio has a literal and an allegorical meaning." In another article Johnson writes that "like Moreau's studio...Elstir's studio has become the realization and consequently the reflection of his inner creative self." "From Artistic Celibacy to Artistic Contemplation," YFS, no. 34 (June 1965), 87.

446 For a discussion of the various meanings of this image, see Irma Tiedtke's study Symbole und Bilder im Werke Marcel Prousts (Hamburg, 1936), pp.89-90; Emily Zants, "Proust's Magic Lantern," MFS, 19, ii (Summer 1973), 211-16; Johnson, "'La Lanterne Magique'...," pp.17-31; and Monnin-Hornung, p.88.

447 Johnson, "The Painter and His Art...," pp.297-8.

448 It is interesting to recall, in this connection, Proust's letter to Marie Nordlinger (March 1900): "...c'est quand les rapports scientifiques...ont disparu de notre esprit et qu'ils ont pris une vie où les éléments chimiques sont oubliés dans une individualité nouvelle, que la technique, le tact...peut commencer." (emphasis mine) Lettres à une Amie, pp.17-18.

449 Cf. Fiser, Le Symbole Littéraire, pp.169-70: "Proust emploie le terme 'métaphore' pour désigner une conception d'art qui n'a rien à voir avec ce que nous entendons par métaphore dans le langage courant ... Marcel Proust entend par métaphore 'la rencontre-sensation-souvenir-par-analogie,' qui est en réalité le symbole dynamique ou littéraire."

450 Chernowitz, p.107.

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[451] Autret, L'Influence de Ruskin sur...Proust, pp.129-34, draws several parallels between the painterly techniques of Turner and Elstir, and points to a passage in Ruskin's Harbours of England and sections of The Stones of Venice which he feels may have given Proust the theoretical basis for his fictional painter's canvas.

[452] Cf. Bowie, The Painter in French Fiction, pp.35-6: "If we relied on Proust alone we could easily ascribe the work to a kind of first-rate Gustave Moreau whose Medieval leanings had not been corrected but fortified by association with the Plein-Airists."

[453] Cf. Bernard, "Rimbaud, Proust et les Impressionnistes," p.259: "...il n'est pas impossible d'ailleurs que Proust en écrivant ces lignes ait eu présentes à l'esprit des transpositions non seulement picturales mais littéraires: peut-être Marine [de Rimbaud] précisément, ou bien le fameux chapitre des Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe (au livre 2) sur les 'campagnes pélagiennes,' où Chateaubriand fait déjà allusion à de tels échanges de vocabulaire."

[454] Cazeaux, L'Ecriture de Proust..., pp.93-4.

[455] Monnin-Hornung, p.76.

[456] The only indications of color occur in the description of the rainbow and again towards the end of the passage: "L'intelligence faisait ensuite un même élément de ce qui était, ici noir dans un effet d'orage, plus loin tout d'une couleur avec le ciel et aussi verni que lui, et là si blanc de soleil, de brume et d'écume...qu'on pensait à quelque chaussée de pierres ou à un champ de neige...." (JF,I,837-8) This dearth of coloristic notations in descriptions of paintings has been singled out by some critics (e.g., Cocking, Riva, Monnin-Hornung) to support the view that Proust was not primarily interested in rivalling the painter in his own art; he was concerned with the aesthetic foundations of the various arts rather than the diverse technical means used to express their individual message. Cf. Bailey, "Le Rôle des Couleurs...," pp.188, 191, 196 resp.: "...la vision spontanée de Proust exclut volontiers les couleurs ... la vision impressionniste se surimpose sans l'altérer à la vision proustienne. Celui-ci garde une 'manière' essentiellement proustienne d'utiliser les couleurs pour des fins non descriptives ... dans le texte proustien, l'addition des notations colorées nous laisse le plus souvent devant une curieuse imprécision visuelle. Lorsque les teintes ajoutées ne sont pas un souvenir impressionniste ...les couleurs que Proust introduit après coup ne l'engagent guère quant au coloris ... Les couleurs tardivement apparues sont ainsi une trouvaille--non de l'artiste peintre...mais du grand romancier dans la mesure où celui-ci est un démiurge, refaisant le monde avec des matériaux qu'il a lui-même choisis."

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[457] Monnin-Hornung, p.76.

[458] Cunningham, "Giorgione Transfigured--A Note on Proust's Method," Romance Notes, 9, i (Autumn 1967), 15. Cf. Johnson, "The Painter and His Art...," p.301: "...Proust did not simply ascribe any real paintings to Elstir. Rather, he reduced a number of paintings by any one artist to what was for him the essence of that painter's art ... Proust then transposed and synthesized these essences, fusing them into the creative, artistic production of the painter Elstir."

[459] Johnson, "Proust's 'Impressionism' Reconsidered...," pp.28-9, terms "Le Port de Carquethuit" "little more than a terribly overcrowded studio piece heavily charged with nineteenth century picturesqueness ... one of the all-time outstanding examples of kitsch." In an attempt to update Proust's aesthetic, to bring it closer to the experiments of the Cubists and the Futurists, Johnson is led to draw certain distinctions (with which I do not fully agree) between the aesthetic theories of Proust and those held by his fictional artist: "...[the painting] certainly has remarkably little to do with Proust's own style or vision in literature ... I think the picture is intended as a repoussoir. Its function is to establish the considerable distance that separates an 'illusionist' manner such as Elstir's clearly nineteenth century style from Proust's own twentieth century style ... Analyses of works by the fictive Elstir ultimately reveal only limited aspects of Proust's 'impressionism.'" While the connections between Elstir's painting and the pictorial experiments of the Impressionists are certainly tenuous, there is little justification for Johnson's wholesale debunking of "Le Port de Carquethuit" as an accurate reflection of Proust's aesthetic theories.

[460] Chernowitz, p.177.

[461] Daudet, Autour de Soixante Lettres..., p.18.

[462] Proust, "Rembrandt," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.660.

[463] Ibid., p.662.

[464] Cf. the following statement by Proust, expressed in the preface to his translation of The Bible of Amiens: "Quand plusieurs portraits de Rembrandt, d'après des modèles différents, sont réunis dans une salle, nous sommes aussitôt frappés par ce qui leur est commun à tous et qui est les traits mêmes de la figure de Rembrandt." Cited by Autret, L'Influence de Ruskin sur...Proust, p.46.

[465] Proust, "Chardin et Rembrandt," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.376.

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466 Cf. Reynaldo Hahn's brief description of the same self-portrait: "Au Louvre avec Marcel. Pastels de Chardin ... Chardin au foulard hallucinant ... oeil droit fatigué, bouffi, cet oeil qui a tout vu, qui sait tout voir--ton de foulard: finesse exquise." Notes, Journal d'un Musicien (Paris: Plon, 1933), p.19; cited by Inoue, "Proust et Chardin," p.7.

467 May, "Chardin Vu par Diderot et par Proust," p.413. Cf. Blanche's analysis of Proust's descriptive skill in the matinée episode: "...c'est sa violence cynique qui vous frappe, sa vision abominable de la vieillesse ... Proust subitement devient peintre, on pense au Goya des Caprices, aux dessins de Rouveyre ... toute une gamme de colorations verdâtres, saumâtres, oxydées, cadavériques, de fromage pourri, des formes désarticulées de squelette, gonflées et flasques de pupazzi." Mes Modèles..., pp.132-3.

468 Cf. Chernowitz, p.140: "...following Oscar Wilde's doctrine, for Proust too this process does not end with art but continues with the view of the critic, who treats art as the artist does nature, and finally with the spectator or reader, who also creates his vision of the work as he reads himself into it."

469 In an undated letter to Antoine Bibesco, Proust wrote that Van Dyck's painting "a été l'objet d'une de mes grandes admirations d'autrefois..." Princesse Bibesco, Au Bal avec Marcel Proust (Paris, 1928), p.166.

470 Billy, Lettres et Conversations, pp.29-30.

471 Proust, "A mon Ami Willie Heath," Jean Santeuil..., p.6. Cf. Monnin-Hornung, p.102: "Ce qui frappe Proust dans l'aspect extérieur de l'ami...n'est donc pas tant un ensemble de lignes et de couleurs, que ce qui symbolise cet aspect extérieur: la vie de l'âme."

472 Proust, "Portraits de Peintres," Jean Santeuil..., p.81.

473 Cf. the following letter (1921) to Vaudoyer: "Céleste me dit que vous avez les Plaisirs et les Jours. Vous y trouverez les seuls vers sur Cyp [sic] restés dans mon souvenir. Ils furent écrits avant une classe à Condorcet, en sortant du Louvre où je venais de voir les cavaliers qui ont une plume rose au chapeau. On m'a assuré depuis que le vêtement du duc de Richemond [sic] était non bleu pâle, mais blanc." (Corr. Gén.,IV,89)

474 Cf. the following line from the Willie Heath dedication: "C'est au Bois que je vous retrouvais souvent le matin, m'ayant aperçu et m'attendant sous les arbres, debout, mais reposé, semblable à un de ces seigneurs qu'a peints Van Dyck..." (emphasis mine) Jean Santeuil..., pp.5-6.

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[475] Monnin-Hornung, p.102.

[476] Proust, "A Mon Ami Willie Heath," Jean Santeuil..., p.6.

[477] Drucker, "Proust et la Peinture," p.278.

[478] "Marcel Proust par Lui-même," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.336.

[479] Proust, "Les Eblouissements, par la comtesse de Noailles," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., pp.534-5. Cf. the following: "Quelquefois un poète, d'une race ayant aussi une individualité particulière pour un zoologiste (caractérisée par une certaine insexualité), se promenait avec une Muse...." (CG2,II,421-2)

[480] Monnin-Hornung, p.152. The same critic has suggested that "Proust, chez les gens qu'il a fréquentés, a eu maintes fois l'occasion de remarquer cette équivoque des sexes sur un visage. Et d'ailleurs si son esprit observateur était porté à étudier si finement cette particularité, c'est parce qu'elle caractérisait son visage même...." (p.84) This theory is partially corroborated by Céleste Albaret's account of Proust's strange attraction to his portrait by Blanche: "Il avait une espèce de fascination pour ce portrait," she recalled; "souvent, en me parlant, il le regardait comme s'il s'était revu dans son miroir en ce temps-là. La première fois qu'il me l'a montré, il m'a demandé: --'Vous ne trouvez pas qu'il a quelque chose de bizarre?'-- 'Je ne sais pas, Monsieur. Je ne vois que le teint nacré et cette allure de jeune prince de l'Orient.'" Monsieur Proust, pp.186-7.

[481] Cf. Brée, The World of Marcel Proust, p.222: "The reaction to art is, in fact, one of the many touchstones Proust uses in his depiction of character, a valid one since in the social circles with which he deals, art was one of the values most unanimously taken for granted."

[482] Cited by H.C.R. Stockwell, "Proust and Reality," Adam, no. 260 (1957), 108. Stockwell offers the following explication of this concept: "...we can see what Proust would be at. A faithful copy of a pretty face, like the pretty face itself, is not to be sneezed at, but somehow he cannot assimilate it. He pauses, admires and passes on wondering why he cannot get more out of it. This kind of portrait has eluded the artist's mind and therefore the onlooker's mind. The picture is false; it fixes what is impermanent; it individualizes what is general. The Proustian hero will not shift his gaze to see it." (ibid.)

[483] Brée, The World of Marcel Proust, p.222. Although

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Johnson, "The Painter and His Art...," p.129, rightly warns the reader of A la Recherche that "references to painters when used to illustrate tastes other than Proust's own cannot be equated with what Proust wrote concerning the painters whom he really admired," adding that "any confusion of the two groups is bound to be erroneous," this does not prevent De Ley from arriving at the basically unsound conclusion that "the relation between impressionists and Salon painters in Proust's novel is thus one of transition and uneasy co-existence, and this uncertainty extends to the taste of the Proustian narrator himself ... Although the Proustian protagonist consistently expresses his admiration for the impressionists and Elstir, the narrator condemns the academics only indirectly, through the misguided praise of fools ... For Proust, the relationship between beauty and mediocrity, and hence between academic and other painting, is a reciprocal one." "'L'Hôpital sans style...,'" pp.34, 39, and 41 resp.

484 Cf. Cocking, "Proust and Painting," p.318: "Proust seems to have found transvestism in pictures as spicy as Baudelaire did." Even in Proust's essay devoted to Chardin, one can detect an interest in the element of disguise and the reversal of sexual identity: "Dans le portrait dont nous venons de parler, la négligence du déshabillé de Chardin, la tête déjà coiffée d'un bonnet de nuit, le faisait ressembler à une vieille femme. Elle atteint, dans l'autre pastel que Chardin nous a laissé de lui, à l'étrangeté cocasse d'un vieux touriste anglais." Proust, "Chardin et Rembrandt," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.377.

485 In the opinion of Jaquillard, "...Proust [veut] nous mettre sur une piste fausse et nous empêcher de remonter à la source où il a peut-être puisé son exemple." "Proust et la Peinture," p.131. Conversely, Diaconu argues that "par malice, Proust s'amuse parfois à mentionner dans la même phrase ou dans des phrases voisines le nom du personnage réel dont il s'est inspiré pour construire un personnage fictif." "Considérations sur le Theme de Proust et de la Peinture," p.552.

486 Feuillerat, Comment Marcel Proust..., pp.62-3.

487 Chernowitz, p.115. From a purely aesthetic angle, Drucker argues that the work "fait songer à un Manet par ses oppositions de noir et de blanc et les rapports entre le bouquet et le modèle." "Proust et la Peinture," p.6.

488 Monnin-Hornung, pp.98-9.

489 Cocking, "Proust and Painting," p.318.

490 If we are to accept Céleste Albaret's account of Proust's reaction to the photograph, then a blatant contradiction arises: "Regardez, Céleste," Proust is purported to

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have exclaimed, "De toutes les femmes il n'y avait qu'elle [i.e., Réjane] pour pouvoir se permettre l'audace de porter, avec cette élégance et cette finesse, l'habit d'homme, le haut-de-forme et le monocle. Et voyez le gardénia à la boutonnière ... Il n'y a qu'un dommage: qu'elle ait gardé ses perles rares aux oreilles." (emphasis mine) Monsieur Proust, p.367. The photograph in question is reproduced in the insert between pp.384-5.

491 The interview was first reported by Louis Handler in the Jan. 20, 1920 issue of Comoedia; it is reprinted under the title "Sur Réjane" in Contre Sainte-Beuve..., p.600.

492 For example, the Bibliothèque Nationale exhibition catalog (p.66) lists the following item as #319: "Marie Van Zandt en travesti masculin. Photo Hansen, à Copenhague. --A Mme Mante-Proust. Au verso, dédicace au docteur Adrien Proust, du 23 octobre 1881. On peut penser que cette figure en travesti a inspiré le personnage de Miss Sacripant, dont le portrait est donné pour une peinture de jeunesse d'Elstir." Another photograph of a young woman in male attire, which bears the caption "Une amie de L. Weil," is reproduced on page 96 of Proust, ed. Antoine Adam et al (Paris, 1965).

493 Bondanella and Rivers, "Sacripant and Sacripante: A Note on Proust and Ariosto," Romance Notes, 11, i (Autumn 1969), 4. I would tend to qualify their sweeping generalization, viz. that "the portrait has a wholly literary significance...." The title may, in fact, be derived solely from a literary recollection, but the description of the portrait, as I shall attempt to demonstrate, owes as much to Proust's knowledge of aesthetics as it does to his understanding of psychology.

494 Ibid., p.6. It is interesting to note, in this connection, Proust's use of the term sacripant to denigrate Albert Le Cuziat, the owner of a male brothel to whom the author of A la Recherche gave his parents' furniture: "Figurez-vous, Céleste, que le sacripant m'avait demandé autrefois ces meubles pour arranger sa chambre personnelle, dans ses bains de la rue Godot-de-Mauroy. Et qu'est-ce que je vois, rue de l'Arcade? Il s'en est servi pour des besoins écoeurants." Monsieur Proust, p.237.

495 In La Fugitive, the narrator criticizes those Venetian painters who prefer to depict the crass, materialistic side of their native city rather than the more aesthetic, somewhat romanticized conception of its legendary beauty: "...puisque à Venise ce sont des oeuvres d'art, les choses magnifiques, qui sont chargées de nous donner les impressions familières de la vie, c'est esquiver le caractère de cette ville, sous prétexte que la Venise de certains peintres est froidement esthétique dans sa partie la plus célèbre...de n'en représenter au contraire que les aspects misérables, là où ce qui fait sa

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splendeur s'efface, et, pour rendre Venise plus intime et plus vraie, de lui donner de la ressemblance avec Auber-villiers. Ce fut le tort de très grands artistes, par une réaction bien naturelle contre la Venise factice des mauvais peintres, de s'être attachés à la Venise, qu'ils trouvèrent plus réaliste, des humbles campi, des petits rii abandonnés." (F,III,626)

496 Cf. Monnin-Hornung, p.99: "De Manet encore, on peut reconnaître 'le verre du porte-bouquet...' Manet a peint souvent des bouquets dans des vases de cristal, auxquels il donnait une transparence que, seul peut-être, Renoir a su égaler dans ses verres et ses carafes par exemple, du Déjeuner des canotiers, ou du Déjeuner." The absurd lengths to which some scholars will go to establish a visual source is illustrated in the following example: "Here Proust has...let himself be guided by Holbein," writes Bussom, "whose painting of the Dutch merchant he evidently had in mind when he analyzed the treatment Elstir gives to the flower container and the stems of the flowers in it as they are reflected through the glass. The force of the visual image Proust held of this painting has curiously led him into an error of statement. In the opening lines of the analysis of Elstir's painting, he points to the water container that is full of roses but later on, in the description of what was on the canvas, the water container is made to hold pinks. The picture by Holbein which he had in mind does have pinks in just such a receptacle." "Marcel Proust and Painting," p.65.

497 Cf. Monnin-Hornung, p.99: "Soulignons que Proust a dû se souvenir d'une toile bien plus ancienne lorsqu'il décrit le plastron.... Aucun des impressionnistes n'a montré tant de raffinement dans la représentation du vêtement féminin et il faudrait remonter au XVIIIme siècle, ou plus loin encore, pour trouver une telle finesse dans le rendu. En décrivant ces reflets, Proust aurait-il pensé à ceux que donnent tant de charme aux tableaux de Chardin?"

498 The description of Elstir's "Portrait de la Famille Cottard" represents another attempt--although on a much more superficial level--to convey a painterly sense of line, color, and movement: "...[Mme Verdurin] a donné au peintre l'idée d'avoir fait l'homme en habit pour obtenir tout ce beau bouillonnement du linge, et [c'était elle] qui a choisi la robe de velours de la femme, robe faisant un appui au milieu de tout le papillotage des nuances claires des tapis, des fleurs, des fruits, des robes de gaze des fillettes pareilles à des tutus de danseuses." (TR,III,715) Renoir's group portrait of La Famille Charpentier has been suggested as a possible source for this fictional painting.

499 Monnin-Hornung, p.85. The same critic also stresses "cette faculté de donner une âme aux vêtements, qui distingue nettement Proust des peintres impressionnistes, ceux-ci se

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montrant beaucoup moins subjectifs que lui dans la façon de transcrire la beauté d'une robe de femme." (p.158)

500 This episode appears to be a variant of a similar scene in Jean Santeuil, where the painter Bergotte also finds his mistress, Mme Delven, beautiful enough to be his model even though she is, to all outward appearance, rather homely; cf. the following passage: "[Jean et sa tante] se promenèrent encore [à l'exposition des oeuvres du peintre], causant de Bergotte et de l'incroyable amour qu'il avait pour Mme Delven. 'C'est elle qui a posé pour son Electre, regarde bien, tu retrouveras quelque chose, quoiqu'elle soit si laide. Mais il la voit belle.' Et en passant, Jean, à travers les joues énormes et grêlées de Mme Delven, à travers le regard pointu dont elle regardait tout le monde...[cherchait] soit dans les profondeurs [de] l'âme de Mme Delven, soit dans l'essence physique [conservée] matériellement par sa race, l'aspect d'une tristesse âpre qui lui [avait] paru si singulier dans l'Electre et dont il semblait contrôler maintenant la vérité par la ressemblance, et qui d'une abstraction devenait une créature." (JS,788-9)

501 According to Michel Butor, "Cette importance des aberrations sexuelles, ou plus exactement de leur résolution, dans la genèse de l'oeuvre d'art, elle est déjà présente dans le personnage d'Elstir.... Non que Proust estime le moins du monde qu'une anomalie sexuelle déclarée soit indispensable à la constitution d'un artiste. Ni Vinteuil, ni Elstir n'en sont affligés personnellement, mais cette 'différence' qui les oblige à inventer un art est nécessairement en communication étroite avec les autres 'différences' que l'on peut découvrir dans la société contemporaine...et les entraîne dans son mouvement de salut. L'aberrant sexuel...est amené un jour à en passer par la catharsis de l'oeuvre d'art; il ne peut rejoindre le véritable objet de son désir que dans l'abolition non seulement de sa propre erreur, mais de ce qui a provoqué cette erreur, donc dans un changement de la réalité, dans ce 'véritable voyage' qu'est l'oeuvre." Les Oeuvres d'Art Imaginaires Chez Proust (London, 1964), pp.42-3.

502 Proust may well have derived this window-painting analogy from his readings of Ruskin. "Every pane of your window," observed the British aesthetician, "may be considered, if you choose, as a glass picture, and what you see through it, as painted on its surface." Cited by Cocking, "Proust and Painting," pp.323-4. For a discussion of the various uses to which this motif is put, see Autret, L'Influence de Ruskin sur...Proust, p.97; see, also, Nicolas, "Du Côté de la Nature...," pp.82-3. A good illustration of this technique occurs in La Fugitive, during the narrator's stroll through Venice: "...l'extrême proximité des maisons faisait de chaque croisée le cadre où rêvassait une cuisinière qui regardait par lui, d'une jeune fille qui, assise, se faisait peigner les cheveux par une vieille femme à figure, devinée dans

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l'ombre, de sorcière, --faisait comme une exposition de cent tableaux hollandais juxtaposés, de chaque pauvre maison silencieuse et toute proche à cause de l'extrême étroitesse de ces calli." (F,III,650) In the present context, the framing device of the window may also represent a visual equivalent for Proust's conception of artistic creation as an ordering process. Elstir's habit of arranging his portraits so that the face of his sitter creates a counterweight to the hat held at knee-level, according to Cazeaux, "reflète la ruse de l'esthétique proustienne. Nous avons souvent noté comme il affectionne les cadres et que ces figures correspondent au secret du réel: le réel, c'est le fini ... La réalité n'est qu'une masse confuse dans laquelle l'art vient isoler des formes...cerner une surface, en traçant une limite, un cadre ... nous sommes assujettis à une série d'images: 'rectangles' formés soit par les tableaux, soit par la fenêtre de l'atelier, qui lui-même prend la signification optique d'un cristal, avec ses 'cassures,' d'un 'miroir.' La fenêtre elle-même est 'encadrée de chèvrefeuilles.'" L'Ecriture de Proust..., pp.87-8.

503 Bondanella and Rivers, "Sacripant and Sacripante...," pp.6-7.

504 One need only recall the title of the volume in which Elstir appears, A l'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs, or the elaborate mating ritual between Charlus and Jupien which unfolds in the opening pages of Sodome et Gomorrhe; the metaphorical analogy between the human and the flower-insect fecundation process is explicitly stated: "[Jupien] faisait saillir son derrière, prenait des poses avec la coquetterie qu'aurait pu avoir l'orchidée pour le bourdon providentiellement survenu." (SG,II,604)

505 According to William S. Bell, "...the variety of orchid called the cattleya...is used...as a symbol of sterility. The evening when Swann first makes love to Odette, she appears on the Grands Boulevards virtually covered with these large mauve orchids, which are her favorite flowers: she has attached them to the swan's plumes she is wearing in her hair; she has placed them at the cleft of her bosom; and she holds a bouquet of them in her hand. Odette, like the orchid, is for Swann a vulgarly showy flower. As Swann pretends to rearrange these flowers, the pollen from them spills down the front of Odette's dress (I,232) ... In the carriage, Odette has become for Swann a fleur-femme, and he hopes that the physical possession of Odette will emerge, as it were, from between the large mauve petals of the orchid (I,234)." "Proust's Un Amour de Swann: A Voyage to Cytherea," L'Esprit Créateur, 5, i (Spring 1965), 29-30.

506 See Feuillerat, Comment Marcel Proust..., p.58.

507 Monnin-Hornung, pp.83, 85-6 resp.

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Conclusion

The foregoing chapters have attempted to illustrate the impact of the visual arts upon four major figures. From a purely factual standpoint, both the existence of a body of art criticism, either published separately or embedded within a work of fiction, plus the fact of chronological proximity partially dictated the choice of these particular writers for treatment. On a more organic level, however, one could reasonably argue that each writer's subjective theory of fiction predisposed him towards an equally subjective and individual appreciation of the visual arts.

For example, Emile Zola's championing of Naturalism in fiction, with its stress upon the application of the scientist's impartiality to a "slice of life" intended for fictional treatment, clearly reappears in both the salon criticism (e.g., Manet is labeled a naturaliste, one who applies the laws of tonal values and optics to his paintings by means of la tache) and the novel L'Oeuvre, where the deterministic element inherent in Zola's theory of fiction is used to explain Lantier's artistic decline (i.e., the painter's genetic inheritance in the form of a lesion of the eyes is made partially responsible for his decadent, Symbolist phase).

Similarly, Oscar Wilde's denunciation of realism, his

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elevation of Art above Nature, and his stress upon style and formal arrangement rather than subject matter--Wilde considered Dorian Gray "an essay on decorative art"--are all elements of an aesthetic which can serve both fictional and painterly ends. Vivian, the spokesman for the supremacy of Art and imaginative criticism in "The Decay of Lying," repeatedly stresses the intimate connection existing between the theory of fiction and painting: "What is true about the drama and the novel," he tells Cyril, the skeptic, "is no less true about those arts that we call the decorative arts." This philosophy is again echoed in a subsequent discussion when Vivian insists that "as it is with the visible arts, so it is with literature."[1] Wilde's exposure to painting was therefore inherent in his theory of fiction and general aesthetic outlook.

Henry James's utter conviction that the art of the painter and that of the writer are intertwined is clearly stated in "The Art of Fiction":

> The only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life...the same attempt that we see on the canvas of the painter ... the analogy between the art of the painter and the art of the novelist is, so far as I am able to see, complete. Their inspiration is the same, their process (allowing for the different quality of the vehicle) is the same, their success is the same. They may learn from each other, they may explain and sustain each other. Their cause is the same, and the honor of one is the honor of another. [2]

James's rather conventional fondness for a more-or-less literal visual representational style (e.g., for the minute brushwork and realistic detail of the Pre-Raphaelite painters)

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is reflected in the same essay when he states that "the air of reality (solidity of specification) seems to me to be the supreme virtue of a novel ... it is here that [the novelist] competes with his brother the painter in his attempt to render the look of things, the look that conveys their meaning, to catch the color, the relief, the expression, the surface, the substance of the human spectacle."[3] Theory of fiction and art criticism thus complement one another.

Finally, Marcel Proust's stress upon vision rather than technique, his theory of fiction emphasizing the metaphorical basis of artistic creation, and the grounding of his aesthetic credo in the humble sensory experience make a rapprochement with the visual arts--particularly the Impressionist vision--virtually inevitable.

The concluding section of the present study will not be primarily concerned with establishing narrow connections between Zola, Wilde, James, and Proust. Rather, it will attempt to view, in terms of broad similarities and differences, the four writers' individual contributions to the field of aesthetics and art criticism, as well as their efforts to embody artistic (i.e., visual) concepts in a fictional context.

If any "thesis" is to be uncovered, it is not through an artificial and contrived attempt to establish arbitrary links between the various chapters. It is to be sought in each writer's attitude towards the diverse artistic movements and individual painters discussed in his art criticism and/or

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depicted in his fiction. If Zola, Wilde, James, and Proust can be said to share a common outlook, it is most likely to be found in their mutual realization of the potential which the visual arts possess for illuminating the theoretical basis of their own craft (and artistic creation in general) and for adding a symbolic dimension to their respective fictional narratives.

Adhering to the schema adopted in each successive chapter, one may begin by noting that at least two of the writers with which this study has been concerned, viz. Zola and Proust, were endowed with a special visual sense and a retentive memory which predisposed them to the viewing experience before they had ever entered a painter's atelier or a museum. As for Wilde and, more particularly, James, both handled the painter's brush and palette, if not with the same degree of professionalism as their artistic confreres, at least with far more skill and dexterity than is usually found among writers of equal literary merit. Contrary to the opinion of François Fosca and other staunch opponents of the writer-cum-art critic phenomenon, all four novelists were not totally ignorant of the painter's métier. They were frequent visitors to artists' studios and had ample opportunity to observe the painter in action: Zola sat for Manet, visited Courbet's studio, and accompanied Cézanne to the atelier Suisse; Wilde spent much time in Whistler's studio, and befriended Burne-Jones, Charles Conder, Walter Sickert, William Rothenstein, J.E. Millais, William Morris, and the book illustrators Ricketts and

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Shannon; James joined his brother in William Hunt's studio and sat for Sargent, Du Maurier, and Blanche; Proust likewise had his portrait painted by the latter, as well as by his boyhood acquaintance Paul Baignères.

This intimate contact with the art of the painter is also evident in the writers' adoption of the artist's argot and/or painterly imagery in their fiction. Zola's novel is studded with technical terminology relating to the painter's facture. James's use of painterly analogies in both his fiction and his literary criticism proves how ingrained the artistic milieu was in his mind. Proust, who elevated artistic vision above technique in his aesthetic, was inclined to use technical terms more sparingly and to present his painterly analogies in a freer, more generalized manner. (One will recall that he viewed the utilization of technical jargon in art criticism as a blemish and condemned Ruskin for advocating this method in theory and chastised Fromentin and the Goncourt brothers for putting it into practice.)

It is interesting to note that several of these writers felt the need to coin or invent their own terms to describe the particular qualities of a painter. To Zola, for example, Manet was "un peintre analyste, un naturaliste." To James, Tintoretto, Delacroix, Turner, and Sargent were "synthetists" in that they were able to fuse the spiritual and the real in their respective works; by contrast, the "analytic" painters (e.g., Meissonier) were only able to present a detailed yet ultimately static universe in their paintings.

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Instead of viewing this habit as a sign of the writer's ignorance of technical matters, it should be interpreted as a sincere desire to probe beneath the brushwork to discover the essence, the prime trait or quality which makes each painter's style unique. The fact that Zola and James both condemned the Impressionists for their supposed lack of a firm technique and dismissed their canvases as being devoid of careful brushwork proves that these writers were not afraid to examine the painter's craft from a technical angle.

Where Zola and James openly professed ignorance was in the realm of the operation of the painter's mind and the creative process as it relates to visual art--a fact which makes their incomprehension of the artistic accomplishments of Impressionism more readily understandable. Whereas James insisted that the artistic process remained a mystery to all but the painter himself, Proust carried this conviction one step further in stating that the artist (e.g., Moreau) was a passive recipient of an inspirational process greater than the sum total of his particular technical facility.

At the risk of oversimplification, one could say that in their role as art critics all four writers tend to focus their attention primarily upon Renaissance and post-Renaissance artistic movements, with particular emphasis upon the art of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The various reasons behind this conscious choice are partly subjective. Zola, in a characteristic attempt to view artistic progress in terms of a broad formula or pattern,

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dismissed Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Medieval art as being "collective" in nature, i.e., lacking the stamp of individuality, the necessary imprint of a particular tempérament. James, likewise, was convinced that earlier painters simply did not possess the requisite technique to give their grandiose visions an adequate embodiment in paint; it was only with the perfection of perspective in the Italian Renaissance, with its corresponding concern for human anatomy and its breakthroughs in the preparation and preservation of pigments and their application to canvas, wall, or ceiling, that the painter, according to James, could successfully convey the spiritual as well as the corporeal element in art.

Proust, like James, seems to have harbored an aversion for the grandes machines of the Baroque period--the acres of flesh à la Rubens, the preponderance of mythological or allegorical subjects, the theatricality, artificiality, and distortion inherent in the trompe-l'oeil effects so characteristic of the period. Not that James was unable to appreciate the distorting lens of the artist's personality. It was this aspect in particular that attracted him to the art of Bronzino and other Italian Mannerist painters, all of whom were able to convey the psychological mood of their sitters. Like Zola, James could appreciate the tempérament of a Veronese, whose personality was reflected in every element of his painting.

Unlike the other writers, however, James possessed the ability to generalize about a nation's artistic merits or

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shortcomings as a collective unit, to pinpoint the chief quality which distinguishes, say, the Italian school of painting from the French. It will be recalled that he found the aesthetic principle or impulse most pronounced in the former, whereas the plastic element and the gift for vivid expression was more characteristic of the latter. English art, by contrast, was weighed down by its own sense of moral rectitude and the need to illustrate human conduct in a rather plodding, anecdotal manner. Spanish art was infused with a sense of otherworldliness and mysticism, while German art represented the grotesque underside of human existence. Whatever truths these general statements may contain--they are obviously too broad to receive a limited, practical application to a specific painterly style--they do suggest that James was making a serious effort to understand the general flow of art history and, equally important, that he was attempting to put to rest the charge that he was just another writer dabbling in the visual arts, a dilettante with a concern for only a handful of painters.

It is nevertheless true that Wilde, Zola, Proust, and even James himself seem to have favored a one-to-one approach to painting in their art criticism, i.e., they preferred to discuss styles and movements in terms of individual painters rather than broad, abstract characteristics of national schools. This preference can be seen in the first recorded references to painters by these writers, reflecting their untutored and undisciplined artistic tastes at the outset

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of their respective careers. In almost every instance, the list is an embarrassment, both to the writer himself and to the reader: Zola waxing rhapsodic over the melodramatic works of Greuze or the imaginary, dreamlike canvases of Ary Scheffer; James singing the praises of Emmanuel Leutze and the Düsseldorf Academy or the accomplished technique of Delaroche; Proust finding the works of Gleyre and second-rate academicians so conducive to a child's reveries, or elevating the paintings of a Paulus Potter or an Albert Cuyp to the same level as those by Watteau or Van Dyck. The point here is not to view these choices as an obvious sign of each writer's "immature" and ultimately incomplete understanding of painting; to do so would be to forget that all of these admittedly minor masters were either repudiated or forgotten in the course of the writer's subsequent development. Zola laughed at his early ultra-Romantic tastes in art and moved to the opposite extreme in favoring the scientific approach to painting of Manet and condemning the "unhealthy" and morbid visual fantasies of Gustave Doré. James ultimately rejected the contrived and theatrical styles of Leutze and Meissonier, claiming that the bric-à-brac in their panoramic canvases lacked a pervading sense of spiritual unity, an all-encompassing vision or point of view. Proust made the salon painters the butt of his irony in A la Recherche, appointing as their spokesmen and defenders such incompetents as the duc and duchesse de Guermantes.

Yet even in their mature criticism, each of the writers in question was guilty of serious omissions and inexcusable

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blunders. Zola's basically conservative tastes in art blinded him to the radical experiments in visual perception which the paintings of Monet and Cézanne represented. His own form of sexual repression may have led him to single out Gustave Moreau's art as the epitome of sterile eroticism and narcissism. Similarly, James was equally ill at ease with the art of this master, perhaps for much the same reason. Since his art criticism came closest to embodying Ruskin's ethical/moral concerns, such an aversion is understandable; it also helps explain his dislike of Rubens's nudes. Less comprehensible, however, is James's rejection of the art of Daumier and Rembrandt, the former being dismissed as a middle-class boor and the latter as a theatrical painter. Just as Zola had condemned the art of Monet, James looked upon Whistler's loosely painted works bearing abstract titles as a sign of the artist's lack of technical training, sloppy workmanship, and hasty execution. Proust shared Zola's incomprehension of the art of Cézanne and James's aversion for the overblown art of the Baroque period. Like Wilde, he could have his narrator in A la Recherche stand enraptured before Giotto's frescoes or delight in the decorative qualities of japonaiserie. Yet he frequently championed then fashionable society painters (e.g., Sert, Helleu, Blanche) while neglecting other artists more deserving of his praise.

If these writers dismissed, perhaps unjustly, the works of certain painters, they championed those of other artists with an unflagging zeal and ardor. Zola rightly insisted

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upon the superhuman scale and grandiosity of Michelangelo's art, one which reflected the temperament of a unique and powerful artistic personality. He likewise recognized the new painterly vision which Manet expressed in his works and hailed him as the first modern painter of his own century. A careful reading of James's art criticism will reveal that Tintoretto and Delacroix were the writer's favorite masters, with Turner and Sargent close behind. What all these painters shared, according to James, was a distinctness of vision, a reflective quality, and the ability to infuse the material world represented on their canvases with a deep spiritual meaning. Wilde's preference for the art of Beardsley and Whistler can perhaps best be understood in terms of the writer's parallel effort to explore and expose the sexual hypocrisy of his own era, in the case of the former, and his belief in the supremacy of art over life, of an abstract harmony of line and color rather than a mirror image of reality, in the case of the latter. As regards the art criticism of Proust, one can trace a trajectory leading from the art of Chardin, to that of Rembrandt, and finally culminating in the paintings of Moreau, each artist bringing us one step closer to the spiritualization of art.

One might also note, in passing, that several of the same artists were singled out by the various writers for praise or blame. The contemporary subject matter of Degas, for example, was admired by both Zola and Proust. Similarly, James and Proust both praised Watteau's compositions for their poetic, dreamlike atmosphere. Where they

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differed, however, was on the subject of Botticelli's art: Proust chose to identify this painter with the idolatrous aesthetic theories of Charles Swann, while James hailed Botticelli as a truly imaginative painter, the source of a modern psychological facial expression subsequently adopted by the Pre-Raphaelite painters.

On the whole, it would appear that the art criticism of the majority of these writers was often most perceptive when it was least orthodox, i.e., when it consciously ignored the technical jargon of the professional art critic in favor of an intuitive, poetic, psychological, or multidisciplinary approach. The dangers of such a venture are clearly apparent in the case of James, whose art criticism frequently owed more to purely literary associations (e.g., Claude's art was primarily appreciated for its use of biblical and mythological subject matter) than it did to a more profound understanding of the painter's artistic accomplishments. By the same token, however, James's reliance upon other than purely pictorial terms permitted him to single out Delacroix's "orchestration" of color as the keynote of his art. His stress upon the psychological underpinnings of art led him to formulate his theory of the transfiguring vision of Turner, the brooding reflection of Sargent, and the distinctness of vision of Tintoretto. Likewise, Proust's stress upon feeling or interior vision rather than technique (cf. Leonardo's dictum that art is cosa mentale) explains the dearth of technical terminology in his art criticism. What he was after, in essence, was not so much a description

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or analysis of a finished work of art as an exploration of the process of artistic creation. Zola's need to coin his own phrases to describe the artistic achievements of Manet and his elevation of tempérament above the artist's technical command of his craft is yet another instance of the writer's wish to expand and broaden the traditional boundaries of art criticism, to permit the personality of the artist (and the art critic, for that matter) to enter into an evaluation of his artistic achievements.

The rejection of an objective, narrowly pictorial analysis of a painter's oeuvre can be sensed in each writer's acceptance or rejection of previous art critics' ideologies and critical approaches. James and Proust, for example, are firmly united in their opposition to the super-subtle analyses of Eugène Fromentin; rather than conceive of his role as that of a mediator between an uninformed yet eager public and a knowledgeable, highly skilled painter, so their argument runs, Fromentin's technical approach to each painting, coupled with a language which is both dense and abstract, sets up a veritable smokescreen between the object under investigation and the viewer. Not much better, in Proust's eyes, is the écriture artiste of the Goncourts, with its heavy-handed use of atelier jargon. On a strictly subject- or content-oriented level, however, both writers admired Fromentin's breadth of knowledge and familiarity with the painter's storehouse of imagery; thanks to the latter's Les Maîtres d'Autrefois, moreover, James and Proust developed a thorough understanding and love of Dutch and

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Flemish art.

A feeling of ambivalence towards the critical approach and achievement of Hippolyte Taine is evident in the reactions of both Zola and James. On the one hand, each writer claimed to be a humble disciple of this master, having learned to appreciate the beauties of art through his eyes. Zola praised the scientific accuracy of Taine's art criticism and its avoidance of an abstract ideal of beauty. James viewed the art critic's emphasis upon the social forces shaping art as a corollary of his own belief in the historical importance of art as a reflection of the achievements of human culture. Yet each writer also found aspects of Taine's aesthetic with which they could not concur. For example, Zola criticized Taine's submergence of the individual temperament of the artist in a deterministic network of "race, moment, milieu." Likewise, James felt that this deterministic outlook greatly lessened the allusive and suggestive qualities which every great work of art should possess. Taine's ideological formula was merely the expression, on another level, of Fromentin's need to stylistically "dissect" and reduce a painting to its constituent elements.

If one compares the reactions of Zola and Proust to the aesthetic theories and salon criticism of Baudelaire, one can find little trace of ambivalence. Zola is clearly opposed to (and perplexed by) Baudelaire's poetic, referential approach to a work of art, i.e., his totally unsystematic and eclectic reactions to individual paintings. While the former shared the latter's love of modernité as a fit

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subject for art and similarly championed the works of Delacroix and the nineteenth-century landscape painters, he failed to grasp the nature of Baudelaire's approach to art criticism--admitting that the poet's personality, which he recognized as the key to understanding his artistic tastes, remained a mystery to him.

Proust, on the other hand, was extremely receptive to Baudelaire's "poetic" form of art appreciation, going so far as to model his "Portraits de Peintres" upon the poet's "Phares." Their joint conception of beauty as a combination of the angelic and the sinister, their view of nature as a reflection of the human mind, and their extensive utilization of synaesthesia and a transposition of the various art forms in their respective works are just a few of the points which they share. Even in terms of the viewing experience, Baudelaire's two-step transformation of volupté (i.e., pleasure brought on by visual sense impressions) into connaissance bears a strong resemblance to Proust's need to distance himself from the painting in order to fully appreciate it, as well as to Elstir's two-step process involving the transformation of optical illusions into metaphorical creations. While they did not fully concur on the role of the imagination in the creative process--Proust fearing that its unchecked operation would divorce the artist from a necessary contact with external sense impressions--both critics saw the isolation of a painter's essential trait, and its recurrence in leitmotif fashion, as an integral aspect of the psychological approach to art criticism which

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they jointly favored.[4]

The art criticism of Walter Pater provides yet another touchstone for evaluating the critical responses of three of our writers. Wilde's wholesale adoption of Pater's aesthetic terminology (e.g., the conscious use of flame imagery to describe the aesthete's state of mind) and his appropriation of several of Pater's key concepts (e.g., the critic as a creator in his own right) are common knowledge. Whereas Wilde's admiration for Pater was boundless, James expressed a more reticent attitude towards this critic's aesthetic philosophy. Certainly, they both shared a deep sensitivity to the visible world and avoided abstract or theoretical discussions in their art criticism. Yet James saw in Pater's sinuous and subtle analyses of various works of art an unhealthy and somewhat morbid preoccupation with the world of thought as something separate from the world of external reality--a trait which he had also criticized in the hermetic painterly style of Burne-Jones. As a counterbalance to this "feminine" approach to art criticism, James relied upon Ruskin's more "masculine" preoccupation with the moral purpose of art and the hierarchy of subject matter which the painter has at his disposal. The attraction of Pater's form of aestheticism was so great, however, that James felt obliged to caricature this philosophical school of thought in his own fiction (e.g., Gabriel Nash).

Proust, like James, had owed his allegiance both to Ruskin and to Pater at different periods in his aesthetic apprenticeship. He was drawn to Pater's stress upon the

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physical sense impression as the basis for aesthetic appreciation, his emphasis upon the purely subjective response of each person, his denigration of habit, his elevation of the element of mystery or irresolution in a work of art, and his theory that an artist's style represents the perfect expression of an internal model. Unlike James, however, Proust ultimately rejected Ruskin's belief in the morality of art, preferring instead to side with the more subjective approach to art appreciation favored by Pater.

These same three writers also reacted in a predictable fashion to the aesthetic theories and the painterly oeuvre of James Abbot McNeill Whistler. Wilde's love-hate relationship with this painter is reflected in the former's early dismissal of the artist's "arrangements" as curious and amusing, followed by his subsequent championing of Whistler as the spokesman for a view of art as totally devoid of ethical, moral, or social considerations. Their repeated habit of borrowing of ideas from one another on art theory and aesthetics has made it extremely difficult to attribute the formulation of individual concepts to either spokesman of the "art for art's sake" movement.

James, like Wilde, at first considered Whistler's paintings rather sterile experiments in visual arrangements, devoid of any sense of life and expression. Even when he found a work which he could admire (e.g., "Whistler's Mother"), James praised the lifelike rendering of the sitter rather than the tonal harmonies and geometric shapes which Whistler wished to emphasize by calling his work Harmony in Gray and

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Black, No. 1. Not until 1897, i.e., twenty years after he had first reviewed the painter's oeuvre, did James finally concede that Whistler was, after all, an artist of distinction.

Proust held both the man and his paintings in awe. Unlike James, who preferred to side with Ruskin in the ethics-versus-aesthetics controversy, Proust attempted to reconcile the critical views of Whistler and Ruskin by stressing the poetic and intuitive aspects of the latter's aesthetic theories rather than the systematic, rigid framework which Ruskin had erected in his art criticism.[5] With respect to Proust's appreciation of Whistler's painterly oeuvre, one might say that his response represents a middle ground between Wilde's stress, in his later art criticism, upon the purely decorative and ornamental qualities evident in Whistler's works, on the one hand, and James's refusal or inability to see beyond the representational and psychological dimensions of a painting (e.g., the portrait of Henry Irving as a Tennyson hero being more than just a study of "melancholy meditation"), on the other. For Proust, Whistler's works were probably cherished for their poetical and harmonious rendering of nature, the blurred outlines and pale color harmonies complementing the writer's own impressionistic vision of reality.

Wilde's art criticism and aesthetic theories were themselves critically scrutinized by James and Proust, although neither writer has left us more than the vaguest of hints concerning their personal reactions to Wilde's critical

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concepts. James, with his stress upon the humanistic value of art, would hardly have favored a theory which claimed that art was solely concerned with its own expression, having no relation to the material universe; nor would he have sanctioned the view that nature is dependent upon art for its beauty. His belief in the social dimension of art and his firm conviction, inherited from Ruskin, that ethical or moral values are part and parcel of any aesthetic creation worthy of consideration were diametrically opposed to Wilde's mature theoretical pronouncements in the field of aesthetics and art criticism. Similarly, although Proust certainly shared Wilde's conviction that art has the power to ennoble and enrich ordinary reality, he did not go so far as to suggest that art could dispense with the physical universe entirely. Proust's stress upon the humble sensory impression as the starting point for any moment privilégié is a clear refutation of Wilde's doctrine of art for art's sake.

Although Zola had little if anything to say concerning the aesthetic theories and art criticism of his contemporary John Ruskin, one can deduce from his violent condemnation of Proudhon's attribution of moral, social, and generally utilitarian aims to Courbet's art that he would certainly have sided with Wilde and Proust on the question of the existence or nonexistence of ethics in the realm of painting. Zola, moreover, in accusing Proudhon of having ignored the technical accomplishments of Courbet's art in favor of a philosophical disquisition on the painter's "aims," and

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in stressing the fact that whereas Proudhon favored a collective, socially oriented approach to painting, he (i.e., Zola) championed an individualistic treatment of each artist's accomplishments, voiced several critical issues which Wilde and Proust would take up again in their analysis of Ruskin's aesthetic theories and art criticism.

Neither Wilde nor Proust frowned upon the "appropriation" of critical concepts from earlier aestheticians (or contemporary thinkers, for that matter). The former's belief that "true originality is to be found rather in the use made of a model than in the rejection of all models and masters"[6] is echoed in the latter's conviction that "il n'y a de meilleure manière d'arriver à prendre conscience de ce qu'on sent soi-même que d'essayer de recréer en soi ce qu'a senti un maître."[7] These admissions help one to understand how, for example, the future spokesman for a view of art totally independent of external forces (viz. Wilde) could have begun his aesthetic apprenticeship as a humble disciple of the spokesman for an art of moral seriousness and ethical import. The pattern of attraction-repulsion can be traced, to a greater or lesser extent, in the encounter between each of the three writers (i.e., Wilde, James, and Proust) and Ruskin's aesthetic/art criticism.

While he was under Ruskin's sway, Wilde adopted both the painterly tastes and major critical assumptions of his master. For example, he praised the "literary" art of Burne-Jones and emphasized the richly detailed and finely

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executed canvases of the Pre-Raphaelite painters. While on tour in America, he championed the Arts and Crafts Movement and deemed it the critic's task to instruct the public in the proper appreciation of artistic masterpieces. The art criticism of William Morris also helped strengthen Wilde's ties to Ruskin. With the publication of his "L'Envoi" manifesto in 1888, however, Wilde emerged in chrysalis-like fashion to begin the next stage of his aesthetic development, viz. his advocacy of art for art's sake, Whistler, and Albert Moore. This was not, of course, an overnight phenomenon, but the break with Ruskin was radical and remained decisive.

The same pattern was again repeated in the case of James, who, however, chose to "soften" Ruskin's moral and ethical artistic precepts rather than reject them entirely. He clearly shared Ruskin's taste for Italian Renaissance art and the paintings of the Pre-Raphaelites, although as a young man he was unable to understand how Ruskin could elevate the art of Turner above that of Claude. James's early consideration of Ruskin as an "aesthetic" art critic was completely reversed in his mature criticism, where he criticized Ruskin's doctrinaire stance, his serious tone, and his refusal to accept the mere fact of personal enjoyment and the viewer's individual impressions of a painting as sufficient guidelines in the appreciation of art. Although James upheld Ruskin's belief that ethics and aesthetics are inextricably intertwined, he was unable to accept the imposition by the art critic of an external

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scale of values on a work of art; such values, he argued, resided in the work itself, and were not dependent upon the critic's attribution of extrapictorial qualities to a particular painting.

Despite a serious language barrier, it could be argued that, among the three writers under consideration, Proust possessed the most intimate understanding of Ruskin's theoretical assumptions in the field of aesthetics and art criticism, not to mention the widest acquaintance with the master's critical writings in this area. Ruskin laid the foundations for Proust's appreciation of quattrocento Italian art and medieval church architecture. He introduced him to the art of Turner, whose theory of artistic perception the French writer subsequently adopted. They did not, however, share a love for the art of the Pre-Raphaelites. Ruskin nevertheless taught Proust how to view and consequently enhance his appreciation of artistic masterpieces; in a more general sense, he opened his eyes to the beauty of nature.

In terms of aesthetic theory, Proust owed Ruskin a great debt. His discussions of artistic creation and "la servitude volontaire," his stress upon the subjective and non-transmissible nature of artistic perception and execution, and his analysis of a painter's oeuvre in terms of leit-motifs are all concepts which one can trace back to Ruskin. Yet, like Wilde and (to a lesser extent) James, Proust could not accept Ruskin's hypocritical assertion that the art he cherished was beautiful because of the ethical or moral ideas

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it contained, and that his love proceeded from ethical rather than purely aesthetic considerations. Unlike Wilde, however, Proust never completely rejected Ruskin's critical writings on art *in toto*, preferring instead to selectively analyze and adopt those aspects of the master's aesthetic philosophy with which he was clearly in agreement (e.g., the Platonic, mystical conception of beauty; the spiritualization of reality through art), while leaving aside the social (i.e., utilitarian) and scientific (i.e., naturalistic) or religious preoccupations which Proust felt had no place in a discussion of aesthetics or a piece of art criticism. Like James, Proust discovered in Ruskin's writings on art an underlying love of beauty and a keen appreciation for the visual aspect of paintings.

For all three writers, in short, Ruskin represented a necessary stage in their aesthetic apprenticeship. Their individual conceptions of Ruskin as man and critic--Wilde's kindly professor; James's view of Ruskin as, alternately, a dreamer, an aesthetic critic, and a strict taskmaster; and Proust's idolater--all reflect certain aspects of the master's multifaceted personality and his ambivalent attitude towards visual beauty and aesthetic appreciation. Ruskin taught a generation of Oxfordians to appreciate Italian Renaissance art and, when he was able to lay aside his doctrinaire attitude, instilled a deep love of beauty in the minds of his readers, opening their eyes to the visual splendors of painting.

In turning next to a discussion of the embodiment of

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central aesthetic concepts by each writer in their respective fictional works, it is helpful to recall Henry James's notebook entry concerning his short story "The Real Thing": "It must be an idea--it can't be a 'story' in the vulgar sense of the word. It must be a picture, it must illustrate something."[8] [emphasis mine] This conviction, on the part of the writer, that his narrative can serve as the vehicle for the expression of various theoretical assumptions relating to the field of aesthetics and art criticism has been amply demonstrated in the preceding chapters.

In the case of Zola, the critical discussions between Claude Lantier and his confreres, which form the very substance of L'Oeuvre, can be traced back to parallel statements in Zola's salon criticism. It is the fact that the writer consciously utilizes a fictional narrative to propound his theories of artistic creation, decline, and stylistic metamorphosis that leads his literary critics to conclude: "the thèse overpowers the roman,"[9] thus branding the novel a failure as a work of fiction. But as a fairly accurate reflection of the artistic ferment characteristic of the period between the Salon des Refusés (1863) and the advent of Symbolism L'Oeuvre does succeed. Similarly, Pater observed that as an illustration of key aesthetic concepts which Wilde had enunciated in Intentions, Dorian Gray was partially successful. Were one to remove this theoretical layer, however, little would remain to distinguish this bit of potboiler fiction and Gothic melodrama from similar literary efforts during the 'nineties.

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In the case of James, one can observe a more subtle attempt to present aesthetic theory and art criticism within a fictional framework. Less programmatic or systematic than Zola in his transposition of critical theories from salon reviews to fiction, James is nevertheless intent upon dramatizing major aesthetic issues in his shorter tales and longer novels concerned with the painter and his craft.

With Proust, aside from a handful of critical essays on the art of Chardin, Rembrandt, Moreau, and Monet, it is primarily the fiction (i.e., Jean Santeuil and A la Recherche) which gives one a deeper understanding of Proust's views on artistic creation and individual painterly styles. In other words, there is no need for Proust to transpose his art criticism from one genre (e.g., the critical essay or salon review) to another, for it is precisely through the interaction of incidents and characters in A la Recherche that the author succeeds in establishing and illustrating the various elements of his subjective theory of visual art.

One could, at this point, note the areas of convergence and divergence in the aesthetic theories and art criticism of each of the four writers in question,[10] yet it is doubtful whether any cohesive, overarching scheme would emerge from this patchwork of critical views. In terms of broad literary conventions, however, the following general observations would appear to be valid.

The clearest and most transparent instance of the writer's attempt to embody his art criticism and aesthetic theory in a fictional context is probably the case involving

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a painter as protagonist who also serves as the author's mouthpiece, i.e., one whose theoretical utterances can be traced back to parallel statements formulated by the author in another context. Zola's use of Claude Lantier for this purpose is a prime example of the practical application of such a technique to a work of fiction. To a limited extent, the same might also be said of Wilde's Basil Hallward, James's Nick Dormer, and Proust's Elstir. But to be interesting, these novels must also generate some form of tension or conflict. A means by which each writer succeeds in holding the attention of the reader is in the creation of a series of discussions, debates, or dialogues between 1) the painter and his confreres (L'Oeuvre) 2) the painter and his "aesthetic" friend (Henry Wotton in Dorian Gray or Gabriel Nash in The Tragic Muse) 3) the painter and the omniscient narrator ("The Madonna of the Future") or 4) the painter and his detractors (Elstir, although absent, is the butt of the Guermantes' sarcasm). By assigning opposing or conflicting theoretical positions on various aesthetic issues to each of the parties involved, the writer provides a convenient forum for the elaboration of critical concepts relating to the visual arts.

A more subtle technique practiced by the four writers, most notably by Zola and Proust, enables the reader to draw inferences concerning the author's aesthetic theories and artistic tastes by examining the various stages of the fictional artist's career, i.e., the eclectic nature of the painter's stylistic evolution purportedly reflects a

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progression (or regression) which either parallels or illustrates by negative example the evolution of the writer's own preferences in the field of painting.

For example, Claude Lantier's stylistic evolution--from a "healthy" naturalistic phase, through a transitional period characterized by brighter colors and a greater luminosity reminiscent of Impressionist canvases, to a morbid and "sick" stage marked by eroticism and idealism, plus an interest in the visionary and the surreal--is but a thinly disguised trajectory which parallels Zola's own preferences and dislikes in the visual arts--from the robustness and vigor of works by Courbet and Manet, through a transitional period involving freer brushwork and a lighter palette typical of Monet, to the antinaturalistic use of color and the stress upon the erotic and the fantastic in the dream visions of Gustave Moreau and the Symbolists. By attributing three distinct and divergent stylistic periods to his painter-hero, Zola not only progressively charts the psychological decline of Claude Lantier, he also indirectly expresses his own theoretical assumptions concerning the merits of each of these artistic movements.

In the case of Proust's painter, the emphasis is less upon the artist as a fully rounded character than upon his stylistic development as a demonstration of the author's aesthetic theories and individual preferences in art. In other words, Proust is hardly concerned with the artistic verisimilitude of Elstir's shift from, say, mythological

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subjects painted in the meticulous manner of Moreau to marine studies whose looser brushwork recalls the style of Monet and the Impressionists. No attempt is made, moreover, to trace the change in character from the fawning and foolish Biche (or Tiche) of the Verdurin circle to the more austere and sagelike Elstir whom the narrator comes to know. For Proust, Elstir remains merely a pretext, the third member of his artistic trinity (the other two being Bergotte and Vinteuil) through whose works he can communicate and reinforce his aesthetic theories and critical assumptions in the field of the visual arts.

It is therefore by means of any or all of these conventions (i.e., the painter-protagonist as the author's mouthpiece; the use of critical discussions or debates; and an examination of the various artistic styles or stages in the painter's development through a representative sampling of his oeuvre) that the writer succeeds in making the work of fiction serve as an effective vehicle for the communication of his aesthetic theories and critical aperçus in the realm of painting.

How successful are each of the four writers in achieving this fictional transposition? Speaking subjectively, it would appear that Zola's L'Oeuvre represents the most transparent "grafting" of aesthetic theories and art criticism onto a fictional framework, thus making the novel more appealing to art historians and students of aesthetics than to the general reader of the Rougon-Macquart series. In the case of Wilde, the borderline between

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aesthetic criticism and Gothic melodrama is less visible, although some of the theoretical discussions which Lord Henry Wotton and Basil Hallward engage in are often reminiscent of Wilde's debaters in the critical essays (e.g., "The Decay of Lying"). Whereas Zola is writing within a deterministic/naturalistic framework (i.e., Claude's lesion of the eyes, a genetic inheritance, contributes to his failure as a painter), thus giving the novel a somewhat predictable outcome--especially for anyone at all familiar with Zola's artistic tastes, Wilde is not constrained by such pseudoscientific theories and can give free rein to his imagination by multiplying the supernatural and fantastic elements of his narrative, which is heavily indebted to the Gothic novel. This fact perhaps helps explain the greater popularity of Dorian Gray among general readers.

With James, the rate of success in this "transfusion" process remains uneven. The Tragic Muse, judged solely as a work of fiction, is, in this writer's opinion, a dismal failure. The aesthetic conversations between Nick Dormer and Gabriel Nash are, in truth, rather pedestrian and plodding. James's heavy-handed portrayal of Nash as the archetypal aesthete (Pater, the original model, deserved better) is perhaps more transparent than Zola's use of fictional types (e.g., Fagerolles, the slavish imitator; Bongrand, the kindly chef of the realist band of painters) to represent specific positions on aesthetic issues and/or to symbolize various painterly styles. Given the fact that James's novel must shift back and forth to chart the

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career of Miriam Rooth, an aspiring actress, it is understandable that The Tragic Muse lacks any sense of cohesiveness and seems endless in the reading. (The standard New York Edition is a two-volume affair.)

"The Madonna of the Future," although still marred by occasional set speeches which betray their salon-review origin, represents a more succesful attempt to integrate or fuse aesthetic theory and fictional intrigue. Theobald is both a vivid and affecting character and a painter whose dilemma (i.e., the inability to reconcile the ideal and the real, to express an artistic vision in paint) reflects some of James's most basic and fundamental aesthetic concerns as they relate to painting.

"The Real Thing" is considered by many of James's critics to be equal, if not superior, to the previous tale. In its single-minded demonstration of an idea (an aim which James himself professed in the Notebooks) and its economy of means (only three characters are required to point up the moral) it is truly a remarkable little tale. The issue at stake, viz. the need for illusion in art, is perhaps one of James's most serious aesthetic concerns. The writing is lively and animated, the issues relating to the painter's craft are presented forthrightly and clearly, and the parable-like quality of the whole gives it a real claim to ranking as a fine example of the transference of aesthetic concepts to a literary text.

In a sense, Proust's A la Recherche represents the ultimate expression of aesthetic/art theory within a

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fictional narrative. Since Proust never wrote official salon reviews and left only a handful of scattered remarks concerning his favorite painters, it is only to be expected that he would consequently reflect his aesthetic preoccupations in the form which best suited his individual needs. So organically interfused are theoretical statements relating to the art of the painter and fictional narrative that the reader would be hard put to find the points at which they meet in this virtually seamless fabric. The theoretical discussions of Bergotte, Vinteuil, and Elstir are not superfluous, for they clearly contribute to the central theme of the novel (viz. the narrator's search for a vocation). If the work seems to demand more concentration and a greater effort on the part of the reader to follow the various strands of the "action," it is not because Proust has failed to successfully integrate his aesthetic theories with the traditional "storytelling" aspect. By experimenting with the form of the novel, Proust has significantly broadened the conventional definition of this literary genre, thus permitting all elements (e.g., theory, plot, character) to freely mingle in the narrator's undertaking. If one is therefore to speak of the successful integration of art criticism and aesthetic theory within a fictional narrative, Proust's A la Recherche certainly represents a serious and notable achievement.

With the exception of Zola, each of the preceding chapters concludes with an examination of the portrait-motif as it is embodied in selected fictional (and also,

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in the case of Proust, nonfictional) works of Wilde, James, and Proust. Before proceeding to specifics, it is well to ask why the portrait, an iconographic image invested with symbolic overtones, has been singled out for special attention by each of the writers in question: "...one cannot help wondering," writes Newton Arvin, "why [the portrait] has recurred so frequently ... and just what the secret is not only of its curious beauty but of its troublous, equivocal effect upon the fancy. For certainly, in the hands of a genuinely imaginative writer, a portrait ... ceases to be a mere pleasing work of the pictorial art; it troubles us with a sense that the ordinary limits of consciousness and rational experience have been well overpassed; that some deeper and darker levels of existence have been penetrated, and their mysterious waters stirred."[11] Invoking Frazer and Freud, Arvin arrives at the tentative conclusion that the frequency of the portrait's appearance in fiction can be explained in terms of its symbolic fusion of the anthropological/folkloric theory of the Separable Soul (Frazer) and the psychological discovery of the multiple or divided self (Freud). While this may help explain the unconscious attraction of various writers to the portrait-motif, it is the conscious (i.e., artistic) use to which this graphic image is subjected by Wilde, James, and Proust in their respective fictional works that has been of primary concern in the present study.

Perhaps the most dramatic utilization of a visual portrait in nineteenth and early twentieth century fiction can

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be found in Oscar Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray. While still retaining many of the trappings reminiscent of the animated portrait in the Gothic novel (e.g., supernatural atmosphere, unexpected plot reversals, lurid descriptions), Wilde clearly outstripped his predecessors by making the portrait function not merely as a fleeting incident in a convoluted series of occurrences, but as the central image of the novel, its recurrence integrating both character and plot. James, it will be recalled, had done much the same thing in his early tale, "The Story of a Masterpiece" (1868), and again in his posthumous novel, The Sense of the Past (1917). One might characterize these fictional examples involving the portrait as compositional in nature, since in a real sense the portrait determines the structure of the whole. There are, however, instances where the portrait makes only a brief appearance in a longer work, even though the placement of this symbolic image within the narrative seems to give it a central position (e.g., the Bronzino portrait in The Wings of the Dove, the Man with the Mask in The Sacred Fount, and "Miss Sacripant" in A la Recherche). These examples are episodic in nature, the portrait setting off symbolic reverberations which can be felt throughout the remainder of the narrative.

While such formal distinctions are certainly of value in that they provide the reader with a deeper understanding of the various techniques the author employs in constructing his narrative, the emphasis in the present study has fallen upon the thematic, symbolic, and psychological

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value of these emblematic images. On one level, such portraits may serve as a reflection of the writer's aesthetic theories and/or his preferences for individual painterly styles. Given the fact that Wilde's Intentions asserts the superiority of art over nature (and, by extension, over life), one can understand why the author of Dorian Gray makes a conscious attempt to blur the distinctions between the real and the imagined, between the inanimate graphic image and the living model, attributing to the former qualities belonging to the latter and vice-versa. One might even go so far as to suggest, as Lewis J. Potect has hinted, that the ultrarealistic description of the blood-stained and bloated silenus visible on the canvas is actually an ironic attempt by Wilde to parody his own dislike of representational painting.[12]

Henry James's use of the portrait in The Sacred Fount also reflects his interest in the major issue of appearance and reality, i.e., the artist's subjective re-creation of reality versus the need for an "objective" anchorage in the world of "fact." As with all of James's fictional works, the problem of point of view is crucial here; it is given a dramatic illustration in the individual reactions of the various characters to the mysterious portrait of the Man with the Mask. In The Wings of the Dove, on the other hand, one can see the application of James's preference for Italian Renaissance painting--and the Mannerist style in particular--in his choice of a Bronzino portrait of an aristocratic noblewoman to serve as a catalyst for Milly

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Theale, a choice which discloses a deep awareness, on the part of the writer, of the particular style of the painter and its suitability for conveying the mood of spiritual uneasiness and mental strain to which his heroine is subject.

Proust also raises the question of illusion and reality by means of Elstir's portrait of Odette de Crécy as "Miss Sacripant." Like the guests at Newmarch, the narrator is at first unable to discover precisely what he is looking at (JF,I,848). The theme of l'équivoque, which had previously been explored in Elstir's "Le Port de Carquethuit," is here applied to the portrait genre. Odette's appearance in male attire, moreover, gives Proust a chance to express his theory of the androgyne, a type which he had discovered in the figure of Moreau's Poet, and also provides a concrete illustration of the writer's belief in the multiple selves within each of us (i.e., Arvin-Freud's hypothesis). From a purely visual angle, the extremely detailed description of the fictional portrait suggests that Proust has fused the diverse painterly styles of Whistler, Manet, Renoir, as well as other Impressionists--all of whose works he ardently admired.

It is as a means of exploring the psychology of their characters, however, that the three novelists appear to make the fullest, most original and suggestive use of the portrait-device. Among the possible variations on this concept, one might mention: 1) the reaction of the sitter to his portrait (Dorian Gray and Ralph Pendrel); 2) the attitude of the painter towards his creation (Basil Hallward,

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Stephen Baxter, Elstir); 3) the reaction of a character to a portrait which either discloses some hidden truth about the viewer's personality and/or fate (Ralph Pendrel and Milly Theale) or that of a loved one or personal acquaintance (Marian Everett and Odette de Crécy); and, finally, 4) the responses of various characters to a portrait whose authorship is unknown and whose meaning remains shrouded in mystery (the Man with the Mask).

As an illustration of the first situation, i.e., the reaction of the sitter to his portrait, one can find no better example than Dorian Gray's response to Basil Hallward's creation. Wilde is quite precise on the subject of the portrait functioning as a psychological register, a graphic reflection or embodiment of his protagonist's conscience: "The picture, changed or unchanged, would be to him the visual emblem of conscience." (VII,91) The alterations in the portrait serve as an index by which to measure Dorian's moral disintegration. The protagonist's various reactions to these alterations consequently constitute the heart of the narrative.

One can point to several examples where the writer utilizes the portrait to dramatize the artist's reaction to his own creation. A fair amount of discussion in Dorian Gray is given over to Basil Hallward's opinion of his painting. A possible reading of the novel, put forward by Houston A. Baker, Jr., holds that Hallward's emotional involvement with his sitter and the consequent reflection of this secret in the portrait leads to the painter's corruption

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of his artistic ideal, one which he felt was embodied in the person of Dorian Gray.[13] The artist eventually becomes the victim of his own creation: "Good God, Dorian, what a lesson! what an awful lesson! ... I worshiped you too much. I am punished for it." (XIII,157)

The painter, however, need not feel remorse for his creation. In the Jamesian tale "The Story of a Masterpiece," Stephen Baxter's earlier intimacy with Miss Marian Everett unconsciously surfaces in his imaginary portrait entitled "My Last Duchess." It becomes even more apparent in the portrait of Marian which he executes at the behest of John Lennox, her present fiancé. While the latter objects to the painter's point of view, claiming that the portrait reflects the artist's contempt for his model, Baxter insists that he has only captured a likeness of Marian Everett and has applied the technical secrets of his craft to achieve this end. Both Basil Hallward's portrait of Dorian and Baxter's portrait of Marian reveal unconscious truths about the feelings of each artist towards his sitter, but whereas the former feels that he has corrupted his painterly ideal, the latter insists that it has been preserved (a fact which is corroborated by the omniscient narrator of the tale).

Elstir's reaction to his portrait of Odette de Crécy as "Miss Sacripant" is curiously ambivalent. On the one hand, he refuses to acknowledge his liaison with the model in question (JF,I,849-50), fearing perhaps that he may lose the respect of the young narrator. He therefore characterizes the watercolor as an insignificant sketch which he

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tossed off as a period piece. Yet it is Elstir's firm belief that the subject of a work of art should be of no concern to the creative artist, i.e., morality and art should never be confused with one another. At the moment of creation, observes the narrator in connection with Elstir's paintings of nude female bathers in a forest setting, " ...[le peintre] n'y eût vu que la beauté sculpturale, pour mieux dire, la beauté de blancs monuments que prennent des corps de femmes assis dans la verdure." (P,III,405) It is this sense of objectivity, the necessary distancing of the artist from his subject, that was present at the moment of creation of "Miss Sacripant." Paradoxically, the portrait still testifies to the subjective nature of the painter's involvement with his model; as the narrator later observes, the watercolor "est moins le portrait d'une amante que du déformant amour ... Le portrait dit: 'Ce que j'ai aimé, ce qui m'a fait souffrir, ce que j'ai sans cesse vu, c'est ceci.'" (F,III,440) Elstir's reaction to the portrait encompasses two different attitudes, i.e., Hallward's fear that the painting will reveal his most intimate feelings towards his sitter, as well as Baxter's confidence that his conscious emotions and personal prejudices have played no part in the creation of the portrait of Marian Everett.

In the third variation on the portrait-motif, a character confronts a portrait which reveals some aspect of his own personality or that of an individual close to him. Elstir's portrait of Odette discloses certain aspects of her

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sexual nature and provides the narrator with visual proof of the complex and elusive quality of the human personality. In a similar manner, Baxter's portrait of Marian gives Lennox an insight into the young woman's character which he had previously not possessed: "It seemed to Lennox that some strange potent agency had won from his mistress the confession of her inmost soul, and had written it there upon the canvas in firm yet passionate lines ... Was she a creature without faith and without conscience? ... [Baxter's] composition had embraced the truth."[14]

Whereas the revelation of a character's true personality by means of a visual portrait still harks back to the Romantic tradition popularized by Hawthorne, James had clearly moved away from this device by the time he came to write The Wings of the Dove. Here the portrait serves to remind the heroine, Milly Theale, of her own mortality and, paradoxically, of the possibility that she may yet find a degree of comfort and reassurance by immersing herself in the rarefied atmosphere of art. Though the Italian noblewoman in the portrait is physically dead, Bronzino has captured her likeness and thereby assured her of lasting immortality.

In The Sense of the Past, James presents his most subtle and convoluted use of the portrait-device. The Arvin-Freud hypothesis concerning the existence of multiple selves is here given a concrete embodiment, for Ralph Pendrel is literally in search of his former self. The hero's curiosity vis-à-vis the averted face in the mysterious

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portrait hanging in the recessed parlor becomes an almost narcissistic infatuation with his own likeness. His punishment, viz. to remain trapped in a time warp of his own devising (since he had desired to exchange places with his 1820 counterpart), may be thought of as a variant of Dorian Gray's own torture, the hero having similarly wished to link his fate to a portrait. James's final, original twist upon the portrait theme is suggested in the notes to the unfinished novel--to have Ralph Pendrel's sense of uneasiness be psychologically communicated to the artist who is in the process of painting his portrait (in 1920), and to have the latter, in turn, cast his own suspicions upon his model's true identity. The labyrinthine use of the portrait in this novel to reveal aspects of a character's psyche and to explore the psychological relationship between artist and sitter at the moment of creation is without parallel in James's fictional oeuvre.

Lastly, in the fourth variation on the portrait-motif the subjective responses of various characters to a mysterious portrait are presented in order to elucidate the central theme of the entire work. This approach is clearly utilized in The Sacred Fount. Although the portrait is episodic rather than compositional in nature, it serves to integrate the action by involving all of the major characters in a highly dramatic confrontation scene. It also reinforces the central theme of illusion and reality by having the various characters derive differing interpretations from the iconographic symbols embedded within the painting,

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thus emphasizing the ambiguous and multifaceted nature of one's individual perception of reality. On another level, the artifice and social pretense existing at Newmarch are echoed in the theme of unmasking which the portrait appears to suggest (e.g., May Server's grimace is identified by the narrator with the mask in the portrait). The portrait thus serves as a reflection, in microcosm, of the action of the entire novel, encapsulating the themes of artistic creation, social pretense, and the subjective nature of human perception. Situated at the symbolic center of the work, this visual image represents the reader's sole anchorage in a sea of conjecture, for it is only after carefully weighing the characters' individual reactions to the portrait of the Man with the Mask that he can ever hope to arrive at any tentative conclusions about the novel.

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Footnotes

[1] Wilde, "The Decay of Lying," Literary Criticism of Oscar Wilde, ed. Stanley Weintraub (Lincoln: Univ. Nebraska Press, 1968), pp. 178 and 183 resp.

[2] James, "The Art of Fiction," Henry James: Representative Selections..., ed. Lyon N. Richardson (Urbana/London: Univ. Illinois Press, 1966), p. 77.

[3] Ibid., p. 85.

[4] For a detailed examination of the Baudelaire-Proust question, see Simone Kadi's La Peinture chez Proust et Baudelaire (Paris: La Pensée Universelle, 1973). This work came to my attention after I had already completed my chapter on Proust.

[5] Cf. Frank D. Curtin, "Ruskin in French Criticism: A Possible Reappraisal," PMLA, 77, i (March 1962), 103-4: "The most important service of the French critics has been the penetration to some of the pervasive themes, attitudes, and modes of expression which help to bring unity to the incoherent bulk of Ruskin's work and thereby to explain his unique stimulus ... Later French critics,...including Proust, were to stress...the qualities of Ruskin's style and his 'intuitive' approach to nature, art, and society." I do not, however, agree with Curtin's conclusion that Proust's essays and translations "...as criticism [are] more a tribute to Ruskin than an analysis."

[6] Wilde, A Critic in Pall Mall: Reviews and Miscellanies, ed. E.V. Lucas (New York/London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1919), p. 272.

[7] Proust, "En Mémoire des Eglises Assassinées: III. John Ruskin," Contre Sainte-Beuve..., ed. P. Clarac and Y. Sandre ([Paris]: Gallimard, 1971), p. 141.

[8] Notebook entry dated Feb. 22, 1891. The Notebooks of Henry James, ed. F.O. Matthiessen and K.B. Murdock (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1961), p. 103.

[9] Allan Pascoe, "The Failure of L'Oeuvre," L'Esprit Créateur, 11, iv (Winter 1971), 55.

[10] For example, one could point to the fact that both Zola and Wilde stress the importance of the artist's temperament or personality, whereas they differ sharply on the

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question of contemporary subject matter as worthy of artistic treatment (Wilde being opposed to such a use on the grounds that the painter's proximity to his own time would ultimately destroy the imaginative and ethereal qualities of his art). One could also point to the fact that both Wilde and Proust agree that the work of art has a life of its own once the painter has created it; which, by extension, also leads them to conclude that the portrait can frequently reveal more about the painter himself than the sitter. Similarly, Lord Henry Wotton's view that the great artist puts all of himself into his creation and is therefore personally uninteresting finds an echo in Proust's theory of the divided nature of every creator, viz. the artistic self and the social self, a truth which is confirmed when the narrator, having been exposed to, and overwhelmed by, the artistic creations of Bergotte, Vinteuil, and Elstir, is sorely disappointed when he confronts the individuals responsible for these works.

[11] Arvin, "Counterfeit Presentments," American Pantheon, ed. D. Aaron and S. Schendler (New York: Delacorte Press, 1966), p. 241.

[12] Poteet, "Dorian Gray and the Gothic Novel," Modern Fiction Studies, 17, ii (Summer 1971), 246.

[13] Baker, "A Tragedy of the Artist: The Picture of Dorian Gray," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 24, iii (Dec. 1969), 349-55.

[14] James, "The Story of a Masterpiece," Eight Uncollected Tales of Henry James, ed. Edna Kenton (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1950), p. 113.

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